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# Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond

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# FEMALE FOUNDERS IN BYZANTIUM AND BEYOND

Edited by LIOBA THEIS, MARGARET MULLETT and MICHAEL GRÜNBART  
with GALINA FINGAROVA and MATTHEW SAVAGE

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This volume is the product of a Gastprofessur in Gender Studies, offered to the University by the Ministry of Culture and held by Margaret Mullett, then of Queen's University Belfast, now of Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC. It is also the result of the collaboration between Margaret Mullett, Univ-Prof. Lioba Theis of the Institute of Art History at Vienna and Michael Grünbart, then of the Institute of Byzantine Studies and now professor of Byzantine Studies at Münster. The culmination of the Gastprofessur was to be a conference on Female Founders, on female economic power in Byzantium and its neighbours.

Margaret Mullett would like to thank Johannes Koder for hosting and housing her, colleagues in both institutes and in the Institut für Byzanzforschung of the Academy, together with the Frauenpower group of women professors, for the most stimulating environment imaginable during the time of the Gastprofessur. Her especial thanks are due to Lioba Theis, the ultimate female founder, whose energy and rigour, enlightened pedagogy, and sheer imagination made the enterprise very special, and the whole Vienna experience for the Guest Professor quite magical.

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it possible for us to see manuscripts which were the product of Byzantine female founders. Galina Fingarova and Matthew Savage have been with us all the way, and both finished their doctoral theses during the organisation of the conference, no mean feat. We should like to thank the University of Vienna, namely the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies, the Institute of Art History, and the Center for Gender Equality, as well as Wien Kultur, Raiffeisen Centrobank and Wüstenrot for financial support, Reeds exhibitions, Alba Druck, the wineries of Schlumberger, Taubenschuss and Kemeter, then Vöslauer, Tee-kanne, Ströck Brot and Manner Wien for substantial donations in kind for the conference. Thanks also to the editorial board of the Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte for allowing us to guest-edit a volume. At the end it was Galina who saw the volume to the press, and for this we thank her.

It was no ordinary conference (Wien ist anders) in two ways. One was the enthusiasm with which the call for papers was received which has resulted in this many-authored volume; we thank all the speakers who stood at Strzygowski's lectern in lecture room 1, especially those who gave us their papers for the volume. The other is that the organisation of the conference was part of a seminar offered in both semesters in 2007–08. Students gave papers, and the best were delivered at the conference and appear in this volume, but they also produced posters which were displayed at the conference, judged

by a panel of art historians (Sharon Gerstel, Liz James, Sophia Kalopissi and Linda Safran) on grounds of content, presentation and relevance to the issues of *Female Founding*: Fani Gargova, who always knew how everything worked, who set up the web and the programme, who was always there to help, and who has contributed to this volume, was also the winner of the poster competition. But the contribution of the students to the conference is what makes it different. They were amazing from the very first meetings in October to the delivery of the posters, the papers, and the conference, the fund-raising, commissioning, all the logistics, including the Schlumberger Strassenbahn, an unforgettable experience. The work and imagination of those two men and eighteen women was female founding of a remarkable kind.

In the publication stage we are very grateful to our anonymous peer reviewers, to Caroline Macé who read the French-language papers for us, to the Institute of Art History and to Stefan Junker for the index. The financial support of FWF has made it possible. A few remarks about editorial practices that we have adopted in arranging this volume are in order. We have cho-

sen to use the spellings of names in the Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium. We have not achieved complete consistency across the volume as to Greek font or transliteration when citing original passages. Within an article, attention is paid to uniformity in quotations and spellings according to its author's language (English, German, French). We have decided to compile the index in English. Almost no titles of series and periodicals are abbreviated (for exceptions see "Abbreviations"). J.-M. SPIESER/E. YOTA (ed.), *Donations et donateurs dans le monde byzantin (Realités byzantines)*, Paris, 2012, reached us too late to incorporate into our volume.

The conference and volume gained significance from the environment of Vienna, and the inspiration from the fundamental research of Viennese scholarship, especially that of a woman scholar, Irmgard Hutter. We dedicate this volume to her.

Lioba Theis (University of Vienna),  
Margaret Mullett (Dumbarton Oaks),  
Michael Grünbart (University of Münster),  
Galina Fingarova (University of Vienna),  
Matthew Savage (Louisiana State University)

## ABBREVIATIONS

- AASS Acta Sanctorum. Antwerpen/Bruxelles 1643–1925.
- BHG F. HALKIN (ed.), Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca, 3rd ed., 3 vols., Bruxelles 1957.
- BMFD J. THOMAS/A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO (ed.), Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' *Typika* and Testaments, 5 vols., Washington, DC 2000.
- CCSG Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca, Turnhout 1977–.
- CPG M. GEERARD (ed.), Clavis Patrum Graecorum, 5 vols., Turnhout 1974–1998.
- IG Inscriptiones graecae, Berlin 1873–.
- LCI Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie, 8 vols., Rome et al. 1968–1976.
- ODB A. P. KAZHDAN et al. (ed.), The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, 3 vols., New York/Oxford 1991.
- PG J.-P. MIGNE (ed.), Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca, Paris 1857–1866.
- PLP E. TRAPP et al. (ed.), Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit, Vienna 1976–1996.
- PLRE A. H. M. JONES/J. R. MARTINDALE/J. MORRIS (ed.), The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, Cambridge 1971–1980.
- PmbZ R.-J. LILIE et al. (ed.), Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit, Berlin 1999–.
- SEG P. ROUSSEL et al. (ed.), Supplementum epigraphicum graecum, Leiden 1923–.



# FEMALE FOUNDERS – DAS PROJEKT: NETZWERKE ODER SEILSCHAFTEN?

ÜBERLEGUNGEN ZUM DEDIKATIONSBILD DER  
ANICIA JULIANA IM WIENER DIOSKURIDES  
(CODEX VINDOBONENSIS MED. GR. I, FOLIO 6V)

LIOBA THEIS

In einer Zeit, in der die Spende, also die freie Gabe, die keine Gegenleistung beabsichtigt, auf vielen Ebenen durchaus als suspekt gilt, da Verflechtungen aller Art die erforderliche Uneigennützigkeit in Frage stellen, erscheint es besonders reizvoll, ausgewählte Aspekte des byzantinischen Spendenwesens zu ergründen, das es in einem abgeschlossenen historischen Rahmen steht. Für die Betrachtung eignen sich neben den schriftlichen Quellen in besonderem Maß visuelle Botschaften, die einen Einblick in das Spendenwesen gewähren, der eine Reihe von Erkenntnissen bereithält, die weit über die beabsichtigte Information hinausgehen.

Im Rahmen der Planung, Organisation und Durchführung des Projekts „Female Founders“ war es in Wien in doppelter Hinsicht eine Herausforderung, dazu das „älteste erhaltene Dedicationsbild einer Handschrift“ heranzuziehen (Abb. 2), welches einer historisch fassbaren Person gewidmet ist, deren Aktivitäten als Stifterin bekannt und gerühmt sind: Es ist die Patrizierin Anicia Juliana, die als Tochter des Flavius Anicius Olybrius und der Placidia, ihrerseits Tochter

des Kaisers Valentinian III., der valentinianisch-theodosianischen Dynastie oströmischer Kaiser entstammte.<sup>2</sup> Da sich die Handschrift seit 1569 in Wien befindet, war es ein besonderes Privileg, das selten gezeigte kostbare Original des Wiener Dioskurides während des Female Founders-Colloquiums in der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek bei einem speziell arrangierten Besuch eingehend betrachten zu können.<sup>3</sup> Die auffällige, ungewöhnliche Rahmung, in der die Stifterin erscheint, bot sich als Grundmotiv für das Signet des Colloquiums selbst an: So konnten mittels der vergrößerten Schlaufen auch weitere namhafte Stifterinnen byzantinischer Zeit in ein Netzwerk von Gründerinnen und Stifterinnen verwoben werden,<sup>4</sup> denen in den Vorträgen der Konferenz teilweise besondere Aufmerksamkeit zukam (Abb. 1).

Gründerinnen und Stifterinnen aus der Zeit der Spätantike und des byzantinischen Mittelalters waren Studierende in zwei Seminaren am Institut für Kunstgeschichte der Universität Wien im Wintersemester 2007/8 und im Sommersemester 2008 schon eingehend nach-

1 H. GERSTINGER (Hrsg.), *Der Wiener Dioskurides. Codex [palatinus] Vindobonensis Graecus I, II. Kommentarband zur Faksimileausgabe (Codices selecti, 12)*, Graz 1970, S. 33.

2 Zur Person s. J. R. MARTINDALE (Hrsg.), *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, II*, Cambridge 1980, S. 635–636.

3 Ganz besonderer Dank gilt dafür Hofrat tit. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ernst Gamillscheg.

4 Die für das Signet des Colloquiums genutzten Portraits zeigen Kaiserin Theodora aus dem Mosaik von San Vitale, Ravenna, Kaiserin Zoe aus dem Mosaik der Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Anna Radene, Hagioi Anagyroi in Kastoria, Theodora Synadene aus dem Lincoln College Typikon, fol. 11r, Anicia Juliana, Kaiserin Eirene Komnene aus dem Mosaik der Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Kaiserin Eirene aus der Pala d'Oro, San Marco, Venedig und eine anonyme Stifterin in der Südkonche des Narthex von Asinou, Zypern.



1: Logo des Colloquiums Female Founders

gegangen.<sup>5</sup> Die Aufmerksamkeit galt dabei einerseits – soweit erfassbar – den Personen, ihren Gründungs- bzw. Stiftungsabsichten, andererseits natürlich auch dem eigenständigen Zeugniswert gestifteter Objekte, deren Inschriften in einigen Fällen den einzigen Hinweis auf die Existenz einer Stifterin gaben. Viele der Seminarteilnehmerinnen waren als Studierende des Faches Kunstgeschichte bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt

noch nicht mit der byzantinischen Kultur vertraut. Durch die intensive Vertiefung mit den jeweiligen Untersuchungsgegenständen wurden die Seminarteilnehmerinnen zu Spezialistinnen, die bei der Auswahl der *keynote-Speaker* ebenso eingebunden waren, wie bei der Auswahl der Beiträge, die nach dem *Call-for-papers* in großer Zahl eingelangten, denn sie hatten in der Zwischenzeit selbst durch das Seminar und seine

5 Anlass für das Seminar war die einjährige Gastprofessur von Margaret Mullett am Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien, die im Rahmen des „excellencia-Programms“ vom Österreichischen Wissenschaftsministerium finanziert wurde. In der Ausschreibung für diese Gastprofessur, um die sich die Fächer der Historisch-Kulturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Wien bewerben konnten, wurden die Vorgaben deutlich: Erwartet wurde „Nachhaltigkeit“ in Forschung und Lehre, vertreten von einer Persönlichkeit, die einen „Leuchtturm“ der Wissenschaft darstellen sollte. Auch ein Workshop oder eine Tagung sollte innerhalb des beschränkten Zeitrahmens von einem Jahr durchgeführt werden. Besondere Chancen wurden Bewerberinnen eingeräumt, die interdisziplinäre Lehre und Themen geplant hatten. Durch die intensive Zusammenarbeit mit dem Lehrstuhl für Byzantinische Kunstgeschichte am Institut für Kunstgeschichte und am Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik konnte so eine große Zahl von Studierenden von dieser Entscheidung profitieren. Bei der Planung des Themas für dieses Colloquium war es daher wichtig, auf einen Themenbereich zu fokussieren, der in der interdisziplinären Herangehensweise zusätzlichen Erkenntnisgewinn bietet. Das Seminar fand daher unter gemeinsamer Leitung und Betreuung von Margaret Mullett und Lioba Theis statt, die Studierenden erfuhren auch erhebliche Unterstützung durch Michael Grünbart, der zur Zeit der Vorbereitung des Colloquiums noch als Bibliothekar an der Fachbibliothek Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik tätig war.



2: Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Vind. Med. Gr. 1, fol. 6v, Dedikationsbild

abschließenden Kurzreferate klare Kriterien und einen hohen Qualitäts-Standard entwickelt, die dazu führten, dass auch fünf Referentinnen des Seminars ihre Ergebnisse während des Colloquiums vortragen konnten.

Auch bei der praktischen Vorbereitung des Colloquiums waren die Studierenden intensiv eingebunden, es wurden ganz andere Fähigkeiten erforderlich und entwickelt: Fundraising, Tagungsorganisation mit Begleitprogramm und die Vorbereitung einer Ausstellung kamen als neue Aufgaben hinzu, die zu einer noch intensiveren Zusammenarbeit der Beteiligten untereinander führte. So, wie eine Seilschaft gemeinsam einen Gipfel erklimmt, so gelang allen Beteiligten durch die intensive Zusammenarbeit die Organisation und Durchführung der Tagung. Damit kam eine Erfahrung für Sinn und Notwendigkeit von Netzwerken hinzu, die die Studierenden dann auch durch den Kontakt mit den Teilnehmern des Colloquiums selbst fachlich und persönlich vertiefen konnten: Die Grundlagen für

das wissenschaftliche Netzwerk waren so bei einer ganzen Zahl von Studierenden gelegt. Aus dieser Arbeit sind inzwischen auch Diplomarbeiten hervorgegangen.

Die Wirksamkeit eines Netzwerkes beruht in der Regel auf der zuverlässigen Verbindung einer Gruppe von Personen zueinander, die sich durch den Austausch von Informationen fördern und Vorteile verschaffen können. Auf diese Weise können Ziele erreicht werden, die für eine einzelne Person kaum oder nicht realisierbar sind. Als Vorteil gesehen wird beispielsweise der Erkenntnisgewinn in der Wissenschaft durch ein Wissensnetzwerk, als Nachteil gewertet aber wird eine „Seilschaft“ oder ein „Netzwerk“ dann, wenn die Gruppe den Mitgliedern unabhängig von deren individuellen Leistungen unverdiente Vorteile verschafft.

Im figürlichen Sinne in der Mitte eines „Netzwerkes“ ist die zentrale Gestalt im Dedikationsbild des Wiener Dioskurides (Cod. Vind. med. gr. 1, fol. 6v) platziert (Abb. 2). Das Wid-



mungsbild findet sich in der Widmungslage des Codex an vorletzter Stelle.<sup>6</sup> Dem Bild vorangestellt sind vier jeweils ganzseitige quadratische Miniaturen, davon sind die ersten zwei Ärztebilder (fol. 2v und 3v) und die zweiten zwei Autorenbilder (fol. 4v und 5v). Das Widmungsbild (fol. 6v) und der anschließende Ziertitel (fol. 7v) zeigen Medaillonform. Allen Miniaturen gemeinsam ist die Positionierung in der Mitte des Pergamentblattes, so dass ein Großteil des Pergaments frei bleibt.

Entgegen der Umfassung des Widmungsbildes durch Seile, die im Folgenden eingehender behandelt werden soll, zeigen alle anderen Miniaturen der Widmungslage eine aufwendige Rahmung der Bildfläche:<sup>7</sup> Sie bestehen jeweils aus einem breiten Band, welches nach außen und innen durch einfarbige Streifen begrenzt ist. Darin wird ein plastisch modellierter von Stoffbändern umwickelter Lorbeerkranz mit goldverzierten Ecken wiedergegeben (erstes Ärztebild),<sup>8</sup> alternativ wird der Rahmen durch eine Bordüre mit *opus-sectile*-Muster in reicher Farbigkeit flächig

ornamentiert (zweites Ärztebild). Das Rahmenfeld des ersten Autorenbildes wird durch ein breites, mosaikartiges Rautenband in breiter Farbpalette geschmückt, das des zweiten Autorenbildes zeigt eine grüne Akanthuswellenranke auf rotem Grund, die Ecken sind wie im ersten Ärztebild metallisch glänzend plastisch ausgeformt. Wie das Dedikationsbild ist auch das anschließende Medaillon mit dem Ziertitel kreisrund, im Gegensatz zum Dedikationsbild wird es aber reich mit einem goldfarbenen Lorbeerkranz gerahmt.

Im Gegensatz zu allen anderen Miniaturen der ersten Lage des Wiener Dioskurides erscheint die durch das Widmungsbild besonders hervorgehobene Stifterin ausgerechnet in einem sehr einfachen Rahmen, der allein aus ineinander gedrehten goldfarbenen Seilen<sup>9</sup> gebildet wird und daher die Wahrnehmung des gesamten Dedikationsbildes außerordentlich dominiert: Ein im Kreis gelegtes Seil bildet den äußeren Rahmen, in den zwei um 45 Grad verschobene Quadrate eingeschrieben sind. Auch diese werden jeweils von einem Seil geformt, welches an jeder Ecke

- 
- 6 Die Fachliteratur zum Wiener Dioskurides ist umfassend zusammengestellt bei B. KILLERICH, *The Image of Anicia Juliana in the Vienna Dioscurides: Flattery or Appropriation of Imperial Imagery?*, in: *Symbolae Osloenses*, 76, 2001, S. 169–190. Zur Bewertung der Bautätigkeit Anicia Julianas vgl. den sehr anregenden Beitrag von G. NATHAN, *‘Pothos tes Philoktistou’*. Anicia Juliana’s Architectural Narratology, in: J. BURKE (Hrsg.), *Byzantine Narrative. Papers in Honour of Roger Scott* (*Byzantina Australiensia*, 16), Melbourne 2006, S. 433–443. Rezent zum Codex und seiner Rezeptionsgeschichte: A. FINGERNAGEL, *Ein spätantikes Original. Der Wiener Dioskurides und seine Rezeptionsgeschichte*, in: ders. (Hrsg.), *Juden, Christen und Muslime. Interkultureller Dialog in alten Schriften*, Wien 2010, S. 109–126, zum Dedikationsbild S. 111 und Abb. 39. Zur Frage der Widmungslage und damit der Datierung der Handschrift vgl. E. GAMILLSCHEG, *Das Geschenk für Juliana Anicia. Überlegungen zur Struktur und Entstehung des Wiener Dioskurides*, in: K. BELKE/E. KISLINGER/A. KÜLZER/M. STASSINOPOULOU (Hrsg.), *Byzantina Mediterranea. Festschrift für Johannes Koder zum 65. Geburtstag*, Wien 2007, S. 187–195.
- 7 Erstmals erhielt die Rahmung Aufmerksamkeit durch E. DIEZ, *Die Miniaturen des Wiener Dioskurides*, Wien 1903, bes. S. 57–61. Auf S. 60 kommt Diez zu dem Schluss, dass „die Rahmen des Dioskurides den ganz bestimmten Typus des Prachtrahmens [...] vertreten“. In dem Zusammenhang ist es überraschend, dass er der besonderen Rahmenform des Dedikationsbildes keine spezifische Aufmerksamkeit zukommen lässt. Er ordnet diesen der Flechtbandornamentik zu und vertritt die Ansicht (S. 60): „Es ist wohl kaum nötig, auf das häufige Vorkommen dieses Ornaments auf koptischen Stoffen sowie auf den Denkmälern der orientalischen Kunst christlicher Zeit näher einzugehen.“
- 8 Nach P. BUBERL, *Die byzantinischen Handschriften, I. Der Wiener Dioskurides und die Wiener Genesis*, Leipzig 1937, S. 14, ist das Vorbild dafür in halbrund geschnitzten Blätterstäben zu finden.
- 9 GERSTINGER, *Der Wiener Dioskurides* (zit. Anm. 1), S. 33, bezeichnet dieses als „eigenartiges Flechtband“. Ein Flechtband im herkömmlichen Sinne ist hier sicher nicht gemeint, auch wenn die Seile in besonderer Weise verflochten werden.

der Quadrate das äußere Seil in einer Schlaufe umschließt. Die Verflechtung der zwei Quadrate mit dem umfassenden Kreis wird durch die präzise Anordnung der sich überlagernden Seilpartien in illusionistischer Wiedergabe erreicht. Auf diese Weise werden drei unterschiedliche Arten von Flächen geschaffen, die auch durch verschiedene Farbgründe deutlich voneinander differenziert werden können. Während das oktagonale Zentrum von Juliana selbst und den flankierenden Personifikationen bestimmt ist, so füllt ihr in Gold geschriebener Name IOULIANA mit jeweils einem Buchstaben im Uhrzeigersinn angeordnet die acht rotgrundigen Dreiecke. Die acht blaugrundigen äußeren Zwickel zum Kreis werden belebt durch arbeitende Eroten: So sehen wir im Uhrzeigersinn im obersten Bildfeld über dem Haupt der Personifikation der *Phronesis* eine Gruppe von zwei geflügelten Eroten, die eine Hauswand bemalen, während ein weiterer Farben mischt. Ihnen folgen zwei Eroten, die einen Balken zersägen, die Szene in dem anschließenden Zwickel ist leider nicht mehr identifizierbar.<sup>10</sup> Zu Füßen Julianas ist eine Gruppe von Eroten dabei, eine Winde zu drehen, um einen Steinblock zu transportieren. Es folgen zwei Zwickel mit Szenen von Eroten bei der Stein-(?) und Holzbearbeitung. Die Szene im nächsten Zwickelfeld ist aufgrund des Erhaltungszustands nicht einfach zu identifizieren. Hans Gerstinger gibt an, Eroten „in Rückenansicht rechts auf den Stufen vor einer Architektur und rote Flecken,

vielleicht eine Statue oder ein Mosaikbild“ zu erkennen.<sup>11</sup> Im letzten Zwickelfeld sieht man zwei geflügelte Eroten, einer der beiden mischt die Farben, der andere malt an einer Staffelei.

Das Portrait, dem wir im zentralen Bildfeld begegnen, ist der Stiftung einer Theotokos-Kirche in dem konstantinopolitanischen Stadtteil Honoratae zu verdanken, für die die hier geehrte Stifterin Anicia Juliana nun zum Dank eine kostbare Handschrift, das Herbarium des griechischen Arztes Dioskurides, dediziert bekommt. Die Qualitäten der Stifterin werden wirksam ins Bild gesetzt, indem Juliana, auf einer Art *sella curulis* thronend,<sup>12</sup> von zwei Personifikationen flankiert wird, die inschriftlich als *Megalopsychia* und *Phronesis* benannt werden, also von *Großherzigkeit* und *Klugheit*, die damit als besondere Eigenschaften der Stifterin hervorgehoben werden. Im Bild werden diese Eigenschaften unterstrichen durch charakteristische Beigaben: So trägt *Megalopsychia* einen Schatz von Goldmünzen in ihrem Gewandbausch, während *Phronesis* mit ihrer rechten Hand auf einen Codex verweist, den sie auf ihrem linken Knie zur Schau stellt.

Sowohl durch die strenge Frontalität als Thronende als auch durch ihre Kleidung und die Präsentation eines Codicillus in ihrer Linken ist Juliana als Person herausgehobenen Standes präsentiert, nach Gerstinger ist sie eindeutig als Patrizierin ausgewiesen.<sup>13</sup> Mit ihrer Rechten spendet sie Goldmünzen, die auf den Codex gleiten, der ihr durch einen geflügelten Eros entgegenge-

10 Nach GERSTINGER, Der Wiener Dioskurides (zit. Anm. 1), S. 35, soll hier die Bearbeitung von Steinen gezeigt worden sein.

11 GERSTINGER, Der Wiener Dioskurides (zit. Anm. 1), S. 35.

12 KILLERICH, The Image of Anicia Juliana (zit. Anm. 6), S. 177, sieht in der Nutzung der *sella* den imperialen Anspruch Julianas.

13 GERSTINGER, Der Wiener Dioskurides (zit. Anm. 1), S. 34, bezeichnet sowohl die Kleidung als auch den Codicillus als eindeutige Charakteristika für das Patriziat, er schreibt: „... eine Frau in patrizischer Tracht (purpurner Tunica und Dalmatica mit goldbesetzten Ärmeln, golddurchwirkter Trabea, scharlachroten Schuhen und ebenso gefärbter perlenbesetzter Haube mit Goldgraffe, in den Ohren Goldringe mit je einer großen Perle) in strenger Vorderansicht auf einer von Greifen getragener, mit rotem Kissen belegter Sella curulis sitzend. In der von der Palla bedeckten Linken hält sie einen rot eingebundenen, mit einem weißen Rhombus verzierten Kodizillus, das kaiserliche Ernennungsdekret zum Patriziat [...]“.

streckt wird. Die daneben stehende Beschriftung vermag vielleicht auch etwas über den „Eros“ der Stifterin bezüglich ihrer Kirchenstiftung zu errahnen, wenngleich die Beschriftung: *póthos tes philoktístou* einen breiten Interpretationsraum öffnet zwischen dem *Wunsch der Kunstgönnerin*<sup>14</sup>, oder dem *Wunsch der baulustigen Fürstin*<sup>15</sup> und *founder's desire for wisdom*<sup>16</sup>. Zumindest kann so auch sogleich noch der Dank, der der Stifterin für ihre großzügige Tat zukommen soll, ins Bild gesetzt werden: Unterwürfig in tiefstmöglicher Proskynese erscheint am rechten Fuß Julianas die *eucharistía technon*, als ehrerbietiger, bzw. tiefempfundener *Dank der Zünfte*. Damit liegt die Interpretation nahe, dass sich die an der Erbauung der Theotokoskirche von Honoratae beteiligten Gewerke zusammengeschlossen haben, um der Stifterin zum Dank den erworbenen Codex zukommen zu lassen.<sup>17</sup>

Der das zentrale Bildfeld umgebende schmale achteckige Rahmen trägt auf dunklem Grund in weißer Majuskel das nur noch schwer erkennbare Akrostichon, dem wir den Anlass der Dedikation der Handschrift – die Weihe der Kirche 512 – entnehmen können, aus der sich im Rückschluss auch die Datierung des Codex ergibt:

*Juchhe! Mit allen guten Ruhmessprüchen  
besingt und rühmt dich, o Herrin, die Stadt Honoratae.*

*Denn zu dem ganzen Erdenkreis zu sprechen  
treibt sie die Großherzigkeit der Anicier, deren Sproß  
du bist.*

*Denn einen Tempel des Herrn erbauest du,  
der hoch emporstieg und herrlich.*<sup>18</sup>

In der versteckten Inschrift wird die Gruppe derer benannt, die sich zusammengeschlossen haben, um in gemeinsamer Anstrengung ein besonderes Ziel zu erreichen: Aber wer sind die Bürger von Honoratae, die sich selbst so bescheiden geben, dass die Inschrift und das Lob auf die Stifterin kaum wahrzunehmen sind? Gibt es hier ein besonderes Interesse, verdeckte Verbindungen für Wissende dennoch erkennbar werden zu lassen? Sind es Netzwerke oder Seilschaften, die hier am Werk sind, weil sie sich womöglich unverdiente Vorteile verschafft haben? Zumindest eines ist sicher: In den Aktivitäten, die die geflügelten Erosen in den äußeren Zwickeln ausüben, erkennen wir gerade die Tätigkeiten, die für die Errichtung der Kirche notwendig waren. Vielleicht stehen gerade die Erosen für diejenigen, die sich dann zum Dank für den großzügigen

14 Vgl. dazu BUBERL, Die byzantinischen Handschriften I (zit. Anm. 8), S. 29, mit der Diskussion um die Bedeutung dieser Beischrift in der älteren Literatur.

15 So schon 1903 bei DIEZ, Die Miniaturen des Wiener Dioskurides (zit. Anm. 7), S. 26.

16 So interpretiert Leslie Brubaker die Inschrift, sie bezieht sich hier allerdings auf die erst nachträglich (im vierzehnten Jahrhundert) links neben dem Medaillon in Minuskel gesetzte Interpretation der im Medallion vorhandenen Beschriftung und erweitert diese auf *pothos tes sophias ktistou*, vgl. L. BRUBAKER, The Vienna Dioskorides and Anicia Juliana, in: A. M. LITTLEWOOD/H. MAGUIRE/J. WOLSCHKE-BULMAHN (Hrsg.), Byzantine Garden Culture, Washington, DC 2002, S. 189–214, hier bes. S. 210.

17 BUBERL, Die byzantinischen Handschriften I (zit. Anm. 8), S. 29, und zuletzt GAMILLSCHEG, Das Geschenk für Juliana Anicia (zit. Anm. 6), S. 192, der nach der Untersuchung der Lagen des Codex zu dem Schluss kommt, dass die Widmungslage (fol. 2–7) nicht zusammengehörig mit den weiteren Teilen des Codex ist, weswegen nicht angenommen werden kann, dass die medizinisch-pharmazeutische Sammlung speziell für die Stifterin hergestellt wurde. Er folgert daraus: „Die Bevölkerung des Viertels Honoratae griff vielmehr auf eine vorhandene Abschrift des Dioskurides mit weiteren Traktaten zurück, veranlaßte die Herstellung der Widmungslage und übergab dieses Exemplar anlässlich der Stiftung der Theotokoskirche.“ Gamillscheg kommt daher zu dem Schluss, dass die mit der Weihe der Kirche verbundene Widmung von 512 somit als Datierung für den Hauptteil des Codex nur als *terminus ante quem* bezogen werden kann.

18 Hier zitiert nach A. VON PREMERSTEIN, Anicia Juliana im Wiener Dioskurides-Kodex, in: Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses, 24, 1903, S. 105–124, bes. S. III.

Bauftrag an der Finanzierung der Handschrift für die Stifterin beteiligt haben.

Mit dem eindeutigen Hinweis auf die Bautätigkeiten und ihre für die Architektur wichtigen Tätigkeiten sollte aber auch gefragt werden, ob die Wahl eines Seils für den alle Teile zusammenfügenden Rahmen wohl mit einer besonderen Absicht verbunden war? Schnüre und Seile waren für die Errichtung von Gebäuden unabdingbar, ihr Besitz kostbar. So konnten sie dem Transport von Baumaterial ebenso dienen wie der Übertragung von Bauplänen auf den Baugrund und nicht zuletzt der Kontrolle der präzisen Errichtung aufgehender Wände.

Da das Seil, welches das Widmungsbild rahmt, in einer ganz bestimmten Form angelegt ist, muss darüber hinaus die Frage gestellt werden, ob auch hierin eine besondere Absicht zu erkennen ist? Die hier gewählte spezifische Verbindung von Kreis und Quadrat stellt dabei ein Prinzip dar, welches aus der Geometrie seit der Antike bekannt ist. Die Verbindung beider geometrischer Grundformen miteinander ist eine der Urformen der Ornamentik, auf die an dieser Stelle nicht näher eingegangen werden kann. In der vorliegenden Form der Verschränkung zweier Quadrate ineinander, die dem Kreis eingeschrieben sind, erfuhr es ei-

ne Interpretation als Kosmogramm bei Andreas Schmidt-Colinet.<sup>19</sup> Den Hinweis auf die magische Funktion von Kreis und Quadrat als besonderen Glückszeichen gab zuletzt Henry Maguire.<sup>20</sup>

Daher soll nun abschließend darauf verwiesen werden, dass die wechselseitige Einschreibung von Quadrat und Kreis ineinander auch dazu diente, Größenverhältnisse und Proportionen zu ermitteln, die neben der oft gewagten Interpretation „göttlicher Harmonien“ in der Architektur auch eine sehr praktische Anwendung erfuhr.<sup>21</sup> Die Konzeption von Räumen wurde mithilfe von Zirkel und Lineal in der Planung vorgenommen.<sup>22</sup> Sie konnte mithilfe des Zwölfknoten-seils leicht auf den Baugrund übertragen werden (Abb. 3). Gleichzeitig verband sich mit dieser Planung im „rechten Maß“ ein Ordnungssystem, welches bei der Konzeption von Sakralräumen eine besondere Rolle spielte, da gerade diese Räume einem übergeordneten Konzept, bzw. einem ordnenden Prinzip unterstellt sein sollten.<sup>23</sup> Soweit wir es aus dem etwas späteren Neubau der Hagia Sophia erkennen können, waren für die Planung und für die Baudurchführung die Anwendung harmonischer Prinzipien, die sich aus Kreis und Quadrat entwickeln ließen, gleichermaßen von fundamentaler Bedeutung.<sup>24</sup>

- 19 Vgl. A. SCHMIDT-COLINET, Zwei verschränkte Quadrate im Kreis. Vom Sinn eines geometrischen Ornaments, in: A. STAUFFER, *Textiles d'Egypte de la collection Bouvier*, Bern 1991, S. 21–34, hier bes. S. 27 und Anm. 34.
- 20 H. MAGUIRE, Magic and Geometry in Early Christian Floor Mosaics and Textiles, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 44, 1994, S. 265–274.
- 21 Über dieses Proportionssystem schreibt schon Vitruv auf Grundlage platonischer Harmonien. Über die Anwendung dieses Wissens vgl. R. OUSTERHOUT, *Master Builders of Byzantium*, Princeton 1999, zur Planung insbes. Kap. 3: *Drawing the Line and Knowing the Ropes*, S. 58–85.
- 22 Sehr hilfreich zum Verständnis sind mehrere Beiträge von Hans Buchwald. Generell zum Thema H. BUCHWALD, *The Geometry of Middle Byzantine Churches and Some Possible Implications*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 42, 1992, S. 293–321. Zur Anwendung der Quadratura s. H. BUCHWALD, *Sardis Church E: A Preliminary Report*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 26, 1977, S. 265–299, hier bes. S. 271–272 und Abb. 7. Zu den Gewerken und ihrem Zusammenwirken an der Baustelle darüber hinaus: H. BUCHWALD, *Job Site Organization in 13th-Century Byzantine Buildings*, in: S. CAVACIOCCHI (Hrsg.), *L'edilizia prima della rivoluzione industriale, secc. XIII–XVIII: Atti della "Trentasettesima Settimana di Studi"*, 26–30 aprile 2004, Florenz 2004, S. 625–667.
- 23 M. HARRISON, *Ein Tempel für Byzanz. Die Entdeckung und Ausgrabung von Anicia Julianas Palastkirche in Istanbul*, Stuttgart 1990, bes. S. 137–144 in Kap. V: *Schlussbetrachtung: Ein neuer Tempel Salomonis? mit Verweis auf die Anwendung der königlichen Elle als Maßeinheit für den Bau*.
- 24 Dazu umfassend V. HOFFMANN/N. THEOCHARIS, *Der geometrische Entwurf der Hagia Sophia in Istanbul*, in: *Istanbuler Mitteilungen*, 52, 2002, S. 393–428, und zuletzt V. HOFFMANN, *Der geometrische Entwurf der Hagia Sophia in Istanbul: Bilder einer Ausstellung*, Bern u. a. 2005.



3: Rom, Biblioteca Vaticana, Cod. Vat. Gr. 746, fol. 372r, Landvermessung

Auch bei der Errichtung der Marienkirche von Honoratae sollte vorausgesetzt werden, dass ein ordnendes Prinzip in der Planung, aber vor allem auch ein ordnendes Prinzip in der Finanzierung und Baudurchführung zugrunde lag. Die Person, die dieses Ordnungsprinzip zum Bau der Kirche vielleicht ersonnen, sicher aber initiiert und darüber hinaus finanziell ermöglicht hat, damit gewissermaßen „alle Fäden in der Hand“ hielt, war Anicia Juliana. Und genau das zeigt das Widmungsbild!

**Abbildungsnachweis:** Abb. 1: Bearb. H. Unterlerchner. – Abb. 2: ÖNB – Abb. 3: OUSTERHOUT, Master Builders (zit. Anm. 21), fig. 31.

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FEMALE FOUNDERS – DAS KONZEPT:  
ZU STIFTUNGSHANDLUNGEN IN DER  
BYZANTINISCHEN WELT

MICHAEL GRÜNBART

Im September 2008 fand am Institut für Kunstgeschichte der Universität Wien eine Tagung zum Thema „Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond“ statt, welche sich der Frage stellte, was Frauen im byzantinischen Kulturkreis stifteten und wodurch sie sich einen Namen machen konnten.<sup>1</sup> Am Beginn soll kurz das Begriffsfeld „Stiften“ – auf den byzantinischen Bereich abgestimmt – abgesteckt werden.<sup>2</sup> Das Wort umfasst die Bedeutungen „gründen,

einsetzen, bauen“, aber auch „ein Geschenk darbringen, etwas spenden“.<sup>3</sup> „Stiften“ kann sowohl im weltlichen, als auch im religiösen Bereich verwendet werden. Dazu zählen also die Gründung eines Klosters oder einer Stadt, aber auch ein Personennetzwerk oder eine Stiftungsgemeinschaft gehören dazu. Weiters kann man als Stifterin oder Stifter auch Gegenstände<sup>4</sup> oder Geldzuwendungen an eine bereits existierende Institution (mit Zweckwidmung) vermachen.

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- <sup>1</sup> Ich beschränke mich möglichst auf die Anführung von Werken, die nicht in der annotierten Bibliographie am Ende des Bandes von Judith Herrin genannt werden. Zum Stiftungswesen erschien seit den 1960er Jahren eine nahezu unüberschaubare Flut an Untersuchungen, die hier nur eklektisch mit Blick auf das Symposium betrachtet werden können. Um die Jahrtausendwende führte der Boom an dieser Forschungsrichtung sogar zur Gründung einer eigenen Publikationsreihe „Stiftungsgeschichten“, die es sich zur Aufgabe gemacht hat, sowohl in religionsgeschichtlicher als auch territorialer Hinsicht dieses Phänomen übergreifend zu fassen. Jüngst erschien dort T. GEELHAAR/J. THOMAS (Hrsg.), *Stiftung und Staat im Mittelalter: Eine byzantinisch-lateineuropäische Quellenanthologie in komparatistischer Perspektive* (Stiftungsgeschichten, 6), Berlin 2011. Dort werden die Forschungen zur Thematik zusammengefasst, von einer Quellenanthologie begleitet und mit einer umfangreichen Bibliographie (S. 71–91) versehen. Das aktuelle Heft von *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 63, 2012, 1–2, widmet sich „Stiftungen in der Geschichte“. Gerade erschien der Sammelband von J.-M. SPIESER/E. YOTA (Hrsg.), *Donation et donateurs dans le monde byzantin (Réalités Byzantines, 14)*, Paris 2012. Stiftende und wohlthätige Handlungen sind nicht ein Phänomen der nachantiken Epochen, dokumentiert sind derartige Aktionen schon seit der Zeit Homers. Klassisch B. LAUM, *Stiftungen in der griechischen und römischen Antike*. Ein Beitrag zur antiken Kulturgeschichte, 2 Bde., Leipzig 1914; S. VON REDEN, *Stiftungswesen zwischen Staat, sozialer Verantwortung und Selbstinteresse*. Ein historischer Vergleich von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart. Beihefte der Historischen Zeitschrift (in Vorbereitung).
- <sup>2</sup> Ausführlich CH. SAUER, *Fundatio und memoria*. Stifter und Klostergründer im Bild 1100 bis 1350 (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 109), Göttingen 1993, S. 12–13.
- <sup>3</sup> Zum Geschenk s. M. GRÜNBART (Hrsg.), *Geschenke erhalten die Freundschaft*. Gabenpflege und Netzwerkpflge im europäischen Mittelalter. Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums Münster, 19.–20. November 2009 (Byzantinistische Studien und Texte, 1), Münster 2011; C. HILSDALE, *The Social Life of the Byzantine Gift: The Royal Crown of Hungary Re-Invented*, in: *Art History*, 31.5, 2008, S. 602–631; dies., *Gift*, in: *Studies in Iconography*, 33, 2012, S. 171–182.
- <sup>4</sup> Eine besondere Spielart stellen Modelle von Bauwerken dar, die den Gedanken des Stiftens auf den Punkt bringen, diese wurden hin und wieder später in das errichtete Bauwerk integriert; M. ANGAR, *Stiftermodelle in Byzanz und bei christlich-orthodoxen Nachbarkulturen*, in: CH. KRATZKE/U. ALBRECHT (Hrsg.), *Mikroarchitektur im Mittelalter*. Ein gattungübergreifendes Phänomen zwischen Realität und Imagination. Beiträge der gleichnamigen Tagung im Germanischen Nationalmuseum Nürnberg vom 26. bis 29. Oktober 2005, Leipzig 2008, S. 433–453.

Dies kann schon zu Lebzeiten erfolgen oder mit dem Tod eintreten. Der Begriff „Patronage“ bezieht das Netzwerk einer Persönlichkeit mit ein;<sup>5</sup> diese hat aufgrund ihrer wirtschaftlichen oder gesellschaftlichen Stellung Möglichkeiten, sich etwas zu leisten, was sie von anderen unterscheidet, oder um sich von anderen abzuheben. Mit Patronage kommt also ein weiterer Aspekt zum Tragen, „etwas in Auftrag geben“ (commissioning) enthält ein distinktives Element, welches sich in einer einigermaßen homogenen Gesellschaftsschicht entfalten kann. Und von hier ist der Schritt nicht weit zum Konkurrenzkampf, der auf einer symbolischen Ebene mit großem materiellem Aufwand ausgetragen wird.<sup>6</sup>

Wenn man sich als Stifterin oder Stifter wohlwütig verhalten wollte, war man meistens daran interessiert, sich inschriftlich zu verewigen oder bildlich darstellen zu lassen. Von „Stiften“ und „Verewigen“ führt der Weg weiter zur Gedenkhandlung oder *Memoria*, welche in der Mediävistik ein gut beackertes Feld darstellt, in der byzantinistischen Forschung aber nach wie

vor den Status eines Randthemas genießt.<sup>7</sup> Auch in der byzantinischen Gesellschaft war die Sorge um das Seelenheil Teil des irdischen Daseins. Man gedachte kollektiv der Verstorbenen, nur *en passant* sei an die Wichtigkeit der in Diptycha eingetragenen und während der liturgischen Handlung verlesenen Namen erinnert.

Noch kurz etwas zur Terminologie: Generell wird ein Stifter im Griechischen mit *ktetor* (κτῆτωρ), eine Stifterin mit *ktetorissa* (κτῆτορίσσα) bezeichnet. Allerdings muss eine stiftende Tätigkeit nicht immer auf die Neuerrichtung eines Bauwerkes oder die Neuschaffung eines kostbaren Objektes zielen, sie umfasst auch die Renovierung oder die Verzierung desselben.<sup>8</sup> Wenn also *kainizein* (καίνιζειν), *kalliergeo* (καλλιεργέω) und verwandte Wortbildungen verwendet werden, gehört dies in das hier zu betrachtende Spektrum.<sup>9</sup>

Will man sich mit den rechtlichen Grundlagen des Stiftungswesens vertraut machen, so kann die Studie von Josef von Zhishman als klassisch angesehen werden.<sup>10</sup> Spätestens

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- 5 Damit verbunden ist der Klientelismus, s. R. G. ASCH/B. EMICH/J. I. ENGELS (Hrsg.), *Integration – Legitimation – Korruption. Politische Patronage in Früher Neuzeit und Moderne*, Frankfurt am Main 2011.
- 6 Dazu demnächst M. GRÜNBART, *Inszenierung und Repräsentation der byzantinischen Aristokratie vom 9. bis 12. Jahrhundert. Über die facettenreichen Funktionen von Patronage* s. etwa B. ROECK, *Kunstpatronage in der Frühen Neuzeit. Studien zu Kunstmarkt, Künstlern und ihren Auftraggebern in Italien und im Heiligen Römischen Reich (15.–17. Jahrhundert)* (Sammlung Vandenhoeck), Göttingen 1999.
- 7 K. SCHMID/J. WOLLASCH (Hrsg.), *Memoria. Der geschichtliche Zeugniswert des liturgischen Gedenkens* (Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften, 48), München 1984; K. SCHMID (Hrsg.), *Gedächtnis, das Gemeinschaft stiftet* (Schriftenreihe der katholischen Akademie der Erzdiözese Freiburg), München/Zürich 1985; O. G. OEXLE (Hrsg.), *Memoria als Kultur* (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 121), Göttingen 1995; A. PAPALEXANDROU, *The Memory Culture of Byzantium*, in: L. JAMES (Hrsg.), *A Companion to Byzantium* (Blackwell Companion to the Ancient World), Oxford 2010, S. 108–122; M. GRÜNBART, *Memorialkultur im byzantinischen Mittelalter*, in: D. SULLIVAN/E. FISHER/S. PAPAIOANNOU (Hrsg.), *Byzantine Religious Culture. Studies in Honor of Alice-Mary Talbot* (The Medieval Mediterranean, 92), Leiden/Boston 2012, S. 373–394; zum Vergleich mit dem islamisch geprägten Stiftungswesen s. J. PAHLITZSCH, *Christian Pious Foundations as an Element of Continuity Between Late Antiquity and Islam*, in: M. FRENKEL/Y. LEV (Hrsg.), *Charity and Giving in Monotheistic Religions* (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients, 22), Berlin/New York 2009, S. 125–151.
- 8 In diesem Sinne auch M. MULLETT (Hrsg.), *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries* (Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, 6.3), Belfast 2007; dort auch eine „Select Bibliography on Founding Byzantine Monasteries“, S. 529–531.
- 9 Das Wort *καλλιεργέω* kommt etwa mehrfach in den Inschriften der Muttergottes-Kirche in Skripou vor, dazu A. PAPALEXANDROU, *The Church of the Virgin of Skripou: Architecture, Sculpture, and Inscriptions in Ninth-Century Byzantium*, PhD Thesis, Princeton University 1998.

seit Karl Krumbacher zählt die Beschäftigung mit dem Stiftungswesen zum Forschungsfeld der Byzantinistik.<sup>11</sup> Vor allem in der Handschriftenkunde, vornehmlich in der Kodikologie, zählen Provenienzfragen zu den wichtigsten Aufgaben. Neben der Zuordnung der Handschriften zu einem Skriptorium oder gar einem Schreiber, gehören die Klärung des Auftraggebers und dessen Intentionen zu den Standardaufgaben eines jeden Manuskriptforschers. Nur selten kann man schreibende Frauen nachweisen: Schreiberinnennotizen<sup>12</sup> oder Autorinnen<sup>13</sup> bilden ein überschaubares Feld. Zentrale Stifterinnenpersönlichkeiten aus der spätbyzantinischen Zeit waren etwa Simonis Palaiologina<sup>14</sup> oder Theodora Raulaina. Letztere gab nicht nur Handschriftenkopien in Auftrag, sie schrieb auch selbst.<sup>15</sup>

Einen Impuls für die Rekonstruktion des byzantinischen Stiftungswesens stellte die Ar-

beit von John Philip Thomas dar, welcher sich mit den privaten Stiftungen beschäftigte.<sup>16</sup> Mittlerweile sind viele Dokumente, die Stiftungen zum Inhalt haben, in modernen Sprachen zugänglich. Das monumentale fünf-bändige Werk von John Thomas und Angela Constantinides Hero erlaubt die systematische, diachrone Analyse von Klosterstiftungen. Das Werk war auch eine der wesentlichen Grundlagen bei der Vorbereitung des Symposiums.<sup>17</sup> Das monastische Stiftungswesen und seine Entwicklung können genauer fassbar gemacht werden. Die Einrichtung des Charistikariats<sup>18</sup> war seit der klassischen Studie von Peter Charanis Gegenstand des wissenschaftlichen Diskurses.<sup>19</sup> Die *charistike* führte rasch zu Mißbrauch und konnte erst gegen Ende des elften Jahrhundert beschränkt und im zwölften Jahrhundert beendet werden.<sup>20</sup>

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- 10 J. VON ZHISHMAN, Das Stifterrecht (Τὸ κτητορικὸν δίκαιον) in der morgenländischen Kirche, Wien 1888.
- 11 K. KRUMBACHER, Ktetor, ein lexicographischer Versuch, in: Indogermanische Forschungen, 25, 1909, S. 393–421; gleichzeitig erschien G. N. CHATZIDAKES, Ktetor, ktitor klp, in: Athena, 21, 1909, S. 441–464.
- 12 P. SCHREINER, Kopistinnen in Byzanz. Mit einer Anmerkung zur Schreiberin Eugenia im Par. Lat. 7560, in: Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici, 36, 2000, S. 35–45.
- 13 Stellvertretend TH. GOUMA-PETERSON (Hrsg.), Anna Komnene and Her Times (Garland Medieval Case-Books, 29/Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 2201), New York 2000.
- 14 Zu ihrem Wirken s. H. HUNGER/O. KRESTEN, Archaisierende Minuskel und Hodegonstil im 14. Jahrhundert. Der Schreiber Theoktistos und die *κράλαινα τῶν Τριβυλλῶν*, in: Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik, 29, 1980, S. 187–236.
- 15 Siehe dazu H. BUCHTHAL/H. BELTING, Patronage in Thirteenth-Century Constantinople: An Atelier of Late Byzantine Book Illumination and Calligraphy (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 16), Washington, DC 1978; die Zuweisung ist allerdings nicht so klar, s. dazu ausführlich Alexander Riehle in diesem Band.
- 16 J. PH. THOMAS, Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 24), Washington, DC 1987. Er verwendet bezeichnenderweise das Bild Juliana Anicias aus dem Vindobonensis graecus 1 als Motto seiner Abhandlung (detailliert auf S. 24). Zu den dargestellten Putti s. Lioba Theis oben. Juliana scheint an einem Endpunkt des römischen/patrizischen Stiftens zu stehen: Als Vertreterin eines bedeutenden aristokratischen Clans lässt sie als letzten monumentalen Schlusspunkt die Polyeuktoskirche in Konstantinopel errichten, dazu M. HARRISON, Ein Tempel für Byzanz. Die Entdeckung und Ausgrabung von Anicia Julianas Palastkirche in Istanbul, Stuttgart 1990; M. MEIER, Das Ende des Konsulats im Jahr 541/542 und seine Gründe, in: M. MEIER (Hrsg.), Justinian (Neue Wege der Forschung), Darmstadt 2011, S. 250–286, 256–257 (= Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik, 138, 2002, S. 277–289). Angekündigt ist A. MÜLLER, Ein vermeintlich fester Anker: Das Jahr 512 und die Datierung des „Wiener Dioskurides“, in: Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik, 62, 2012.
- 17 BMFD.
- 18 Die Betreuung von älteren kirchlichen Institutionen durch neue weltliche Patrone, die keine Beziehungen zu den Gründern hatten.
- 19 P. CHARANIS, Monastic Properties and the State in the Byzantine Empire, in: Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 4, 1948, S. 53–118.



Wozu stifteten Mann und Frau? In erster Linie dient eine Stiftung der Sicherung des Seelenheiles und der Bewahrung des Namens im (kollektiven) Gedächtnis. Gerade hier kann man die gesellschaftliche Vielschichtigkeit des Willens, den Namen zu bewahren oder sich der Verstorbenen zu erinnern, fassen.<sup>21</sup> Man findet einfache Graffiti, bestenfalls kombiniert mit Daten in Kirchen oder sogar auf Säulen antiker Tempel, die zu christlichen Kultstätten umgewandelt wurden, eingeritzt.<sup>22</sup> Wenige handschriftliche „Gedenklisten“ sind aus byzantinischer Zeit erhalten geblieben, eine Vorstellung gibt das *Typikon* des Christos Philanthropos-Kloster in Konstantinopel.<sup>23</sup> Das im lateineuropäischen Mittelalter so gut belegte Phänomen von Bruderschaften lässt sich im byzantinischen Einflusbereich kaum fassen.<sup>24</sup> Dass Derartiges existierte, zeigen zufällige Zeugnisse. Ein Dokument wird in Palermo aufbewahrt (Pergamena di S. Maria di Naupactos, no. 1), in dem 49 Personen (20 Geistliche und 29 Laien) aufgeführt sind. Diese schlossen sich zu einer geistlichen Gemeinschaft

zusammen, um regelmäßig Gottesdienste – an jedem Monatsersten – zu feiern und sich einmal jährlich vollzählig zu versammeln. Die Gemeinschaft steht unter dem Schutz der Mutter Gottes, welcher durch die Ikone des Klosters der Frauen aus Naupaktos gewährt wird. Monatlich wechselte die Verantwortlichkeit der Pflege der Ikone. Die Intention der Vereinigung bestand darin, sich bei Krankheit zu helfen, Begräbnisse auszurichten und die Memorialdienste abzuhalten. In der Unterschriftenliste findet man drei Frauen, die gleichberechtigt miteinbezogen waren.<sup>25</sup> Um in die Gemeinschaft einzutreten, waren keine Gebühren notwendig, sondern lediglich soziale Leistungen wie Gebet und „Seelsorge“. Hier wird deutlich, wie komplex stiftendes Verhalten organisiert sein konnte und welche Bereiche bei der Analyse von Personenverbänden und Netzwerken miteinbezogen werden müssen.<sup>26</sup>

Durchforstet man die unterschiedlichen Quellen, dann kann man den Eindruck gewinnen, dass das Stiftungswesen meistens von Männern,

20 Dazu jetzt J. THOMAS, Exkurs: The Charanis Thesis Revisited, in: GEELHAAR/THOMAS, Stiftung und Staat im Mittelalter (zit. Anm. 1), S. 57–68.

21 O. G. OEXLE, Die Gegenwart der Toten, in: H. BRAET/W. VERBEKE (Hrsg.), Death in the Middle Ages (Mediaevalia Lovanensia, 1, Studia 9), Leuven 1983, S. 19–77; P. J. GEARY, Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages, Ithaca, NY 1994, sowie ders., Phantoms of Remembrance. Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium, Princeton, NJ 1994.

22 Die beste Sammlung nach wie vor A. K. ORLANDOS/L. BRANUSES, Τὰ χαράγματα τοῦ Παρθενῶνος ἧτοι ἐπιγραφὰὶ χαρακθεῖσαι τῶν κίονων τοῦ Παρθενῶνος κατὰ τοὺς παλαιοχριστιανικοὺς καὶ βυζαντινοὺς χρόνους, Athen 1973. Jetzt A. McCABE, Byzantine Funerary Graffiti in the Hephaisiteion (Church of St. George) in the Athenian Agora, in: Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies London 21–26 August 2006, II, Aldershot 2006, S. 127–128.

23 M. KOUROPOU/J.-F. VANNIER, Commémorations des Comnènes dans le typikon liturgique du monastère du Christ Philanthrope (ms. Panaghia Kamariotissa 29), in: Revue des Études Byzantines, 63, 2005, S. 41–69; ein weiteres Beispiel bei G. PRINZING, Spuren einer religiösen Bruderschaft in Epiros um 1225? Zur Deutung der Memorialtexte in Codex Cromwell II, in: Byzantinische Zeitschrift, 101, 2008, S. 751–772.

24 P. HORDEN, The Confraternities of Byzantium, in: W. J. SHEILS/D. WOOD (Hrsg.), Voluntary Religion. Papers Read at the 1985 Summer Meeting and the 1986 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society (Studies in Church History, 23), Oxford 1986, S. 25–45.

25 J. NESBITT/J. WITA, A Confraternity of the Comnenian Era, in: Byzantinische Zeitschrift, 68, 1975, S. 360–384.

26 Zu Netzwerkstudien und die damit verbundenen Probleme der Adaption auf das byzantinische Mittelalter s. M. GRÜNBART, 'Tis love that has warm'd us – Reconstructing Networks in 12th-Century Byzantium, in: Revue Belge de philologie et d'histoire, 83, 2005, S. 301–313; M. MULLETT, The Detection of Relationship in Middle Byzantine Literary Texts: The Case of Letters and Letter-Networks, in: W. HÖRANDNER/M. GRÜNBART (Hrsg.), L'épistolographie

bestenfalls von Familien durchgeführt wurde. Die Versorgung von weiblichen Familienangehörigen spielte immer eine große Rolle, in vielen *Typika* oder Testamenten wird darauf Bezug genommen. Exemplarisch sei auf das Testament des Eustathios Boilas aus der Mitte des elften Jahrhunderts hingewiesen,<sup>27</sup> der drei Kirchen mit regelmäßigen Stiftungen ausstattete (sowohl Naturalien als auch Gegenstände beträchtlichen Wertes)<sup>28</sup>. In Verbindung mit den Kirchenbauten wurden auch die Grablegen für seine Mutter, seine Frau und seinen Sohn angelegt.

Eine Kloster- oder Kirchenstiftung ist meistens mit einem Bestattungsort verbunden, wodurch die *Memoria* dort auch besonders gepflegt werden konnte.<sup>29</sup> Zeugnisse solcher Memorialhandlungen stammen aus der kaiserlichen Sphäre: Im Jahre 559 besuchte Justinian bei seiner Rückkehr von der Inspektion der anastasischen Landmauern das Grab seiner Gemahlin Theodora und zündete Kerzen an.<sup>30</sup> Theodora trat auch als Stifterin auf, die sich laut Prokopios auch insbesondere Frauen widmete.<sup>31</sup> Wenn

man glaubt, hier nun ein genderspezifisches Ansinnen entdeckt zu haben, dann kann dies relativiert werden durch eine Gründung des Vaters des Gregorios Antiochos im ausgehenden zwölften Jahrhundert. In seinem Kloster sollten Frauen unterkommen, welche keine Mitgift hatten, aber Grundkenntnisse in Lesen und Schreiben. Dieses Profil passt zu Familien, welche aus welchen Umständen auch immer einen gesellschaftlichen und damit wirtschaftlichen Abstieg durchmachen mussten.<sup>32</sup>

Sichtbar werden Frauen als Stifterinnen hauptsächlich in der aristokratischen Gesellschaftsschicht oder im kaiserlichen Milieu.<sup>33</sup> Nur hier vermochten es Frauen durch ihre vergleichsweise wirtschaftliche Unabhängigkeit, auch (nachhaltige) Patronage-Tätigkeiten zu entwickeln. Paradebeispiele dafür sind Frauen, die sich als Sponsorinnen von Literatur einen Namen machten. Das bekannteste Beispiel dafür ist die *sebastokratorissa* Eirene.<sup>34</sup>

Das Verständnis von Stiften und der diesem Akt innewohnende Konkurrenzdruck zeigt ei-

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et la poésie épigrammatique: Projets actuels et question de méthodologie. Actes de XXe Congrès international des Études byzantines, Paris 2001, 19–25 August (Dossiers byzantins, 3), Paris 2005, S. 63–74.

- 27 Sp. VRYONIS JR., *The Will of a Provincial Magnate, Eustathios Boilas (1059)*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 11, 1957, S. 263–277; P. LEMERLE, *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantine*, Paris 1977, S. 20–35.
- 28 M. PARANI/B. PITRAKIS/J.-M. SPIESER, *Un exemple d'inventaire d'objets liturgiques. Le testament d'Eustathios Boilas*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 61, 2003, S. 143–165.
- 29 Heute noch am eindrucksvollsten sichtbar sind die unterschiedlichen Grabanlagen aus der spätbyzantinischen Zeit in der Chora-Kirche (Kariye Camii) in Istanbul, s. etwa R. G. OUSTERHOUT, *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul* (*Dumbarton Oaks Studies*, 25), Washington, DC 1987.
- 30 Überliefert bei I. I. REISKE (Hrsg.), *Constantini Porphyrogeniti Imperatoris De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae Libri Duo*, Bonn 1829, S. 497,13–498,13.
- 31 Zu diesem Thema Ulrike Unterwiesing in diesem Band. Vgl. A. L. McCLANAN, *The Empress Theodora and the Tradition of Women's Patronage in the Early Byzantine Empire*, in: J. H. McCASH (Hrsg.), *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, Athens, GA 1996, S. 50–72. In der jüngst erschienenen Biographie der Kaiserin von Th. PRATSCH, *Theodora von Byzanz. Kurtisane und Kaiserin* (Kohlhammer/Urban Taschenbücher, 636), Stuttgart 2011, wird die Stiftungstätigkeit kaum berücksichtigt.
- 32 Zitiert nach M. ANGOLD, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261*, Cambridge 1995, S. 297, bzw. J. DARROUZÈS, *Notice sur Grégoire Antiochos (1160 à 1196)*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 20, 1962, S. 61–92, hier S. 86.
- 33 Hierzu gibt es mittlerweile auch über die Fachgrenzen hinaus rezipierte Abhandlungen wie z. B. J. HERRIN, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium*, Princeton, NJ 2001, oder D. NICOL, *The Byzantine Lady. Ten Portraits 1250–1500*, Cambridge 1995. Alle dort porträtierten Frauen wirkten auch als Stifterinnen.
- 34 Vgl. Elizabeth Jeffreys in diesem Band.

ne öfters zitierte Stelle bei Niketas Choniates, der ausdrücklich von dem Streben nach dem prominentesten / sichtbarsten Platz in Konstantinopel spricht: *Deshalb <scil. aus Gründen der Repräsentation> hatten sie auf den Marktplätzen und Straßenkreuzungen heilige Klöster gegründet und in diese Mönche gesteckt ohne auf ihre Tüchtigkeit zu achten, die sich bloß durch das geschorene Haar, ihre Kleidung und den langen Bart als Mönch ausweisen.*<sup>35</sup>

Der Wettkampf und das Buhlen um Stiftung oder materielle Zuwendung darf nicht einseitig gesehen werden, auch von geistlicher Seite bemühte man sich, Vermögende dazu zu bewegen, in ihr Kloster einzutreten und damit der Mönchsgemeinschaft materiellen Gewinn zu verschaffen. Eustathios von Thessalonike gibt davon in seiner Schrift über das Mönchsleben beredtes Zeugnis.<sup>36</sup> Frauen stifteten auch Klöster.<sup>37</sup> Viele der noch heute erhalten geblieben kostbaren by-

zantinischen Gegenstände wie Kelche, Ikonen, Räuchergefäße, Reliquiare und dergleichen dienen auch dazu, die ernsthafte Intention des Stiftenden zu unterstreichen und dieser Nachdruck zu verleihen.<sup>38</sup>

Mit einer Stiftung schuf sich eine Stifterin oder ein Stifter auch ein Denkmal;<sup>39</sup> nicht nur dass dort ihres / seines Namens gedacht wurde und werden musste, man trachtete auch danach, dort persönliche Gegenstände oder schriftliche Hinterlassenschaften zu deponieren. Ein sprechendes Beispiel dafür ist die Klostereinrichtung des *sebastokrators* Isaakios in Pherrai, dessen *Typikon* sich erhalten hat (1152).<sup>40</sup> In seinem spirituellen Refugium ließ er auch seine eigenen Werke aufbewahren. Möglicherweise war das auch bei Theodora Raulaina der Fall, welche eine *Vita* verfasste und mit zahlreichen Gelehrten brieflich in Kontakt stand.

35 I. A. VAN DIETEN (Hrsg.), *Nicetae Choniatae historia* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, II.1–2 – Series Berolinensis), Berlin / New York 1975, S. 207,5–208,12: ἐπ’ ἀγορᾶς τε καὶ τριόδων τὰ θεία ἠκοδόμησαν φροντιστήρια, ἐνλακκεύσαντες ἐν τούτοις καὶ ἐνσηκάσαντες οὐκ ἐπιλέγδην τὸ ἀρεταῖνον, τὸ δὲ μέχρι τριχῶν ἀποβολῆς καὶ τῆς τῶν ἐσθιμᾶτων μεταβολῆς καὶ τοῦ ἀφειμένου πώγωνος χαρακτηρίζον τὸν μοναστήν. S. auch Alexander Riehle in diesem Band.

36 Eustathii Thessalonicensis *De emendanda vita monachica*, rec., Germanice vertit, indicibusque instruxit K. METZLER (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, 45), Berlin / New York 2006, bes. Cap. 120–121.

37 E. C. Koubena, *A Survey of Aristocratic Women Founders of Monasteries in Constantinople Between the Eleventh and Fifteenth Centuries*, in: J. Y. Perreault (Hrsg.), *Les femmes et le monachisme byzantin / Women and Byzantine Monasticism. Actes du Symposium d’Athènes / Proceedings of the Athens Symposium 28–29 mars / March 1988* (Publications de l’Institut Canadien d’Archéologie à Athènes / Publications of the Canadian Archaeological Institute at Athens, 1), Athen 1991, S. 25–32; A.-M. Talbot, *Building Activity in Constantinople under Andronikos II: The Role of Women Patrons in the Construction and Restoration of the Monasteries*, in: N. Necipoğlu (Hrsg.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life* (The Medieval Mediterranean, 33), Leiden 2001, S. 329–343; L. James, *Building and Rebuilding: Imperial Women and Religious Foundations in Constantinople*, in: Basilissa, 1, 2004, S. 50–64; V. Dimitropoulou, *Imperial Women Founders and Refounders in Komnenian Constantinople*, in: Mullett, *Founders and Refounders* (zit. Anm. 7), S. 87–106.

38 H.-R. Meier / B. Brenk (Hrsg.), *Für irdischen Ruhm und himmlischen Lohn. Stifter und Auftraggeber in der mittelalterlichen Kunst*, Berlin 1995, dort etwa R. Schumacher-Wolfgarten, *Von Frauen für Frauen*, S. 264–279; vgl. das Ausstellungskonzept der Ausstellung „Goldene Pracht“ in Münster: O. Siart (Hrsg.), *Goldene Pracht. Mittelalterliche Schatzkunst in Westfalen*, 26. Februar bis 28. Mai 2012 im LWL-Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Münster und in der Domkammer der Kathedrale St. Paulus, München 2012.

39 A. Schmid, *Gebetsgedenken und adliges Selbstverständnis im Mittelalter. Ausgewählte Beiträge Festgabe zu seinem 60. Geburtstag*, Sigmaringen 1983.

40 N. Ševčenko, *The Tomb of Isaak Komnenos at Pherrai*, in: *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 29, 1984, S. 135–140.

Was bisher nicht behandelt wurde, ist das Stifter- oder Memorialbild.<sup>41</sup> Aufgrund der schlechten Überlieferungslage kennt man Darstellungen von Wohltäterinnen und Wohltätern nur aus Handschriften<sup>42</sup> und dem kirchlichen Raum,<sup>43</sup> wenngleich es Nachrichten gibt, dass solche auch an anderen baulichen Strukturen in Byzanz zu sehen waren. Mit piktorialer Präsenz wollten Stiftende etwas ausdrücken, die Wahl des Platzes rechts oder links der Kirchenpatrone will die Bedeutung, die man sich zumaß, unterstreichen.<sup>44</sup>

Eine systematische Auswertung der literarischen Zeugnisse könnte sich bei der Suche nach „typischen“ Stiftungsakten von Frauen als fruchtbar erweisen.<sup>45</sup> Reichhaltiges Material liefern Verse bzw. Versinschriften, die von Frauen für ihre Männer etwa auf Ikonen oder Grabmäler gestiftet wurden. Wolfram Hörandner edierte einige Gedichte des Theodoros Prodromos aus dem

zwölften Jahrhundert, die man hier anführen kann.<sup>46</sup> Da spricht die Witwe des Georgios Botaneiates zum Verstobenen (Nr. LX a) oder die Frau des Konstantinos Kamytyzes klagt über ihren Verlust (Nr. LXIV b). Frauen stifteten auch liturgische Gegenstände, die oft mit Versinschriften versehen waren (z. B. die Gemahlin von Theodoros Stypepiotes, Nr. LXXIII). Augenfällig waren die kostbar mit Metallen und Edelsteinen verzierten Ikonen(rahmen), auf denen die Stiftenden oder Erneuernden lobend erwähnt wurden. Man darf nicht übersehen, dass Ikonen auch als Wertdepots verstanden wurden.<sup>47</sup> In Kirchen aufgehängter Ikonenschmuck diente in Krisenzeiten oft als Notgroschen.<sup>48</sup> Frauen spendeten ebenso Altartücher, in die ihre Namen eingewoben waren; somit zeigten sie ihre Zuwendung in der liturgischen Öffentlichkeit und sicherten damit gleichzeitig ihre *Memoria*.<sup>49</sup> Der Kirchenraum war ein Ort, an dem das Sehen und Gese-

41 O. G. OEXLE, *Memoria und Memorialbild*, in: SCHMID/WOLLASCH, *Memoria* (zit. Anm. 6), S. 384–440; W. E. WAGNER, *Die liturgische Gegenwart des abwesenden Königs. Gebetsverbrüderung und Herrscherbild im frühen Mittelalter* (Brill's Series on the Early Middle Ages, 19), Leiden 2010.

42 I. HUTTER, *Die Geschichte des Lincoln College Typikons*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 45, 1995, S. 79–114.

43 Z. B. CH. PENNAS, *Some Aristocratic Founders: The Foundation of Panaghia Krena on Chios*, in: J. Y. PERREAULT (Hrsg.), *Les femmes et le monachisme byzantin/Women and Byzantine Monasticism. Actes du Symposium d'Athènes/Proceedings of the Athens Symposium 28–29 mars/March 1988* (Publications de l'Institut Canadien d'Archéologie à Athènes/Publications of the Canadian Archaeological Institute at Athens, 1), Athen 1991, S. 61–66.

44 Siehe dazu den Beitrag von Galina Fingarova.

45 Einen Anfang dazu bietet Sylvie Herl, die auf Basis des „Prosopographischen Lexikons der Palaiologenzeit“ Terminologie und Abstufungen des Stiftungsaktes auswertete.

46 W. HÖRANDNER, *Theodoros Prodromos. Historische Gedichte* (Wiener byzantinistische Studien, 11), Wien 1974.

47 N. OIKONOMIDES, *The Holy Icon as an Asset*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 45, 1991, S. 35–44; T. PAPAMASTORAKIS, *The Display of Accumulated Wealth in Luxury Icons: Gift-Giving from the Byzantine Aristocracy to God in the Twelfth Century*, in: M. VASSILAKI (Hrsg.), *Βυζαντινές εικόνες. Τέχνη, τεχνική και τεχνολογία/Byzantine Icons. Art, Technique and Technology*, Herakleion 2002, S. 35–47.

48 Stellen bei M. GRÜNBART, *Zur Kulturgeschichte des Goldes*, in: M. GRÜNBART (Hrsg.), *Gold und Blei – Byzantinische Kostbarkeiten aus dem Münsterland*, Wien 2012, S. 53–66, 61–62.

49 Z. B. Eudokia Kleronomos, S. LAMPROS, *Ὁ Μαρκετιανὸς κῶδιξ* 524, in: *Neos Hellenomnemon*, 10, 1911, S. 3–59, 123–192, Nr. 86; Anna Komnene, LAMPROS, *Ὁ Μαρκετιανὸς κῶδιξ* 524, Nr. 230; Maria Komnene (Tochter des *sebastokrator* Andronikos), E. MILLER, *Poésies inédites de Théodore Prodrome*, in: *Annuaire de l'association pour l'encouragement des études grecques en France*, 17, 1883, S. 18–64, 38 und 40; Eudokia Stypepiotes bei HÖRANDNER, *Theodoros Prodromos* (zit. Anm. 45), Nr. 73. Zum Begriff *encheirion* und zur Verwendung von ikonoverhüllenden Tüchern s. V. NUNN, *The Encheirion as Adjunct to the Icon in the Middle Byzantine Period*, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 10, 1986, S. 73–102.

hen werden eine nicht zu unterschätzende Rolle spielte.<sup>50</sup> Die hier versammelten Beiträge sollen zu einem geschlechterübergreifenden Verständnis des Stiftungswesens in Byzanz beitragen.

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<sup>50</sup> Das eindrucksvollste Zeugnis dazu liefert der Patriarch Athanasios, der sich beim Kaiser über zu sehr herausgeputzte Frauen in der Kirche beklagt (ausführlich unten Alexander Riehle in seinem Beitrag).

## VISIBILITY OF FEMALE FOUNDERS: THE CASE OF ANCIENT GREECE

MARION MEYER

Ancient Greek society was a patriarchal society – everywhere, and at all times. In religion and cult, however, females had functions, offices, duties, and possibilities that were equal to those of men.<sup>1</sup> Thus it is very likely that women acted as founders of cults long before there is evidence to substantiate this assumption. Women are credited with having transferred ancestral cults to colonies founded in the Archaic period.<sup>2</sup> In Classical times (fifth and fourth centuries BCE) we are on firm ground with the earliest evidence for foundations made by women on their own initiative, and it is on this period that I concentrate in this paper.

As an archaeologist I am used to working with anonymous data. We can deduce a lot from the material evidence, but we cannot connect

this evidence with specific agents if we do not have additional information. A sanctuary does not show that it was founded by a woman, and a votive offering as such does not reveal whether it was given by a man or a woman. If we want to trace female founders we need explicit testimony, we need names, we need written records in the form of literary sources or inscriptions. So the search for female founders is first of all a problem of evidence, a problem of visibility. Actually, there are two problems: visibility in ancient times (why, when, how did a female founder want to show up and succeed in being conspicuous?) and visibility in modern scholarship (how does the archaeologist see and present the evidence?). I will start with the first problem and end with the last one.

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I would like to thank the anonymous referee(s) for suggestions and an additional reference (I. MALKIN, What is an Aphidruma?, in: *Classical Antiquity*, 10.1, 1991, pp. 77–96).

- 1 M. DILLON, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, London/New York 2002; A. HUPFLOHER, The Woman Holding a Liver from Mantinea: Female *manteis* and Beyond, in: E. ØSTBY (ed.), *Ancient Arcadia. Papers from the 3rd International Seminar on Ancient Arcadia held at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 7–10 May 2002*, Athens 2005, pp. 77–89; J. B. CONNELLY, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece*, Princeton 2007; N. KALTSAS/H. A. SHAPIRO (ed.), *Worshipping Women. Ritual and Reality in Classical Athens*, New York 2008.
- 2 Kleobolia is said to have taken the cult of Demeter from Paros to Thasos (ca. 680 BCE); Aristarcha helped the Phocaeans to establish the cult of Artemis Ephesia in Massilia/Marseille (founded ca. 600 BCE); I. MALKIN, What is an Aphidruma?, in: *Classical Antiquity*, 10.1, 1991, pp. 78–87; U. KRON, Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism. What Part Did Religion Play in the Political and Social Status of Greek Women?, in: P. HELLSTRÖM/B. ALROTH (ed.), *Religion and Power in the Ancient Greek World. Proceedings of the Fourth Uppsala Symposium, 1993* (Boreas, 24), Uppsala 1996, p. 153; A. PURVIS, Singular Dedications. Founders and Innovators of Private Cults in Classical Greece, New York 2003, pp. 97–98; CONNELLY, *Portrait of a Priestess* (cit. n. 1), p. 195.

VISIBILITY IN CLASSICAL GREECE, I:  
FOUNDERS AND FOUNDRESSES

In his treatise on laws (*Nomoi*), Plato calls for a general ban on private cults – cults in houses as well as cults established by individuals in places where they had had a religious experience. According to Plato, the foundation and practice of cults require special insight (*dianoia*) and should be left to priests and priestesses. He then proceeds to expound his observations of common practice: there are people, and especially women, he says, who, when they find themselves in either a precarious or an especially fortunate situation, promise sacrifices and foundations to gods, *daimones* and the children of gods. Also, when they are frightened or reminded of frightening experiences, they build altars and cult places (*bomoi* and *hiera*) in their houses and villages.<sup>3</sup> Thus according to Plato the establishment of cults by private individuals was a widespread phenomenon in Classical Athens, a phenomenon that was to a large degree due to the initiative of women.

Plato's comment about female activity is in line with what we know about the society of Athens in the Classical period. Whereas politics and all juridical matters were the exclusive affairs

of the male citizens, cult activities were open to the female part of the population, too. In affairs of religion and cult women acted independently, took decisions, performed various functions including high offices as priestesses, gave orders, and managed cults.<sup>4</sup>

For certain activities limits were set by their expenses. The foundation of a cult and the installation of a cult place did not, however, necessarily require extensive financial resources.<sup>5</sup> For a place for worship a small spot in open nature with simple installations for sacrifices and votive offerings would do.<sup>6</sup> Cults could also be established in private houses. So the foundation of a cult as such was not primarily a question of economic power.

The majority of cult foundations by private individuals will have been rather modest establishments. There are exceptional cases. The establishment of the sanctuary of Asklepios on the south slope of the Acropolis in 420/19 BCE was due to a private individual named Telemachos. He recorded his action on the slab of a stone stele topped with a double-sided relief and had two copies erected in the sanctuary.<sup>7</sup>

3 PLATO, *Leg.* 10, 909e–910a; F.T. VAN STRATEN, Daikrates' Dream. A Votive Relief from Kos, and Some Other *kat'onar* Dedications, in: *Bulletin antieke beschaving*, 51, 1976, p. 17; PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 8–9. On private cults see ARISTOTLE, *Polit.* 1319b; C. SOURVINOU-INWOOD, Further Aspects of Polis Religion, in: *Annali dell'istituto universitario orientale di Napoli. Archeologia e storia antica*, 10, 1988, pp. 259–273, esp. pp. 265–266; D. BOEHRINGER, Heroenkulte in Griechenland von der geometrischen bis zur klassischen Zeit, Berlin 2001, pp. 128–129.

4 CONNELLY, *Portrait of a Priestess* (cit. n. 1), pp. 57–69; E. HARTMANN, *Frauen in der Antike*, Munich 2007, pp. 53–63; KALTSAS/SHAPIRO, *Worshipping Women* (cit. n. 1).

5 To aspects of finance and administration: R. GARLAND, *Introducing New Gods. The Politics of Athenian Religion*, London 1992, p. 21; PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 5–13, 122.

6 A fine example is the altar for the nymphs and Demos, carved in the rock on the Hill of the Nymphs in Athens (fifth century BCE), see U. KRON, *Demos, Pnyx und Nymphenhügel*, in: *Athenische Mitteilungen*, 94, 1979, pp. 49–75.

7 R. PARKER, *Athenian Religion. A History*, Oxford 1996, pp. 175–181; A. COMELLA, I rilievi votivi greci di periodo arcaico e classico, Bari 2002, pp. 47–52, 201, figs. 37–39; I. LEVENTI, Heroenikonographie, in: *Thesaurus cultus et rituum antiquorum*, II, Los Angeles 2004, p. 150, no. 105; J. W. RIETHMÜLLER, Asklepios. Heiligtümer und Kulte, Heidelberg 2005, pp. 241–250, fig. 34; J.-CH. WULFMEIER, *Griechische Doppelreliefs*, Münster 2005, pp. 8, 37–39,

Plato's statement about the multitude of private foundations can only indirectly be confirmed. The fact that there were decrees forbidding individuals to erect altars in public sanctuaries sheds a light on what must have been common practice in Classical Athens.<sup>8</sup> There is very little positive evidence for foundations by individuals in the literary or epigraphic record referring to the Classical period<sup>9</sup> (although this changes in Hellenistic times<sup>10</sup>). This fact cannot be accounted for only by an unfavorable state of preservation. Excavations have long focused on Greek sanctuaries, and we have much archaeological and literary evidence for matters of cult and cult practice. There is also a rich tradition of stories that tell about foundations by mythical figures.<sup>11</sup> There is, however, a poor record of foundation acts by historical persons.

We have to consider the circumstances that are necessary for the existence of such evidence: in order to appear in the literary or epigraphic record, the founders themselves have to make an effort to escape oblivion. They themselves have to write down their names and a statement about their action in one form or the other. The bulk of the literary sources about cultic matters in general is later than the Classical period, often very much later. The knowledge about founders was bound

to get lost in the course of the centuries if there was not a permanent record deliberately made by the founders in order to preserve the memory.

It is always problematical to argue *ex silentio*, but considering the abundance of votive inscriptions and other items in the sanctuaries that often carried inscriptions of all sorts in relation to the scarcity of evidence for founding activity we must conclude that this activity was not regularly commemorated, and that the founders usually made no great efforts to link their name or their image to the place they established.<sup>12</sup> Unlike in Byzantine times when images of founders were often presented on walls of churches, in the Classical period one could not expect to be confronted with information about the foundation of the cult place.

This observation has consequences for the interpretation of the evidence that we do have. We must regard the comparatively few cases of recorded foundations by individuals as exceptions, as deviations from the normal procedure. They should be taken not as standard evidence for founding activity, but as evidence for the rather unusual case in which a private individual wanted her or his action to be announced to visitors of the cult place and to be preserved over time. We need to be aware of the fact that the

141–146 WR 37, pls. 21–22; C. L. LAWTON, *Attic Votive Reliefs and the Peloponnesian War*, in: O. PALAGIA (ed.), *Art in Athens during the Peloponnesian War*, Cambridge 2009, pp. 74–81.

- 8 IG I<sup>3</sup> 78 (ca. 422 BCE?); IG II<sup>2</sup> 1177 (mid-fourth century BCE); PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), p. 9.
- 9 KRON, *Priesthoods, Edications and Euergetism* (cit. n. 2), p. 168; PARKER, *Athenian Religion* (cit. n. 7), pp. 185–186; PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 4, 121. – Examples: Telemachos (see n. 7). – Pantalkes in Thessaly: PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 17–18; RIETHMÜLLER, *Asklepios* (cit. n. 7), pp. 105–106 – Xenophon in Skillous: PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 65–120. – Philios near Priene: VAN STRATEN, *Daikrates' Dream* (cit. n. 3), pp. 15–16; PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 58–59, 121. – For Archedemos in Vari see PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 33–63; G. SCHÖRNER/H. R. GOETTE, *Die Pan-Grotte von Vari*, Mainz 2004, pp. 21–22, 111–119; for Archias in Pergamon see K. BURASELIS, *Apotheose*, in: *Thesaurus cultus et rituum antiquorum*, II, Los Angeles 2004, p. 162; RIETHMÜLLER, *Asklepios* (cit. n. 7), pp. 232–233.
- 10 P. GAUTHIER, *Les cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs*, Paris 1985; B. DIGNAS, *Benefitting Benefactors: Greek Priests and Euergetism*, in: *L'Antiquité Classique*, 75, 2006, pp. 72–84 (with emphasis on the close link of priesthoods and benefactions in the Hellenistic and Roman periods). – Female founders: see n. 16.
- 11 PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 123–124 with examples; add the foundation of a cult for Artemis in Halai, see E. VIKELA, in: KALTSAS/SHAPIRO, *Worshiping Women* (cit. n. 1), p. 86.
- 12 Cf. PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 4, 125. She points to evidence for inscriptions on wood: *ibid.*, p. 18.



evidence does not tell us about the usual practice of founding, but about the rather unusual wish to have this act of founding commemorated. So we must ask not only about the reasons for founding, but also about the reasons of the wish for commemoration.

Bearing this in mind we can approach a phenomenon within the issue of private foundations, namely that there is a remarkable disproportion of male and female founders attested for the Classical period. Even without a comprehensive collection of material – and taking into account that the total number of records for private foundations in the Classical period is statistically too small – we can say that males far outnumber females as founders (and not only in the Classical period).<sup>13</sup>

How does this remarkable disproportion of male and female founders relate to Plato's comment on female agency in this matter? I see two alternatives:

First alternative: Plato's statement can be accepted at face value. Women acted as founders just as men did (or with even more eagerness than men), but the motivation to make this action known and commemorated was stronger for

men than it was for women. After all, whereas the founding of a cult was an act of piety and of personal concern (suitable for men and women alike), the commemoration of this act was a public performance, a conspicuous display of representation, a communication that went beyond the bilateral contact of worshipper and cult recipient. The recording of a foundation announced this act to the community, to other worshippers, to the public. It aroused attention and bestowed prestige. Communication within the society, social interaction in public, competition and distinction were concerns and domains of the male part of the population. This might account for the reluctance or lack of interest on the part of female founders in having their action recorded.<sup>14</sup>

Second alternative: we can interpret Plato as referring to the social organization and preserved evidence as revealing the social structure. The initiative for founding might have been taken by the female part of the family (just as Plato suggests), but the actual founding could have been made by the *kyrios*, the head of the family (and the agent for all legal acts of the females in the family).<sup>15</sup> This scenario can be supported by two lines of reasoning.

13 Male founders: see n. 7 and 9. Female ones: see the cases discussed below. As the cases of the male founders show it was not generally considered hybriatic to display one's name and activity as founder in an inscription. – B. LAUM, *Stiftungen in der griechischen und römischen Antike*, I, II, Berlin 1914, pp. 23–26, discusses foundations in the sense of legacies and testaments (mostly Hellenistic and Roman Imperial times). Among 244 personal names there are 28 female ones. – Even on the level of dedications women are usually vastly outnumbered (with the exception of cults for a female clientele), see VAN STRATEN, *Daikrates' Dream* (cit. n. 3), pp. 17, 21–27 (15 percent by women); KRON, *Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism* (cit. n. 2), pp. 160–161, 165–166. The statistics given by S. B. ALESHIRE, *The Economics of Dedication at the Athenian Asklepieion*, in: T. LINDERS/B. ALROTH (ed.), *Economics of Cult in the Ancient World*, Uppsala 1992, pp. 90–92, for the Athenian Asklepieion are revealing: in the inventories (mostly referring to the Hellenistic period) the proportion of female dedicants to male ones is 43 percent to 38 percent (in an earlier study of the same material she gives different figures: 51 percent to 46 percent; S. B. ALESHIRE, *The Athenian Asklepieion*, Amsterdam 1989, pp. 45–46; KRON, *Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism* [cit. n. 2], p. 165); however, as dedicants of the costly and prestigious artefacts made of stone the ratio is 12 percent (females) to 67 percent (males).

14 Cf. ALESHIRE, *The Economics of Dedication* (cit. n. 13), pp. 91–92 (wish for conspicuous display and self-advertisement as motivation for dedications).

15 For a detailed study of the legal position of women in Classical Athens see E. HARTMANN, *Heirat, Hetärenentum und Konkubinät im klassischen Athen*, Frankfurt 2002. – A comparable imbalance between decision-making in private (with active participation of females – left unrecorded) and action-taking in public (with male agency recorded and taken for granted) can be assumed for the private grave monuments of Classical Athens: a family's precinct is

The recording of a foundation was, as stated above, not an act of worship, but of communication within the community. As a worshipper a person acted on her or his own, in a private dialogue with the cult recipient. Within the community a person did not act as an individual, but as a social persona. The social persona of females was shaped by their roles in the family. Within the community the family was represented by the *kyrios*.

As the recording of a foundation betrays a certain aspiration for social prestige, more ambi-

tious foundations are more likely to be linked to a founder's name than more modest installations. Although the foundation of a cult did not have to be expensive, costlier foundations had better chances of being commemorated as private initiatives than simpler ones. Tellingly, the remarkable increase of evidence for female founding activity in the Hellenistic period goes hand in hand with an increase of evidence for female handling of financial affairs and euergetism.<sup>16</sup>

## VISIBILITY IN CLASSICAL GREECE, II: THE FOUNDRRESS'S VOICE

The following three examples for female founders of the Classical period present slightly more evidence than the mere name of a female in connection with the establishment of a cult.<sup>17</sup>

### 1. Nikagora and the healing god Asklepios (Text 1)

One of the earliest sanctuaries of Asklepios was founded by a woman. She lived in Sikyon (near Corinth) and introduced the god into her home town. Pausanias, who in the second century CE travelled in Greece and recorded buildings, works of art, and stories told by the

locals, heard that *Nikagora, mother of Agasikles, wife of Echetimos*, carried a snake from Epidaurus in her carriage to Sikyon.<sup>18</sup> This was the usual form of *translatio* for the cult of the healing god. A chronological clue for the foundation is given by the name of the artist Kalamis who made the cult statue for the sanctuary, also mentioned by Pausanias in that context. There are two sculptors by the name of Kalamis. The famous one worked in the second quarter of the fifth century BCE; his grandson was active in the first half of the fourth century BCE.<sup>19</sup> Either one could have been commissioned to make the statue – any

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marked by a tall slab inscribed with the names of the successive *kyrioi* (without relief decoration). The reliefs flanking this slab depict family members in various combinations, with a definite preference for female figures. Given the women's traditional responsibility in the burial ceremonies and the cult of the dead it can hardly be imagined that the figured monuments were chosen without a considerable impact of the female voices of the family. The ubiquitousness of females on these reliefs in non-representative scenes reveals the interests of the commissioners: to cope with the loss of a beloved, to remember a family member. For the grave monuments of Classical Athens see J. BERGEMANN, *Demos and Thanatos*, Munich 1997 (with a one-sided interpretation from the male perspective); cf. N. HIMMELMANN, *Attische Grabreliefs*, Opladen 1999.

16 GAUTHIER, *Les cités grecques* (cit. n. 10), pp. 74–75; R. VAN BREMEN, *The Limits of Participation. Women and Civic Life in the Greek East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Amsterdam 1996; KRON, *Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism* (cit. n. 2), pp. 168–182; J. FABRICIUS, *Die hellenistischen Totenmahlreliefs*, Munich 1999, pp. 183–190; E. STAVRIANOPOULOU, *Gruppenbild mit Dame. Untersuchungen zur rechtlichen und sozialen Stellung der Frau auf den Kykladen im Hellenismus und in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Stuttgart 2006.

17 Further evidence: The famous *hetaira* Phryne (fourth century BCE) was accused of having introduced a new cult for a new divinity, PARKER, *Athenian Religion* (cit. n. 7), pp. 162–163.

18 PAUSANIAS 2,10,3; RIETHMÜLLER, *Asklepios* (cit. n. 7), pp. 130–132, 232–233, no. 23.

19 P. MORENO, *Kalamis I and II*, in: R. VOLKOMMER (ed.), *Künstlerlexikon der Antike*, I, Munich/Leipzig 2001, pp. 373–385.



1: Athens NM 2756, Votive relief, dedicated by Xenokrateia



2: Location of the sanctuary of Kephisos

time after Nikagora's action had taken place.<sup>20</sup> We do not have any additional information about the persons mentioned by Pausanias. He does not mention Nikagora's motivation. There is no archaeological evidence for the sanctuary or the cult statue.

## 2. Xenokrateia and the river god Kephisos (Text 2)

More can be said about a foundation that occurred in Athens in the late fifth century BCE. Near the mouth of the river Kephisos and half-way between the harbors Piraeus and Phaleron a very fine, large votive relief was found (Fig. 1). Its base (Fig. 3) carries an inscription saying that Xenokrateia founded a sanctuary (*hieron*) of or for Kephisos, and that she set up the relief as a

gift for him and *the divinities (worshipped) at the same altar (symbomoi theoi)*, as a gift for *didaskalia* (line 2). In the third line she calls herself the daughter and mother of Xeniadēs, from the deme of Cholleidai.<sup>21</sup>

The area yielded another votive relief contemporaneous with the one erected by Xenokrateia, as well as a slab with an inscription containing the names of ten cult recipients, among them the river god Kephisos. The sanctuary itself has not been excavated (Fig. 2).<sup>22</sup>

The relief set up by Xenokrateia neatly demonstrates its purpose. Against the background of various divinities who fill up almost the entire space of the relief, three figures take prominence: the dedicator herself, who – according to

20 MORENO, Kalamis I and II (cit. n. 19), p. 384, assuming that the cult of Asklepios did not spread from Epidaurus before the fourth century BCE, thinks that Kalamis the Younger was responsible. See, however, RIETHMÜLLER, Asklepios (cit. n. 7), pp. 130–133. For the dispersion of the cult see *ibid.*, pp. 229–240.

21 Athens, National Museum 2756; IG I<sup>3</sup> 987; KRON, Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism (cit. n. 2), pp. 153, 166–168, fig. 17; COMELLA, I rilievi votivi greci (cit. n. 7), pp. 71–72, 212, fig. 63; N. KALTSAS, Sculpture in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Athens 2002, p. 133, no. 257; PURVIS, Singular Dedications (cit. n. 2), pp. 3, 15–32, 121–126, fig. 1; R. PARKER, Greek Dedications, in: *Thesaurus cultus et rituum antiquorum*, I, Los Angeles 2004, pp. 270, 278, no. 52 with fig.; R. PARKER, Polytheism and Society at Athens, Oxford 2005, pp. 429–432, fig. 30. – M. GUARDUCCI, L'offerta di Xenokrateia nel santuario di Cefiso al Falero, in: D. W. BRADEEN (ed.), *Phoros. Tribute to B.D. Meritt*, Locust Valley 1974, pp. 58–59, and PARKER, Polytheism, p. 430, n. 49, claim that IG I<sup>3</sup> 987 does not say that Xenokrateia founded “the” sanctuary (because there is no definite article).

22 Votive relief (with inscription IG II<sup>2</sup> 4546): COMELLA, I rilievi votivi greci (cit. n. 7), pp. 70–71, 211, figs. 61–62; KALTSAS, Sculpture (cit. n. 21), p. 134, no. 258; WULFMEIER, Griechische Doppelreliefs (cit. n. 7), pp. 9, 61–63, 128–131; PURVIS, Singular Dedications (cit. n. 2), pp. 24–25, fig. 2. – Inscription: IG II<sup>2</sup> 4547; PURVIS, Singular Dedications (cit. n. 2), pp. 18–19; PARKER, Polytheism (cit. n. 21), pp. 430–432. – Site of the sanctuary: J. TRAVLOS, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Attika*, Tübingen 1988, pp. 288–291, fig. 364.

the usual habit of votive reliefs – is depicted in a smaller scale than the cult recipients; a small naked boy in front of her, the younger Xenokrates mentioned in the inscription; and a youthful male god who bends towards the two mortals and sets his right foot on a base. Because of his intense interaction with Xenokrateia and her son (who raises his head and arms to the divinity) it is very likely that he is Kephisos for whom Xenokrateia founded the *hieron*.<sup>23</sup>

The relief tells us what the inscription does not: it tells us that Xenokrateia, who set up this relief out of concern for her young son, actually entrusted her child to the care of the river god and his partners in the sanctuary. River gods as the proverbial carriers of fertility qualify as kourotrophic deities, too.<sup>24</sup> And there are more divinities with that responsibility shown. Although the figures depicted in the relief (and referred to in the inscription as *sybomoi theoi*) and the ten cult recipients mentioned in the separate inscription do not exactly match, we can expect to see some of the *Nymphai genethliai* represented in the image. Furthermore, the word *didaskalia* in line 2 points to the teaching of the little boy, an important part of his upbringing.<sup>25</sup>

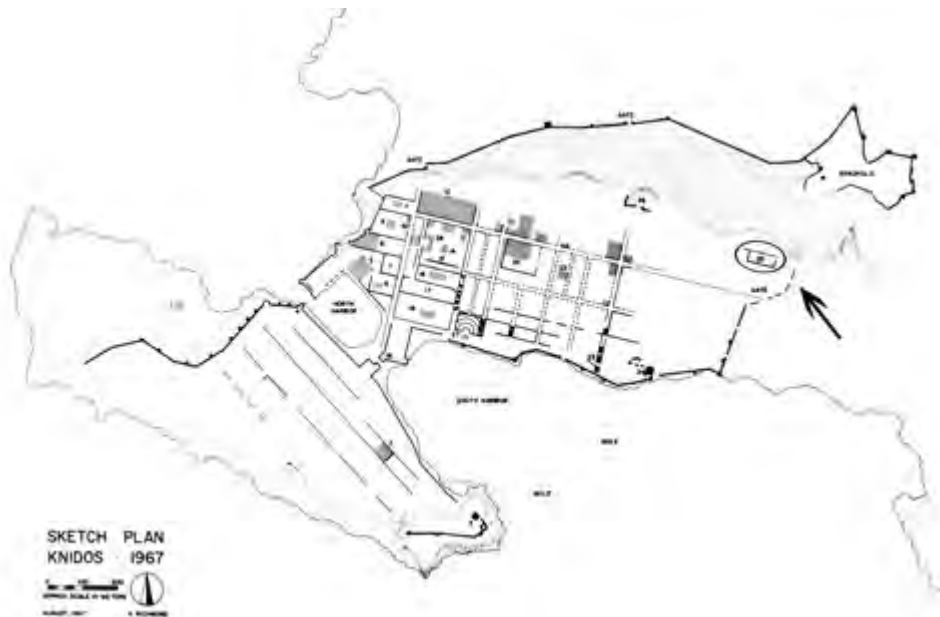
### 3. Chrysinia and the goddesses Kore and Demeter (Text 3)

The third example carries us to the western coast of Asia Minor. In Knidos, known for the famous Aphrodite by Praxiteles, there was also a small sanctuary of Demeter (Fig. 4). In this sanctuary a marble base with an inscription of



3: Athens NM 2756, Votive relief with base and inscription

- 23 For reasons of space diverging interpretations cannot be fully discussed here. GUARDUCCI, *L'offerta di Xenokrateia* (cit. n. 21), pp. 61–66, and L. BAUMER, *Vorbilder und Vorlagen*, Bern 1997 p. 132, think that he is a priest. A priest depicted taller than other mortals and of the same size as the divinities is without parallel. Because of the size of the figure the interpretation by KALTSAS, *Sculpture* (cit. n. 21), p. 133 (Xenokrateia's father Xenokrates) cannot be accepted either. PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 21–31, excluded Kephisos for iconographical reasons and suggested either Dionysos or a local hero. However, river gods can be depicted beardless and without horns, see C. WEISS, *Fluvii*, in: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, IV, Zurich 1988, pp. 144–148.
- 24 O. WALTER, *Die Reliefs aus dem Heiligtum der Echeliden in Neu-Phaleron*, in: *Archaiologiki Ephimeris*, 1937, pp. 103–104; PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 19, 23; PARKER, *Polytheism* (cit. n. 21), pp. 430–431.
- 25 See WALTER, *Die Reliefs* (cit. n. 24), pp. 99–107; KRON, *Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism* (cit. n. 2), pp. 167–



4: *Knidos, plan*

the fourth century BCE came to light. The base was prepared to support a statue (which was not found). The inscription tells that Chrysina, *mother of Chrysogone, wife of Hippokrates*, dedicated an *oikos* (building) and an *agalma* (statue) to Kore and Demeter. It also gives the reason for this act: Chrysina had a holy vision during the night.<sup>26</sup> So here we have one of the cases that Plato mentioned as a typical phenomenon in his hometown: action taken upon a dream.<sup>27</sup> Chrysina uses the word *anetheken*, the usual term for dedications, but that her action is not a mere dedication can be deduced from the last line of the inscrip-

tion: Hermes tells Chrysina to serve the goddesses as *propolos* (temple servant), in a place called Tathne. As it was common practice for founders of a cult to serve as cult personnel, I follow Uta Kron who regards Chrysina as a foundress;<sup>28</sup> however I wonder whether she was the foundress of the sanctuary of Demeter itself or of the cult place at Tathne mentioned in the inscription.<sup>29</sup>

These three foundations of sanctuaries for three different cult recipients in three different places of Classical Greece have, in addition to the fact that they are foundations by women,

168; PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 16–32; PARKER, *Polytheism* (cit. n. 21), p. 430. – GUARDUCCI, *L'offerta di Xenokrateia* (cit. n. 21), pp. 59, 66, thought that Xenokrateia taught something to the visitors of the sanctuary.

26 C. T. NEWTON, *A History of Discoveries at Halicarnassus, Cnidus, and Branchidae*, London 1863, pp. 380, 418, 714–715, no. 15, pl. 89; W. BLÜMEL, *Die Inschriften von Knidos, I*, Bonn 1992, p. 76, no. 131; VAN STRATEN, *Daikrates' Dream* (cit. n. 3), p. 7; KRON, *Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism* (cit. n. 2), pp. 150–155; PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), pp. 59–60; DIGNAS, *Benefitting Benefactors* (cit. n. 10), pp. 76–78 (with justified criticism of Rigsby's interpretation of the epigram); CONNELLY, *Portrait of a Priestess* (cit. n. 1), pp. 134–135.

27 For dedications spurred by a dream see VAN STRATEN, *Daikrates' Dream* (cit. n. 3), pp. 1–38.

28 KRON, *Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism* (cit. n. 2), pp. 150–153.

29 KRON, *Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism* (cit. n. 2), pp. 150–153, thinks that she founded the sanctuary of Demeter and that Tathne was the name of its very location (NEWTON, *A History of Discoveries* [cit. n. 26], pp. 380,

one striking feature in common: in each case the woman is presented or presents herself as a mother.

The case of Xenokrateia is the most obvious. While the relief shows us the motivation for her initiative, relief and inscription combined might reveal the reason why Xenokrateia chose to record not only the dedication but also the fact that she founded the sanctuary. She is depicted with her child, she speaks about *didaskalia*, and the god for whom she founds the sanctuary and sets up the relief is a kourotrophic deity. In her votive inscription she calls herself the daughter and mother of Xeniades, without mentioning her husband. As her son has the same name as her father, Kron has convincingly argued that Xenokrateia probably was an *epikleros*, a single daughter or a daughter whose brothers had died without heirs and who, in order to keep the wealth within the family, had to marry a male relative. Thus, due to the lack of a son's son, Xeniades' name would have passed on to a daughter's son.<sup>30</sup> By recording both names, Xenokrateia documents her function as a link between the generations and she presents her son as the heir of the older Xeniades. In a way, then, in the inscription – to be exact in that part of the dedication that records her foundation – Xenokrateia speaks for her son.

The two other cases are less evident, but they both share the peculiarity that the name of the woman's child precedes the name of the woman's husband.<sup>31</sup>

In the Knidos inscription, the child is a daughter. The dedication is made for the goddesses who are the archetypical mother and daughter. However, in this case the younger goddess Kore is named first, contrary to the usual order. Likewise, the dedicant's daughter precedes the dedicant's herself (*mother of Chrysogone, wife of Hippokrates, Chrysina...*). There is an obvious attempt to parallelize the relationship of daughter and mother on both the divine and the mortal level. The focus on the daughter (the divine and the mortal one) might have been enhanced by the statue that likely represented Kore.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the foundress is to serve as *propolos* for the goddesses. The inscription stops short of saying that the daughter should follow her mother in that function one day.

As for Nikagora, the foundress in Sikyon, we have only the short notice of Pausanias, citing her as the mother of Agasikles before calling her the wife of Echetimos; and we have, of course, the cult recipient, Asklepios. The emphasis on Nikagora as a mother and the fact that she founded the cult of a healing god suggests a connection.

714, also assumed that Tathne was the name of the site of the *temenos*). Chrysina's inscription, however, may be a little later than the earliest evidence we have for the establishment of this sanctuary, the mid-fourth century statue of the seated Demeter in London (see below n. 32); BLÜMEL, *Die Inschriften von Knidos*, I (cit. n. 26), p. 76.

30 KRON, *Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism* (cit. n. 2), p. 168. – WALTER, *Die Reliefs* (cit. n. 24), pp. 100–104, suggests the possibility that Xeniades was not the first-born son (who would have received the name of his father's father) but the second son, bearing the name of his mother's father. However, in this case the missing father would be even more surprising. – PURVIS, *Singular Dedications* (cit. n. 2), p. 31, hypothesizes that Kephisodotos (who dedicated a contemporaneous relief in the same sanctuary, see n. 22) was Xenokrateia's husband.

31 Cf. Telestodike's dedication (Paros, late Archaic times); KRON, *Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism* (cit. n. 2), pp. 157–158 (dedication for her son?).

32 Suggested already by KRON, *Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism* (cit. n. 2), p. 152, n. 62 (the cavity on top of the statue base belongs to a standing figure). Both goddesses could be represented standing. However, according to the evidence of votive reliefs, in the fourth century there is a certain preference for showing Demeter seated and Kore standing, see COMELLA, *I rilievi votivi greci* (cit. n. 7), pp. 194–209, figs. 110, 113–115, 117, 127. The statue of Demeter found in the sanctuary (mid-fourth century BCE, now in London, BM) is seated: KRON, *Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism* (cit. n. 2), pp. 150–152, fig. 7. – CONNELLY, *Portrait of a Priestess* (cit. n. 1), p. 135, assumes that the base supported Chrysina's portrait statue. However, the word *agalma* suggests the statue of a divinity.

Nikagora might have called on the god for facilitating conception or for the delivery of her child,<sup>33</sup> or she might have entrusted her son to the healing god for his well-being during childhood.

Given the fact that there is so little evidence for female founders in Classical times one should be careful with generalizing conclusions. The following remarks, however, seem justified. I asked whether the ostentatious emphasis on motherhood in these cases pointed to the fact that these women were widows who acted on behalf of their dead husbands. After all, a child, male or female, was primarily thought of as the child of its father; and although mothers would, of course, have prayed, sacrificed and given offerings for the well-being of their children, the public record of the concern for a child would be expected from the parents as such. On the other hand, male founders do not generally make references to their families.<sup>34</sup> That is why I see no necessity to interpret these female founders as substitutes for male founders.

The motivation of these mothers in recording their activities was the wish to secure the permanence of the cult institution, outlasting the respective foundress herself,<sup>35</sup> so that the child would continue to profit from the cult recipient's beneficial disposition. Asklepios and the river god Kephisos were archetypical gods for the well-being of the young. In the case of Chrysina, her daughter was the person who would suggest herself as Chrysina's successor as temple servant in the cult.

According to Plato's statement, we can expect women to have founded cults for their own interests and benefits. The scant nature of the evidence leads to the conclusion that whenever women made the effort to leave a lasting record of their activity, they did so for their children, either because of the benefits their children could expect from the cult recipients or because of the function in the cult their children might inherit from their mothers.

#### VISIBILITY IN MODERN SCHOLARSHIP: THE VANISHED FOUNDRESS

There is another difficulty with female founders: their visibility in modern scholarship. In his seminal book on the cult of Asklepios, Jürgen Riethmüller twice refers to Pausanias's statement about Nikagora, the foundress of the sanctuary of Asklepios in Sikyon, and twice he paraphrases the ancient author's words. Twice

he speaks of Nikagora as the *wife of Echetimos, mother of Agasikles* (whereas Pausanias mentions the son first, then the husband: see Text 1). By subconsciously twisting the statement about Nikagora's relation to her kin, Riethmüller misses the point that Pausanias implicitly makes.<sup>36</sup>

33 Suggested by RIETHMÜLLER, Asklepios (cit. n. 7), pp. 132, 233 (cf. below n. 36).

34 In the case of Archedemos's dedication to the nymphs (see n. 9) one might have expected a reference to a family or children, given the fact that the nymphs were kourotropic deities and often associated with (divine and mortal) children. PARKER, Polytheism (cit. n. 21), pp. 430–431.

35 This interest is voiced in votive inscriptions, e.g. that of the priestess Timo of Erythrai (fourth/third century BCE): Timo dedicates a portrait statue of herself, as a lasting reminder for children and descendants; KRON, Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism (cit. n. 2), p. 149. – Dedications, on the other hand, could not expect the same longevity as the foundation of a cult.

36 RIETHMÜLLER, Asklepios (cit. n. 7), pp. 132, 233. He does end up suggesting the god's help in getting pregnant as one of the possible motivations for Nikagora's foundation because, as he says, this might account for the "otherwise unmotivated reference to her son", *ibid.*, p. 132.



5: Bull with inscription, detail: dedication by Regilla



6: Bull with inscription: dedication by Regilla

Whereas in this case a peculiarity of a person's characterization was simply overlooked,<sup>37</sup> there are cases in which obvious evidence is simply ignored, misunderstood or misinterpreted. There is a very prominent example which I would like to mention here (although the foundress belongs to a later period than the one I have focused on thus far).

The excavations in the Panhellenic sanctuary in Olympia brought to light the substantial remains of a fountain building, including equally substantial remains of the building's sculptural decoration (mid second century CE; Fig. 7). The inscription recording the dedication is fully preserved and perfectly readable, and it states that Regilla, priestess of Demeter, donated the whole complex (Text 4; Figs. 5–6).<sup>38</sup> Regilla is a very well-known person. She was a member of a noble

Roman family, related to the empress Faustina the Elder; her husband Herodes Atticus was immensely rich and a well-known sponsor and patron.<sup>39</sup> Statues of members of the imperial family and statues of the family of Regilla and Herodes were placed in niches behind the water basin.<sup>40</sup> This fountain, a so-called nymphaeum, was situated in a most prominent spot of the sanctuary, close to the oldest temple and the treasures, and it was one of the major monuments in the sanctuary in the Roman imperial period.

Now go to Olympia and ask for the nymphaeum of Regilla, or go to a library and check the publications on Olympia for that complex. You will look in vain.<sup>41</sup> The prestigious donation is known among tourist guides and archaeologists as – the nymphaeum of Herodes Atticus.<sup>42</sup>

37 Another telling slip of mind (confusing the role of mother and daughter): BURASELIS, *Apotheose* (cit. n. 9), p. 162: ... *Nikagora, die Tochter des Agasikles, die den Gott... zu ihrer Stadt brachte*. NEWTON, *A History of Discoveries* (cit. n. 26), p. 380, spoke of the dedicant in Knidos as *Chrysinia, wife of Hippocrates, and mother of Chryso gone*.

38 R. BOL, *Das Statuenprogramm des Herodes-Atticus-Nymphaeums* (Olympische Forschungen, 15), Berlin 1984, *passim*, esp. pp. 109–110, pls. 2–3 (dedication); M. GALLI, *Die Lebenswelt eines Sophisten. Untersuchungen zu den Bauten und Stiftungen des Herodes Atticus*, Mainz 2002, pp. 225–226, pl. 30,1.

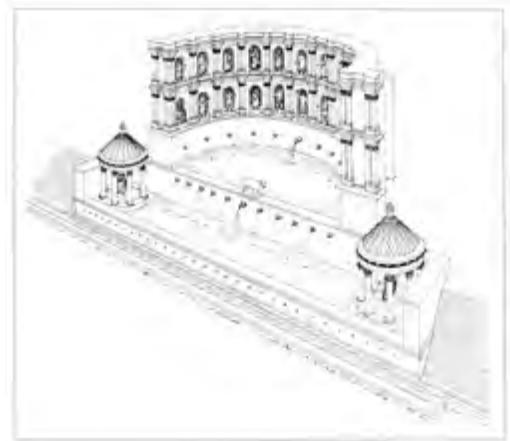
39 Regilla: BOL, *Das Statuenprogramm* (cit. n. 38), p. 109; J. TOBIN, *Herodes Attikos and the City of Athens*, Amsterdam 1997, pp. 76–83. – Herodes Atticus: GALLI, *Die Lebenswelt eines Sophisten* (cit. n. 38), *passim*.

40 BOL, *Das Statuenprogramm* (cit. n. 38), pp. 50–58, Beil. 4–5.

41 Regilla's role is credited by U. SINN, *Olympia. Kult, Sport und Fest in der Antike*, Munich 1996, pp. 92–94; U. SINN, *Das antike Olympia. Götter, Spiel und Kunst*, Munich 2004, pp. 202–205.

42 This is the title of Renate Bol's authoritative publication: BOL, *Das Statuenprogramm* (cit. n. 38). See also GALLI, *Die Lebenswelt eines Sophisten* (cit. n. 38), pp. 222–227; P. VALAVANIS, *Games and Sanctuaries in Ancient Greece*, Athens 2004, pp. 185–188. – Regilla's husband financed the water conduit in Olympia, GALLI, *Die Lebenswelt eines Sophisten* (cit. n. 38), pp. 222–223. He is not, however, named in the dedication of the nymphaeum (see n. 38).





7: Olympia, Nymphaeum dedicated by Regilla (reconstruction Bol 1984)

This is a drastic example, but it can remind us of the extent to which our interpretations depend on our preconceptions. The most unequivocal

evidence is no help if we close our eyes. The search for female founders will to a large degree depend on the disposition to find them.

#### TEXTS: <sup>43</sup>

##### Text 1:

PAUSANIAS, *Description of Greece* 2, 10, 2–3

2 Ἐντεῦθέν ἐστιν ὁδὸς ἐς ἱερὸν Ἀσκληπιοῦ. ...

3 ἐσελθοῦσι δὲ ὁ θεός ἐστιν οὐκ ἔχων γένεια, χρυσοῦ καὶ ἐλέφαντος, Καλάμιδος δὲ ἔργον· ἔχει δὲ καὶ σκῆπτρον καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐτέρας χειρὸς πίτυος καρπὸν τῆς ἡμέρου. φασὶ δὲ σφισιν ἐξ Ἐπιδάουρου κομισθῆναι τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ ζεύγους ἡμιόνων δράκοντι εἰκασμένον, τὴν δὲ ἀγαγοῦσαν Νικαγόραν εἶναι Σικυωνίαν Ἀγασικλέους μητέρα, γυναῖκα δὲ Ἐχετίμου.

*From there there is a way to a sanctuary of Asklepios. ...*

*For those who enter there is the god, beardless, (made) of gold and ivory, a work by Kalamis. He holds a scepter and in the other hand a cone of a cultivated pine tree. They say that they got the god from Epidauros (on a chariot drawn) by a pair of mules, represented by a snake, and that she who brought him was Nikagora from Sikyon, mother of Agasikles, wife of Echetimos.*

##### Text 2:

[http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/main.s.v.Attica\(IGI-III\),IGI3987](http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/main.s.v.Attica(IGI-III),IGI3987)

Ξενοκράτεια Κηφισῶ ἱερὸν ἰδρύσατο καὶ ἀνέθηκεν ξυμβώμοις τε θεοῖς διδασκαλίας τὸδε δῶρον, Ξενιάδο θυγάτηρ καὶ μήτηρ ἐκ Χολλειδῶν, θύεν τῶι βουλομένωι ἐπὶ τελεστών ἀγαθῶν.

*Xenokrateia founded a sanctuary of Kephisos and dedicated this gift also to the divinities (worshipped) at the same altar, because of (or: for) instruction, daughter and mother of Xeniadēs, from Cholleidai. Who wishes to sacrifice (is free to do so) for the fulfillment of good things.*

##### Text 3:

<http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/main.s.v.AsiaMinor:CariaIKKnidosI131>

Κούραι καὶ Δάματρι οἶκον καὶ ἀγαλμ' ἀνέθηκεν | Χρυσογόνη[ς] μήτηρ, Ἴπποκράτους δὲ ἄλοχος, |

43 All translations are by the author.

Χρυσίνα, ἐννυχίαν ὄψιν ἰδοῦσα ἱεράν. | Ἑρμῆς γάρ  
 νιν ἔφησε θεαῖς Τάθνηι προπολεύειν |  
*For Kore and Demeter Chrysina, mother of  
 Chrysogone, wife of Hippokrates, dedicated an  
 oikos and a statue, after she had seen a holy vision  
 at night. For Hermes told her to be a temple servant  
 for the goddesses at Tathne.*

**Text 4:**

BOL, Das Statuenprogramm (cit. n. 38), p. 109

PHΓΛΛΑΙΕΡΕΛΑ

ΔΗΜΗΤΡΟΣΤΟΥΔΩΡ

ΚΑΙΤΑΠΕΡΙΤΟΥΔΩΡΤΩΔΗ

*Regilla, priestess of Demeter (dedicated) the water  
 and the things around the water to Zeus*

**Illustration credits:** Fig. 1: DAI INST Athens Neg Hege 1135 (photographer: W. Hege). – Fig. 2: after TRAVLOS, Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Attika (cit. n. 22), p. 291 fig. 364. – Fig. 3: after J. N. SVORONOS, Das Athener Nationalmuseum, Athen 1908, pl. 182. – Fig. 4: after M. J. MELLINK, Archaeology in Asia Minor, in: American Journal of Archaeology, 72, 1968, p. 137 pl. 59 fig. 23. – Fig. 5: DAI INST Athens 79/468 (photographer: G. Hellner). – Fig. 6: DAI INST Athens 79/467 (photographer: G. Hellner). – Fig. 7: after BOL, Das Statuenprogramm (cit. n. 38), Beilage 5.



MALE CONSTRUCTIONS OF FEMALE IDENTITIES:  
AUTHORITY AND POWER IN THE BYZANTINE  
GREEK LIVES OF MONASTIC FOUNDRESSES

STAVROULA CONSTANTINOIU

More than a decade ago the eminent late antique historian Elizabeth Clark, inspired by post-modern feminist theory in which gender is treated as a social and language construct,<sup>1</sup> published a provocative and highly influential article entitled “The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the ‘Linguistic Turn’” (1998).<sup>2</sup> In this article whose main title (“The Lady Vanishes”) is borrowed from Alfred Hitchcock’s famous 1938 film, Clark criticises the previous mode of feminist historians (including herself) who read old texts referring to women

neglected by earlier historiography in an attempt to hear those women’s voices and to find out about their actual experiences. As Clark bluntly puts it, “scholars must move beyond the stage of feminist historiography in which we retrieve another forgotten woman and throw her into the historical mix. [...] We cannot with certainty claim to hear the voices of ‘real’ women in early Christian texts, so appropriated have they been by male authors”.<sup>3</sup>

Clark’s argument that late antique texts about women, such as the Lives of Macrina, Olympias

- 1 The most important supporter of this argument is Judith Butler who in her pioneering book: *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York 1990, maintained that gender is performative. In other words, according to Butler, gendered identities are constructed through language and a repetition of acts.
- 2 E. A. CLARK, *The Lady Vanishes. Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the “Linguistic Turn”*, in: *Church History*, 67.1, 1998, pp. 1–31. A shorter version of parts of this article was published within the same year, see E. A. CLARK, *Holy Women, Holy Words. Early Christian Women, Social History, and the “Linguistic Turn”*, in: *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 6.3, 1998, pp. 413–430. A considerable number of feminist approaches to late antique texts were inspired by Clark’s work discussed here, see, for example, D. BRAKKE, *The Lady Appears. Materialization of “Woman” in Early Monastic Literature*, in: *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 33.3, 2003, pp. 387–402, repr. in: D. B. MARTIN/P. COX MILLER (ed.), *The Cultural Turn in Late Ancient Studies. Gender, Asceticism, and Historiography*, Durham/London 2005, pp. 25–39; V. BURRUS, “*Begotten Not Made*”. *Conceiving Manhood in Late Antiquity*, Stanford 2000, and idem, *Macrina’s Tattoo*, in: *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 33.3, 2003, pp. 403–417, repr. in: D. B. MARTIN/P. COX MILLER, *The Cultural Turn in Late Ancient Studies*, pp. 103–116; A. JACOBS, *Writing Demetrias. Ascetic Logic in Ancient Christianity*, in: *Church History*, 69.4, 2000, pp. 719–748; R. KRAEMER, *When is a Text about a Woman a Text about a Woman? The Cases of Aseneth and Perpetua*, in: A.-J. LEVINE/M. M. ROBBINS (ed.), *A Feminist Companion to Patristic Literature (Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings, 12)*, London/New York 2008, pp. 156–172. It should be also noted that Clark’s article on the vanishing lady as well as some of her other work on early Christian women stimulated a great deal of my thinking while I was working on the present paper, and I would like to thank her for that.
- 3 CLARK, *The Lady Vanishes* (cit. n. 2), pp. 30–31. Cf. Peter Brown’s statement concerning the genre of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles in which women play a prominent role: “the Apocryphal Acts should not be read as evidence for the actual role of women in Christianity. [...] Throughout this period [late second and third centuries], men used women ‘to think with’ in order to verbalize their own nagging concern with the stance that the Church should take to the world” (P. BROWN, *The Body and Society. Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, New York 1988, p. 153).

and Melania the Younger, do not offer information about these historical women, as previous historians thought, but that they rather express their male authors' desires, is mainly supported by her discussion of Gregory of Nyssa's two works whose protagonist is his sister Macrina: the *Life of Macrina* and the dialogue *On the Soul and the Resurrection*.<sup>4</sup> Following David Halperin's approach to the figure of Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* whom Halperin sees not as a true woman, but as a trope for Socrates himself,<sup>5</sup> Clark suggests that Macrina as portrayed in Gregory's two aforementioned works is not a "real" woman either, but "a trope for Gregory". "He is", Clark

states, "writing like a woman'. Gregory has appropriated woman's voice".<sup>6</sup> That Gregory uses to some extent Macrina as a means allowing him to "reflect on various troubling intellectual and theological problems of his day",<sup>7</sup> seems to be valid for his dialogue *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, which, as Clark shows, is influenced to a high degree by Plato, whose philosophy had a great impact on Gregory.<sup>8</sup> This does not seem to be the case, however, for the *Life of Macrina*. In her *Life*, in contrast to the dialogue in which despite her lack of profane education she raises philosophical and theological issues that preoccupied Gregory himself,<sup>9</sup> Macrina undertakes

4 The edition of *Macrina's Life* used here is found in P. MARAVAL, Grégoire de Nysse. Vie de Sainte Macrine (Sources Chrétiennes, 178), Paris 1971, pp. 136–266. As for *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, see PG 46: 11–160.

5 D. M. HALPERIN, Why Is Diotima a Woman?, in: D. M. HALPERIN (ed.), One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love, New York/London 1990, pp. 113–151.

6 CLARK, The Lady Vanishes (cit. n. 2), p. 27. See also S. ASHBROOK HARVEY, Women and Words. Texts By and About Women, in: F. YOUNG et al. (ed.), The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature, Cambridge 2004, p. 386; BURRUS, "Begotten Not Made" (cit. n. 2), pp. 112–122; D. KRUEGER, Writing and Liturgy of Memory in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina*, in: Journal of Early Christian Studies, 8.4, 2000, pp. 483–510, here p. 488, repr. in: D. KRUEGER, Writing and Holiness, The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian Era, Philadelphia 2004, pp. 110–132.

7 E. A. CLARK, History, Theory, Text. Historians and the Linguistic Turn. Cambridge, MA/London 2004, p. 179; see also CLARK, The Lady Vanishes (cit. n. 2), p. 27, and CLARK, Holy Women, Holy Words (cit. n. 2), p. 426.

8 Macrina's role as a female Socrates in *On the Soul and the Resurrection* and the text's allusions to Platonic works, especially *Phaedo*, have been previously pointed out by a number of other scholars, see, for instance, C. APOSTOLOPOULOS, Phaedo Christianus. Studien zur Verbindung und Abwägung des Verhältnisses zwischen dem platonischen "Phaidon" und dem Dialog Gregors von Nyssa "Über die Seele und die Auferstehung" (Europäische Hochschulschriften [Reihe Philosophie, 20], 188), Frankfurt am Main/Bern/New York 1986; H. F. CHERNISS, The Platonism of Gregory of Nyssa, Berkeley 1930; C. B. CHRISTAKIS, A Woman Christian Sage of the Fourth Century. Macrina the Virgin-Philosopher, in: Theologia, 66.1, 1995, pp. 330–361, here pp. 349–356; A. MOMIGLIANO, The Life of St. Macrina by Gregory of Nyssa, in: J. W. EADIE/J. OBER (ed.), The Craft of the Ancient Historian. Essays in Honor of Chester G. Starr, Lanham/New York/London 1985, pp. 443–458, repr. in: A. MOMIGLIANO (ed.), On Pagans, Jews, and Christians. Middletown, CT 1987, pp. 206–221, here p. 445; C. P. ROTH, Platonic and Pauline Elements in the Ascent of the Soul in Gregory of Nyssa's Dialogue on the Soul and Resurrection, in: Vigiliae Christianae, 46, 1992, pp. 20–30. In contrast to Clark and Virginia Burrus, these scholars do not see Macrina as Gregory's spokesperson, but as a wise woman instructing her brother.

9 CLARK, The Lady Vanishes (cit. n. 2), pp. 23–24, 27–28, and CLARK, History, Theory, Text (cit. n. 7), pp. 178–179. That Macrina, in contrast to her brothers Basil and Gregory, did not go to school and completely refrained from secular education is a piece of information given by Gregory himself in her *Life* (*Life of Macrina*, §3.3–26). It is on this very information that Clark bases her argument that Macrina's platonic and other philosophic ideas cannot be her own. There is, however, a counterargument: Macrina might not have read profane authors, such as Plato; there is nevertheless a possibility that she had read previous or contemporary religious works influenced by Plato. When Gregory mentions Macrina's education, he only refers to that of her early years, the lessons she received from their own mother who was the one deciding about Macrina's religious education. What about Macrina's readings in her later years? The fact that Gregory does not mention anything about them does not mean that throughout her whole

roles and behaves in ways that represent a “real” woman rather than the female persona of a male author: after her father’s death she stays close to her mother whom she helps with housework;<sup>10</sup> as a second mother, she looks after and instructs her younger brothers; with her mother’s consent she transforms the family house into a nunnery whose leadership she undertakes.

Of course, despite the fact that it is treated as a historical account by its author, his contemporaries and later Christian audiences, *Macrina’s Life*, like *On the Soul and the Resurrection* and all hagiographical works, is a piece of literature having intertextual relations with previous texts,<sup>11</sup> such as the Bible, Homer’s *Odyssey*,<sup>12</sup> Platonic works,<sup>13</sup> the *Vita Plotini* of Porphyry and the *De Vita Pythagorica* of Iamblichos.<sup>14</sup> However, *Macrina’s Life* and any hagiographical work venerating a historical person written shortly after its protagonist’s death should not be dismissed as mere fiction. As formulated by Andrew Jacobs, “to claim that a text is literary or rhetorically

laden is not to say that it is a fantastic fiction, entirely divorced from the thoughts, ideas, and practices of its producers and consumers”.<sup>15</sup>

Holy women’s Lives, therefore, should reveal more than the possible fantasies of their male authors, and the literary conventions and tastes of their times.<sup>16</sup> In fact, they do tell us certain things about ancient women’s situation, the roles they undertook, their activities, and how their contemporaries saw them. Additionally, these texts give us some information about what was considered exemplary, acceptable and unacceptable female behaviour in male-dominated Christian societies in general, and in women’s monastic communities in particular where leadership was for once a female responsibility. I would, therefore, agree with Jacobs that, “we are not witnessing the final and absolute erasure of women from ancient Christian history. [...] We can [...] allow ourselves to imagine that women in fact existed who were believed to have acted in the fashion narrated by male authors”.<sup>17</sup>

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life Macrina read only the Bible. A further point should be also made. Clark rejects Gregory’s works on Macrina as sources for the woman because they are “literary constructions [...] of a high rhetorical order” (CLARK, *The Lady Vanishes* [cit. n. 2], p. 15). In this case, also Gregory’s statement concerning Macrina’s exclusively religious education should not be taken at face value, but as a hagiographical topos, see also ASHBROOK HARVEY, *Women and Words* (cit. n. 6), p. 385, and MARAVAL, *Vie de Sainte Macrine* (cit. n. 4), pp. 49–51.

- 10 For the relations between mothers and daughters in ascetic contexts see S. ASHBROOK HARVEY, *Sacred Bonding: Mothers and Daughters in Early Syriac Hagiography*, in: *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 4.1, 1996, pp. 27–56.
- 11 According to structuralist and poststructuralist literary theory, intertextuality is the very condition of literature, see, for example, R. BARTHES, *Image, Music, Text*, tr. S. HEATH, London 1977; G. GENETTE, *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré*, Paris 1982; M. RIFFATERRE, *Intertextual Representation. On Mimesis as Interpretive Discourse*, in: *Critical Inquiry*, 11.1, 1984, pp. 141–162. For a discussion of the intertextual relations between Byzantine hagiographical texts see S. CONSTANTINO, *A Byzantine Hagiographical Parody. Life of Mary the Younger*, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 34.2, 2010, pp. 160–181.
- 12 G. FRANK, *Macrina’s Scar. Homeric Allusion and Heroic Identity in Gregory of Nyssa’s Life of Macrina*, in: *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 8.4, 2000, pp. 511–530.
- 13 G. LUCK, *Notes on the Vita Macrinae by Gregory of Nyssa*, in: A. SPIRA (ed.), *The Biographical Works of Gregory of Nyssa (Patristic Monograph Series, 12)*, Cambridge, MA 1984, pp. 21–33, here pp. 28–30.
- 14 A. MEREDITH, *A Comparison Between the Vita Sanctae Macrinae of Gregory of Nyssa and the Vita Plotini of Porphyry and De Vita Pythagorica of Iamblichos*, in: SPIRA, *The Biographical Works of Gregory of Nyssa* (cit. n. 13), pp. 181–195, here p. 188.
- 15 JACOBS, *Writing Demetrias* (cit. n. 2), p. 721.
- 16 The first discussion of male perception of women in Byzantium in historical, anthropological and literary contexts was undertaken in the 1980s by Catia Galatariotou, see C. GALATARIOU, *Holy Women and Witches. Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender*, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 9, 1984–85, pp. 55–94.
- 17 JACOBS, *Writing Demetrias* (cit. n. 2), pp. 720–721.

Certainly, we should be careful while reading ancient texts involving women, as we should be equally cautious when we reconstruct the lives of historical men. Before hastening to call Macrina a “female Socrates”, for instance, we should think of the possibility that this might not represent reality. However, even if in Gregory’s dialogue Macrina functions to a certain degree as his spokesperson, as Clark has convincingly shown, we should not give up thinking about the “real” Macrina. Possibly she did not talk like a philosopher, such as Plato, but is it legitimate to discard her ability to engage in discussions of a higher level and to form interesting arguments because she did not study ancient Greek philosophy? If Gregory considered Macrina as a useful tool allowing him to express his own views, why did he not employ her also in other works of his in which he had no problem articulating his theological theories in his own voice?

As we can assume from one of Gregory’s letters, he did indeed admire and respect the “real” Macrina for her exemplary character and conduct, which functioned as guides for his own life. He wrote that his sister was for him *a teacher of how to live, a mother in place of [...] mother* after the latter’s death.<sup>18</sup> There is no reason to doubt the honesty of Gregory’s words. Gregory wrote his two works on Macrina (especially the *Life*) rather with the intention of honouring his beloved sister, of showing his gratitude towards her, and of managing his grief at her loss, as sug-

gested by Derek Krueger,<sup>19</sup> and less because he wanted to participate in the theological discussions of his time.

Obviously, my intention in the present paper is not to recover the words, thoughts and feelings of certain historical women known not only from the Lives devoted to them, but also from other contemporary and later sources of less or more rhetorical value. Such an undertaking is impossible not only because the texts are male-authored – in fact the impossibility of hearing those women’s “real” voices would have been equally present even if their hagiographers were women –, but also because, as already mentioned, such texts are subjected to literary conventions and, in addition, they often function as vehicles of propaganda.<sup>20</sup> What this paper shall seek to discover is how the identity of women undertaking leading roles in monastic contexts is shaped, and how their authority and power, the two important characteristics of such an identity, are attained, strengthened and retained even after their deaths.

Of course, a woman founding a monastic community whose control, protection and leadership she herself undertakes either by means of her role as abbess or through the individual she appoints as superior of her convent is by definition authoritative; she exercises full power over her foundation and the lives of the nuns inhabiting it, both as a director and spiritual guide. As formulated by the empress Irene Doukaina Komnene (1066–1123),<sup>21</sup> foundress of the Kecharitomene

18 Letter XIX.6.62–63, ed. P. MARAVAL, Grégoire de Nysse, *Lettres* (Sources Chrétiennes, 363), Paris 1990, p. 248, tr. in: A. M. SILVAS, *Macrina the Younger, Philosopher of God* (Medieval Women, Texts and Contexts, 22), Turnhout 2008, p. 87.

19 KRUEGER, *Writing and Liturgy of Memory* (cit. n. 6).

20 The highly propagandistic character of the *Life of Melania the Younger*, for instance, has been pointed out by E. A. CLARK, *The Life of Melania the Younger. Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Studies in Women and Religion, 14), New York/Toronto 1984, pp. 141–152, and idem, *Piety, Propaganda, and Politics the Life of Melania the Younger*, *Studia Patristica, Papers of the 1983 Oxford Patristics Conference*, 18.2, 1986, pp. 167–183, repr. in: E. A. CLARK, *Ascetic Piety and Women’s Faith. Essays on Late Ancient Christianity* (Studies in Women and Religion, 20), Lewiston, NY 1986, pp. 61–93.

21 For Irene Doukaina Komnene see L. GARLAND, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium AD 527–1204*, London/New York 1999, pp. 193–198, and B. HILL, *Imperial Women in Byzantium, 1025–1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology*, Harlow 1999.

convent in Constantinople – and this is a case in which a woman’s “real” voice may be heard, *I wish that the convent of my Lady the Mother of God Kecharitomene set up by me be administered and managed in whatever manner I myself wish* (*Typikon of Theotokos Kecharitomene*, §1).<sup>22</sup> The foundress’s authority and power exercised both inside and outside the confines of her monastic community, however, as we shall see, are not restricted to her double role as a monastic patroness and director. They derive also from other factors that are strongly interrelated and contribute to the fashioning of the foundress-abbess’s identity. These are her vast property, her social status, her conduct, her teachings, her monastic rules, and the friendships she develops with men of authority, such as emperors and important bishops.

The texts used for the purposes of the present paper fall into two categories. The texts of the first category, on which my examination will focus, are the Greek Lives of foundress-abbesses that were produced by male authors in Byzantium.<sup>23</sup> The second category is formed by monastic documents, which on the contrary are

female-authored and, since they serve functional purposes, less rhetorical. The monastic documents I am referring to are *typika* for nunneries written by their foundresses who in most cases took monastic vows and entered their own convents.<sup>24</sup> The co-examination of these *typika* with monastic women’s Lives is very helpful in distinguishing between literary conventions or the idealized depiction of a foundress-abbess found in hagiography, on the one hand, and the “realities” concerning a foundress-abbess’s identity, authority and power, on the other.

Unfortunately, apart from one exception the surviving female *typika* come from the late Byzantine period,<sup>25</sup> while almost all the Lives of monastic foundress-abbesses we possess date to the early Byzantine period.<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, there are no female monastic foundation documents from a period in which there is a rather remarkable production of foundress-abbesses’ Lives, whereas when a production of such documents appears, hagiographers cease to compose Lives devoted to female monastic founders and leaders.<sup>27</sup> The chronological gap between the examined Lives

22 Tr. R. JORDAN, in: BMFD, II, p. 667.

23 Even though most of the examined Lives are anonymous the hagiographers’ self-referential statements reveal male authorship.

24 For these *typika* see C. L. CONNOR, *Women of Byzantium*, New Haven/London 2004, pp. 268–308; C. GALATARIOU, *Byzantine Women’s Monastic Communities. The Evidence of the Τυπικά*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 38, 1988, pp. 263–290, and A. E. LAIOU, *Observations on the Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 59–102.

25 The earliest surviving female *typikon* was written in the twelfth century (1110–1116) by the aforementioned empress Irene Doukaina Komnene (1081–1118) for the convent of Theotokos Kecharitomene (ed. P. GAUTIER, *Le typicon de la Théotokos Kécharitóménè*, in: *Revue d’Études Byzantines*, 43, 1985, pp. 5–165). The other four we possess are the following: *typikon* of Theodora Palaiologina (1240–1303) for the convent of Lips written between 1294–1301 (ed. H. DELEHAYE, *Deux typica byzantins de l’époque des Paléologues*, Brussels 1921, pp. 106–136), the *typikon* for the convent of Anargyroi written also by Theodora between 1294–1301 (ed. DELEHAYE, *Deux typica*, pp. 136–140), the *typikon* of Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina (1291–1355) for the convent of Christ Philanthropos written in 1307 (ed. P. MEYER, *Bruchstücke zweier τυπικά κτητορικά*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 4, 1895, pp. 45–58, and the *typikon* of Theodora Synadene (1265–1332) for the convent Bebaia Elpis written between 1327–1335 (ed. DELEHAYE, *Deux typica*, pp. 18–105, suppl. C. BAUR, *Le Typikon du monastère de Notre-Dame tes bebaia elpidos*, in: *Revue de l’histoire ecclésiastique*, 29, 1933, pp. 635–636).

26 These Lives will be presented below.

27 The reasons for this phenomenon constitute a desideratum in better understanding both female monasticism in Byzantium and the social and theological function of foundresses’ Lives. Unfortunately the scope and restricted length of the present paper do not allow such an investigation.



and the female monastic *typika* might be considered problematic, since the *typika* are expected to reflect monastic realities not applying to female monasticism of the earlier periods. However, some of the factors determining the identity of the foundress-abbess based on her power and authority seem to remain unchanged throughout time, as a co-examination of the *typika* and the Lives attests.

In comparison to the large number of monasteries founded by women throughout the Byzantine era,<sup>28</sup> the number of monastic foundresses commemorated in Byzantine holy women's Lives is rather small, but higher than that of the female saints undertaking other monastic roles, such as those of the cenobitic nun and the solitary.<sup>29</sup> The Lives of foundress-abbesses that have come down to us number nine. Of these, seven were composed in the early Byzantine period, one in the middle and one in the late period.

The texts of the early period are the Lives of the following holy women: Macrina (ca. 330–

379 / 380), Olympias (360 / 370–408), Melania (383–439), Domnika (fourth century), Eusebia-Xene (fifth century), Matrona (fifth/sixth century) and Sopatra (sixth/seventh century). Athanasia of Aegina (ninth century) is the holy foundress of the middle period,<sup>30</sup> and Theodora of Arta (1225–ca. 1275) is that of the late period.

Written by her brother Gregory of Nyssa between 382 and 383,<sup>31</sup> the *Life of Macrina* [BHG 1012] tells the story of a woman who showed from an early age her eagerness to dedicate herself to God. Nevertheless, her father betrothed her to a noble man who died before they could marry, and Macrina refused to marry anyone else. Upon her father's death, Macrina persuaded her mother to transform their house into a nunnery, and along with their female servants, who were now treated as free women, to adopt a religious life. After many years of a life devoted to God and to her monastic community, Macrina became seriously ill, and died before the eyes of her brother and hagiographer.<sup>32</sup>

- 28 For the rather large number of convents founded by women in the middle Byzantine period see D. ABRAHAMSE, Women's Monasticism in the Middle Byzantine Period, Problems and Prospects, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 35–58, and J. HERRIN, Changing Functions of Monasteries of Women during Byzantine Iconoclasm, in: L. GARLAND (ed.), *Byzantine Women. Varieties of Experience AD 800–1200*, Aldershot 2006, pp. 1–15. For the late Byzantine period see A.-M. TALBOT, Late Byzantine Nuns: By Choice or Necessity?, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 103–117, repr. in: A.-M. TALBOT (ed.), *Women and Religious Life in Byzantium*, Aldershot 2001, XIII, and idem, Building Activity in Constantinople under Andronikos II. The Role of Women Patrons in the Construction and Restoration of Monasteries, in: N. NEČIPOĞLU (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life (The Medieval Mediterranean, 33)*, Leiden 2001, pp. 329–343.
- 29 For female roles of sanctity depicted in Byzantine hagiography see S. CONSTANTINO, Female Corporeal Performances. Reading the Body in Byzantine Passions and Lives of Holy Women (*Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia*, 9), Uppsala 2005.
- 30 An important earlier foundress, who was active during the first period of Iconoclasm (726–787), is Anthousa. She established a large double monastery in Mantineon in Paphlagonia. Unfortunately, her *Life* is not preserved. There is a short notice on her in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*, C. MANGO, St. Anthousa of Mantineon and the Family of Constantine V, in: *Analecta Bollandiana*, 100, 1982, pp. 401–409; A.-M. TALBOT, Life of St. Anthousa of Mantineon, in: A.-M. TALBOT (ed.), *Byzantine Defenders of Images. Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation (Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation, 2)*, Washington, DC 1998, pp. 13–19.
- 31 See MARAVAL, *Vie de Sainte Macrine* (cit. n. 4), p. 67. The scholarship on Gregory of Nyssa is immense. For a recent approach to Gregory's work and theology see M. LUDLOW, *Gregory of Nyssa, Ancient and (Post)modern*, Oxford 2007.
- 32 In comparison to the other holy women examined here, Macrina is not a typical foundress, since the transformation of her family house into a religious abode does not necessarily constitute the foundation of a monastery. However, Macrina's case is also discussed because she, like the other foundresses, was the religious leader of a number of women, see P. ROUSSEAU, The Pious Household and the Virgin Chorus. Reflections on Gregory of Nyssa's Life of Macrina, in: *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 13.2, 2005, pp. 165–186.

The identity of Olympias's hagiographer is not known. He wrote her *Life* [BHG 1374] at some point in the second half of the fifth century,<sup>33</sup> a few decades after the holy woman's death, by using as one of his sources a text composed while Olympias was still alive, Palladios's *Dialogue on the Life of John Chrysostom* (date: 408).<sup>34</sup> Olympias, an aristocratic woman from Constantinople, lost her parents at a young age and inherited an immense fortune. She was married to a prefect who died before the marriage was consummated. Wishing to lead a religious life, she rejected all new marriage proposals, and she built beside the principal church of Constantinople a convent to which she withdrew. As a result of her ecclesiastical politics she was forced at some point to leave Constantinople. She died in exile some years later.

Gerontius, a disciple of Melania, is the author of her *Life* [BHG 1241] composed towards the end of the fifth century, some nine years after her death.<sup>35</sup> Like Olympias, the Roman Melania came from an extremely rich and aristocratic family. Her parents married her off, ignoring her desire to lead a religious life. After the death of their two children, Melania convinced her husband Pinian to lead together with her a chaste life, and to give away their vast fortune. Followed by Pinian, she went to Africa where she founded a nunnery and a male monastery. She also visited the Holy Land, and the monks and hermits of Palestine and Egypt. Afterwards she spent more than a decade in a cell near the Mount of Olives, and a year after her mother's

death she got involved in a new series of monastic foundations. She founded a nunnery on the Mount of Olives, and later when her husband died she built a monastery for men, then a chapel, and later a church. Melania travelled also to Constantinople, where she helped in the conversion of her pagan uncle, Volusian, and in the conflict with Nestorianism. She died three years later in her convent in Jerusalem.

Neither the authorship nor date of the *Lives of Domnika* [BHG 562] and *Eusebia-Xene* [BHG 633] are established.<sup>36</sup> These texts must have been written between the fifth and the seventh centuries. According to her *Life*, Domnika was a noble Roman woman who left her home to avoid marriage. She went to Alexandria where she met four pagan virgins, whom she converted to Christianity. The five women sailed to Constantinople where the patriarch Nektarios (381–397) baptized the three virgins, and helped Domnika to found a monastery. Soon Domnika became famous for her holy life as a result of which many people went to see her. Wishing to have more peace and isolation, Domnika relocated her monastery in a remote place of the city with both the patriarch's and the emperor Theodosios's (379–395) help, and she stayed there until her death.

Eusebia, another rich and noble woman from Rome, cross-dressed and left her home accompanied by two of her female servants while her parents were arranging her wedding. The three women travelled to Alexandria, and from there they went to the island of Kos where they

33 See the edition of A.-M. MALINGREY, *Jean Chrysostome, Lettres à Olympias, Vie anonyme d'Olympias* (Sources Chrétiennes, 13), Paris 1968, pp. 406–448.

34 Another source employed by Olympias's hagiographer is PALLADIOS'S *Lausiak History* (date: ca. 419; J. BOUSQUET, *Vie d'Olympias la Diaconesse*, in: *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, 11.1, 1906, pp. 225–250, here pp. 229–231, and MALINGREY, *Jean Chrysostome* [cit. n. 32], pp. 393–396).

35 See the edition: D. GORCE, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie* (Sources Chrétiennes, 90), Paris 1962, pp. 124–270. The editor discusses the text's date in pp. 54–62.

36 For the *Life of Eusebia-Xene* see the edition of T. NISSEN, *S. Eusebiae seu Xenae Vita*, in: *Analecta Bollandiana*, 56, 1938, pp. 106–111, and for the *Life of Domnika* see the edition of T. IOANNOU, *Μνημεία Αγιολογικά*, Venice 1884, pp. 268–284.

got rid of their male disguise and rented a house. Eusebia, who in the meantime had changed her name into Xene in order to hide her identity, met the monk Paul and later bishop of Mylasa who took the three women with him to Mylasa where Xene founded a nunnery. Paul remained the spiritual guide of both Xene and her community until his death.

The *Life of Matrona* [BHG 1221] was written around the middle of the sixth century probably by a monk of the monastery of Bassianos, who does not give his name.<sup>37</sup> Matrona was a noble married woman from Perge who had a daughter. At some point she moved with her family to Constantinople where she suffered at her husband's hands. She then abandoned her family, cross-dressed, called herself Babyllas, and entered the monastery of Bassianos where she led the life of a monk. At some point her female identity was discovered. Matrona left the monastery, and went to a convent in Emesa, in Syria, in which she did not stay long. She had to leave in order to escape from her husband who was after her. She went to Jerusalem and then to Sinai. In the end, she found refuge in a pagan temple near Beirut. After spending some time as a solitary monastic, Matrona created a community of nuns in the area, but she did not want to stay there. She returned to Constantinople to be near her former abbot and spiritual father, the aforementioned Bassianos. With Bassianos's assistance she eventually founded a nunnery in Constantinople where she spent the rest of her life.

The *Life of Sopatra* and her spiritual mother Eustolia [BHG 2141] has come down to us in a fragmentary form.<sup>38</sup> Sopatra, the daughter of the Emperor Maurice (582–602), was inclined towards monasticism. After meeting Eustolia, a pious Roman woman, Sopatra decided to renounce the world. She transformed the palace building that her father had given her into a monastery known for its strict monastic rule.

The *Life of Athanasia of Aegina* [BHG 180] was written between the second half of the ninth and the first decade of the tenth century, some years after her death.<sup>39</sup> The anonymous male author claims that he was an eyewitness to the holy woman's posthumous miracles (*Life of Athanasia of Aegina*, § 19).<sup>40</sup> At an early age Athanasia, a noble woman from the Greek island Aegina, had a spiritual experience, which led her to the decision to take monastic vows. She was, however, forced to marry. The marriage did not last, as her husband was killed in a battle. Against her will, Athanasia was forced to remarry. She eventually persuaded her second husband to become a monk, and with a holy man's help she founded a convent in a remote area of the island. Four years later Athanasia withdrew with her nuns to an even more remote place. At some point she built three churches, and then she went to a convent in Constantinople where she spent six or seven years. A few days after her return to Aegina she fell seriously ill and died.

A monk named Job wrote the *Life of Theodora of Arta* [BHG 1736] in the thirteenth century.<sup>41</sup> Theodora was the wife of Michael II Kom-

37 The edition of *Matrona's Life* is in *AASS*, Nov. III, 1910, pp. 790–813.

38 The edition of the surviving text is in *AASS*, Nov. IV, 1925, pp. 217–219.

39 L. CARRAS, *The Life of St Athanasia of Aegina. A Critical Edition with Introduction*, in: A. MOFFATT (ed.), *Maistor. Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning* (Byzantina Australiensia, 5), Canberra 1984, pp. 199–224, here pp. 203–205; L. F. SHERRY, *Life of St. Athanasia of Aegina*, in: A.-M. TALBOT (ed.), *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* (Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation, 1), Washington, DC 1996, pp. 137–158, here p. 139.

40 See the edition of F. HALKIN, *Six inédits d'hagiologie byzantine* (Subsidia Hagiographica, 74), Brussels 1987, pp. 179–195.

41 The edition of the text is in *PG* 127, pp. 903–908.

nenos Doukas, the despot of Epiros (ca. 1231–ca. 1267/68), with whom she had six children.<sup>42</sup> Like Matrona, Theodora was a pious woman who was abused by her husband. He sent her into exile, but five years later he allowed her to return home. From then and until Michael's death the couple lived in love and piety. Michael founded two monasteries while his wife established a nunnery where she withdrew after she became a widow, and led an exemplary monastic life until her death. In contrast to the other hagiographers discussed here, Job devotes a very short narrative space to Theodora's life as a nun.<sup>43</sup>

One of the very few early discussions of the foundress-abbess's authority and power can be found in an article by Clark that refers to female monasticism of the fourth century.<sup>44</sup> Clark remarks that both the Church Fathers associated with wealthy aristocratic foundresses such as Melania the Elder and Olympias and these women's hagiographers emphasize their humility

while "their leadership in founding and directing monasteries receives practically no mention".<sup>45</sup> Clark's argument is that the exaltation of aristocratic foundresses' humility is an authorial strategy aimed at hiding the real sources of their authority and power, which were their wealth and high social status.<sup>46</sup> It should be noted, however, that the same silence concerning the foundresses' supervision of their monastic communities is detected also in the Lives whose protagonists are of less aristocratic origins, and do not possess the mythical riches of either Olympias or the two Melanias. In these Lives too (such examples are those of Matrona and Domnika, whose convents are built and sustained from gifts) the emphasis is placed on the foundress-abbess's religiosity, virtues and teachings. In fact, the same phenomenon can be found also in the Lives of male saints who undertake the founder's role without however possessing money or social status.

In general, hagiographers do not deem it necessary to discuss how their protagonists ad-

42 For Theodora see D. M. NICOL, *The Despotate of Epiros*, Oxford 1957, pp. 128–131, 149–160, 200–203; A.-M. TALBOT, *Theodora of Arta*, in: ODB, III, p. 2038, and A.-M. TALBOT, *Life of St. Theodora of Arta*, in: TALBOT, *Holy Women* (cit. n. 39), pp. 323–325.

43 For an examination of the *Life of Theodora of Arta* see S. CONSTANTINOIU, *Generic Hybrids, the "Life" of Synkletike and the "Life" of Theodora of Arta*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 56, 2006, pp. 113–133.

44 E. A. CLARK, *Authority and Humility. A Conflict of Values in Fourth-Century Female Monasticism*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 17–33, repr. in: idem, *Ascetic Piety and Women's Faith* (cit. n. 20), pp. 209–228. Another approach to the same subject in the same period is that of Gillian Cloke (*G. CLOKE, This Female Man of God. Women and Spiritual Power in the Patristic Age, AD 350–450*, London/New York 1995, pp. 157–211). Concerning the authority and power of the holy man and the clergy in late antiquity see P. BROWN, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley 1982; idem, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity. Toward a Christian Empire. The Curti Lectures*, 1988, Madison 1992; idem, *Authority and the Sacred. Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman World*, Cambridge 1995; and idem, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire. The Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures*, Hanover, NH 2001, and also C. RAPP, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity. The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage, 37)*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2005; for the saint of the middle Byzantine period see E. PATLAGEAN, *Sainteté et pouvoir*, in: S. HACKEL (ed.), *The Byzantine Saint. 14th Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, University of Birmingham 1980, London 1981, pp. 88–105.

45 CLARK, *Authority and Humility* (cit. n. 44), p. 18.

46 For the importance of social and economic status to the sanctification of late antique women see also E. A. CLARK, *Ascetic Renunciation and Feminine Advancement. A Paradox of Late Ancient Christianity*, in: *Anglican Theological Review*, 63, 1981, pp. 240–257, repr. in: idem, *Ascetic Piety and Women's Faith* (cit. n. 20), pp. 175–208. The appeal of Christianity to late antique aristocratic women has been discussed in: J. BREMMER, *Why Did Early Christianity Attract Upper-Class Women*, in: A. A. R. BASTIAENSEN et al. (ed.), *Fructus centesimus. Mélanges offerts à l'occasion de son soixante-cinquième anniversaire (Instrumenta Patristica, 19)*, Dordrecht 1989, pp. 37–47.

minister their male or female monasteries; the presentation of the saints' conducts, virtues, teachings and miracles appear as more important. This is not surprising if one considers that the main purpose of hagiographical literature was to provide its audiences with models of Christian life. Such a purpose would not have been served through a presentation of a monastery's administration, and of a discussion of practical matters concerning its daily life. These issues were the subjects of other types of texts, such as the *typika*.

Even though hagiographers do not mention much about the convents' organisation and management, they do reveal the sources of their heroines' power and authority as monastic foundresses and leaders. The holy women's actions and teachings often disclose some of their unwritten rules determining life in their communities. When Melania, for instance, wakes up after two hours of sleep and raises also her nuns to teach them how they *should spend the first fruits of the night for God's glory*, and that they *ought to keep awake and pray at every hour* (*Life of Melania the Younger*, § 23),<sup>47</sup> she sets her rules concerning the nuns' sleep and their activities during the night, which should be devoted to liturgy and prayer.

There is no doubt that an important part of the power and authority of most of the holy women examined here derives from their social and financial position (such examples include Macrina, Olympias, Melania, Eusebia-Xene, Sopatra and Theodora of Arta); but there are also other factors that determine their author-

ity and power as monastic leaders, such as their character, their way of life and their teachings. In fact, in the case of the wealthy aristocrats, the authority and power they exercise outside their convents as patrons, almsgivers and ecclesiastical policy-makers is mostly based on their status, both social and financial, while their power and authority inside their communities are mostly drawn from their teachings and asceticism.

Here asceticism is understood as a set of practices, exercises and performances including, among others, strict fasts, vigils, continuous prayers, bodily suffering and humility. Such bodily and spiritual operations termed "technologies of the self" by Michel Foucault permit individuals to "transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality".<sup>48</sup> According to Foucault, the "technologies of the self" bestow power. Through asceticism an individual is transformed into a subject: he/she becomes an object for him/herself. In Foucault's words, a "subject is led to observe himself, analyse himself, interpret himself, [and] recognizes himself as a domain of possible knowledge".<sup>49</sup> The ascetic thus is an active subject of creation, a dominant and powerful individual,<sup>50</sup> who governs him/herself and in so doing he/she moves towards a conception of power that strengthens and activates him/herself.

The ascetic's power over him/herself allows him/her to exercise power over others too, according to Foucault's definition of power: "[Power] is a set of actions on possible actions;

47 Tr. in: E. A. CLARK, *The Life of Melania the Younger* (cit. n. 20), p. 45.

48 M. FOUCAULT, *Technologies of the Self*, in: L. H. MARTIN et al. (ed.), *Technologies of the Self. A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, London 1988, pp. 16–49, here p. 18, repr. in: P. RABINOW (ed.), *Michel Foucault. Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth. Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, I, tr. R. HURLEY et al., London 2000, pp. 223–251.

49 J. FAUBION (ed.), *Michel Foucault. Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology. Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, II, tr. R. HURLEY et al., New York 1999, p. 461.

50 The strong relation between asceticism and power has been pointed out by Richard Valantasis, R. VALANTASIS, *Constructions of Power in Asceticism*, in: *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 63.4, 1995, pp. 775–821. See also G. G. HARPHAM, *The Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism*, Chicago 1987, and E. WYSCHOGROD, *Saints and Postmodernism. Revisioning Moral Philosophy*, Chicago 1990.

it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; it releases or contrives, makes more probable or less; in the extreme, it constraints or forbids absolutely, but it is always a way of acting upon one or more acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions.<sup>51</sup>

For Foucault, power is associated with action and the possibility of acting. It is a structure of actions influencing the actions of others. The foundress-abbess, for example, who through her paradigmatic asceticism that will be shortly presented is transformed into a powerful authority of ascetic discipline, is involved in a power relation with her nuns. As both an exemplary ascetic and religious guide, she establishes a set of rules and norms, and she creates a space in which certain actions take place whose form and limits she determines.

But before going on to discuss the power and authority of the examined holy women, as monastic founders and agents of religious and ascetic life, I should first present the lives they led before their decision to found monasteries. The discussion of this first phase of their earthly lives is necessary not only because the hagiographers devote a considerable narrative space to it, and in so doing they show the importance they attach to it, but also because it functions as a time of preparation without which the heroines' lives as foundress-abbesses cannot be imagined. It is this very first phase that allows the heroines to acquire what they need in order to be able to enter the second and most important phase of their lives during which, liberated from male control, and distinguished by their social status and their strong and influential characters, they obtain the power to control both their properties, and their own lives, as well as those of others.

In the first phase of their lives, the heroines acquire gradually all the qualities that should characterise a monastic founder and leader, either male or female: they become independent and socially active, they administer their properties, and through their social position and conduct they attract, on the one hand, the first nuns who populate the nunneries they later found, and on the other, authoritative men who become their spiritual fathers and their supporters in their religious projects. All in all they show initiatives, and undertake actions suggesting that they can become successful leaders.

The heroines' first actions are made towards the acquisition of social independence, which they achieve by either avoiding marriage or by getting rid of an already existing husband. Eusebia and Domnika flee their houses just before their weddings are about to take place. Matrona escapes from her abusive husband. Macrina's, Olympias, Athanasia's and Theodora's husbands die, and apart from Athanasia these women perform a heroic deed: they manage to avoid a second marriage that male authorities try to impose upon them. In so doing, they prove their ability to make decisions about matters that concern them, and they manage to convince their families about their right to act so. Of course, these are further qualities that a leader should possess.

As for Melania and for Athanasia in her second marriage, even though they are forced to live with a husband, they find an intelligent way out by transforming their marriage into a spiritual relationship. Both women become their husbands' Christian guides, and through their teachings and strong characters they manage to persuade the two men to adopt religious lives.<sup>52</sup> As a result Melania and Athanasia are liberated from their

51 J. FAUBION (ed.), Michel Foucault. *Power. Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, III, tr. R. HURLEY et al., London, p. 341.

52 Lynda Coon describes Melania's relationship with Pinian as one in which the husband is "reduced to a passive subordinate who follows his wife's lead" (L. L. COON, *Sacred Fictions. Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity*, Philadelphia 1997, p. 114; see also CLOKE, *This Female Man of God* [cit. n. 44], pp. 114–121).

obligations as wives, and become free to lead the life that pleases them.

The fact that these women undertake initiatives and decide to found monasteries as soon as they become widows is not a literary motif, but it reflects a social reality of their times supported also by the lives of the aforementioned Palaiologan foundresses.<sup>53</sup> The empress Theodora Palaiologina,<sup>54</sup> for instance, undertakes to restore two older monasteries (Lips and Anargyroi) and to construct further buildings for the needs of the nuns after the death of her husband, emperor Michael VIII (1259–1282).<sup>55</sup> Interestingly, Theodora's career, like that of the holy women examined here, can be divided into two phases: her life as a married obedient wife and responsible mother, and her life as a widow devoted mainly to religious activities.<sup>56</sup> After the sudden death of her husband, the prince John, son of Andronikos II (1282–1328) and his second wife Irene-Yolanda of Montferrat, Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina, to mention a second example, restores the convent of Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople, whose abbess she becomes with the monastic name of Eulogia.<sup>57</sup>

As is obvious from both the female authors of our *typika* and the Lives discussed here, foundresses are in their large majority married elderly women or widows. They are namely women with more experience of social and religious life. With the only exception of Theodora of Thessalonike (ca. 812–892), the other monastic female saints,

on the contrary, are virgins taking monastic vows at a young age.<sup>58</sup> The fact that holy foundresses are in general more experienced women does not seem to be a coincidence or a literary topos. It must have been more socially acceptable and much easier for mature women, as it was for widows, to found monasteries and to become leaders of other women who were less experienced. As pointed out by Angeliki Laiou, a monastic patroness and leader “was expected to be not only a pious and wise woman, but one of great worldly experience”.<sup>59</sup>

In addition to maturity and leadership qualities, an individual planning to establish and administer a monastic community has to possess the necessary financial means. Both the authors of the female *typika* and the large majority of the protagonists of our Lives are therefore rich aristocrats whose wealth allows the construction of monastic complexes and the sustenance of life therein. A central issue in the first phase of the lives of the holy women examined here is the administration of their fortunes, which are sometimes vast. After becoming socially independent, they undertake actions towards their financial independence without which they cannot realise their monastic projects.

Their acquisition of economic autonomy is in some cases more difficult than their achievement of social independence. The emperor or their male kin is not willing to allow them to dismantle their properties on philanthropic and

53 As Alice-Mary Talbot has shown, widowhood in Byzantium was a “stage of life in which many women achieved the greatest esteem and power” (A.-M. TALBOT, *Women*, in: G. CAVALLO [ed.], *The Byzantines*, tr. T. DUNLAP et al. Chicago/London 1997, pp. 117–143, here pp. 128–129, repr. in: TALBOT, *Women* [cit. n. 28], I).

54 For Theodora see A.-M. TALBOT, *Empress Theodora Palaiologina, Wife of Michael VIII*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46, 1992, pp. 295–303, repr. in: TALBOT, *Women* (cit. n. 28), V.

55 The buildings she constructs and the properties she donates to her two convents are listed in her *typikon* of the Lips convent.

56 TALBOT, *Building Activity* (cit. n. 28), pp. 329–334.

57 For Irene-Eulogia see A. C. HERO, *Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina, Abbess of the Convent of Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 119–147, and D. NICOL, *The Byzantine Lady: Ten Portraits, 1250–1500*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 59–70.

58 See CONSTANTINO, *Female Corporeal Performances* (cit. n. 29).

59 LAIOU, *Observations* (cit. n. 24), p. 86.

other religious activities. Olympias, for instance, is for some time prevented by the emperor Theodosios I from using her own property (*Life of Olympias*, § IV). Melania's brother-in-law encourages her slaves to revolt when she and Pinian decide to sell their lands and to offer the slaves their freedom. Eventually they solve the problem by asking for the intervention of Serena (*Life of Melania*, § 10–12), the sister of emperor Honorius (393–395). Later and just before Melania and Pinian are about to leave Rome, the Senate decides to confiscate their property (*Life of Melania*, § 19). This, according to the hagiographer, is avoided through God's providence. In their attempts to achieve fiscal freedom and retention of dower, the holy foundresses reveal a further qualification they possess, that of a strong and competent negotiator.

As soon as they get hold of their own properties, the holy women start attracting ecclesiastical and monastic functionaries who desperately need their financial support in order to pursue their ecclesiastical politics. The wealthy women's appeal among the members of contemporary ecclesiastical and monastic circles is extremely strong. As Peter Brown characteristically puts it, "like the crash of avalanches heard from the upper slopes of great mountains, women such as Melania and Olympias caused the clergy and ascetics of the late fourth century to look up with awe".<sup>60</sup>

Ignoring Theodosian law, the Constantinopolitan bishop Nektarios ordains Olympias as a deaconess of his church at the very young age of thirty, while the legal age was sixty (*Codex Theodosianus* 16. 2. 27–28).<sup>61</sup> With this ordination, through which Olympias acquires authority in the church of Constantinople and gets involved in its politics, Nektarios expects Olympias to use her wealth for the support of the church and of

his own personal ambitions. This is the reason he allows himself to be *persuaded to a great degree by her even in ecclesiastical issues* (*Life of Olympias*, § XIV. 11–13). Olympias's church politics associated with the use of her property create a tension between political and ecclesiastical authorities. Following the emperor's orders, the prefect attempts unsuccessfully to prevent Olympias from having contacts with bishops and clergymen (*Life of Olympias*, § IV. 7–11). Through such a tension Olympias's position becomes even stronger. Her high social status and her appealing wealth, which she herself fully controls, allow her to interfere in both social and ecclesiastical matters.

All bishops of the cities visited by Melania and Pinian during their travels welcome them very warmly because they are interested in their wealth which they would like to see invested in their own churches. Augustine of Hippo (396–430) in particular tries without success to convince Pinian to be ordained in his church so that he could have claim on the disposition of his wealth.<sup>62</sup> Even though Augustine and his fellow African bishops Alypius and Aurelius do not manage to acquire any control over the administration of Melania's and Pinian's property, they do make the couple follow their advice concerning the use of their property: to *give both a house and an income to each monastery* instead of giving to monasteries money that *will be used up in a short time* (*Life of Melania the Younger*, § 20).<sup>63</sup> Melania's and Pinian's acceptance of the African bishops' suggestion is a diplomatic move enabling them to preserve their friendships with the bishops and, of course, the bishops' subsequent support for their own projects.

Through their social position and wealth, both Olympias and Melania dominate bishops and interfere in ecclesiastical and social matters

60 BROWN, *Body and Society* (cit. n. 3), p. 279.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 283.

62 CLOKE, *This Female Man of God* (cit. n. 44), pp. 145–148.

63 Tr. in: CLARK, *The Life of Melania the Younger* (cit. n. 20), p. 43.



while at the same time they manage to resist being directed by either political or ecclesiastical authorities. Of course, their friendly relationships with authoritative men provide them with further authority and power. These very relationships will prove extremely instrumental in their later careers as foundress-abbesses: they will allow them to promote their own interests and those of their closest friends. Olympias, for example, became a powerful abbess through her friendship with John Chrysostom when he was the bishop of Constantinople (398–404),<sup>64</sup> at whose disposal she also placed large amounts of money, while her connections with other influential people proved very useful when she was assisting her beloved John during the time of his exile.

Important contemporary bishops are interested in the rich aristocratic foundresses of the Palaiologan period too. A case in point is Irene Choumnaina Palaiologina and her spiritual father Theoleptos (ca. 1250–1326), the influential metropolitan of Philadelphia.<sup>65</sup> Theoleptos, who is a friend of Irene's father, convinces her as soon as she loses her husband to take monastic vows and to devote her large fortune to religious purposes despite her father's objections.<sup>66</sup> Irene is important to Theoleptos both for her wealth and

her kinship to the emperor.<sup>67</sup> Of course, Theoleptos's relationship with Irene proved useful for both parts. Inexperienced in monastic matters – she was only sixteen years old when she became a widow – Irene needed the assistance and religious authority of a man such as Theoleptos to found and direct a double monastery.

The independence of holy women acquired during the first phase of their lives is also expressed in their travelling activities. Apart from a very few exceptions,<sup>68</sup> these women either alone or with others travel before establishing their monastic communities; and they often continue their travels afterwards. Travelling is an element found only in foundress-abbesses' Lives. Other female monastic saints usually do not travel, and if they have to, they do so disguised as men. Travelling, on the contrary, characterises the lives of most monastic male saints.<sup>69</sup> The fact that only foundress-abbesses travel without having to hide their female identity shows that they are more active, more authoritative, and consequently manlier than other holy women.

In their travels, the holy women meet other people, especially women over whom they exercise spiritual power through their asceticism and teachings. Most of these women are inspired to

64 For John's relationship with Olympias see E. A. CLARK, *Friendship Between the Sexes. Classical Theory and Christian Practice*, in: idem (ed.), *Jerome, Chrysostom and Friends. Essays and Translations (Studies in Women and Religion, 2)*, New York/Toronto 1979, pp. 35–105; R. DELMAIRE, *Les "lettres d'exil" de Jean Chrysostome. Études de chronologie et de prosopographie*, in: *Recherches Augustiniennes*, 25, 1991, pp. 71–180; W. LIEBESCHÜTZ, *Friends and Enemies of John Chrysostom*, in: *Moffatt, Maistor* (cit. n. 39) pp. 85–111; W. MAYER, *Constantinopolitan Women in Chrysostom's Circle*, in: *Vigiliae Christianae*, 53.3, 1999, pp. 265–288; P. ROUSSEAU, "Learned Women" and the Development of a Christian Culture in Late Antiquity, in: *Symbolae Osloenses*, 70, 1995, pp. 116–147.

65 For Theoleptos see A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO (ed.), *The Life and Letters of Theoleptos of Philadelphia (Archbishop Iakovos Library of Ecclesiastical and Historical Sources, 20)*, Brookline, MA 1994.

66 A.-M. TALBOT, *The Byzantine Family and the Monastery*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 44, 1990, pp. 119–129, here p. 127.

67 For Theoleptos's influence upon the emperor Andronikos II, Irene's father-in-law, see T. GOUMA-PETERSON, *The Parecclesion of St. Euthymios of Thessalonica. Art and Monastic Policy under Andronikos II*, in: *The Art Bulletin*, 58.2, 1976, pp. 168–183, here pp. 178–179.

68 These are the following women: Macrina, Olympias and Athanasia of Aegina. Except for Macrina, who never leaves her convent, the other two women travel during their lives as foundress-abbesses.

69 See E. MALAMUT, *Sur la route des saints byzantins*, Paris 1993; T. PRATSCH, *Der hagiographische Topos. Griechische Heiligenviten in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit (Millennium Studies, 6)*, Berlin/New York 2005, pp. 147–159.

adopt the monastic life, and they thus become the first nuns of the heroines' convents. Matrona, for instance, creates her first monastic circle with the women who visit her while she is staying in a pagan temple in Beirut, and these women decide to stay with her. These same women follow her later to Constantinople where her convent is constructed. Domnika meets four pagan maidens during her stay in Alexandria whom she not only converts to Christianity, but also includes in her monastic community. In fact, the large majority of the holy women discussed here become the spiritual leaders and teachers of others long before establishing their monastic communities.<sup>70</sup>

As the preceding discussion has indicated, the chief qualifications for becoming a foundress-abbess in late antiquity and Byzantium are the following: high social and financial status, widowhood, connections, leadership qualities, piety and experience obtained through social activity and travelling. The combination of all these characteristics results in the acquisition of authority and power providing on the one hand the foundress-abbess with the licence to interfere with both secular and ecclesiastical affairs, and enabling her to lead a monastic community on the other. Undoubtedly, the foundress-abbess is the most authoritative and powerful female saint outside the virgin martyr. It is to the performance of her authority and power as enacted within the walls of her monastic community that I now turn.

As already suggested, the holy foundress-abbesses exercise their power and authority

inside their convents through their asceticism and their roles as spiritual leaders, teachers and protectors of their nuns' souls. Concerning their "self-technologies", these do not reach the extremities of those of male ascetics. In contrast to their male counterparts, foundress-abbesses neither ascend tall pillars, nor do they immobilise their bodies in chains;<sup>71</sup> yet, as mentioned earlier, they are established as ascetic authorities, since their "self-technologies" appear so strict and exemplary that no one else from their environment can perform them:

*She [Athanasia] spent three days [in Matrona's convent], then, [...] she marked how the sisters gathered together at the hour of the office, how they knelt down, how they rose up; [...] how from the evening until the morning office the blessed Matrona did not recline her body in relaxation, but sitting on a small wooden chair fulfilled her need for sleep, and how after the office and the great toil of standing she returned to the same position; and moreover, how, as the <other> nuns slept, she would stretch out her hands in tearful prayer.<sup>72</sup> (Life of Matrona, § 41)*

In the eyes of Athanasia, a laywoman visiting Matrona's convent, Matrona, who performs more difficult and painful ascetic practices than the other nuns, functions as a powerful exemplar of asceticism leading her to renounce the world and to adopt the monastic life followed in Matrona's nunnery. Here we have a graphic example of the operation of power as defined by Foucault: Matrona's actions, through which she is first transformed into a self-dominant subject

70 Macrina and Melania instruct members of their respective families. For Macrina see S. CONSTANTINO, Women Teachers in Early Byzantine Hagiography, in: F. J. RUYTS (ed.), *What Nature Does Not Teach*. Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods (Disputatio, 15), Turnhout 2008, pp. 189–204. Eusebia-Xene becomes the spiritual guide of her two servants, and Athanasia of Aegina leads to monastic life her second husband and pious women from Aegina who later enter her convent.

71 An example of a founder performing such ascetic practices is Lazaros of Mt Galesios (eleventh century; edition in AASS, Nov. III, 1910, pp. 508–606).

72 Tr. J. FEATHERSTONE, in: J. FEATHERSTONE/C. MANGO, Life of St. Matrona of Perge, in: TALBOT, Holy Women (cit. n. 39), pp. 13–64, here pp. 55–56.

and later into an authority of asceticism, direct the actions of another woman not belonging to monastic circles. Athanasia is not the only laywoman influenced by Matrona's actions. As noted previously, Matrona's practices exercise power also on the pagan women whom she meets in her travels during the first phase of her life.

That an abbess should surpass her nuns in ascetic practices so that she may function as their model and guide is also noted in the female *typika*. For example, in her advisory words addressed to the future superiors of her convent, Theodora Synadene says:

*Expound that which is necessary and leads to salvation [...] through your actions and deeds. Surpass the others in virtue, thereby giving sure pledges and guarantees to your followers, that the achievement of virtue and the good is by no means impossible (Typikon of Bebaia Elpis, § 27).*<sup>73</sup>

In general, for the holy foundress-abbess, the ascetic life consists of daily exercises and practices through which she attempts to transform herself into a bodiless existence in order to both edify her disciples and achieve the status of holiness. All holy women under examination wear rough, hairy vestments leaving their flesh consumed. They eat and drink sparingly. Eusebia-Xene, for example, remains without food for a week, and when she eats she takes some bread combined with ashes taken from the censer (*Life of Eusebia-Xene*, § 11.22–28). Through their strict fasts, the holy women acquire new bodies, with skin that sticks to bones. They go without sleep, as demonstrated by the example of Matrona mentioned above; and when they do sleep, they use the ground, a board or a stone for a bed. They refuse to sleep on a more comfortable bed even

when they are seriously ill. Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, is surprised to find his sister Macrina lying on a board on the ground while suffering from a deathly illness (*Life of Macrina*, § 13–19). For some time, Melania sleeps in a wooden box whose size prevents her from stretching out and turning over (*Life of Melania*, § 40), while the haircloth garment she lies on is full of lice (*Life of Melania*, § 32). Apart from violating their bodily needs, the foundress-abbesses transform their daily lives into living liturgies: they continuously pray in tears, and they sing hymns.<sup>74</sup>

The ascetic virtue that distinguishes holy foundress-abbesses is humility. Humility is a further empowering technology, since it allows the individual to acquire self-knowledge through self-renunciation, the very condition of salvation (Mt. 16.25, Mk. 8.34–35, Lk. 14.25–26). As formulated by Foucault, there is “no truth about the self without a sacrifice of the self.”<sup>75</sup> The foundress-abbesses' humility, which becomes a recurrent theme in their Lives, is presented by one of the hagiographers in the following way:

*So what account could explain, what tongue could present the loftiness of her great humility? For she would never allow <herself> to be served by anyone of them nor <allow> water to be poured over her hands <by anyone> during her entire lifetime [...]. Considering herself unworthy to be with them, let alone be served by them (even though she was mother superior) [...]. Although enduring many tribulations, inasmuch as she was the leader of her sisters and was concerned about them, she never upbraided any of them because of the great humility she had attained.*<sup>76</sup> (*Life of Athanasia of Aegina*, § 4, § 5)

73 Tr. A.-M. TALBOT, in: BMFD, IV, p. 1531.

74 For an investigation of liturgical piety and practice in *Macrina's Life*, for example, see KRUEGER, Writing and Liturgy of Memory (cit. n. 6).

75 M. FOUCAULT, About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self. Two Lectures at Dartmouth, in: Political Theory, 21.2, 1993, pp. 198–227, here p. 222.

76 Tr. in: SHERRY, Life of St. Athanasia of Aegina, (cit. n. 39), pp. 145–146.

As the passage above suggests, humility is central in the case of the foundress-abbess because it is strongly related to her role as spiritual guide. Being an individual of high social and economic background, it is essential that she cultivate humility. In fact, humility is one of the very qualities constituting a powerful sign of her transformation from a rich aristocrat into a servant of God, as suggested by the following extract from *Melania's Life*:

*She [the empress Serena] was greatly moved when she saw the blessed woman in that humble garment. [...] Serena called together all the servants [...] and began to speak to them in this manner: "Come, see the woman who four years ago was beheld vigorous in all her worldly rank, who has now grown old in heavenly wisdom. Behold, she has trod underfoot the softness of her upbringing, the massiveness of her wealth, the pride of her worth."<sup>77</sup> (*Life of Melania*, § 12)*

It is mainly through her own humility that the foundress-abbess may encourage the acquisition of virtues on the part of her nuns: if she, who *had been delicately raised as a member of such an important family* (*Life of Melania*, § 31)<sup>78</sup> acts in such humble ways, then they her disciples, most of whom used to be socially and financially inferior during their lives in the world, cannot behave differently.

In the case of the foundress-abbess in particular, humility does not just function as a strong indication of the renunciation of a former self. It is also a practice allowing her to govern her present self both as an ascetic authority and as the "owner" and manager of a whole monastic com-

munity. On the one hand, humility enables the foundress-abbess to escape the danger of becoming proud of her spiritual achievements: *Although she possessed such great and numerous virtues, she never became proud about her own righteous deeds, but always made herself lowly, called herself a useless servant* (*Life of Melania*, § 32).<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, through humility the foundress-abbess fulfils her role as a guide leading other women to salvation, and she secures their obedience and devotion:

*Melania busied herself greatly to take care of the nuns' physical needs. [...] Secretly she took them the things they needed. [...] The sisters, however, knew from the manner in which it was done that the saint was the one who had provided these things, and they were eager to cleave to her to a remarkable degree, to obey her in all things, for they knew her boundless compassion.<sup>80</sup> (*Life of Melania*, § 41)*

It is mainly for its value both as an empowering virtue and as a means of monastic discipline that humility is stressed also in the female *typika*. The reference to humility in these documents takes two forms: it is either a self-presentation of the patroness as a *humble servant* and sinful individual,<sup>81</sup> or an exhortation addressed to nuns and especially future abbesses of the convent in the following manner:

*The dignity of authority is great and lofty is the honor of leadership. But let not this dignity puff you up, or the honor exalt you. For this puffing up and exaltation prepares the one who has thus puffed up and raised herself to fall from the blessing of humility, and makes her to fall*

77 CLARK, *The Life of Melania the Younger* (cit. n. 20), p. 35.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 48.

79 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

80 *Ibid.*, p. 55.

81 Theodora Synadene, for example, calls herself the *humble servant* of her convent's nuns (*Typikon of Bebaia Elpis*, § 117). She also writes that she established a convent for the abolition of her *unspeakable sins* (*Typikon of Bebaia Elpis*, § 11). In a similar fashion talk about themselves Irene Doukaina Komnene (*Typikon of Kecharitomene*, § 78) and Theodora Palaiologina (*Typikon of Lips*, § 52).

*into the sin and trap of the devil because of her arrogance and pride. Therefore in the disposition of your heart and the secret [recesses] of your soul you should consider yourself a worthless maidservant and lowly slave granted by God for this purpose to the servants and daughters and brides of Christ himself, but by your external appearance you should show the distinction of the total authority and power which you have over them all. [...] Well-honoured humility may be taught by your praiseworthy condition. Furthermore, in the conviction that authority over the majority and concern for them makes you rather their slave and servant, and that you will have to give a greater accounting to God on behalf of the majority, do not make this cause for pride or fill your heart with much anguish and fear and unspeakable terror. Do not be arrogant because of your authority, but be humble because of the great concern and thought about the defence [you will have to make]. Thus you will set yourself forth as a fine example for your subordinates [...] of humility.*<sup>82</sup> (*Typikon of Bebaia Elpis*, § 34, § 35)

Through their repeated ascetic practices, the foundress-abbesses establish a set of norms as to how their nuns should operate. The evaluation of the nuns' asceticism is based upon the rules set by the superior's self-technologies. They are expected to imitate their leader to the best of their ability. The holy women are successful in creating communities whose all female members perform the expected monastic behaviour, the one leading to salvation, which is also witnessed by the visitors of their convents. Gregory of Nyssa describes the life of the nuns in his sister's convent with the following words:

*Such was the order of their life, so lofty their philosophy and the dignity of their way of life as they lived it day and night [...]. For just as souls*

*freed by death from their bodies are freed at the same time from the cares of this life, so too their life was far removed from these things, divorced from all earthly vanities and attuned to the imitation of the angelic life. For no high temper, or jealousy, or hostility, or arrogance, or any such thing was to be seen among them, since they had cast off all vain desires for honour and glory, and self-importance, and pre-eminence and the like. Their luxury was in self-control and their glory in being unknown. Their wealth was in dispossession and in shaking off all material superfluity as so much dust from their bodies. They were not occupied with the pursuits of this life, or rather, not preoccupied, but solely with meditation on divine things, unceasing prayer and uninterrupted hymnody, which was extended evenly over the whole time, throughout the night and day, so that it became for them both work and respite from work.*<sup>83</sup> (*Life of Macrina*, § 11.13–33)

The foundress-abbesses are expected to guide their disciples not only through exemplary "self-technologies", but also through corresponding teachings, as indicated by the advice that Bassianos gives to Matrona before the latter is about to found a monastic community in Constantinople:

*Go, my child, settle yourself and save the souls that the Lord shall send you. Preserve yourself and present your way of life as a model to those who are being saved, that those who are taught by you may see the things you teach through words being fulfilled in you through deeds.*<sup>84</sup> (*Life of Matrona*, § 29)

In general, the holy women teach their disciples to undergo painful ascetic practices, to fight against temptation armed with prayer and faith, to acquire virtues such as chastity, voluntary poverty and humility, and to renounce human pas-

82 Tr. A.-M. TALBOT, in: BMFD, IV, p. 1533.

83 Tr. in: SILVAS, *Macrina the Younger* (cit. n. 18), pp. 121–122.

84 Tr. J. FEATHERSTONE, in: FEATHERSTONE/MANGO, *Life of St. Matrona* (cit. n. 72), p. 46.

sions.<sup>85</sup> Similar teachings are also to be found in the female *typika*. Obviously, the teachings of the holy foundress-abbesses lie in full accordance with their own way of life presented earlier. The appearance of their ascetic bodies and their whole behaviour constitute striking manifestations of the life they ask their disciples to lead.

The power and authority gained by the foundress-abbesses through their teaching projects involving both their edifying deeds and words are in some cases perceived and described by their disciples through the metaphor of light. Upon Macrina's death, her nuns, for example, exclaim:

*The lamp of our eyes is extinguished! The light that guided our souls is taken away! The surety of our life is dissolved! The seal of incorruptibility is removed! The bond of our harmony is broken! The firmness of the vacillating is trampled asunder! The cure of the infirm is withdrawn! With you the night became for us as the day, for we were illuminated by your pure life. But now even our day shall be changed to deep gloom.*<sup>86</sup> (*Life of Macrina*, §26.23–29)

According to her nuns, Macrina was the light allowing them to see, the light illuminating their lives and the light showing them which path to follow. Through her way of life and teachings, Macrina transformed the darkness of her nuns' primary ignorance into the light of Christian knowledge. Macrina's loss has now brought a deep darkness in her nuns' lives. They have lost their leader, the person who guided their lives providing them with meaning and purpose. As one may assume from the nuns' words, the idea that Macrina was their light is very central in

their understanding of her essential role in their lives.<sup>87</sup> Now the teacher as person has gone forever; the disciples will not see Macrina, and will never hear her voice again.<sup>88</sup> However, Macrina's personality and teachings, as well as those of all foundress-abbesses, remain alive in the memories of the disciples who despite their leaders' death will continue their monastic lives according to the rules set by them. Just before their deaths the holy foundress-abbesses name their successors and exhort their disciples to keep their monastic rules unchanged. In a similar fashion the authors of the *typika* stress the importance of the rules set by them in their documents, and express their strong wish that they remain unaltered.

The foundress-abbess's career does not end with her death, as Irene Doukaina reminds the nuns of her convent, *but even if we are absent in the body, you should think that we are present with you in spirit* (*Typikon of Kecharitomene*, §78).<sup>89</sup> The foundress-abbess's post-mortem gifts, patronage, authority and power are expressed in visionary appearances and miracles.<sup>90</sup> For her disciples and admirers, she does not cease to be the patroness of her nunnery even after her death. Through miracles of protection and vengeance, which cannot be presented here, she defends her convent from trespass, plunder, attack and subversion.

This analysis has attempted to show that even if she often seems to disappear in literary conventions and male fantasies, desires and ideologies the ancient lady does exist, and has to be studied. Her presence in both ecclesiastical and

85 For the teaching projects of Byzantine foundress-abbesses see CONSTANTINO, *Female Corporeal Performances* (cit. n. 29), pp. 136–152, and idem, *Women Teachers* (cit. n. 70).

86 Tr. in: SILVAS, *Macrina the Younger* (cit. n. 18), pp. 136–137.

87 Macrina's great importance for her disciples is discussed in more detail in: J. W. SMITH, *A Just and Reasonable Grief. The Death and Function of a Holy Woman in Gregory of Nyssa's Life of Macrina*, in: *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 12.1, 2004, pp. 57–84.

88 See also CONSTANTINO, *Women Teachers* (cit. n. 70), pp. 202–203.

89 Tr. R. JORDAN, in: *BMFD*, II, p. 706.

90 See, for example, *Life of Domnika*, §18–19 and *Life of Athanasia of Aegina*, §14–18.

monastic contexts is extremely prominent especially when, having the necessary means, she undertakes the roles of patroness and leader. There is no doubt that such women as the ones Theodora Synadene orders the nuns of her convent to choose as their future superiors existed:

*Such should be the woman who leads the others; such a woman you must all seek and choose from among yourselves, one who is able [...] by speech and action to instruct her disciples in the fixed word of truth and the holy lessons of piety, and to instil zeal for the truly good, and to kindle your souls with fine love for this, and thus in no way whatever fail to attain the goal. She should provide herself as an example to you and model of the good, and*

*whether speaking or silent present herself to you as an exhortation.*<sup>91</sup> (*Typikon of Bebaia Elpis*, § 25)

Even if such pious and gifted women were not always present, Theodora's words reveal what kind of character, abilities and behaviour an abbess was expected to have. As the investigation undertaken here has manifested, in order for a late antique or Byzantine woman to become the successful abbess suggested by Theodora, that is an authoritative woman able to lead others, and gain their submission and devotion, she had to be an exceptional, courageous and influential actor in various settings: social, ecclesiastical and monastic.

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91 Tr. A.-M. TALBOT, in: BMFD, IV, p. 1530.

MAKING A NAME:  
REPUTATION AND IMPERIAL FOUNDING  
AND REFOUNDING IN CONSTANTINOPLE

LIZ JAMES

How could the building of churches influence the reputation of an empress and how could reputation play a part in the associations made between empresses and churches? Work on women patrons in the 1990s established that women's patronage of the arts, like men's, could be seen on two levels, the personal and the political.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the former, the reasons behind patronage were as individual and varied as the patrons themselves. On the political level, however, women's patronage was understood as having a more urgent purpose than men's. The political and symbolic benefits for men in terms of the patriarchal power structures of the medieval and Byzantine worlds have been widely discussed.<sup>2</sup> In the case of female patrons, founding buildings and paying for the arts offered a space for those disempowered to greater or lesser extents by "the system" to assert their own political agenda. It became clear that cultural authority in the Middle Ages and Byzantium functioned in a socially sanctioned way for women in particular

to achieve political goals, to gain spiritual benefits, to enhance their own positions and their own families, perhaps in dynastic terms, and to accrue symbolic credit for themselves, as learned, as pious, as virtuous. This symbolic credit could then be transferred to other spheres, including political power. A cycle developed in which it becomes apparent that the building of a church could lead to a reputation for piety and virtue and that in turn could lead to the ascription of more churches to the individual. Founding and re-founding therefore became one element in the establishment of reputation and the commemoration of certain individuals ahead of others. Matronage, to borrow Leslie Brubaker's term, was never simply art for art's sake.<sup>3</sup>

Reputation in the context of founding and, more particularly, re-founding buildings is a central issue. It is well-known that a "good reputation" played an important role in establishing standing and authority in Imperial Rome and Renaissance Italy, one that could be both gained

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My thanks to the unknown reader for some valuable thoughts and questions.

- 1 See, for example, J. H. McCASH (ed.), *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, Athens, GA/London 1996, esp. A. L. McCLANAN, *The Empress Theodora and the Tradition of Women's Patronage in the Early Byzantine Empire*, pp. 50–72; L. BRUBAKER, *Memories of Helena: Patterns in Imperial Female Matronage in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries*, in: L. JAMES (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium*, London/New York 1997, pp. 52–75; B. HILL, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025–1204. Power, Patronage and Ideology*, Harlow 1999; L. GARLAND, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium*, London/New York 1999; L. JAMES, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium*, Leicester 2001, ch. 9.
- 2 R. CORMACK, *Writing in Gold*, London 1985, esp. ch. 5, and R. CORMACK, *Patronage and New Programmes of Byzantine Iconography*, in: *17th International Byzantine Congress, Major Papers*, Washington, DC 1986, pp. 609–638.
- 3 BRUBAKER, *Memories of Helena* (cit. n. 1).



and enhanced by patronage of the arts; the same was true in Byzantium.<sup>4</sup> The concept of “reputation” itself derived from Aristotle, one of the most influential of philosophers in Byzantium, and his definition of it against a background of qualities of honour, magnificence and liberality, all perceived as qualities made manifest through a patronage of the arts.<sup>5</sup> These virtues were highly rated in Roman times, but they are just as relevant for Byzantium. They featured among the qualities of a good ruler, recast to some extent to incorporate philanthropy and piety.<sup>6</sup> Because building was a large-scale, expensive, highly visible activity, an act of public display and a claim to some form of public recognition, it was a significant act in Byzantium, whoever the patron. As such, it was a political action, as many emperors recognised. Theodosios II is supposed to have banished his city prefect, Kyros, after the crowd cheered that *Constantine built, Kyros rebuilt*, ignoring the emperor altogether.<sup>7</sup>

Building a church was especially significant for it established one’s piety in public and for an emperor or empress, displayed the key imperial qualities of piety and philanthopia, whilst establishing intimacy with God. The epigram from St Polyeuktos hailed Anicia Juliana as *pi-ous, righteous*, a doer of good works; that from Sts Sergios and Bacchos described Justinian and

Theodora as *fostering piety* and *bright with piety* respectively, and praised Theodora for nourishing the destitute. For some Byzantine authors, one claim to reputation for the good emperor was that he built churches, whilst bad emperors demolished them. The Iconophile Theophanes claimed that Constantine the Great, Pulcheria, Justinian and Theodora, Justin II, Tiberios, and Irene, the mother of Constantine VI, all imperial figures he approves of, were all builders, whilst Justinian II (castigated for demanding a prayer from the patriarch to initiate the demolition of a church) and the iconoclast emperors, were all destroyers.<sup>8</sup>

As a result, refounding and rebuilding had the potential to be as significant, and perhaps more significant, than building in the first instance. Refounding offered patrons a chance to associate themselves with the original patron. That might allow them to inherit the lustre of the earlier founder or to be seen to out-do them publicly, or, better, both. In the epigram on the church of St Polyeuktos, Anicia Juliana is hailed as refounder, in the footsteps of Eudokia the empress, but as surpassing her.<sup>9</sup> Once a reputation was established for honour, magnificence, piety, philanthropy and other virtues, then other benefits inevitably accrued to the individual. Anicia Juliana may well have wished to suggest her

4 The Pantheon being a case in point see J. ELSNER, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph*, Oxford 1998, pp. 69–70. For the Renaissance see J. BURKE, *Changing Patrons: Social Identity and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Florence*, University Park, PA 2004; J. NELSON/R. ZECKHAUSER, *The Patron’s Payoff: Conspicuous Commission in Italian Renaissance Art*, Princeton 2008.

5 ARISTOTLE, *On rhetoric*, 1, 5, 8 and 9, for example: tr. J. H. FREESE, *Aristoteles, The Art of Rhetoric*, London 1926.

6 For proper imperial behaviour see S. McCORMACK, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley 1981, pp. 263–265; JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 1), ch. 2.

7 *Chronicon Paschale*, yr. 450, ed. L. DINDORF, *Chronicon Pascale*, Bonn 1832, tr. M. WHITBY/M. WHITBY, *Chronicon Pascale AD 284–632*, Liverpool 1989; JOHN MALALAS, *Chronographia*, ed. I. THURN, *Ioannis Malalae chronographia*, Berlin/New York 2000, p. 282, tr. E. JEFFREYS/M. JEFFREYS/R. SCOTT, *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, Melbourne 1986.

8 THEOPHANES, *Chronographia*, e.g. AM 5901 (Pulcheria), AM 6042 (Justinian), AM 6064 (Justin II), AM 6073 (Tiberios); AM 6186 (prayer for the demolition of a church); AM 6259 (Constantine V), ed. C. DE BOOR, *Theophanes, Chronographia*, Leipzig 1883–5, tr. C. MANGO/R. SCOTT, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, Oxford 1997.

9 *Greek Anthology* 1, 10, 1 and 7–10, text and tr. W. R. PATON, *The Greek Anthology*, Cambridge, MA/London 1916.

possession of appropriate imperial virtues. And as reputations changed over time, so too did the founders and refounders of buildings. Not all were as extreme as the case of St Polyeuktos which was abandoned by the twelfth century, not even warranting a refounding, but, as we shall see, several churches had founders who were affected by refounders.

For women, there was an added dimension in both founding and refounding. In late antique and Byzantine society, women had no public roles.<sup>10</sup> However, as Anicia Juliana's St Polyeuktos showed, in building a church, a woman gained access to a public space and was able to make a legitimate statement and civic display of her piety and, consequently, of her wealth and standing.<sup>11</sup> This was particularly useful for empresses whose access to the public world was also limited. They, as much as, or even more than, emperors, could benefit from establishing a reputation for piety and philanthropy as a result of their building activities, and in some cases, these reputations outlasted them.<sup>12</sup> It was Helena whose building activities seem to have led to a belief that church building was what empresses did, and empresses from then on could earn themselves the title of a "new" Helena in part through

their construction works.<sup>13</sup> The fifth-century Theodosian empresses, Eudoxia, Eudokia and Pulcheria, were all keen builders and all earned various reputations for piety, linked in part with major construction projects: the Eudoxiana in Gaza for Eudoxia; churches in the Holy Land for Eudokia; churches in Constantinople for Pulcheria.<sup>14</sup> Their successor, Verina, was another empress whose reputation as pious and faithful, *beloved of God* and as a *new Helena* derived, at least in part, from her church-building activities.<sup>15</sup> Even Justinian's Theodora established a potentially-lasting reputation for virtue through her church building, for the inscription inside the church of Sts Sergios and Bacchos talks of *God-crowned Theodora, whose mind is adorned with piety, whose constant toil lies in efforts to nourish the destitute*, and both this church and Hagia Sophia display her monogram prominently.<sup>16</sup> It is no surprise, therefore, that building churches became a standard female imperial activity between the fifth and seventh centuries. From Eudoxia, wife of the emperor Arkadios, building in the early fifth century, down to Constantina, the wife of Maurice, every Eastern empress is credited somewhere in the written sources with some form of building activity.<sup>17</sup>

10 JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 1); J. HERRIN, *The Imperial Feminine in Byzantium*, in: *Past and Present*, 169, 2000, pp. 3–35.

11 B. KILLERICH, *The Image of Anicia Juliana in the Vienna Dioscurides: Flattery or Appropriation of Imperial Imagery?*, in: *Symbolae Osloenses*, 76, 2001, pp. 169–190.

12 JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 1), ch. 9.

13 BRUBAKER, *Memories of Helena* (cit. n. 1), pp. 62–63.

14 The reputations of these women are all linked to their versions of Orthodoxy and that version of Orthodoxy practiced by the particular author. For example, Eudokia was revered in the monophysite tradition, which had only censure for Pulcheria, see JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 1), pp. 16–20; R. SCOTT, *Text and Context in Byzantine Historiography*, in: L. JAMES (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium*, Oxford 2010, pp. 251–262.

15 The text is in Paris, BN ms. Gr. 1447, fols. 257, 58, ed. in: A. WENGER, *Notes inédites sur les empereurs Théodose I, Arcadius, Théodose II, Léon I*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 10, 1952, pp. 47–59, from p. 54 on, and tr. in C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, Toronto 1972, pp. 34–35. For Verina's role in the tenth century see WENGER, *Notes inédites*; M. JUGIE, *L'église de Chalcostrate et le culte de la ceinture de la Sainte vierge à Constantinople*, in: *Échos d'Orient*, 16, 1913, p. 308.

16 Greek text and tr. in: A. VAN MILLINGEN, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople: Their History and Architecture*, London 1912, pp. 73–74.

17 For Constantina see Pope GREGORY, *Epistle* 4, 30, in: PL 77, 701A, and R. JANIN, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin*, I: *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat œcuménique*, III: *Les églises et les monastères*, Paris

In Constantinople, building empresses tended also to be associated with emperors who built.<sup>18</sup> Constantine I, son of Helena, is ascribed at least eighteen churches; Marcian five alone, and four with his wife Pulcheria; Leo I six, and one with his wife, Verina; Anastasios at least eight, and three more in association with Ariadne, together with the rebuilding of a Constantinian church; Justinian at least ten as builder and seventeen more as a refounder; Justin II seven and three with Sophia.<sup>19</sup> Other emperors such as Theodosios I, Theodosios II, Zeno, Justin I are all also credited with church building, but to a lesser extent. Underlining an impression that church building developed into an action performed by the imperial couple together, on many occasions, as the figures above make clear, emperor and empress were credited together: Marcian and Pulcheria; Anastasios and Ariadne; Justinian and Theodora; Justin and Sophia. It may be that, in building, the empress's patronage complemented that of her husband for elsewhere when emperor and empress are credited together,

the virtues of the empress supplement, clarify and exalt the virtues of the emperor, underlining the depiction of the imperial couple working towards the same goals.<sup>20</sup>

Where empresses are not recorded as building churches, it is often the case that their husbands are not renowned as builders. No churches are credited to Phokas and Leontia, for example, or to Herakleios and either Fabia or Martina.

Although building a church reflected a public display of piety and philanthropy, coupled with a public demonstration of the ability to build in Constantinople, this activity may also have had more specific individual purposes. The Orthodox Ariadne's building work with Anastasios perhaps bolstered the reputation for piety of that theologically doubtful emperor, and may also have underlined his legitimacy as emperor through his marriage. Theodora's work at Sergios and Bacchos has been associated with her protection of a sizeable group of leading Monophysites within the Hormisdas palace.<sup>21</sup> If so, it was a sign of her power that she could shelter, protect and advance

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1953, church of St Paul, p. 393. For fuller details of empresses' building activities see JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 1), ch. 9, esp. pp. 150–151.

- 18 My calculations in this paragraph, with the exception of Justinian, where the details given by Prokopios in his *Buildings* were added in, are all drawn from Janin's *Églises*. Since it is generally accepted that Janin's work, though valuable, is in need of updating, these figures should not be taken as including every church built. They do, however, provide a sense of who was and was not a church builder. For Constantine's churches, also see G. DAGRON, *Naissance d'une capitale*, Paris 1974, pp. 391–409, and G. DAGRON, *Constantinople imaginaire. Études sur le recueil des "Patria"*, Paris 1984, pp. 78–97, on Constantine's role as a founder in the city. For Justinian's churches, Prokopios's *Buildings* serve as a unique source; and see G. DOWNEY, *Justinian as a Builder*, in: *Art Bulletin*, 32, 1950, pp. 262–266.
- 19 For why Anastasios might have been regarded as a good thing see P. MAGDALINO, *The Distance of the Past in Early Medieval Byzantium*, in: *Ideologie e pratiche del reimpiego nell'alto medioevo* (Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 46), Spoleto 1999, p. 137.
- 20 Such a case of complementarity is apparent, though not in the context of building, in Corippus's poem celebrating the accession of Justin II, *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris*, ed. and tr. A. M. CAMERON, *Corippus, Flavius Cresconius, In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris libri IV*, London 1976, section II, lines 10–84. As far as I am aware, there are no empresses renowned for building in Constantinople when their husbands were not. Eudoxia's church in Gaza was commemorated locally and neither she nor Arkadios have much of a building record in Constantinople. Further afield, Galla Placidia was a notable builder in Ravenna, again seemingly divorced from male influence.
- 21 C. MANGO, *The Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople and the Alleged Tradition of Octagonal Palatine Churches*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 21, 1972, pp. 189–193, and C. MANGO, *The Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus Once Again*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 68, 1975, pp. 385–392; for a different view see J. BARDILL, *The Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople and the Monophysite Refugees*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 54, 2000, pp. 1–11.

the cause of the monophysites. Some Byzantine sources suggest that Theodora and Justinian balanced out Orthodox and monophysite claims; if that was the case, then this church offered a concrete demonstration of their collaboration.<sup>22</sup>

The effect of a reputation for piety and correct Christian behaviour offered an empress an additional level of authority and prestige beyond that of her office alone.<sup>23</sup> The building activities, real and otherwise, of the Augustae Pulcheria and Eudokia reveal something of the importance that such status could have for an empress.<sup>24</sup> If the view of the two as rivals is accepted, then their building of churches can be seen as something of a competition for the better standing and renown.

Pulcheria is said to have built the church of St Lawrence, the church of the Forty Martyrs, to have begun the church of the Prophet Isaiah and the chapel of St Stephen, and, together with her husband Marcian, to have built the churches of St Menas and of St Mokios.<sup>25</sup> She is also credited with building the church of the Virgin Chalkoprateia and the church of the Virgin at Blachernai.<sup>26</sup> Eudokia built churches in the Levant, notably of St Stephen and of St Peter in Jerusalem. Her building work in Constantinople itself, the centre of imperial power, appears to

have been restricted, perhaps only to St Polyeuktos.<sup>27</sup> Almost all of Pulcheria's recorded building work was in Constantinople, thus establishing her buildings as public monuments at the heart of empire and herself as both powerful enough to be able to build in this fashion, and worthy enough of any good reputation that might develop from these works. In contrast, Eudokia's foundations were in Jerusalem but these, coupled with her pilgrimages to the Holy Land, allowed her to be hailed as a new Helena and to gain a standing for holiness and piety. Such a reputation for imperial virtue placed her sanctity on a level with that publicly pious virgin, Pulcheria. The rivalry is also potentially visible in the timings of building work. Sozomenos claims that Pulcheria discovered and housed the relics of the Forty Martyrs at some point between 434 and 446.<sup>28</sup> This period coincided with the return of Eudokia from Jerusalem in a blaze of saintliness after her building activities there, activities that might demand a well-considered pious riposte on the part of Pulcheria. Interestingly, a later text, the *Chronicon Paschale*, dates the discovery of the relics to 451.<sup>29</sup> This was the year in which Pulcheria and Marcian were married and crowned, and so was also a suitable moment for a divine revelation, in this instance to establish

22 EVAGRIOS, *Ecclesiastical History*, ch. 10, ed. J. BIDEZ/L. PARMENTIER, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius with the Scholia*, London 1898, repr. Amsterdam 1964. French tr. by A. J. FESTUGIÈRE, *Evagre, Histoire ecclésiastique*, in: *Byzantion*, 44, 1975, pp. 187–488; PROKOPIOS, *Secret History*, ch. 10.15, text and tr. H. B. DEWING, *Procopius, The Anecdota or Secret History*, Cambridge, MA/London 1914–1940.

23 Argued in JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 1).

24 K. HOLM, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1982; C. ANGELIDI, *Pulcheria. La castita al potere*, Milan 1996, especially on Pulcheria's later reputation; JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 1).

25 For Pulcheria's building in Constantinople, both religious and secular, see DAGRON, *Naissance* (cit. n. 18), pp. 97, 400–401; C. MANGO, *Le développement urbain de Constantinople*, Paris 1990.

26 THEODORE LECTOR, *Epitome*, 363; also statements by NIKEPHOROS KALLISTOS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ch. 14, 2.49 and ch. 15, 14, in: *PG* 145–147.

27 *Greek Anthology*, 1, 105 (cit. n. 9). For Eudokia's buildings in the Holy Land see E. D. HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312–460*, Oxford 1982, pp. 239–242.

28 SOZOMENOS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 9,2, ed. J. BIDEZ/G. C. HANSEN, *Kirchengeschichte*, Berlin 1960, tr. E. WALFORD, *Sozomen and Philostorgius*, London 1855.

29 *Chronicon Paschale*, yr. 451 (cit. n. 7).

that, despite apparently breaking her vow of virginity, Pulcheria was still blessed by God.<sup>30</sup>

If the two empresses were in competition during their lives, then the struggle continued with their reputations after death. The monophysite Eudokia became increasingly overlooked, her reputation distorted by allegations of adultery and marital dispute. Theophanes, writing in the ninth century, omitted any mention of her building work, though he allowed that she made donations to churches in Jerusalem. Instead, he described her provincial birth, dubious Orthodoxy and dysfunctional marital relations, and established Pulcheria as the winner in any power struggle.<sup>31</sup> The tenth-century *Patria*, a text concerned with buildings in Constantinople and their founders, telling us what some of the inhabitants of Constantinople believed or found plausible about their city, makes no mention of her building activities, focusing again on her birth, her dubious Orthodoxy and her unhappy relationship with Theodosios II.<sup>32</sup> The Orthodox Pulcheria, however, is celebrated by both The-

ophanes and the *Patria* for her building works, in company with her illustrious birth, pious virginity and successful control of imperial affairs.<sup>33</sup>

A similar story around reputation can be seen to play out over the foundation of the churches of the Virgin Chalkoprateia and the Virgin Blachernitissa. It has been widely accepted, from the ninth century almost to the present, that Pulcheria built both.<sup>34</sup> However, as Cyril Mango has argued convincingly, it is almost certain that these two churches were the foundation of the later fifth-century empress, Verina, wife of Leo I, and Verina has been gradually replaced in the historical record by Pulcheria.<sup>35</sup> This seems a case of reputation influencing histories of founding and refounding.

That both churches were founded by Verina and Leo makes religious and political sense. Verina and Leo were the first rulers actively to promote a cult of Mary after the Council of Ephesos.<sup>36</sup> An additional political motive may be supplied by the circumstances of Leo's accession. He was originally raised to power by Aspar,

30 There may well also have been a further political significance that we have not appreciated that lies behind the discovery of the Forty, rather than any other saint. For the changing significances of relics see I. KALAVREZOU, *Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial Ceremonies and the Cult of Relics at the Byzantine Court*, in: H. MAGUIRE (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, Washington, DC 1997, pp. 53–80.

31 For example, THEOPHANES, *Chronographia* (cit. n. 8), AM 5947.

32 As in the *Parastaseis*, ch. 64, ed. and tr. A. M. CAMERON/J. HERRIN, *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, Leiden 1984, pp. 140–141; THEOPHANES, *Chronographia* (cit. n. 8), AM 5940. It is interesting that it is a thirteenth-/fourteenth-century historian, Nikephoros Kallistos, who gives the most detailed list of Eudokia's building activities, including the sums of money spent. Although this testimony is very dubious, it does indicate a revitalised reputation for piety on the part of this empress.

33 *Patria Constantinopoleos*, III, ch. 63, 71, 74, ed. T. PREGER, *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum*, Leipzig 1907; *Parastaseis*, ch. 33 and 45 (cit. n. 32).

34 HOLUM, *Theodosian Empresses* (cit. n. 24).

35 See C. MANGO, *Addenda to the Development of Constantinople as an Urban Centre*, in: C. MANGO, *Studies on Constantinople*, Aldershot 1993, esp. p. 4; C. MANGO, *The Origins of the Blachernae Shrine at Constantinople*, in: *Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae*, II, Vatican City/Split 1998, pp. 61–76, and C. MANGO, *Constantinople as Theotokoupolis*, in: M. VASSILAKI (ed.), *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, Exhibition Catalogue, Milan 2000, pp. 17–26. Mango also dismisses her association with the Hodegoi. For Verina's patronage see C. MANGO, *The Chalkoprateia Annunciation and the Pre-Eternal Logos*, in: *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Ηεταρείας*, 17, 1993–94, pp. 165–170. Also, L. JAMES, *The Empress and the Virgin in Early Byzantium: Piety, Authority and Devotion*, in: M. VASSILAKI (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God*, Aldershot 2005, pp. 145–152.

36 B. PENTCHEVA, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium*, University Park, PA 2005, pp. 12, 189.

who as an Alan and more especially as an Arian Christian, could not hope to hold imperial power himself. Leo made himself increasingly independent of Aspar and it is not unreasonable that, in seeking to establish both his independence and his Orthodoxy, he and Verina founded churches. Faith and politics come together in the inscription Leo and Verina are recorded by a tenth-century text as writing on the costly chest in which they housed the Virgin's robe: *By showing reverence here to the Theotokos, they secured the power of their basileia*, their imperial power.<sup>37</sup> In demonstrating especial imperial devotion to the Mother of God for the first time, they perhaps sought to establish her as their special protector and patron; in building for the glory of God and the benefit of the subjects of the empire, Leo and Verina could be seen as displaying their fitness to rule and their harmonious relationship with the deity who protected their empire, asserting that both God and his Mother were on their side. But, by the ninth century, Verina, Leo and their particular political and personal motives seem to have been forgotten. Instead, as Theophanes tells us, Pulcheria was the founder of the churches of the Virgin Chalkoprateia and the Blachernai.<sup>38</sup>

Here, I suggest, reputation played a part in Byzantine perceptions. By the ninth century, Verina was established in the majority of surviving textual sources as a troublesome figure, an overmighty female with ideas above her standing, a woman of uncertain Orthodoxy, a witch and the Whore of Babylon.<sup>39</sup> Pulcheria, on the other hand, with the defeat of Nestorios and the establishment of Mary as Theotokos at the Council of Ephesos, was a heroine of Orthodox believ-

ers. For Theophanes, she was a pious empress first and foremost.<sup>40</sup> The *Souda* records that *she managed the kingdom very well, being most wise and having a god-like mind* and that *having herself founded many churches and poorhouses and hostels and monasteries she appropriated the revenues [from them] and by other numerous successes God often appeared through her*.<sup>41</sup> Who then had the better reputation? And who was the more likely founder of two of the great Marian churches of Constantinople? And, indeed, with whom was it better for those churches to be associated? It is also unsurprising that the Hodegoi, which is first mentioned in the ninth century, should also appear as a Pulcherian foundation: whom better to ascribe it to?

What all of this suggests is that issues of founding and refounding in Constantinople introduce concerns beyond the "simple" question of who "really" had the work carried out and why. Rather, founding and refounding work on both "real" and "imaginary" levels. Indeed, even the Blachernai and Chalkoprateia are not quite as straightforward as my account implies. An anonymous tenth-century text describes the foundation of a church of the Virgin by the pious and faithful Verina, *beloved of God*.<sup>42</sup> This is an important reminder that different traditions could and did co-exist and that the same church could be simultaneously linked to more than one founder. The *Patria*, where churches are overwhelmingly ascribed imperial founders of either sex, perhaps gives us a sense of who the "wrong" people to associate with churches were, and who the "right", whether they be "genuine" founders, "fake" founders, imaginary founders or even use-

37 WENGER, Notes inédites (cit. n. 15), pp. 54–59, tr. in: MANGO, *Art of the Byzantine Empire* (cit. n. 15), p. 35, and HOLUM, *Theodosian Empresses* (cit. n. 24), p. 227.

38 THEOPHANES, *Chronographia* (cit. n. 8), AM 5942, 5943, 5945.

39 *Witch* is *Parastaseis* (cit. n. 32), ch. 89; *whore of Babylon* is the Oracle of Baalbek: P.J. ALEXANDER, *The Oracle of Baalbek*, Washington, DC 1967.

40 ANGELIDI, Pulcheria (cit. n.24).

41 *Souda*, "Poulcheria", ed. A. ADLER, *Suidae Lexicon*, IV, Leipzig 1935, p. 183.

42 WENGER, Notes inédites (cit. n. 15), pp. 54–59, tr. in: MANGO, *Art of the Byzantine Empire* (cit. n. 15), pp. 34–35.

ful founders.<sup>43</sup> The *Patria* credits Helena, for one, with founding at least four churches in Constantinople. Since her death is dated to ca. 330, before Constantine established the city as his capital, these claims are usually dismissed as pious myths.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, because empresses clearly did build in Constantinople, and because Helena was the mother of all female imperial church builders, her reputation was such that the patriographers knew she must have founded churches in the city.

Not only do founders and refounders change in the written sources, so too do the churches they built. Eusebios's church of the Holy Apostles, Prokopios's, Constantine of Rhodes's and Nicholas Mesarites's are all different, not simply in their constructions and their decoration, but also in the roles of the different founders and refounders, all of which tell us as much about these authors' programmes as about the church. For Eusebios, Constantine the Great was the founder and Constantine had his own coffin placed in the middle of the apostles.<sup>45</sup> Prokopios, however, claimed that the church was the foundation of Constantius but that Constantius left no intimation that there were such relics within the church. Rather, Justinian in his rebuilding rediscovered and identified these remains.<sup>46</sup> Constantine of Rhodes, writing for Constantine VII and eager to associate that emperor with great imperial figures of the past, associated Constantius and Justinian specifically with the building and rebuilding of

the Holy Apostles and asserted that it was Constantius who placed the apostolic relics there.<sup>47</sup> Nicholas Mesarites stated that the founder was Constantius and that Justinian refounded it, but he identified the same relics as Constantine of Rhodes.<sup>48</sup> The question of who we should believe is only part of the story; almost as interesting is tracing the ways in which attributions of founding and refounding might change to suit the interests and concerns both of particular writers at particular times.

What the Holy Apostles and the fifth-century Marian churches also suggest is that founding and refounding were not viewed as different activities.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, refounding does not seem to have been treated as a lesser activity than building from scratch. It certainly does not seem to have created lesser reputations for either emperors or empresses. According to the *Patria*, the church of St Euphemia was built by Constantine the Great, destroyed by Constantine V during Iconoclasm and restored by Irene. Whether or not Constantine was the actual founder, such an ascription might render Irene's pious refoundation all the more valuable and Constantine V's destruction even more reprehensible.<sup>50</sup> Nor does it seem to have been the case that churches built by particularly godly emperors or empresses were singled out for rebuilding. Although there was some refounding of the churches of Constantine and of Justinian, notably by Basil I, there

43 On the *Patria* see MAGDALINO, *Distance of the Past* (cit. n. 19), pp. 115–146.

44 As JANIN, *Églises* (cit. n. 17), pp. 63 (Monastery of Bethlehem), p. 67 (Gastria) does.

45 EUSEBIOS, *Life of Constantine*, ch. 4, 58–60, tr. and commentary A. M. CAMERON / S. G. HALL, *Eusebius. Life of Constantine*, Oxford 1999, pp. 176–177, 337–338.

46 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings*, ch. 1, iv, 9–24, text and tr. H. B. DEWING, Cambridge, MA/London 1914–1940.

47 CONSTANTINE OF RHODES, *On Constantinople and the Church of the Holy Apostles*. A new Greek edition by I. Vassis, ed. L. JAMES, Farnham 2012, p. 52.

48 NICHOLAS MESARITES, *The Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople*, ch. 39, ed. and tr. G. DOWNEY, in: *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s., 47, 1957, pp. 891–892.

49 See also M. MULLETT (ed.), *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries* (Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, 6.3), Belfast 2007.

50 *Patria Constantinopoleos* (cit. n. 33), III, pp. 216–217; JANIN, *Églises* (cit. n. 17), pp. 120–121; A. BERGER, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* (Poikila Byzantina, 8), Bonn 1988, pp. 556–559. Also see *Parastaseis*, ch. 5 (cit. n. 32), for the arrival of St Euphemia's relics in Constantinople.

was also considerable refounding of small and even apparently insignificant churches. Prokopios describes how Justinian rebuilt a church of St Michael (the original founder is simply called “a patrician”) because it was *small and very badly lighted, utterly unworthy to be dedicated to the archangel*.<sup>51</sup> Refounding may have depended in large part on what needed refounding. Justinian was forced to carry out a great deal of rebuilding after the Nika riots; and he refounded a sanctuary dedicated from ancient times to Sts Kosmas and Damian after an illness and in response to a vision of the holy healers.<sup>52</sup> Such rebuildings established, as well as any foundation might, imperial claims for piety and philanthropy, even a more abstract philanthropy (restoring a small church because it was in poor condition), and a chance to show the emperor’s blessings from God (thanks for divine healing). In the case of Justinian’s building work, Prokopios carefully constructed a pattern that makes it appear that Justinian built churches for every level of the heavenly hierarchy, from Hagia Sophia and Hagia Irene, through the Virgin, St Michael, the Apostles, the saints and the martyrs; he also claimed that Justinian built throughout Constantinople, including the suburbs and shore.<sup>53</sup> The refoundation work of Basil I forms a distinct contrast to this dispersed building. Written sources make it very clear that Basil’s refoundations were overwhelmingly of former im-

perial churches (or churches identified by Basil as such), an emphasis that might relate to Basil’s own circumstances as a usurping emperor and own desire to assert his legitimacy and relationship with previous rulers.<sup>54</sup> Basil’s actions again underline the idea that memories of the early founders had some resonance in later Byzantium.

Of course, confusion could also play a part in attributions of founding and refounding. The church and monastery of the Augusta are said to have been built by Euphemia and her husband Justin I or by Justin II and his wife Sophia, suggesting an uncertainty over the Justins.<sup>55</sup> That Euphemia is also said to have built the church of St Euphemia is an example of the very typical eponymous way in which the Byzantines thought about names; Byzantium itself was said to have been founded by Byzas and Antes.<sup>56</sup> The trend of creating eponymic founders is apparent in countless other examples. In the case of the church of St Euphrosyne, the *Patria* claimed it was built by Irene, but that Michael III closed up his mother and sisters in it, and that it took its name from one of Michael’s sisters. Michael, however, did not have a sister called Euphrosyne. Nikephoros Kallistos, writing in the thirteenth / fourteenth century, employed the same technique when he ascribed the church to Leo VI in the context of an apparently legendary saint, Euphrosyne the Younger.<sup>57</sup> Elsewhere in the *Patria*, the monastery of Kallistratos is seen as

51 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings* (cit. n. 46), I, 3, 14. Also see the twin shrines of St Michael at I, 8, 2–20, and THEOPHANES, *Chronographia* (cit. n. 8), AM 5816, for Constantine as the founder of these.

52 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings* (cit. n. 46), I, 6, 5.

53 DOWNEY, Justinian as a Builder (cit. n. 18), p. 264.

54 P. MAGDALINO, Observations on the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 37, 1987, pp. 51–64.

55 *Patria Constantinopoleos* (cit. n. 33), III, 273; CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENNETOS, *The Book of Ceremonies*, II, 42, ed. J. J. REISKE, De Cerimoniis, Bonn 1829. CEDRENOS, *Synopsis historion*, ed. I. BEKKER, Georgius Cedrenus, Ioannis Scylitzae operae, Bonn 1838, p. 642, says that Justin and Euphemia were buried in the Augusta and Justin and Sophia in Justinian’s heroon. JANIN, *Églises* (cit. n. 17), p. 54, takes this as reason to accept the *Patria* over the *Book of Ceremonies*. Also see BERGER, *Untersuchungen* (cit. n. 50), p. 655.

56 See *Parastaseis* (cit. n. 32), ch. 34 and p. 34 of Cameron and Herrin’s introduction.

57 *Patria Constantinopoleos* (cit. n. 33), III, 243; JANIN, *Églises* (cit. n. 17), pp. 130–131; BERGER, *Untersuchungen* (cit. n. 50), pp. 646–648.



a monastery founded by one Kallistratos and Justin II's church of St Zoticus was apparently built for the holy man Zoticus.<sup>58</sup> A further legendary founder is apparent in the *Patria's* mention of the empress Anna, wife of Leo III, as founder of the monastery of St Anna.<sup>59</sup> It was Leo's daughter who was Anna; his wife was Maria. How true, as opposed to convenient, these ascriptions might be is difficult to determine. Sometimes, church and founder appear to match in terms of their date and what is known from other sources, as is the case with the church of the Virgin tou Kyrou, and sometimes they do not: witness the church of St Theodore ta Kludio.<sup>60</sup> What these ascriptions might say about private foundations as opposed to imperial ones is another key issue.

The potential gaps and differences between the written sources also offer a chance to look at the changing geographies of the city. One aspect of this that I have not had space to deal with here is that of the founding and refounding of types of church: did it make a difference to found, or be seen as founder of a monastery, a nunnery, or simply a church? Do churches become monasteries part way through their lives and at whose behest? Do the patriographic sources describe churches as monasteries because in the tenth century the trend was to found monasteries rather than churches? Is this a contrast between Justinian I and Basil I for instance? And how far was the gender of the founder or refounder an issue? So far, this does not seem to have been a problem: when sources record different founders

or refounders for churches, these tend to be of the same sex (for example, Verina and Pulcheria). Perhaps most frustrating is the numbers of churches that still survive within the city, such as the Kalenderhane Camii, where we have no certain knowledge of the founders or refounders.

By looking at the construction of the history of a building by different authors, we can gain access to the different ways in which different figures, most notably imperial figures, could be mobilised. When monuments and sites drop out of the record and are apparently removed from memory, or when the people associated with monuments change and are reconfigured, this offers a means of tracing discontinuities in remembrance and in thinking about social change.<sup>61</sup> Founding and refounding, and its relation to reputation, also offers insights into the Byzantines' perceptions and constructions of their own past, for both founders and reputations appear to be contingent on time. There is the question of the reputation of individuals in their own time, a reputation created or enhanced by their patronage. There is also the issue of reputations changing over the years, and how this shift could have a knock-on effect on the status of a building or an object, enhancing or diminishing it in accordance with the perception of its founder. Pulcheria offers an example of a reputation enhanced over several centuries. In considering empresses as founders and refounders, it is apparent that sex and gender were not automatic barriers to gaining a good reputation.

58 Kallistratos: *Patria Constantinopoleos* (cit. n. 33), III, 269; JANIN, *Églises* (cit. n. 17), p. 275; BERGER, *Untersuchungen* (cit. n. 50), p. 677. Zoticus: *Patria Constantinopoleos* (cit. n. 33), III, 267; JANIN, *Églises* (cit. n. 17), p. 135; BERGER, *Untersuchungen* (cit. n. 50), p. 426. The Synaxarion of Constantinople has another version of events: *Synaxarion Constantinopolitanum*, ed. H. DELEHAYE, Brussels 1902, nos. 360, 1.18–20 and 362, 1.19–29.

59 *Patria Constantinopoleos* (cit. n. 33), III, 251, and JANIN, *Églises* (cit. n. 17), p. 38; BERGER, *Untersuchungen* (cit. n. 50), pp. 524–525.

60 Virgin tou Kyrou: JANIN, *Églises* (cit. n. 17), p. 195. St Theodore ta Kludio: JANIN, *Églises* (cit. n. 17), p. 149.

61 S. E. ALCOCK, *The Reconfiguration of Memory in the Eastern Roman Empire*, in: S. E. ALCOCK et al. (ed.), *Empires. Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, Cambridge 2001, pp. 323–250; S. E. ALCOCK, *Archaeologies of the Greek Past. Landscape, Monuments and Memories*, Cambridge 2003.

ASCETICISM AND HOSPITALITY AS PATRONAGE  
IN THE LATE ANTIQUE HOLY LAND: THE EXAMPLES  
OF PAULA AND MELANIA THE ELDER

MARLENA WHITING

To the modern mind, late antique Jerusalem frequently appears to be at the centre of a vortex of people and ideas, with pilgrims and saints being inexorably drawn to its holy places from around the Roman world. This article aims to provide a snapshot of three trends of late antique society that all converged on the Holy City in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, namely the ancient tradition of elite guest-friendship, the emerging tradition of Christian asceticism, and the new enthusiasm, among the elite and commoners alike, for Holy Land pilgrimage. I will limit myself to the examples of two women, Melania the Elder and Paula, who, as contemporaries in the Jerusalem area from ca. 372 to 410, transplanted to Palestine the traditions and trends of Rome, but also

engaged in a new form of patronage: pilgrim hospitality.<sup>1</sup>

Friendship and kinship ties were central to how people – mainly the upper classes – moved about the Roman world. The roots of the practice are pre-classical: Homer's epics are full of examples of *xenia*, the extension of hospitality to strangers that transcends generations.<sup>2</sup> *Xenia*, frequently translated as guest-friendship, became common practice throughout the Mediterranean. In the Roman world, claiming shared social status and mutual friends could be sufficient for an invitation to hospitality. The practical implications of this system of hospitality meant that there were many ways in which one could make use of one's social connections to aid one's travels. First, and most simply, one could hope to

1 Melania the Elder (ca. 341–410) lived in Jerusalem from 372 until about 399, and again from 404 until her death in 410. She was the granddaughter of the consul Marcellinus (PLRE, I, Marcellinus 4), and was likely married to Valerius Maximus, prefect of Rome 361–363. Having lost several of her children in infancy, upon becoming widowed she embraced the ascetic life, placed her remaining son in foster care, and removed herself to Palestine. For biographical information see PALLADIOS, *Historia Lausiaca*, 46, 54–55, ed. D. C. BUTLER, *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, II, Cambridge 1898–1904, pp. 134–136, 146–149, and PAULINUS OF NOLA, Ep. 29, tr. P. G. WALSH, *The Letters of Paulinus of Nola*, II, London 1967, pp. 101–118.; also PLRE, I, Melania 1, p. 592; See also F. X. MURPHY, *Melania the Elder: A Biographical Note*, in: *Traditio*, 5, 1947, esp. pp. 61–63; L. SWAN, *The Forgotten Desert Mothers: Sayings, Lives, and Stories of Early Christian Women*, New York 2001, pp. 114–118, 142. – Paula (ca. 347–404) lived in Jerusalem from 385 until her death. She was a descendant of the Scipiones and the Gracchi, and was married to Toxotius of the Julii, bearing him five children, three of whom predeceased her. Her youngest daughter, Eustochium, was consecrated a virgin and was her mother's constant companion in Palestine. Her youngest child, a son, was left to be raised in Rome. Biographical information on Paula is largely derived from the eulogy composed to her by JEROME, Ep. 108, ed. and tr. J. LABOURT, *Lettres*, Paris 1949–1963, V, pp. 159–201; See also PLRE, I, Paula 1, pp. 674–675; J. N. D. KELLY, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies*, London 1975, pp. 91–140; SWAN, *The Forgotten Desert Mothers*, pp. 138–141; E. A. CLARK, *Friendship Between the Sexes. Classical Theory and Christian Practice*, in: idem (ed.), *Jerome, Chrysostom and Friends. Essays and Translations (Studies in Women and Religion, 2)*, New York/Toronto 1979, pp. 35–105, esp. p. 63.

2 G. HERMAN, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, Cambridge 1987; D. KONSTAN, *Friendship in the Classical World*, Cambridge 1997, pp. 33–37.

reach one's destination by visiting one's friends en route and being housed with them or on their estates. One could also impose on friends' positions and privileges for ease of passage. Pliny the Younger, for example, supplied his wife with a diploma for the public highway, the *cursus publicus*, contravening the established laws for the issue of such documents, so that she might visit her family. Libanios was stymied on his trip to Athens by the fall from power of the friend who was to supply him with a diploma for a part of the journey.<sup>3</sup> This recalls the famous boast made by Trimalchio in Petronius's *Satyricon*, that one day he hoped to be able to travel from the Italian peninsula to North Africa without ever stepping off his own land.<sup>4</sup> On a more modest scale, Cicero was able to do this for his own properties between Rome and Formiae on the Adriatic coast, and even maintained lodges (*deversoria*) where he might put up overnight.<sup>5</sup>

For the late antique period, Scott Bradbury has argued, based on the geographic dispersal of Libanios's correspondents throughout the Eastern Empire, that the restructuring of the systems of provincial government during the Tetrarchy saw increased opportunities for men of status to take up positions outside their native province, rarely staying in one place very long.<sup>6</sup> With this increased geographic mobility, networks of influence also expanded, and, by extension, networks of hospitality. Libanios himself rarely travelled,

but had he done so, he would probably never have lacked a place to stay. This is evident also in the way in which Jerome sent and received letters. His letters were often delivered by hand by a mutual acquaintance; therefore, the movement of his letters corresponds to the movement of people, and implies that hospitality was extended to the letter-bearer.<sup>7</sup>

Relying on the hospitality of friends and family was by far the preferred way to travel. Commercial places of accommodation had a – probably deservedly – bad reputation as dens of licentiousness and iniquity. They were considered offensive, therefore, not only to the refined tastes of the upper classes, but also to the moral decorum of the pilgrim – and especially to women in each group. For both classes, alternatives had to be sought, and in the homes and monasteries of the Christian elite, we see the possibilities for adequately housing both types of traveller.

At the end of the fourth century, Rome and Constantinople were centres for much aristocratic asceticism. Visible Christian piety played an important role in the identity of the Theodosian elite; the role of the emperor became ideologically linked with the Church under Theodosios I, and the members of the extended imperial family and other aristocrats followed suit.<sup>8</sup> However, although joining the clergy might increasingly have appealed as a viable alternative to the traditional *cursus honorum*, it was still fairly uncom-

3 PLINY THE YOUNGER, X, Ep. 120, ed. and tr. W. WILLIAMS, *Pliny: Correspondence with Trajan from Bithynia (Epistles X)*, Warminster 1990, pp. 82–83; LIBANIOS, *Oration 1.14*, ed. and tr. A. F. NORMAN, *Libanios: Autobiography and Selected Letters, I*, Cambridge, MA 1992, pp. 68–71.

4 PETRONIUS, *Cena Trimalchionis*, 48.3, ed. M. S. SMITH, *Petronii Arbitri Cena Trimalchionis*, Oxford 1975, p. 20.

5 L. CASSON, *Travel in the Ancient World*, Baltimore 1994, p. 138; J. D'ARMS, *Romans on the Bay of Naples and Other Essays on Roman Campania*, Bari 2003, p. 58.

6 S. BRADBURY, *Libanios' Letters as Evidence for Travel and Epistolary Networks*, in: L. ELLIS/F. KIDNER (ed.), *Travel, Communication, and Geography in Late Antiquity: Sacred and Profane*, Aldershot 2004, p. 74.

7 See, for example, Ep. 68, in: LABOURT (cit. n. 1), III, pp. 188–190. Augustine's brother Alypius carried letters to and from Jerome (Ep. 56.1, *ibid.*, pp. 49–50). In an effort to reconcile with Rufinus, Jerome sent copies of letters to anyone he thought Rufinus might encounter in the West: Ep. 81.2, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), IV, p. 112. See also Paulinus of Nola's praise of Victor, the bearer of letters to and from Sulpicius Severus, Ep. 28.1, in: WALSH (cit. n. 1), pp. 93–94.

8 J. F. MATTHEWS, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A.D. 364–425*, Oxford 1975, pp. 101–145.

mon for men of aristocratic standing to abandon home and duty in favour of an exclusively monastic life.<sup>9</sup> They might eventually retire into a religious life, as did Paulinus of Nola, for example, or Paula's son-in-law, Pammachius.<sup>10</sup> Despite professing their Christian devotion, most men continued to hold office and engage in secular government, expressing their piety through acts of patronage and sponsorship instead. Flavius Rufinus could be considered the exemplar of the pious nobleman: he built on his palace grounds at Chalcedon a martyrium containing the relics of Peter and Paul, and also constructed a monastery attached to it, and invited a community of monks from Egypt to reside there. His own baptism, which coincided with the consecration of his martyrium, was presided over by bishops from throughout the East, all while Rufinus himself was serving, first as consul in 392, and then as praetorian prefect of Constantinople.<sup>11</sup>

In this environment of expressive piety, the asceticism of noble women was especially celebrated. From the late fourth and early fifth centuries we have entire catalogues of women who all followed a similar practice of disavowing their social positions and the expectations of rank, sometimes even renouncing their families, in the pursuit of an ideal Christian life.<sup>12</sup> They converted their homes into quasi-monastic establishments, which became centres for prayer and scriptural learning. What may have vexed their families the most was how they dispersed their

fortunes through charity and the founding of monasteries. The two women who are the focus of this article, Paula and Melania the Elder, both belonged to a group of such women in Rome, whose central figure was Marcella.<sup>13</sup> Marcella's home on the Aventine was in part a monastery (her sister lived as a hermit in part of the complex), but it was also where the discussions of scripture in which Paula and Melania participated took place, and where the circle was eventually introduced to Jerome, who served as tutor and mentor to the group, and who was to be Paula's companion and partner in the Holy Land.

What is noteworthy is that most of these women who participated in Marcella's group, or who turned their own households into venues for domestic asceticism, were in fact widows. The status of widowhood gave women a degree of independence in the form of control over their own destinies and wealth which they could then distribute as charity or give to the church as they chose. Conversely, women without personal wealth and no male heirs would often turn to the church for assistance, becoming recipients of its charity, as opposed to donors.<sup>14</sup> Widowhood also gave women with pious aspirations a chance to redeem themselves spiritually in a religious environment where virginity was prized and marriage reviled. Jerome, for example, ranked the married state as the lowest for women, valuing, in descending order, virginity, widowhood and marriage, in contrast to *most Latin and Greek au-*

9 See M. WHITTO, *Ruling the Late Roman and Early Byzantine City: A Continuous History*, in: *Past and Present*, 129.1, 1990, pp. 3–29, esp. p. 29, for a discussion on the social transformations in late antique elite society and especially the role of the church.

10 Jerome's advice to Paulinus on approaching the monastic life: Ep. 53, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), III, pp. 8–25; Ep. 58, *ibid.*, pp. 73–85. Praise for and advice to Pammachius: Ep. 66.13, *ibid.*, pp. 179–180.

11 The life of Flavius Rufinus is recorded in the *Vita s. Hypatii*, see MATTHEWS, *Western Aristocracies* (cit. n. 8), pp. 134–135 for summary; also PLRE, I, Rufinus 18, pp. 778–781.

12 See SWAN, *The Forgotten Desert Mothers* (cit. n. 1), for biographies. KELLY, *Jerome* (cit. n. 1) suggests that, in Rome at least, this phenomenon of aristocratic domestic monasticism was restricted to women; see p. 139. See also K. BOWES, *Private Worship, Public Values and Religious Change in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge 2008, pp. 96–103, who emphasises the sponsorship of theologians such as Jerome and Rufinus and their writing as an act of patronage.

13 Ep. 127.5, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), VI, p. 117.

14 A. ARJAVA, *Women and Law in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 1996, pp. 171–172.

*thors*, who placed widows at the bottom of the hierarchy below martyrs and virgins, and excluded married women completely.<sup>15</sup>

Given the typical age difference between a bride and her husband, women tended to be young when widowed – Melania, for example, was only twenty-two. Many younger widows experienced pressure to enter into a second marriage; Melania and Paula may have been partially exempted from this by the fact that both had produced healthy male heirs, and two of Paula's daughters had made marriages that had further strengthened the family's ties among the nobility. Their jobs as wives and mothers were fulfilled, and as a consequence they had attained what Elizabeth Clark calls "ascetic freedom".<sup>16</sup> This freedom, which was completed by the voluntary renunciation of family ties, enabled widows to devote themselves to asceticism, donate all their money to the church, take off on a tour of the holy places, or even, as Melania and Paula did, remain in the region permanently. In Palestine their money was spent much as that of their friends in Rome, on the construction and furnishing of their monasteries, on charity, and on extending hospitality to their visitors.

In fact, Melania's and Paula's actions represented an extreme version of a fairly wide-spread trend. In 390 a law was passed forbidding women under the age of sixty (i. e., women of marriageable and child-bearing age) to become deaconesses of the church, or to *under the cover of religion* dispose of their property to the church at

the expense of their family.<sup>17</sup> While this law was quickly repealed, it points to an issue of concern at levels of society high enough to provoke legislative action.<sup>18</sup> Begging themselves through almsgiving and indiscriminate charity had become the modish way for Christian ladies to demonstrate their piety.

Some of these aristocratic widows undertook pilgrimages to Palestine and Egypt, bestowing largesse here and there. Melania the Elder is, however, one of the earliest to have actually made her home there. Arriving in Jerusalem sometime after 372, she founded two monasteries on the Mount of Olives, one for women run by herself, and the other for men, under the leadership of her spiritual mentor and companion, Rufinus of Aquileia. Their monasteries soon became noted for their lavish and generous hospitality – all paid for by Melania.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the ostensible renunciation of her social status through the dispersal of her wealth and her adoption of ascetic habits, Melania nevertheless remained linked to the highest aristocracy from which she sprang.<sup>20</sup> She was not so cut off from her family that she did not rush back to Rome to intercede on behalf of her granddaughter's own ascetic aspirations.<sup>21</sup> Nor did she renounce her aristocratic ties, but happily provided hospitality to various members of the Constantinopolitan elite who were travelling through the Holy Land on pilgrimage. For example, among the guests housed at the Mount of Olives was Bacurius the Iberian, who, in ad-

15 Ep. 48.2–3, in: LABOURT (cit. n. 1), II (as letter XLIX), p. 122: *omnibus paene Latinis et Graecis tractatoribus*.

16 E. A. CLARK, *Ascetic Renunciation and Feminine Advancement: A Paradox of Late Antique Christianity*, in: *Ascetic Piety and Women's Faith: Essays on Late Ancient Christianity*, Lewiston, NY 1986, p. 184.

17 *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 2. 27, ed. and tr. C. PHARR, *The Theodosian Code and Novels, and the Sirmundian Constitutions*, New York 1969, pp. 444–445.

18 G. CLARK, *Women in Late Antiquity: Pagan and Christian Lifestyles*, Oxford 1993, p. 55.

19 PALLADIOS, *Historia Lausiaca* 54, ed. BUTLER (cit. n. 1), p. 146: Τριακοστὸν μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἑβδομὸν ἔτος ξενιτεύσασα ἰδίῳι ἀναλώμασιν ἐπήρκεσε καὶ ἐκκλησίαις καὶ μοναστηρίοις καὶ ξένοις καὶ φυλακαῖς, χορηγούντων αὐτῇ καὶ τῶν πρὸς γένος καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τῶν ἰδίων ἐπιτρόπων τὰ χρήματα.

20 See MURPHY, *Melania the Elder* (cit. n. 1), pp. 61–63, on her forebears.

21 PALLADIOS, *Historia Lausiaca* 54, ed. BUTLER (cit. n. 1), p. 146.

dition to being a devout Christian, was a favourite of the emperor, held the rank of *comes* and was, for a time, *dux Palaestinae*.<sup>22</sup> Another guest was Evagrius Pontikos, who had close ties to the imperial court, and whose relationship with Melania was deep and profound, possibly even filial in its affection.<sup>23</sup> There was also Palladios himself, who eventually produced the compendium of holy lives (from which much of our biographical knowledge of Melania derives) for his patron, Lausos, the *praepositus sacri cubiculi* in Constantinople. Other high-ranking friends included Silvia, sister-in-law of the aforementioned Flavius Rufinus, with whom Melania undertook a journey from Jerusalem to Egypt.<sup>24</sup> David Hunt also suggests that the noblewoman Poemenia, who, having travelled extensively in Palestine and Egypt, might have stayed with Melania while her church on the Imbomon on the Mount of Olives was being constructed.<sup>25</sup> Certainly the proximity would have given the patroness an ideal vantage point to keep an eye on her building project. In Palladios's description of life on the Mount of Olives, Melania is a commanding presence, managing her nuns, participating in ongoing theological debates, maintaining correspondence with guests who had

moved on and acting as hostess to her guests. She is also described as playing a principal role in interceding in matters pertaining to local monks and local clergy.<sup>26</sup>

Her granddaughter, the younger Melania, eventually came to assume a similar position on the Mount of Olives, extending hospitality to members of the nobility and prominent clergymen. The connection between Melania the Younger and the court of Theodosios II is made clear by the reciprocal hospitality enjoyed by Melania and her entourage in Constantinople, and by members of the imperial court in Jerusalem, such as the Iberian prince-turned-monk, Peter, and, of course, the empress Eudokia herself.<sup>27</sup>

Paula, with her daughter Eustochium, having left behind her young son, arrived in the Holy Land under the guidance of Jerome around 385. Like Melania the Elder, she undertook a tour of the holy places, including Egypt, before electing to make her home in Bethlehem.<sup>28</sup> There she built two monasteries, one for herself and her female companions, and one for Jerome and his monks, as well as a roadside hostel. Our knowledge of Paula's role in the Bethlehem community is, however, completely overshadowed by Jerome's descriptions of his own activities.<sup>29</sup>

22 E. D. HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire, AD 312–460*, Oxford 1984, p. 166.

23 PALLADIOS, *Historia Lausiaca* 38, ed. BUTLER (cit. n. 1), pp. 119–120.

24 PALLADIOS, *Historia Lausiaca* 55, ed. BUTLER (cit. n. 1), p. 148; E. D. HUNT, *St. Silvia of Aquitaine: The Role of a Theodosian Pilgrim in the Society of East and West*, in: *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 23, 1972, pp. 352–353.

25 HUNT, *ibid.*, p. 354; HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage* (cit. n. 22), p. 162.

26 See n. 1; See also JEROME, Ep. 133.3, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), VII, p. 53 for Melania's correspondence with Evagrius Pontikos in Egypt; HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage* (cit. n. 22), p. 187.

27 HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage* (cit. n. 22), pp. 228–233; GERONTIOS, *Life of Melania the Younger*, 58, tr. E. A. CLARK, *The Life of Melania the Younger: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, New York 1984, p. 70.

28 Ep. 108.14, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), V, pp. 175–6. Jerome's letters make clear that he intended Melania to serve as a model for Paula's life in the Holy Land: Ep. 39.5, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), II, p. 81; Ep. 45.4, *ibid.*, p. 98.

29 KELLY, *Jerome* (cit. n. 1), describes the relationship between Paula and Jerome as co-dependent (p. 97), and questions the degree to which Paula's appearance of independence and control over her own decisions and body is the product of hindsight and redaction. A. CAIN, *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2009, pp. 111–114, discusses Paula's family's disapproval of their relationship. Even in later years, at Bethlehem, Palladios describes with pity the noble woman who looked after Jerome, but whose holiness was overshadowed by his temper and his envy. PALLADIOS, *Historia Lausiaca*, 36, ed. BUTLER (cit. n. 1), p. 108.

Paula as an aristocratic woman also had strong family ties to the nobility, and was connected by blood or through the marriage of her children to many of the prominent Roman senatorial families of the time. Despite these ties, the guests who came to Bethlehem were either family of Paula (her granddaughter was sent to be raised as a consecrated virgin) or Jerome (his younger brother, Paulinianus, dwelt for a number of years in Jerusalem), friends of his from his student days, or recipients of his correspondence.<sup>30</sup> Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis was in turn repaid for the hospitality he had extended to Paula and Jerome on their way to Palestine.<sup>31</sup> This has led Hunt to characterise the hospitality of the Bethlehem monasteries as reflecting “the loyalty and cohesion of a close-knit fraternity, in contrast to the widespread and influential circle of visitors who came and went on the Mount of Olives.”<sup>32</sup>

Male guests would naturally have stayed with Jerome in the men’s monastery. Of visitors who might have been entertained in Paula’s nunnery, far less is known. Jerome makes references to a few female guests who visited the area.<sup>33</sup> Jerome and Paula jointly extended an invitation to a couple in Rome (either husband and wife or brother and sister), to come visit the holy places and partake of their society.<sup>34</sup> If this pair did in fact make the journey, then it is probable that the couple would have lodged apart while in Bethlehem: Desiderius would have likely resided

with Jerome, while Serenilla would have been the guest of Paula. Jerome, again writing on behalf of Paula and her daughter, composed an eloquent invitation to Marcella to join them in the Holy Land.<sup>35</sup> She declined, but had she come, she too might have stayed with Paula.

One lady who is known to have made the journey to Bethlehem was Fabiola, another friend from Rome. She travelled to Palestine with her companion Oceanus, apparently with an eye to establishing a permanent home there, possibly a dual monastery like Paula’s or Melania’s. Upon their arrival, they may have stayed with Paula and Jerome respectively, but their sojourn was brief: Jerome mentions that he undertook to find them a place to live, and the theft of Jerome’s manuscript is said to have been from their lodgings.<sup>36</sup> It is likely that Fabiola remained only briefly in Bethlehem because she was looking to set up a monastic foundation of her own in the Jerusalem area, including a hostel for travellers such as she eventually established at Portus in Rome.<sup>37</sup>

New rules for old hospitality came into effect among the Christian elite. There are no references to anyone who was not a Christian staying at any of these monasteries, though many members of the senatorial classes in the fourth and fifth centuries were still pagan (including many of Melania’s and Paula’s in-laws).<sup>38</sup> Nor are there references to anyone visiting purely on business, although this could be the bias of the

30 Paula the Younger: Ep. 107.13, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), V, p. 157. Paulinianus found himself at the epicentre of the controversies between the supporters and detractors of Origen when he was ordained deacon over the Bethlehem community by Epiphanius of Salamis in direct insult to the jurisdiction of John of Jerusalem: Ep. 51, a letter from Epiphanius of Salamis to John of Jerusalem, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), V, pp. 156–172; see also n. 7.

31 Ep. 108.7, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), V, p. 165.

32 HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage* (cit. n. 22), pp. 175–176.

33 One must here acknowledge the lacuna in the epistolary corpus that spans the years 386–393.

34 Ep. 47.2, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), II, p. 115.

35 Ep. 46, *ibid.*, pp. 100–114.

36 Ep. 77.7–8, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), IV, pp. 47–49. *Apologia contra Rufinum*. III. 4, ed. P. LARDET, (*Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina*, 79), Turnhout 1982, p. 76.

37 Ep. 77.8, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), IV, p. 49; Ep. 77.10, *ibid.*, p. 50.

38 CAIN, *The Letters of Jerome* (cit. n. 29); for Paula’s relatives, pp. 111–114.

sources.<sup>39</sup> Paula, on first arriving in Jerusalem, refused to stay in the residence of the proconsul of Palestine, an old family friend, as custom might have dictated, *preferring instead a humble cell*.<sup>40</sup> Even among those who shared a religious vocation, it was important to share the correct religious vocation. When the Origenist controversy caused an acrimonious falling out between the previously friendly communities in Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives after 393, those arriving in Jerusalem had to choose sides, if they had not done so already.

However, no matter how well documented these elite cases might be, they represent but a small portion of the overall traffic to the Holy Land.<sup>41</sup> To what extent might these politics matter to the ordinary people who could claim no personal acquaintance with the founders of these monastic precincts? For instance, would it have mattered to the masses of local pilgrims that these women were from the West? There is no indication that the Western origin of these women would have affected their reception in Palestine. As adherents to Nicene Orthodoxy, they would not have been considered heretical by the episcopal leadership of Jerusalem (Cyril and his successor John), whose principal concern while in office seems to have been to engage in diplomatic opportunism with an eye towards elevating the status of their see over Caesarea Maritima, which was the archepiscopal see.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the population of Jerusalem and its environs was at this time highly eclectic: it comprised princi-

pally Christians drawn from other parts of the empire to the holy places, who resided there either temporarily on pilgrimage or who had set up or joined monastic foundations with an eye to permanent residence. Since Jerusalem had little significance as either an administrative or mercantile centre prior to its reinvention during the reign of Constantine, it did not have a long-established local elite with whom these aristocrats from Rome might come into conflict.<sup>43</sup>

Admittedly, these cordial relations were not to last. However, it should be noted that the controversy that flared up between the supporters and detractors of Origen was imported to the Holy Land from outside, and that the Western religious communities in Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives were protagonists in the affair, rather than reacting to a local dispute. Rufinus and Melania were in favour of Origen, which put them in line and on favourable terms with John, the bishop of Jerusalem. Jerome, on the other hand, being vitriolically anti-Origen, put both his and Paula's communities at a disadvantage – Jerome's monks were even for a time excommunicated for having tried to subvert John's authority.<sup>44</sup> Whether Paula's nuns suffered similarly is not made clear. In the end, it was only Jerome's machinations further afield, winning over Theophilus of Alexandria, that swayed the scales in his favour and prompted the return (retreat?) to Rome of Rufinus and Melania in 397 and 399 respectively. The Origenist controversy, and the invective being hurled back and forth between the heads of the two most in-

39 For example, Bacurius, mentioned above, is described by Rufinus as a devout Christian, but Libanios in his Letter 1060 addresses him in pagan terms. See PLRE, I, Bacurius, p. 144; LIBANIOS, *Opera*, ed. R. FOERSTER, XI, Stuttgart 1963, p. 183.

40 JEROME, Ep. 108.9, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), V, p. 167: *elegit humilem cellulam*.

41 C. MANGO, The Pilgrim's Motivation, in: Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Bonn 1991, pp. 6–7, states that while the elite travellers were trendsetters, they were in the minority, with the bulk of pilgrims belonging to lower classes, making short-distance journeys.

42 J. W. DRIJVERS, Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City, Leiden 2004, pp. 48–49; Z. RUBIN, The Cult of the Holy Places and Christian Politics in Byzantine Jerusalem, in: L. LEVINE (ed.), Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, New York 1999, pp. 155–156.

43 See H. SIVAN, Palestine in Late Antiquity, Oxford 2008, ch. 5, esp. pp. 194–200, for the transformation of Jerusalem into a Christian city, mostly at the expense of Jews and pagans.



fluent Western monasteries in the area, had the effect of politicising Jerusalem pilgrimage, with sides being taken on doctrinal grounds, rather than on grounds of kinship and friendship. What is quite clear is that, during this time, decisions on where to be accommodated were not based on the *loca sancta* themselves, but rather on the identities and politics of one's hosts.<sup>45</sup>

The Western origins of these foundresses would have had greater significance to those who fled the West during the height of the barbarian threat. Jerome complains at that time of his peaceful monastery having given way to the bustle of a guesthouse, as members of the highest and noblest families sought succour in the monastery.<sup>46</sup> Although the exact volume of refugees arriving in the Holy Land is impossible to quantify, the names of the individuals who are mentioned indicate that those who relocated there represented the same landowning aristocracy to which Paula and Melania belonged. For the poor who were tied to the land there was either no opportunity or no need to flee so far.<sup>47</sup>

Only those who were able to convert their assets to movable wealth in sufficient amounts to pay for passage across the Mediterranean seem to have made the journey. Melania the Younger and

her husband Pinian would have been representatives of this group; they fled from Rome to Palestine, liquidating their estates in North Africa as they went, and giving much of it away in charity.<sup>48</sup> Jerome's extensive network of correspondence meant that he was known either personally or by reputation to many; many Western refugees were thus drawn to the Bethlehem monasteries by claims of acquaintance. These included the bishop Orosius, who had left Spain and arrived in the Holy Land via North Africa with an introduction to Jerome from Augustine of Hippo.<sup>49</sup> Women were among those who took to the Holy Land: Artemia was on pilgrimage in Palestine where she expected her husband Rusticus to join her from Rome when the invasion of 406 prevented his travelling.<sup>50</sup> While the holy places themselves were the principal attraction for people arriving from abroad, the presence of Western monasteries headed by persons with whom one could claim an acquaintance might have lessened the sense of displacement of those who had fled their homes.<sup>51</sup>

But even outside times of crisis, Paula's and Jerome's monasteries were overflowing with guests: Jerome frequently bemoans the volume of pilgrims that keep him from his writing.<sup>52</sup> The

44 See n. 30.

45 It is possibly for this reason that Jerome desperately tried to dissuade Paulinus of Nola, whom he knew only through letters, from making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, fearing lest he be bound by family ties and stay with his relative Melania in the den of heresy that Jerome felt the Mount of Olives monasteries had become, Ep. 58.4, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), III, pp. 77–78.

46 Preface to Ezekiel, Book 7, ed. J. P. MIGNE, S. Eusebii Hieronymi Stridonensis Presbyteri Opera Omnia, Patrologia Latina (PL), XXV, Paris 1845, col. 199: *et monasterii solitudinem, hospitum frequentia commutamus*; also Book 3, *ibid.*, col. 75: *quis crederet... ut quotidie sancta Bethleem, nobiles quondam utriusque sexus, atque omnibus divitiis affluentes, susciperet mendicantes?*

47 See J. F. DRINKWATER, *The Bacaudae of Fifth-Century Gaul*, in: J. F. DRINKWATER/H. ELTON (ed.), *Fifth-Century Gaul: a Crisis of Identity?*, Cambridge 1992, pp. 213–214, on the economic impact of the barbarian invasions on various sectors of society.

48 GERONTIOS, *Life of Melania the Younger*, 19–20, tr. CLARK (cit. n. 27), pp. 41–43.

49 JEROME, Ep. 131.2, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), VIII, pp. 8–9.

50 Ep. 122.4, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), VII, p. 72; E. D. HUNT, *Gaul and the Holy Land in the Early Fifth Century*, in: DRINKWATER/ELTON, *Fifth-Century Gaul: a Crisis of Identity?* (cit. n. 47), p. 271.

51 HUNT, *ibid.*, p. 268.

52 Ep. 66.14, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), III, p. 180; Ep. 71.5, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), IV, p. 12: *Ego enim tanta volumina prae frequentia commentium et peregrinorum turbis relegere non potui.*

strains of housing guests eventually exhausted Paula's financial reserves. She left her daughter deeply in debt when she died, and even before that, Jerome was forced to sell some of his family's property in Italy and Dalmatia to cover costs.<sup>53</sup> It is possibly therefore with bitterness tinged with envy that he decries Melania's and Rufinus's hospitality as frivolous and excessive: *hic bene nummatus, plus placebat in prandiis*.<sup>54</sup>

Monasteries served as key providers of hospitality throughout the Christian world, and in the Holy Land in particular. There, monastics served as custodians of holy sites, and organised the accommodation that might be required by pilgrims. At sites of such enormous biblical importance as Bethlehem as the site of the Nativity and the Mount of Olives as the site of the Ascension, monastics would have played a crucial role. Paula's double monastery was by no means the first at Bethlehem – she herself had stayed at the hostel of one there while she arranged for the construction of her own buildings, and a letter ascribed to Athanasios of Alexandria describes virgins extending hospitality to other virgins there in the 360s.<sup>55</sup> The Mount of Olives and the hillside between it and Jerusalem was home to a large number of small monastic communities and anchorites from the fourth century onwards.<sup>56</sup>

The paramount importance of providing accommodation – not just to other monastics and fellow aristocrats, but also to random travellers – is made clear by the fact that Paula's monasteries included a separate guesthouse at the side of the road, for which Jerome uses the word *man-*

*sio*, which is the same word used for an overnight stop on the Roman public highways. As he says, it was deliberately built, with awareness of Scripture, so that travellers could now find the welcome which Mary and Joseph had missed.<sup>57</sup> There is a paradox inherent in the very concept of "monastic hospitality" which makes its implementation difficult. Monasteries were founded on the ideal of withdrawal from the world and the contemplative isolation of their inhabitants. The problem for monasteries then became how to embrace solitude while at the same time discharging philanthropic obligations of charity and hospitality. The solution was frequently the construction of a detached hostel where outsiders could come and go according to their need, but with minimal disruption to the lives of the monks and nuns of the monastery proper.

This paradox may be reflected in the slightly different ways in which hospitality was extended at Melania's and Paula's monasteries, which is also a reflection of the different personalities of the two women, and their approach to the ascetic ideal. Melania comes across as forceful and imperious, and, by virtue of her great asceticism and learning, emerges as the ungendered equal of her male guests. Paula, on the other hand, comes across as far more reclusive, often in ill health from fasting, and utterly devoted to the nuns in her charge. Her focus on maintaining the spiritual purity of her virgins by isolating them from temptation, and her own habit of never taking a meal with a man, make her a less likely hostess than Melania.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, as we have

53 Ep. 66.14, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), III, p. 180.

54 Ep. 125.18, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), VII, p. 130.

55 Ep. 108.14, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), V, p. 176; ATHANASIOS OF ALEXANDRIA, *Second Letter to Virgins*, 1, in: D. BRAKKE, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, Oxford 1995, p. 292.

56 Y. TSAFRIR, *Byzantine Jerusalem: The Configuration of a Christian City*, in: LEVINE, *Jerusalem* (cit. n. 42), p. 138.

57 Ep. 108.14, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), V, p. 176: *et diversorum peregrinorum juxta viam conderet mansiones, in qua Maria et Joseph hospitium non invenerant*.

58 Ep. 108.20, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), V, pp. 185–187; Ep. 108.15, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), V, p. 177: *numquam post viri mortem usque ad diem dormitionis suae cum ullo comedit viro*; Ep. 45.3, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), II, p. 98: *quam manducantem nunquam vidi*.

seen, friends who shared her convictions were welcome to stay with her, and she continued to interact with local clergy and bishops up to the time of her death.<sup>59</sup> However, the fact that Paula's convent had a separate hostel is a testament to the importance she placed on isolation as part of the ascetic ideal; the criticism of excessively lavish hospitality levied at the Mount of Olives community by Jerome, and the fact that a similar arrangement is not recorded there, speaks of a different emphasis on Melania's part.

That Paula's and Melania's monastic establishments were founded by women for women was, of course, immensely important to female pilgrims – it gave them equal access to the holy places. Segregation of the sexes was strictly observed on pilgrimage: women were not permitted to lodge at monasteries for men – in most cases they were not even permitted to enter. In the *Life of Euthymios*, it is described how a woman from Betaboudissae was cured by oil from the shrine of the saint, although she never set foot in the church. She stayed *for three days and nights in front of the monastery, fasting and praying continuously*. She returned annually to give thanks and provide the monastery with a meal – *she would kiss the jambs of the main entrance*.<sup>60</sup>

It is likely that in such cases, women made makeshift shelters or camped out of doors. Yizhar Hirschfeld identified what he thought was a campsite for women near the monastery of Theoktistos in the Judean Desert: there were places for hitching up horses and graffiti including women's names etched into the cliff.<sup>61</sup> The sources make it clear that pilgrimage was popu-

lar among women of all classes: the wealthy and noble would travel from the West or Constantinople on a Grand Tour of the holy places, while their less exalted sisters would frequently take to the roads to visit local saints' shrines to pray or seek out a cure for themselves or a family member. The popularity of pilgrimage among women belies the threat that they were under: the roads were not a safe place for travellers, and women were especially vulnerable. Wealthy pilgrims like Egeria and Paula travelled with large entourages including men as well as women.<sup>62</sup> Women making local pilgrimages often travelled with female friends or relatives. However, as in the case of the woman of Betaboudissae mentioned above who travelled to the monastery of Euthymios with her husband, they could also be accompanied by male relatives. Gregory of Nyssa, in his letter *On Pilgrimages*, famously used the impropriety of women needing to rely on male servants and strangers while travelling as a disincentive for pilgrimage.<sup>63</sup>

The presence of monasteries intended for women at such important pilgrimage sites as Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives therefore vouchsafed a bed, a roof and security, and the patronage of such noble and saintly women added an element of prestige. The fact that these sites had both women's and men's monasteries, with men's quarters presumably not too far away, meant that women who were travelling with their husbands, male relatives or male servants could be lodged near their travelling companions, heightening the sense of a shared experience of the holy.

59 Ep. 108.28, in: LABOURT (cit. n.1), V, p. 198, records that the bishops of Jerusalem and of other cities, as well as numerous other clergy, were present at her death.

60 CYRIL OF SCYTHOPOLIS, *Life of St Euthymius*, 79, pp. 13–28, tr. R. M. BINNS, *Lives of the Desert Saints*, Kalamazoo, MI 1991.

61 Y. HIRSCHFELD, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period*, New Haven, CT 1992, p. 196.

62 EGERIA, 7.2, J. WILKINSON, *Egeria's Travels*, Warminster 1999, pp. 115–116, refers to monks and clergy travelling with her, as well as a military escort.

63 GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On Pilgrimages*, tr. P. SCHAFF, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Second Series, V: Gregory of Nyssa: Dogmatic Treatises, etc.*, Oxford 1900.

To conclude, these women transplanted to the Holy Land a form of domestic asceticism, which gave them the opportunity to participate in the ancient tradition of guest-friendship by entertaining friends and relatives, but also per-

mitted them to provide hospitality within the emerging arena of Christian pilgrim hospitality, to which accommodation provided by monastic communities was vital.



## THE PATRONAGE OF AELIA EUDOKIA IN JERUSALEM

KONSTANTIN M. KLEIN

SOZOMENOS informs us that when Theodosios II became emperor of the Byzantine Empire at the age of seven in 408 CE, the affairs of state were influenced by his elder sister, Aelia Pulcheria, who gave an identity to her brother's reign.<sup>1</sup> The church historian writes that she even had to show him how to gather up his robes.<sup>2</sup> But the Theodosian wardrobe contained more than just silk dresses: it has been repeatedly pointed out in recent scholarship that the imitation of previous rulers, both mythological kings and real predecessors, was a convenient and effective method of defining the character and style of individual emperors.<sup>3</sup> Like other Byzantine rulers, Theodosios had patterned his life from an early age on the model of Constantine, David and Solomon.

However, this concept of imitation was not only restricted to the male Theodosians. Princesses and empresses as well modelled their public image on the lives of paradigmatic female examples. Byzantine aristocratic women used role models of pious and philanthropic, humble and educated empresses to gain influence in connection with their personal patronage.<sup>4</sup> Even though a certain amount of extravagance ran in the family, Pulcheria's imitation of the Virgin Mary within this concept was exceptional. Inside the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, the emperor's sister had an altar consecrated *on behalf of her own virginity and her brother's rule*.<sup>5</sup> Modern scholars have often pointed to the rivalry between Pulcheria and Theodosios's wife, Eudokia.<sup>6</sup> It is, however,

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- 1 The image of Theodosios II as a generally weak emperor who was largely influenced by others has to be reconsidered. It is noticeable that both Aelia Pulcheria and the empress Eudokia play almost no role in Fergus Millar's recent study on Theodosian politics, cf. F. MILLAR, *A Greek-Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II (408–450)*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2006.
- 2 [Κ]αὶ πρῶτα μὲν τὴν αὐτῆς παρθενίαν τῷ θεῷ ἀνέθηκε καὶ τὰς ἀδελφὰς ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ἐπαιδαγωγῆσε βίον, cf. SOZOMENOS, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 9,1, ed. G. HANSEN, *Sozomenos, Historia Ecclesiastica*. Kirchengeschichte, 4 vols., Turnhout 2004.
- 3 Theodosios II was portrayed as a second Constantine mainly by Socrates and Sozomenos who stood in his favour and enjoyed his patronage. Cf. J. HARRIS, *Pius princeps: Theodosius II and Fifth-Century Constantinople*, in: P. MAGDALINO (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries*. Papers from the Twenty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St Andrews, March 1992, Aldershot 1994, pp. 34–44, esp. pp. 37–38, see also M. WHITBY, *Images for Emperors in Late Antiquity: A Search for a New Constantine*, in: MAGDALINO, *New Constantines*, pp. 83–94, esp. p. 84.
- 4 Cf. L. JAMES, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium*, London 2001, esp. pp. 12, 14, 148–150.
- 5 SOZOMENOS, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1,3–4 (cit. n. 2), cf. V. LIMBERIS, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople*, London/New York 1994, pp. 54–60.
- 6 Cf. K. HOLM, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1982, p. 176, and JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 4), p. 156.

questionable to what extent their activities – both in politics and patronage – were really in opposition. If so, Eudokia, who was not a virgin like Pulcheria, had to choose other ways to emulate her pious sister-in-law.<sup>7</sup> It is very likely that the empress eventually found her imperial role model, when she set off for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 438/439 CE. She was the first member of the court after Helena and Eutropia, Constantine's mother and mother-in-law respectively, to travel to the Holy Land.<sup>8</sup> Just a few years after this journey, Eudokia left the court in Constantinople for unknown reasons.<sup>9</sup> Again, she chose Jerusalem as the place for her retirement, a city where she would live the rest of her life as an important patroness of buildings and a strong supporter of anti-Chalcedonian monks – even after she renounced Miaphysitism and was eventually re-admitted into the Orthodox Church. Eudokia died

in 460 CE and was buried in the church of St Stephen, her most important religious foundation.

The aim of this case study in early Byzantine patronage is not to examine whether Eudokia made her foundations in the Holy Land as acts of defiance in order to emulate or antagonize her husband and sister-in-law. Moreover, we cannot measure how deep or sincere her Christian devotion was solely through her charitable foundations. Both questions cannot be answered sufficiently – and can only provide material for historical narratives with quite a moving plot, something that has already been done.<sup>10</sup> In this study, Eudokia's possibilities and limits as an imperial founder will be discussed by asking why she chose Jerusalem as the goal of her final retreat and whether her foundations in the Holy City show a deliberate concept of patronage.

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- 7 For other contemporary forms of pious rivalry see J. MATTHEWS, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, AD 364–425*, Oxford 1975, pp. 130–131.
- 8 Nevertheless, Eudokia was not the first female member of the Theodosian house who made donations to the holy places. The mother of Theodosios II, Eudoxia, supposedly played a key role in the destruction of the sanctuary of Zeus Marnas in Gaza and the subsequent building of a church at the same spot, the Eudoxiana, cf. H. GRÉGOIRE/M.-A. KUGENER (ed.), *Marc le Diacre: Vie de Porphyre évêque de Gaza*, Paris 1930, pp. 53, 75–92, cf. p. 92: ἐκλήθη δὲ Εὐδοξιανῆ ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς θεοφιλεστάτης Εὐδοξίας τῆς βασιλίδος. For Helena as a female role model of Byzantine empresses, cf. L. BRUBAKER, *Memories of Helena: Patterns in Imperial Female Matronage in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries*, in: L. JAMES (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, London/New York 1997, pp. 52–75, esp. pp. 56–62. For an interesting re-evaluation of the role of Eutropia in the Holy Land, cf. R. VAN DAM, *The Roman Revolution of Constantine*, Cambridge 2007, pp. 300–302. Kenneth Holm refers to Eudokia as a “latter-day Helena”, HOLM, *Theodosian Empresses* (cit. n. 6), p. 188. The choice of Helena as a role model turned out to be a formidable one, when, for example, Pulcheria herself was acclaimed as a new Helena at the sixth session (25 October 451 CE) of the Council of Chalcedon, at a time when Eudokia had been away from the court for almost a decade: *Pulcheria noua Helena. Helena fides demonstrasti. Helena zelum tu ostendisti*, cf. E. SCHWARTZ (ed.), *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, 3.2, Berlin/Leipzig 1936, Actio 6,11 (versio antiqua), p. 177; cf. BRUBAKER, *Memories of Helena* (cit. n. 8), p. 62; L. GARLAND, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527–1204*, London/New York 1999, p. 89.
- 9 Later writers report that Eudokia was accused of adultery, but the sources remain rather vague. John Malalas is the first of many ancient authors to tell a fabulous story involving a notorious Phrygian apple which leads Theodosios to the wrong assumption that Eudokia was unfaithful. Cf. MALALAS, *Chronographia* 14,8, ed. J. THURN, Johannes Malalas, *Chronographia*, Berlin 2000. However, the source material equally supports a version of the story according to which Eudokia left Constantinople for Jerusalem in accordance with and perhaps even encouraged by her husband, Theodosios II.
- 10 Cf. F.-T.-M. DE BACULARD D'ARNAUD, *Eudoxie* [sic], in: *Nouvelles historiques (1774–1783)*, III, Paris 1803 (=Évre de M. d'Arnaud, 9), pp. 181–312; W. WIEGAND, *Eudoxia* [sic], *Gemahlin des oströmischen Kaisers Theodosius II.*, Worms 1871; F. GREGOROVIVUS, *Athenais: Geschichte einer byzantinischen Kaiserin*, Leipzig 1892, and I. TSATSOU, *Athenais*, Athens 1970 (in Greek).

AELIA EUDOKIA AS PILGRIM AND  
PATRONESS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

It appears that before Eudokia left the court, there was little space for her to cultivate her prestige in the capital. Historians praised her beauty, her wit and her literary talents, but the dominant figure representing piety and Christian devotion was Pulcheria, who accomplished this through her vow of virginity, her ascetic lifestyle and her religious foundations such as the church of St Lawrence and several others in honour of the Theotokos. Eudokia's first pilgrimage to Jerusalem may be seen as one attempt to challenge this perception. The empress used the prestige gained from the journey to establish herself in Constantinople, when she brought back relics of St Stephen just as Helena had once returned with parts of the True Cross. The relics allowed her to command over important religious resources for the first time; something that only her sister-in-law could do in the past.<sup>11</sup> This also marks the beginning of increased interaction between Constantinople and Jerusalem during the reign of Theodosios II.<sup>12</sup> As this paper tries to demonstrate, the connection between the two cities went both ways: Eudokia imported relics

to Constantinople, but also exported a distinctive form of veneration from there to Jerusalem. As a dedicatory epigram from the *Greek Anthology* informs us, back at court after her pilgrimage, Eudokia built a small church for St Poly-euktos which would eventually be rebuilt and enlarged by her great-granddaughter Anicia Juliana.<sup>13</sup> The choice for this rather rarely venerated saint may be seen as having a clear religious-political meaning. Polyeuktos suffered martyrdom in Armenia under Decius for having destroyed statues of pagan gods. Despite her supposed pagan upbringing, Eudokia emerged, on the eve of her departure from Constantinople, as a true Christian empress, even though she had the charming flaw to be the only daughter of a Greek sophist in Athens. Her alleged hometown profited under the reign of Theodosios II.<sup>14</sup> But Eudokia did not choose Athens as her final retreat, nor did she retire to Antioch, where she had been received with great honour when she passed through on her first journey to Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup> Her address to the Antiochians, in which she employed a quotation from Homer's *Iliad*, of

- 11 Cf. BRUBAKER, *Memories of Helena* (cit. n. 8), p. 62, and HOLUM, *Theodosian Empresses* (cit. n. 6), pp. 137, 189. Sozomenos's description of the *inventio* of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia through Pulcheria, however, was also modelled on Helena's discovery of the True Cross, cf. SOZOMENOS, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (cit. n. 2), 2,2 and 9,2.
- 12 As discussed below, Theodosios II may have founded a church in Jerusalem in the late 430s as well. Generally, an exchange of pious and prominent pilgrims started off at this time: Melania the Younger travelled to Constantinople in 436–437 CE, and Peter the Iberian, who grew up in Constantinople, left for the Holy Land in 437 CE.
- 13 Εὐδοκίη μὲν ἄνασσα θεὸν σπεύδουσα γεραίρειν, / πρώτη νηὸν ἔτευξε θεοφραδέος Πολυεύκτου / ἀλλ' οὐ τοῖον ἔντευξε καὶ οὐ τόσον οὐ τινι φειδοί, / οὐ κτεάτων χατέουσα – τίνος βασιλεία χατίζει; – / ἀλλ' ὡς θυμὸν ἔχουσα θεοπρόπον, ὅττι γενέθλην / καλλείψει δεδαυῖαν ἀμείνονα κόσμον ὀπάξειν. *Greek Anthology* 1,10 (Εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ ἁγίου μάρτυρος Πολυεύκτου), 1–6, ed. H. BECKBY, *Anthologia Graeca*, I, Munich 1965. For the archaeological remains of the church near the Şehzade Camii in Istanbul's Saraçhane quarter, cf. C. MANGO / I. ŠEVČENKO, *Remains of the Church of St. Polyeuktos at Constantinople*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 15, 1961, pp. 243–247.
- 14 Cf. *Codex Theodosianus* 16,2,45 and 11,1,33, ed. T. MOMMSEN / P. MEYER, *Theodosiani libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis et leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, Berlin 1905. For a church foundation in Athens by Eudokia, cf. G. FOWDEN, *Late Roman Achaëa: Identity and Defence*, in: *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 8, 1994, pp. 549–567.
- 15 For Eudokia addressing the people in Antioch, cf. EVAGRIOS, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1,20, ed. A. HÜBNER, *Evagrius Scholasticus, Historia ecclesiastica. Kirchengeschichte*, 2 vols., Turnhout 2007; MALALAS, *Chronographia* 14,8 (from the *fragmenta tusculana*) (cit. n. 9), and *Chronicon Paschale* 585, ed. L. DINDORF, *Corpus scriptorum historiae by-*



*the same kin and blood I am proud to be*,<sup>16</sup> generated the speculation as to whether Eudokia had originally been born in Antioch and whether she had been brought up a pagan or a Christian.<sup>17</sup> Be that as it may, Eudokia indeed looked favourably on Antioch. The life of St Kyprianos, a former bishop of the city, was one of the topics of her literary interests.<sup>18</sup> When Theodosios and Eudokia were still living together, they extended Antioch's city walls, a form of patronage which was an attempt to provide security in a visible manner for the early Byzantine provin-

cial.<sup>19</sup> However, Eudokia had good reason to choose Jerusalem and not Antioch or Athens as her goal for patronage and final retreat during her exile. Only this city could offer her the possibility to retain her role as a Christian empress. This was much easier to accomplish in a place associated with Christian salvific history than in the distinguished classical cities of Antioch or Athens. Whether originally pagan or not, Eudokia clearly transferred everything which related to her classical upbringing solely into her literary activities as a learned Christian poet.<sup>20</sup>

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zantinae, Bonn 1832. Both, Evagrius and Malalas, came from Antioch and Eudokia's influence may be over-estimated in their accounts.

- 16 Ὑμετέρης γενεῆς τε καὶ αἱματος εὐχομαι εἶναι, adapted from HOMER, *Ilias* 6,211 and 20,241. Traditionally, Eudokia's quotation was explained as a reference to the citizens from Athens, who founded Antioch in 300 BCE, cf. M. WHITBY (tr.), *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, Liverpool 2000, p. 48, n. 173. However, Kenneth Holm assumes that Eudokia actually came from Antioch, cf. HOLM, *Theodosian Empresses* (cit. n. 6), pp. 117, 278; see also J. BURMAN, *The Athenian Empress Eudokia*, in: P. CASTRÉN (ed.), *Post-Herulian Athens: Aspects in Life and Culture in Athens AD 267–529*, Helsinki 1994, pp. 63–87, esp. p. 81.
- 17 Most scholars assume that Eudokia was born and brought up as a pagan, cf. BURMAN, *Athenian Empress* (cit. n. 16), pp. 71–74; M. HAFFNER, *Die Kaiserin Eudokia als Repräsentantin des Kulturchristentums*, in: *Gymnasium*, 103, 1996, pp. 216–228; J. HERRIN, *Women in Purple: Rulers of Medieval Byzantium*, London 2001, p. 135, and HOLM, *Theodosian Empresses* (cit. n. 6), pp. 112–115. The possibility remains that Eudokia was in fact brought up as a Christian. It might be debatable whether the bride's beauty and her family's reputation for Greek philosophy was enough for Pulcheria to give her consent to the marriage. Eudokia's baptism shortly before her marriage with Theodosios, however, is not sufficient proof that she had been pagan up to that moment, as it was rather common to be baptised in adulthood. Only in the Justinianic period did the baptism of infants become more widespread, cf. BURMAN, *Athenian Empress* (cit. n. 16), p. 71.
- 18 Cf. AELIA EUDOCIA, *De Sancto Cypriano libri II*, ed. J.-P. MIGNÉ, in: *PG*, 85, Paris 1864, coll. 827–864; cf. 2,856d–857a for a praise of Antioch.
- 19 For the late antique and early Byzantine perception that the provincials lived in fear of a barbaric world engulfing the individual, the city or the Empire as a whole, cf. e.g. AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, *Res Gestae* 14,4,1.3–4, ed. W. SEYFARTH, *Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae*, 2 vols., Leipzig 1978; ANONYMUS, *De rebus bellicis* 6,1–3, ed. R. IRELAND, *Anonymi Auctoris: de rebus bellicis*, Leipzig 1984; HIERONYMUS, *Vita Malchi* 4,2, ed. E. MORALES, *Jérôme: trois vies de moines* (Paul, Malchus, Hilarion), Paris 2007, pp. 184–211, and PROKOPIOS, *De aedificiis* 2,6,15, ed. J. HAURY, *Procopius: Opera omnia IV. De aedificiis libri VI*, Leipzig 1964. Regarding Jerusalem's city walls, this view has been challenged by Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah who convincingly interprets the fortifications as reflecting the city's prosperity and wealth, cf. S. WEKSLER-BDOLAH, *The Fortifications of Jerusalem in the Byzantine period*, in: *Aram*, 18–19, 2006–2007, pp. 85–112, esp. pp. 97–98.
- 20 Even Christian authors praised the ideal of pagan poetic learning, cf. T. GELZER, *Zum Hintergrund der hohen Schätzung der paganen Bildung bei Sokrates von Konstantinopel*, in: B. BÄBLER, *Die Welt des Sokrates von Konstantinopel: Studien zu Politik, Religion und Kultur im späten 4. und frühen 5. Jh. n. Chr.* (FS Christoph Schäublin), Munich/Leipzig 2001, pp. 111–124, esp. pp. 116–121. Eudokia's literary activities, especially the *Homeroecentones*, were commended by Malalas, the *Chronicon Paschale*, Evagrius, Theophanes and the Suda, cf. P. VAN DEUN, *The Poetical Writings of the Empress Eudokia: An Evaluation*, in: J. DEN BOEFT (ed.), *Early Christian Poetry: A Collection of Essays*, Leiden/New York/Cologne 1993, pp. 273–282, esp. pp. 277–278. Even Photios, renowned for his notorious detest for poetry, mentioned and praised her work, cf. B. BALDWIN, *Photius and Poetry*, in: *Byzantine and*

who presented “salvation history in a most precious frame.”<sup>21</sup>

From the time of her departure from the court, her entire building activity proceeded in the manner of that of a new Helena in the Holy Land. This comparison with the most famous Jerusalem pilgrim and benefactor<sup>22</sup> allowed Eudokia to actively remain in the role of an empress for the rest of her life. In explaining her patronage in the Holy City, it is usually said that she desired Jerusalem to rival the capital in the magnificence of its monuments, at a location where she was free from the control of her family and where her prestige was able to grow in spite of her political misfortune.<sup>23</sup> However, it remains questionable whether her activities in the Holy Land were in opposition or perhaps rather complementing the Theodosian benefactions in Constantinople. Eudokia’s patronage can be seen as one of three major Byzantine phases of development in

the Holy City, the others being the Constantinian building program and later that of Justinian. However, urban development and patronage in Jerusalem followed certain rules. The city was the actual location where salvation history took place. When Eudokia visited Jerusalem for the first time in 438/439 CE, every church she saw was connected to a local tradition remembering salvation history at the very spot under the assumption that Biblical history had taken place exactly there. Therefore, every religious building became a unique place: There could not be a second place commemorating the resurrection of Christ beside the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the sending of the Holy Spirit was celebrated at the Hagia Sion and nowhere else. Therefore, it is not only worth asking how Eudokia’s buildings fit into this scheme of religious urban development, but also what the meaning of her foundations was and what her patronage meant for Jerusalem.

#### AELIA EUDOKIA IN JERUSALEM

According to several historical sources, written down some time after Eudokia’s death, the empress rebuilt not only the city walls of Antioch, but also of Jerusalem. Through this, the south-

eastern hill with the Pool of Siloam and the southwestern hill with St Peter and Hagia Sion were integrated into the city until the extent of the walls was later reduced in Fatimid times.<sup>24</sup> However, in

Modern Greek Studies, 4, 1987, pp. 9–14. Earlier in the century, however, the genre itself found a critic in Jerome, who commented on the *Homerocentones* as literary childrens’ games: *Quasi non legerimus Homerocentonas et Uergiliocentonas ac non sic etiam Maronem sine Christo possimus dicere Christianum [...] puerilia sunt haec et circulatorum ludo similia*, HIERONYMUS, *Epistulae* 53,7, ed. I. HILBERG, Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, 3 vols., Vienna 1996.

21 H. HUNGER, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, II, Munich 1978, p. 101.

22 The literature – both in ancient sources and modern studies – on Helena’s church foundations abounds; how important her acts in the Holy Land actually were can be shown by the large material taken from Eusebios’s *Ecclesiastical History* and quoted in Socrates Scholasticus, cf. SOCRATES, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1,9 and esp. 1,17, ed. G. HANSEN, Sokrates: Kirchengeschichte, Berlin 1995. For the Helena-tradition, cf. J. DRIJVERS, *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of her Finding of the True Cross*, Leiden/Boston 1992.

23 Cf. J. BINNS, *Ascetics and Ambassadors of Christ: The Monasteries of Palestine 314–631*, Oxford 1994, p. 88.

24 Cf. EVAGRIOS, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1,22 (cit. n. 15); cf. K. BIEBERSTEIN/H. BLOEDHORN, *Jerusalem: Grundzüge der Baugeschichte vom Chalkolithikum bis zur Frühzeit der osmanischen Herrschaft*, 3 vols., Wiesbaden 1994, I, p. 178, II, pp. 114, 390 and III, p. 143. Eudokia may have re-used parts of Herod’s so-called “Upper Wall” for the fortifications built by her, cf. K. PRAG (ed.), *Excavations by K. M. Kenyon in Jerusalem 1961–1967, V: Discoveries in Hellenistic to Ottoman Jerusalem. Centenary volume: Kathleen M. Kenyon 1906–1978*, Oxford 2008, pp. 85, 474–478. The archaeological evidence, however, illustrates that parts of the Byzantine city wall discovered thus far appear to be constructed uniformly. Therefore, it has been suggested that the walls were built together at the same time between the late fourth and mid-fifth century. Whereas Hillel Geva’s dating of the walls to Constantinian times

contrast to Antioch, this construction was not only meant to provide security for the population.<sup>25</sup> The new walls would have rather encompassed new foundations in the city, some of them surely donated by Eudokia herself. According to John Malalas, she referred explicitly to Psalm 51 (50) when she said that it was for her that the prophet David spoke when he said *in thy good pleasure* [ἐν τῇ εὐδοκίᾳ σου], *O Lord, the walls of Jerusalem shall be built*.<sup>26</sup> With a poetess so well-versed in classical and biblical literature, we may assume that if the reference to her own name in the psalm is genuine, the extension of the wall was indeed both an intended act and a proud statement.

Besides the city's walls, the most important foundation of Eudokia was the church of St Stephen, on the site of today's École biblique et archéologique française, outside the city walls on the main road northwards that connected the

city with Neapolis (Nablūs) and Damascus. It is remarkable that Eudokia did not attempt to reproduce Pulcheria's devotion to the Virgin at a new place but built a church of St Stephen instead. I would argue that it was not possible any more to donate a church of the Theotokos in Jerusalem, as this position in the religious landscape of Jerusalem was already filled: The third ecumenical Council of Ephesos in 431 tried to establish the status of Mary as Theotokos both in Christian vocabulary and worship. This found a parallel in the memorial landscape of Jerusalem shortly after the council was completed. There are many traces of attempts to find the location of Mary's tomb in the sacred landscape of Jerusalem between 430 and 450 CE, eventually complemented by the building of a church in the Kidron Valley, perhaps commissioned by Eudokia's husband, Theodosios II.<sup>27</sup> Hence,

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has to be discarded as the discovered course of the wall does not correspond with the Constantinian city limits (cf. H. GEVA, Jerusalem: The Roman Period, in: E. STERN/A. LEWINSON-GILBOA/J. AVIRAM [ed.], *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, II, pp. 758–766), Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah put forward the suggestion that it was not Eudokia, but Eudoxia who commissioned the encircling of the city some time in the first days of the fifth century (cf. WEKSLER-BDOLAH, *Fortifications* [cit. n. 19], pp. 93–102). The archaeological record, according to her discussion of the material, favours a late fourth or early fifth century construction date rather than the mid-fifth century. This would leave the possibility open that Eudokia may indeed have restored parts of the wall some decades later. The literary sources, however, remain ambiguous on the matter with most of the later authors ascribing the walls to Eudokia, but also two pilgrim accounts who name Eudoxia as the founder. Weksler-Bdolah argues that John Rufus's *Vita Petri Iberii* mentions the city's "holy walls" in an episode prior to Eudokia's arrival. This does not necessarily attest to an earlier construction of the city walls as the *Vita* was written down almost sixty years later and we cannot be sure whether John Rufus was aware whether there was a city wall in the 430s or not. Moreover, the episode of Peter the Iberian first beholding, then entering Jerusalem is highly fashioned in the wording of the Psalms and Isaiah 33:20 – therefore, the mention of the walls might also be a purely stylistic necessity.

25 Cf. R. SCHICK, Jerusalem in the Byzantine Period, in: Z. KAFARI/R. SCHICK (ed.), *Jerusalem before Islam*, Oxford 2008, pp. 169–188, esp. p. 175, and PRAG, Jerusalem, V (cit. n. 24), p. 477.

26 Δι' ἐμὲ εἶπεν Δαβὶδ ὁ προφήτης, ὅτι καὶ ἐν τῇ εὐδοκίᾳ σου οἰκοδομηθήσεται τὰ τεῖχη Ἱερουσαλήμ, κύριε. MALALAS, *Chronographia* 14,8 (cit. n. 9). Cf. ἀγάθυνον, κύριε, ἐν τῇ εὐδοκίᾳ σου τὴν Σιών, καὶ οἰκοδομηθήτω τὰ τεῖχη Ἱερουσαλήμ, Ps 50,20 (LXX).

27 Three independent sources point to a church of Mary in the Kidron valley: The second homily on the Dormition of Mary by John of Damascus includes a lengthy quotation of the now lost *Historia Euthymiaca*. In this, Pulcheria asks patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem to grant her the body of Mary – which she expected to be found in the church at Gethsemane in Jerusalem, cf. JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *De dorm.* 2,18, ed. P. VOULET, S. Jean Damascène, *Homélies sur la nativité et la Dormition*, Paris 1998. Of course, Pulcheria was to be disappointed: The body remained unfound, in accordance with the Church's teaching that Mary's body had been taken into heaven at her death. The Coptic memorial speech for bishop Makarios of Tkōw, written in the early sixth century, relates that after a riot, the whole city gathered together in the church of Mary in the Kidron valley, cf. DIOSCORUS 49,28–31, ed. D. JOHNSON, A Panegyric on Macarius Bishop of Tkōw: Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria, Louvain 1980. The third source which suggests that a new

Eudokia had to fix her patronage in the Holy City to new goals.

The foundation of a church of St Stephen in the north of Jerusalem was connected with Eudokia's successful *translatio* of the saint's relics to Constantinople.<sup>28</sup> She provided the place, which would become her burial site,<sup>29</sup> not only with

bones of St Stephen but also with relics of the saints Kallinikos, Dominos and Thekla, a name which might refer to Melania the Elder who was often called Thekla.<sup>30</sup> The consecration of the basilica with two side-aisles (41,7 × 19,3 m) was a major event for Jerusalem.<sup>31</sup> Eudokia invited Cyril of Alexandria, who also consecrated Melania's

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church was being built to commemorate the Theotokos is the Syriac *Vita Petri Iberii*, ed. C. HORN/R. PHENIX JR., John Rufus: The *Lives* of Peter the Iberian, Theodosius of Jerusalem, and the Monk Romanus, Leiden/Boston 2008. In it, a monk explains that he was visited in a dream by Peter, who took him through Jerusalem, showing him the church of Gethsemane, cf. JOHN RUFUS, *Vita Petri Iberii* 134. As this church of Gethsemane was no longer standing at this time, Stephen Shoemaker and Klaus Bieberstein have argued that the monk meant in fact to indicate the church of Mary, which was later often referred to as Gethsemane, taking the name of the church which had previously stood on the adjacent site, as mentioned by Eutychios of Alexandria, who ascribed the erection of the church to Theodosios I. This must be considered a misunderstanding on his part. Theodosios II alone can have built the church, according to the accepted chronology. Thus it appears that the church of the Dormition of Mary can only have been built in the later part of the reign of Eudokia's husband between 430 and 450 CE, cf. BIEBERSTEIN/BLOEDHORN, Jerusalem (cit. n. 24), I, p. 156; S. SHOEMAKER, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption*, Oxford 2002, pp. 98–107, and K. BIEBERSTEIN, „Zum Raum wird hier die Zeit“: drei Erinnerungslandschaften Jerusalems, in: *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie*, 22, 2007, pp. 3–39, esp. pp. 24–26. The confusion of Theodosios I and II is a common problem in the sources, cf. the question of the attribution of the Antiochian city walls in EVAGRIOS, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1,20 (cit. n. 15), and in MALALAS, *Chronographia* 13,39–41 (cit. n. 9). I would argue, however, that the same sources also allow a different interpretation of the ecclesiastical landscape in the valley of Gethsemane. The weak point in the above argument made by Klaus Bieberstein is the existence of a church in the valley mentioned by Egeria. The sources are too vague to attribute a specific donor to what she called the “graceful church” – it might well have been the clergy with the aids of various donors, but though unlikely, we cannot completely exclude Theodosios I as a potential founder, as mentioned in the late testimony of Eutychios. This would be the first and only imperial foundation in Jerusalem between Constantine and the early fifth century. As Egeria makes no mention about whether the church was liturgically used, I would suggest that it simply was not finished or not yet dedicated. It may have commemorated the Virgin's Dormition, however, I think it would be more plausible if we rather assumed it marked e.g. Christ's teaching or prayer in the hours before his passion associated with this area. Whatever the original church commemorated, it becomes clear from the late fifth-century sources that at some time during this century (perhaps in 431, perhaps not) it was or eventually became the place in which the Dormition of Mary was commemorated. Whether the re-dedicated church or a newly built church on the same spot was erected by Theodosios II thus remains open to question.

- 28 Eudokia's acquisition of the relics of the protomartyr was not an easy task, for Gerontius and Melania the Younger too had attempted to claim them for a *martyrion* on the Mount of Olives, cf. JOHN RUFUS, *Vita Petri Iberii* 49 (cit. n. 27); cf. E. CLARK, Claims on the Bones of St Stephen: The Partisans of Melania and Eudokia, in: *Church History*, 51, 1982, pp. 141–156, and B. LEYERLE, Children and Disease in a Sixth-Century Monastery, in: L. RUTGERS, *What Athens Has to Do with Jerusalem: Essays on Classical, Jewish, and Early Christian Art and Archaeology* (FS Gideon Foerster), Leuven 2002, pp. 349–372, esp. p. 350.
- 29 Eudokia's funeral in Jerusalem forms the single exception of the whole Theodosian dynasty (cf. MALALAS, *Chronographia* 14,8 [cit. n. 9]), as she was the only member who is not buried in the imperial mausoleum in the so-called South Stoa, a cruciform annexe to Constantine's Apostoleion in Constantinople, which was built under Theodosios I, cf. M. JOHNSON, On the Burial Places of the Theodosian Dynasty, in: *Byzantion*, 61, 1991, pp. 330–339, and now M. JOHNSON, *The Roman Imperial Mausoleum in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge 2009.
- 30 Cf. *SEG* 8, 1937, p. 192. The inscription is today in the museum of the École Biblique (Inv. 2497/42). For Eudokia's church, cf. BIEBERSTEIN/BLOEDHORN, Jerusalem (cit. n. 24), II, pp. 231–233, and M.-J. LAGRANGE, *Saint Étienne et son sanctuaire à Jérusalem*, Paris 1894.
- 31 For the construction of the church see SOCRATES, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7,47,3 (cit. n. 22), and EVAGRIOS, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1,22 (cit. n. 15).

*martyrion* on the Mount of Olives on the following day.<sup>32</sup> The empress knew about the considerable popularity of the protomartyr throughout the whole Empire. Stephen's death was interpreted as an echo of the Crucifixion, and the church of Stephen donated by Eudokia resembled the revelation of the True Cross by Helena and the erection of the church of the Holy Sepulchre by Constantine.<sup>33</sup> She also dedicated a church to him in Gaza and one in Antioch containing the remains of the saint's foot in gratitude for the cure of an affliction.<sup>34</sup> Eudokia's devotion to the protomartyr may originate from personal reasons, but it is more likely that Eudokia realised that a church for St Stephen in Jerusalem was a building project still missing in the city's memorial landscape. The martyr's bones were discovered at Kaphar Gamala, probably Bait Jamal in the Shephelah, in 415 CE and temporarily buried in the Hagia Sion, the place actually commemorating the events of the Last Supper and Pentecost. Within the sacred topography of Jerusalem a space dedicated exclusively to St Stephen was still missing when Eudokia arrived there.

This appears to be no coincidence. Looking closer at the churches which were built

in Jerusalem until the time of Eudokia, it becomes clear that the commemoration of St Stephen was neglected due to the dominance of places of remembrance of Christ's life and passion: The first two churches built in Jerusalem were Constantine's church of the Holy Sepulchre and that of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives, the so-called Eleona. The latter was complemented with the Imbomon, erected by the Roman noble woman Poemenia before 374 CE.<sup>35</sup> The Hagia Sion, built before 384 CE, commemorated the community of the Disciples (e.g. the Last Supper and Pentecost). The fourth-century pilgrim Egeria mentions a church at Gethsemane, connected with the prayer of Christ's agony in the garden in the night before his death.<sup>36</sup> A church on the Mount of Olives on the road to Bethany celebrated Jesus's path when he entered the Holy City.<sup>37</sup> A church of St Peter was built in the house of Kaiaphas shortly after 451 CE, being the reminder of Christ's trial.<sup>38</sup> This church and the so-called Hagia Sophia, built in the supposed house of Pontius Pilatus and mentioned for the first time in the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, formed important stations of the gradually de-

32 Cf. CLARK, *Bones of St Stephen* (cit. n. 28), p. 151; C. HORN, *Ascetics and Christological Controversy in Fifth-Century Palestine: The Career of Peter the Iberian*, Oxford 2006, p. 75, and B. BITTON-ASHKELONY/A. KOFSKY, *The Monastic School of Gaza*, Leiden/Boston 2006, pp. 49–50.

33 Cf. CLARK, *Bones of St Stephen* (cit. n. 28), p. 142, and E. HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire, AD 312–460*, Oxford 1984, pp. 212, 220. Indeed, Eudokia's church had a precinct to rival that which the Constantinian builders had constructed around the Holy Sepulchre, EVAGRIOS, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1,22 (cit. n. 15). Cf. HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage* (cit. n. 33), p. 242.

34 Cf. HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage* (cit. n. 33), p. 223. For Eudokia's sprained foot, cf. HOLUM, *Theodosian Empresses* (cit. n. 6), p. 185, and HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage* (cit. n. 33), p. 233. For the church in Gaza, cf. MARK THE DEACON, *Life of Porphyrius* 54, ed. H. GRÉGOIRE/M.-A. KUGENER, *Marc le Diacre: vie de Porphyre*, Paris 1930.

35 Cf. PALLADIOS, *Historia Lausiaca* 35, ed. D. C. BUTLER, *The Lausiaca History of Palladius, II: The Greek Text Edited with Introduction and Notes*, Cambridge 1904; JOHN RUFUS, *Vita Petri Iberii* 38 (cit. n. 27), cf. J. WILKINSON, *Egeria's Travels: Newly Translated with Supporting Documents and Notes*. 3rd ed., Warminster 1999, pp. 14–16.

36 Cf. *Itinerarium Egeriae* 36,1–2, ed. A. FRANCHESCHINI/R. WEBER, *Itinerarium Egeriae*, Turnholt 1965, pp. 35–103.

37 Cf. BIEBERSTEIN/BLOEDHORN, *Jerusalem* (cit. n. 24), I, p. 156.

38 Cf. BIEBERSTEIN/BLOEDHORN, *Jerusalem* (cit. n. 24), III, p. 414, and BIEBERSTEIN, *Erinnerungslandschaften* (cit. n. 27), pp. 26–27. In later times this traditions moved to the Hagia Sion, and the church became a place of remembering the denial of Peter. For the sacred topography see the seminal study M. HALBWACHS, *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en Terre sainte: étude de mémoire collective*, édition prepare par M. Jaisson, avec des contributions de D. Hervieu-Léger, J. P. Cléro, S. Gensburger et E. Brian, Paris 2008, *passim*.

veloping Via Dolorosa.<sup>39</sup> Two other churches of the fifth century were erected on the sites of miracles performed by Christ, the healing of the blind man and the paralytic.<sup>40</sup> A church at the eastern Mount of Olives, built in the reign of Valens or Theodosios I, commemorated the meeting between Christ and the sisters Martha and Mary.<sup>41</sup> So far, all buildings mentioned honoured different events in the life of Christ – we may add another church connected with his mother, the Virgin Mary, the above mentioned Theodosian church for the Dormitio Mariae at Gethsemane. It seems that in Jerusalem the veneration of Christ was – for understandable reasons – so important and dominant that the commemoration of saints and martyrs was less distinctive than in other cities of the early Byzantine Empire. And indeed, the sacred topography for such places of remembrance remained extraordinarily vague in the period up to Eudokia's arrival in the Holy City. Besides her foundation of St Stephen, we can find only a

very small amount of sacred places which were not connected directly to the life and passion of Christ: Rufinus of Aquileia and Palladios of Hierapolis mention that a church on the eastern Mount of Olives was dedicated to St John the Baptist after some of emperor Julian's soldiers allegedly defiled his tomb in Samaria.<sup>42</sup> However, the sources remain very vague on this place. Unlike in other cities, most of the early monasteries in Jerusalem, built e.g. by Melania the Elder, Gerontius, Melania the Younger, Eustorgios, Peter the Iberian and John the Eunuch, were erected not at holy places and did not carry the name of a certain saint. Eudokia's hospice with its attribution and chapel to St George again formed an exception.<sup>43</sup> The attempts of Melania the Younger to erect a private *martyrion* for St Stephen have already been mentioned. A chapel for the military saint Menas, probably in the Armenian quarter,<sup>44</sup> was founded by a Roman noble woman, Bassa, who exchanged letters with Pulcheria<sup>45</sup> and belonged to

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- 39 Cf. JOHN RUFUS, *Vita Petri Iberii* 120 (cit n. 27). Cf. BIEBERSTEIN/BLOEDHORN, Jerusalem (cit. n. 24), III, p. 418. The term "Via Dolorosa" is, of course, a medieval invention, for stational liturgy in Jerusalem, cf. J. BALDOVIN, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy*, Rome 1987, and its condensed version in: J. BALDOVIN, *Liturgy in Ancient Jerusalem*, Nottingham 1989.
- 40 Cf. John 5 and 9. A successor-building of the church of the paralytic today is known as St Anna, as starting from the sixth century, the birth of the Virgin was connected with this place.
- 41 Cf. *Itinerarium Egeriae* 25,11; 29,3–6 (cit n. 36), BIEBERSTEIN/BLOEDHORN, Jerusalem (cit n. 24), I, p. 156.
- 42 Cf. BIEBERSTEIN/BLOEDHORN, Jerusalem (cit n. 24), III, p. 416.
- 43 Cf. CYRIL OF SKYTHOPOLIS, *Life of John the Hesychast* 204,9, ed. E. SCHWARTZ, Kyrillos von Skythopolis, Leipzig 1939; BIEBERSTEIN/BLOEDHORN, Jerusalem (cit n. 24), II, pp. 51–52. Blake Leyerle suggested that Eudokia's foundation of St Stephen as well included an important hospital, especially for infants. Cf. LEYERLE, *Children and Disease* (cit n. 28), pp. 360, 369–372.
- 44 When a mosaic inscription was discovered in the area of the Armenian garden, which contains the beginning of a personal name starting with the Greek letters *BA*, the excavators restored it to *Bassa* and identified the place as Bassa's chapel or church, cf. K. KENYON, *Excavations in Jerusalem 1963*, in: *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 96, 1964, pp. 7–18. Until today, the nearby Armenian church of St James contains a chapel dedicated to St Menas dating to the late fifth or sixth century. The monastery, mentioned by CYRIL OF SKYTHOPOLIS, *Life of Euthymios* 49,20 (cit. n. 43), however, was perhaps different from the church of St Menas though the two buildings were presumable close to each other. A. Douglas Tushingham dated the findings rather to the Justinianic restoration of the monastery of the Iberians (cf. PROKOPIOS, *De aedificiis* 5,9,6 [cit. n. 19]; A. TUSHINGHAM [ed.], *Excavations in Jerusalem 1961–1967*, I, Toronto 1985, p. 101), though if the chapel now included in the church of St James was indeed part of Bassa's church, the nearby mosaic could well have been part of her nunnery located in the Armenian garden area, cf. also C. JONES, *The Inscription on the Hare Mosaic*, in: TUSHINGHAM, Jerusalem, I, pp. 88–90.
- 45 A letter dating to late 453 CE from Pulcheria to Bassa is preserved among the post-conciliar documents in the Greek acts of Chalcedon, cf. E. SCHWARTZ (ed.), *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, 2. I. 3, Berlin 1935, pp. 494–495.

the circle of the younger Melania. From Cyril's description it becomes clear that Bassa's chapel was built in imitation of Eudokia's church of St Stephen – perhaps directly influenced by the empress's foundation. Cyril of Skythopolis and Paul of Elousa mentions the monk Theognios, who came to Jerusalem in 454/455 CE and stayed at a monastery on the Mount of Olives which had been founded shortly before his arrival by the noble woman Flavia, who also built a church of the martyr Julian.<sup>46</sup> Again, this church post-dates the church of St Stephen by more than a decade. Finally, the same author mentions a shrine of the military saint Theodore with a *terminus ante quem* of 532 CE; however, archaeologically such a chapel is not attested before the sixteenth century.<sup>47</sup> The distribution of these chapels shows a clear centre of *martyria* on the Mount of Olives. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that most of the places

were erected by Roman noble women, i. e. not by the clergy of Jerusalem but from outsiders to the city such as Eudokia herself. Compared to these small memorial places, the huge church of St Stephen differed in its sheer size – and at the prominent location on the main road towards the north. We may conclude at this point that Eudokia's endeavours to promote and commemorate St Stephen can be regarded as a clear novelty within the sacred landscape of Jerusalem.

The empress was the first patron in the city who acknowledged the growth in importance of the public veneration of relics and saints starting at the end of the fourth century. By the mid-fifth century, the Church exercised significant effort both in promoting and in controlling the veneration of relics. Coming from the centre of power in Constantinople with its numerous churches, this cult of saints was well-known to Eudokia.<sup>48</sup>

46 CYRIL OF SKYTHOPOLIS, *Life of Theognios* 241,20 (cit. n. 43). Cf. also PAUL OF ELUSA, *Life of Theognios* 5: ... καταλαμβάνει δὲ τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα, εὐχῆς ἕνεκα τῶν σεβασμίων τόπων. Κάκεισε παρὰ τῶν ἐν τῷ Φλαβίας καλουμένῳ μοναστηρίῳ εὐλαβῶν ἐδεξιώθη ἀνδρῶν, καὶ παροικήσας αὐτόθι τῆς συνήθους αὐτῷ ἡσυχίας καὶ πραύτητος εἶχετο, πάντας μὲν ὠφελῶν τοὺς συνόντας, μηδένα δὲ σκανδαλίσει καὶ ἅπαζ ἐλόμενος. ([...] he arrived in Jerusalem in order to pray at the Holy Places. There he was received by pious men in the so-called monastery of Flavia, and while he was living at this spot, he continued his accustomed solitude and mildness in order to help all those living with him and to strive not even a single time to give offence to anyone.), cf. J. VAN DEN GHEYN, *Acta Sancti Theognii Episcopi Betelae Paulo Elusensi et Cyrillo Scythopolitano auctoribus ex codice Parisino Coisliniano N° 303*, in: *Analecta Bollandiana*, 10, 1891, pp. 73–118. Flavia founded the monastery in the 450s. She made Theognios administrator of the monastery and then left for her homeland. Monastery and church are only attested in literary sources and may be identical with the so-called building of Flavia (ფლავიანის მონებ[უ]ლსა) mentioned in the Georgian Lectionary on 3rd June, 4th September (?), and 15th October, cf. G. GARITTE (ed.), *Le Calendrier Palestino-Géorgien du Sinaiticus 34* (Xe siècle), Brussels 1958, pp. 70, 88 (?), 97, cf. also BIEBERSTEIN/BLOEDHORN, *Jerusalem* (cit. n. 24), III, p. 412.

47 Cf. CYRIL OF SKYTHOPOLIS, *Life of Sabas* 185,4 (cit. n. 43); BIEBERSTEIN/BLOEDHORN, *Jerusalem* (cit. n. 24), II, p. 98. It is important to note that the fact that no more places of remembrance are recorded in the sources, does not necessarily mean that they did not exist. The small number of mentions may result from the nature of the sources; the few examples are mostly recorded by Cyril of Skythopolis who was an insider to the area.

48 Cf. P. BROWN, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, London 1981, esp. pp. 92–95. Even after Eudokia's time, the veneration of saints and martyrs remained somewhat hesitant. The legend of the discovery of the relics of Jacob in Kidron valley was clearly modelled on the discovery of St Stephen, even though the account claims that it already happened during the reign of Valens. However, no chapel for Jacob is attested before the eighth century. Finally, a church for John the Baptist is not attested before the Sassanid devastation of the city (614) and John Moschos mentions a church of St Kosmas and St Damian for the year 615 CE, once again maybe in the Kidron valley. Moreover, Biblical figures as well were remembered in Jerusalem, from the sixth to the tenth century, a grotto was shown to be the prison of Jeremiah and a memorial place of Isaiah existed in the Kidron valley, both not included on the normal pilgrim routes, cf. BIEBERSTEIN/BLOEDHORN, *Jerusalem* (cit. n. 24), I, pp. 158–159, III, pp. 234, 408. For the implications of the growing cult of saints for Jerusalem, cf. G. KRETSCHMAR, *Die Theologie*

Assuming that the empress as an imperial founder had a certain liberty in choosing her preferred forms of patronage,<sup>49</sup> it becomes clear that she introduced this concept to Jerusalem. Another novelty of Eudokia's act is that this building in the north of the city was the first sacred building that had no direct connection with a local tradition, for Stephen's stoning was commemorated in the Kidron valley.<sup>50</sup> Only later, from the sixth century onwards, does the legend appear that the place of Eudokia's church of St Stephen was indeed the exact location of the martyr's stoning.<sup>51</sup>

Through her foundations Eudokia managed to uphold her role as a model Christian empress and – tentatively more importantly – took provision for her posthumous fame as one of the

main benefactors of the Byzantine Holy Land, the only one who actually dwelled in Jerusalem herself. Judging from the broad distribution of texts, ranging from the hagiography of Cyril of Skythopolis to early Byzantine legends and medieval romance, which praise Eudokia's imperial presence and always closely link her name to Jerusalem, it appears that her strategies in patronage were successful: in the end, she died in the *odour of sanctity* and became a saint of the Orthodox Church.<sup>52</sup> Eudokia was the first to recognise the potential of Jerusalem beyond the enhancement of places of remembrance with religious buildings in the manner of Constantine and brought the cult of martyrs back to the very city that once had killed the prophets and stoned those sent to her.

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der Heiligen in der frühen Kirche, in: F. VON LILJENFELD (ed.), *Aspekte frühchristlicher Heiligenverehrung*, Erlangen 1977, pp. 77–125, esp. p. III.

- 49 It is noticeable that Eudokia received an annual appanage and/or could command her own fortune when she was away from the court. Nevertheless, the construction of St Stephen took relatively long and was not completed at the time of Eudokia's death in 460 CE (cf. CYRIL OF SKYTHOPOLIS, *Life of Euthymios* 53,5–54,11 [cit. n. 43]), which points at least to a certain shortage of funds. For Eudokia's political activities in the Holy Land see the monographs by BINNS, *Ascetics* (cit. n. 23); BITTON-ASHKELONY/KOFSKY, *School of Gaza* (cit. n. 32), and HORN, *Ascetics* (cit. n. 32), as well as A. KOFSKY, *Peter the Iberian: Pilgrimage, Monasticism and Ecclesiastical Politics in Byzantine Palestine*, in: *Liber Annuus*, 47, 1997, pp. 209–222.
- 50 Jodi Magness suggested that the Hadrianic re-foundation of Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina was situated further north than the city today, having the plaza behind the Damascus gate as a central square. Even though the archaeological evidence is not strong enough to support this theory, this would be a further explanation why Eudokia's church was erected in the North, not only because of the main street, but also because of the use of spoils from the remains of the Hadrianic city wall. Cf. J. MAGNESS, *The North Wall of Aelia Capitolina*, in: L. STAGER (ed.), *The Archaeology of Jordan and Beyond* (FS James Sauer), Winona Lake 2000, pp. 328–339.
- 51 Cf. BIEBERSTEIN/BLOEDHORN, *Jerusalem* (cit. n. 24), II, pp. 231–232. In Eudokia's times, the Damascus gate was called Stephen's gate, a tradition which was moved in the twelfth century onto the Eastern gate, today's Lion's gate.
- 52 Enrico Livrea attributes the *opus alexandrinum*-icon from the monastery of the Theotokos tou Libos (now in the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul) to Aelia Eudokia, cf. E. LIVREA, *L'imperatrice Eudokia santa*, in: *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 119, 1997, pp. 50–54.





## THE IMAGE OF THE EMPRESS THEODORA AS PATRON

ULRIKE UNTERWEGER

The early Byzantine empress Theodora is usually first associated with the mosaics in the church of San Vitale in Ravenna. This single surviving depiction of the empress shows her as an imperial donor or patron with the communion chalice, which she offers in the direction of Christ, and the attributes of the three Magi – the ultimate “imperial donors” – who appear in a similar gesture on the hem of her chlamys and thus underscore the intended message. Yet we still know little about Theodora’s contemporary image as patron.<sup>1</sup> Scholarly attention on patronage during Justinian’s reign has focused almost exclusively on deeds of the emperor, while questions about the empress were concerned with her supposedly dubious past and her purported personality. Reasons for this can be found in the historical understanding of and research on empresses and their role in Byzantine society,<sup>2</sup> and the long-lasting scholarly tradition of valu-

ing certain written sources – chronicles or works written by historians – to be historically more reliable than others, for example hagiographies.<sup>3</sup>

The three sixth-century authors most often cited in regard to the patronage of this imperial couple are John Malalas, John of Ephesos and Prokopios of Caesarea, who particularly shaped our understanding of Justinian’s reign and Theodora’s role and became the most common point of reference for this period. Yet all works by these authors – except for the first half of Malalas’s *Chronicle* – were composed after the empress’s death in 548, an aspect most studies fail to elaborate on. This includes the works of Liz James and Anne McClanan, who produced the first studies on early Byzantine empresses and their patronage that diverged from the tendency of past decades towards a focus on individual and prestigious objects and on linking empresses to grand churches, precious ivories and the like.<sup>4</sup> James’s

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- 1 The word “patron”, though gendered in its etymology, was chosen as a way to refer neutrally to the idea of a person engaged in the act of patronage. Also the expression “emperors” – as in contemporary Byzantine texts βασιλείς – is in certain situations used to refer to both emperor and empress.
  - 2 As has been analyzed by L. JAMES, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium*, London 2001, esp. “Will the Real Byzantine Empress Please Stand Up”, pp. 1–10.
  - 3 Regarding Theodora’s patronage, Cyril Mango was the first scholar to build his case on a hagiographical text, namely John of Ephesos’s *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, to argue that the church of Sts Sergios and Bacchos in Constantinople was actually a foundation of Theodora. See C. MANGO, *The Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople and the Alleged Tradition of Octagonal Palace Churches*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 21, 1972, pp. 189–193, and C. MANGO, *The Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus Once Again*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 68, 1975, pp. 385–392.
  - 4 L. JAMES, *Building and Rebuilding: Imperial Women and Religious Foundations in Constantinople in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries*, in: *Basilissa*, 1, 2004, pp. 50–64; JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 2), esp. “She for God Only? Empresses as Religious Patrons”, pp. 148–163; A. McCLANAN, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses. Image and Empire*, New York 2002, esp. “The Patronage of the Empress Theodora and Her Contemporaries”, pp. 93–106.

critical approach to the study of empresses, her analytical accomplishments and the contextualisation of actions into a structured framework are great aids to the understanding of Byzantine empresses. Yet she only takes religious imperial patronage into account and her approach also does not allow for an in-depth analysis of individual patrons and the abundant sources associated with them. McClanan on the other hand manages to collect a large amount of varying evidence connected to Theodora in order to establish a profile of the empress as patron, but in her own assumptions she fails to employ the needed source-criticism and relies almost exclusively on literary sources, neglecting to analyse the physical evidence. While James has already pointed out the active political dimension of patronage in Byzantium and argued against the practice of reducing women's patronage to "cultural patronage",<sup>5</sup> McClanan still refers to Theodora's "capabilities as a cultural patron".<sup>6</sup> Moreover, McClanan's assessment of Theodora and her patronage is highly contradictory, and she fails to reconcile her initial statement of how "banal the fulfilment of her role was"<sup>7</sup> and her conclusion that Theodora was "a fascinating example of the display of female *basileia*"<sup>8</sup> who "pursued a distinct agenda of building and cultural support", which relies solely on the Monophysite community within the Hormisdas palace and Mango's ascription of the church of Sts Sergios and Bacchos to Theodora.<sup>9</sup> McClanan states that only some

of Theodora's projects were joint foundations with Justinian,<sup>10</sup> while James explicitly names this emperor and empress as representative for the development of church building into an action performed by imperial couples, although the only example she offers for Theodora and Justinian is also the church of Sts Sergios and Bacchos.<sup>11</sup>

In order to shed light on the politics of imperial female patronage during Theodora's time as *augousta* 527–548, it is necessary and valuable to complement the material gathered by McClanan and thus creating a larger corpus of acts of patronage that includes only sources written or produced by her contemporaries. While critically re-evaluating the evidence, this article will lay particular emphasis on distinguishing between sources from before the empress's death in 548, and those composed posthumously, and will reconcile these with the material evidence.

Before examining such a corpus, we must first define which activities qualify as imperial patronage: building a home for the poor or a lavish church, having a precious cross manufactured or giving but one *nomisma* to a "fallen woman" – all these acts can be seen as imperial patronage if linked to the right person and understood in a specific context. Patronage associated with the empress could be undertaken by the empress herself or in her name, could be a joint action with the emperor or undertaken solely by the emperor and later linked to her

5 JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 2), p. 149.

6 McCLANAN, *Representations* (cit. n. 4), p. 106.

7 McCLANAN, *Representations* (cit. n. 4), p. 93.

8 McCLANAN, *Representations* (cit. n. 4), p. 106.

9 See McCLANAN, *Representations* (cit. n. 4), p. 102. Both acts of patronage can also be traced back to a single literary origin, the 47th history of John of Ephesos's *Lives of the Eastern Saints*.

10 McCLANAN, *Representations* (cit. n. 4), p. 102.

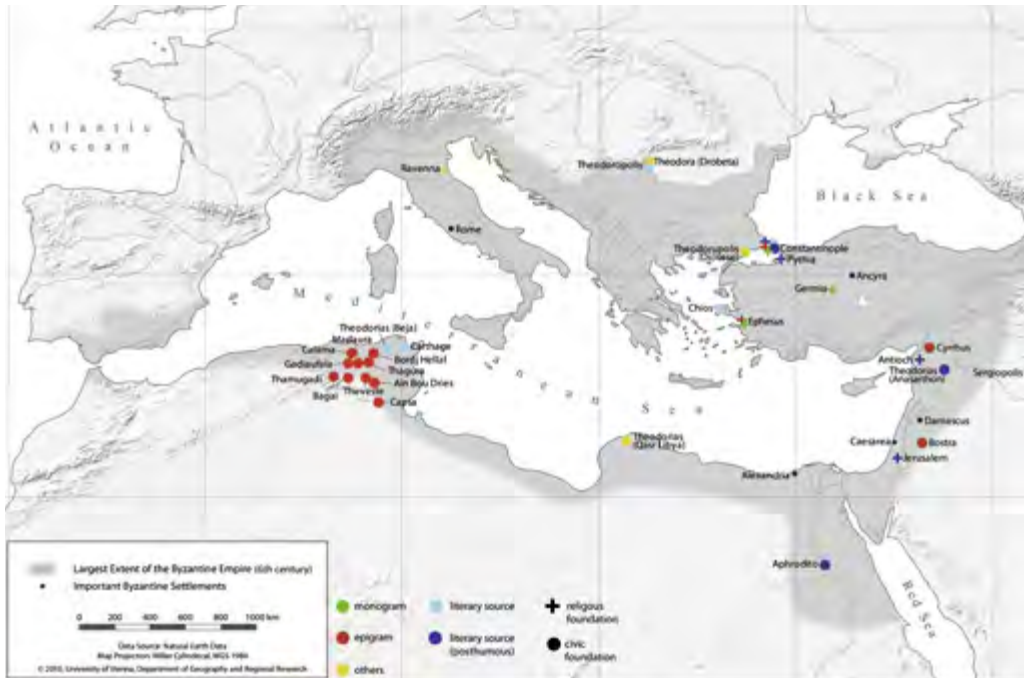
11 See JAMES, *Building and Rebuilding* (cit. n. 4), pp. 55–56. James further states that "in the sixth century at least, [Theodora] possessed a reputation for church building", an assertion James bases on the observation that Prokopios's *Buildings* mentions "other religious foundations" of the empress; JAMES, *Building and Rebuilding* (cit. n. 4), p. 63. It has to be noted though that Theodora's sole religious foundation is the convent of Repentance, and that she is not mentioned as a founder or co-founder of any church.

name<sup>12</sup> or could be an act of a third party as thanks to the empress for her patronage or to possibly woo her into becoming a patron. Acts of philanthropy such as public building or the support of persons – from individuals to larger communities and even whole towns<sup>13</sup> – are interwoven with pious acts in a religious context like building churches and monasteries or donating money or objects to persons and institutions,<sup>14</sup> and together form specific profiles or build images of imperial patrons.<sup>15</sup>

The political dimension of all patronage in Byzantine society, especially of imperial patronage, has already been shown and for a sixth-century empress it was a well-established possibility of acting in public.<sup>16</sup> All documented acts of patronage can be classified according to their nature: patronage could be civic or religious; in the form of countable units like the donation of money or construction of specific objects, or immaterial and uncountable like the support from an influential position. Patronage could establish new, or build on existing structures such as be-

stowing monetary or other charity upon an institution, or restoring or re-founding an institution and thus establishing a link with previous patrons, could have a larger or smaller audience, could be publicly accessible or only to a restricted group, or only at specific times, could be well known, much heard of and prestigious or only of minor importance or of importance to only a few. While these differentiations are already important in order to analyse critically a corpus of material connected with the empress as patron, they are absolutely indispensable when comparing the deeds of one empress or patron to another in an attempt to establish a pattern of (imperial) female patronage and to discuss aspects of a possible *mimesis*.<sup>17</sup> In regard to the literary sources we must keep in mind how we know about a certain foundation or act of patronage and not another – what made a sixth-century author decide that it was important, inevitable or possible to report or write about a certain occasion and omit another<sup>18</sup> – and of the audience that had access to a text or for whom a text was created. The

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- 12 For example a city, an institution or a monument which was graced with imperial patronage and subsequently named after the empress.
- 13 For example, the village of Aphrodito in Egypt from which a draft for a petition for help from the empress has survived; see H. I. BELL, An Egyptian Village in the Age of Justinian, in: *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 64, 1944, pp. 21–36, here p. 31, and E. R. HARDY, The Egyptian Policy of Justinian, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 22, 1968, pp. 21–41, here pp. 38–39; or her and Justinian's support for the children of Hilderic and all descendants of the emperor Valentinian and even for the defeated Gelimer and his family after the Vandal Wars in Northern Africa, PROKOPIOS, *Wars*, IV.9.13.
- 14 Religious treatises dedicated to the empress also form part of her religious patronage, such as Theodosios of Alexandria's *Tome against Themistios* or a similar treatise by Constantine of Laodikeia both composed while living in Constantinople under Theodora's protection. See L. GARLAND, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527–1204*, London/New York 1999, p. 24.
- 15 Other instances such as diplomatic gift-giving (e.g. the gifts Theodora is said to have sent to the sister of the Persian emperor, MALALAS, *Chronicle*, Book 18.61) or consular diptychs bearing the empress's image do not qualify as imperial patronage.
- 16 See L. BRUBAKER, The Age of Justinian: Gender and Society, in: M. MAAS (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 427–447, here p. 438; JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 2), p. 149; JAMES, *Building and Rebuilding* (cit. n. 4), esp. pp. 52–54.
- 17 McClanan utterly neglects this possibility, for example in her comparison to the Theodosian empresses, whose actions Theodora supposedly “mirrors” in her display of *philanthropia*, and does not show how this suggested *mimesis* consists of more than just superficial similarities. See McCLANAN, *Representations* (cit. n. 4), pp. 94, 105.
- 18 JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 2), p. 19, has shown how authors have “redacted” history by omitting supposedly bad empresses and their actions. Similarly it seems possible that acts of patronage found inappropriate for an empress could suffer the same fate.



1: Byzantine empire at the time of Justinian and Theodora, featuring locations of patronage with an association to the empress

location of a certain act of patronage was another important issue, whether at the periphery or the centre of the empire and thus in immediate proximity to the emperors, at a renowned place, possibly with former imperial patronage, or a location with less obvious significance.<sup>19</sup>

A map featuring all securely located donations and foundations connected with Theodora (Fig. 1) provides an overview of her image as patron throughout the empire. Outside of Constantinople acts of patronage in a civic

or profane context were mostly the erection or restoration of city walls and fortifications, especially in the border regions and newly conquered territories: epigrams on such structures can be found at the eastern border in Bostra<sup>20</sup> and Kyrros<sup>21</sup>, and in North Africa where Jean Durliat documented as many as fourteen epigrams on defensive walls in ten settlements, erected by the prefect Solomon between 539 and 544.<sup>22</sup> Prokopios adds a few more acts of imperial patronage in these newly conquered territories in North

19 See also JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 2), pp. 153–154, for remarks on the importance of locations of imperial patronage.

20 See McCLANAN, *Representations* (cit. n. 4), p. 94.

21 An inscription on a gate of the citadel gives the names of Justinian, Theodora, Belisarios, and the domestikos Eustathios, see “Kyrros Syria” in: R. STILLWELL (ed.), *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*, Princeton 1976, p. 473.

22 All the epigrams name Justinian, Theodora, and the prefect Solomon, during whose second prefecture the structures were erected. See J. DURLIAT, *Les dedicaces d’ouvrages de défense dans l’Afrique byzantine*, Rome 1981: Aïn Bou Dries (no. 11), Bagai (no. 16), Bordj Hellal (nos. 1, 2), Calama (no. 14), Capsa (nos. 12, 13), Gadiaufala (no. 17), Madaura (no. 6), Thagura (no. 10), Thamugadi (nos. 19, 20, 21), Theveste (no. 8). For Solomon and the dates of his prefecture see p. 7.

Africa, namely a public bath in Carthage built by Justinian named Theodoriana<sup>23</sup> and the city Vaga being surrounded by defence walls and subsequently called Theodorias in honour of the empress.<sup>24</sup> Naming towns after the empress was a common practice: in today's Qasr Libya, Northern Libya, a floor mosaic from the sixth-century basilica features the inscription ΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΙΑΣ, that refers to the re-foundation of the city in honour of the empress; Malalas notes that the fortress Anasarthon in today's Syria was elevated to a town and renamed Theodorias,<sup>25</sup> and Prokopios writes about the foundation of a city called Theodoropolis in Thrace<sup>26</sup> and further lists two fortresses with the same name and another fortress called Pulchra Theodora in the same region.<sup>27</sup> The author also speaks of another new city called Theodoropolis erected close to the Danube, and while he explicitly states that the settlement Theodora on the other side of the river did not receive any imperial support, sixth-century structures can also be found there.<sup>28</sup> According to Malalas, Justinian created a new province near Antioch that he called Theodorias<sup>29</sup> and we also know of a diocese in Thrace called Theodoroupolis.<sup>30</sup>

In a theocracy like Byzantium, religious foundations were especially important, and building, funding and embellishing churches and monasteries were a primary imperial duty.<sup>31</sup> Outside of Constantinople material evidence for religious foundations connected to the empress survives in three places: in Ravenna with its well-known mosaics, at St John near Ephesos and in Germia. In Ephesos, a traditional place of worship since antiquity, Justinian and Theodora re-founded the church of St John; the capitals on the colonnades still bear their monograms and also an epigram describing a (now lost) pictorial scene of Christ crowning the imperial couple has survived.<sup>32</sup> The second location outside of Constantinople where Theodora's monogram on a capital has been found is Germia, today's Gümüşkonak in Turkey, which at times bore the name Theodoriaton after the empress.<sup>33</sup> The capital, featuring her monogram on one side and Justinian's on the other was found in the remains of what was probably the church of the Archangel Michael.<sup>34</sup> Malalas's *Chronicle* reports her to have founded two churches in the author's hometown Antioch, another church dedicated to the Archangel Michael and the basilica of Anatolios, for which the

23 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings*, VI. 5. 10.

24 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings*, VI. 5.12–14. Theodorias can be identified with today's Beja in Tunisia.

25 MALALAS, *Chronicle*, Book 18. 31.

26 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings*, IV. 7. 5.

27 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings*, IV. 11.

28 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings*, IV, 6.15–18. Prokopios states that Justinian did not consider Theodora worthy of his attention as it was exposed to barbarians on the other side of the river, yet during the time of Justinian's reign a defensive tower was constructed on the ruins of ancient Drobeta that was at the time – possibly subsequently – called Theodora. See "Drobeta Romania", in: STILLWELL, *The Princeton Encyclopedia* (cit. n. 21), p. 284.

29 MALALAS, *Chronicle*, Book 18. 39.

30 Although the diocese is not identified with the foundation mentioned by Prokopios (see n. 26 above), the parallel in names should be noted. The earliest sources published in relation to this diocese are dated to the eighth century. See A. KÜLZER, *Ostthrakien (Tabula Imperii Byzantini, 12)*, Vienna 2008, p. 671.

31 On the importance of religious patronage see JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 2), p. 6.

32 See C. FOSS, *Ephesus After Antiquity*, Cambridge 1979, pp. 88–89. For a concise study of the monograms in Ephesos see J. KRAMER, *Kämpferkapitelle mit den Monogrammen Kaiser Justinus II. und seiner Gemahlin, der Kaiserin Sophia in Yalova Kaplıcaları (Termal)*, in: M. RESTLE (ed.), *Festschrift für Klaus Wessel*, Munich 1988, pp. 175–190, here p. 185.

33 See K. BELKE, *Galatien und Lykaonien (Tabula Imperii Byzantini, 4)*, Vienna 1984, p. 167.

34 See BELKE, *Galatien und Lykaonien* (cit. n. 33), p. 168.



2: Possible route for Theodora's journey from Constantinople to Pythia in 528

columns are said to have been sent from Constantinople.<sup>35</sup> Another building supposedly erected by the empress is mentioned by John of Ephesos, who writes about a *ξενοδοχῆ* in Chios where Theodora also *established monks* and where *many banished bishops resided ... from time to time*.<sup>36</sup> Portable objects mentioned in the sources are a precious cross *set with pearls* Theodora had made and sent to Jerusalem, a donation Malalas describes immediately after the church foundations in Antioch,<sup>37</sup> and another cross, given to the city of Sergiopolis by Justinian and Theodora, Evagrius Scholasticus mentions in his account of the siege of the city by Chosroes.<sup>38</sup>

Malalas also provides us with one of the most interesting cases of patronage by Theodora, her *profectio* to the thermal springs in Pythia in 528. It is the only occasion known on which the empress supposedly left the city, accompanied by 4,000 people including patricians and *cubicularii*.<sup>39</sup> The region of Bithynia, which she travelled through on her way to Pythia, is noteworthy for

two reasons: firstly Bithynia is the only place in which Prokopios lets Theodora partake in any act of patronage outside of Constantinople, namely in securing a road together with Justinian *leading into the Phrygian territory*.<sup>40</sup> More importantly though, Malalas's account states that the empress [*gave*] *generously to the churches in each place* on her way,<sup>41</sup> thus engaging in multiple acts of patronage during her journey. Looking at the path she might have taken (Fig. 2), one town is of special importance in regard to imperial patronage: Helenopolis, the empress Helena's supposed place of birth, only a few kilometres away from Pythia. Prokopios is the only literary source to describe the imperial (if we are to believe Prokopios, Justinian's) initiative of giving Helenopolis the *appearance of a prosperous city* in great detail; an aqueduct, public baths, churches, a palace, stoas and lodgings for the magistrates were built, thus making it a city worthy to bear the name of Helena. This step marks a certain triumph over Constantine, who had elevated the village to the

35 MALALAS, *Chronicle*, Book 17. 19. One can presume that such columns also bore capitals featuring the empress's monogram.

36 JOHN OF EPHEOS, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, 51st history, ed. and tr. E. W. BROOKS, *Patrologia Orientalis*, 19, fol. 2, Paris 1925, pp. 161–162.

37 MALALAS, *Chronicle*, Book 17. 19.

38 EVAGRIOS SCHOLASTIKOS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 4. 28.

39 MALALAS, *Chronicle*, Book 18. 25.

40 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings*, V.3.12–15.

41 MALALAS, *Chronicle*, Book 18.25, tr. E. JEFFREYS et al., *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, Melbourne 1986, p. 256.

rank of a city and bestowed it with his mother's name but then failed to erect any buildings of significance – out of his *want of propriety* Prokopios adds. Considering the tradition of female imperial patronage, the general association of empresses with Helena,<sup>42</sup> and Prokopios's notorious omission of Theodora from any more illustrious act of building patronage, it could be asked whether the revitalisation of Helenopolis should not be seen as an act of patronage initiated by the empress rather than the emperor.

While several acts of patronage in a religious context can be found in the literary sources, non-religious foundations outside of Constantinople are nearly absent in contemporary texts and are almost exclusively known through material evidence. As James has pointed out, one of the difficulties with literary sources is that rather than focusing on what empresses actually did, authors often represented what they thought was right for them to do or what they needed them to have done.<sup>43</sup> A study of omission and representation of the empress Theodora as patron, confronting literary sources and material evidence, can best be undertaken in the capital of the empire and residence of the emperors, as it has the highest density of sources. Constantinople thus also serves as a good example to reflect on the three most cited authors in regard to the patronage of Theodora and Justinian: Prokopios, John of Ephesos, and John Malalas.

As the general point of reference for the "Age of Justinian" Prokopios of Caesarea is the most influential literary source for that period. His most relevant work in the context of imperial patronage is the encomium to the emperor, *Buildings*, in its preserved state probably written around 554 and unfinished.<sup>44</sup> Prokopios belonged to the (male) Byzantine elite, and with the higher stratum of society being his aspired target audience for his works, Brubaker's appraisal that he "imposed the hierarchy of Byzantine gender on his distribution of imperial patronage"<sup>45</sup> is not surprising. On several occasions Prokopios lets Theodora act alongside Justinian: they convert a palace into a convent for former prostitutes,<sup>46</sup> found the House of Isidoros and the House of Arkadios, two hospices near the church of Hagia Irene,<sup>47</sup> and another large hospice for the temporary lodging of visitors to the capital.<sup>48</sup> Prokopios further locates a depiction of Theodora on the mosaics at the Chalke gate, with the emperor and empress side by side rejoicing in the victories over the Goths and Vandals<sup>49</sup> and mentions a statue on a purple column which the city dedicated to her in gratitude for a court built by Justinian at the public baths of Arkadianai.<sup>50</sup> By reducing Theodora's presence to an utmost minimum, *Buildings* had a vast impact on our modern perception of this empress as patron: out of the over thirty churches he describes as being erected or restored by the emperor in Constan-

42 Studied by L. BRUBAKER, *Memories of Helena: Patterns in Imperial Female Matronage in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries*, in: L. JAMES (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, London/New York 1997, pp. 52–75, who claims that the association of imperial women with Helena would continue intermittently throughout the Byzantine period (p. 62).

43 See JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 2), p. 67. It must be noted that this phenomenon can also be observed in modern scholarship, especially in regard to the range of action and capacities of women, including empresses.

44 For the date see A. CAMERON, *Prokopios and the Sixth Century*, London 1985, pp. 10–12.

45 BRUBAKER, *The Age of Justinian* (cit. n. 16), p. 432.

46 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings*, I. 9.5–10, the Convent of Repentance or Metanoia, a building also prominently featured in the *Secret History*, XXVII. 5–6.

47 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings*, I. 2. 17.

48 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings*, I. II. 27.

49 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings*, I. 10.15–19.

50 PROKOPIOS, *Buildings*, I. II.1–9.



tinople, not a single one is associated with the empress, leaving the Metanoia as the only religious foundation attributed to her.<sup>51</sup>

The Monophysite John of Ephesos draws a distinctly different picture of Theodora's patronage in the capital: in the hagiographic *Lives of the Eastern Saints* as well as his *Historia Ecclesiastica* he speaks of numerous acts of supporting and protecting Monophysites, offering houses and money to holy men. Theodora supposedly also established monasteries for both men and women, inside and outside the city,<sup>52</sup> most prominently the congregation at the palace of Hormisdas,<sup>53</sup> where she and Justinian resided before moving to the Great palace in 527. What John of Ephesos and Prokopios have in common is that they both create an image of Theodora after her death, exploiting her figure posthumously for their own aims.

John Malalas's *Chronicle* is the only source written during Theodora's lifetime to depict her as an independent donor. She first appears in Book 17, covering the reign of Justin I, as the patron of the two churches in Antioch and the cross sent to Jerusalem, shortly after having been made *augusta* as the wife of the co-emperor in 527. The only philanthropic deed the author ascribes to the empress in the capital is her personal freeing of all Constantinople's prostitutes by buying them off their brothel-keepers and afterwards

*presenting the girls with a set of clothes and dismissing them with one nomisma each.*<sup>54</sup> As of the year 532, when a notable shift in emphasis from Antioch to Constantinople occurred,<sup>55</sup> there are no more accounts of any acts of patronage of Theodora, although she appears as sending a diplomatic gift to the sister of the king of Persia.<sup>56</sup> Possible explanations for this lack of her representation as an active patron after 532 are Malalas's use of different source material, most likely the *City Chronicle* of Constantinople, or the later composition of this part of the text,<sup>57</sup> potentially even after the empress's death in 548.

The material evidence in the former capital suggests yet another image of Theodora as patron. Capitals bearing her monogram can be found in conjunction with four different buildings, all of them churches: the church of Hagia Sophia; the church of Hagia Irene; the church of the Sts Sergios and Bacchos, which also features a dedicatory epigram of Justinian and Theodora; and an unspecified church, a capital from which was found at the Hebdomon.<sup>58</sup> Comparing the three major literary sources with other evidence (Fig. 3) shows how many different images of the empress as patron were created and could be experienced in Constantinople. If we are to believe John of Ephesos, the city was filled with Monophysites and their monasteries, whereas Prokopios has Theodora engage only in the co-foun-

51 While her actions are all collaborations with Justinian, this notion of a *joint* foundation is sometimes lost when modern scholars ascribe the foundation of a convent for former prostitutes to Theodora alone, implying her "natural" inclination as a woman to help other women, and bearing in mind Prokopios's construction of the empress's dubious past in the *Secret History*, which a foundation like this could only reaffirm.

52 JOHN OF EPHEOS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Book 1, ch. X.

53 JOHN OF EPHEOS, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, 47th history. This story also indicates that the hagiography was compiled after 548, as it speaks of a time after Theodora's death.

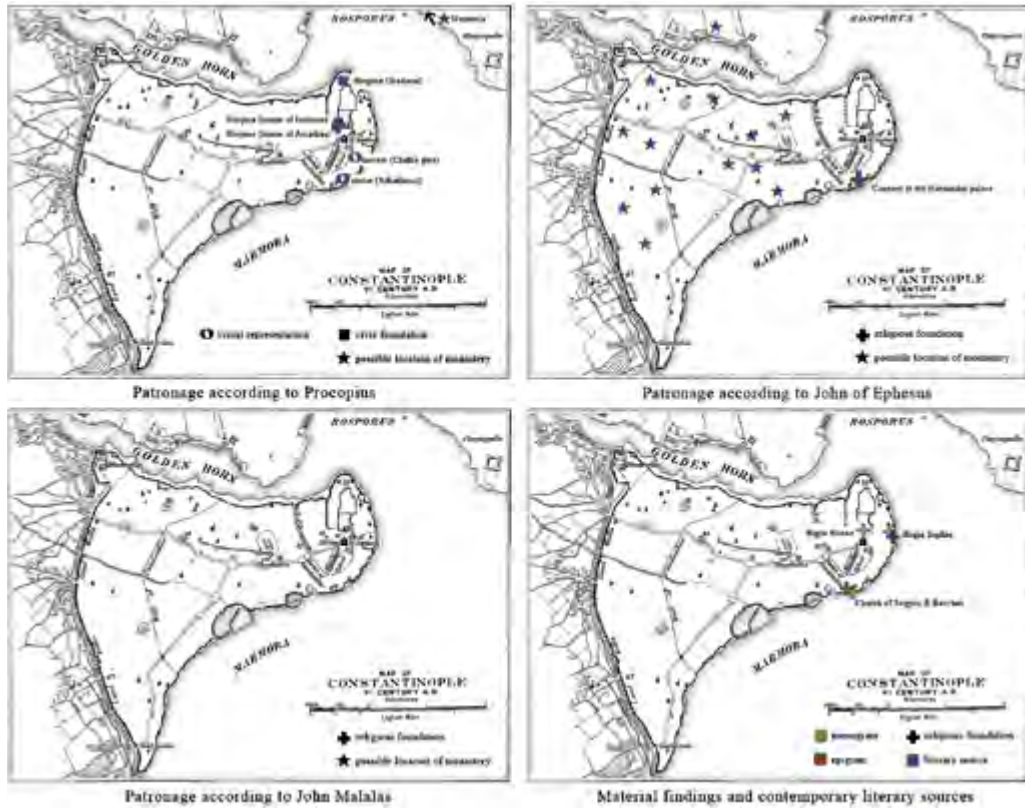
54 MALALAS, *Chronicle*, Book 18.24, (cit. n. 41), pp. 255–256. Actions like these or the foundation of the Metanoia must also be seen in the context of the attempt to fight prostitution via a stricter legislation. See S. LEONTSINI, *Die Prostitution im frühen Byzanz*, Vienna 1989, pp. 177–179.

55 See JEFFREYS, *The Chronicle of John Malalas* (cit. n. 41), p. xxxii.

56 MALALAS, *Chronicle*, Book 18. 61.

57 See JEFFREYS, *The Chronicle of John Malalas* (cit. n. 41), p. xxxii.

58 The latter was published in 1901 by S. PÉTRIDÈS, *Chapiteau aux monogrammes de Justinien et de Théodora*, in: *Échos d'Orient*, V, 32–37, 1901–1902, pp. 219–221.



3: *Theodora's patronage in Constantinople according to the authors Prokopios, John of Ephesos, and John Malalas, other contemporary literary sources and material findings*

dation of civic buildings and a single monastery outside the city centre, and Malalas reports on no building activities she was involved in at all. Despite the physical evidence found in the city, none of the authors ascribes a church to her, although the *martyrs' chapel*<sup>59</sup> or *martyrium*<sup>60</sup> men-

tioned by John of Ephesos in his description of the congregation at the Hormisdas palace has been interpreted by Mango as the church of Sts Sergios and Bacchos, making it the only church discussed as a possible independent foundation by Theodora still extant today.<sup>61</sup>

59 See JOHN OF EPHESES, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, 47th history, ed. and tr. E. W. BROOKS, *Patrologia Orientalis*, 18, fol. 4, Paris 1924, p. 682.

60 The latter translation was suggested by R. KRAUTHEIMER, *Again Saints Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 23, 1974, p. 252.

61 Cyril Mango attributes the foundation of the church to Theodora in the context of the Monophysite monastery established by her in this palace and dates the building as late as the 530s, thus making it contemporary to the Hagia Sophia. See MANGO, *The Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus* (cit. n. 3), and MANGO, *The Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus Once Again* (cit. n. 3). Recently Mango's conclusions have been strongly questioned by B. CROKE, *Justinian, Theodora, and the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 60, 2006, pp. 25–63, who suggests an earlier date in the mid 520s and in his conclusive statement even ascribes the initiative for the construction to Justinian alone. Although his arguments for a date around 527, shortly after the coronation of Justinian and Theodora, are compelling (the epigram refers to Theodora as *God-crowned*, thus making 527 the earliest possible year for its completion), Croke's apparent neglect for the presence of both the emperor and empress as patrons in

The Hagia Sophia however, the “Great Church”, is rarely discussed in regard to Theodora despite the similarity of evidence to the church of Sts Sergios and Bacchos. Her name is present throughout the church alongside her husband Justinian’s; numerous monograms of *Theodora* (ΘΕΟΔΩΡΑΣ) and of *the empress* (ΑΥΤΟΥΣΤΑΣ) are carved into capitals and also appear on the plates of the bronze rings around the sixteen larger columns in the naos.<sup>62</sup> In his description of the church written around the time of the second dedication in December 562, following the reconstruction due to the collapse of the first dome, Paul Silentiarios tells us of two more occurrences where the imperial couple is presented jointly as patrons of the church: Their names – probably also in form of a monogram – were featured on the middle panels of the chancel screen, one of the most prominent places in the church.<sup>63</sup> Additionally he describes some altar cloths of the church, undoubtedly also an imperial gift, that the priests should *unfold... along its four sides and show to the countless crowd*, with one of them depicting

*the countless deeds of the Emperors, guardians of the city on its hem, including hospitals for the sick and churches, while others showed the monarchs joined together, here by the hand of Mary, the Mother of God, there by that of Christ.*<sup>64</sup>

Through its proximity to the erection of the church another text, written in the 530s and itself an imperial commission, surpasses other literary sources in describing the church and its foundation: Romanos the Melode’s fifty-fourth kontakion *On Earthquakes and Fires*.<sup>65</sup> Kontakion 54 was to be sung on the Wednesdays of the third week of Lent and is the only one of Romanos’s surviving kontakia that was composed in direct response to historical events, namely the Nika revolt of 532 and its consequences. Internal evidence suggests that it was completed before the dedication of the church,<sup>66</sup> and while Johannes Koder assumes that it was recited only once before, during Lent 537,<sup>67</sup> Eva Catafygiotu Topping argues for a date as early as 532 or 533.<sup>68</sup> The kontakion consists of a proem and 25 stanzas, each of ten verses,<sup>69</sup> with the imperial couple appearing in nearly each of the last eight stanzas.

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the monograms of the church as well as the dedicatory epigram (in which he sees a stronger emphasis on Justinian as opposed to Mango, who stated the same but in regard to Theodora) and his conclusion that the initiative for the construction of the church “clearly” (sic!) falls on Justinian himself (p. 63) demand revision. The *in dubio pro Iustiniano* argument for church foundations, with its roots in the extensive reception of Prokopios’s *Buildings*, should not be favoured where as much evidence opposing it exists. It should also be noted that to a certain degree the public/private dichotomy in regard to women is repeated, when the only church discussed as a possible foundation by Theodora is a building erected within the seclusion of an imperial palace.

- 62 While there are fewer capitals with monograms of the empress than of the emperor, the bronze plates show an equal number of monograms, all stating *of Justinian* on the one side and *of Theodora* on the other, alternately facing the naos. This observation was first published by E. M. ANTONIADES, *Ekphrasis tes Hagias Sophias*, II, Leipzig 1908, p. 32. One monogram stating ΑΥΤΟΥΣΤΑΣ can also be found in the church of Sts Sergios and Bacchos, see KRAMER, *Kämpferkapitelle mit den Monogrammen Kaiser Justinus II.* (cit. n. 32), p. 185.
- 63 PAUL SILENTIARIOS, *Description of Hagia Sophia*, see tr. C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453: Sources and Documents*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1972, p. 87.
- 64 Tr. by MANGO, *Art of the Byzantine Empire* (cit. n. 63), p. 89.
- 65 Kontakion 54 has the number 23 in J. KODER, *Romanos Melodos: Die Hymnen*, I, Stuttgart 2005, as his counting is derived from the hymns’ position in the church year. For a summary of the translations and editions of his hymns see KODER, *Romanos Melodos*, pp. 49–51.
- 66 Stanza 22 and 23 speak of the church as still being in a state of reconstruction.
- 67 KODER, *Romanos Melodos* (cit. n. 65), p. 413.
- 68 Following the proposition by Kariophilis Mitsakis, see E. CATAFYGIOTU TOPPING, *On Earthquakes and Fires: Romanos’ Encomium to Justinian*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 71, 1978, pp. 22–35, here p. 23.
- 69 For an analysis of the structure of the kontakion see CATAFYGIOTU TOPPING, *On Earthquakes and Fires* (cit. n. 68),

Justinian and Theodora – referred to as the emperor (βασιλεύων) and his wife (σύνευνος) or simply *the emperors* (βασιλεῖς) – are shown as saviours of the city through their prayers and subsequently, in stanza 23, as the patrons rebuilding the city and the church of Hagia Sophia:

*Today the royal pair, piously discharging their imperial duties, have done things truly magnificent, brilliant, worthy of wonder, far surpassing the accomplishments of previous emperors.*

*In a very short time they have raised up the entire city (...).*

*Holy Sophia, the very home of our church, is being reconstructed with such skill that it imitates Heaven, the throne of God (...).*<sup>70</sup>

The preceding stanzas name certain previous emperors whose accomplishments Justinian and Theodora have surpassed: first Solomon in stanza 21, who was by that time an established topos of Christian rhetoric for the patronage of churches and who had built and adorned a temple only for it to be destroyed and ridiculed.<sup>71</sup> In stanza 22 Constantine and *the faithful Helena* built on the same location the churches of the Resurrection and Sion two hundred and fifty years after the destruction of the temple, only to be surpassed in the same stanza by the

pace in which in Constantinople the rebuilding started *only one day after its fall* – with the imperial couple described as generous donors. Thus, after *re-founding* the city of Helenopolis some years earlier, the imperial couple – the emperor Justinian **and** his wife and **augousta** Theodora – triumphs once more over the emperor Constantine **and** his mother and **augousta** Helena. Unlike the empress's predecessors, who, since Pulcheria, were referred to as “New”, “Second” or “Orthodox” Helenas,<sup>72</sup> Theodora is not just another “New Helena” just as Justinian is not a “New Constantine”.<sup>73</sup> By showing their triumph over these idealized rulers, they at once distance themselves from the claim of any descendant of this imperial line<sup>74</sup> and at the same time create a new imagery of the ideal imperial female and male patrons and founders, acting together as *the imperial couple*. While kontakion 54 has been studied only in regard to its significance to the emperor Justinian,<sup>75</sup> it might be the most important source for our understanding of the contemporary view of Theodora as patron. An imperial commission itself, it can be seen as an instruction of how the foundation of Hagia Sophia was to be understood, having a far greater impact than any epigram, monogram, or other literary source as it was recited during the liturgy and was thus “legible” even to the illiterate, both within the church of Hagia Sophia and in churches all over the empire.<sup>76</sup>

pp. 24–25, who noted that while the second section of the kontakion is a eulogy to the emperor, the first is a hymn to Christ the Savior.

70 Stanza 23, tr. R. J. SCHORK, *Sacred Songs from the Byzantine Pulpit: Romanos the Melodist*, Gainesville 1995, p. 194.

71 For the use of Solomon as topos from the fourth century see J. KODER, *Justinians Sieg über Salomon*, in: *Thymiamata mnemotes Laskarinas Boura*, Athens 1994, pp. 135–142, esp. p. 136.

72 For empresses being hailed as “New”, “Second” or “Orthodox” Helenas see JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 2), pp. 14, 91, 152.

73 On Justinian's lack of using the image of Constantine in his imperial propaganda see P. MAGDALINO (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries*, Aldershot 1994, p. 4.

74 One might think of Juliana Anicia and her epigram in the church of St Polyeuktos, see e.g. C. L. CONNOR, *The Epigram in the Church of Hagios Polyeuktos in Constantinople and its Byzantine Response*, in: *Byzantion*, 69, 1999, pp. 479–527.

75 Barkhuizen, for example, completely ignores Theodora's presence in this kontakion, see J. H. BARKHUIZEN, *Romanos Melodos: On Earthquakes and Fires*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 45, 1995, pp. 1–18.

Despite the diversity of her actions and engagement, Theodora's importance as a patron is still underrated by comparison with her husband Justinian's, in a tradition of relying on Prokopios as the most valuable source for the mid-sixth century. Yet other evidence for her patronage, especially the sources predating the empress's death in 548 and the presence of her name throughout the empire, show a completely different picture, strongly suggesting a reassessment not only of the image of Theodora as patron but also of Justinian for the years 527 to 548. Although the image of Theodora as patron has often been redrawn, surviving glimpses of its original appearance present

the empress as a great donor, an active patron and the co-founder of many churches, including the most splendid of all, the Hagia Sophia.

**Illustration credits:** Fig. 1: Map by M. Breier, University of Vienna, Department of Geography and Regional Research, with additions by the author. – Fig. 2: Map drawn by K. Bichler, University of Applied Arts Vienna, by instruction of the author. – Fig. 3: Original map from PROKOPIOS, *The Anecdota or Secret History*, ed. H. B. DEWING, London 1935, p. 361, with additions by the author.

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76 For remarks on the audience of Romanos's kontakia see KODER, Justinians Sieg über Salomon (cit. n. 71), p. 141, and H. HUNGER, Romanos Melodos, Dichter, Prediger, Rhetor und sein Publikum, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 34, 1984, pp. 15–42.

## DIE STIFTERINNENTÄTIGKEIT DER KAISERIN SOPHIA: IMPULS FÜR DIE GLEICHBERECHTIGUNG MIT DEM KAISER?

JUDITH RADLEGGER

Ausgehend von der Aussage im „Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium“ unter dem Schlagwort „women“, die Rolle der Frau habe in Krisenzeiten an Bedeutung gewonnen,<sup>1</sup> legte ich zunächst mein Hauptaugenmerk auf die Veränderung der Stellung der Frau in einer krisengeschüttelten Zeit. Da das byzantinische Reich in seinem tausendjährigen Bestehen mehrfach mit Krisenzeiten konfrontiert wurde, war es mein Anliegen, eine Kaiserin exemplarisch herauszugreifen und deren Positionierung und Bedeutung innerhalb der Gesellschaft zu analysieren.<sup>2</sup> Die Hochblüte des byzantinischen Reiches unter Justinian und Theodora im sechsten Jahrhundert lassen das Wirken und Schaffen ihrer Nachfolger – Justin und Sophia – in der Fachliteratur in den Hintergrund treten. Während die Vita der Kaiserin Theodora in größtem Ausmaß ausgebreitet wurde, scheint Sophia im Schatten ihrer „berühmten“ Tante unterzugehen.<sup>3</sup> Averil Cameron stellt dies kritisch fest, wenn sie sagt: „She had been one of the most colourful of empresses

and far outstripped in real power the more notorious career of her short lived aunt Theodora.“<sup>4</sup>

Kaiserin Sophia stellt in der Emanzipationsgeschichte der byzantinischen Kaiserinnen gewiss einen Höhepunkt dar. Die Gleichstellung Justins II. und Sophias auf Münzen, die Benennung von Palästen nach Sophia oder die Errichtung von Statuen der Kaiserin und ihrer Familie, sind nur einige Indizien für die Macht, welche die Kaiserin innehatte. Während man in der bisherigen Fachliteratur davon ausgegangen ist, die Gleichstellung der Kaiserin mit dem Kaiser sei lediglich auf die Persönlichkeit Sophias zurückzuführen, führte ich vor dem Hintergrund der krisengeschüttelten Zeit, mit welcher die Kaiserin konfrontiert war, meine Forschungen weiter und konkretisierte sie auf den Einfluss von Stiftungen auf die Positionierung der Kaiserin. Stiftungen legen Zeugnis über die gesellschaftliche Stellung des Stifters respektive der Stifterin ab, können aber auch Impuls für deren gesellschaftliche Aufwertung sein.

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Der Beginn meiner Auseinandersetzung mit Kaiserin Sophia fand im Rahmen des Seminars „Female Founders I“, welches Prof. Lioba Theis, Prof. Margaret Mullett und Dr. Michael Grünbart im Wintersemester 2007/2008 am Institut für Kunstgeschichte in Wien geleitet hatten, statt und wurde durch die Möglichkeit, meine Forschungsergebnisse im Rahmen des Kolloquiums „Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond“ zu präsentieren, vertieft.

1 J. HERRIN / A. KAZHDAN / A. CUTLER, Women, in: ODB, III, S. 2201–2204.

2 L. GARLAND, Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527–1204, London / New York 1999, S. 1.

3 So findet die Kaiserin Sophia beispielsweise in CH. DIEHL, Impératrices de Byzance, Paris 1954, keine Erwähnung. Die bedeutendste Forschungsliteratur Kaiserin Sophia betreffend lieferte zweifelsohne Averil Cameron, deren Forschungsschwerpunkt Byzanz im sechsten Jahrhundert umfasst, s. hierzu: A. CAMERON, Continuity and Change in Sixth-Century Byzantium, London 1981.

4 A. CAMERON, The Empress Sophia, in: Byzantion, 45, 1975, S. 5–21, hier S. 21.

Die gemeinsame Präsentation des Kaiserpaares auf Münzen, wie sie unter Justin II. und Sophia erstmals stattfand,<sup>5</sup> war Ausgangspunkt für die Überlegung, wie und warum sich Kaiser und Kaiserin als Einheit in der Öffentlichkeit präsentierten. Die Münzen legen Zeugnis über die Betrachtungsweise des Kaiserpaares ab und fungieren als Seismograph der Repräsentation nach Außen. Angetrieben von der Frage, ob sich politische und persönliche Veränderungen auf die öffentliche

Repräsentation auswirken können, führten mich meine Forschungen zu den Stiftungen des Kaiserpaares. Es gilt nun zu hinterfragen, welche Stiftungen von dem Kaiserpaar und welche von der Kaiserin alleine getätigt wurden und in welcher Weise der Stifter respektive die Stifterin abgebildet beziehungsweise verewigt sind. Kann man die Stifterinnenätigkeit der Kaiserin in Bezug zu politischen und persönlichen Ereignissen setzen und wenn ja, in welcher Weise präsentiert sich Sophia?

#### KAISERIN SOPHIA ALS MITREGENTIN

Kaiserin Sophia nahm während der Regierungszeit Justins II. die Rolle der Mitregentin ein, indem sie sich in politischen, finanziellen, als auch religiösen Angelegenheiten ein Mitspracherecht eingeräumt hatte.<sup>6</sup> Sophia war der Auffassung, das gleiche Anrecht auf den Thron wie Justin besessen zu haben – er war Nefee Justinians, sie Nichte Theodoras. Ihr Wille zu regieren überdauerte das Leben des Kaisers und so zitiert Ioannes von Ephesos Sophia in seiner Kirchenchronik: *Das Königreich kam durch mich, und es ist zu mir zurückgekommen, und für ihn, er ist gezüchtigt, und ist in diesen Zustand meiner wegen gefallen, da er mich nicht genügend wert geschätzt hat und mich aufgeregt hat.*<sup>7</sup>

In der Literatur tritt Sophia erstmals nach dem Tod Kaiser Justinians in Erscheinung. Da Justinian keinen rechtmäßigen Nachfolger bestimmt hatte, kam Justin II., welcher als *curopalates* um die nötigen Kontakte am Hof verfügte, durch Unterstützung des Senates und der Minister an die Macht. Justins einziger Rivale um den Thron war der Sohn von Justinians Cousin Ger-

manos, der ebenfalls Justin hieß.<sup>8</sup> Evagrius und Ioannes von Biclar berichten in ihren Schriften von der Ermordung Justins, welche auf die Initiative Sophias zurück zu führen war.<sup>9</sup> Es war Sophias größtes Anliegen, ihrem Gatten den Weg zur Kaiserkrone zu ebnen, auch wenn sie hierfür über Leichen gehen musste. Von Anbeginn der Regierung Justins II. war Sophias Präsenz allgegenwärtig und ihre Unterstützung unverzichtbar. Auch wenn die Hauptaufgabe der byzantinischen Kaiserinnen vor allem die Organisation von Zeremonien umfasste, gelang es einigen Kaiserinnen als Mitregentinnen, einen unverzichtbaren Platz einzunehmen.<sup>10</sup> Und so vermochte es Sophia, Einfluss auf die Finanzen des Reiches, sowie auf die Innen- und Außenpolitik auszuüben und ihre politische Macht auch über den Tod Justins II. beizubehalten.

Sophias innenpolitisches Interesse galt vor allem den finanziellen Angelegenheiten des Reiches. Im Gegensatz zu ihrem Vorgänger Justinian versuchte das Kaiserpaar die Schätze des Reiches aufzustocken, dies erfolgte zum einen durch

5 L. JAMES, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium*, London/New York 2001, S. 102.

6 CAMERON, *The Empress Sophia* (zit. Anm. 4), S. 5.

7 J. M. SCHÖNFELDER, *Die Kirchengeschichte des Johannes von Ephesus*, München 1962.

8 A. CAMERON, *The Early Religious Policies of Justin II.*, in: A. CAMERON, *Continuity and Change in Sixth-Century Byzantium*, London 1981, S. 52.

9 Zit. nach CAMERON, *The Empress Sophia* (zit. Anm. 4), S. 9; JOH. BICLAR, s.a. II. Iustini: *Iustinus filius Germani... factione Sophiae Augustae in Alexandria occiditur.*

10 JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (zit. Anm. 5), S. 59.

Einforderung von Schulden, zum anderen durch das Beenden der Friedenszahlungen an die Perser.<sup>11</sup> Theophanes schrieb in seiner *Chronik*, dass *Sophia, die frommste Augusta, die Banker und die Geldverleiher zu sich zitierte, und anordnete, dass die Verträge und Belege der Schuldner gebracht werden. Als sie sie gelesen hatte, nahm sie die Belege und händigte sie den Schuldner aus und zahlte die Summe an die Besitzer.*<sup>12</sup> Dass eine Kaiserin sich der finanziellen Angelegenheiten des Reiches annahm, war mehr als nur ungewöhnlich und dies sollte ihr erst wieder Eirene im achten Jahrhundert gleichtun, als diese das Steuersystem veränderte.<sup>13</sup>

Neben den finanziellen Angelegenheiten trat Sophia politisch durch ihre Erwählung der Nachfolger Justins II. in Erscheinung. Nach der geistigen Erkrankung des Kaisers, benötig-

te man einen Nachfolger, dessen Wahl der Senat an Sophia übertrug. Sophia entschied sich für Tiberios den Führer der *excubitores* – der Leibwache des Kaisers. Tiberios II. wurde zuerst zum Cäsaren und nach dem Tod Justins II. 578 zum Augustus erhoben.<sup>14</sup> Als 582 Tiberios II. starb, konsultierte der Senat erneut Sophia, deren Wahl dieses Mal auf den General Maurikios fiel. Sophia war keineswegs die erste Kaiserin, welche die kaiserliche Nachfolge bestimmt hatte, so nahm z. B. Pulcheria nach dem Tod ihres Bruders Theodosios II. 450 Markianos zum Mann, um ihre Macht zu sichern.<sup>15</sup> Dass Sophias Meinung in einer solch wichtigen Entscheidung wie jener der Nachfolge des Kaisers zu Rate gezogen wurde, stellt ihre über den Tod des Kaisers hinausgehende Macht dar.

#### KAISERIN SOPHIAS ABBILDUNG AUF MÜNZEN

Bereits 565 – dem Jahr der Thronbesteigung Justins – kommt es auf Münzen zur gleichwertigen Präsentation des Kaiserpaars (Abb. 1, 2). Das Erscheinen einer Kaiserin auf Münzen war bereits vor Sophia Usus, das Revolutionäre jener Münzen, welche unter Justin II. und Sophia entstanden, war, dass sie erstmals das Kaiserpaar zusammen darstellten. Es waren vor allem Bronzemünzen, auf welchen das Kaiserpaar geprägt war. Während der Umlauf von Gold und Silbermünzen nur ein geringer war, waren die Folles die Münzen des Alltages. Dass sich gerade auf diesen Münzen die Aussage der Gleichstellung wieder findet, verweist abermals auf Sophias herausragende Stellung. Es ist ein Irrglaube, wenn man annimmt, dass die besonders kostbaren Gold- und Silbermünzen dem Kaiser

vorbehalten waren und die Kaiserin lediglich auf Bronzemünzen abgebildet wurde. Darstellungen von Kaiserinnen auf Gold und Silbermünzen gab es sehr wohl bereits vor Sophia. Während Philip Grierson der Annahme ist, das Erscheinen einer Kaiserin auf Münzen stehe in engem Zusammenhang mit der Geburt eines Thronfolgers,<sup>16</sup> vertritt Liz James die Meinung: „(...) the production of the coins of empresses, from Pulcheria onwards, is linked more consistently to the accession of the emperor, which is also, generally, the point at which the woman receives the title Augusta.“<sup>17</sup> Die Darstellungen von Kaiserinnen vor Sophia stehen somit in unmittelbarer Abhängigkeit zu dem Kaiser. Sophias gleichrangiges Erscheinen auf den Folles wiederum vermittelte das Bild der Kaiserin als Mit-

11 GARLAND, *Byzantine Empresses* (zit. Anm. 2), S. 43.

12 C. MANGO/R. SCOTT (Hrsg.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, Oxford 1997, S. 357.

13 JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (zit. Anm. 5), S. 71.

14 GARLAND, *Byzantine Empresses* (zit. Anm. 2), S. 51.

15 JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (zit. Anm. 5), S. 66.

16 PH. GRIERSON, *Byzantine Coins*, London 1982, S. 32.

17 JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (zit. Anm. 5), S. 102.



regentin und lässt sich somit als eine geschickt gelenkte Propaganda-Strategie des Kaiserpaares verstehen. Anne McClanan bekräftigt dies, wenn sie schreibt: „Bronze coinage in contrast, consistently depicts Sophia on equal footing with her husband Justin II. Although art historians in their discussion of medieval imperial representations more routinely consider the visually enticing gold and silver coinage, the modest bronze coinage would have been one of the primary means by which the imperial image was disseminated to the population.”<sup>18</sup>

Um das numismatische Gesamtbild widerzuspiegeln, bedarf es jedoch der Betrachtung aller gefundenen Münzen – Gold, Silber und Bronze, als auch der Münzen verschiedener Münzstätten. Auch wenn Liz James die feinen Variationen, welche zwischen den Münzen entstanden, als unbedeutend betrachtet, da die Aussage gleich bliebe,<sup>19</sup> sind es meiner Meinung nach gerade jene kleinen Veränderungen, die es gilt herauszustreichen.

Der Solidus zeigt ausnahmslos den Kaiser, der in seiner Rechten einen Globus hält. Die Rückseite erfuhr hinsichtlich seines Vorgängers eine markante Veränderung: sie zeigt anstelle der Victoria eine thronende *Constantinopolis*.<sup>20</sup> Die politische Krise, in welcher sich das byzantinische Reich befand, führte zu einem stärkeren Hauptstadt-Bewusstsein und so kam es in weiterer Folge zu einer verstärkten Präsenz der Personifikation Konstantinopels. Die Siliquen Justinians wurden ohne größere Veränderungen unter Justin weitergeprägt, lediglich der Name des Kaisers änderte sich. Sie zeigen den Kaiser im Profil. Eine Besonderheit stellt der in Karthago geprägte Halbsiliquentyp dar. Während die ersten beiden Prägungen wie im restlichen Reich den Kaiser im Profil zeigen, kommt es bei der letzten Prägung

zu einem Indiktionswechsel und so zeigt dieser Halbsiliqua das thronende Kaiserpaar. Die Rückseite wurde von den Solidi entlehnt und stellt das Halbbild der nach rechts gewandten *Constantinopolis* dar.<sup>21</sup>

Die Vorderseite der Folles (Abb. 1) zeigt das thronende Kaiserpaar: Justin mit dem Kreuzglobus und Sophia mit dem Kreuzzepter zu seiner Linken. Sophia nimmt auf den Münzen die Rolle des Mitregenten ein – wie im Vergleich mit dem Solidus (Abb. 3), welcher unter Justin I. und Justinian entstand, deutlich wird. Die Prägung des Kaiserpaares setzte sich in manchen Münzstätten erst sehr spät durch, so z. B. auch in Antiochia, wo erst im 5. Regierungsjahr (570) mit der angeglichenen Typologie begonnen wurde. Antiochia (Abb. 4) weicht jedoch von der gängigen Darstellungsweise des Kaiserpaares ab und zeigt Justin II. und Sophia, wie sie in der Mitte gemeinsam einen Globus mit langem Kreuz halten.<sup>22</sup> Diese Version scheint die Gleichstellung der Kaiserin mit dem Kaiser zur Gänze zu präsentieren. Sophia ist gleichwertige Mitregentin, der der Globus – Symbol für das Reich an sich – gleichermaßen zusteht. Auch die namentliche Erwähnung der Kaiserin auf Folles aus Karthago ab 572 (Abb. 5) spiegelt Sophias Macht und Stellenwert wider. Warum es gerade ab dem 5. Regierungsjahr Justins zu dieser verstärkten Präsentation des Kaiserpaares als geschlossene Einheit, sowie einer größeren Präsenz der Kaiserin, gekommen ist, führe ich auf Justins beginnende geistige Erkrankung zurück. Der Ausbruch der Krankheit wird im Allgemeinen mit dem Fall und Verlust der Grenzstadt Dara 573 in Verbindung gebracht. Averil Camerons Auffassung nach war der geistige Zustand jedoch, will man einer Anekdote von Theophanes, in welcher der

18 A. McCLANAN, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses. Image and Empire*, New York 2002, S. 158.

19 JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (zit. Anm. 5), S. 109.

20 W. HAHN, *Moneta Imperii Byzantini, II: Von Justinus II. bis Phocas (565–610)*, Wien 1975, S. 37.

21 GRIERSON, *Byzantine Coins* (zit. Anm. 16), S. 353.

22 JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (zit. Anm. 5), S. 110.



1: Follis aus Konstantinopel (565–566), Kupfer; Vorderseite: Justin II. und Sophia



2: Follis aus Konstantinopel (565–566), Kupfer; Rückseite: Münzstätte CON (Konstantinopel) und Prägung im 1. Regierungsjahr



3: Solidus aus Konstantinopel (527), Gold; Vorderseite: Justin I. und Justinian I. als Mitregent



4: Follis aus Antiochia (570 – 571), Kupfer; Vorderseite: Justin II. und Sophia, die gemeinsam einen Globus mit Kreuz in der Mitte halten



5: Follis aus Karthago (572), Kupfer; Vorderseite: Büsten von Justin II. und Sophia (erste namentliche Erwähnung der Kaiserin auf Münzen)

Kaiser seinen Bruder Baduarios grundlos attackiert, Glauben schenken, bereits 572 bedenklich.<sup>23</sup> Der abrupte Gesinnungswandel Justins gegenüber den Monophysiten 571 und deren daraus resultierende Verfolgung lassen manche Historiker gar davon ausgehen, dass bereits in diesem Jahr Justins Krankheit zu Tage trat.<sup>24</sup> Die Jahre 571/572 werden somit zu einem Wende-

punkt und markieren das Erstarren der Macht der Kaiserin. Während Sophia vor der Erkrankung Justins eher im Hintergrund verweilte und von hier aus ihre Fäden spannte, übernahm sie ab 572 die Aufgaben des Kaisers und regierte das Reich bis zu der Ernennung des Generals Tiberios zum Cäsaren.

#### STIFTUNGEN DES KAISERPAARES

Ob und vor allem inwiefern sich eben dieser Wendepunkt in der Stifterinnentätigkeit der Kaiserin widerspiegelt, sei nun unter Betrachtung der wenigen dokumentierten Stiftungen beziehungsweise der Beteiligung an Stiftungen zu hinterfragen. Da sich nur wenige Stiftungen des Kaiserpaares erhalten haben, sind unsere wesentlichen Quellen für diese das Lobgedicht von Corippus,<sup>25</sup> die Kirchenchronik von

Ioannes von Ephesos, die Chroniken von Theophanes, sowie Epigramme, welche in der *Anthologia Graeca* überliefert wurden. Im Gegensatz zu den Schriften von Prokopios handelt es sich bei den genannten schriftlichen Quellen keineswegs um die genaue Beschreibung von Bauten und Kunstwerken, sondern sehr viel mehr um die vereinzelte Nennung von Stiftungen, deren detaillierte Beschreibung ausbleibt. Weiters muss

23 CAMERON, *The Empress Sophia* (zit. Anm. 4), S. 10.

24 J.J. NORWICH, *Byzantium. The Early Centuries*, New York 1988, S. 270.

25 A. CAMERON, *The Artistic Patronage of Justin II*, in: CAMERON, *Continuity and Change* (zit. Anm. 8), S. 63.

zwischen jenen Stiftungen, welche von dem Kaiserpaar gemeinsam und jenen, welche von der Kaiserin alleine gestiftet beziehungsweise initiiert wurden, unterschieden werden.

Da Justin II. von Justinian nicht als Nachfolger ernannt wurde, lag das besondere Augenmerk des Kaisers auf der Errichtung von Denkmälern und so versuchte Justin mittels seiner gestifteten Statuen seine kaiserliche Legitimierung zu untermauern. Wie wir von Corippus wissen, wurde die kaiserliche Familie als eine Statuen-Gruppe am Hafen und am Milion abgebildet. Die Säulen am Hafen trugen Statuen von Justin, Sophia, deren Tochter Arabia und dem *praepositus* Narses, die Gruppe am Milion stellte ebenfalls Sophia und Arabia, sowie Helena, eine Nichte Sophias dar.<sup>26</sup> Ioannes von Ephesos nennt weiters zwei Bronzestatuen des Kaisers und der Kaiserin, welche in der Stadt aufgestellt waren. Die Statuen fungierten als Zeichen der Macht und des Standes. Dass auch die Kaiserin in einer allein stehenden Bronzestatue abgebildet wurde, demonstriert abermals Sophias vom Kaiser unabhängige Macht. Durch die öffentliche Präsentation einer Statue wurde unmissverständlich klar gestellt, wie man eine Person zu betrachten hatte. Lynda Garland schrieb hierzu: „Sophia was no shrinking violet. Even from the early days of Justin’s reign the indissolubility of the couple was publicly presented to their subjects and others through a highly visible building programme and display of official statuary in the city.”<sup>27</sup> Die Beteiligung Sophias an den gestifteten Statuen ist vor allem im Falle der Gruppe am Milion anzunehmen, da diese sich auf die weiblichen Familienmitglieder der Kaiserin beschränkt. Dieser dynastische Gedanke Sophias knüpft unmittelbar an der Familienpolitik ihrer Tante Theodora an,

welche die Hochzeit zwischen Sophia und Justin arrangiert hatte, um das Fortwähren ihrer Familienlinie zu sichern.

Neben den Statuen des Kaiserpaares war das städtische Bauprogramm eine weitere Möglichkeit, die Einheit des Kaiserpaares zu demonstrieren und so ließ Justin II. den Hafen Julians wiederaufbauen, zwei neue Paläste errichten und ein öffentliches Bad renovieren. Alle Bauten sollten der Kaiserin zu Ehren ihren Namen tragen. So nannte er den Palast nahe dem Hafen *Sophiae*, jenen über dem Bosphorus *Sophianae* und das Bad am Forum *Tauri* ebenfalls *Sophianae*.<sup>28</sup> Eine Beteiligung Sophias an dem städtischen Bauprogramm kann angesichts der Namensgebung angenommen werden, ist aber lediglich im Falle der Umbauten an den Bädern von Pylai, dem heutigen Yalova, bewiesen. Bei den Ausgrabungen unter Arif Müfid Mansel 1932 wurden in der Exedra mehrere Kapitelle mit den Monogrammen von Justin und Sophia gefunden, womit die Bautätigkeit des Kaiserpaares an den Bädern belegt werden kann.<sup>29</sup>

Eine weitere gemeinsame Stiftung von Justin und Sophia ist ein silbervergoldetes Reliquienkreuz, die sogenannte *Crux Vaticana* (Abb. 6). Das Reliquienkreuz lässt sich auf Grund seiner Inschrift auf der Vorderseite mit dem Kaiserpaar in Verbindung bringen. Die Inschrift auf dem Längsbalken des Kreuzes lautet: *LIGNO QVO CHRISTVS HUMANVM SVBDIDIT HOSTEM*, jene des Querbalkens: *DAT ROMAE IVSTINVS OPEM ET SOCIA DECOREM*.<sup>30</sup> McClanan stellt zu Recht in Frage, ob mit jenem *IVSTINVS* Justin II. oder vielleicht doch sein Vorgänger Justin I. gemeint wurde.<sup>31</sup> Aufschluss über die Frage nach dem eigentlichen Stifter gibt ein weiteres diplomatisches Geschenk des Kaiser-

26 Ebenda, S. 70.

27 GARLAND, *Byzantine Empresses* (zit. Anm. 2), S. 47.

28 CAMERON, *The Artistic Patronage of Justin II* (zit. Anm. 25), S. 72–73.

29 A. M. MANSEL, *Yalova und Umgebung*, in: *Istanbul Müzeleri Nasriyatı*, 13, 1936, S. 57.

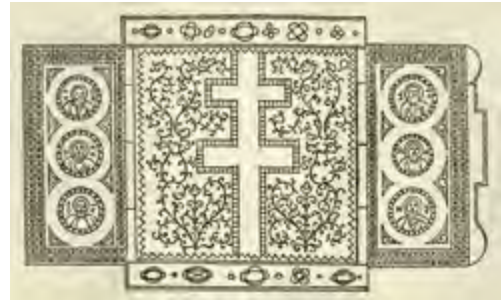
30 McCLANAN, *Representations* (zit. Anm. 18), S. 163 ff.

31 Ebenda, S. 166.



6: Vatican, *Sancta Sanctorum, Crux Vaticana*, ca. 568,  
*Vorder- und Rückseite*





7: Poitiers, Kloster Sainte Croix, Teil des Reliquiars für Radegunde, 569/570

8: Rekonstruktion des Reliquiars für Radegunde

paares an Radegunde, die Witwe König Clothars I. (511–561). Wie wir aus dem Danksagungsgedicht von Venantius Fortunatus, welches nach dem Erhalt der Kreuzreliquie 568 von Radegunde in Auftrag gegeben wurde, wissen, sind Justin II. und seine Gattin Sophia die Stifter dieses Reliquiars (Abb. 7, 8). Es ist nahe liegend, dass Justin und Sophia zur gleichen Zeit sowohl die Crux Vaticana als auch die Kreuzreliquie der Radegunde als diplomatische Geschenke versandten. Das Interesse des Kaiserpaares an Verbündeten war in der Zeit der politischen Krise, in welcher sich das byzantinische Reich befand, größer denn je. Während die Langobarden im Begriff waren, Italien einzunehmen und die Perser zum Krieg rüsteten, war es ein politisch kühner Schachzug, durch Radegunde die Franken als Verbündete zu gewinnen und durch die Crux Vaticana den Papst auf ihre Seite zu ziehen.<sup>32</sup> Die Frage nach der Beteiligung Sophias am diplomatischen Austausch kann durch eine Passage in Venantius Fortunatus Lobgedicht bestätigt werden, in welcher dieser die eigentliche Initiative,

das Reliquiar Radegunde zu schenken, der Kaiserin zuschreibt.<sup>33</sup>

Weiters unterstreicht sowohl die Abbildung der Kaiserin in einem der Medaillons, als auch das Wortspiel mit dem Namen der Kaiserin durch die bewusste Verwendung von *SOCIA* anstatt *SOPHIA* in der Inschrift die Beteiligung Sophias an der Crux Vaticana. Da Sophia im Falle des Reliquiars der Radegunde bereits die Entscheidungsträgerin war, nehme ich an, dass dies auch auf die Crux Vaticana zutrifft, vor allem da Sophia mit jenen Geschenken mehr als nur politische Kontakte beabsichtigte. Helena, welche seit der Suche und der Auffindung des „wahren“ Kreuzes als Vorbild der byzantinischen Kaiserinnen galt, hatte die kaiserliche Heiligkeit definiert. Venantius Fortunatus vergleicht Sophia in seinem Lobgedicht mit Helena, was die Kaiserin unwiderrufflich zur neuen Helena werden lässt. Die Analyse des Lobgedichtes des Fortunatus lässt weiters erkennen, dass der Kaiser als auch die Kaiserin in der Literatur gleichwertig behandelt werden und so wird beiden gleich viel Platz

32 CAMERON, *The Early Religious Policies of Justin II* (zit. Anm. 8), S. 60.

33 Zit. nach CAMERON, *The Empress Sophia* (zit. Anm. 4), S. 13, Venantius Fortunatus, *Appendix Carminum 2: Ad Iustinum et Sophiam Augustos*.

im Gedicht gegeben. Auch in den zwei Gedichten, welche Corippus zu Ehren der Thronbesteigung Justins II. verfasste, nimmt Sophia eine bedeutende Rolle ein. Corippus bezeichnet Sophia

als die *Königin von allen, welche die Welt schützt*<sup>34</sup> und nennt sie im ersten Buch als eigentliche Stifterin des Panegyrikons.<sup>35</sup>

#### DIE STIFTERINNENTÄTIGKEIT DER KAISERIN SOPHIA

Sophias wachsendes Interesse an den politischen Angelegenheiten des Reiches resultierte mitunter aus der immer schwächer werdenden Gestalt des Kaisers. Ein anonymes Epigramm lässt sich in eben jene Zeit der beginnenden geistigen Erkrankung Justins datieren und gibt uns Auskunft über eine ausschließlich von Sophia vorgenommene Stiftung. Es heißt in dem Epigramm:

Τοῖς σοῖς θεράπουσιν ἢ θεράπεινα προσφέρω  
Σοφία τὸ δῶρον. Χριστέ, προσδέχου τὰ σὰ  
καὶ τῷ βασιλεῖ μου μισθὸν Ἰουστίνῳ δίδου  
νίκας ἐπὶ νίκαις κατὰ νόσων καὶ βαρβάρων<sup>36</sup>

Das Epigramm befand sich an der Anargyroi-Kirche, welche laut Theophanes 569/70 von Justin nordöstlich des Sophienhafens errichtet wurde. Auch wenn das Epigramm keine nähere Auskunft darüber gibt, was von der Kaiserin gestiftet wurde, ermöglicht die Tatsache, dass Sophia in dem Epigramm um *Sieg über Sieg ob Krankheit und Barbarenvolk* bittet, eine ungefähre Datierung. Das Hinwenden der Kaiserin an die Anargyroi (Geldlose) – den heilenden Heiligen Kosmas und Damianos verweist auf Justins geistigen Zustand und beschränkt die Datierung des Epigramms auf die Jahre 572–578. Dass die einzige dokumentierte Stifterinnentätigkeit Sophias ohne Beteiligung des Kaisers, in jenen Zeitraum der Demenz Justins und Alleinregierung Sophias fällt, bestä-

tigt die von mir angenommene wachsende Präsenz und Bedeutung der Kaiserin ab 572.

Während das Erscheinen der Kaiserin auf Münzen, die Errichtung von Statuen der Kaiserin, sowie die Benennung von Palästen, eines Hafens und eines öffentlichen Bades nach der Kaiserin, die Position Sophias als Mitregentin innerhalb des byzantinischen Reiches belegen und Versuch waren, das Kaiserpaar zu legitimieren, betrachte ich die Stiftung der diplomatischen Geschenke überdies als Impuls für die Gleichstellung mit dem Kaiser. Waren es anfänglich Stiftungen Justins, welche Sophia gleichwertig darstellten, handelt es sich bei den diplomatischen Geschenken um Stiftungen, welche von der Kaiserin initiiert wurden und ihr Wirken in der Außenpolitik belegen. Ein von Sophia verfasster Brief an den Perserkönig Chosroes stellt das außenpolitische Geschick der Kaiserin ebenso wie die diplomatischen Geschenke unter Beweis. Sophia schrieb, nachdem Byzanz die Festung Dara 573 und damit verbunden die mesopotamische Grenze an die Perser verloren hatte, Chosroes einen Brief, in welchem sie ihn um die Verschonung einer wehrlosen Frau mit einem kranken Mann bat und handelte so einen dreijährigen Friedensvertrag aus. Die Schwäche des Kaisers vermochte Sophia geschickt für sich zu nutzen.<sup>37</sup>

In den Jahren der gemeinsamen Herrschaft wurde das Kaiserpaar stets als Einheit präsentiert,

34 Flavius Cresconius Corippus in *Laudem Iustini Augusti Minoris Libri IV*, ed. with commentary and tr. A. CAMERON, London 1976, 1.8–9: *summa regens Sapientia protegit orbem*.

35 GARLAND, *Byzantine Empresses* (zit. Anm. 2), S. 41.

36 *Anthologia Graeca*, ed. H. BECKBY, 2. Aufl., München 1965, XII–XVI, S. 131: *Ich, Deine Dienerin Sophia, bringe dies/als Gabe deinen Dienern. Nimm das Deine, Christ, und schenke meinem König Justin dafür/Sieg über Sieg ob Krankheit und Barbarenvolk*.

37 GARLAND, *Byzantine Empresses* (zit. Anm. 2), S. 51.

dennoch verharrte Sophias Bedeutung, trotz der Gleichberechtigung nach Außen, in einem Abhängigkeitsverhältnis zu Justin, da die Legitimation der Kaiserin an jene des Kaisers gebunden war. Auch wenn eine Kaiserin jegliche Aufgaben des Kaisers erfüllen konnte, stand ihr Geschlecht ihr hinsichtlich der militärischen Obrigkeit im Weg: nur ein Kaiser war imstande, eine Armee zu führen. Die exzeptionelle Stellung, welche Sophia dank der geistigen Erkrankung ihres Gatten einnehmen konnte, lässt sich an ihrer Stifterinnentätigkeit ablesen. Die namentliche Erwähnung der Kaiserin auf Folles aus Karthago, sowie die Folles aus Antiochia, welche den Kreuzglobus in der Mitte des Kaiserpaares und nicht nur in der Hand des Kaisers darstellen, verweisen auf die wachsende Präsenz und Macht der Kaiserin. Die diplomatischen Geschenke des Kaiserpaares, sowie das Epigramm an der Anargyroi-Kirche, welches eine alleinige Stiftung der Kaiserin bezeugt, können als Seismograph der innerpolitischen Veränderungen betrachtet

werden und ermöglichten der Kaiserin eine Positionierung als Machtinhaberin sowohl innerhalb, als auch außerhalb des byzantinischen Reiches. Mittels der Folles wurde die Botschaft der Gleichberechtigung zwischen Kaiser und Kaiserin im Volk verbreitet und mittels der diplomatischen Geschenke bis in den lateinischen Westen getragen.

**Abbildungsnachweis:** Abb. 1, 2, 4: PH. D. WHITTING, *Byzantine Coins. The World of Numismatics*, London 1973, S. 102–103, Figs. 157, 158, 161. – Abb. 3, 5: A. R. BELLINGER, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, I, Washington 1966, Pls. XII, A/2, LVIII, AE198. 2. – Abb. 6: J. A. COTSONIS, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses. Catalogue of an Exhibition at Dumbarton Oaks*, 23 September through 29 January 1995, Washington, DC 1994, S. 58–59, Figs. 22a, 22b. – Abb. 7: G. HASELOFF, *Email im frühen Mittelalter*, Marburg 1990, S. 46. – Abb. 8: D. TALBOT RICE, *Morgen des Abendlandes*, München 1965, S. 215, Abb. 52.





## FEMALE “DONORS” IN EIGHTH-CENTURY EGYPT

CORNELIA RÖMER

This paper does not deal with visible objects donated to monasteries or churches; what women bestowed onto a holy place in Upper Egypt in the later eighth century CE were not objects ever to be perceived by our eyes. These female donors have names, but they are by no means élite women, they may even have offered donations to the monastery in moments of deepest destitution.

Written records make it possible to track down those women of the eighth century and their donations to the very day on which the donations were made. The objects of these donations were children; the written records define the deeds as *δωρεατικὰ* (*donations*), but the term may well obscure the reality behind the contracts.

As in many cases, Egypt has left a very special corpus of evidence, which illustrates the lives of people through many periods. The dry climate of the country has allowed organic material to survive; sheets of papyrus carrying public or private texts have been excavated in Egypt since the nineteenth century. Among the hundreds of thousands of contracts, letters, laundry lists etc. – whatever you can imagine as written records – which came to light during the excavations, there were twenty-six contracts in which parents, couples, single men, and also single women, donated their children to a monas-

tery on the western bank of the river Nile near Thebes, the modern city of Luxor.<sup>1</sup> These legal documents provide vivid accounts of women’s involvement in local religious life.

This paper intends to make this very valuable corpus of evidence for women’s involvement in religious life in late antique Egypt known to a wider audience; until now it has not generated much interest outside Coptology. Focusing on the female donors of children may provide a new opportunity to understand the procedure and purpose of child donation in general.

Most of the donors whom we encounter in these contracts come from a little town called Jême and its environs; Jême had developed inside the ruins of the Pharaonic mortuary temple of the Middle Kingdom Pharaoh Ramesses III (Fig. 1). Within the temple precincts, there flourished a lively community, in particular between 600 and 800 CE. A church was built into the pharaonic temple itself; inhabitants of Jême were farmers, businessmen, clerics, and practitioners of other professions we would expect in a town which had no wider significance, but which served as a local centre among smaller villages and monasteries. The special relationship between Jême and the surrounding holy places is easily traceable in the written papers which were found in the debris of the town itself and of the

1 These texts were first published by W.E. CRUM/G. STEINDORFF, *Koptische Rechtsurkunden des achten Jahrhunderts aus Djeme (Theben)*, I, Texte und Indices, Leipzig 1912 (=KRU 78–103); a German translation was provided by W.C. TILL, *Die koptischen Rechtsurkunden aus Theben* (Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse, 244.3), Vienna 1964, pp. 149–188.



1: *Remains of the town of Jême within the temple precincts as standing today*

monasteries. Women play an impressive role in this written evidence.<sup>2</sup>

Most important among the holy places in this area – there were about a dozen at least – was the monastery of St Phoibammon.<sup>3</sup> Its massive structure had been built on top of the temple of queen Hatshepsut in the sixth century, where it

flourished until the later eighth century. Nothing of the monastery remains. Between 1903 and 1908 its ruins were removed by the excavators who were more interested in the Middle Kingdom temple of Hatshepsut than in the late antique Christian building. But the papyri were kept; most of the archive, to which these papers belong, is housed today in the British Library.

Twenty-six donations of children to the monastery and one self-donation of a man survive; they are all written in Coptic and show the recurrent pattern which was used for transactions of this kind at the time.

In the same format in which a palm-tree or a field was donated to the monastery, these donation contracts first name the contracting parties, on the one side the saint, St Phoibammon himself, or his monastery, both represented by the abbot or other clerics, and on the other side the donors.

The aim of the contract is to make the child irrevocably and definitely a *σαυον*, Coptic for slave, of the monastery. One should note that this term designates free servants as well as slaves.<sup>4</sup> KRU 86 may serve as one example of such a contract; it was set up between Tachel, daughter of Sophia, who acts together with her sister Elisabeth, on the one side, and the holy monastery of Apa Phoibammon, on the other side; the date is 29 August 766 CE.

2 For more information on all aspects of women's lives in this town see T. G. WILFONG's well written documentation on: *The Women of Jême, Lives in a Coptic Town in Late Antique Egypt*, Ann Arbor 2002.

3 For the monastery and his history see W. GODLEWSKI, *Le monastère de St. Phoibammon, Deir el-Bahari, V*, Warsaw 1986.

4 A. STEINWENTER, *Das Recht der koptischen Urkunden*, Munich 1955, pp. 16–18; cf. T. S. RICHTER, *What's in a Story? Cultural Narratology and Coptic Child Donation Documents*, in: *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology*, 35, 2005, pp. 237–264, at p. 244, who clearly sees an “entire loss of freedom” in these contracts; idem, “... auch wenn wir nicht an das Maß der seligen Anna heranreichten...”, *Kinderschenkungen an ein oberägyptisches Kloster im 8. Jh. n. Chr. und ihr narrativer Horizont*, in: H.-W. FISCHER-ELFERT / T. S. RICHTER (ed.), *Literatur und Religion im Alten Ägypten: Ein Symposium zu Ehren von E. Blumenthal (Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse, 81, Heft 5)*, Stuttgart/Leipzig 2011, pp. 164–198; A. PAPA-CONSTANTINOU, *Notes sur les actes de donation d'enfants au monastère thébain de Saint-Phoibammon*, in: *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology*, 32, 2002, pp. 83–105, p. 92, “Leur statut est exprimé par les termes peu définis *Ⲛⲙⲉⲗⲁ* ou *σαυον*, qui serve à designer aussi bien le simple serviteur que l'esclave. Plusieurs éléments indiquent que c'est ce dernier statut qui leur était réservé.”

P. KRU 86:

*In the name of the Holy, life giving and homoios Trinity, God Father, Son and Holy Spirit, written on Thot 1 of the 5th Indiction. I, Tachel, daughter of Sophia, from Apé, a quarter of the city of Ermont, assisted by my sister Elisabeth – we will provide the scribe, who will sign for us, and ask for reliable witnesses, to bear witness to this contract of donation.*

*I write to the holy monastery of Apa Phoibammon at the mountain of Jême, which is governed by our Father, the ἄρχων κύριος (ruling governor) Psmo, the Dioiketes of the holy monastery and all the Kastron (= the village of Jême). Since the laws of the merciful God encourage all people to perform good deeds, so that they may achieve the forgiveness of their sins – for nobody is without sin, if not God himself, the innocent ... No authority, whoever may govern, will hinder anybody to do with his/her belongings, what he/she likes.*

*Since, in that time in which we were, a male child was born to me, Tachel, woman and free-woman (eleuthera), in his seventh month, I promised him as a servant to the holy monastery of Phoibammon in the mountain of Jême, so that, if God would keep him from death, I should give him to the holy monastery. Afterward, when God caused that the little boy, whom I named Athanasios at the holy baptism, grow and get bigger, my lost reason cast me into a great sin. Concerning this little boy, I plotted that I should not (have to) give him to the holy place. When God saw the lawless thing I did, he cast the little boy into a great sickness, which became so great that it was reckoned by everyone who saw him that he had died. When I remembered the sin and the reckless thing that I had done, I once again called upon the holy one in his monastery: “If you will call upon God and he bestows on this boy a cure, I will put him into the monastery forever, according to my first agreement”. Then the merciful God showed his mercy to the boy and granted him the recovery. I took him in my hands to the holy*

*place, since he was possessed by a demon, and all who saw him, were astonished about him.<sup>5</sup>*

*As a surety for the holy place they asked me for this contract of donation which concerns my beloved son Athanasios; I proceeded to this contract being alive, sober minded and sound of mind, free from any physical illness; but according to my will and my decision, without any cunning, fear, force or deception, I declare that I surrender my son Athanasios from now till all coming eternal times after me to the holy monastery which I have mentioned already. Whoever will dare to appear against this boy will encounter the condemnation for my sacrifice at the judge’s seat, and I will dispute with him.*

*As a surety for the holy place, I have written out this contract of donation. It is firm and valid, wherever it will be presented.*

*I, Papas, the deacon; I, Georgios, son of Philotheos; I, Chael, son of John, men from Apé, we are witnesses. I Sanagape, have written for them.*

This contract has nearly all the ingredients typical also for the other contracts, in particular a vivid story about motives which induced the donors to surrender the child to the monastery. What is not mentioned here are the tasks the child was expected to carry out in the monastery. In KRU 79, in which a woman called Kallisthene donates her son Merkurios to the monastery, we read the following: *I have donated my beloved son Merkurios to this holy place of St Apa Phoibammon at the mountain of Jême, so that he should be a slave, employed for the sweeping and besprinkling and for all tasks which are necessary, and that the holy monastery should be his master for ever, master over the work of his hands and the salary which he gains with his physical work, whether he is inside or outside the monastery, according to the order of the head of the monastery.*

The background of these contracts has been discussed more intensively within the last decades,

5 Tr. WILFONG, *The Women of Jême* (cit. n. 2).

after a long period of complete silence. Arguments focused on the questions of how seriously one should take the embedded stories,<sup>6</sup> and what the real purpose of these donations was.<sup>7</sup> The main question is still open: in which way did the donors benefit from the donation? While the benefit for the monastery seems to be well defined and evident, the question of the benefit for the donors is obscure, in particular in the cases where women were the donors (see further below). The ambiguity of the wording of these contracts has generated different answers to the latter question, but all scholars have entertained the idea that there is something behind these contracts, which for one reason or another had to be concealed.

Let us look briefly at the possible cultural prerequisites of such donations. The more general question for these cultural prerequisites was asked by Heinz-Josef Thissen, who (after others) referred this eighth-century phenomenon to certain forms of self-dedication, which were practised in the temples of the Ptolemaic period.<sup>8</sup> People who dedicated themselves to a god were called *hierodouloi* (holy slaves).

Most of the evidence comes from the second century BCE. There are quite a number of Demotic texts (many still unpublished) in which a person declares himself the slave of a god, enters the god's service and engages to pay annually a fixed sum, either forever or for a period of 99 years. In return, the slave expects protection by the patron deity against demons, phantoms and ghosts. One of these declarations reads as follows:<sup>9</sup>

In the year 33, on Mecheir 23, under King Ptolemy and Queen Cleopatra (21 March 137 BCE): *It has said the slave Tanebtynis, daughter of Sokmenis and Esoeris, before my Master Sobek, the Master of Tebtynis, the Great God: I am your slave together with my children and grandchildren. I will not be free ever in your temple for ever. You will guard me, you will protect me against any evil demon. I will pay you a certain sum every month from this day for 99 years; I will give the money to your priests.*

This contract is being made between the God and the individual who dedicates herself and her children, as was the contract made between the Saint and the mother of the child. In the Demotic contracts, no father's name is mentioned for the children who enter the service together with the woman.

The woman of the Ptolemaic period promises to pay a certain sum to the temple as long as she lives, in the same way as the donors of children promise that these children will work for or pay to the monastery as long as they live. Thissen concludes: „verstehen lassen sich die (koptischen) Kinderschenkungs-surkunden auf dem Hintergrund ägyptischer Tradition;“ and „ich möchte die besprochenen Urkunden als späte Nachfahren, als Survival der hellenistisch-römischen Hierodulie auffassen.“<sup>10</sup>

Some scholars have argued against this interpretation by pointing at the wide time gap between the Ptolemaic and Byzantine practices, and the different concepts of the dedications.<sup>11</sup> But

6 S. SCHATEN, Koptische Kinderschenkungs-surkunden, in: Bulletin de la société d'archéologie copte, 35, 1996, pp. 129–142.

7 A. PAPAConstantINOU, Θεία οἰκονομία. Les actes thébains de donation d'enfants ou la gestion monastique de la pénurie, in: Mélanges Gilbert Dagron (Travaux et Mémoires du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 14), Paris 2002, pp. 511–526.

8 H.-J. THISSEN, Koptische Kinderschenkungs-surkunden. Zur Hierodulie im christlichen Ägypten, in: Enchoria, 14, 1986, pp. 117–128.

9 P. British Museum 10622, ed. H. THOMPSON, Two Demotic Self-Dedications, in: Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, 26, 1940, pp. 69–70.

10 THISSEN, Koptische Kinderschenkungs-surkunden (cit. n. 8), p. 128.

11 PAPAConstantINOU, Θεία οἰκονομία (cit. n. 7), p. 513; RICHTER, What's in a Story? (cit. n. 4), pp. 248–249.

*hierodouloi* were present in the temples in Egypt after the Ptolemaic period. There is no doubt that these *hierodouloi* were an important factor for the well-functioning and even for the economics of temples also in the Roman period.<sup>12</sup> It may also be worthwhile to consider that there were always children in the monasteries of Pachomios.<sup>13</sup> How did they get there, if not by donation or abandonment? Most likely, those children were given to the monastery in an act of *oblatio*. The *oblatio puerorum* is a well-known phenomenon in Western monasticism. Children were given to the monasteries to become monks; this institution was often a welcome relief for those who could not afford to raise the children themselves.

The striking phenomenon of the child donations from Egypt is the fact that the children were obviously not expected to become monks; some contracts state explicitly that the child could also quit the service in the monastery, in which case he had to pay a certain sum every month to the holy place as long as he lived.<sup>14</sup> In this respect, the status of the donated children is closer to what we see in the Ptolemaic self-dedications than what we see in the *oblationes*.

But until now, no written evidence for this kind of self-dedication in the pagan Roman period has been identified, nor has there been found any other evidence for child donations to monasteries with the clear indication that they were not expected to become monks, earlier than the

eighth century. The historical situation of the monasteries in the eighth century may have produced this new kind of legal handling of the donations, which was not felt necessary in earlier times or in other places (see further below).<sup>15</sup>

Since the boys were not expected to become monks, what then was the aim of these donations, and in what way did the monastery and the parents benefit from such a donation?

The monastery certainly expected to benefit from these persons by giving them tasks in the organisation of the holy place, tasks which were quite important for the running of the monastery. The format of the contracts makes us believe that the children, while staying there, carried out all kinds of well defined services; in most cases they were employed to tend the lamps at the altar, to look after the basins of holy water – which were obviously used for the healing processes which were offered in the monastery –, and in sweeping the floors of the church, all activities which were well visible to those who came to the holy place seeking to be healed or just to visit the church.<sup>16</sup> It was obviously the healing station and the altar of the saint which made the monastery a place worth visiting. Such visitors must have made an important contribution to the monastery's upkeep.

After 705 CE, monks, too, had to pay the poll tax, which led to a dramatic decline in the numbers of monks. The children could have

12 W. OTTO, Beiträge zur Hierodulie im hellenistischen Ägypten (Abhandlungen der Bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften N. F., Heft 29), Munich 1950, pp. 31–32; but see RICHTER, What's in a Story? (cit. n. 4), p. 248.

13 See for instance Precepts and Judgements 13 (*Pachomian Koinonia*, II, tr. /int. A. VEILLEUX, Pachomian Koinonia, II, Pachomian Chronicles and Rules, Kalamazoo 1981, p. 178).

14 KRU 99, 13 ff.: *If they (in this case two brothers were donated) want to live in the monastery, they are expected to serve there as the head of the monastery orders them; but if they want to live outside the monastery, they should give the common taxes (δημόσιον) to the monastery.* The term δημόσιον is discussed by ΠΑΡΑΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥ, Notes (cit. n. 4), pp. 102–105.

15 The reference to a child donation to the monastery of Apa Thomas in P. Vat. Copt. Dorese 7, as postulated by G. SCHENKE, Kinderschenkungen an das Kloster des Apa Thoma(s)?, in: *Journal of Juristic Papyrology*, 37, 2007, pp. 177–183, seems to be not certain enough; that the monastery of Apa Thomas is mentioned here was clearly recognized by Schenke, but the other supplements are uncertain.

16 In some cases, the tasks expected from the children are described in a less definite way, like *that he should be subordinated to the holy place, serving by day and by night and obeying all orders which will be given to him* (KRU 87, 14–17).

filled a gap in the organisation of the holy place, which was running into more and more difficulties. We have to keep in mind that the monastery of St Phoibammon would finally be abandoned in the late eighth century.

While the benefit for the monastery is obvious, it is less obvious what the benefit for the donors was. In a recent article Sebastian Richter<sup>17</sup> has argued that the donated children may have been disturbed children, whom the parents could not handle and therefore finally gave to the monastery in desperation. I find this difficult to believe. Admittedly, it would have been a safe way to install such children *as monks* into the environment of a monastery, where they would have been maintained until the end of their lives.

However, the phrasing of some of the contracts seems to point in a different direction. All scholars who have worked on this corpus of texts have observed that the contracts contain references both to the divine as well as to the worldly law. In some contracts<sup>18</sup> the divine law is introduced by pointing to Hannah's sacrifice of Samuel (1. Samuel 1, 11–24), where the childless woman prays for a child, and when it is given to her, she leaves it in the temple of God, as she had promised. The meaning for the eighth-century contracts is obvious: If Hannah did the right thing by giving her child to the temple, how can the same act be wrong now? The worldly law is represented by the phrase: everybody can do with his/her property what he/she wants.<sup>19</sup> The references to both laws protect the donors against those who attack them over their decision to surrender the child. Furthermore, the narrative can be seen as such a means of defence, as it supports

the decision of the donor by making everybody believe that the parents or single parent could not have acted differently, for they would have been punished by God, if they did not redeem their promise. Laws and the narratives (whether fictitious, real or perceived as real)<sup>20</sup> defend and protect the donors in their decision. The modern reader of the contracts may get the impression that the act of donation was not altogether a legally clean one. This observation may lead to the conclusion that these children were actually sold to the monastery to be slaves. The ambiguous term *σαυον* could be understood this way (see above with n. 4). The Greek terms used for the status of the boys are likewise ambiguous: the child is given to the holy place in an act of *ἀγάπη* or *προσφορά* = almsgiving (KRU 79; 82; 84); on the other hand the act of donation ends in the *ὑποταγή* = subordination of the child under the monastery (KRU 93), the act itself is described as an act of *ἀποτάσσειν* = ceding, surrendering (KRU 86).

Since Christianity had become the leading religion in the Roman Empire, the phenomenon of slavery, once so important for the functioning of the society of that Empire, had been declining, but was still present. Slavery had become a less visible feature in everyday life after the fourth century (at least apparently in Egypt), but the church remained one of the most active “employers”.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, the possession of slaves was stigmatized in Christian circles. The monk Victor of Apollonos Polis, who releases his slave Menas in 589 CE, declares to do so because he wants to achieve mercy in front of the Judge's throne at the Last Judgement.<sup>22</sup>

17 RICHTER, *What's in a Story?* (cit. n. 4), pp. 260–261.

18 KRU 85; 89; see PAPAConstantINOU, *Θεία οἰκονομία* (cit. n. 7), pp. 522–525.

19 KRU 79; 81; 86; these are three of the contracts written for women donors; the fourth (KRU 95) is not complete in the beginning and may have had that sentence as well. Not all the other contracts do have that statement, even when they are complete.

20 See RICHTER, *What's in a Story?* (cit. n. 4).

21 See A. DEMANDT, *Die Spätantike: Römische Geschichte von Diocletian bis Justinian 284–565 n. Chr.* (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, 3.6), 2nd ed., Munich 2007, p. 346.

The *Codex Theodosianus* does allow the sale of children (3. 3. 1), and the *interpretatio* explains that the child *non poterit in perpetua servitute durare*. Who has fulfilled all his duties *servitio suo satisfecerit* can leave as a free person. This corresponds quite well to what we have in the contracts, but the *Codex* does not say anything about a lifelong dependence on the former owner, which is what we see in the contracts.<sup>23</sup>

Here a further gap opens between the wordly and the divine laws. Tachel cedes her son Athanasios *from now till all coming eternal times after me to the holy monastery* (see above KRU 86) and thus follows the example of Hannah (divine law), but the child is not to become a monk, but a labourer in the monastery (ὕποταγή, worldly law).

Let us now turn to the four donations which were made by women. They are:

KRU 79 (between 765 and 785 CE); Kallisthene, daughter of (void) from Neihbabe in the district of Primide, donates her son Merkurios to the monastery of St Phoibammon.

KRU 81 (26. 5. 771); Staurou, daughter of Peschate from the hamlet of Matoi in the district of Psoi, living in the monastery of Apa Sergios in the Kastron Apé, donates her son Andrew to the monastery of St Phoibammon.

KRU 86 (29. 8. 766); Tachel, daughter of Sophia, together with her sister Elisabeth, donates her son Athanasios to the monastery of St Phoibammon (see above).

KRU 95 (after 747/748); Maria, daughter of Daniel, from Tout, donates her son Komes to the monastery of St Phoibammon.

When we look at particulars of these four contracts, they seem to be completely in line with the other contracts, which were set up by couples

or single men. But it is striking that none of the four women mentions the name of the father of the child. This is the more astonishing in a society where people were usually identified by their names **and** their fathers' names.<sup>24</sup> The children in these contracts are identified only by the name which the women had given them at baptism.

All four women are obviously single mothers, whether widowed or unmarried.

Tachel may be a widow – she calls herself ἐλευθέρα, which can be understood as *free woman* of a respectable social status (not a slave), or widow.<sup>25</sup> Also Kallisthene, who only mentions the sinful soul of an unnamed husband, may be a widow; most interesting is the case of Staurou, daughter of the deceased Peschate, who confesses to be living in the monastery of Apa Sergios, and thus relates to her motherhood: *When the good God had ordered that a son was born to me, I called him Andreas* (KRU 81); Staurou may never have been married.

All these women talk about their sins, but so do the couples who bestow their children to the monastery. Also in line with the other contracts is the statement in three of the four of these contracts<sup>26</sup> that describe the child as the property of the women. Here and there the phrase returns: *No authority can hinder anybody to do with his or her property whatever he or she likes*. That is the worldly law.

Single women and widows were minorities who faced particular problems throughout antiquity. Often their only means of support were their children or, in late antiquity, the services provided by monasteries and churches. A woman in that condition who donates her child must have expected a reasonable recompense for doing so. The case of Kallisthene (KRU 79) is striking.

22 P. Köln 3, 157; see the detailed commentary by D. Hagedorn to P. Köln 157.

23 Cf. RICHTER, *What's in a Story?* (cit. n. 4), p. 252 with n. 45.

24 As it is the case with two of these four women; note that Tachel gives only the name of her mother; in Kallisthene's contract the space for the father's name is void.

25 For this term see W. TILL, *eleutheros* = *unbescholten*, in: *Le Muséon*, 64, 1951, pp. 251–259.

26 Most likely also in KRU 95, where the beginning is broken off, see n. 18.



This is the only contract in which the age of the donated child is precisely mentioned (KRU 79 31–34): *When he (my son Merkurios) had become of age (ἡλικία), he wanted and agreed to go to the monastery of Apa Phoibammon for the good of his soul; we thought: that is a lonely place, which needs this kind of vow. We decided to do the good deed.* A young man of age could decide by himself to become a monk, or to work for the monastery out of his free will. Having the mother involved must mean that the woman had a certain advantage.

I would argue that these contracts are sales contracts disguised as donations. In a society that was rapidly changing, it may have been appropriate to handle certain procedures not openly. Part of the rapid change was the introduction of the new religion brought to the country by Arabs about a hundred years before. In certain circles and regions, people may have felt strongly about certain principles that were considered truly “Christian”, without wanting to relinquish the older traditions. Insisting on the divine law disguised the real facts behind the contracts which were set up by the worldly law. It is worthwhile noting here that all the important jurists of early Islam condemned the sale of children.<sup>27</sup>

The women (and the couples) who “donated” their children to the monastery of St Phoibammon may have also expected that their “donations” would establish a lifelong relation to the monastery, a relation which may have added

noticeably to the social prestige of the donor. The monastery of St Phoibammon was certainly an important place of reference for the region (we would say today “the main employer in the region”).

The donation to the monastery, possibly well imbedded into a long tradition in Egypt, is thus an act of public self-assertion also for women, not merely an act of desperation which would leave nothing to the female donor (apart from any money that was not mentioned).

The monastery of St Phoibammon was abandoned towards the end of the eighth century. Not too long before this happened, the clerics running the monastery tried to recruit workers to carry out the most important activities to keep the holy place, which had a reputation as a healing centre, functioning; therefore emphasis was laid on the tending of the lamps, administering the baths and keeping the church clean. Since they did not find enough men at the time who wanted to become monks, they tried a different approach. They could have encouraged parents and single women to “donate” their children.<sup>28</sup> That those donors hoped only for recompense by the divine power (as referred to by the divine law), is improbable; they must also have received a recompense in a worldly category, money, but this was well disguised in the contracts.

**Illustration credits:** Fig. 1: C. Römer.

<sup>27</sup> See I. SCHNEIDER, *Kinderverkauf und Schuldknechtschaft. Untersuchungen zur frühen Phase des islamischen Rechts* (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, 52.1), Stuttgart 1999, p. 334; unfortunately, Schneider’s comments on the donations at Jême are very superficial, p. 327.

<sup>28</sup> PAPAConstantINOU, *Θεία οικονομία* (cit. n. 7), p. 511, sees the monasteries acting rather repressively on the individuals to surrender their children: “the monastery’s authorities used the cult of the saints to its advantage, as a counterbalance to economic difficulties encountered under Early Islamic rule.”

PATRONAGE IN THE *PATRIA*,  
MATRONAGE AND MATERNITY

EIRINI PANOU

This paper focuses on female patronage during the eighth and ninth centuries in Constantinople and examines how it is illustrated in the *Patria*.<sup>1</sup> While this tenth-century text is often lacking in historicity, it nevertheless gives us the opportunity to evaluate the way childbirth was perceived in the tenth century. Through the connection of childbirth with patronage in the

*Patria* the figure of St Anna (the mother of the Virgin Mary) emerges, as well as her role as protector of childbirth. I will argue that the *Patria* patronage stories are the result of tradition rather than historicity and that associations made in the text with St Anna or women named Anna point to the veneration that the saint enjoyed in the tenth century.

THE PATRONAGE STORIES

In the *Patria* we find four very similar cases of female patronage or patronage taking place by an emperor on behalf of an empress.<sup>2</sup> First, Jus-

tinian II (685–695 and 705–711) is said to have built a church of St Anna in the quarter of Deu-teron after his wife Theodora became pregnant

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- 1 For the original text of the *Patria* see T. PREGER (ed.), *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum*, Leipzig 1989, pp. 135–289. For a commentary on the text see A. BERGER, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos*, Bonn 1988.
- 2 Justinian II is not the only emperor who acted as a donor on behalf of his wife. Leo VI (886–912) built a chapel of St Anna next to his wife's vestiary, see I. BEKKER (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (*Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae*), Bonn 1838, pp. 146 v. 18–19. Leo's interest in Mary's mother is also shown in his composition of sermons on Mary's Nativity and Presentation, see *PG* 107: 1–12C, 12D–21A. Leo VI shared his father's (Basil I, 867–886) interest in St Anna. Basil had a daughter named Anna (*PmbZ*, no. 463), reconstructed two churches of St Anna, one in Constantinople (*THEOPHANES CONT.* 1838: 324) and one in Trebizond, see A. BRYER/D. WINFIELD, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos*, Washington, DC 1985, p. 218. The visual equivalent of female patronage on behalf of their husbands is attested in the dedicatory inscription of the tenth-century portrait of St Anna in Carpignano (see Linda Safran's article in this volume) and in the depictions of St Anna in the churches of Hagioi Anargyroi and St Stephen in Kastoria, where in both cases the name of the wives of the donors (Theodore Limniotes and Constantine respectively) are Anna. See S. M. PELEKANIDES/M. CHATZIDAKIS, *Kastoria*, Athens 1985, pp. 11, 22, 25, no. 127. See also J. K. DARLING, *Architecture of Greece*, Westport, CT 2004, pp. 17–19; S. GERSTEL, *Painted Sources for Female Piety in Medieval Byzantium*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 52, 1998, pp. 96–97; J. LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'Empire byzantin et en Occident*, I, Brussels 1992, pp. 39, 44; T. MALMQUIST, *Byzantine 12th Century Frescoes in Kastoria: Agioi Anargyroi and Agios Nikolaos tou Kasnitzi*, Uppsala 1979, p. 19, no. 81, p. 23.
- 3 PREGER, *Scriptores* (cit. n. 1), p. 244.

and had a vision of the saint.<sup>3</sup> Second, the wife of Leo III (717–741), Anna – who was actually his daughter –,<sup>4</sup> is said to have built a monastery called *ta Annes* (= of St Anna), the location of which we are not told and modern research has failed to locate.<sup>5</sup> Third, in order to explain the name of the monastery of Spoude (= haste) the writer/editor of the *Patria* tells us that Anna, once again identified as the wife of Leo III, was returning from the Blachernai and, while passing the house of a *protospatharios*, gave birth in a location where she later bought a house and founded the *monastery of haste*.<sup>6</sup> Finally, a century later, Theophilos's (829–842) wife, Theodora, is said to have realized she was pregnant while return-

ing from the Blachernai when her horse flinched, which motivated her to build the church in the Dagestheas area dedicated to St Anna.<sup>7</sup>

In these four stories empresses are responsible (three directly, the wife of Justinian II indirectly) for the construction of churches dedicated to St Anna. The alleged wife of Leo III is mentioned twice, and one of the foundation stories she is involved in resembles closely the one pertaining to the wife of Theophilos. The story of Theophilos's wife and that of the wife of Justinian II are also very similar, the major difference being the form in which the saint's divinity was made known to the empresses, namely through a dream or the flinching of a horse.<sup>8</sup>

#### THE HISTORICITY OF THE STORIES

Some of the evidence incorporated in these four stories cannot be supported either by top-

ography or written sources.<sup>9</sup> They do, however, have a historical nucleus: According to the sixth-

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- 4 PmbZ 137: no. 443. She was married to Artabasdos, who was incarcerated by the iconoclast emperor Constantine V and who (741–2) restored the icons during his reign: ὁ δὲ Ἀρτάνασδος κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν πόλιν τὰς ἱεράς εἰκόνας ἀνεστῆλωσεν, see C. DE BOOR (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia*, repr. Hildesheim 1963, p. 415.
- 5 PREGER, *Scriptores* (cit. n. 1), p. 251; BERGER, *Untersuchungen* (cit. n. 1), p. 525; R. JANIN, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin. Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique, III: Les églises et les monastères*, 2nd ed., Paris 1969, p. 470.
- 6 PREGER, *Scriptores* (cit. n. 1), p. 251.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 232; R. JANIN, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin. Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique. III: Les églises et les monastères*, Paris 1953, pp. 41–42; JANIN, *La géographie* (cit. n. 5), pp. 22–26, and (enclosed) map: F6–G7; BERGER, *Untersuchungen* (cit. n. 1), p. 440. This church was located close to the public bath of Dagestheas, next to St Anastasia's church, see BEKKER, *Theophanes Continuatus* (cit. n. 2), p. 384. The *ta Annes* could signify a house with a church built in the fifth or sixth century by a woman named Anna, who subsequently fell out of favour, had her dwelling place destroyed, leaving only the church preserved. See G. DAGRON, *Le christianisme dans la ville byzantine*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 31, 1977, pp. 8–9, n. 29; C. MANGO, *The Development of Constantinople as an Urban Centre*, in: *The Seventeenth International Byzantine Congress, Main Papers*, New Rochelle, NY 1986, pp. 117–136, repr. in: C. MANGO, *Studies on Constantinople*, Aldershot 1993, I, pp. 127–128.
- 8 There are no Byzantine sources on St Anna performing miracles as there are in the West, see T. BRANDENBARG, *Saint Anne: A Holy Grandmother and her Children*, in: A. B. MULDER-BAKKER (ed.), *Sanctity and Motherhood: Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages*, New York/London 1995, pp. 31–68, here pp. 54–56.
- 9 On the one hand Dagron argues that “a cult is extended through either an arbitrary place or through a location where a miracle made it pass smoothly to the geography of the sacred”, and refers to Theodora's church in the Dagestheas area to demonstrate the inconsistencies between texts and topography, see DAGRON, *Le christianisme* (cit. n. 7), pp. 8, 25. On the other hand, Janin believes that even if the story behind Dagestheas is fictional, it “obliges us to admit the existence of a church that the patriographers must have seen or that they copied from earlier texts”, see R. JANIN, *Deuteron, Triton et Pempton*, in: *Échos d'Orient*, 35, 1936, p. 150.
- 10 J. HAURY (ed.), *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, VI, *De aedificiis*, Leipzig 1964, I 2, II, p. 21, 17–18. For other

century historian Prokopios, a church had been dedicated to St Anna in the quarter of Deuteron by Justinian I (527–565) – not, as the *Patria* claims, by Justinian II.<sup>10</sup> A chapel to St Anna had been dedicated by Leo VI and also by Anna the wife of Leo Patrikios and not by Leo III.<sup>11</sup> The visit of Theodora, wife of Theophilos, to the Blach-

ernai is verified by Theophanes, and we know that Leo VI's wife (not the wife of Leo III), Theophano, was a frequent visitor to Blachernai.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the *Patria* stories developed from a historical nucleus, but, as I will show, ideological associations related to St Anna, childbirth and imperial ideology shaped their final form.

#### ST ANNA AND CHILDBIRTH

Patronage, empresses, cases of pregnancy or childbirth, St Anna and women named Anna are the features that transcend the four *Patria* stories. Examples from hagiography demonstrate that women normally prayed to the Virgin for a child.<sup>13</sup> However, Anna's role in resolving sterility is shown in the life of Theodora of Kaisareia, a nun in the monastery of St Anna in Rigidion. Theodora's mother was barren and used to pray in a church dedicated to Mary, until she *accepted the grace of Anna the mother of the Theotokos* and gave birth to Theodora.<sup>14</sup> We do not know whether it

was St Anna to whom the empresses were praying when they visited the Blachernai, but in the *Patria* the dedication of the church to the saint after pregnancy or childbirth may allude to this. Evidence from hagiography points to the significance of the name Anna from the ninth century onwards in resolving issues of sterility. The mothers of Stephen the Younger, of Peter of Atroa and of St Theophano – all ninth century – or, later, the mother of the monk Nicholas (eleventh century), all had mothers named Anna who had difficulties getting pregnant.<sup>15</sup> Brigitte Pitarakis and Katerina Nikolaou see

sources that mention the church of St Anna in the Deuteron see BEKKER, Theophanes Continuatus (cit. n. 2), pp. 197, 324, 677; I. BEKKER (ed.), Leo Grammaticus, Chronographia. Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1842, p. 168; I. THURN (ed.), Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum. (Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae, 5), Berlin 1973, pp. 107, 163. The last information on the church is found in the *typikon* of the Kecharitomene monastery (twelfth century), see R. JORDAN (tr.), *Typikon of Empress Irene Doukaina Komnene for the Convent of the Mother of God Kecharitomene in Constantinople*, in: BMFD, II, p. 710.

- 11 BEKKER, Theophanes Continuatus (cit. n. 2), p. 146, v 18–19; BERGER, Untersuchungen (cit. n. 1), p. 525; JANIN, La géographie (cit. n. 5), pp. 35–37; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453: Sources and Documents*, Toronto/London 1972, p. 205. For an English translation of Theophanes's account of Leo's VI chapel see MANGO, *The Art*, p. 164. For the dedication by Anna, the wife of Leo Patrikios, see P. SPECK, (ed./tr.), *Jamben auf verschiedene Gegenstände: Einleitung, kritischer Text*, Berlin 1968, pp. 310–314.
- 12 BEKKER, Theophanes Continuatus (cit. n. 2), pp. 88, 93, 174; It was customary for empresses to visit the Blachernai. Located next to the palace and kept apart from empresses, members of the imperial family often visited it, see C. MANGO, *Η Κωνσταντινούπολη ως Θεοτοκούπολη*, in: M. VASSILAKI (ed.), *Μήτηρ Θεού: Απεικονίσεις της Παναγίας στη Βυζαντινή τέχνη*, Athens 2000, p. 21. For the ideological associations between St Anna and the Blachernai see below.
- 13 K. NIKOLAOU, *The Woman in the Middle Byzantine Period. Social Models and Everyday Life in the Hagiographical Texts* (in Greek), Athens 2005, pp. 29–31. In the mosaics of the Chora monastery a pine cone symbolizing fertility is introduced in the Annunciation to Anna – an iconography that we do not find in the Annunciation of Mary, since Mary had no fertility issues, see LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *Iconographie* (cit. n. 2), pp. 71–72.
- 14 H. DELEHAYE (ed.), *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. Propylaeum ad Acta sanctorum Novembris*, Brussels 1902, p. 354; NIKOLAOU, *The Woman* (cit. n. 13), p. 43.
- 15 NIKOLAOU, *The Woman* (cit. n. 13), p. 29. Prayer to goddesses for protection during childbirth and miraculous pregnancies of deities occur long before, in ancient Greece, see N. ROBERTSON, *Greek Ritual Begging in Aid of Women's Fertility and Childbirth*, in: *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 113, 1983, pp. 146, 153–154, 157.
- 16 B. PITARAKIS, *Female Piety in Context: Understanding Developments in Private Devotional Practices* in: M. VASSI-

a clear connection between St Anna and problems of sterility within Byzantine society and note that the name “Anna” in these cases is not haphazard.<sup>16</sup> The maternal role of St Anna was first demonstrated in art in the standing portraits of her alone or with Mary, which date from the eighth century onward in Italy (Rome) and Egypt (Faras) but also from the tenth century onwards in mainland Greece.<sup>17</sup> Hagiography and the *Patria* make an association between St Anna and childbirth, and this association has a long visual tradition: thus, this social reality is reflected in the *Patria*.

Ideology plays a significant role in the formation of the patronage stories under discussion, and not only those pertaining to St Anna as a protector of childbirth, but also to imperial ideology. For example, in contrast to the sterility problems of women named Anna in hagiography, in the *Patria* empresses are not presented as struggling with sterility at all. The writer or editor of the *Patria* manipulated ideologies differently according to the social group they targeted, and since it was an essential prerequisite for empresses to leave offspring, he formed the stories accordingly.

#### WOMEN AT CHURCH — THE BLACHERNAI

The integration of the church of Blachernai in the *Patria* stories and its connection to the name Anna is placed in the wider framework of women named Anna at the church.

On a first level, the name Anna – either as the name of the empress who prays for a child or as the mother of Mary – brings to mind the Old Testament childless woman Hannah, the mother of Samuel (I Samuel 1), who is associated with the apocryphal Anna in the writings of Church

Fathers and in hagiography. Gregory of Nyssa, Maximos the Confessor and the hagiographer of the *vita* of St Stephen the Younger make this association very clear.<sup>18</sup>

On a second level, the visit to the church by females mentioned in the *Patria* is the result of the motif of biblical and other women visiting a church or spending most of their time there. This is the case in the New Testament of a prophetess named Anna (Luke 2:37)<sup>19</sup> who, according to the

LAKI (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, Aldershot 2005, pp. 156–157; NIKOLAOU, *The Woman* (cit. n. 13), p. 72.

- 17 For artistic depictions of St Anna in Rome see J. WILPERT, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV. bis XIII. Jahrhundert*, II, Freiburg im Breisgau 1916, p. 711; S. LUCEY, *Palimpsest Reconsidered: Continuity and Change in the Decorative Programs at Santa Maria Antiqua*, in: J. OSBORNE/J. R. BRANDT/G. MORGANT (ed.), *Santa Maria Antiqua al Foro romano: cento anni dopo. Atti del colloquio internazionale*, Roma, 5–6 maggio 2000, Rome 2004, p. 87; in Faras (Egypt) see W. SEIPEL, *Faras: die Kathedrale aus dem Wüstensand*, Milan 2002, pp. 65–67; S. JAKOBIELSKI, *Remarques sur la chronologie des peintures murales de Faras aux VIIIe et IXe siècles*, in: S. JAKOBIELSKI (ed.), *Nubia Christiana*, I, Warsaw 1982, p. 147; in mainland Greece see GERSTEL, *Painted Sources* (cit. n. 2), pp. 96–98.
- 18 *PG* 44: 1137D; *CSCO* (479) 1986: 3. In the *Vita*, Stephen’s mother is called the *new Anna* and throughout the text the name “Anna” is repeated several times, see for example M.-F. AUZÉPY (ed.), *La vie d’Étienne le Jeune*, Aldershot 1997, p. 94. However, in the *Protoevangelion* of James, when Anna reflects on her infertility, she recalls not Hannah, but Sarah the mother of Isaac, see ed. and tr. É. DE STRYCKER, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques: recherches sur le papyrus Bodmer 5 avec une édition critique du texte grec et une traduction annotée*, Brussels 1961, p. 74. In saints’ lives, the infertility of a saint’s parents has its roots in the biblical motif of barren parents, see V. KARRAS (tr.), *Life of St Elisabeth the Wonderworker*, in: A. M. TALBOT (ed.), *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints’ Lives in English Translation*, Washington, DC 1996, p. 123 n. 29; E. BAUMER (ed.), *Marinenlexikon*, I, St Ottilien 1988, p. 154; P. HALSALL (tr.), *Life of St Thomais of Lesbos*, in: TALBOT, *Holy Women of Byzantium*, p. 299.
- 19 Before the eighth century, when the homilies on Mary’s early life started being produced, Anna the prophetess appears much more often in texts compared to the apocryphal Anna. See (selectively) (Ephrem the Syrian) K. E. Mc-

seventh-century life of St Artemios, used to light a lamp before the icon of John the Baptist;<sup>20</sup> or also of the mother of emperor Basil I, who visited the church *similarly to Anna (the prophetess) and would not leave the temple but spent her time there praying and fasting*;<sup>21</sup> or also of St Theophano's mother Anna, who spent her days praying for a child in the church of the Theotokos in the area of Bassois.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the story of the apocryphal Anna (the mother of Mary), the Biblical Hannah (the mother of Samuel), both infertile, and that of the New Testament Anna (the prophetess) created a model for the presentation of women named Anna inside a church praying for a child. This as-

sociation was fused in the stories of the empresses who prayed in the church of Blachernai and were rewarded with a child as were their role models.<sup>23</sup> Evidence from hagiography – mentioned earlier – supports this view.

We are not told whether the empresses in the *Patria* ever visited a church of St Anna to pray for a child, but it could be that the writer or editor wanted to attribute to these empresses the construction of the first churches of St Anna in Constantinople. In that case his wish would have been to show that churches dedicated to St Anna in the Byzantine capital were the result of female patronage.

#### FINAL REMARKS

The building and rebuilding of all monuments dedicated to St Anna that we are certain existed in Constantinople were initiated by male emperors such as Justinian I, Basil I and Leo VI, and only in the *Patria* do we see a connection to female patrons.<sup>24</sup> The empresses in the *Patria*, some of whom were married to iconoclast emperors, appear to have worshipped a saint whose role as Christ's progeni-

tor was promoted after the end of Iconoclasm and to whom each of them dedicated a monument after a successful childbirth. This shift in the promotion of Anna in texts is placed in the framework of developments in Marian theology during Iconoclasm, when Mary became a symbol of Orthodoxy.<sup>25</sup> Interest in the grandparents of Christ was expressed first in the early Christian period,<sup>26</sup> but the texts stressing

VEY (tr.), Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns, New York 1989, pp. 110, 113 v. 14; pp. 365, 367 v. 10; p. 369; p. 374 v. 15; (Cyril of Jerusalem) L. P. McCauley/A. A. Stephenson (tr.), The works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, I, Washington, DC 1969, pp. 208, 248; (Gregory of Nazianzos) *PG* 35: 928C; *PG* 36: 549C; *PG* 38: 353; (Leontios) *CCSG* 17:74, 243, *CCSG* 25:8, *CCSG* 60:10; (Eustratios of Constantinople) *CCSG* 23: 39; (Pseudo-Kaisarios) R. Riedinger (ed.), Pseudo-Kaisarios: Überlieferungsgeschichte und Verfasserfrage, Munich 1969, pp. 15, 21, 121, 146–147; (Maximos the Confessor) *CCSG* 44: 25; (Anastasios of Sinai) *CCSG* 59:70.

20 V. S. Crisafulli/J. W. Nesbitt (ed.), The Miracles of St Artemios: A Collection of Miracle Stories by an Anonymous Author of Seventh Century Byzantium, Leiden/New York 1997, pp. 176–177.

21 DELEHAYE, *Synaxarium* (cit. n. 14), p. 314.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 314. St Thekla is directly linked with Anna the prophetess because of her endurance of her childlessness through prayer, see S. J. Davis, *The Cult of Saint Thecla: A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2008, p. 62.

23 Hannah becomes the "hagiographical model for those depicted in the church", see T. Pratsch, *Der hagiographische Topos: griechische Heiligenviten in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit*, Berlin 2005, p. 78.

24 In the description of St Anna's churches by Prokopios and Theophanes Continuatus there is no connection of the saint with childbirth, see Haury, *Procopius, De aedificiis* (cit. n. 10), p. 21; Bekker, *Theophanes Continuatus* (cit. n. 2), pp. 146, 324.

25 For how this process evolved in texts and iconography, see N. Tsironis, *From Poetry to Liturgy: The Cult of the Virgin in the Middle Byzantine Era*, in: Vassilaki, *Images of the Mother of God* (cit. n. 16), pp. 91–102.

26 Demetrios, bishop of Antioch (third century) and Cyril of Jerusalem (fourth century) wrote on the genealogy of Mary and included elements from the story of the *Protoevangelion*, see E. A. W. Budge (tr.), *Miscellaneous Coptic*

Christ's humanity during the eighth and ninth centuries outnumber by far the texts in all other periods of Byzantine text production. The story of Anna as a childless woman in the second-century *Protoevangelion*, the outbreak of Iconoclasm and the need to support the dogma of Incarnation,<sup>27</sup> the growing number of Marian homilies dating from the eighth and ninth centuries on the conception of Anna and the nativity of Mary,<sup>28</sup> and hagiography, facilitated

the spread of the veneration of St Anna from the ninth century onwards and her association with problems of sterility and protection of childbirth. These ideological associations are responsible for the crystallisation of the female patronage stories in the *Patria* and demonstrate the value of the study of the veneration of St Anna for our understanding of Byzantine mentality.

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Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt, London 1915, pp. 630, 653; Pseudo-Eustathios (fifth century) in his *Hexaemeron* repeats the story of the *Protoevangelion*, see É. DE STRYCKER/S. J. LOUVAIN, *Le Protévangile de Jacques. Problèmes critiques et exégétiques*, in: F. L. CROSS (ed.), *Papers Presented to the Second International Congress on New Testament Studies held at Christ Church, Oxford 1961, Berlin 1964*, p. 349 (for the date of the text), *PG* 18: 772–3 (for the text).

27 J. MEYENDORFF, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, New York 1976, p. 165.

28 *Homilies* on Anna's Conception and Mary's Nativity written by the tenth century are: (Andrew of Crete) *PG* 97: 805–882; (John of Damascus) *PG* 96: 661–698; (John of Euboea) *PG* 96: 1460–1500; (Kosmas Vestitor) *PG* 106: 1006–1018; (Patriarch Tarasios) *PG* 98: 1484–1488; (George of Nikomedeia) *PG* 100: 1385A, 1368D, 1389A; (Patriarch Euthymios) *PO* 19: 441[323]–455 [337]; (Emperor Leo VI) *PG* 107: 5–12; (Niketas Paphlagon) *PG* 106: 20B; (Patriarch Photios) *PG* 102: 542–562; (Peter of Argos) K. T. KYRIAKOPOULOS (ed. and tr.), *Άγίου Πέτρου επισκόπου Άργους βίος και λόγιοι. Εισαγωγή, κείμενον, μετάφρασις, σχόλια*, Athens 1976, pp. 22–34.

## DECONSTRUCTING “DONORS” IN MEDIEVAL SOUTHERN ITALY

LINDA SAFRAN

This paper asks a deceptively simple question: of the human figures painted on Byzantine and Western medieval church walls, which ones should be considered donors? The ones shown in the act of donating, literally giving something to a recipient, certainly deserve that label, but what about painted persons who are empty-handed or hold something other than a miniature church? And what if a person is not represented pictorially but rather in the form of a painted text? The scholarly literature consistently calls all of these people “donors” and their nearby texts “donor inscriptions”; there is frequent reference to “donor portraits”.<sup>1</sup> “Donor” has become a convenient label for painted human figures or their textual surrogates in both Byzantine and European medieval art. In what follows, I critique the overuse of the “donor” designation by focusing

on three sites in a single geographical area: the Salento, in southeastern Italy.

Comprising most of the modern Italian provinces of Lecce, Brindisi, and Taranto, the entire region was part of the Byzantine Empire from about 870 to 1070; Orthodoxy survived there until the seventeenth century, the Greek language even longer. I consider alternative meanings and functions for the people named or represented on church walls, paying particular attention – given the aims of this volume and the colloquium that preceded it – to the women. I conclude that there are many potential explanations for the presence of these painted figures and names, and that they are better understood from the viewers’ or readers’ perspective than from that of the individual allegedly represented. Along the way I offer some observations about medieval South Italian prac-

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I am grateful to the organizers of the Vienna conference for the invitation to present this material, which derives from work on my forthcoming book, *The Medieval Salento: Art and Identity in Southern Italy*, Philadelphia 2014. Preliminary versions were presented at the Johns Hopkins University (November 2007) and the University of Toronto (March 2008), and I am grateful to those institutions and individuals in Baltimore, Toronto, and Vienna who helped me critique the “donor” concept. In addition, I extend particular thanks to Nancy Ševčenko, Herbert Kessler, Vasileios Marinis, Elizabeth Bolman, and, as always, Adam S. Cohen.

1 With the English term “donor” I am referring to a number of terms in other languages and in particular to the interchangeable Italian *donatore* and *committente*. Among the most significant recent studies of “donor” imagery in Byzantium and the West are H. FRANCES, *Symbols, Meaning, Belief: Donor Portraits in Byzantine Art*, unpub. Ph.D. diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1992; S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece*, Vienna 1992; N. P. ŠEVČENKO, *Close Encounters: Contact Between Holy Figures and the Faithful as Represented in Byzantine Works of Art*, in: A. GUILLOU / J. DURAND (ed.), *Byzance et les images, Cycle de conférences organisées au musée du Louvre du 5 octobre au 7 décembre 1992*, Paris 1994, pp. 256–285; L. R. JONES, *Visio Divina, Exegesis and Beholder-Image Relationships in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Indications from Donor Figure Representations*, unpub. Ph.D. diss., Harvard University 1999; L. D. GELFAND / W. S. GIBSON, *Surrogate Selves: The ‘Rolin Madonna’ and the Late-Medieval Devotional Portrait*, in: *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 29.3–4, 2002, pp. 119–138.



tices of piety and viewership. While my inquiry is geographically circumscribed, many of its conclusions should prove more broadly applicable.

The *Gründerinnen und Stifterinnen* of the original colloquium title are only a small subset of the larger category of so-called “donors.”<sup>2</sup> As founders, re-founders, or extensive decorators, these *ktetores* are often associated with a lengthy dedicatory text; they may occupy a privileged location in the church; and they often have a special iconography that communicates their role as major givers by actually showing them in the act of donation. A well-known example is Theodore Metochites kneeling in the narthex of the Chora in Constantinople, miniature church in hand. Such images elevate features of the terrestrial gift economy, the social system of gift-giving, to a different plane: by proffering such a lavish gift as a whole church building, the givers expect something in return from the recipient(s).<sup>3</sup> These people are appropriately called “donors”. However, it seems wrong to then assign the **same** label to painted figures who do not share their pose or

gesture and who neither claim nor receive credit for extensive patronage activity.

In any event, there are no examples of this unambiguous visual donor iconography in the Salento. Instead, there are painted texts that name individuals who claim to have made large-scale contributions. Because they were clearly visible in the public space of the church, it is unlikely that such epigraphic claims were fabricated. In addition to several comparable Latin texts, the Salento preserves six painted inscriptions in Greek that record significant acts by, in every case, men whom I am willing to call donors or significant patrons. They built or rebuilt, or, in one lengthy verse, excavated (a tomb); they painted or reclad; and they directed these activities toward a most venerable church or the most venerable, holy, or new icons. However, these longer texts seem never to have been accompanied by human figures. A textual record of names and accomplishments, evident to all, apparently was deemed sufficient to ensure the desired reward.

#### CARPIGNANO SALENTINO

Three of the male claims of extensive patronage activity are made in a single site that was excavated and decorated during the Byzantine era, the rock-cut or “crypt” church of Sta Christina at Carpignano.<sup>4</sup> In stark contrast to virtually all of its contemporaries in Byzantine Cappadocia, it contains only one image that is not strictly

iconic, the Annunciation flanking an enthroned Christ in a shallow niche on the east wall (Fig. 1). To Christ’s right (the viewer’s left) is the earliest text in what would later become a heavily inscribed interior: an invocation naming a husband and wife, precisely dated to 959.<sup>5</sup> Six decades later, a second enthroned Christ, flanked by the Virgin

2 “Donor” comes from the Anglo-Norman and Old French *don(o)ur*, ultimately rooted in the Latin *donator*; the first definition in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary is “a person who gives or [LAW] conveys something.”

3 See especially FRANCES, Symbols, Meaning, Belief (cit. n. 1), who asserts that all “donors” are gift-givers seeking to influence a positive outcome for themselves in the life beyond.

4 C. D. FONSECA/A. R. BRUNO/V. INGROSSO/A. MAROTTA, Gli insediamenti rupestri medioevali nel Basso Salento, Galatina 1979, pp. 59–80; M. FALLA CASTELFRANCHI, Pittura monumentale bizantina in Puglia, Milan 1991, pp. 45–70; M. FALLA CASTELFRANCHI, La cripta delle Sante Marina e Cristina a Carpignano Salentino, in: G. BERTELLI (ed.), Puglia Preromanica dal V secolo agli inizi dell’XI, Milan 2004, pp. 206–221.

5 Remember, Lord, your servant Leo the priest, and his wife Chrysolea and all his family, Amen. Painted by the hand of Theophylact, painter, month of May, second indiction, year 6467. A. GUILLOU, Notes d’épigraphie byzantine, Studi medievali, ser. 3, II, 1970, pp. 403–408, repr. in: Culture et société en Italie byzantine (VIe–XIe s.), London 1978, VIII. All translations are by the author.

and Child and the archangel Michael, was painted in another niche on the opposite end of the east wall. In this case Christ is supplicated through an inscription by an individual who claims personal agency in addition to offering a prayer.<sup>6</sup> Within fifty years, two more male patrons at Carpignano claimed significant involvement in the crypt: one had holy icons painted in 1054/55<sup>7</sup> and another provided new images and a tomb for his dead son a few years later.<sup>8</sup> These longer statements about pious activity often include the painter’s name. They are interspersed with shorter invocations containing supplicants’ names and sometimes kinship information, but no dates or painters’ names. With one exception, all of the shorter texts use the phrase Μνήσθητι Κύριε τοῦ δούλου σου, *Remember, Lord, your servant*, a formula derived from the commemoration of the dead and extremely widespread in Salentine painted inscrip-

tions; the two prayer formulas preferred elsewhere in Byzantium, Δέησις τοῦ δούλου σου and Κύριε βοήθει, were rarely used in this region.<sup>9</sup>

On the east wall, to the north of the Annunciate Virgin who abuts the 959 inscription, is the only Greek text in the medieval Salento that names a woman alone. Unaccented black capitals on the red border of a rare tenth-century image of St Anna holding the infant Virgin read: MNHCΘ[HTI K]E THC Δ(OY)ΛΗ C(OY) AANAC (*sic*) KE (TOY) TEKN/OY AYT[HC]/A[MEN], *Remember, Lord, your servant Anna and her child, Amen*<sup>10</sup> (Figs. 1, 2). This seems to be an unequivocal conjunction of a putative donor’s name with a homonymous saint. But why do we assume that Anna was the “donor” who commissioned the panel with her name saint? Nothing in the text indicates Anna’s personal agency; the invocation is on *behalf*

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- 6 *Remember, Lord, your servant Aprilios and his wife and children, he who with an intense desire had [these walls] built and had these venerable images painted in the month of May of the third indiction, 6528 [1020]. Painted by the hand of the painter Eustathios, Amen.* A. JACOB, *Inscriptions byzantines datées de la Province de Lecce (Carpignano, Cavallino, San Cesario)*, in: *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, ser. 8, 37, 1982, pp. 41–51, correcting an earlier misreading by André Guillou.
- 7 *Remember, Lord, your servant John Pankitzes the priest [and his children] who with intense desire had these holy images painted. Amen. Year 6563, indiction . . . painted by the hand of Constantine, painter.* JACOB, *Inscriptions byzantines datées* (cit. n. 6), pp. 45–46.
- 8 *Here is buried the gentle Stratigoules, my very dear [child] loved by all and above all, I would say, by his father and his mother, by his brothers and at the same time by his cousins, by all his friends and at the same time by his schoolmates, a generous benefactor of slaves. Like a sparrow, he [flew] from our hands and filled with sadness his father and his mother, his brothers and his beloved friends. O Mary, divine mistress, since you are the source of all graces, with Nicholas, the wise shepherd, with the victorious martyr Christine, place my very dear child in the bosom of the great patriarch Abraham . . . I have recovered with new images, I have excavated a tomb for the shrouding and burial of my body, which was formed of earth. But regarding the name itself, you say, Who could this mortal have been, and from where is he? . . . yra . . . is his name, virtuous his habits, spatharos and resident of Carpignano, servant of Christ and of the saints seen here, the all-immaculate Lady Theotokos and Nicholas of Myra . . .* A. JACOB, *L’inscription métrique de l’enfeu de Carpignano*, in: *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici*, 20–21, 1983–84, pp. 103–122; L. SAFRAN, *Cultures textuelles publiques: une étude de cas dans le sud de l’Italie*, in: *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, 52, fasc. 3, 2009, p. 259.
- 9 *Petition of is found once among the extant medieval Greek texts in the Salento; Lord, help is used 10 times, compared with 42 instances of Remember, Lord (or another sacred figure).* For South Italian commemorations of the dead see A. JACOB, *Épidémies et liturgie en Terre d’Otrante dans la seconde moitié du XIVe siècle*, in: *Helikon*, 31–32, 1991–92, pp. 93–126.
- 10 In an earlier article I misidentified this figure, at that time still covered with whitewash except for one tiny head, as belonging to the Adoration of the Magi, L. SAFRAN, *Byzantine South Italy: New Light on the Oldest Wall Paintings*, in: G. KOCH (ed.), *Byzantinische Malerei. Bildprogrammme–Ikonographie–Stil*, Wiesbaden 2000, pp. 257–274. For other early examples of St Anna in Byzantine churches see C. JOLIVET-LEVY, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce. Le programme iconographique de l’abside et de ses abords*, Paris 1991, pp. 54, 61, 124, 241, 323.



**1:** Carpignano, *Sta Cristina*, view of central pier (on the left) and south end of east wall: niche with painted pediment, *St Anna and the Virgin, Annunciation* flanking enthroned Christ (959)



**2:** Carpignano, *Sta Cristina*, east wall, *St Anna and the Virgin, with supplication of Anna on frame*, detail



3: Carpignano, *Sta Cristina*, north wall, saints, eleventh century: from left, unidentified, male, Agatha; Catherine and unknown saint (short perpendicular wall); Theodore, Christina, Christina

of Anna and her child, but it is not necessarily **by** her. Could not Anna’s husband, or the beneficiary of her will if she was the widowed head of her household, have funded a post-mortem commemoration? Perhaps the local preference for the verb *μνηύσκομαι*, rather than *Δέησις*, deliberately emphasizes memory rather than active prayer.

Carpignano contains an extraordinary number of named women and female saints. In addition to Anna, two other women are identified as mothers or wives: Chrysolea, the wife of Leo in the 959 apse inscription; and Anastasia, whose husband’s name is now lost. The latter appears on one of the crypt’s five Byzantine-era depictions of St Christina that includes at least one on the east wall to the left of St Anna.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Sts Agatha and Catherine were painted on the north

wall, for a total of eight extant female saints (not counting the Virgin, who is represented six times) compared with sixteen identifiably male saints (excluding Christ), all between 959 and ca. 1075 (Fig. 3). Of the male saints, Nicholas, John, and Michael are duplicated but none is shown five times.

The presence of at least two female saints on the crypt’s east wall probably rules out a regular liturgical function for the church. Even one female saint in a Byzantine sanctuary is uncommon, although they could be depicted there in exceptional cases.<sup>12</sup> It is more likely that Carpignano was a funerary church and that the text of Anna on the east wall was visible and accessible to an entire community of users instead of being hidden behind a sanctuary barrier. The space certainly served a funerary function by the second

11 Intriguingly, the Orthodox feast days of Sts Anna and Christina are contiguous, on July 24 and 25. One of the St Annas is visible behind the right edge of the central pier in Fig. 1.

12 S. E. J. GERSTEL, *Painted Sources for Female Piety in Medieval Byzantium*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 52, 1998, p. 93. There are a few instances of female saints at the east end of Cappadocian churches as well, mostly drawn from the Anagyroi: JOLIVET-LEVY, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce* (cit n. 10), pp. 345–346.



quarter of the eleventh century, when Μνήσθητι Κύριε τῆς ψυχῆς (sic) τοῦ δούλου σου commends the souls of men named John and Vincent on the north wall; this was supplemented a few decades later by an arcosolium tomb for a dead boy in the northwest corner.<sup>13</sup> Evidence of sub-floor burials is hidden by a modern concrete floor, but there is no reason that the dead could not have been buried both beneath and above the crypt, as tombs atop a nearby rock-cut chapel attest.<sup>14</sup>

Sharon Gerstel has shown how the images of female saints and St Anna in particular could serve as focuses for female piety.<sup>15</sup> At Carpignano, however, the female saints are interspersed with males in a way that makes it difficult to identify their locations as exclusively female or even women-oriented spaces. If the crypt served primarily for burials, women would have been frequent visitors because they were intimately involved in Byzantine funeral rites and commemorations. However, it would be quite surprising if all of these women had personal funds with which to commission wall paintings. The devotion to female saints seen here must be due, at least in part,

to male patronage.<sup>16</sup> In my next case study, too, there is no clear correspondence between female saints and the gender of their textual or pictorial supplicants.

The unparalleled repetitions of St Christina may be linked to how the crypt was used by an extended family or group of families. She must have been an effective saint to merit so many images, which then create so many possibilities for proximate interment. Christina was an early Christian martyr whose cult may have been popularized in ninth-century Byzantium thanks to the five troparia written in her honor by Kassia (or Kassiane), the first female hymnographer.<sup>17</sup> Her flourishing Italian cult at Bolsena, near Rome, might have been known in the Byzantine south.<sup>18</sup> Yet in Byzantine art Christina was rarely depicted, and without recourse to an onomastic parallel it is difficult to understand her popularity at Carpignano among both men and women. The crypt's first named woman, Chrysolea, may have introduced the cult of her near-name saint around 959; there was no St Chrysolea, and almost no women were named Christina.<sup>19</sup> Sub-

13 *Remember, Lord, the soul of your servant John and your servant Vincent and assign them to the place of light. Amen.* Greek text in A. JACOB, *Le culte de Saint Vincent de Saragosse dans la Terre d'Otrante byzantine et le sermon inédit du Vaticanus Barberinianus Gr. 456 (BHG 1867e)*, in: B. JANSENS/B. ROOSEN/P. VAN DEUN (ed.), *Philomathestatos. Studies in Greek Patristic and Byzantine Texts Presented to Jacques Noret for his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, Leuven 2004, p. 291. The text runs vertically between St Vincent and the Virgin and Child; St John is on the Virgin's other side. For the arcosolium tomb see JACOB, *L'inscription métrique de l'enfeu de Carpignano* (cit. n. 8).

14 The crypt of San Salvatore at Giurdignano has above-ground tombs, all empty, that probably are medieval. At Carpignano, any evidence for burials above the crypt was lost in the eighteenth century with the construction of a chapel dedicated to Sta Maria delle Grazie.

15 GERSTEL, *Painted Sources for Female Piety* (cit. n. 12), pp. 96–98.

16 On male devotion to female saints see, e.g., C. RAPP, *Figures of Female Sanctity: Byzantine Edifying Manuscripts and Their Audience*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 50, 1996, pp. 313–344; J. COTSONIS, *Onomastics, Gender, Office and Images on Byzantine Lead Seals: A Means of Investigating Personal Piety*, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 32.1, 2008, pp. 1–37.

17 A. M. SILVAS, *Kassia the Nun c. 810–c. 865: An Appreciation*, in: L. GARLAND (ed.), *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience 800–1200*, Aldershot 2006, p. 27.

18 A reused marble urn inside the alleged sarcophagus of St Christina contained an early tenth-century coin, and the Latin inscription on the exterior further attests to cultic activity (reposition of the relics?) in the tenth or eleventh century; see C. CARLETTI/V. FIOCCHI NICOLAI, *La catacomba di S. Cristina a Bolsena*, Vatican City 1989, pp. 32–34.

19 Christine/Christina was an extremely rare name, with only two attestations in the Prosopography of the Byzantine World (on line at <http://www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk>); Chrysolea is not attested at all. The PBW currently includes names from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

sequent generations at Carpignano continued to depict St Christina, and even if there is no firm evidence that they named their daughters Chrysolea, Orthodox naming patterns – both medieval and modern – would suggest that this was the case. That John and Vincent were commemorated near their name saints further supports the notion of a local preference for homonymy.<sup>20</sup> More important, if God is being asked

to assign the souls of those two men to the “place of light”, a phrase from the funeral liturgy, they surely were dead and not actively paying for the inscription. I suggest the same possibility for Anna and her child. Despite the absence of explicit reference to her soul, *Μνήσθητι Κύριε* used in a funerary chapel likely signals that Anna, too, was not a living “donor”.

#### VASTE

Byzantine Carpignano contains supplicatory texts about individuals but no people are depicted. To investigate so-called “donor images,” I move forward in time, but not far in space, to a triple-apsed rock-cut church dedicated to Santi Stefani at Vaste. Decorated in the early and later eleventh century with a program of apostles on the piers, bishops in the left apse, and Christ between angels in the right apse, it was partly repainted in 1379/80 with a new series of saints and a renovated central apse<sup>21</sup> (Fig. 4). In the four centuries between the first Byzantine paintings at Carpignano and the last ones at post-Byzantine Vaste, significant changes occur. The longer claims of extensive patronage disappear, and instead of stand-alone short texts there are now texts paired with small figures, both male and female. The range of invocations expands to include three *Μνήσθητι Κύριε*, one *Μνήσθητι Χριστέ*, two *Μνήσθητι Άγιε*, and a *Μνήσθητι*

*Δέσποινα* directed to a Woman of the Apocalypse in the apse. Finally, the number of painted female supplicants increases to three – Kalia (on the east wall), Donna (on a south-wall pilaster), and Margaret (on a north pier) (Fig. 5). Another three named women – Doulitzia, Maria, and Ioanna – are included in the prayer of their husband and father in the central apse (Fig. 4).<sup>22</sup> Greek-language churches with so many women represented are extremely rare; only the Asinou narthex, which also dates to the fourteenth century, comes to mind. However, if the paintings mirror contemporary practices, worship at Vaste might have made Orthodox visitors from elsewhere uncomfortable: the miniature supplicants adopt the kneeling pose with clasped hands common in the Roman rite since the thirteenth century; several of them carry a string of prayer beads; and the image in the apse is the expected Virgin Mary, but of an unrecognizable apocalyptic type.<sup>23</sup>

20 GERSTEL, *Painted Sources for Female Piety* (cit. n. 12), p. 95, adduces examples of female preference for their name saints in wall painting of southern Greece, but this is not corroborated by evidence from the rest of Greece or from Cyprus: cf. KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits* (cit. n. 1); A. STYLIANOU/J. A. STYLIANOU, *Donors and Dedicatory Inscriptions, Supplicants and Supplications in the Painted Churches of Cyprus*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft*, 9, 1960, pp. 97–128.

21 A. JACOB, *Vaste en Terre d'Otrante et ses inscriptions*, in: *Aevum: Rassegna di scienze storiche linguistiche e filologiche*, 71.2, 1997, pp. 243–271; FALLA CASTELFRANCHI, *Pittura monumentale bizantina* (cit. n. 4), pp. 53–60, 75–81, 233–237.

22 The apse inscription reads: *Remember, Lady, your servant Antony and his wife Doulitzia and their children Maria and Ioanna, of the village of Nuci, year 6888*. JACOB, *Vaste en Terre d'Otrante* (cit. n. 21), p. 257, corrects earlier misreadings.

23 Although Byzantine literature is widely considered a “distorting mirror” vis-à-vis Byzantine life (see C. MANGO, *Byzantine Literature as a Distorting Mirror*, repr. in: C. MANGO, *Byzantium and Its Image*, Aldershot 1984, II), Byzantine art contains many *realia*: see especially M. G. PARANI, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*. Byzantine Material



4: Vaste, *Sti Stefani*, central apse, *Woman of the Apocalypse envisioned by St John (conch)*; *Vision of Zechariah (triumphal arch)*, 1379/80

There is a high degree of similarity among all of the painted humans at Vaste. Except for one tonsured priest and a second male who wears white, every one of them wears a red overgarment, often with a belt. All of the women, except the two presumably unmarried daughters in the apse, have a white veil over their hair. That these iconographically homogeneous figures are well-to-do is evidenced by their tight buttoned sleeves, belts trimmed with metal appliqué, and perhaps by their red-dyed clothes. The fact that this is a rock-cut church should not make us think that its users were poor.

Village churches served many functions other than worship: they were burial spaces, sites of

physical protection during storms, social centers, venues for some of the most important moments in the lives of individuals and communities. Whenever people gathered there was potential for envy, and one of the most salient cultural phenomena in the Mediterranean region was (and still is) the fear of attracting the evil eye,<sup>24</sup> of exposing oneself in a position where others, especially others with malign powers, might be envious.<sup>25</sup> In such an environment, displaying one's wealth or good fortune was foolhardy. The implications of this *habitus* have hardly been explored by art historians, and I am not suggesting that this is a complete explanation for the appearance of human figures in Salentine wall paintings. How-

Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries), Leiden 2003, and her subsequent studies, including Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography, in: M. GRÜNBAERT et al. (ed.), *Material Culture and Well-Being in Byzantium (400–1453)* (Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung, 11), Vienna 2007, pp. 181–192.

24 The Italian for “evil eye” is *malocchio* or *invidia*, Latin for greed; cf. the Septuagint’s ὀφθαλμὸς πονηρὸς, φθονερὸς (Wisdom of Sirach [Ecclesiasticus] 14:10), lit. “an evil eye, evil [things]” and modern Greek *κακὸ μάτι*.

25 Fear of the evil eye was widespread in antiquity and persisted among medieval (and many modern) Jews, Christians, and Muslims. In a famous Talmudic statement (JT, *Shab.* 14c; BT, *B.Me.* 107b), 99 of 100 people in a Jewish cemetery are said to have died through the evil eye and only one from natural causes; Maimonides was the rare medieval commentator who opposed the notion of the evil eye. I cite Jewish literature here because in the Middle Ages it was

ever, I fully agree with Herbert L. Kessler’s recent assertion that the evil eye “needs to be added to other medieval models of viewing art that existed side-by-side with it.”<sup>26</sup> The omnipresence of the evil eye may help explain why none of the painted female figures is ever shown wearing jewelry, even though the painted female saints are frequently bejeweled, and earrings and other adornments are common in Salento tombs. It also could be one reason that likeness was avoided in every one of these images even though portraiture was emerging in fourteenth-century Italy.<sup>27</sup> Individualization at Vaste occurs only in the accompanying texts, which were not susceptible to the envious gaze. To interpret these figures as living and recognizable donors is to ignore a pervasive belief system that militated against ostentation.

Evidence for local fear of the evil eye is not based only on textual references and modern

ethnographic studies, although both are plentiful. It also includes evil-eye charms, like the bone amulet excavated at the deserted medieval village of Apigliano, about 25 kilometers from Vaste<sup>28</sup> (Fig. 7). The *mano fica* or “fig” gesture, in several variations, was employed by Jews and Christians all over medieval Europe, underscoring the ubiquity of both the superstition and its solutions.<sup>29</sup> Such a gesture repelled the evil gaze, and so did the color red. The Talmud had recommended the use of red as protection against bewitchment, and it was the apotropaic color of choice in southern Italy.<sup>30</sup> Red coral charms are frequently worn by the Christ Child in Salentine wall paintings beginning in the early fifteenth century,<sup>31</sup> and it is possible that the red clothing worn by most of the painted people at Vaste was thought to have a protective quality.<sup>32</sup>

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widely believed that the Jews, and particularly Solomon, had special knowledge of magic. In the Orthodox realm, the evil eye was constantly invoked to protect children, birthing mothers, grooms, and others at liminal and dangerous moments in the life cycle. See, e.g., the prayer for parturients that asks God’s protection from *jealousy, and envy, and from the evil eye* (ζήλε, καὶ φθόνε, καὶ ὀφθαλμῶν βασκανίας): J. GOAR, *Euchologion sive Rituale Graecorum*, Graz 1960, p. 261; K. HARTNUP, ‘On the Beliefs of the Greeks’. Leo Allatius and Popular Orthodoxy (The Medieval Mediterranean, 54), Leiden/Boston 2004, esp. pp. 146–149. Belief in the power of the evil eye pervaded all Byzantine social levels; see the various studies in: H. MAGUIRE (ed.), *Byzantine Magic*, Washington, DC 1995; on line at <http://www.doaks.org/resources/publications/doaks-online-publications/byzantine-studies>.

26 H. L. KESSLER, *Evil Eye(ing): Romanesque Art as a Shield of Faith*, in: C. HOURIHANE (ed.), *Romanesque Art and Thought in the Twelfth Century: Essays in Honor of Walter Cahn*, Princeton 2008, p. 135.

27 G. SOMMERS WRIGHT, *The Reinvention of the Portrait Likeness in the Fourteenth Century*, in: *Gesta*, 39.2, 2000, pp. 117–134.

28 B. BRUNO, *Chiese e religione*, in: P. ARTHUR (ed.), *Da Apigliano a Martano, tre anni di archeologia medioevale (1997–1999)*, Galatina 1999, p. 30. The amulet comes from a stratum that contained eighth- to tenth-century Byzantine pottery (email communication, P. Arthur, June 5, 2009).

29 See L. W. MOSS/S. C. CAPPANNARI, *Mal’occhio, Ayin ha ra, Oculus Fascinus, Judenblick: The Evil Eye Hovers Above*, in: C. MALONEY (ed.), *The Evil Eye*, New York 1976, pp. 1–15; W. L. HILDBURGH, *Images of the Human Hand as Amulets in Spain*, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 18.1–2, 1955, pp. 67–89, esp. 78 ff.

30 BT *Shab.* 67a. The Jewish presence in the Salento was very strong and outsiders were amazed that Jews and Christians were neighbors. Vaste even depicts on its “triumphal arch” the *Vision of Zechariah* (Zech. 4:1), a very unusual iconographic choice perhaps inspired by the presence in nearby Otranto of a monumental lampstand in the Cathedral modeled on the Temple menorah and described as much admired by the Jews who gathered to look at it from the cathedral doorway. See now L. SAFRAN, *Betwixt or Beyond? The Salento in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, in: M. S. BROWNLEE/D. H. GONDICAS (ed.), *Renaissance Encounters: Greek East and Latin West*, Leiden/Boston 2013, esp. pp. 126–127.

31 S. A. CALLISEN, *The Evil Eye in Italian Art*, in: *The Art Bulletin*, 19, 1937, pp. 450–462.

32 In Massafra and other towns in the Salento today, special precautions are taken to protect infants from the evil eye, including dressing them in maroon-brown or reddish-green garments, “the colors of the thaumaturgic saints”: F.





5: Vaste, *Sti Stefani*, second north pier, south face, *St Martin with supplicant Margaret*, detail

6: Apigliano, middle Byzantine “fica” amulet, bone

All of the figures at Vaste and other regional sites are shown with both eyes visible to their viewers; sometimes only one pupil, or neither, is turned toward the nearest saint (Fig. 5). As is well known, the profile had a negative valence in medieval art,<sup>33</sup> and I venture to suggest that one of the reasons behind this convention is that the *malocchio* was effected with one eye, not both. Linguistically and pictorially, the evil eye is invariably single.<sup>34</sup> A Hebrew text explains that when both eyes are open man is in the image of God and cannot do evil, but when one

eye is closed he resembles an evil demon.<sup>35</sup> There are parallels in the myths and literature of many countries: the Norse god Odin could shackle his enemies with his one eye, and the monophthalmic Hannibal was justly feared.<sup>36</sup>

There is, however, another reason that the painted supplicants turn both eyes out into the space of the church rather than sideways or upwards to their adjacent sacred figures: this three-quarter view made them more accessible to pious viewers. On the piers and pilasters at Vaste, five of the six kneeling humans slightly overlap the sacred

LADIANA, La culla di paese. Massafra ritualità popolare della nascita, in: F. LADIANA (ed.), *Puglia e Basilicata tra medioevo ed età moderna. Uomini, spazio e territorio*, Miscellanea di studi in onore di C. D. Fonseca, Galatina 1988, p. 372. By contrast, blue is the preferred evil-eye color in Greece and other areas formerly under Turkish control: L. C. JONES, *The Evil Eye Among European-Americans*, in: *Western Folklore*, 10, 1951, pp. 11–25, repr. in: A. DUNDES (ed.), *The Evil Eye: A Casebook*, Madison, WI 1981, pp. 150–168.

33 F. GARNIER, *Le langage de l’image au Moyen Age*, I. Signification et symbolique, Tours 1982, pp. 142–146; M. SHAPIRO, *Words and Pictures: On the Literal and the Symbolic in the Illustration of a Text*, The Hague 1973, pp. 37–49.

34 KESSLER, *Evil Eye(ing)* (cit. n. 26), esp. n. 41.

35 A. BRAV, *The Evil Eye Among the Hebrews*, in: *Ophthalmology*, 5, 1908, pp. 427–435, repr. in: DUNDES, *The Evil Eye* (cit., n. 32), esp. p. 49. See also R. ULMER, *The Evil Eye in the Bible and in Rabbinic Literature*, Hoboken, NJ 1994.

36 F. KELLY, ‘The Evil Eye’ in Early Irish Literature and Law, in: *Celtica*, 24, 2003, pp. 1–39.

figures whom they invoke (as in Fig. 5). In so doing, they occupy space in the church, before the picture plane, and so mediate between real worshippers and the sacred persons with whom they are intimately connected. While the family group in the apse does not touch the Virgin, it appears to be fully involved in John the Evangelist’s apocalyptic vision (Fig. 4). Whether via proximity or actual overlap, all of the painted supplicants are visually united with the nearby objects of their supplication. And that, I believe, is the real message of these so-called donors – not that they are recognizable individuals who have paid for the paintings and therefore have privileged and enviable access to the saints, but that they are generalized simulacra, incapable of inspiring envy, shown in

appropriate attitudes of prayer to serve as models for real humans’ behavior.<sup>37</sup> To attain comparable proximity to the sacred, a supplicant at Vaste must, like Margaret (Fig. 5), kneel in prayer with joined hands. The painted people participate in an ideal anagogical transmission: they are placed at, or close to, the viewers’ eye level; their gazes attract the viewers’ gaze;<sup>38</sup> their praying gesture directs attention to, and in most cases onto, the very fabric of the saint; and through this mimetic process the viewer accesses the saint and, ideally, God himself. Whether they are imagined to be living or dead, and whether their saintly proximity would occur in this life or the next, the painted figures help bridge the space between the sacred and the human realms.<sup>39</sup>

#### MOTTOLA

The last putative donor figures I examine here are neither Byzantine nor Orthodox, but they appear in a triple-apsed rock-cut church in Mottola that retains much of its original templon barrier, employs Greek on Christ’s book in the central apse Deesis, and includes

the Orthodox saints Pelagia and Paraskeve in its thirteenth-century redecoration<sup>40</sup> (Fig. 7). Now dedicated to St Nicholas, this space may have been used for more than one rite or, more likely, by converts from Orthodoxy to the Roman church.<sup>41</sup> There is evidence here for local beliefs

37 Even if the figure was considered recognizable when initially painted, this could only have been in conjunction with the adjacent onomastic information, which is the sole feature that individualizes the Vaste supplicants. Yet even with an initially recognizable figure, repetitive local naming patterns would soon have erased any clarity about exactly which “Margaret” (et al.) was depicted. Even if family members could subsequently point to a painted image and claim kinship, any sense of pride or connection need not have depended on specifics (“that was my grandma Kalía”) so much as on a generalization (“that was paid for by my family” or “that is my family’s patron saint”) that makes the image represent family piety and longevity in the worship community.

38 Eyes attract eyes: see KESSLER, “Evil Eye(ing)” (cit. n. 26), p. 118. Science has shown that, starting in infancy, humans looking at faces seek out the eyes first: see, e.g., M. S. KEIL, “I Look in Your Eyes, Honey”: Internal Face Features Induce Spatial Frequency Preference for Human Face Processing, in: *PLoS Computational Biology*, March 27, 2009; on line at <http://www.ploscompbiol.org/Article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pcbi.1000329>, esp. p. 11.

39 Some of these ideas are inspired by the 1999 dissertation of L. JONES, *Visio Divina* (cit. n. 1).

40 C. D. FONSECA, *Civiltà rupestre in Terra Jonica*, Milan/Rome 1970, pp. 182–203; N. LAVERMICOCCA, *Il programma decorativo del Santuario rupestre di S. Nicola di Mottola*, in: C. D. FONSECA (ed.), *Il Passaggio dal dominio bizantino allo Stato normanno nell’Italia meridionale. Atti del secondo convegno internazionale di studio sulla civiltà rupestre medioevale nel Mezzogiorno d’Italia*, Taranto, 1973, Taranto 1977, pp. 291–337; R. TORTORELLI, *Aree cultuali e cicli agiografici della civiltà rupestre: i casi di Santa Margherita e San Nicola di Mottola*, unpub. Ph.D. diss., Università degli studi di Roma “Tor Vergata” 2008, on line with good photos at <http://dspace.uniroma2.it/dspace/handle/2108/527>.

41 This is true even though the church was in the possession of the Benedictine monastery of the Trinity at La Cava after 1081. For the comparable contemporary case of the Orthodox monastery of San Pietro Imperiale at Taranto see now J.-M. MARTIN, *Le Mont-Cassin et l’Évêché d’Ugento*, in: J.-M. MARTIN/B. MARTIN-HISARD/A. PARAVICINI



7: Mottola, S Nicola, north wall and northeast corner of sanctuary behind templon screen, St Basil, Virgin and Child (with amulet), St Nicholas (with Sarulus text)

and limited information about patronage. On the north wall, the infant Christ on his mother's lap appears to wear a circular evil-eye amulet around his neck.<sup>42</sup> Next to him, on a panel with St Nicholas, a so-called donor is represented textually with a supplication in Latin: *Remember, Lord, your servant Sarulus, priest.*<sup>43</sup> The Latin *Memento Domine* formula, identical to the Greek *Μνήσθητι Κύριε*, again raises the question of whether the *sacerdote* Sarulus – who is also named in a nearby crypt alongside St Margaret –

must be a living donor, or whether he might be a worthy dead man being commended to the company of the saints by others.

On the south wall are two more supposed donors, this time pictorial. These figures are painted on a pilaster between recessed niches that contain pairs of saints; they are at eye level for anyone seated on the rock-cut bench that encircles the naos (Fig. 8). While the saints – Peter and Pope Leo on the left, Helena and Blasios<sup>44</sup> on the right – may date originally to

BAGLIANI (ed.), *Vaticana et Medievalea. Études en l'honneur de Louis Duval-Arnauld*, Florence 2008, pp. 311–322.

42 For the meaning and efficacy of concentric circles in late antiquity see E. DAUTERMAN MAGUIRE / H. P. MAGUIRE / M. J. DUNCAN-FLOWERS (ed.), *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House* (Illinois Byzantine Studies, 2), Urbana 1989. On S Nicola at Mottola see now L. SAFRAN, *Scoperte salentine*, in: *Arte medievale*, 7.2, 2008 [2010], pp. 86–92, where the infant Christ with amulet is reproduced in color in Fig. 45.

43 MEME[N] / TO D(OMI)NE FAMU / LO TUO / SARULO / SACER[DOTE]: see FONSECA, *Civiltà rupestre* (cit. n. 40), p. 183; FALLA CASTELFRANCHI, *Pittura monumentale bizantina* (cit. n. 4), p. 74.

44 Following LAVERMICOCCA, *Programma decorativo di S. Nicola* (cit. n. 40), p. 319, this figure is usually identified, because of his proximity to Helena, as Cyril of Jerusalem, Cyriakus, or James the Less; FONSECA, *Civiltà rupestre* (cit. n. 40), posits St Nicholas; and just as frequent is his non-identification as a “santo ignoto” (see, e.g.,



**8:** *Mottola, S Nicola, southwest pier (on the left) and south wall: from left, Sts Peter and Leo, two candle-bearing women on pilaster, Sts Helena and Blasios, all eleventh/thirteenth century, and St George, fourteenth century*

the eleventh century and thus to the era of Byzantine rule, they were almost certainly over-painted in the thirteenth century. Hence the human figures between them probably have nothing to do with the fragmentary text visible in the left niche, next to Pope Leo, which is in the masculine voice and seems to refer to an individual named Leo<sup>45</sup> (Fig. 9). That these figures are both women is not in doubt: they are dressed identically, and both have long hair

falling down the back.<sup>46</sup> Such long tresses were not the fashion for men in thirteenth-century Italy, not even in the formerly Byzantine south, where the rare depictions of long-haired men also show them with facial hair.<sup>47</sup> The two women at Mottola are more differentiated than those at Vaste; perhaps one is meant to be older than the other. Except for Vaste, even a single painted woman is unusual, and no other regional monument contains a pair of them.

TORTORELLI, *Aree culturali e cicli agiografici* [cit. n. 40], p. 278). However, both letter traces and the iconographic probabilities I discuss below argue for his identification as Blasios.

45 CH. DIEHL, *L'art byzantin dans l'Italie méridionale*, Paris 1894, p. 146, followed by FONSECA, *Civiltà rupestre* (cit. n. 40), p. 183.

46 They are identified as women by FONSECA, *Civiltà rupestre* (cit. n. 40), p. 183, and TORTORELLI, *Aree culturali e cicli agiografici* (cit. n. 40), pp. 277–278. The closest comparison for this long (braided?) hairstyle is that worn (with a headdress) by a kneeling woman at Muro Leccese, analyzed and dated to the thirteenth century in SAFRAN, *Scoperte salentine* (cit. n. 42), p. 71, figs. 16–17.

47 R. LEVI PISSETZKI, *Storia del costume in Italia*, I, Milan 1964, pp. 289, 305. My collection of supplicant images from the Salento contains few long-haired men. One thirteenth-century example is a kneeling monk (with beard and mustache) in a trio of male supplicants at Sta Marina at Miggiano. See M. DE GIORGI, *La Koimesis bizantina di*

Here each woman carries a large, lit candle, and this constellation of women, candles, and specific saints suggests possible alternatives to their usual identification as “donors”.<sup>48</sup>

Candles figured in many medieval rituals, including baptisms and funerals, but women were most closely associated with tapers on two occasions. The first was the feast of Candlemas (equivalent to Greek *ὑπαπαντή*, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple). The purification of the Virgin, celebrated on February 2, was regularly marked by candle-lit processions and the wearing of white garments, and candles were blessed in church for many uses throughout the year.<sup>49</sup> The second occasion was when a woman emerged from her home for churching forty days (more or less) after childbirth; at that event, too, she carried a candle that had been blessed on Candlemas. For her churching, the woman knelt at the church entrance with candle in hand and was escorted inside after psalms were recited. In the Orthodox realm, the infant preceded its mother and was carried to the altar, if a boy, or the

sanctuary barrier if a girl; in the Roman rite, the woman appears to have been emphasized more than her child.<sup>50</sup> In both cases, candles represented the light of Christ as well as the purity of his mother. The light color of at least one of the painted women's garments, and probably both, would have counted as white in the Middle Ages, when color values were far from absolute.

That viewers would intuitively associate the candle-bearing Mottola women with Candlemas and/or with churching is confirmed, I believe, by their proximity to saints Helena and especially Blasios, whose feast day in the West immediately follows Candlemas on February 3 (Fig. 10). In the *Golden Legend*, the popular compendium of saints' lives and feast days compiled in Italy around 1260, St Blasios encourages a woman to make an annual offering of a candle in his church after he expels a fishbone from the throat of the woman's son.<sup>51</sup> This episode seems to be the origin of his association with both throat remedies and candles (in Catholic practice today, throats are blessed annually with two crossed candles).<sup>52</sup>

Miggiano (Lecce): iconografia e fonti liturgiche, in: A. C. QUINTAVALLE (ed.), *Medioevo mediterraneo: l'Occidente, Bisanzio, e l'Islam*. Atti del VII Convegno internazionale di Studi, Parma, 21–25 settembre 2004, Milan 2007, fig. 5, with corrections in SAFRAN, *Scoperte salentine* (cit. n. 42), p. 72.

48 I discussed the Mottola women in SAFRAN, *Scoperte salentine* (cit. n. 42), pp. 89–92.

49 G. McMURRAY GIBSON, *Blessing from Sun and Moon: Churching as Women's Theater*, in: B. A. HANAWALT / D. WALLACE (ed.), *Bodies and Disciplines. Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England*, Minneapolis/London 1996, pp. 139–154, esp. pp. 140–143; P. HOWELL JOLLY, *Learned Reading, Vernacular Seeing: Jacques Daret's Presentation in the Temple*, in: *The Art Bulletin*, 82.3, 2000, pp. 428–452.

50 J. DE VORAGINE, *The Golden Legend. Readings on the Saints*, 2 vols., tr. W. G. RYAN, Princeton 1993, I, pp. 148–149; GIBSON, *Blessing from Sun and Moon* (cit. n. 49); J. M. PIERCE, 'Green Women' and Blood Pollution: Some Medieval Rituals for the Churching of Women after Childbirth, in: *Studia Liturgica*, 29.2, 1999, pp. 191–215; S. ROLL, *The Churching of Women After Childbirth: An Old Rite Raising New Issues*, in: *Questions Liturgiques/Studies in Liturgy*, 76.3–4, 1995, pp. 206–229. For Byzantine prayers for the fortieth day after childbirth see M. ARRANZ, *Les Sacrements de l'ancien Euchologe constantinopolitain* (3), in: *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 49, 1983, pp. 299–301; GOAR, *Euchologion* (cit. n. 25), pp. 267, 307.

51 *Golden Legend* (cit. n. 50), p. 152. Old photographs show the letters A/IVS alongside the head of the elderly saint whom I identify as Blasios; others have suggested Sabinus, depicted elsewhere in the crypt. In the Orthodox calendar Blasios's feast day is February 11 (Pope Leo's, in the next niche, is February 18).

52 Already in the sixth-century medical writings of AËTIUS OF AMIDA (*Tetrabiblos* VIII), Blasios was invoked in a conjuration for objects stuck in the throat: *Come up, bone, whether bone or stalk or whatever else, as Jesus Christ brought Lazarus from his tomb and Jonah from the whale. Then take him by the throat and say 'Blasius, the martyr and servant of Christ, saith, 'Either come up or go down.'* See J. D. ROLLESTON, *Laryngology and Folk-Lore*, in: *Journal of Laryngology and Otology*, 57, 1942, p. 528; J. D. ROLLESTON, *The Folklore of Children's Diseases*, *Folklore*, 54.2, 1943, p. 292.





9: Mottola, *S Nicola*, south wall pilaster, candle-bearing women



10: Mottola, *S Nicola*, south wall, *Ss Helena (Elizabeth of Hungary?) and Blasios*

Significantly, Blasios had connections with childbirth as well: Western ritual books and fourteenth-century Slavic miscellanies both contain prayers for women in labor that are identical to the prayer for removing a bone from the throat.<sup>53</sup>

Sharing the niche with St Blasios at Mottola is the crowned St Helena, who was venerated in Europe without her son, Constantine. Old photographs preserve the letters SA/ELENA, but only SA/N is visible today after a problematic restoration. St Helena was famous for her maternity, which explains her juxtaposition to images associated with purification and childbirth. Moreover, according to several European liturgical calendars – but not the Roman one –

her feast day was in February, a few days after that of St Blasios.<sup>54</sup>

Curiously, St Helena seems to be visually amalgamated here with St Elizabeth of Hungary, who died in 1231 and was canonized in 1235; the *Golden Legend* spends considerable time describing her churching and other activities associated with maternal care.<sup>55</sup> After her husband died – in the Salento – en route to the Holy Land in 1227, Elizabeth, the daughter of a king, apparently became a Franciscan tertiary. Later tertiaries wore a corded rope belt, and a twisted rope is exactly what outlines Helena’s green cloak at Mottola. Perhaps on the bases of imprecise verbal description and the widely circulated *Golden Legend*, an

53 A. ANGUSHEVA/M. DIMITROVA, *Medieval Slavonic Childbirth Prayers: Sources, Context and Functionality*, *Scripta and e-Scripta*, 2, 2004, p. 281. I thank Adelina Angusheva for sharing her work with me.

54 Commemoration for St Helena on February 8 at Magdeburg, Utrecht, Minden; on February 7 at Langres, Bamberg, Antwerp: W. H. J. WEALE, *Analecta Liturgica*, Bruges 1879.

55 *Golden Legend* (cit. n. 50), II, pp. 303–318.

existing image of a crowned female saint was amplified with a thirteenth-century vair-lined, rope-edged cloak in order to evoke a new royal saint; just how the rope should be worn may not have been known by an artist depicting an early Franciscan devotee for the first time. The accounts of saints Leo and Peter, represented in the adjacent niche, occur together soon after that of St Elizabeth in the *Golden Legend*.<sup>56</sup>

This would be the earliest known image of St Elizabeth and I advance the identification cautiously. It is unclear to what degree the inscription identifying Helena was well preserved in the thirteenth century and whether isolated letters would obviate an artist's or patron's or viewer's assimilation of two crowned female saints. Regardless of whether the female saint is Helena or an amalgam of Helena/Elizabeth, the southern aisle of the San Nicola crypt at Mottola contains several images that cohere around archetypal female themes. It may well have marked a site of gender-oriented veneration, perhaps used with particular devotion in the month of February.

The candle-bearing duo represented at Mottola might commemorate specific women, paid for by themselves; this is the usual "donor" interpretation. But the image also could have been donated by their loved ones. It could record offerings of real candles from women or their husbands, perhaps in thanks for successful recovery from childbirth; candles may have been lit before the saints in the adjacent niches especially by

women. Or the painted pair could memorialize two women who had died in childbirth and so failed to experience their first or last churching. Indeed, their lack of hair covering may strengthen the likelihood that the women are deceased (and thus not donors), given that living mothers went to church with their hair covered. The image might refer to any dead women, for Candlemas tapers were placed in the hands of the dying.

All of these interpretations are speculative, and only one thing is certain: calling the figures "donors" closes off exploration of other possible meanings. In addition to making a very large assumption about finances, the "donor" label places exclusive emphasis on intentionality. Since we can rarely ascertain that from images, even if they appear in conjunction with texts, it is more profitable to consider most medieval supplicating figures from the perspective of viewer response. These differentiated but still generic painted women with candles must have conjured viewers' recollections of the occasions when women in Mottola held candles. Whatever these women were originally supposed to be, or to do, they became nonspecific: they were exempla for (female?) behavior in perpetuity, encouraging the donation of candles or of pious behavior in general. It is worth noting again how their eyes are accessible to the viewers' gaze and thus able to activate the mimetic function that I posited for the supplicating figures at Vaste.

## CONCLUSIONS

In an article about the emergence of portraiture in fourteenth-century Italy, Georgia Sommers

Wright wrote that "We live in a culture so saturated with likenesses that we tend to find them

56 In the account of St Peter, candlesticks with lit candles feature prominently: *Golden Legend*, II, p. 349. Elizabeth was especially devoted to St Peter, who appears in the adjacent niche at Mottola. The connection between Peter and Pope Leo dates to the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon in 451, when it was said that *Peter speaks through Leo* thanks to his Tome about the Virgin as the mother and not just the bearer of Christ. Moreover, in the Roman rite Peter and Leo are venerated on June 29 and 28, respectively, in addition to other dates. I also wonder whether the juxtaposition of Peter and Leo might reflect the historical situation at the time of the church's donation to the Trinity at La Cava: in 1081 the new abbot's name was Peter, and his immediate successor was named Leo.

in earlier cultures where none were intended.”<sup>57</sup> While we can recognize some differentiated characterizations in the medieval Salentine monuments, they are relative: older and younger, perhaps, at Mottola; parents and children in the apse at Vaste. These are not individual portraits and, I have argued, any evocations of specific persons are secondary to their value as mimetic models. This interpretation helps explain why so many of the alleged “donors” are allowed to remain on the church walls, not overpainted or expunged once their “donation” had been forgotten. They have meaning, or meanings, that transcend the individual, and they help the faithful in church transcend time and space; they visibly cross the boundaries between earth and heaven, eliding the lines between the past, present, and future of the living, the dead, and the saved. But it is not my intention to interpret all of the painted figures or their textual proxies in the same way, for that would simply be substituting one homogenizing interpretation for another. In my case studies at Carpignano, Vaste, and Mottola, I hope to have demonstrated a range of possible readings.

My thoughts about the human presence on Salento church walls are informed in part by studies on marginalia. The figures and texts I have examined are all on the margins, small in scale, skirting the edges of the sacred figures or separated from them by painted or architectural borders. Only a few entirely “westernized” late medieval monuments in the Salento contain painted humans entirely integrated into sacred scenes, at the same scale as the saints or the Virgin and receiving attention from them. As Michael Camille pointed out, the margins are both a physical and a cultural space.<sup>58</sup> Just as most scholars no longer dismiss marginalia as irrel-

evant to the main action or maintain a simplistic dichotomy between sacred and secular, so it is not possible to draw too firm a line between our pictorial or textual humans and the divine figures they flank. Nor is it possible to completely separate those represented humans from the living and even the dead ones nearby because there is visual movement between these groups: the painted eyes facing outward compel acknowledgment (and not, in my view, recognition), and the praying gestures oblige pious spectators to move from noticing the humans to recognizing the divine.

In the same way that marginalia are now understood to lack a single fixed meaning, the so-called donors are iconographically unstable and dependent on regional or even local context. These figures and texts should be evaluated individually and not reflexively assigned to a fixed category. As almost all of their accompanying inscriptions claim, the painted people in the Salento are servants of God or his mother or his saint; at the same time, they served complex social, cultural, and spiritual needs and no doubt had a range of meanings for viewers. In many cases these meanings might be quite far from the conventional notion of “the donor.” If we must, for convenience, refer to the painted figures and texts collectively rather than individually, it is best to use a descriptive term – supplicant, supplication – rather than an interpretive one that, in the absence of corroborating information, may very well be incorrect.

**Illustration credits:** Figs. 1–5, 7–10: L. Safran. – Fig. 6: P. Arthur, Laboratory for Medieval Archaeology, University of Salento (P. Pulli).

57 WRIGHT, *Reinvention of the Portrait Likeness* (cit. n. 27), p. 117.

58 M. CAMILLE, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*, Cambridge, MA 1992, and the excellent review by K. A. SMITH, *Liminal Limning*, in: *Oxford Art Journal*, 17.1, 1994, pp. 92–96.





THE ADVENTURES OF A PROVINCIAL FEMALE FOUNDER:  
GLYKERIA AND THE RHETORIC OF FEMALE WEAKNESS

LEONORA NEVILLE

The story of one of Byzantium's less well known monastic founders, Glykeria, who created a monastery on her estate on the island of Skyros in the early eleventh century, provides a fascinating window into the realities of provincial monastic foundations. The struggles Glykeria and her husband John undertook in order to create an independent monastery also display systems of provincial authority in practice. In addition to its value as a source for provincial power contests, Glykeria's surviving act of donation participates in a tradition of legal rhetoric that denigrates women's ability to make legally sound judgments. This essay will use Glykeria's example to explore this rhetorical tradition and assess its function and impact on the range of actions available to female founders and female legal actors more generally.

Glykeria is known from two documents surviving in the archives of Athos. The first document was written in 1012 and records a donation from Eustratios, a monk of the Great Lavra, to his nephew Athanasios who was the hegoumenos of the monastery of the Theotokos of Bouleuteria. Eustratios gave Athanasios a monastery, church and land on the island of Skyros that had been donated to Eustratios by Glykeria.<sup>1</sup> The second document, written in 1016, is an act of donation of the same monastery, church and

land, from Glykeria to Eustratios in which she annuls a prior donation of the same property to her bishop.<sup>2</sup> So at least four different acts of donation were made for this monastery: Glykeria to Eustratios, Eustratios to Athanasios, Glykeria to her bishop, and Glykeria to Eustratios for a second time.

The story that emerges from the two surviving documents is that in the late tenth century Glykeria and her husband John were childless. They decided to turn their house and their estates in Skyros into a monastery and leave it to their spiritual father Eustratios, a monk of Lavra. The bishop of Skyros opposed their choice to found a monastery and demanded that they donate it to the church. In the course of the dispute the bishop banned the celebration of the liturgy at their monastery and censured those priests who served them. John travelled to Constantinople to ask the help of the patriarch, Nicholas Chrysoberges. Presumably John asked the patriarch to make his monastery a patriarchal foundation, a patriarchal *stauropegion*, which would have removed it from the jurisdiction of the local bishop.<sup>3</sup> Nicholas gave John a *sigillion* and letter, which Glykeria still had years later. The *sigillion* and the letter were written to the bishop of Skopelos, rather than to the bishop of Skyros. While a lacuna impedes certainty, a plausible explanation is that the

1 P. LEMERLE/A. GUILLOU/N. SVORONOS (ed.), *Actes de Lavra, I* (Archives de l'Athos, 5), Paris 1970, no. 16.

2 LEMERLE/GUILLOU/SVORONOS, *Actes de Lavra* (cit. n. 1), no. 20.

3 M. ANGOLD, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261*, Cambridge 1995, pp. 338–345; J. THOMAS, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire*, Washington, DC 1987, pp. 214–218, 238–243.

bishop of Skyros had died and so ecclesiastical control of Skyros was temporarily exercised by the bishop of neighboring Skopelos. This bishop was just as hostile and after the receipt of the patriarchal *sigillion* certain illogical malignant ones, inspired by the devil, burned down the church John and Glykeria had built in the middle of the night. In the midst of these tumults John died, leaving Glykeria alone as a childless widow to continue the fight. Glykeria then made a donation of her monastery to her spiritual father Eustratios. Eustratios in turn donated the property to his nephew Athanasios. His act of donation mentions the travails Glykeria endured in order to donate the property to him.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile the fight over the monastery in Skyros continued. Although the poor preservation of the document makes the details obscure, Glykeria's claim seems have been that while in church the bishop threatened to pierce all of her limbs with some kind of saw. Under this pressure, she annulled her first donation and donated her land to the bishop against her will. Subsequently however she called on the help of Eustratios, who was by then the hegoumenos of Lavra. He sent his ecclesiarch Athanasios to Skyros. In the presence of Lavra's representatives, the island's luminaries, and visiting landowners from Lemnos, Glykeria claimed that the donation she had made to the bishop was invalid, null and void, on the grounds that it had been coerced through violence.<sup>5</sup> She then made

a new donation to Eustratios and to Lavra. We do not know whether the fight in Skyros continued after the representatives of Lavra went home, but the great monastery provided Glykeria with a strong and interested protector.

This story brings up a number of key factors in the functioning of authority in provincial society: the alternation of local coercion and violence with appeals to external authorities; physical movement from the provinces toward the centres of power and back; difficulties in getting that authority to stick once back in a provincial setting; the slight regard for ideas of episcopal jurisdiction or formal chains of authority.<sup>6</sup> In addition Glykeria's story offers particularly valuable information about the abilities of women to exert their authority and make legally binding decisions regarding their property.

The study of this provincial fight is made more intriguing by the preservation of all of our information in texts that participate in deeply ancient legal traditions. Legal documents of the Byzantine era participated in a tradition of legal writing that stretched back many centuries. Byzantine laws and legal theory of course constituted a direct living continuation of Roman law.<sup>7</sup> Greek deeds of conveyance – sales, gifts, bequests – had been written as first-person declarations by the alienator since the first century BCE.<sup>8</sup> Particular clauses of these deeds have clear antecedents in Akkadian deeds of the Old Babylonian peri-

4 LEMERLE/GUILLOU/SVORONOS, *Actes de Lavra* (cit. n. 1), no. 16, pp. 141–144.

5 H. SARADI, On the 'archontike' and 'ekklestiasitike dynasteia' and 'prostasia' in Byzantium with Particular Attention to the Legal Sources: A Study in Social History of Byzantium, in: *Byzantion*, 64, 1994, pp. 69–117, 314–351, at p. 324.

6 On the realities of authority in provincial Byzantium see L. NEVILLE, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society*, 950–1100, Cambridge 2004.

7 M.-T. FÖGEN, Reanimation of Roman Law in the Ninth Century: Remarks on Reasons and Results, in: L. BRUBAKER (ed.), *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?*, Aldershot 1998, pp. 11–22; B. STOLTE, The Social Function of the Law, in: J. HALDON (ed.), *A Social History of Byzantium*, Chichester 2008, pp. 76–91; A. E. LAIOU/D. SIMON (ed.), *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth–Twelfth Centuries*, Washington, DC 1994.

8 The fundamental studies of Byzantine notarial practice are H. SARADI, *Le notariat byzantin du IXe au XVe siècles*, Athens 1992; H. SARADI, *Notai e documenti greci dall'età di Giustiniano al XIX secolo*, I: *Il Sistema Notarile Bizantino (VI–XV secolo)*, Milan 1999. Other useful discussions include: D. SIMON, *Ein spätbyzantinisches Kaufformular*, in: R. FEENSTRA/J. H. A. LOKIN/N. VAN DER WAL (ed.), *Flores Legum*, Groningen 1971, pp. 155–182; F. PRINGSHEIM, *The Greek Law of Sale*, Weimar 1950, *passim* and pp. 109–111; J. BEAUCAMP, *Byzantine Egypt and Imperial Law*, in:

od.<sup>9</sup> This continuity in legal forms and practices means that many of the individual phrases in medieval deeds of conveyance are present because they were required by legal conventions. Notaries constructed texts whose validity and strength they believed derived from their conformity to the principles of Roman law as they understood it.

The preponderance of evidence however indicates that medieval deeds were deeply responsive to individual circumstances. Notaries commonly had templates or formularies to guide their work.<sup>10</sup> Yet while the models may have helped the writers know what sort of thing needed to be said, the documents vary too much for us to think that the authors were copying out clauses mindlessly. The structure of the deeds and the contents of the individual clauses conform to stable legal patterns, but the texts contain enough variation to be certain that they were composed with care for their specific occasions.<sup>11</sup> Even in examples which share many common elements in length, vocabulary and meaning, the precise word choice varies.<sup>12</sup> Each text should be treated

as an individual composition because the writers were working within a living legal tradition that was adaptive and responsive to particular cases.<sup>13</sup>

Late antique writers are known to have imbued their notarial work with a lively sense of drama and novelistic excitement.<sup>14</sup> The influence of late antique rhetorical elaboration on legal education may be part of the explanation for the longer, more flamboyant, deeds of the sixth century and later.<sup>15</sup> A similar sense of narrative drama can be discerned in medieval Greek deeds, such as Glykeria's.

A standard part of a medieval deed of conveyance was a set of clauses in which the alienator expresses free will and denies coercion or any kind of pressure in making the transaction. If the seller could reasonably claim later only to have transferred the property under pressure, then the transaction could be ruled invalid. The clauses expressing free will and renouncing the ability to contest the transaction in the future became increasingly elaborate and detailed through the medieval period.<sup>16</sup> When it came to writing clauses of intention

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R. BAGNALL (ed.), *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300–700*, Cambridge 2007, pp. 271–287; U. YIFTACH-FIRANKO, *Regionalism and Legal Documents: The Case of Oxyrhynchus*, in: H.-A. RUPPRECHT (ed.), *Symposium 2003. Akten der Gesellschaft für Griechische und Hellenistische Rechtsgeschichte*, 17, Vienna 2006, pp. 347–366.

9 Many elements of the first-person “subjective homology” form of deeds of conveyance have close affinities with Aramaic legal forms that participate in ancient Near Eastern legal traditions. I am grateful to Andrew Gross for bringing the antecedents of the Byzantine legal tradition to my attention. A. GROSS, *Continuity and Innovation in the Aramaic Legal Tradition*, Leiden 2008, pp. 20–26, 86–87, 199–200. Phrases indicating that transactions were conducted with volition and joy have a particularly long history: Y. MUFFS/B. LEVINE, *Studies in the Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine*, Leiden 2003, pp. 128–141. See also SARADI, *Il Sistema Notarile Bizantino* (cit. n. 8), pp. 127–166; E. W. TURNER/L. KOENEN/J. F. POMAR (ed.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XXVII*, London 1962, pp. 175–177.

10 SARADI, *Il Sistema Notarile Bizantino* (cit. n. 8), pp. 89–93.

11 SARADI, *Il Sistema Notarile Bizantino* (cit. n. 8), pp. 208–209; H. SARADI-MENDELOVICI, *A Contribution to the Study of the Byzantine Notarial Formulas: The Infirmities of Women and the sc. Velleianum*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 83, 1990, pp. 72–90, at p. 89.

12 For example compare: F. MIKLOSICH/F. MÜLLER (ed.), *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, IV, Vienna 1890, p. 122; J. LEFORT/N. OIKONOMIDES/D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU (ed.), *Actes d'Iviron, I* (*Archives de l'Athos*, 14), Paris 1985, no. 12; N. OIKONOMIDES (ed.), *Actes de Docheiariou*, Paris 1984, no. 42.

13 SIMON, *Ein spätbyzantinisches Kaufformular* (cit. n. 8), p. 176.

14 A. KOVELMAN, *From Logos to Myth: Egyptian Petitions of the 5th–7th Centuries*, in: *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, 28, 1991, p. 135–152.

15 SARADI, *Il Sistema Notarile Bizantino* (cit. n. 8), pp. 125, 202; H. ZILLIACUS, *Zur Abundanz der spätgriechischen Gebrauchssprache* (*Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum*, 41), Helsinki 1967, pp. 18–21.

16 SARADI, *On the 'archontike'* (cit. n. 5), pp. 346–349; SARADI, *Il Sistema Notarile Bizantino* (cit. n. 8), pp. 199–205.

and renunciation for transactions involving women, their womanhood was frequently – but not universally – added to the list of possible reasons for making a bad decision that needed to be explicitly denied. In 897, for example Georgia stated that she donated her property voluntarily, and without any *womanly simplicity*.<sup>17</sup> Womanhood was listed among all the other factors that could cause one to make a bad decision.<sup>18</sup> One text additionally lists *womanly guile* among grounds for overturning a decision.<sup>19</sup> When Manuel Lygaras, his wife and children, sold property in 1301, they all foreswore acting out of womanly simplicity, even though they were not all female.<sup>20</sup> Womanly simplicity and subjection to men are often placed just before the “ordinance Velleianum” in the list of renounced excuses.

The “ordinance Velleianum” refers to the Roman *Senatusconsultum Velleianum* issued sometime between 41 and 65 CE, which prohibited women from posting security for others.<sup>21</sup> The references to this first century senatorial decree in late medieval documents highlight the continuities in legal rhetoric over great stretches of time. The continuities in terminology can mask real changes in usage and perceptions of the underlying concepts. The precision of the *Senatusconsul-*

*tum Velleianum*, which only forbade women to use their property as security for others, loosened even in antiquity so that the decree was seen as restricting women’s transactions more generally.<sup>22</sup> In the Justinianic era the ordinance was seen as having been intended to protect women from their own weakness, and consequently was applied in circumstances beyond its original purview. By the medieval period “the ancient principle of the decree had been forgotten” and it appears to have been used arbitrarily according to the opinion of the notary.<sup>23</sup>

The legal discourse of “womanly weakness” seems to have originated as a rationalization for the practice of the *perpetua tutela* (lifelong financial guardianship) of women by a male member of her family.<sup>24</sup> In the oldest stratum of Roman law *perpetua tutela* protected not weak women, but their fathers’ male heirs who stood to be defrauded by women who sought to transfer property to their children, and hence to their husbands’ families.<sup>25</sup> The *ancient* Roman prejudice was that women were both greedy and good with money.<sup>26</sup> The discourse of female weakness, and the perceived need to protect women on account of their infirmity, arose in the late republican period at a time when laws regarding women’s tu-

17 LEMERLE / GUILLOU / SVORONOS, Actes de Lavra (cit. n. 1), no. 1, lines 9–11. ἐκουσια ἡμῶν τῇ γνώμῃ (καὶ) αὐτοπροέρετω βουλῆσει καὶ οὐκ εκ τηνο(ς) ἀνάγκ(ης) ἢ δολ(ου) ἢ φόβου ἢ βίας ἢ ἀπατης ἢ περιστάσεο(ς) ἢ συνάρπαγ(ῆς) ἢ δελεασμῶ ἢ εισωδιάσμῶ ἢ χλεύῃ ἢ γυνε(κός) ἀπλώτ(η)τ(ι) ἀλλοῦ(δὲ) τῶν ἀλλ(ων) ἀπάντ(ων) τ(ῶν) τ(οῖς) νόμ(οις) ἢ τοῖς ἱεροῖς κανόνσιν ἀπότ(η)ραμένων, ...

18 For complete lists of published deeds employing terminology of female weakness and deeds involving women that omit this terminology see SARADI-MENDELOVICI, Contribution (cit. n. 11), pp. 83–88. Some examples: OIKONOMIDES, Actes de Docheiariou (cit. n. 12), no. 3, line 5; J. BOMPAIRE et al. (ed.), Actes de Vatopédi, I (Archives de l’Athos, 21), Paris 2001, no. 65, line 30; P. LEMERLE (ed.), Actes de Lavra, II (Archives de l’Athos, 8), Paris 1977, no. 88, line 13.

19 OIKONOMIDES, Actes de Docheiariou (cit. n. 12), no. 3, line 61.

20 J. LEFORT (ed.), Actes d’Esphigmenou (Archives de l’Athos, 6), Paris 1973, no. 9, line 4.

21 SARADI-MENDELOVICI, Contribution (cit. n. 11), p. 74.

22 SARADI-MENDELOVICI, Contribution (cit. n. 11), p. 75.

23 SARADI-MENDELOVICI, Contribution (cit. n. 11), p. 89.

24 S. DIXON, *Infirmas Sexus: Womanly Weakness in Roman Law*, in: Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis, 52, 1984, pp. 343–371.

25 DIXON, *Infirmas Sexus* (cit. n. 24), p. 345–350; S. DIXON, *Reading Roman Women: Sources, Genres, and Real Life*, London 2001, p. 75.

26 DIXON, *Infirmas Sexus* (cit. n. 24), pp. 344, 367.

relage were routinely circumvented and women commonly managed their own estates and passed them to their children.<sup>27</sup> As the social and financial practices that gave rise to the *perpetua tutela* became ever more distant and unfamiliar, the vestigial laws were explained through the appeal to the weakness of women, first in forensic oratory and only in the late antique period in law and legal commentary.<sup>28</sup>

By the medieval period the various phrases referring to female incapacity functioned together as a blanket renunciation of excuses based on female gender. Legal experts may well have understood the etymologies and traditions of legal theory behind these terms. Expert opinion notwithstanding, no legal training was required for participants in legal transactions to understand that the phrase meant that a woman was renouncing the ability to claim fraud based on being an infirm female. Regardless of the precise legal history of the phrases, the social logic was that the woman promised she would not claim that she had been defrauded because of some weakness in her gender.

By the fourteenth century clauses about female incapacity commonly were expanded to include a new renunciation of “subjection to men.”<sup>29</sup> Women forswore future objections to the transaction on the basis of being either simple women or subject to male authority. This phrase has no precedent in classical Roman law, and is rather a rhetorical elaboration of the general idea of female helplessness and weakness. This inno-

vation may indicate that notaries were less concerned with historical legal precision, and certainly reflects the ever-increasing elaboration of medieval notarial documents. The renunciation of the right to object on the basis of being deferential to men leads to a rhetorically pleasing three-part phrase; womanly simplicity, masculine subjection and Velleian doctrine.<sup>30</sup>

The repetition of denials that women acted out of “womanly simplicity” indicated to everyone in the audience that it was possible to challenge a donation or testament on those grounds. Irrespective of formal legal training, anyone who witnessed a transaction involving a woman would have learned that women had certain protections enshrined in law based on the notion that women were naturally vulnerable. As one might expect, in some cases women did appeal to the notion of female weakness to “defraud the buyer.”<sup>31</sup> Female infirmity could become “a loophole in cases in which, as it seems, they had changed their minds.”<sup>32</sup>

Given the existence of this loophole, how did women make their transactions binding when their status as women was a just cause for dissolving their agreements? A step toward greater understanding can be made when the performative contexts of the documents’ creation is appreciated. These texts were both props and scripts in a ritual interaction which constituted the sale. The document is not the sale, but one element of the process of property transfer. The ownership of the property was transformed through all

27 DIXON, *Infirmis Sexus* (cit. n. 24), pp. 353–370; J. BEAUCAMP, *Le statut de la femme à Byzance, 4e–7e siècle, I. Le droit impérial*, Paris 1990, pp. 11–27; idem, *Le statut de la femme à Byzance, 4e–7e siècle, II. Les pratiques sociales*, Paris 1992, pp. 45–50.

28 DIXON, *Infirmis Sexus* (cit. n. 24), p. 370.

29 SARADI-MENDELOVICI, *Contribution* (cit. n. 11), pp. 84–86.

30 Note the alliteration and rhythmic qualities of the new clause: τῆ γυναικεία ἀπλότῃ, τῆ ἀνδρῶ ὑπεξουσιότητι (καὶ) τῶ βελιανείῳ δόγματι, M. ŽIVOJINOVIĆ / V. KRAVARI / C. GIROS (ed.), *Actes de Chilandar, I* (Archives de l’Athos, 20), Paris 1998, pp. 193–195, line 56, D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU (ed.), *Actes de Xenophon* (Archives de l’Athos, 15), Paris 1986, no. 8, lines 38–50: ...ἰδία δὲ ἐγὼ ἢ Ξένη τῆ γυναικεία ἀπλότῃ, τῆ ἀνδρῶ ὑπεξουσιότητ(ι)τ(ι) καὶ τῶ βελιανείῳ δόγματι, ...

31 SARADI-MENDELOVICI, *Contribution* (cit. n. 11), p. 82.

32 SARADI-MENDELOVICI, *Contribution* (cit. n. 11), p. 82.

the elements of the transaction: the whole process of assembling parties and witnesses, invocations of emperors and God, pronouncing certain words, writing those words, describing boundaries, handing money from one party to another – while saying aloud that the money is being handed over – uttering promises for the future and curses against transgressors, moving forward in order of rank to sign and cross the text. As in a marriage ceremony, the words uttered during the sale have a transformative meaning in the context of the performance that transcends their semantic content.<sup>33</sup> The documents surviving are records of transactions, but also scripts and props in performances that enacted the transactions.<sup>34</sup> When the documents describe actions – *I take these coins from your hand* for example – they are further functioning as a script for a drama.

We obviously do not know if the words the texts claim were spoken were actually the words said, but the conceit is that the document is a record of a spoken and physically acted-out transaction. Standard notarial practice would have been to read the document aloud.<sup>35</sup> The normal process of composition of a medieval text was oral.<sup>36</sup> Many of our documents have a wordplay that is essentially oral. Rhythmic and euphonic patterns are established that give the long clauses power as incantations that far exceeds their semantic content. A phrase found in several renunciation clauses, *τῆ περιγραφῆ καὶ παραγραφῆ τῆ ἐγγράφῃ καὶ ἀγράφῃ*, roughly translated as *forgery and special pleas, promises in writing and unwritten*, has its power, not so much in the mean-

ing of those words as in the repetitive euphony of hearing the root *γράφω* with four different prefixes separated with a steady alternation of *τέ*'s and *καὶ*'s. While dreary to read, these texts would sparkle in an oral performance.

The semantic redundancy of the long clauses created strong, powerfully worded declarations for key participants in the transactions; it gave them good speeches. The words of the declarations were rhetorically dramatic and had meaning in the performance beyond their sense content. The continual lengthening of the legal forms through the Byzantine centuries indicates that some benefit was gained by having these performances be full. One simple explanation is that the drama was satisfying. No one would want to give a less elaborate performance than the one everyone had heard last time. All the participants in the transaction were engaged in “participatory literacy” which was inherently empowering as medieval literacy was “a technology of power.”<sup>37</sup> The witnesses assembled were the most important people the participants could gather and their assembly demonstrated the extent of the participants’ effective network. It would be better not to send them home without a good show.

Additionally, strong rhetoric made for stronger performances that may have felt more permanent. The elaboration of the ritual of exchange may reflect anxiety about making the stated decisions permanent. Our surviving records provide significant indications of dispute regarding the transfer of land. People did try to overturn their

33 For an introduction to performance as an analytic category with bibliography see C. BELL, *Performance*, in: M. TAYLOR (ed.), *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, Chicago 1998, pp. 205–224.

34 For an insightful discussion of similar texts see P. GEARY, *Land, Language and Memory in Europe 700–1100*, in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 9, 1999, pp. 169–184.

35 SARADI, *Le notariat* (cit. n. 8), pp. 171–172.

36 GEARY, *Land, Language and Memory* (cit. n. 34), p. 174.

37 J. SMITH, *Europe after Rome: A New Cultural History 500–1000*, Oxford 2005, pp. 15, 44–46. On medieval literacy see R. MCKITTERICK, *The Carolingians and the Written Word*, Cambridge 1989; R. MCKITTERICK, *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, Cambridge 1990; N. EVERETT, *Literacy in Lombard Italy, c. 568–774*, Cambridge 2003.

own agreements.<sup>38</sup> The reactive nature of Byzantine government, especially in the provinces, meant that the process of sale and purchase was essentially unregulated.<sup>39</sup> Part of the elaboration of the clauses of renunciation of future legal action may have been an effort to make the transactions more difficult and more embarrassing to annul later.

The emphasis on the aural qualities and rhetorical strengths of the deeds is not to deny that legal experts would have known the significance of the legal distinctions indicated by the particular words, or that those distinctions had a role in the legality of the document. The level of meaning open to those with specialized legal education was complemented by more immediately experiential meanings open to all participants and witnesses of the transaction. The perceptions and understandings of all the players involved in a community dispute were significant, particularly in a setting such as the Byzantine provinces in which the legal document was but one element of a process of dispute that frequently included intimidation, physical violence, arson, and threat of denunciation to imperial authorities who were otherwise uninterested in regulating provincial squabbles.

Appreciation of the role of the legal documents within a transformative performance goes some way to explain how women could be party to legal transactions although “womanly simplicity” was a cause for annulling a transaction. Plenty of our surviving acts included

women as central participants. The key that allowed women to make legal transactions may have been that gender is performed.<sup>40</sup> The sheer act of participation in drawing up a written document and entering into a legal transaction was masculine gendered activity. All the women who undertook legal transactions were therefore performing masculinity. Since women engaged in legal activity were performing masculine actions they explicitly claimed **not** to act out of womanly simplicity. Women could make binding agreements when they acted like rational men rather than like simple women, hence they needed to forswear “womanly simplicity” in their transactions.

Returning to Glykeria, in her final act of donation to Eustratios in 1016, she rhetorically performs female gender, in an almost exaggerated form. In her first-person narrative of her travails, Glykeria appeals to her own female helplessness and weakness. In her narrative she endeavors to elicit sympathy by depicting herself as a helpless, childless widow struggling against oppressive tyrannical powers.<sup>41</sup> The vocabulary of her story clearly invokes the constraint, difficulties, tyrannies, injustices, and indeed, the womanly simplicity, that were routinely denied as having influenced a decision to donate or sell property. Glykeria can be seen as having annulled her donation on the formal grounds of coercion and violence.<sup>42</sup> Yet the rhetorical portrayal of her as a weak and helpless woman was a key to presenting such a powerful and wealthy landowner as a

38 SARADI, On the ‘archontike’ (cit. n. 5), p. 345. In donating his property to Lavra for all eternity, Jacob Kalaphatos explained that he had previously donated the land to another monastery for eternity, but he had changed his mind after a fight with the superior. LEMERLE/GUILLOU/SVORONOS, Actes de Lavra (cit. n. 1), no. 34. The regulations issued by Constantine Monomachos for the monasteries on Mt Athos addressed the issue of superiors who sign agreements before witnesses but later change their minds and annul the agreements, BMFD, I, p. 288.

39 NEVILLE, Authority (cit. n. 6), pp. 99–135.

40 For the basic bibliography see D. SMYTHE, Gender, in: J. HARRIS (ed.), *Palgrave Advances in Byzantine History*, New York 2005.

41 LEMERLE/GUILLOU/SVORONOS, Actes de Lavra (cit. n. 1), no. 20, line 35: Ἐν τούτοις οὖν τοῦ ἐμοῦ τελευτήσαντο(ς) [συμβίου] (καὶ) γήρα καὶ ἀπαις καταλιφθεῖσα τί τῶν ἀνιερώων καὶ πολλῶν θρήνων ἀξίων [.....] [.....] ἢ ταλαίπωρο(ς) οὐχ ὑπέειργν.

42 SARADI, On the ‘archontike’ (cit. n. 5), p. 324.



victim of coercion. Our text is so badly damaged that we have more a penumbra of vocabulary than clear sentences, but nearly all the key words occurring in the clauses renouncing coercion are used in the description of Glykeria's troubles.<sup>43</sup> Glykeria's status as a widow – an unprotected woman – was central in portraying her as unable to resist pressure from her bishop.

Here the traditional gendered rhetoric of the legal texts is manipulated to make a case for annulling Glykeria's previous sworn statement. Glykeria succeeded in changing her donation in part by appealing to her female weakness to overturn her earlier act. Glykeria's final donation to Lavra includes many elements of the standard free-will clause. She acts *freely and un-compelled and without any necessity or tyranny, but rather with all enthusiasm and choosing with my whole heart*.<sup>44</sup> But significantly she does not renounce "womanly simplicity". In Glykeria's donation she performs a weak woman whose sworn statement was invalid because of her female vulnerability in the face of pressure.

The circumstances of her fight indicate that much of Glykeria's weakness was an act. The first witness to sign the document was Andrew Pappadopoulos, an *oikodespotes* from Lemnos, fol-

lowed by two *spatharokandidatoi*, several other landowners, the *archon* of Skyros and another landowner from Lemnos. Traveling from the island of Lemnos to Skyros was not trivial and the presence of two landowners from another island as well as several highly-titled local individuals speaks to Glykeria's real influence and strength. At stake in Glykeria's fight was not only the valuable asset of the estate but the principle of episcopal jurisdiction. The bishop stood to be publicly disempowered by having his canonical rights ignored by prominent members of the island community.

The gendered rhetoric – both the standard attempts not to act like women and Glykeria's exaggerated female helplessness – can be better understood when the texts are considered as performative documents. Glykeria's performance of female helplessness was but one act in a prolonged struggle, most of which was not recorded at any time. The two documents remaining are not a history of the event but props in an on-going fight. Glykeria's ostensible helplessness exhorted the men of her community to care for and protect her. Her posturing weakness gave them the opportunity to perform the highly positive role of helper and defender of the poor.

43 LEMERLE / GUILLOU / SVORONOS, Actes de Lavra (cit. n. 1), no. 20, lines 36–50: Ἴνα γὰρ τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα διὰ τὸ πλήθο(ς) ἄσσω ἐν [±15] ... .. θεῖον θυσιαστήριον εἰσελθὼν ὁ ἄ[... ..] τοῦ βήματος(ς) ἄνωθ(εν) ἐπὶ τοσοῦτ(ον) τῷ [±15] [±15] λεγομέν(ον) πριονιστή... .. ἔτυχε τότε.. ὀρ(ῶν) πάντα μου διατρήσαι τὰ μέλη [±15][±18] ἄλλα (καὶ) αὐτὰ πάντα καὶ τα... .. τησαμένη τὸν πν(ευματ)ικὸν καὶ [±15] [.....] καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν (καὶ) τὸ παρ' ἐμοῦ γενόμε(εν) (ον) κατέλιπ[ον] μοναστ(ή)ρ(ιον) μετημφιασάμην [±15] ὀνομα καὶ ἡξιώθην τέκνον αὐτοῦ γενέσθαι καὶ σώμα τ(ῆς) σ[ὺν] αὐτῷ ἀδελφότη(η)τ(ος). Ἀλλὰ τοῦ [±12] ... .. τοῦ προδηλωθ(έν)τ(ος) ἐπισκόπ(ου) γεγεννημένου ἀνέστ[η] ἕτερο(ς) τὰ ἐκείνω ἀπολειφθέντα ἀναπληρ[ῶσαι] ... .. τευόμε(εν)ο(ς) ὥστε ἄκουσάν με καὶ μὴ βουλομένην καὶ τυ[ραν]νικ(ῶς) καὶ [±15] [±10] τοῦ ἐπισκ(ό)που τ(ῆν) ἐμὴν ὑπόστα[σιν] προ[ο]σχυρῶσαι καὶ ταῦτα ἐποιούσιν ἀμφοτέρ(ε)ρ(α) μὴ ἐθ[έλ]ουσα [±28] ἐπιστάμ(εν)οι, μήτε τὸ τυρανν(ικὸν) εὐλαβοῦμ(εν)οι μήτε [±12] ... .. ἔχοντες μὴ τι δε(ον)? εἰ μὴ τι ἄλλο τὸ οἰ(ων)οῦν τ(ῆς) ἐπισκοπ[ῆς] ±25] ... .. χαρακτηρ καὶ εἰκὼν ἀρετ(ῆς) πᾶσι Χριστιανοῖς παρ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ καὶ τῶν τούτου μαθητ(ῶν) ... .. εἰδὼς τὰ τῶν καρδιῶν ἐκάστου ἐνθύμια, εἰδὼς τ(ῆν) αἰτίαν δι' ἣν μοναστήριον ... .. γενέσθ(αι) ἄπρακτα καὶ ἀνωφελῆ καὶ ἀνίσχυρα πάντα τὰ τῶν ἀμφοτέρ(ε)ρ(ων) ἐπιτηδεύματα ἐπεξήργασατο (καὶ) τὴν βουλὴν καὶ θέλησιν ἣν μετὰ τοῦ ἀνδρός μ(ου) ἐχουσα δια σπουδῆς ἐπιποιούμην πληρῶσαι ὡς δυνατ(όν) ἐστίν.

44 LEMERLE / GUILLOU / SVORONOS, Actes de Lavra (cit. n. 1), no. 20, lines 7–8: τίθημι [(καὶ)] ποιῶ ἐκουσί(ως) (καὶ) ἀβιάστ(ως) (καὶ) δίχα πάσης ἀνάγκ(ης) ἢ τυραννίδ(ος), μᾶλλ(ον) μὲν οὖν συνπροθυμ(ία) πάσῃ [(καὶ) ὄλο]ψύχῳ προθέσει, ...

When emperors took on this role, they did so in clear imitation of God.<sup>45</sup>

Glykeria's story challenges us to reflect on the function of written documents in Byzantine society. It appears that, while texts and literacy were highly prized and acts of writing and written texts were significant and treasured in Byzantine culture, we should be highly cautious about using the surviving texts as mirrors of past events.<sup>46</sup> However elaborate the statements of free will in a written document, the sentiments expressed could be denied later on the grounds that the participants had acted under duress.<sup>47</sup> Presumably Glykeria's donation to her bishop followed the standard form and so had all the usual attestations of free will. When another widow, Kalida, sold her property, she used a fairly standard clause of intent, but unusually explained that the reason she needed cash was so that she could ransom her captured son.<sup>48</sup> Kalida's description of her necessity at the moment of the sale was probably intended to make it more difficult for her to later annul the sale on the grounds that she had not acted out of free will. Making the seller's script long and elaborate made it rhetorically stronger, but it could never actually guarantee that the participant in reality believed and thought the things he or she was asked to say. Performers could be actors. Glykeria, like Kalida, could say at the moment of the transaction that she was selling her land of her own free will without force, necessity, violence or

compulsion, but if she really was subject to force, necessity, violence or compulsion what else would she say? This fundamental weakness of the document – that it could never lose its essential pretence and speak to inner truth – may have contributed to the continual growth of the rhetoric. Rhetorically elaborate performances were stronger than plain ones and so writers continually tried to go beyond the normal expressions of will to create a binding expression of true will.

These limitations on the binding power of the semantic content of the texts do not mean that the texts were unimportant. They were necessary as props in the moment they were created and enacted and in subsequent contexts they took on new roles. Texts can have all sorts of significance beyond what the words say. While whether the people who enacted the acts of sale really in their inward minds thought the things they pronounced at the moment the document was read was always open to doubt, the documents bore witness that they had once performed those sentiments in public. Documents were highly significant objects in disputes in part because sometimes the information in documents superseded all oral testimony and carried the day.<sup>49</sup> Apart from issues of what people had said, the texts subsequently became objects testifying to the antiquity and significance of a household's possessions. In particular within the deeply and continuously classicizing culture of Byzantium, texts could have significance as markers of continuity with ancient literate habits.<sup>50</sup> Although the

45 On the emperors imitating God as defenders of the downtrodden see R. MORRIS, *The Powerful and Poor in Tenth-Century Byzantium: Law and Reality*, in: *Past and Present*, 73, 1976, pp. 3–27. On the Byzantine practice of patterning behavior on ideal types of relationships see NEVILLE, *Authority* (cit. n. 6), pp. 66–85.

46 Evidence that documents were treasured is found in the instructions to the sacristan of the Kecharitomenē monastery to preserve and guard the monastery's records, BMFD, II, p. 681. I thank Alice-Mary Talbot for this reference.

47 SARADI, *On the 'archontike'* (cit. n. 5), p. 345: "Of course clauses of warranty could not secure the transactions if, in case of contestation of the validity of the document, it could be demonstrated in the tribunal that *dynasteia* or some other circumstance, which was contrary to the stipulations of the law, was involved."

48 LEFORT/OIKONOMIDES/PAPACHRYSSANTHOU, *Actes d'Ivion* (cit. n. 12), no. 16.

49 NEVILLE, *Authority* (cit. n. 6), pp. 139–142.

50 The cultural necessity of assessing taxation on the basis of written registers drove the imperial administration to

content of legal documents may have been decisive in some cases, these texts would have been deeply important even if they did not have much significance as records of what happened in the

past.<sup>51</sup> Glykeria's example at least pushes us to consider the possibility that some of the performances recorded in our legal texts may have been quite disingenuous.

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continue to produce and carry tax register books whose information was so inconsistent and inexact as to be of little or no practical record-keeping utility. The difficult process of assessing taxation was eased by the presence of an authoritative text that may or may not have contained relevant information about who owed what, L. NEVILLE, *Information, Ceremony and Power in Byzantine Fiscal Registers: Varieties of Function in the Cadaster of Thebes*, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 25, 2001, pp. 20–43.

51 On the emergence of the record-keeping function of documents the classic treatment is M. T. CLANCHY, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066–1307*, Cambridge 1993.

## LA RHÉTORIQUE AU SECOURS DU PATRIMOINE: PSELLOS, LES IMPÉRATRICES ET LES MONASTÈRES

ERIC LIMOUSIN

Depuis quelques années, les études pselliennes connaissent un renouveau lié en grande partie au travail des éditeurs qui mettent à la disposition des chercheurs les œuvres de Michel Psellos. Cela permet de dépasser la « simple » étude de la *Chronographie*, l'œuvre majeure, et de la comparer avec les autres écrits de Psellos afin de mieux comprendre son œuvre.<sup>1</sup> Depuis quelques temps, les chercheurs se sont intéressés aux œuvres dites mineures comme la correspondance, les œuvres rhétoriques, en attendant la poésie et les œuvres didactiques. Pour les discours, longtemps dispersés, quatre volumes regroupent toute la production psellienne.<sup>2</sup>

La tradition a conservé de nombreux discours écrits par Michel Psellos pour les empereurs de Constantin IX Monomaque à Michel VII Doukas. Au total on peut repérer 24 discours entre Constantin IX Monomaque et Michel VII Doukas.<sup>3</sup>

Cette production peut fournir la matière à une série d'études mettant en parallèle la *Chronographie* et les discours. Il est indispensable de bien connaître les questions littéraires, les techniques de la rhétorique employées par Psellos telle que la langue qu'il utilise est volontairement obscure et difficile à traduire. Néanmoins, les spécialistes ne doivent pas renoncer et doivent fournir aux chercheurs des traductions, mêmes imparfaites, que la

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- 1 On peut consulter entre autres exemples: F. LAURITZEN, Psellos and the Nazireans, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 64–65, 2006–2007, p. 359–364; F. LAURITZEN, Christopher of Mytilene's Parody of the Haughty Mauroπους, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 100, 2007, p. 125–132; J. N. LJUBARSKIJ, Some Notes on the Newly Discovered Historical Works by Psellos, in: J. S. LANGDON et al. (éd.), *To Hellenikon, Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis Jr.*, I, New Rochelle/New York 1993, p. 213–228.
  - 2 Les discours de Psellos sont donc désormais disponibles dans les éditions suivantes: PSELLOS, *Orationes Panegyricae*, éd. G. T. DENNIS, Stuttgart/Leipzig 1994, p. 214 (désormais PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.*); PSELLOS, *Orationes Minora*, éd. A. R. LITTLEWOOD, Leipzig 1985, p. 201 (désormais PSELLOS, *Or. Min.*). On trouve des éléments de comparaison dans les autres discours regroupés dans PSELLOS, *Orationes forenses et acta*, éd. G. T. DENNIS, Stuttgart/Leipzig 1994, p. 203; PSELLOS, *Orationes hagiographicae*, éd. E. A. FISHER, Stuttgart/Leipzig 1994, p. 382. De plus, avec le répertoire des œuvres de Michel Psellos dans P. MOORE, *Iter Psellianum*, Toronto 2005, nous disposons d'un outil de travail formidable. Il implique cependant une uniformisation des références et des citations parfois difficile à mettre en œuvre (Quand cela ne nuit pas à la lecture, sont indiquées entre crochets les références dans *Iter Psellianum*).
  - 3 Nous avons ajouté dans le tableau les lettres adressées aux empereurs. Comme on le verra par la suite, il est difficile d'étudier les deux exercices rhétoriques de manière séparée, ainsi la lettre PSELLOS, KD II, n°188, à Michel VII Doukas est désormais considérée comme un discours (PSELLOS, *Or. Min.*, n°32 = [ORA.32]). Elle a été étudiée par G. DAGRON, Psellos épigraphiste, in: C. MANGO/O. PRITSAK (éd.), *Okeanos. Essays Presented to Ihor Ševčenko on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students* (Harvard Ukrainian Studies, 7), Cambridge, MA 1984, p. 117–124, et plus récemment par C. ANGELIDI, Observing, Describing and Interpreting: Michael Psellos on Works of Ancient Art, in: *Νέα Πώμη*; Rivista di ricerca bizantinistica, 2 = *Ἀμπελοκήπιον*: Studi di amici e colleghi in onore di Vera von Falkenhausen, Rome 2005, p. 227–242.

	Nb	Discours	Nb	Lettres
Constantin IX Monomaque	10	PSELLOS, <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; 7; 8; 9; 10	2	MB V, n°115, n°155
Théodora	2	PSELLOS, <i>Or. Min.</i> n°1; PSELLOS, <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°11		
Isaac Ier Comnène			6	KD II, n°156, n°215; MB V, n°6, n°69, n°81, n°161
Constantin X Doukas	3	PSELLOS, <i>Or. Min.</i> n°4 et 5; PSELLOS, <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°14 (l'attribution d' <i>Or. Min.</i> n°4 à Constantin X est possible mais pas certaine)	5	KD II, n°29; MB V, n°48, n°52, n°74, n°104
Eudocie	1	PSELLOS, <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°12	5	G n°35; KD II, n°271, n°272; MB V, n°53, n°132
Romain IV Diogénès	5	PSELLOS, <i>Or. Min.</i> n°2; PSELLOS, <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°18, 19, 20, 21	3	KD II, n°5; MB V, n°3, n°82
Michel VII Doukas	3	PSELLOS, <i>Or. Min.</i> n°3 et 32; PSELLOS, <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°13		
Total	24		21	

discussion scientifique pourra améliorer sans cesse.<sup>4</sup> Tout travail sur Psellos doit débiter par l'étude de la langue, il est nécessaire de chercher les références, parfois les modèles et les inspirations. Malheureusement, cet aspect nécessite de vrais spécialistes, ici au mieux, on pourra trouver quelques références croisées entre les différentes œuvres de Michel Psellos. Ensuite, les travaux doivent dépasser cette nécessaire étude philologique et doivent replacer les textes pselliens dans leur contexte littéraire, c'est-à-dire tenter de trouver les liens entre eux, chercher les passerelles entre les œuvres rhétoriques et la *Chronographie* par exemple. Il faut également les étudier dans le contexte historique lié à leur rédaction. A cet égard, le travail pionnier de Jacques Lefort sur « trois discours de Jean Mauropous » a été exemplaire car en travaillant à partir du contexte des discours, il a permis une meilleure compréhension du texte.<sup>5</sup> Modestement, c'est l'objectif de cet article : étudier les discours de Psellos prononcés en l'honneur des impératrices.

Personnage incontournable de la vie intellectuelle et politique de Constantinople au XIe siècle, Michel Psellos poursuit un objectif politique en prononçant ses discours dans le monde bien particulier du palais, un monde souvent décrit dans la *Chronographie*, mais qui reste mal connu. Comme tous les rhéteurs, il utilise ses discours pour améliorer sa situation dans le monde clos de la cour. Cette situation est assez bien connue pour la fin du XIe siècle et le début du XIIe siècle. Par exemple, les études sur Théophylacte d'Ochrida ont permis de mieux connaître la place de la rhétorique à la cour byzantine.<sup>6</sup> Soutenu par Marie d'Alanie et peut-être par Irène Doukaina, Théophylacte d'Ochrida a été chargé de prononcer le discours devant l'empereur, le 6 janvier, à l'occasion de l'Epiphanie. On dispose d'un discours de forme classique, qui correspond à un travail d'école comme le montre le fait qu'il cède la parole à un de ses élèves pour conclure.<sup>7</sup> Ce modèle achevé à l'époque d'Alexis Ier Com-

4 Il est essentiel pour les byzantinistes de proposer dans la mesure du possible des traductions des textes. En effet, elles seules permettent une discussion sur la compréhension que nous avons de ces textes. Il est parfois plus facile de laisser un peu de grec dans nos publications pour ne pas avoir à préciser le sens que l'on donne à ce mot.

5 J. LEFORT, Rhétorique et politique : trois discours de Jean Mauropous en 1047, in : Travaux et Mémoires, 6, 1976, p. 265-303.

6 Il est parfois difficile de s'y retrouver dans les types de discours, art. « Basilikos logos », ODB, I, p. 266.

7 THÉOPHYLACTE D'OCHRIDA, *Discours, traités, poésies*, éd. et tr. P. GAUTIER, Thessalonique 1980, n°5, p. 243, 10-14, comm. p. 68-69.

nène n'est probablement encore qu'une ébauche au milieu du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, à l'époque de Michel Psellos. Selon Paul Gautier,<sup>8</sup> le texte l'*Or. Pan.* n°6 est un discours de l'Épiphanie puisqu'il termine sur le fait qu'il a *acquitté une contribution annuelle et [qu'il] l'a restituée par un paiement en paroles.*<sup>9</sup> De même, Psellos mentionne qu'il obéit à une demande dans le prologue de l'*Or. Pan.* n°1.<sup>10</sup> Par conséquent, si cette pratique est bien attestée à partir du dernier quart du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, elle n'est pas encore systématique dans les années 1040 à 1060, période de la grande activité rhétorique de Psellos.

C'est pour cette raison que l'on ne trouve pas de remarques de ce type dans les discours étudiés ici. À l'extrême rigueur dans l'*Or. Min.* n°1, Psellos mentionne qu'il agit et parle à la demande de l'impératrice devant un collège d'auditeurs.<sup>11</sup> De même dans l'*Or. Pan.* n°11, il indique qu'il s'agit d'une commande d'un discours de circonstances qui ne s'appuie pas sur une manifestation habituelle mais qui célèbre un événement précis ou d'une situation unique.<sup>12</sup> Il se rapproche donc de l'exemple étudié par Jacques Lefort. Ainsi, s'il est net que l'*Or. Pan.* n°11 est prononcé à la suite d'une révolte, il sert également de prétexte

à un discours courtois sur les qualités de l'impératrice. De même Michel Psellos détourne la conclusion de l'*Or. Min.* n°1 pour faire la description des différents conseillers de l'impératrice en mettant en avant ses propres qualités. L'utilisation personnelle de ses œuvres rhétoriques par Michel Psellos lui-même, permet de les rapprocher des lettres qu'il envoie aux empereurs et impératrices.

Il est indispensable de passer par la description précise de écrits de Michel Psellos adressés aux impératrices. En effet, il utilise sciemment la rhétorique pour faire triompher son point de vue. Cependant, ses raisons ne deviennent claires que si le corpus des textes est bien connu et analysé. Ce n'est qu'ensuite que l'on peut soulever le voile de la rhétorique pour mettre au jour les motivations réelles de Michel Psellos.

Le tableau ci-dessous tente de répertorier toutes les œuvres rhétoriques qui mettent en scène les impératrices, cela va de la simple citation au discours dédié à l'une de ces femmes qui dominent la vie politique et mondaine de Constantinople de 1043 à 1071.

#### LES TEXTES DE PSELLOS CONCERNANT LES IMPÉRATRICES<sup>13, 14</sup>

Dans toute l'œuvre de Michel Psellos, on ne trouve pas de discours adressé à Zoé seule. La première raison est pratique: en effet, Psellos est probablement trop jeune pour déjà jouer un rôle de premier plan dans le palais. Comme il le ra-

conte lui-même, ce n'est qu'à partir des années 1042–1045 que le groupe auquel il appartient avec Jean Xiphilin et surtout Jean Mauropous et Constantin Leichoudès commence à avoir de l'influence dans la vie du palais.<sup>14</sup> La seconde

8 P. GAUTIER, *Basilikoi logoi* inédits de Michel Psellos, in: *Siculorum Gymnasium*, 33, 1980, p. 722–723.

9 PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°6, p. 101,341–343: ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ μὲν ἡ ἐτή[σιος ἀ]ποπεπλήρωται εἰσφορὰ καὶ τὸ λογικὸν τοῦτο ἀποδέδοται ὀφλημα.

10 PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°1, p. 1–2,1–19.

11 PSELLOS, *Or. Min.* (cit. note 2), n°1, p. 1,3–5: Ἡ τῶν ἀρετῶν βασιλὶς μετὰ τῆς τῶν ὠρῶν βασιλίδος ἀνωθεν ἡμῖν συνηθῶς καὶ κατὰ προθεσίμιαν ἐφέστηκεν, ὃ σῦλλογος ἱερὸς ἐμοὶ καὶ συνειλεγμένος θεῶ.

12 PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°11, p. 120,54–61: Il s'agit ici d'une révolte matée par l'impératrice qui peut correspondre à celle de N. Bryennios en janvier–février 1055, J.-CL. CHEYNET, *Pouvoirs et contestations à Byzance* (963–1210), Paris 1990, p. 66, fiche n°76.

13 Sont indiqués les références dans la Bibliotheca Teubneriana, dans l'édition de Gautier (G) et les références dans l'*Iter Psellianum* entre crochets.

14 PSELLOS, *Chronographie*, I, 4–IV, p. 55,1–3; 4–XII, p. 59,1–6; 5–III, p. 87,1–3 etc.

Impératrice	Dédicace	Lettre	Citation dans les discours
Zoé <sup>15</sup> (avril–juillet 1042)			1043 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°2 (G1; [ORA.54]) 1048/50 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°5 (G2; [ORA.57]) 1048/50 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°6 (G3; [ORA.58]) 1051/54 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°7 (G4; [ORA.59]) 1054 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°4 (G6; [ORA.56]) 1054 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°1 (G7; [ORA.53])
Théodora (avril–juillet 1042 et janv. 1055–août 1056)	1055/6 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°11 (G8; [ORA.62]) 1056 <i>Or. Min.</i> n°1; [ORA.5]		1045/1050 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°6 (G3; [ORA.54]) 1054 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°4 (=G6; [ORA.54]) 1054 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°1 (=G7; [ORA.54])
Catherine (pts 1057–nov 1059)		MB V n°112; [EP.54]	1058/1059 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°9 (G9; [ORA.61]) <i>Or. Min.</i> n°5 (=G11; [ORA.5]) Citée dans MB 161 [EP.475]
Eudocie (mai 1067– octobre 1071)	<i>Or. Pan.</i> n°12; G13; [ORA.63]	G 35 [EP.477] KD271 [EP.463]; KD272 [EP.55] MB53 [EP.91] MB132 [EP.371]	1068 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°18 1068; [ORA.54] 1069/1071 <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°19; [ORA.54]

raison serait plus politique: en effet, pourquoi s'adresser à une impératrice à qui la tradition n'accorde aucun pouvoir politique?<sup>16</sup> Bien que cette tradition historiographique s'appuie sur les écrits de Psellos, on doit cependant remarquer qu'il montre Zoé avec une activité politique plus importante à certains moments comme en 1042, après l'élimination de Michel V. Zoé et sa sœur Théodora exercent un temps la réalité du pouvoir et ce sont leurs querelles qui expliquent la mise à l'écart de Théodora et le mariage de Zoé avec le futur Constantin IX.<sup>17</sup> Frederick Laurit-

zen et Barbara Hill insistent également sur le rôle pionnier de Zoé dans l'affirmation de l'autorité des impératrices dans le palais.<sup>18</sup> Il est également possible de voir dans cette situation, l'émergence d'un groupe de *basilikoi anthrôpoi* qui agit dans les périodes 1041–1042 et 1054 et exerce probablement la réalité du pouvoir en mettant en avant les porphyrogénètes.<sup>19</sup>

Cependant, Zoé est citée dans six discours sur les dix adressés à Constantin IX Monomaque. Ainsi, dans l'*Or. Pan.* n°2, Michel Psellos développe longuement les relations entre Constantin

15 Elle est brièvement citée dans le poème dédiée à la Skleraina, PSELLOS, *Poemata*, n°17, p. 252,434.

16 G. OSTROGORSKY, *Histoire de l'État byzantin*, Paris 1969, p. 344–351, mentionne uniquement son goût pour les dépenses somptuaires et les intrigues d'alcôve.

17 PSELLOS, *Chronographie*, I, 6a–II, p. 117–118.

18 B. HILL, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025–1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology*, Harlow 1999, p. 42–55 faisant suite à B. HILL/L. JAMES/D. SMYTHE, *Zoe: The Rhythm Method of Imperial Renewal*, in: P. MAGDALINO (éd.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium 4th–15th Centuries*. Papers of 26th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Aldershot 1993, p. 215–229; F. LAURITZEN, *A Courtier in the Women's Quarters: The Rise and Fall of Psellos*, in: *Byzantion*, 77, 2007, p. 251–266.

19 Sur les *basilikoi anthrôpoi*, voir E. LIMOUSIN, *Obtenir l'autorité du prince à Byzance au XIe siècle*, in: J. QUAGHEBEUR/J.-M. PICARD/H. OUDARD (éd.), *Le prince et son peuple*, Actes du Colloque de Lorient (septembre 2007), Rennes 2013, p. 233–253, et J.-CL. CHEYNET, L'"homme" du *basileus*, in: *Puer Apuliaz*, Mélanges offerts à J.-M. Martin, Paris 2008, I, p. 139–154.

et Zoé ce qui ne surprendra personne car ce discours est très proche de la date de l'avènement de Constantin et il appartient à l'entreprise d'affirmation de ce nouveau pouvoir. Dans l'*Or. Pan.* n°6, il se contente d'une simple mention en passant, un simple politesse en quelque sorte, qui fait douter de la présence des dites impératrices dans l'assistance.<sup>20</sup> Ce n'est qu'une fois morte qu'elle reprend une place dans la rhétorique psellienne. Son décès est signalé dans l'*Or. Pan.* n°5<sup>21</sup> et dans l'*Or. Pan.* n°7, il admire la construction du tombeau de Zoé comme il s'émerveille devant les travaux de Saint-Georges-des-Manganes.<sup>22</sup> C'est un thème qui est repris dans l'*Or. Pan.* n°4 et développé par l'ajout d'un éloge de Théodora.<sup>23</sup> Enfin, inconsolable et pour une fois disert, il se lamente sur la mort de Zoé dans l'*Or. Pan.* n°1.<sup>24</sup> Seul l'*Or. Pan.* n°3 ne mentionne pas la ou

les porphyrogénètes, mais, selon Paul Gautier, la simple mention de travaux d'adductions d'eau à Constantinople et du changement dans la politique de recrutement des sénateurs permettent de le dater des années postérieures à 1047.<sup>25</sup> En définitive, Zoé est citée seule à trois reprises, alors que sa sœur est toujours citée en sa compagnie, même après la mort de Zoé.

C'est une fois seule au pouvoir après la mort de sa sœur et de Constantin IX Monomaque, que Théodora commence à intéresser le rhéteur qu'est Psellos. Elle est la « destinataire » de deux discours dont il est nécessaire de faire une rapide analyse.<sup>26</sup>

Poursuivant notre panorama des relations entre Psellos et les impératrices, il est nécessaire de s'arrêter sur un cas particulier: Catherine, la femme d'Isaac Ier Comnène. La position de Ca-

<b>PSELLOS, <i>Or. Pan.</i> n°11 (G 8) (1055/6)</b>	<b>PSELLOS, <i>Or. Min.</i> n°1 (même date)</b>
§ 1–2 Mention d'une révolte dont Théodora est sortie vainqueur.	§ 1 Vertus impériales familiales.
§ 3 Difficultés de l'éloge tant les qualités de l'impératrice sont nombreuses.	§ 2 Nécessité de l'alliance du corps et de l'âme.
§ 4 Elle fait la richesse de sa ville et même ceux qui la critiquent profitent de son gouvernement.	§ 3 Exemple de la femme tentatrice de la Genèse.
§ 5 Elle s'appuie sur toutes les familles pour gouverner et fait leurs richesses.	§ 4 Nécessité de la modération qui est une vertu impériale <sup>27</sup> car elle permet le choix des meilleurs conseillers et auxiliaires.
§ 6 Elle est restée vierge et stérile mais ce n'est pas une faiblesse au contraire.	§ 5 Impossibilité d'une ascèse générale.
§ 7 Force de ses mœurs.	§ 6 Elle s'inspire des principes de ses prédécesseurs pour gouverner.
§ 8 Véritable empereur du fait de sa famille et de son amour des lois.	§ 7 Elle a donc bien gouverné.
§ 9 Péroraison religieuse.	§ 8 Référence au Christ modèle.

20 PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°6, p. 96,224–228.

21 PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°5, p. 86,137–145.

22 PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°7, p. 105,91–96.

23 PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°4, p. 75,464–469 et Théodora est citée p. 76,493–495.

24 PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°1, p. 9,174–10,203.

25 PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°3, p. 54,79–81; ce thème est repris dans PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°1, p. 12,240–244; PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°4, p. 72,401–73,423.

26 Le second discours est un *silention* prononcé par l'impératrice mais rédigé par Michel Psellos, PSELLOS, *Or. Min.* (cit. note 2) V, voir par exemple M. LOUKAKI, Note sur l'activité d'Aréthas comme rhéteur à la cour de Léon V, in: M. GRÜNBAERT (éd.), *Theatron: Rhetorical Culture in Late Antiquity and Middle Ages* (Millenium-Studien, 13), Berlin/New York 2007, p. 267–269.

27 La notion de comportement (ἦθος) de l'empereur, ici l'impératrice, est un des éléments essentiels de l'ouvrage de A. KALDELLIS, *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia*, Leyden 1999, p. 22–28.



therine à la cour peut préfigurer celle de Marie d'Alanie, l'épouse de Michel VII Doukas puis de Nicéphore III Botaneiatès. Mais cette dernière est mieux connue et mieux illustrée dans les sources. Ainsi, Jean Doukas aura conseillé à Nicéphore III Botaneiatès d'épouser Marie. En effet, pour lui, cette femme étrangère aurait un avantage politique, celui de ne pas avoir à côté d'elle une faction, un groupe familial à placer et à favoriser.<sup>28</sup> Il faut quand même admettre que la situation est différente entre les deux femmes: d'une part Marie d'Alanie a un avantage que Catherine n'a pas, elle est la mère d'un porphyrogénète, d'autre part, il semble bien que Catherine ait des parents dans l'empire. En effet, elle est citée de manière élogieuse dans un discours adressé à Constantin X Doukas ou elle est associée au nouveau pouvoir après la mort de son mari.

*L'impératrice voulait l'imiter [Isaac Ier] et changer de vêtement aussitôt, mais je parvins à la retenir par de nombreuses exhortations qui furent plus puissantes que ses entreprises. Si bien que tant qu'elle sera encore au monde, nous ne la priverons pas de l'acclamation impériale. Nous ordonnons également que tu fasses connaître à tous ceux qui sont sous ton thème ce que la providence et l'économie de Dieu a décidé pour nous, que tu réunisses autour de toi les plus nobles et les plus notables du thème et que vous fassiez l'acclamation suivante: « Longue vie à la grande impératrice et autokratorissa des Romains, Catherine et au grand empereur et autocrator des Romains, Constantin Doukas ».*<sup>29</sup>

Michel Psellos a auparavant adressé une lettre à Catherine que l'on peut, sans difficultés, dater du règne d'Isaac. En effet, la lettre s'adresse à lui à travers l'impératrice. Là encore, l'analyse du texte est nécessaire: dans un premier temps, il regrette l'absence de l'empereur à Constantinople et la lettre est une consolation de l'absence. Enfin, arrive la demande de Michel Psellos dissimulée par la pratique du porteur de lettre. A lire Psellos, l'empereur semble malade et la fin de la lettre semble lui être adressée, lui qui est parti non pour chasser mais pour méditer et déterminer la meilleure manière de gouverner.

Avec Catherine, l'attitude de Michel Psellos est plus classique car, dans le palais, l'impératrice n'est pas la détentrice du pouvoir mais seulement la femme de l'empereur et elle dispose d'un pouvoir moins apparent. Néanmoins, à la différence de Marie d'Alanie, Catherine est d'une famille puissante car elle est la fille de Jean Vladislav, le dernier tsar bulgare. Les descendants des princes de Bulgarie font de belles carrières au service de l'empire comme Alousianos, stratège de Théodosiopolis dans les années 1030 jusqu'à sa révolte en 1040 et surtout Aaron, duc d'Ibérie en 1047 et de Mésopotamie en 1059.<sup>30</sup> La position favorable de cette famille survivrait d'ailleurs à la mort d'Isaac Ier Comnène puisque dans un véritable discours du trône rédigé par Michel Psellos, Constantin X Doukas fait l'éloge de Catherine et de toute la famille, preuve du maintien de la famille Alousianos dans les cercles proches

28 La plupart des sources traitant de Marie d'Alanie sont répertoriées dans L. GARLAND/S. RAPP, *Mary 'of Alania': Woman and Empress Between Two Worlds*, in: L. GARLAND (éd.), *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience A.D. 800–1200*, Aldershot 2006, p. 91–123; dans le cas cité ici, l'anecdote est dans ANNE COMNÈNE, *Alexiade*, I, p. 107,21–28.

29 PSELLOS, *Or. Min.* (cit. note 2), n°5, p. 18,47–57: Ἐβούλετο μὲν οὖν καὶ ἡ δέσποινα εὐθὺς ἐκείνον μιμήσασθαι καὶ μεταμφιάσασθαι ἄλλ' ἐγὼ ἐπέιχον παρακαλέσας πολλὰ, εἰ καὶ αὐτὴ κρείττων ἐστὶ παντὸς ἐγχειρήματος. ὁμῶς, ἐπειδὴ ἔτι τῷ κόσμῳ περίεστιν, αἰδοῖ τῆ τε πρὸς αὐτὴν καὶ τῆ πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα οὐκ ἀποστεροῦμεν τῆς βασιλικῆς εὐφημίας, ἀλλὰ παρακελευόμεθα παντὶ τῷ ὑπὸ σε θέματι φανερὰν καταστήσαι τὴν περὶ ἡμᾶς οἰκονομίαν καὶ πρόνοιαν τοῦ θεοῦ συλλέξει τε περὶ σεαυτὸν τοὺς εὐγενεστέρους καὶ προκρίτους ἐν τῷ θέματι καὶ οὕτω τὴν εὐφημίαν ποιήσασθαι, Ἄικατερίνης μεγάλης βασιλίσσης καὶ αυτοκρατορίσσης Ῥωμαίων πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη καὶ Κωνσταντίνου μεγάλου βασιλέως καὶ αυτοκράτορος Ῥωμαίων τοῦ Δούκα πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη. Sur les relations entre Psellos et Catherine, voir LAURITZEN, A Courtier (cit. note 18), p. 256, 260–262.

30 Les relations entre les familles Aaron, Radomir, Alousianos sont assez complexes, voir V. LAURENT, *La prosopographie de l'empire byzantin*, appendice à la famille byzantine des Aaron, in: *Échos d'Orient*, 33, 1934, p. 385–395;

du pouvoir.<sup>31</sup> Dernière impératrice à profiter de la prose de Michel Psellos, Eudocie Makrembolitissa nous replace dans une situation qui rappelle celle de Théodora, le caractère porphyrogénète en moins. Les liens entre Psellos et la famille Makrembolitzès sont forts et anciens, il a été le contemporain de l'ascension politique de son oncle Michel Cérulaire et, si avec lui les choses se sont mal terminées,<sup>32</sup> il parvient à conserver des liens assez forts avec son neveu, Constantin Cérulaire, comme le montre la correspondance nombreuse qu'il lui adresse.<sup>33</sup> Ce dernier poursuit une carrière prestigieuse et parvient à traverser sans encombres ou presque tous les règnes jusqu'à sa mort sous Nicéphore III Botaneiatès.<sup>34</sup>

À côté du discours analysé ensuite, nous disposons de quatre lettres rédigées par Michel Psellos à Eudocie sous le règne de Constantin X Doukas entre 1059 et 1067. Dans une courte lettre (MB V n°53 [EP.375]), il mentionne l'envoi de fruits, de pain et de vin qui reprend le thème développé dans la lettre n°52 [EP.520] adressée à

Constantin X Doukas sans qu'il soit possible de déterminer laquelle précède l'autre, il est d'ailleurs tout à fait possible qu'elles soient strictement contemporaines.<sup>35</sup> Dans la lettre MB n°132 [EP.91], il revient sur le même thème car il vient d'offrir des présents à l'impératrice, une femme exceptionnelle, à qui il proclame sa fidélité.<sup>36</sup> Légèrement redondant, dans KD n°271 [EP.463], il associe chaque cadeau avec une vertu d'Eudocie: n'étant pas un simple sophiste, il n'a rien à gagner à vanter les mérites de l'impératrice mais il le fait pour la grandeur de la connaissance. Le cadeau qu'il fait (du pain, du vin, des fruits) ne doit pas être mesuré à l'aune du prix mais de ce qu'il va faire gagner à l'impératrice (la vie, la joie spirituelle, la grâce).<sup>37</sup> Enfin, dans la dernière lettre (KD n°272 [EP.55]), le même thème est encore développé. Il est intéressant, en passant, de constater la pratique permanente de la répétition des thèmes. Cette répétition a-t-elle quitté la table de travail de Psellos? A-t-il « bombardé » l'impératrice de lettres quasi identiques, ou bien ces lettres ne sont que les vestiges

J.-CL. CHEYNET, Dévaluations des dignités et dépréciations monétaires dans la seconde moitié du XIe siècle, in: *Byzantion*, 53, 1983, p. 453-477.

- 31 PSELLOS, *Or. Min.* (cit. note 2), n°5, p. 18,47-57, dans le même discours (p. 17,12-21) sont célébrées les vertus d'un parent d'Isaac, Théodore Dokeianos qui est probablement le destinataire de la lettre PSELLOS, MB V, n°113, p. 358 [EP.86]. Elle reprend le thème du goût d'Isaac pour la chasse, et est adressée à un Dokeianos selon le manuscrit *Laurentianus gr. 57-40*, XVe siècle, folio 83r; E. N. PAPAIOANNOU, Das Briefcorpus des Michael Psellos, Vorarbeiten zu einer kritischen Neuedition, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 48, 1998, p. 84.
- 32 Les rapports entre les deux hommes sont complexes et l'affrontement culmine avec la rédaction de l'acte d'accusation de Michel Cérulaire par Michel Psellos en 1059, PSELLOS, *Or. for.* (cit. note 2), n°1. Sur le schisme et Cérulaire, voir M. KAPLAN, Le schisme de 1054: Quelques éléments de chronologie, in: *Byzantinoslavica*, 56, 1995, p. 147-158, et J.-CL. CHEYNET, Le patriarche « tyrannos »: le cas Cérulaire, in: M.-T. FÖGEN (éd.), *Ordnung und Aufruhr im Mittelalter*, Francfort 1995, p. 1-16.
- 33 Avec 17 lettres de Psellos reçues, il fait partie avec Jean Mauropous (19) et Nicolas Sklèros (17) des destinataires les plus fréquents, hors famille impériale, E. LIMOUSIN, *Etude du fonctionnement d'un groupe aristocratique à Byzance au XIe siècle: Juges et Lettrés dans les correspondances*, Poitiers 1996, p. 255-275.
- 34 DÖLGER, *Regesten*, II, n°1054 traite du règlement de son héritage.
- 35 En mettant les deux textes en regard, la ressemblance est parlante: *Le Christ soit avec toi, impératrice, fortifie-toi en t'appuyant sur le fruit qui représente la beauté et la grâce, le vin qui est le plaisir intellectuel, le pain qui représente les âmes des pauvres, ô triomphatrice de tout le sexe féminin, par la beauté du corps et par la grâce de l'âme*. PSELLOS, MB V, p. 284, n°53 [EP.375]. *Je rapporte du pain comme le pain de la vie et de la présence de Dieu, du vin pour vraiment réjouir l'empereur au cœur triste; et le fruit qui se flétrit facilement car de nature mortelle alors que toi tu resteras éternel, ciel du ciel, pouvoir du pouvoir et couronne brillante de l'Empire*. PSELLOS, MB V, p. 283, n°52 [EP.520].
- 36 PSELLOS, MB n°132, à Eudocie Makrembolitissa, p. 377 [EP.91].
- 37 PSELLOS, KD II, n°271, à Eudocie Makrembolitissa, p. 316 [EP. 463].

de la technique de travail de rédaction de l'auteur byzantin? En mettant en ordre, les lettres de Psellos, le copiste les a toutes reprises pour fournir un véritable choix à ceux qui voudront les réutiliser.<sup>38</sup>

Pour en venir au discours, Psellos a rédigé un texte relativement court, deux fois plus court que ceux adressés à Théodora et dont l'analyse donne les thèmes suivants:

- § 1 (ll. 1–23) Qualités et vertus impériales d'Eudocie; elle a une bonne pratique du gouvernement car elle accepte les conseils avisés.
- § 2 (ll. 23–35) Elle a choisi seule de se remarier avec Romain IV Diogénès.
- § 3 (ll. 35–44) Eloge des qualités impériales d'Eudocie.<sup>39</sup>
- § 4 (ll. 45–fin) Demande d'aide de Psellos.

A première vue, cela ressemble beaucoup à une lettre et il est probable qu'il date de la même période que le discours adressé à Romain IV célébrant leur mariage et qui est daté de janvier 1068.<sup>40</sup> Cependant il faut mettre ce discours en parallèle avec une autre lettre adressée à Eudocie dont l'analyse a été donnée par Paul Gautier, l'éditeur d'une série de lettres pselliennes. Dans ce texte, il proteste en clamant sa loyauté envers Eudocie dont il a toujours fait l'éloge. Il ne comprend pas l'ingratitude de l'impératrice envers

un serviteur loyal de sa famille alors que tous les empereurs précédents ont apprécié ses qualités intellectuelles. Comment expliquer cette soudaine froideur impériale: aurait-il mal interprété un ordre de l'impératrice?<sup>41</sup> Selon Eva de Vries, il est probable que le discours *Or. Pan.* n°12 date de 1068 alors que la lettre date de la fin 1069 et donc entre les deux documents, les relations entre Eudocie et Psellos se sont nettement détériorées.<sup>42</sup>

Maintenant que le corpus des textes est précisé, il est désormais possible de proposer une explication en précisant le contexte précis des relations entre Michel Psellos et les impératrices. Dans le cas de Théodora, l'analyse des discours de Psellos permet de mieux cerner les évolutions de la position de l'auteur, de mieux préciser sa vision des relations à l'intérieur de la cour impériale. Ensuite, le thème des fondations monastiques est utilisé comme un révélateur des oppositions à l'intérieur de l'aristocratie. En effet, il semble bien qu'il existe des rivalités entre plusieurs clans de « conseillers » qui favorisent ou freinent une politique impériale de fondations monastiques. Enfin, il faut reconnaître aux œuvres de Michel Psellos un rôle de premier plan comme source pour le court règne de Théodora, l'autre auteur, Jean Skylitzès, plus jeune, est un peu court.<sup>43</sup> De plus,

38 Il existe un autre exemple dans la correspondance de Michel Psellos: il envoie au César Jean Doukas, frère de Constantin X une lettre accompagnant du fromage (KD II, n°232 [EP.403.]); des amandes (KD II, n°234 [EP.447]); des noisettes (KD II, n°235 [EP.226]); des châtaignes (KD II, n°236 [EP.420]); du melon (KD II, n°237 [EP.238]); du raisin (KD II, n°238 [EP.146]); des noix (KD II, n°232 [EP.176]) et un récapitulatif de tout ce qu'il lui a envoyé (KD II, n°233 [EP.128]). Dans chaque lettre, il tire un enseignement moral en rapport avec le cadeau envoyé.

39 Elles sont déjà énumérées dans un autre discours à Constantin X Doukas, PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°10, p. 115, 11–13.

40 Dans la typologie des lettres de Psellos que nous avons dressée, cela ressemble fort à une « lettre de demande », E. LIMOUSIN, *Les lettrés en Société: φίλος βίος ou πολιτικός βίος?*, in: *Byzantion*, 59.2, 1999, p. 342–365. Dans PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°18, il développe les mêmes thèmes que dans la lettre KD n°5 adressée à Romain et analysée par E. DE VRIES-VAN DER VELDEN, *Psellos, Romain IV Diogénès et Mantzikert*, in: *Byzantinoslavica*, 58, 1997, p. 285 [EP.193].

41 P. GAUTIER, *Quelques lettres de Psellos inédites ou déjà éditées*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 44, 1986, n°35, p. 191–194 [EP.477].

42 DE VRIES-VAN DER VELDEN, *Psellos* (cit. note 40), p. 291–293.

43 Sur les relations entre Psellos et Skylitzès, E. LIMOUSIN, *L'entrée dans la carrière à Byzance au XIe siècle: Michel Psellos et Jean Skylitzès*, in: J.-C. CASSARD / Y. COATYVY / A. GALLICÉ / D. LEPAGE (éd.), *Le prince, l'argent, les hommes au Moyen Âge. Mélanges offerts à Jean Kerhervé*, Rennes 2008, p. 67–76. Le règne de Théodora est expédié en

les trop rares documents connus de la chancellerie sont peu utilisables, même s'ils indiquent qu'elle serait moins favorable aux moines que sa sœur Zoé. On connaît une décision prise par l'impératrice de retirer les privilèges accordés au monastère de la Néa Monè de Chios par Constantin IX. Le monastère et ses dirigeants participent alors à une affaire très complexe où agissent également Michel Psellos et le patriarche de Constantinople, Michel Cérulaire, qui les soutient.<sup>44</sup>

Traditionnellement, les historiens estiment que les relations entre Psellos et les clercs en général, les moines en particulier sont très mauvaises car il existerait une opposition entre eux pour des raisons philosophiques et spirituelles.<sup>45</sup> Cependant, il est peu probable, d'une part, que cette opposition ne s'appuie que sur ces éléments et que, d'autre part, elle ait été permanente et systématique. Ainsi, si l'on reprend le cas du monastère de Chios, à l'époque de Constantin ou Théodora, les moines ont proposé à Michel Psellos d'être leur charistacaire car ils espéraient obtenir le soutien de celui qu'ils pensaient être un

proche conseiller de l'empereur ou de l'impératrice.<sup>46</sup> Certes Psellos n'est pas une source objective à cause de la haute idée qu'il a de lui-même, ce qu'il exprime dans l'*Or. Pan.* n°11 et la *Chronographie*.<sup>47</sup> Malgré ce manque total de modestie, il est fort probable que parfois il décrive la réalité et qu'il est bien été un homme important dans les années de la fin du règne de Constantin IX Monomaque. Il s'est enrichi et a amassé une fortune foncière remarquable composée presque exclusivement de monastères en charisticariat.<sup>48</sup> Pour des raisons qui nous échappent, les moines de Chios n'ont pas réussi à s'attirer les bonnes grâces de Psellos qui a refusé de les aider à l'automne 1054. Dans la période juste postérieure à cet épisode, il est fort probable que les relations entre Psellos et les moines se sont détériorées et qu'il ait subi des attaques de leur part: accusé de manquer de foi chrétienne, il doit s'en défendre dans le discours à l'impératrice, dans la *Chronographie* mais également dans une profession de foi peu étudiée.<sup>49</sup> En attendant que tous ces éléments soient bien établis, on doit bien admettre que la situation de

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deux paragraphes: l'un traitant du remplacement des conseillers proches, en premier lieu, Léon Paraspondylos et de l'échec de la révolte de Bryennios; l'autre du choix de Michel comme successeur. SKYLITZÈS, p. 479-480; ATTALEIATÈS, p. 51,19-52,18 s'attarde surtout sur la description de Léon.

- 44 HILL, *Imperial Women* (cit. note 18), p. 57; F. DÖLGER, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, München/Berlin 1924-1960, II, n°931 dans cet acte perdu et connu seulement par sa mention dans l'Acte d'Accusation (L. BRÉHIER, Un discours inédit de Psellos: accusation du patriarche Michel Cérulaire devant le synode [1059], in: *Revue des Études Grecques*, 16, 1903, p. 402,5; PSELLOS, KD I, p. 256,10), elle retirerait au monastère des biens de la couronne accordés par des jugements impériaux précédents. Le lien entre Cérulaire et la Néa Monè est le sujet d'une lettre de PSELLOS, KD II, n°36, p. 56-60 [EP:205]. K.-P. TODT, *Die Frau als Selbstherrscher: Kaiserin Theodora, die letzte Angehörige der Makedonischen Dynastie*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 50, 2000, p. 139-171; sur la Néa Monè de Chios, ODB, II, p. 1446-1447.
- 45 Cette position a été renforcée par l'ouvrage de Kaldellis qui recense les critiques de Psellos sur les moines dans la *Chronographie*, KALDELLIS, *The Argument* (cit. note 27), p. 80-93.
- 46 PSELLOS, KD II, n°36, p. 58-60 [EP:205] est adressée à Jean et Nicétas les fondateurs du monastère, sur cette lettre, voir A. KARPOZELOS, *Realia in Byzantine Epistolography X-XII c.*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 77.1, 1984, p. 30, et E. DE VRIES-VAN DER VELDEN, *Les amitiés dangereuses*, in: *Byzantinoslavica*, 60, 1999, p. 337 et n. 57.
- 47 PSELLOS, *Chronographie*, II, 6b-XIII, p. 78.
- 48 La liste en a été dressée à partir de sa correspondance par H. AHRWEILER, *Le charisticariat et les autres formes d'attribution des couvents*, in: *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta*, 10, 1967, p. 22-27, Reprint in: *Etudes sur les structures administratives et sociales de Byzance*, Londres 1971, commentée par M. KAPLAN, *Les monastères et le siècle à Byzance: les investissements des laïcs au XIe siècle*, in: *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, 27, 1984 (Actes du XIVe congrès de la Société des Historiens Médiévistes de l'Enseignement Supérieur Public), p. 71-83, sur le charisticariat en général, J. P. THOMAS, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire*, Washington, DC 1987, p. 167-213.
- 49 PSELLOS, *Chronographie*, I, 6a-XXXVII, p. 135; PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* n°11; sur la profession de foi, on doit toujours

Michel Psellos s'est dégradée rapidement dans cette période. De plus, il intente un procès à son ex-futur gendre.<sup>50</sup> Cette crise est surmontée en trois temps: d'une part Théodora laisse le pouvoir à Michel VI dont Michel Psellos peut espérer se rapprocher grâce à ses relations avec Léon Paraspondylos;<sup>51</sup> ensuite Psellos parvient à participer au complot et au coup d'Etat qui voit la prise de pouvoir d'Isaac Comnène;<sup>52</sup> enfin, quelques temps après, il utilise la *Chronographie* comme défense car elle regorge de critiques contre les conseillers monastiques et les fondations impériales qui sont considérées la plupart du temps comme onéreuses et ruineuses pour les finances de l'Etat.<sup>53</sup>

Pour Psellos, le court règne de Théodora comprend donc deux parties qui correspondent chacune à un des discours ici étudiés. Le discours *Or. Pan.* n°11 se place dans la première période du règne de Théodora alors que la situation est encore simple et prospère. Il rédige et prononce un discours classique d'un conseiller en place que l'on peut mettre en parallèle avec la situation de Jean Mauropous étudiée par Jacques Lefort:<sup>54</sup> une révolte vient d'être vaincue, même si l'on comprend plutôt qu'il s'agit d'un complot,<sup>55</sup> le conseiller en vue se trouve chargé de prononcer un discours flatteur qui se termine par un double

éloge, celui de l'impératrice, bonne gouvernante, et celui de ses auxiliaires, ici le *nomophylax*.<sup>56</sup> Evidemment, les bénéfiques retombent sur Théodora qui choisit bien ses conseillers et pour finir sur la population de l'empire et au premier chef, celle de Constantinople. Elle est bien une « macédonienne », une digne héritière de la grande et glorieuse dynastie. Pour Psellos, cela se traduit par une pratique de la philanthropie impériale, elle est incorruptible et gouverne de manière extraordinaire (ll. 107–111). Elle enrichit son peuple, récompense ses serviteurs et fait peur aux méchants (ll. 111–117), pour se faire, elle met la loi en avant dans sa pratique gouvernementale.

Le discours *Or. Min.* n°1 de l'édition Littlewood correspond à une période différente. Evidemment, les mêmes vertus impériales sont mises en avant mais la situation semble plus tendue. Dans le 5e paragraphe, par la voix de l'impératrice, il critique les exagérations des moines qui, prônant l'abstinence, ils profitent de la générosité des fondations impériales, faisant preuve d'un orgueil peu coûteux (ll. 54–59). Enfin, l'impératrice étant une bonne impératrice, elle appuie son gouvernement sur les vertus impériales classiques au rang desquelles elle place la modération. Derrière ce discours contre les moines, Psellos espère l'abandon de la politique récurrente de la famille

se reporter à A. GARZYA, On Michael Psellos' Admission of Faith, in: Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinon Spoudon, 25, 1936, p. 41–46 [THE.159].

50 Sur le procès, le texte est dans PSELLOS, *Or. for.* (cit. note 2), n°4 [ORA.76]. Voir R. GUILLAND, Un compte-rendu de procès par Psellos, in: *Byzantinoslavica*, 20, 1959, p. 205–230; P. LEMERLE, *Roga* et rente d'état, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 25, 1967, p. 84–88, et pour finir E. DE VRIES-VAN DER VELDEN, Psellos et son gendre, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 23, 1996, p. 109–149. Il est intéressant de comparer la situation de Psellos dans la seconde partie du règne de Théodora avec les attaques menées contre Xiphilin lorsqu'il était *nomophylax*, P. LEMERLE, *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle*, Paris 1977, p. 211–212.

51 Sur les difficiles relations entre Psellos et Paraspondylos: LAURITZEN, Psellos and the Nazireans (cit. note 1), p. 359–364; DE VRIES-VAN DER VELDEN, Les amitiés (cit. note 46), p. 315–350.

52 PSELLOS, *Chronographie*, II, 7a–XXXIII–XXXVIII, p. 103–107.

53 E. LIMOUSIN, L'échec des empereurs dans la *Chronographie* de Michel Psellos, in: F. BOCK / G. BUHRER-THIERRY / S. ALEXANDRE (éd.), *L'échec en politique, objet d'histoire*, Paris 2008, p. 245–256; KALDELLIS, *The Argument* (cit. note 27), p. 80–89.

54 LEFORT, *Rhétorique et politique* (cit. note 5), p. 293–303.

55 CHEYNET, *Pouvoirs* (cit. note 12), p. 66, n°76.

56 GAUTIER, *Basilikoi logoi* (cit. note 8), p. 749–750 ne peut pas croire qu'il s'agit de Garidas, selon lui, les seuls *nomophylakes* connus sont Jean Xiphilin et un certain Dol(ios).

macédonienne en général et de Zoé en particulier: les fondations monastiques impériales. En effet, ce n'est pas la bonne manière de gérer les monastères pour un conseiller de Constantin IX Monomaque qui a reçu de nombreux monastères en charisticariat et c'est pour cela qu'il se déchaîne ensuite contre les moines.<sup>57</sup>

Le choix de bons conseillers reste donc le thème omniprésent dans les discours à Théodora. Grand classique de la prose psellienne, il doit s'assurer de la proximité du pouvoir du fait de la concurrence entre conseillers. Il utilise les discours pour vanter ses mérites et surtout discréditer ses adversaires. Pour ce faire, il met en avant le cas exceptionnel de la dynastie macédonienne, insistant sur le poids de la généalogie et montrant ainsi que Théodora est conforme à la tradition familiale. Cependant, elle ajoute ces qualités intrinsèques comme la spécificité de son célibat. Evidemment, faire le parallèle avec la description de la *Chronographie* est redoutable à la fois pour Théodora et pour ceux qui auraient pu croire à une once de sincérité de Psellos. Cependant, malgré tout, la description des qualités impériales tourne autour d'une vertu principale: la *philanthropia* qui sert à récompenser ses serviteurs dans la tradition de la cour macédonienne.

Environ 15 ans plus tard, on retrouve le même schéma: une impératrice destinataire d'un discours de Michel Psellos. Avec Eudocie, Psellos joue sur deux tableaux: la lettre, outil de la proximité et le discours expression plus solennelle et plus officielle. Comme Théodora, elle dispose d'une légitimité indéniable en tant que veuve de Constantin X Doukas et surtout en tant que mère du jeune Michel VII. Cependant, la famille Makrembolitzès, pour importante

qu'elle soit à Constantinople, n'a pas encore l'aura de la famille Macédonienne.<sup>58</sup> Même si le poids de la rhétorique semble le même, le ton est différent. Certes, comme d'habitude, il s'agit de promouvoir les qualités intrinsèques de l'impératrice, elle est donc parée de toutes les vertus classiques (ll. 8–11): *en effet, quoi de plus puissant parmi toutes les femmes, par la beauté du corps, l'ordre de l'âme, le courage de la pensée, une bonté envers ses serviteurs, le souci, la réflexion et l'écoute des conseils*. Plus loin, il poursuit par *tu as la noblesse de race, l'équilibre des mœurs, la droiture de l'âme, la vérité sur la parole, une intelligence aiguë, une nature rapide, une pensée droite, un esprit énergique, une réflexion « qui coulisse bien »*<sup>59</sup>, *des mœurs agréables*.<sup>60</sup> Grâce à ses qualités Eudocie, accepte sans problème les conseils de son entourage et elle épouse Romain IV Diogénès. Le côté exotique, assez particulier de ce discours, vient du dernier paragraphe: l'orateur se dit inquiet, mais il n'est pas inquiet des menaces extérieures ou de complots politiques en gestation, il est inquiet de son devenir car il manque de ressources pour vivre car [il a] *été dépouillé de son trésor nécessaire*. Il s'adresse donc à la source de toutes les richesses qui doit *ouvrir un nouveau fleuve de richesses*.<sup>61</sup> On retrouve ce thème dans la lettre éditée par Paul Gautier où il se plaint d'une brouille entre lui et Eudocie qui lui retire des revenus. Concrètement, selon lui, un document a été mal interprété et, de fait, Michel Psellos se trouve privé de ressources auparavant accordées par l'impératrice ou plus raisonnablement par ses prédécesseurs.

Il ne s'agit pas d'un quelconque vol mais de quelques chose de plus fondamental: Michel Psellos a été depuis longtemps étudié sous l'angle

57 Sur la carrière monastique de Michel Psellos, DE VRIES-VAN DER VELDEN, *Les amitiés* (cit. note 46), p. 332–337.

58 Sur la famille Makrembolitzès, H. HUNGER, *Die Makremboliten auf byzantinischen Bleisiegeln und in sonstigen Belegen*, in: *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography*, 5, 1998, p. 1–29.

59 *ἐπιπείροτροφος* est traduit par *wriggling* dans Liddell-Scott qui donne en référence Eustathe de Thessalonique.

60 PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°12, p. 124,8–18.

61 PSELLOS, *Or. Pan.* (cit. note 2), n°12, p. 126,48–50.

de la rhétorique et de la culture, mais il doit l'être également sous l'angle économique. Au cours du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, qui connaît un formidable essor économique, Michel Psellos a fait le choix du charisticariat et il contrôle un grand nombre de monastères par ce biais et les exploite selon lui de manière efficace.<sup>62</sup> Cependant, ce type de gestion des biens monastiques est caractérisé par sa fragilité institutionnelle. En effet, si l'empereur donne en charisticariat, il reprend aussi vite. Si l'on considère, comme Eva de Vries, que très rapidement après le mariage de Romain IV Diogénès et d'Eudocie Makrembolitissa, Michel Psellos connaît une période de disgrâce, cette défaveur se traduirait par un retrait de monastères.

Dans l'histoire des monastères, les années 1040–1060 marquent une période charnière: le charisticariat a pu apparaître comme une solution technique face au manque d'efficacité monastique dans la gestion de leurs biens. Face à cette solution, que l'Église critique dès le départ, les fondations monastiques classiques pratiquées par l'aristocratie présentent une alternative intéressante surtout après le décollage économique qui rend les monastères rentables puisque consacrés à des activités agricoles commercialisées. Donc, deux solutions sont possibles: à la suite de l'exemple du Mont Athos, les aristocrates désormais fondent des monastères qu'ils cherchent à protéger par des privilèges impériaux; mais ils peuvent également acquérir des charisticariats puisés dans le stock des monastères ruinés, très nombreux en Thrace ou en Bithynie.<sup>63</sup> Le cas du

monastère de Médikion est emblématique: Psellos l'a obtenu de Constantin IX et le fait ensuite passer dans le patrimoine de Lizix.<sup>64</sup> Ce que Psellos redoute, ce sont ces fondations impériales bien connues, comme le Myrélaion ou les Manganes, ou ceux plus obscurs de la Péribleptos. Ce sont des fondations qui rassemblent un grand nombre de propriétés foncières qui diminuent d'autant les possibilités de donation aux conseillers. Ne pouvant s'attaquer à la volonté impériale, Psellos préfère s'en prendre aux moines qui en bénéficient et qui mènent une propagande intense autour des empereurs.<sup>65</sup>

A l'issue de cette étude, les impératrices jouent-elles un rôle particulier dans la politique de fondation monastique? Il semble que du point de vue de Michel Psellos, l'impératrice n'est au centre de la vie politique qu'en cas de vacance d'un pouvoir masculin. Cependant à côté de l'institutionnel, de l'officiel, les femmes de la cour impériale sont au centre d'un réseau d'influences et de relations entre familles et conseillers comme le montre bien le cas de Catherine. De plus, au milieu du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, ce milieu curial est probablement en voie de modification sociale. Il est évident que le milieu de la cour ne peut pas rester inchangé alors que l'ensemble de la société byzantine est en pleine mutation. Les grandes familles arrivent à prendre une place de plus en plus importante et surtout à pérenniser leurs fortunes. Cette permanence bloque la circulation des biens fonciers impériaux qui sont désormais « confisqués » dans les patrimoines

62 Sur les évolutions de l'économie byzantine et leur influence sur la gestion des monastères, J. LEFORT, *The Rural Economy, Seventh-Twelfth Centuries*, in: A. E. LAIOU (éd.), *The Economic History of Byzantium*, Washington, DC 2002, I, p. 290–299.

63 Michel Attaleiatès fait ce choix en associant à des charisticariats une fondation classique, voir LEMERLE, *Cinq études* (cit. note 50), p. 99–112.

64 Sur ce monastère, PSELLOS, KD II, n°202, à l'empereur, p. 230–231, et C. MANGO/I. ŠEVČENKO, *Some Churches and Monasteries on the Southern Shore of the Sea of Marmara*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 27, 1973, p. 235–277; M.-F. AUZÉPY et al., *A propos des monastères de Médikion et de Sakkoudion*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 63, 2005, p. 183–194.

65 Psellos les décrit promettant une vie éternelle à une Théodora proche de la fin, PSELLOS, *Chronographie*, II, 6b–XVIII, p. 80–81.

aristocratiques et sortent de la fortune impériale et surtout ne sont plus remis en circulation au profit d'autres aristocrates. Les aristocrates utilisent les fondations monastiques pour échapper à la confiscation impériale grâce à l'obtention de chrysobulles.<sup>66</sup> Dans cette situation, les impératrices ne font rien d'original, Zoé et Théodora poursuivent la double politique de la famille macédonienne: d'une part soutenir les fonda-

tions aristocratiques et d'autre part, elles protègent les fondations impériales. La bureaucratie s'y retrouve en partie puisque certaines familles parviennent à mettre la main sur les postes de gestion de cette fortune.<sup>67</sup> Eudocie quant à elle, rompt en partie avec certaines familles et conseillers jugés peu utiles voire inefficaces. Psellos en fait partie, il est à la fin des années 1060 aux yeux de l'impératrice déjà un homme du passé.

66 Michel Attaleiatès adjoint à sa *diataxis* des copies des deux chrysobulles de Michel VII Doukas et Nicéphore III Botaneiatès protégeant son établissement, P. GAUTIER, La diataxis de Michel Attaliate, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 39, 1981, p. 100–123. De plus, du règne de Nicéphore III date une nouvelle sur la protection des serviteurs des empereurs déchus probablement due au juriste qu'est également Attaleiatès. La nouvelle est dans I. D. ZEPOS, *Jus graecoromanum*, I, p. 283–288 et elle est abondamment commentée par ATTALEIATÈS, p. 313–318; L. BURGMANN, A Law for an Emperor: Observations on a Chrysobull of Nikephoros III Botaneiatès, in: MAGDALINO, *New Constantinian* (cit. note 18), p. 247–257.

67 Dans le cas des *episkepsis*, on connaît par exemple la succession des Katakalon à Rhodandos avec Constantin Katakalon spatharocandidat chartulaire et épiskeptitès de Rhodandos (DOSeals, IV, n°46.1) et Epiphane ὁ τοῦ Katakalos ou à Anthia, Théodore puis Nicolas Haplorabdès (J.-CL. CHEYNET, *Episkeptitai et autres gestionnaires des biens publics* [d'après les sceaux de l'IFEB], in: *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography*, 7, 2002, p. 104).





THE *SEBASTOKRATORISSA* IRENE AS PATRON

ELIZABETH JEFFREYS

When considering patronage in twelfth-century Constantinople, and especially patronage in a literary context, one of the first names to come to mind, regardless of gender, is that of the *sebastokratorissa* Irene.<sup>1</sup> This paper will summarise what is known about her and discuss whether acts of hers that might come under the heading of patronage fit into a pattern, gendered or otherwise. Patronage will be identified simply as the provision of financial support to those who need it to encourage literary and/or artistic activity.

Irene is an enigmatic figure. Although more details survive about her experiences than for almost any other Byzantine woman, the sources are silent about many of the aspects of her life on

which we would like information, notably her own family background. Like most Byzantine women, she makes no appearance in the narrative histories for the period, those by Kinnamos and Choniates.<sup>2</sup> Most of the material with which one has to work is presented by Konstantinos Barzos in his *Γενεαλογία τῶν Κομνηνῶν*; it is largely drawn from the poets who were composing at the behest of members of the aristocratic households of the mid-twelfth century.<sup>3</sup> Extrapolating from her husband's conjectured date of birth, the normal age at marriage of Byzantine elite women and the likely ages of her children in the 1140s, it is usually concluded that Irene was born ca. 1110/1112; her marriage to the *sebastokrator* An-

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- 1 Irene has been identified as a patron since Chalandon's study of the Komnenian emperors, F. CHALANDON, *Les Comnène, II: Jean II Comnène (1118–1143) et Manuel I Comnène (1143–1180)*, Paris 1912, pp. 212–213. Her activities were given fresh emphasis in a series of studies in the 1980s and 1990s: e.g. E. JEFFREYS, *The Sebastokratorissa Eirene as Literary Patroness: The Monk Iakovos*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 32.3, 1981, pp. 241–256; M. MULLETT, *Aristocracy and Patronage in the Literary Circles of Comnenian Constantinople*, in: M. ANGOLD (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries*, Oxford 1984, pp. 173–201; R. S. NELSON, *Theoktistos and Associates in Twelfth-Century Constantinople: An Illustrated New Testament of A. D. 1133*, in: *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal*, 15, 1987, pp. 53–78; J. C. ANDERSON, *The Illustrated Sermons of James the Monk: Their Dates, Order and Place in the History of Byzantine Art*, in: *Viator*, 72, 1991, pp. 69–120; P. MAGDALINO, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143–1180*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 348–352, 440–442; E. JEFFREYS/M. JEFFREYS, *Who was Eirene the Sebastokratorissa?*, in: *Byzantion*, 64, 1994, pp. 40–68; B. HILL, *Imperial Women in Byzantium, 1025–1204: Power, Patronage, and Ideology*, Harlow 1999, pp. 172–174.
- 2 Irene is presumably one of the group of noble women mentioned by KINNAMOS 36.1–6, ed. A. MEINEKE, *Ioannis Cinnami epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, Bonn 1836, as greeting Bertha of Sulzbach on her arrival in Constantinople in 1142 as bride for Manuel (then merely John II's youngest son): she is not singled out although the wife of Andronikos's brother is (admittedly because her dark garment, and eloquent speech, led Bertha to make an unfortunate comment). Irene is not mentioned by Choniates.
- 3 K. BARZOS, *Η γενεαλογία τῶν Κομνηνῶν*, 2 vols., Thessaloniki 1984: Irene, married into the Komnenos clan, has no separate entry but is discussed in connection with Andronikos, her husband (BARZOS, *Γενεαλογία*, I, no. 76, pp. 357–379, at pp. 361–378). C. DIEHL, *Figures byzantines*, Deuxième série, Paris 1913, pp. 142–153, presents a romantically enhanced version of Chalandon's brief statement on Irene.

dronikos, second son of the emperor John II Komnenos, would have taken place around 1125. Her title of *sebastokratorissa* was derived from Andronikos's rank.<sup>4</sup> Irene and Andronikos produced five children – two sons and three daughters. In the autumn of 1142 Andronikos died, very unexpectedly, of a fever while on campaign in Cilicia. Though there is no direct evidence, Irene herself probably died in 1152 or 1153.<sup>5</sup>

Irene was thus the sister-in-law of the emperor Manuel, and until the birth of Manuel's daughter in 1152 her elder son John (born ca. 1126) was Manuel's most obvious heir.<sup>6</sup> Irene had become a person of considerable dynastic significance. Yet the decade of her widowhood (1142–ca. 1152) was turbulent for her: she fell into severe disfavour with her imperial nephew on at least two occasions, was imprisoned more than once, and taken out of Constantinople to the army camps in Bulgaria.<sup>7</sup> The animosity seems to have been restricted to Irene herself since her children remained in active use as pawns in Manuel's political manoeuvrings, whether within the frac-

tious Komnenian clan itself or in his dealings with external powers: Irene's eldest daughter Maria, for example, was bullied in 1145 into a second marriage with the prominent young warrior John Kantakouzenos after the premature death of her first husband, while Irene's second daughter Theodora was married to Heinrich Jasomirgott of Austria in 1148 to bolster Manuel's crusading alliances.<sup>8</sup> The hostility shown to Irene, combined with the sources' silence about her connections to any of the great Byzantine families of the period, has led to the suggestion that she (like many other brides in the imperial family) came to Constantinople from outside Byzantium as part of John II's marriage policies of the 1120s; it has been concluded that arguably she was of Norman origin.<sup>9</sup> Rather than assuming a source in the Normans of Southern Italy or Antioch, one might think of the Norman groups settled in Constantinople since the early years of the century. In 1121 these had provided a husband (John Rogerios Dalassenos) for John II's daughter Maria, elder sister of Irene's husband Andronikos.<sup>10</sup>

4 *Sebastokrator* by this period had come to be the title of the reigning emperor's sons and brothers (ODB, *s.v.*).

5 As is suggested by the dearth of references to her from this point onwards; BARZOS, *Γενεαλογία* (cit. n. 3), I, p. 378 n. 98.

6 BARZOS, *Γενεαλογία* (cit. n. 3), II, no. 128, pp. 142–155.

7 For the present the best presentation of this evidence, derived from the poems of Manganeios Prodromos (on whom see further below n. 23), remains S. PAPADEMETRIΟΥ, 'Ο Πρόδρομος τοῦ Μαρκιανοῦ κώδικος XI. 22, in: *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*, 10, 1903, pp. 102–163, at pp. 23–32; see also BARZOS, *Γενεαλογία* (cit. n. 3), I, pp. 361–378. Amongst the most relevant poems are MANGANEIOS PRODROMOS 43 (ed. PAPADEMETRIΟΥ, *Πρόδρομος*, pp. 155–163) and 108 (partially ed. PAPADEMETRIΟΥ, *Πρόδρομος*, pp. 124–127, 133, and E. MILLER, *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Historiens grecs*, II, Paris 1881, pp. 530–531, 571, 597–598, 614, 649–650). On the army camps see J. C. ANDERSON/M. JEFFREYS, *The Decoration of the Sebastokratorissa's Tent*, in: *Byzantion*, 64, 1994, pp. 8–18, and M. JEFFREYS, *Manuel Komnenos' Macedonian Military Camps: A Glamorous Alternative Court?*, in: J. BURKE/R. SCOTT (ed.), *Byzantine Macedonia: Identity, Image and History*, Melbourne 2000, pp. 184–191.

8 On Maria's reluctance to re-marry see MANGANEIOS PRODROMOS 46 (unedited; cf. BARZOS, *Γενεαλογία* [cit. n. 3], II, p. 156); on Theodora see E. JEFFREYS/M. JEFFREYS, *The "Wild Beast from the West": Immediate Literary Reactions in Byzantium to the Second Crusade*, in: A. E. LAIOU/R. P. ΜΟΤΤΑΗΕΔΗ (ed.), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, Washington, DC 2001, pp. 101–116.

9 JEFFREYS, *Who was Eirene?* (cit. n. 1), pp. 57–65. It is striking that in the surname-conscious environment of mid-twelfth-century Constantinople in the only references to Irene's parentage her father is simply a brave warrior, "of the race of the Aineiadae", S. LAMBROS, 'Ο Μαρκιανός κώδιξ 524, in: *Νέος Έλληνομνήμων*, 11, 1911, p. 23; poem 56.28–32, and her mother as very beautiful, W. HÖRANDNER, *Theodoros Prodromos, Historische Gedichte*, Vienna 1974, no. 44.20–28.

10 BARZOS, *Γενεαλογία* (cit. n. 3), I, pp. 349–351, 355–356 (in no. 75: Maria Komnene).

In the previous generation Irene-Piroska of Hungary, John II's empress and Irene's mother-in-law, was involved with the founding of the Pantokrator monastery as the Komnenian dynastic shrine. With this one exception Irene the *sebastokratorissa* stands out from the other foreign brides of this period for her acts of patronage, though this statement has to be treated with caution since source materials survive so spasmodically. In a brief time, maybe in one year (ca. 1122), four foreign brides are recorded as entering the imperial family. However, there is no information at all about donations, dedications, or literary works sponsored by Katya of Georgia (married to Alexios, son of Anna Komnene), or the princess from the Caucasian area married on the same day to Alexios's brother John, or Dobrodeja Mstislavna of Kiev (married to Alexios, eldest son of John II), or the unnamed bride of John II's nephew (also Alexios).<sup>11</sup> Does this mean that they did not act as patrons, or that the relevant evidence has been lost? There is, however, information in connection with Bertha of Sulzbach (in Constantinople from 1142, married to the emperor Manuel in 1146 and re-named Irene). She commissioned, for a handsome sum,

an allegorised paraphrase of the *Iliad* from John Tzetzes (though different funding was required to complete it); Tzetzes also initially dedicated to her his *Chiliades* (verse commentaries on his letters).<sup>12</sup> Two offerings of liturgical items by Bertha-Irene are known, one with an inscription by Theodore Prodromos, the other with an epigram by an anonymous poet.<sup>13</sup> Bertha-Irene was also the recipient, on what terms we can only guess, of two poems by the poet known as Manganeios Prodromos, to whom there will be further reference below; the occasion is the anticipated birth of an imperial heir, whose gender was as yet unknown.<sup>14</sup> In the abundance and range of her activity Irene the *sebastokratorissa* stands apart also from the other, indigenous, *sebastokratorissai* and high-ranking aristocratic women, including her imperial aunt Anna Komnene.<sup>15</sup> For these there is evidence for small-scale votive dedications of various types, known because of the epigrams commissioned to be inscribed or embroidered on the objects, as well as some funerary laments.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, for none of these women, potentially active in the middle years of the century, is there evidence for participation in the founding or re-founding of ecclesiastical structures.<sup>17</sup>

11 Katya: BARZOS, *Γενεαλογία* (cit. n. 3), I, pp. 308, 316–317 (under no. 65 Alexios Komnenos); Caucasian princess: BARZOS, *Γενεαλογία*, I, p. 318 (under no. 66 John Doukas); Dobrodeja Mstislavna: BARZOS, *Γενεαλογία*, I, pp. 343–344 (under no. 74 Alexios Komnenos); unnamed bride: BARZOS, *Γενεαλογία*, I, pp. 331–333 (under no. 69 Alexios Komnenos).

12 BARSOS, *Γενεαλογία* (cit. n. 3), I, pp. 456–457 (under no. 81 Manuel Komnenos).

13 A silver-gilt dove: HÖRANDNER, *Historische Gedichte* (cit. n. 9), p. 371, no. 34; a golden platter: LAMBROS, *Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς κῶδιξ* (cit. n. 9), p. 152, no. 233.

14 MANGANEIOS PRODRAMOS, nos. 12 (unedited) and 29 (ed. MILLER, *Receuil* [cit. n. 7], pp. 341–343).

15 Anna Komnene is an exceptional case – an author in her own right and instigator of philosophical commentaries (and so a patron of intellectual activities): see the papers in T. GOUMA-PETERSON (ed.), *Anna Komnene and her Times*, New York 2000. However, there is little evidence that she took part in the fashion for commissioning “occasional” poetry (though note HÖRANDNER, *Historische Gedichte* [cit. n. 9], nos. 38 and 39 and cf. the prose epithalamia for her sons' marriages [*PG* 133, cols. 1397–1406]).

16 Notably icon curtains, or veils, and cloths to cover chalices and patens: see the material collected in V. NUNN, *The Encheirion as Adjunct to the Icon in the Middle Byzantine Period*, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 10, 1986, pp. 73–102. The epigrams which form this evidence are found almost entirely in Marc. Gr. 524 (a mixed collection) and Marc. Gr. XI. 22 (largely Manganeios Prodromos). On the difficulties in interpreting these dedications see E. JEFFREYS, *The Depiction of Female Sensibilities in the Twelfth Century*, in: C. ANGELIDI (ed.), *Byzantium Matures: Choices, Sensitivities and Modes of Expression* (Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries), Athens 2004, pp. 73–85.

17 After the imperial female dedications prior to ca. 1130 (Anna Dalassene: Pantepoptes monastery; Irene Doukaina: Kecharitomene nunnery; Irene Piroska: Pantokrator monastery), there is a pause of some fifty years before Maria

Irene may be associated with three types of patronage. Firstly, of texts; so many did she sponsor that the first assumption for a text from this period with a reference to “the *sebastokratorissa*” in its title is that the reference is to this *sebastokratorissa*, Andronikos’s wife, despite the many other holders of the title. This assumption seems usually to be correct. Secondly, through a web of arguments in recent scholarship Irene has come

to be associated with several lavishly illustrated books, about which increasingly elaborate interpretations have been made. Thirdly, explicitly, she made dedications of liturgical objects in many churches of the Theotokos in Constantinople. As just indicated, this record is hard to match. It gives rise to several questions about the reasons for her actions, her intentions, and her influence.

#### T E X T S

John Tzetzes wrote for Irene a *Theogony*, which was a genealogy of the Olympian deities, and also addressed two letters to her, one of which grumbles about her secretaries who are reluctant to allow him access to their mistress, and the other asks for a book to be returned to him.<sup>18</sup> Constantine Manasses wrote for her his *Synopsis Chronike*, a racy, interestingly expressed chronicle, unusually in verse – in its picturesque elements it has elements of the coffee-table book; he also wrote for her a poem on astrology and the signs of the zodiac.<sup>19</sup> Theodore Prodromos wrote

a grammar, and several poems recording events in her family’s life – most notably one immediately following the death of Andronikos, and also one in which he is asking for her financial support.<sup>20</sup> The monk Jacob, her spiritual father, corresponded with her, over a period of unknown length: there survive forty-three letters and a sermon on the Holy Spirit addressed to her by him.<sup>21</sup> Two un-named persons from the many aspiring rhetoricians who seem to have been swarming around mid-century Constantinople touting for custom included Irene amongst their

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of Antioch, Manuel’s widow, attempts a foundation (Pantanassa): V. DIMITROPOULOU, *Imperial Women Founders and Refounders in Komnenian Constantinople*, in: M. MULLETT (ed.), *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries*, Belfast 2007, pp. 87–106.

- 18 TZETZES, *Theogony*, ed. P. MATRANGA, *Anecdota graeca*, II, Rome 1850, pp. 577–598; TZETZES, *Epistulae*, Letters 43 and 56, ed. P. A. M. LEONE, *Ioannis Tzetzae epistulae*, Leipzig 1972.
- 19 MANASSES, *Synopsis Chronike*, ed. O. LAMPSIDES, *Constantini Manassis Breviarium chronicum*, Athens 1996; on approaches to this text see most recently I. NILSSON/E. NYSTRÖM, *To Compose, Read, and Use a Byzantine Text: Aspects of the Chronicle of Constantine Manasses*, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 33, 2009, pp. 42–63 (with references to previous studies by Nilsson); *poem on astrology*: ed. E. MILLER, *Poèmes astronomiques de Théodore Prodromos et de Jean Camatère (Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale, 23.2)*, Paris 1872, pp. 1–112 (the authorship of this text is disputed, but attribution to Manasses is now generally accepted; cf. HÖRANDNER, *Historische Gedichte* [cit. n. 9], pp. 48–49, and O. LAMPSIDES, *Zur Sebastokratorissa Eirene*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 34, 1998, pp. 91–105.)
- 20 *Grammar*: ed. C. G. GOETTLING, *Theodosii Alexandrini Grammatica*, Leipzig 1822, pp. 80–197; poems: HÖRANDNER, *Historische Gedichte* (cit. n. 9), nos. 44–47.
- 21 JAKOBOS, *Epistulae*, ed. E. JEFFREYS/M. JEFFREYS, *Iacobi Monachi epistulae*, Turnhout 2009; see also M. JEFFREYS, *Iakovos Monachos*, Letter 3, in: A. MOFFATT (ed.), *Maistor: Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning*, Canberra 1984, pp. 241–256; E. JEFFREYS/M. JEFFREYS, *Immortality in the Pantokrator?*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 44, 1994, pp. 193–201; C. LAGA, *Entering the Library of Jacobus Monachus: The Exemplar of Jacobus’ Quotations from the Commentary of the Song of Songs by Gregory of Nyssa*, in: K. DEMOEN/J. VERECKEN (ed.), *La spiritualité de l’univers byzantin dans le verbe et l’image*, Leuven 1997, pp. 151–161.

clientele. One produced two encomia now found in Marc. Gr. 524.<sup>22</sup> The other was a member of her household, who is conveniently and conventionally referred to as Manganeios Prodromos; some 18,000 lines of verse from his pen are preserved, largely in a single manuscript, Marc. Gr. XI 22. About a third of Manganeios's output deals with Irene and her immediate family.<sup>23</sup> The poems range through celebrations of marriages, votive dedications on behalf of an injured son, to pleas to the emperor for clemency, incidentally providing tantalising but stylised glimpses into the realities of life in Constantinople in the 1140s.

All these writers address Irene with great respect, often using the title of empress (ἡ βασιλεία σου or δέσποινά μου): her rank was enough to allow the informal use of titles to which, in strict terms, she had no right. Otherwise, the way in which these writers express their relationship to Irene varies. The monk Jacob advises her on her reading matter – warning her away from some books, both secular and theological, and recommending others (unspecified but including pamphlets of his own); he reproves her mildly on occasion for not disciplining her household sufficiently and elsewhere in the correspondence explodes with vehement indignation at the

treachery of others towards her. He makes no demands of her but rather shows a sense of his own responsibility for her well-being.<sup>24</sup> Manganeios Prodromos is indignant on her behalf to others, especially Manuel, but he can also make aggressive demands when he feels she has not fulfilled her obligations to him.<sup>25</sup> He is in some form of permanent employment in Irene's household – at one point in the period around 1150 he claims he had been in her service for twelve years: perhaps he was one of the *grammatikoi*, secretaries, with whom Tzetzes became indignant; in which case Manganeios's name may in fact be Aspidopolos.<sup>26</sup>

In the cases of Tzetzes and Manasses the relationship with Irene is expressed in terms of her having requested a text from them, and having paid them for it, apparently quite handsomely. The texts differ in length: Tzetzes's *Theogony* is quite short (ca. 500 lines), Manasses's *Synopsis Chronike* is far longer (over 6500 lines). Both are written in the fifteen-syllable line, a form which skilled literary practitioners frequently claimed to find demeaning.<sup>27</sup> Manasses is particularly fulsome about the reward he had received for the *Synopsis Chronike*, and perhaps for that reason in the astrological poem seems to be saying that he is presenting this shorter text as a gift and without

22 Ed. LAMBROS, Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς καὶ δι᾽ (cit. n. 9), nos. 56 and 57. It is, however, not impossible that these are also products of Manganeios Prodromos since they share some of his compositional quirks; there are metrical issues which remain to be explored.

23 The poems are only partially in the public domain, in scattered and for the most part elderly editions; for a list of editions prior to 1970 see E. MIONI, *Biblioteca Divi Marci Venetiarum codices graeci manuscripti*, III, Venice 1970, pp. 116–131, and MAGDALINO, *Empire of Manuel I* (cit. n. 1), pp. 494–500, for additions to 1993 (mainly S. BERNARDINELLO, *Theodori Prodromi De Manganis*, Padua 1972); the poem numbering follows that of Mioni's catalogue. The edition in preparation by E. and M. Jeffreys is making progress. "Manganeios" Prodromos, who is to be distinguished from Theodore Prodromos, has gained his modern nickname from his persistent and eloquent requests between 1152 and 1158 to both the emperor Manuel and the *sebastokratorissa* Irene to be allowed to enter the *adelphaton* at the Mangana monastery in Constantinople.

24 JAKOBOS, *Epistulae* (cit. n. 21), pp. xxvi–xxviii; see especially epp. 39 and 41.

25 Indignation: notably in e.g. poems 43, 47, 108 but it appears as a motif in petitions to the Theotokos (e.g. poems 67–74). Demands: most notably for her promise in connection with the Mangana hospice to be fulfilled (poems 61, 62 = ed. BERNARDINELLO, *Theodori Prodromi* [cit. n. 23] I, II) but less dramatically for a piece of brocade (used for a child's dress) to be given to him (poems 56, 57).

26 Years of service: MANGANEIOS 61.8; possible name: TZETZES, ep. 43.12.

27 The classic presentation of the evidence is in M. JEFFREYS, *The Nature and Origins of the Political Verse*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 28, 1974, pp. 142–195 (at p. 154 for Tzetzes's and Manasses's attitudes to the metre).

payment.<sup>28</sup> Though the details of the process are not spelt out the most obvious interpretation is that Irene has actively commissioned work from two men who are amongst the best known of the literary figures of the twelfth century. The situation with Theodore Prodromos is less clear. The *Grammar* is a substantial piece of work, covering 117 printed pages of Teubner-size text – though even so shorter than Manasses's *Synopsis Chronike* (Theodore comes in at about 3,500 lines of prose as opposed to Manasses's 6,500 lines of verse). The *Grammar*'s connection with Irene is implied, rather than stated, in its opening lines where there is an appeal to φιλολογωτάτη μοι βασιλίδων, in a form of dedication. The phrase is consistent with the way in which other writers refer to Irene, as indicated below, so there is no reason to query the currently accepted view;<sup>29</sup> the dedication implies a commission. There is no apparent reference to fees in Theodore's turgidly thorough progression through the parts of speech. Nor are there any such references in Theodore's poems on Irene's family (nos. 44 and 45 in Wolfram Hörandner's edition), which express consolations at the time of Andronikos's death with a touching vignette of the bereft children. Poem 46, however, is entirely focused on himself and the need to rescue him from his current grim circumstances, presumably following his bout of smallpox: there is an ill-concealed indirect demand for financial support. To conclude that fees for service were the norm in transactions of this type would be not unreasonable: this is a direct benefit passing

from Irene to these men with writing skills. It is also plain that payment in kind – food, clothing, perhaps board and lodging – could also be part of transactions of this type, as indicated by comments from Tzetzes (in other contexts) and the anonymous encomiast of Marc. Gr. XI. 22 (in connection with Irene).<sup>30</sup> We will consider in a moment Irene's side of the bargain.

There are two further points to be noted.<sup>31</sup> The first is that all of these writers – the monk Jacob, the anonymous encomiast and Manganeios Prodromos as well as Tzetzes and Manasses – emphasise Irene's generosity: she is golden-handed, she is a veritable Paktolos flooding gold all round, streams of gold flow from her to unspecified persons, and in unspecified contexts.<sup>32</sup> In the case of Tzetzes and Manasses the lavish payment explicitly makes up for the simplistic nature of the task she had set them. In Manasses's case the task was burdensome and lengthy; for Tzetzes, it was demeaning for he was not asked to use complex metres, hexameters, merely the fifteen-syllable line which posed no compositional challenges and had no classical antecedents. There may be *topoi* here: a variation on the *topos* of the Begging Poet which developed in both East and West in the early twelfth century, as well as the *topos* of the generous patron;<sup>33</sup> *topoi*, however, have some basis in reality. Perhaps it is legitimate to wonder whether Irene was indeed exceptionally generous.

The other point is that these writers also all praise Irene for her learning and devotion to

28 Lavish reward: MANASSES, *Synopsis Chronike* (cit. n. 19), lines 14–17; text offered as a gift in gratitude: MANASSES, *Astrological poem* (cit. n. 19), lines 585–588.

29 HÖRANDNER, *Historische Gedichte* (cit. n. 9), p. 49.

30 TZETZES, *Chiliades* (ed. LEONE), lines 11.24–25. The anonymous encomiast (LAMBROS, Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς Κῶδιξ [cit. n. 9], pp. 22–26, no. 55, at lines 1–25) talks of the lavishness of the hospitality provided by Irene; if this poet is to be identified with Manganeios Prodromos, then this adds a little more light on the terms of his association with Irene.

31 Cf. JEFFREYS, *Who was Eirene?* (cit. n. 1), p. 51.

32 E.g. MANGANEIOS 48.116, 50.63, 60.54; JAKOBOS, ep. 9.20–21; anonymous encomiast (LAMBROS, Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς κῶδιξ [cit. n. 9], no. 55, p. 25), lines 100–110.

33 Cf. R. BEATON, *De Vulgari Eloquentia in Twelfth-Century Byzantium*, in: J. D. HOWARD-JOHNSTON (ed.), *Byzantium and the West, c. 850–c. 1200*, Amsterdam 1988, pp. 261–268, at p. 263.

scholarship. She is φιλόσοφε ψυχή and μουσα φιλόλογε,<sup>34</sup> φιλολογώτατε,<sup>35</sup> fully capable of comprehending the twists and turns τῶν φιλενοσφῶν βίβλων into which she plunges daily.<sup>36</sup> Jacob, as spiritual adviser, attempts to divert her from ὁ σὸς Ὅμηρος and other books of Hellenic learning which destroy the soul.<sup>37</sup> In the midst of troubles Manganaios laments that she who had been so devoted to books has now been herded into a crude prison.<sup>38</sup> The anonymous encomiast declares that her interests cover grammar, Homer, history, Hermogenes and Demosthenes, and that she preferred Plato to Aristotle: she is an ornament to women.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, as has been pointed out before, the evidence for her learning is unconvincing.<sup>40</sup> There is not much evidence that she produced any compositions of her own: there will, of course, have been the letters to which Jacob is replying in their correspondence, and of whose style he is complimentary (e.g. 15.3) in contrast to his abilities, disparaged by a humility *topos*. There is a tantalising hint that she may have composed a λόγος based on the Song of Songs (10.45–46).<sup>41</sup> Yet the surviving books that Irene commissioned all function at an elementary level, while the verse is expressed

in the metre that is reserved for non-intellectual purposes. There is a great contrast with the Aristotelian commentaries instigated by her aunt by marriage, Anna Komnene.<sup>42</sup>

This situation needs to be put into perspective. Jacob's commendations of Irene's intelligence (e.g. epp. 5.55, 19.42–43) can find a parallel in the phrases used, for example, by Michael Italikos of Irene Doukaina (who died in 1133, well after the *sebastokratorissa* became a part of the imperial court). In a speech improvised in the presence of the dowager empress, Italikos alludes to her intellectual activities: he praises Irene Doukaina's perceptiveness and her quick mind which combines intellectual ability with practical qualities.<sup>43</sup> According to Anna Komnene, her mother read extensively and perceptively in the scriptures and theology,<sup>44</sup> while the one clear piece of literary patronage attributable to Irene Doukaina is Nikephoros Bryennios's *Hyle Historias*, an account of Alexios I's youthful achievements.<sup>45</sup> Is there a difference in kind between the academic activities of the imperial mother and daughter and those for which the *sebastokratorissa* is praised? The place of the so-called *theatra* in these activities is discussed below.

34 MANGANEIOS 51.166.

35 MANASSES, *Synopsis Chronike* (cit. n. 19), 3.

36 MANASSES, *Astrological poem* (cit. n. 19), 9–10.

37 JAKOBOS, ep. 14.5, 87–88; 23.34–35, 50–51; 24.57–59; 36.37–38, 57–60; 37.115–117.

38 MANGANEIOS 68.85.

39 Anonymous encomiast (LAMBROS, Ὁ Μαρκετιανὸς Κῶδιξ [cit. n. 9], no. 55, p. 24), lines 75–87.

40 JEFFREYS, Who was Eirene? (cit. n. 1), pp. 47–49.

41 At this point Jacob recasts verses from the Song of Songs into dialogue form and puts them in Irene's voice. The passage dissolves into uncertainty upon consideration of the multiple meanings of λόγος (written discourse as opposed to conversational speech, etc); the position is put too strongly by M. EVANGELATOU, Pursuing Salvation Through a Body of Parchment: Books and Their Significance in the Illustrated Homilies of Iakobos of Kokkinobaphos, in: *Medieval Studies*, 68, 2006, pp. 239–284, at p. 245, n. 20).

42 As discussed in R. BROWNING, An Unpublished Funeral Oration on Anna Komnene, in: *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 188, 1962, pp. 1–12.

43 MICHAEL ITALIKOS, ed. P. GAUTIER, Michel Italikos, *Lettres et Discours*, Paris 1972, p. 148.

44 E.g. *Alexiad*, XII. 3.

45 Cf. BRYENNIOS, *Hyle Historias*, ed. P. GAUTIER, Nicéphore Bryennios, *Histoire*, Brussels 1975, Prooimion § 11. A military man, though one with literary interests, Nikephoros was not perhaps the most obvious candidate for this task, which was ultimately completed by his wife, Alexios's daughter, in her *Alexiad*, a eulogy of the emperor's mature years.



## DECORATED BOOKS

There are several important manuscripts, extant or lost, for which a case can be made for connections with Irene, ranging from very strong to weak and indirect. The extant manuscripts are amongst the most splendid products from the group of painters functioning in the first half of the twelfth century that has come to be known as the Kokkinobaphos workshop, with the major painter from the group known as the Kokkinobaphos master from his association with homilies that are discussed below.<sup>46</sup> The range of this group of painters is extensive: the dates within which the painters functioned and the manuscripts to be associated with them remain the subject of research.

Of these manuscripts the one with the strongest links to Irene is Jerusalem, Taphou 52, a copy of Theodore Prodromos's *Grammar*, which, as we have seen, was dedicated to her. The manuscript has extensive decoration in the style of the most prominent workshop, or group of painters, from mid-twelfth-century Constantinople. It has been argued, convincingly, that the rarity of decorated grammars and the cost implications of the workshop involved must mean that this manuscript was a presentation copy made for Irene, though the

opening pages which would provide the clinching argument are lost.<sup>47</sup>

Manasses's *Synopsis Chronike* survives in a large number of manuscripts (over seventy), though none apparently from the twelfth century. Three late manuscripts have headpieces, admittedly in different formats, that suggest that at the beginning of the transmission of the text there stood a presentation copy with an image which depicted the author and arguably also the person who had requested the work;<sup>48</sup> this would be consistent with Byzantine practice.<sup>49</sup> No comment can be made about the details of the putative dedicatory image as the surviving pages have different layouts; nor can we say whether the lost dedication copy would have included other decoration, such as initial letters or illustrations to the text, or from which painters' workshop it might have derived.<sup>50</sup>

The next instance concerns Jacob the monk. His letters to Irene have a number of peculiarities, as the recently published *editio princeps* indicates.<sup>51</sup> They do not seem to have circulated widely since they are preserved in one contemporary manuscript only, and two late sixteenth-century partial apographs.<sup>52</sup> The correspondence between Jacob and Irene seems to have taken place in the

46 The bibliography on this group of painters is large, with significant contributions from J. C. ANDERSON (see, e.g., *The Seraglio Octateuch and the Kokkinobaphos Master*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 36, 1982, pp. 83–114, and *Illustrated Sermons* [cit. n. 1]).

47 I. SPATHARAKIS, *An Illuminated Greek Grammar Manuscript in Jerusalem: A Contribution to the Study of Comnenian Illuminated Ornament*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 35, 1985, pp. 231–244.

48 Vienna, *Hist. gr.* 91 (fourteenth–sixteenth century; O. MAZAL, *Byzanz und das Abendland*, Vienna 1981, pl. 35); Vienna, *phil.* 146 (fourteenth–fifteenth century; MANASSES, *Synopsis Chronike* [cit. n. 19], pl. 1); Jerusalem, *Patr. Bibl.* 65 (fifteenth–sixteenth century).

49 See I. SPATHARAKIS, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, Leiden 1976, pp. 243–245, 248–250, for a discussion of the varied iconography in which scribes and authors offer books to patrons.

50 Note, however, that the Slavonic version of the *Synopsis Chronike* was richly illustrated: I. DUJČEV, *The Miniatures of the Chronicle of Manasses*, Sofia 1963.

51 Notably his extensive cut-and-paste technique with his sources: JAKOBOS, *Epistulae* (cit. n. 21), pp. xlix–lix.

52 Contemporary manuscript: Par. Gr. 3039; apographs: Marc. Gr. II 93, fols. 32r–92v and Vat. Gr. 1759, fols. 261r–303v; Par. Gr. Suppl. Gr. 98 is a copy made in the Bibliothèque nationale in the mid-eighteenth century. The date of Par. Gr. 3039 is discussed further below.

mid to late 1140s until the early 1150s.<sup>53</sup> It is not clear why it ended, whether with Irene's death or her return to an environment in which Jacob could communicate in person rather than by letter. At the end of the letters as we have them Irene was facing another potential disaster, though one caused by loss of imperial support rather than her own ill-health (especially epp. 32, 39 and 41). On the basis of absence of references to her in such sources as might be expected to notice her, Irene's death, as stated earlier, seems to have taken place ca. 1152. Only Jacob's side of the correspondence is preserved, though – tantalisingly – it is plain that Irene did respond and in fact had initiated the letter exchange (ep. 1).

The manuscript, Par. Gr. 3039, which preserves Jacob's letters is striking: it is large, uses good quality parchment, and has sumptuous ornament, notably a headpiece and also initials at the beginnings of letters. Like Jerusalem, Taphou 52, the manuscript for Theodore's *Grammar*, it is a product of the painters associated with the Kokkinobaphos master. The headpiece of Par. Gr. 3039, fol. 1r, for example, is identical to that on fol. 74r of Par. Gr. 1208 (containing the *Kokkinobaphos Homilies*, discussed further below), while the scribal hand also has many similarities.<sup>54</sup> As with Theodore's *Grammar* the high quality of the manuscript is at odds with the nature of the text it contains, though it is of a piece with the lavishness already noted in connection with Irene's patronage. There is nothing in the text or the manuscript itself to indicate whether the book was made before or after Irene's death.

Dating on stylistic grounds is imprecise, at best to be placed ca. 1150.<sup>55</sup> At least two scenarios for the book's production immediately suggest themselves: it could have been commissioned by Irene herself to record her adviser's words, or by Irene's heirs to commemorate her through her spiritual adviser.<sup>56</sup>

The correspondence with Jacob leads to the other work now known to be written by this monk and which has increasingly in recent scholarship been associated with Irene, though by links that are entirely circumstantial. The work is the set of six homilies on the Theotokos conventionally known as the *Kokkinobaphos Homilies* since their author signs himself as Jacob the monk from Kokkinobaphos (Ἰακωβὸς μοναχὸς τοῦ Κοκκινόβαφου). Given that the Jacob of the letters does not sign himself as *του Kokkinobaphou* the identity of the two monks was for long debatable. It was finally resolved when it became apparent that both used an identical and idiosyncratic method of composition: that is, both make extensive use of quotations from patristic authors, and composed virtually nothing of their own.<sup>57</sup> The extent of the quotations in the letters is now fully documented, though that in the homilies is only partially published (and indeed only partially traced);<sup>58</sup> however that the two authors called "Jacob the monk" are one and the same person is now indubitable. From the letters it is apparent that Jacob was active in the late 1140s through to the early 1150s, and presumably also for a period before then whilst acquiring sufficient status to advise a prominent aristocrat;

53 JAKOBOS, *Epistulae* (cit. n. 21), pp. xxix–xxxii. Firm dating is hard to find in the letters, and while the disasters referred to by both Jacob and Manganeios must relate in some fashion precision is elusive.

54 I. HUTTER/P. CANART, *Die Marienhomiliar des Mönchs Jakobos von Kokkinobaphos*. Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1162, Zurich 1991, p. 88.

55 ANDERSON, *Illustrated Sermons* (cit. n. 1), pp. 90–95; JAKOBOS, *Epistulae* (cit. n. 21), p. liii.

56 Irene's daughters Maria and Theodora seem to have been particularly supportive of her in times of crisis: MANGANEIOS 51 and 54.

57 See JEFFREYS, *Sevastokratorissa Eirene* (cit. n. 1); NELSON, *Theoktistos* (cit. n. 1), pp. 75–76; ANDERSON, *Illustrated Sermons* (cit. n. 1), pp. 100–102.

58 Letters: JAKOBOS, *Epistulae* (cit. n. 21), pp. xlii–xliv. Homilies: HUTTER/CANART, *Marienhomiliar* (cit. n. 54), p. 12.

there is no textual evidence for his subsequent activity. There are at present no other writings that can be associated with him.

The *Kokkinobaphos Homilies* survive in two richly illuminated manuscripts whose quality is such that scholarly convention has lent their name to the workshop that produced them.<sup>59</sup> The manuscripts are virtually identical but for their size: Vat. Gr. 1162 is twice as large as Par. Gr. 1208.<sup>60</sup> While the *Homilies* have a clear statement of authorship they acknowledge no sponsors other than the patristic figures, Chrysostomos and Nazianzos, who appear with Jacob in the frontispiece to Par. Gr. 1208 (there seems never to have been a frontispiece in Vat. Gr. 1162). Par. Gr. 3039, the manuscript containing Jacob's *Letters*, comes, as stated above, from the same painterly environment as both of the *Homilies'* manuscripts. It is thus a tempting suggestion that the commissioning of the *Homilies'* manuscripts involves the same aristocratic figure as patron: Irene.

The strongest support for this supposition is the fact that the *Homilies'* author is Irene's spiritual father. An additional point is that the *Homilies'* manuscripts are on a lavish scale, with sumptuous images copiously ornamented with gold: the lavishness resonates with the references elsewhere to Irene's lavish payments for services rendered (though it is not clear just how costly manuscripts of this type would be). Irene also demonstrates elsewhere, as is discussed below, a fervent devotion to the Theotokos.

Against this supposition is that there is no indisputable textual evidence that ties the *Homilies* to Irene. There is no dedication and no reference to her – or to any other reader – within the *Homilies*.<sup>61</sup> However, the *Homilies* do not cover the material usually found in Marian homiletic texts, that is, the liturgical Marian feasts. These *Homilies*, based on the *Protoevangelion of James* (second century CE?) with the addition of copious encomiastic material taken (mainly) from eighth- and ninth-century homilies, cover the conception and birth of the Theotokos (*Hom.* 1–2), her childhood and upbringing in the Temple and her selection to weave the purple veil of the Temple (*Hom.* 3–4), and the annunciation (*Hom.* 5); the climax of the composition is not, as one might expect, the birth of Christ but rather the Theotokos's vindication after false charges of unchastity have been laid against her (*Hom.* 6).<sup>62</sup> The images in the two manuscripts place the Theotokos in an aristocratic, indeed palatial, setting: there are handsome cradles with embroidered coverlets, marble floors, bright hanging lamps, richly dressed attendants. The narrative thread that underlies the encomiastic overlay is of a well-born young woman thrust into unexpected prominence, who is subjected to unjust charges but vindicated. This could be said to parallel what is known of Irene's life.<sup>63</sup> By one argument it would thus follow that Irene's spiritual adviser recast teachings on the Theotokos to encourage her in her devotions by finding in the Theotokos an even

59 ANDERSON, *The Seraglio Octateuch* (cit. n. 46).

60 Facsimiles: Vat. Gr. 1162 in: HUTTER/CANART, *Marienhomiliar* (cit. n. 54); Par. Gr. 1208 in: H. OMONT, *Miniatures des Homélie sur la Vierge du moine Jacques* (ms. gr. 1208 de Paris), Paris 1927.

61 In the *Homilies*, as in the *Letters*, it is hard to argue that the occasional appearance of the word εἰρήνη conceals any allusion to the *sebastokratorissa* (e.g. in the typological discussion of the Couch of Solomon [Vat. Gr. 1162, f. 80v, Par. Gr. 1208, f. 107 bis], cf. JAKOBOS, Epp. 8.13, 11.16, 13.32, and JAKOBOS, *Epistulae* [cit. n. 21], p. xxv). The most recent discussion of the Couch of Solomon is K. LINARDOU, *The Couch of Solomon, a Monk, a Byzantine Lady, and the Song of Songs*, in: R. N. SWANSON (ed.), *The Church and Mary*, Woodbridge 2004, pp. 73–85.

62 This is part of the narrative in *Protoevangelion* but is not a normal subject in the Marian homiletic corpus.

63 Unexpected rise: JAKOBOS, Ep. 2.5–9; false charges: MANGANEIOS, e.g. poems 43.214, 251–7, 48.106, 53.81, 69.44, 108.66 and *passim*; JAKOBOS, Epp. 8, 32, 39. However, the charges against Irene concerned treachery to the emperor, and lack of chastity was not an issue (as recognised by EVANGELATOU, *Pursuing Salvation* [cit. n. 41], pp. 263–264).

more relevant model to follow. This suggestion, if sustainable, would have implications for the dating of the *Homilies*' manuscripts, as indicated below. It is indubitable that the images illustrating the *Homilies* follow the text closely, often explicating certain idiosyncratic passages and showing that the author and painter worked in intimate collaboration.<sup>64</sup>

Of the many issues still outstanding over the *Kokkinobaphos Homilies*, not least is that of the relationship of one manuscript to the other,<sup>65</sup> and their dates of production. At present dating suggestions derive from stylistic arguments, with the only consensus that both manuscripts are from the middle years of the century. If there is any validity in the correlation of the *Homilies*' narrative with Irene's life experiences, then neither book would have been produced before 1143/4 and the first period when she incurred imperial displeasure. Discussion continues to be hampered by the lack of a complete, let alone a critical, edition of the *Homilies*' text.<sup>66</sup>

The assumption that Irene is the patron behind the *Kokkinobaphos Homilies* now seems

surprisingly well entrenched in the scholarly literature, and is giving rise to increasingly elaborate interpretations.<sup>67</sup> A certain amount of caution, however, is still necessary. It is indubitable that Jacob was Irene's advisor, that she was a known patron and that the manuscripts of Jacob's *Homilies* and *Letters* were both produced by painters and scribes from the same identifiable group of craftsmen. However, that group was patronised by many others in mid-twelfth-century Constantinople, ranging from the emperor John II (a Gospel book), his brother the *sebastokrator* Isaac (an Octateuch), to the abbot Joseph of Glykeria (the liturgical homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos).<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, just as Irene was not the only person to be exercising patronage at this time, she was also not the only woman to have had a deep devotion to the Theotokos. The list given below of Irene's offerings to churches of the Theotokos may be extensive but it is not unique, as is attested by the dedicatory epigrams on behalf of women found in Marc. Gr. 524.<sup>69</sup>

64 As discussed and demonstrated in ANDERSON, *Illustrated Sermons* (cit. n.1), p. 101, and more recently by K. LINARDOU, *The Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts Revisited. The Internal Evidence of the Books*, in: *Scriptorium*, 61, 2007, pp. 384–407.

65 That Vat. Gr. 1162 (the larger manuscript) is the first of the two to be produced is advocated by I. HUTTER, *Die Homilien des Mönches Iakobos und die Illustrationen*, Ph.D. dissertation, Vienna 1970, followed by LINARDOU, *Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts* (cit. n. 64), p. 407, who wishes, somewhat improbably, to argue that Par. Gr. 1208, the smaller manuscript, was Jacob's personal copy. ANDERSON, *Illustrated Sermons* (cit. n. 1), pp. 76–85, argues that Par. Gr. 1208 is the earlier (with a full discussion of previous scholarship on the issue).

66 Work is in progress on an edition; preliminary collations indicate that the two extant manuscripts are independent copies of a third.

67 The current consensus stems from: JEFFREYS, *Sevastokratorissa Eirene* (cit. n. 1); NELSON, *Theoktistos* (cit. n. 1); ANDERSON, *Illustrated Sermons* (cit. n. 1); J. C. ANDERSON, *Anna Komnene: Learned Women and the Book in Byzantine Art*, in: GOUMA-PETERSON, *Anna Komnene* (cit. n. 15), pp. 125–156. Irene's patronage of the *Homilies*' manuscripts underpins the discussions of the manuscripts' images in LINARDOU, *Couch of Solomon* (cit. n. 61); LINARDOU, *Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts* (cit. n. 64), and EVANGELATOU, *Pursuing Salvation* (cit. n. 41).

68 ANDERSON, *Illustrated Sermons* (cit. n. 1), p. 101.

69 Discussed in JEFFREYS, *Depiction of Female Sensibilities* (cit. n. 16).

## LITURGICAL FURNISHINGS AND LITURGICAL OBJECTS

The verse written by Manganeios Prodromos on behalf of Irene offers an insight into the votive offerings made by a devout woman. Irene dedicated icon veils to cover icons of the Theotokos in churches in Constantinople, as well as in her own chapel: the Hagiosorotissa,<sup>70</sup> Hodegetria,<sup>71</sup> Basiotissa,<sup>72</sup> tou Kyrou,<sup>73</sup> and tes Peges.<sup>74</sup> It is not always clear whether these icons were located in the monastery associated with the name or housed elsewhere. She also dedicated *poterokalymmata* and *diskokalymmata* (cloths to cover the chalice and paten).<sup>75</sup> She made offerings of incense and rose-water in, for example, the churches of the Theotokos tou Kyrou and of the Hodegetria, as well as in the chapel in her own house.<sup>76</sup> These offerings are known thanks either to supplicatory poems produced at the time of offering, or to dedicatory epigrams. The supplicatory poems, usually attached to items of liturgical relevance (such as rose-water, incense or lighting devices), tend to be quite long and are

intended to be read out in the course of a service: the final lines turn to the officiating priest and ask for the service to continue.<sup>77</sup> The epigrams associated with the fabrics seem to suggest first that they were to be placed on the fabric itself, that is, embroidered there, and second that Irene had herself made them. Scepticism might be in order about Irene's direct participation, but the encomiast in Marc. Gr. 524 speaks of Irene's household as being the centre of virtuous domestic industry.<sup>78</sup> Needlework is a regular female occupation (though spinning and weaving are the forms most mentioned in Byzantine contexts).<sup>79</sup> In the medieval West aristocratic women engaged in large-scale embroidery projects: one that springs to mind is the Bayeux tapestry, traditionally but wrongly associated with queen Mathilda, wife of William the Conqueror of England, while rather earlier Mathilda's saintly mother, queen Margaret of Scotland (1045–1093), ran a workshop for embroidering ecclesiastical vestments.<sup>80</sup> The

70 MANGANEIOS, poems 89, 90 (both ed. E. MILLER, *Poésies inédites de Théodore Prodrome*, in: *Annuaire pour l'encouragement des études grecques*, 16, 1883, pp. 33–35); both are probably to be dated to 1143/1144. Dates for these and the following poems can be suggested on the basis of family events that can be corroborated elsewhere, normally in Kinnamos's narrative. The full justification for these (which occasionally differ from those given by Papademetriou or Magdalino) will appear in the forthcoming edition of Manganeios Prodromos.

71 MANGANEIOS, poem 91 (ed. MILLER, *Receuil* [cit. n. 7], p. 692, tr. NUNN, *Encheirion* [cit. n. 16], pp. 96–97); also probably to be dated to 1143/1144.

72 MANGANEIOS, poem 92 (ed. MILLER, *Poésies inédites* [cit. n. 70], p. 35); to be dated after 1144 and before 1148, perhaps 1146/1147.

73 MANGANEIOS, poem 93 (ed. MILLER, *Poésies inédites* [cit. n. 70], p. 36, tr. NUNN, *Encheirion* [cit. n. 16], p. 96); to be dated ca. 1148.

74 MANGANEIOS, poem 94 (ed. MILLER, *Poésies inédites* [cit. n. 70], pp. 36–37, tr. NUNN, *Encheirion* [cit. n. 16], pp. 95–96); to be dated ca. 1148.

75 MANGANEIOS, poems 95 and 96 (ed. MILLER, *Poésies inédites* [cit. n. 70], pp. 37–38): no dating indications.

76 MANGANEIOS, poems 68 (unedited; after 1148), 69 (unedited; after 1148), 70 (unedited; 1147), 72 (ed. MILLER, *Poésies inédites* [cit. n. 70], pp. 20–24).

77 E.g. MANGANEIOS, poems 69. 145, 70. 126, 72. 125.

78 LAMBROS, *Ὁ Μαρκεσιανὸς κῶδιξ* (cit. n. 9), no. 57, lines 64–65, and note that in MANGANEIOS, poems 56–57, the poet asks Irene for him to be given a piece of fabric (though clearly an elaborate brocade and not domestic home-spun cloth).

79 For an overview on women's work see, e.g., I. KALAVREZOU, *Byzantine Women and their World* (Exhibition Catalogue), Cambridge, MA 2003; C. L. CONNOR, *Women of Byzantium*, New Haven, CT 2004.

80 M. CHIBNALL, *The Empress Mathilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English*, Oxford 1991, pp. 10–11.

mid-twelfth century also seems to be the point at which embroidered decoration of liturgical cloths began to come into fashion. Irene's *poterokallymmata* and *diskokallymmata* and icon veils,

which can be dated from ca. 1144, presumably resembled the Halberstadt *aeres*, dated to ca. 1185, the earliest surviving examples known of this type of fabric.<sup>81</sup>

#### WHEN DID IRENE FUNCTION AS PATRON?

To be considered next is whether it is possible to locate these activities in any one stage of Irene's life. Apart from the life-changing event that was her marriage, the most drastic episode for Irene would have been the unexpected death of Andronikos in 1142. Is it possible to see changes in her patterns of patronage before and after this event? One problem is that it is very hard to put a date on most of her actions. Tzetzes's letters survive in chronological order. Those to her seem to come in a date-bracket of 1143–1146, after Andronikos's death.<sup>82</sup> Tzetzes addresses Irene as *sebastokratorissa*, as he does in the *Theogony*, to which he refers elsewhere in a context which makes it contemporaneous with the *other book he wrote for a woman*.<sup>83</sup> This is a reference to the *Allegories on the Iliad* that he wrote for Bertha-Irene, Bertha of Sulzbach, Manuel's German-born wife, who was in Constantinople from 1142 though married only in 1146. This would put Irene's patronage of Tzetzes into the years of her widowhood. Theodore's *Grammar* refers to her as φιλολογωτάτε μοι βασιλίδων, which is unspecific. As noted above, βασιλίς is used elastically of all the most senior women in the Komnenian courts and cannot be used as a dating

tool in connection with Irene.<sup>84</sup> In Theodore's poems to her family, at the birth of her youngest son Alexios in the spring of 1142 Andronikos is addressed as much as Irene; thereafter, in the poem of consolation on Andronikos's death and in Theodore's request for support, she is simply the *sebastokratorissa*.<sup>85</sup> This "stripped-down" title would seem to add weight to the suggestion of Odysseus Lampsidis that Manasses's *Synopsis Chronike*, where the hexameter dedication stresses the lustre brought to Irene from her marriage to Andronikos, can only have been produced for her in the years before her widowhood.<sup>86</sup> However, in – for example – the marriage poems by Manganeios Prodromos for Irene's children in the mid to late 1140s, Andronikos is always mentioned where Irene is not, while in other contexts where Irene is acting alone in widowhood Manganeios adduces Andronikos as, as it were, the guarantor of her position.<sup>87</sup> For dating purposes, then, evidence from nomenclature is ambiguous and the presence or absence of references to Andronikos is meaningless. Most weight should be given in connection with the *Synopsis Chronike* to the complimentary phrases about Manuel as emperor that occur half way through the text (at

81 F. DÖLGER, Die zwei byzantinischen "Fahnen" im Halberstädter Domschatz, in: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Suppl. 3.2, 1935, pp. 1351–1360; H. MELLER/I. MÜNDT/B. E. H. SCHMUHL (ed.), Der Heilige Schatz im Dom zu Halberstadt, Regensburg 2008, pp. 282–285, no. 81.

82 M. GRÜNBART, Prosopographische Beiträge zum Briefcorpus des Ioannes Tzetzes, in: Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik, 46, 1996, pp. 175–226, at pp. 197–198.

83 *Scholion to Iliad Allegories, Prooimion*, 532, ed. P. MATRANGA, Anecdota Graeca, II, Rome 1950, p. 605.

84 Note that the monk Jacob consistently refers to Irene as ἡ βασιλεία μου, in the late 1140s.

85 As well, admittedly, as φιλόλαθε βασιλίσσα καὶ φιλολογωτάτη (HÖRANDNER, Historische Gedichte [cit. n. 9], no. 46, line 3).

86 LAMPSIDES, Zur Sebastokratorissa Eirene (cit. n. 19), pp. 91–105, and MANASSES, *Synopsis Chronike* (cit. n. 19), pp. xviii–xx.

87 E.g., MANGANEIOS, poems 21 (wedding of Irene's son John in 1148), 22 (wedding of Irene's daughter Theodora, also in 1148), 93 and 94 (Irene, wife of Andronikos, dedicates an encheirion, ca. 1148).

lines 2506–2512), and which would thus put the date of composition after 1143, and Manuel's accession. Significant portions of Manganeios Prodromos's output can be matched to events (such as the arrival of the Second Crusade or Manuel's campaigns in the Balkans) that are witnessed in other sources and can be placed at points in the 1140s and early 1150s.<sup>88</sup> While the sequence of dramas hinted at in Jacob's letters can be roughly correlated with events recorded by Manganeios, a detailed meshing of the two is frustratingly elusive.<sup>89</sup> The dedications of liturgical furnishings, while often blandly uninformative, sometimes provide a context (the wounding of Irene's son John, for example), which can be fixed by other sources (e.g. Kinnamos).<sup>90</sup>

As for the decorated books, two are to be associated with commissioned texts, and so would presumably have been produced with the completed commission, as part of the commission and presumably at the expense of the commissioner. This applies to Theodore's *Grammar*, on whose date we have no information, and Manasses's *Synopsis Chronike*, which was produced after 1143. Jacob's letters are preserved in a manuscript which, it has been suggested, dates by script and decoration to the early 1150s.<sup>91</sup> The *Kokkinobaphos*

*Homilies*, assuming there is a connection to Irene, present an altogether more complex issue with conflicting possibilities suggested in current scholarship, which this is not the place to argue out in detail. These include: that Par. Gr. 1208 was made in the 1130s, that it was an instructional manual to aid Irene,<sup>92</sup> that Par. Gr. 1208 was made as a personal record for Jacob,<sup>93</sup> that Vat. Gr. 1162 was made as a gift from Irene to one of her daughters.<sup>94</sup> Yet another justifiable scenario could see both large volumes of Jacob's work, Vat. Gr. 1162 (*Homilies*) and Par. Gr. 3039 (*Letters*), intended as commemorations, either of Jacob or of Irene. In the former case the sponsor could have been Irene, Jacob's spiritual child, in the latter Irene's heirs, or those who knew her tastes.

The balance of evidence is that Irene's generous acts took place during her years of widowhood, and in the interstices of imperial disfavour. This is confirmed by a comment by Manganeios, from perhaps 1149, that her funds have been restored and she can now resume her generosity, though to what end is not stated.<sup>95</sup> An earlier remark, from perhaps 1145 though perhaps as late as 1148, shows that generosity had at that point been made impossible.<sup>96</sup>

88 Most notably MANGANEIOS, poems 20 and 24, which deal with the arrival of the Second Crusade at Constantinople. The value of Manganeios's work as a historical source has long been recognised (witness the use made of it by MILLER, *Recueil* [cit. n. 7], or MAGDALINO, *Empire of Manuel I* [cit. n. 1]), and will be fully discussed in the forthcoming edition.

89 E.g. Irene and the emperor Manuel are at odds in 1143/4 and apparently reconciled in 1145 (MANGANEIOS, poem 50, partially ed. MILLER, *Recueil* [cit. n. 7], pp. 770–771); the letters from Jacob refer to problems early in the correspondence (e.g. epp. 4, and 8) but the issues are not clear, and we do not know when the correspondence began. In ep. 21 Irene is consoled for the death of a prominent man (who cannot be Andronikos): possible candidates could be her son-in-law Diomedes (mourned by MANGANEIOS in poem 50) or her brother-in-law Anemas (mourned in poem 42); both died in 1148.

90 MANGANEIOS, poems 97 and 98, refer to an encheirion dedicated when John Kantakouzenos, husband of Irene's eldest daughter Maria, lost a finger when fighting in Dalmatia, ca. 1150; this can be correlated with the battles in KINNAMOS, ed. MEINEKE (cit. n. 2), pp. 131–134; cf. P. STEPHENSON, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, Cambridge 2000, pp. 234–237.

91 ANDERSON, *Illustrated Sermons* (cit. n. 1), pp. 90, 95.

92 ANDERSON, *Illustrated Sermons* (cit. n. 1), p. 85; ANDERSON, *Anna Komnene* (cit. n. 67), p. 142.

93 LINARDOU, *Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts* (cit. n. 64), p. 407.

94 EVANGELATOU, *Pursuing salvation* (cit. n. 41), pp. 265–266 and n. 84.

95 MANGANEIOS, poem 73.58, ed. MILLER, *Poèmes inédites* (cit. n. 70), pp. 20–24.

96 MANGANEIOS, poem 68.54 (unedited).

## REASONS FOR PATRONAGE

This has sketched out what is known of Irene's activities that could come under the heading of patronage – in this context, the support of writers, who are named (or, in the case of Manganeios, allow their personalities to obtrude), and painters and artisans who are not named, a division indicative of the relative social status of the two groups. The dedications Irene made in liturgical contexts are statements of cult practice that employ the writers and artisans. The presumption must be that she acted in these ways because such actions were appropriate to her position in Constantinopolitan society where she was a member of the higher echelons of the elite and part of the imperial court.

Courts are places which provide occasions for conspicuous display, occasions which demonstrate the hierarchies, material as well as intellectual.<sup>97</sup> Ceremonial display has its rituals which are accompanied by words, leading to a need for skilled producers of words. This is apparent in Byzantine court society from the earliest period onwards: good examples are the connections between George of Pisidia and Herakleios in the seventh century or Psellos and Constantine Monomachos in the eleventh. The twelfth century is no exception; indeed in this century the processes that produced skilful practitioners of verbal crafts went into overdrive. In the reign of John II the phenomenon of the *theatron*, a long-standing element in Byzantine culture – a gathering, an occasion, which allowed for the display of literary talent<sup>98</sup> – flourished as never before. Conspicuous for their role in these were the dowager empress Irene Dou-

kaina (d. 1133), and her daughter Anna Komnene. Glimpses into the workings of a *theatron* can be found, for example, in Michael Italikos's account of the response to a letter from Nikephoros Bryennios that he read out in one such gathering: it produced roars of laughter, much admiration for Bryennios's style and his wit, and the next instalment was eagerly awaited.<sup>99</sup> This tells us that the meetings were open to aspiring literary figures (Italikos) as well as aristocrats (Bryennios). The benefits would have been mutual – prestige for the aristocrats, networking leading to job opportunities for the literary figures. One reason for the prominence of women in these contexts at this period must surely have been the absence from Constantinople on campaign of men of military age who would otherwise have participated. Nikephoros Bryennios is an example: we know of his involvement because his absence is recorded. On entering Constantinopolitan society in the mid-1120s literary patronage would have been an aspect of acceptable female aristocratic behaviour that Irene could not have failed to observe, and there were role models for her. However, despite the allusive remarks made by Jacob about Irene's participation in contests, it is noteworthy that in the poems of Manganeios Prodromos, that date from ca. 1143 to the late 1150s (after Irene's death), the word *theatron* appears only once, and with the meaning of a large assembly.<sup>100</sup> *Theatra*, of whatever sort, in the 1140s were not part of Irene's scene though it is plain that most of the corpus of Manganeios Prodromos's verse was intended for oral presentation.

97 As is explored for the Constantinopolitan environment in the contributions in H. MAGUIRE (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, Washington, DC 1997.

98 The definition of a *theatron* is hard: rather like a “bain-marie”, “Ce n'est pas une chose, c'est une situation”. A good discussion remains MULLETT, *Aristocracy and Patronage* (cit. n. 1), but see also the nuanced remarks in MAGDALINO, *Empire of Manuel I* (cit. n. 1), pp. 336–356.

99 MICHAEL ITALIKOS, ed. GAUTIER (cit. n. 43), p. 373. 29.

100 MANGANEIOS, poem 12.142 (unedited); dated 1153.



Display also has its physical manifestations, in robes and in objects. From Manganeios Prodromos there comes a sense of the colour and display that was involved in court occasions in the 1140s, in for example, his references to the imperial *prokypsis* with its brilliant lights.<sup>101</sup> The instances where Irene commissioned decorated books, liturgical cloths and other objects for liturgical use formed one conspicuous way to demonstrate her place in the social hierarchy.

There is also the intangible aspect to display and patronage. On the one hand, tapping into the prestige emanating from the inherited cultural capital of Byzantine intellectual life must be the reason why Irene pursued the Homeric interests challenged by Jacob (though we do not know what form they took); it would also have been the reason why Anna Komnene and Irene Doukaina had previously followed their own cultural directions. On the other, the presentation of costly offerings to churches makes a contract with the unseen spiritual powers: support and protection in adversity is sought in reciprocity for a bejewelled ritual object.<sup>102</sup> However, the objects that Irene offers in the churches she frequented, in times of acute personal distress and in dire need of support, are modest, humble even: rose-water, incense, candles, embroi-

dered cloths. This area of spiritual display does not match the apparent ostentation of her secular patronage: others offered lavishly decorated icons where Irene dedicated an icon veil.<sup>103</sup>

But what about the finances of patronage? Although Irene is praised for her lavish payments by Tzetzes and Manasses, one may ask whether she is exceptional. It is not clear what the sums are, not what are the regular rates for commissioned writing.<sup>104</sup> We do not have account books from Byzantine aristocratic households to show the costs of maintaining a “writer in residence”. Nor is it easy to put a figure on the costs of books, or the liturgical furnishings that Irene dedicated: the scanty figures from the twelfth century offer no guide to the expenses incurred in the production of luxury manuscripts.<sup>105</sup> However, they would be as nothing compared to the financial implications of establishing a religious foundation. It is here that the rhetoric on Irene’s generosity comes into perspective. The dowager empress Irene Doukaina established the Kecharitomene nunnery. Irene-Piroska (and the emperor John) set up the Pantokrator monastery with its elaborate charitable establishments. John’s brother the *sebastokrator* Isaac, who also had literary aspirations and patronised the Kokkinobaphos master and his colleagues, founded the monas-

101 M. JEFFREYS, The Comnenian Prokypsis, in: *Parergon*, n.s., 5, 1987, pp. 38–53; the scenes appear, for example, in MANGANEIOS 2.61–70, 10. 125–138, 30.67–78.

102 As adumbrated in A. CUTLER, *Uses of Luxury: On the Function of Consumption and Symbolic Capital in Byzantine Culture*, in: A. GUILLOU/J. DURAND (ed.), *Byzance et les images*, Paris 1994, pp. 287–327, and further explored in T. PAPAMASTORAKIS, *The Display of Accumulated Wealth in Luxury Icons: Gift-Giving from the Byzantine Aristocracy to God in the Twelfth Century*, in: M. VASSILAKI (ed.), *Byzantine Icons: Art, Technique and Technology*, Heraklion 2002, pp. 35–47.

103 See, for example, the icon commissioned by the *caesar* Rogerios made from his deceased wife’s jewellery (LAMBROS, *Ὁ Μαρκεσιανὸς κῶδιξ* [cit. n. 9], p. 21, poem 52).

104 Tzetzes was apparently offered twelve gold nomismata for each quaternion of the *Iliad Allegories* (TZETZES, *Chiliades* 9. 274–290).

105 On costs of manuscripts see R. S. NELSON/J. L. BONA, *Relative Size and Comparative Value in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts: Some Quantitative Perspectives*, in: D. HARLFINGER/G. PRATO (ed.), *Palaeografia e codicologia greca. Atti del II Colloquio internazionale* (Berlino–Wolfenbüttel, 17–21 ottobre 1983), Alessandria 1991, pp. 339–353 with reference at p. 343 to the two *Kokkinobaphos Homilies*’ manuscripts; V. KRAVARI, *Note sur le prix des manuscrits (IXe–XVe siècle)*, in: V. KRAVARI/J. LEFORT/C. MORRISSON (ed.), *Hommes et richesses dans l’empire byzantin, II, VIIIe–XVe siècle*, Paris 1991, pp. 375–384.

tery of Kosmosoteira. From the *typika* of these monasteries it is clear how much real estate was needed to ensure their continuance. Isaac's rambling comments reveal that he had expended all his imperial inheritance on his foundation.<sup>106</sup> The *sebastokratorissa* Irene was not in this league. When it comes to monastic foundations it is not gender that is the issue but access to funds, which of course more often than not comes to the same thing.

The conclusion has to be that Irene conformed to patterns of behaviour that, almost gender-neutral, were recognised as appropriate to members of the elite families of Constantinople – appropriate to females as well as males. She supported potential word-smiths because they could enhance her standing amongst her peers and she gave to religious causes because the ethos of the age demanded this; she sponsored goods (books almost certainly, liturgical objects quite certainly) of high quality because she had the resources to do so. She seems to have acted alone, during her widowhood and despite financial and social constraints. The only text which might predate her widowhood, Manasses's *Synopsis Chronike*, almost certainly does not. Andronikos, her husband, was not without literary

connections since the second Ptochoprodromic poem, almost certainly by Theodore Prodromos, is dedicated to him, but there is no evidence for joint action by husband and wife.<sup>107</sup> There was, however, no social imperative demanding joint action: perhaps the clearest example involves Irene-Piroska who is credited with an independent line over the foundation of the Pantokrator.<sup>108</sup> Irene's support for writers and artisans after Andronikos's death came from an insecure basis. Most of the insecurity stemmed from her bad relations with the emperor, and from the confiscation of her resources, though we know merely of the fact of the confiscation and not of what was confiscated – whether it was an income paid by Manuel, a dowry in Irene's own name, or revenue from estates bequeathed by Andronikos. It is a fascinating comment on the values of the time that Irene seems to have thought it feasible to stabilize her personal position by conspicuous displays of patronage, which were as much intellectual as tangible. Though future work may shed light on the shadowy networks surrounding her, the major reason currently accepted as prompting conspicuous actions by Byzantine women (the need to promote or defend their children) is absent in the case of Irene.<sup>109</sup>

#### EFFECT OF PATRONAGE

So we come to the question of Irene's importance in Byzantine cultural history. The first part of the twelfth century saw vernacular registers of language coming into increasing literary use in the non-Greek-speaking areas of Europe,

especially in the form of the *chansons de geste* (lively verse narratives of heroic deeds with a slight tinge of love interest).<sup>110</sup> In this same period new interests arise in Byzantine literary circles, notably in the use of vernacular Greek in

<sup>106</sup> BMFD, II, pp. 782–858, no. 29.

<sup>107</sup> Though such joint activities were not unknown: note the comments by Tornikes that in the early years of their marriage the palace shared by Nikephoros Bryennios and Anna Komnene had become *home of the Muses* (J. DARROUZÈS, Georges et Démétrios Tornikès, *Lettres et discours*, Paris 1970, p. 267).

<sup>108</sup> KINNAMOS, ed. MEINEKE (cit. n. 2), p. 10.

<sup>109</sup> Clarification could come from secure identification of two figures: "Diomedes" of MANGANEIOS PRODROMOS 49 and 50, and the stalwart warrior of JAKOBOS, Ep. 21.

<sup>110</sup> Of which the *Chanson de Roland* is emblematic; for overviews see, e.g. J. FOX, *A Literary History of France: The Middle Ages*, London 1974, pp. 58–105.

verse and in the revived interest in writing erotic fiction. It is an attractive thought that Irene, almost certainly from a non-Greek background, perhaps a Norman, could have acted as a conduit for innovation in Byzantine literary productions in the middle years of the twelfth century, and proposals along these lines have been toyed with.<sup>111</sup> However, the timing and circumstances of the Byzantine new developments are now better understood.

Theodore Prodromos is almost certainly the author of the satirical *Ptochoprodromika* which are the best examples of literary use of the vernacular.<sup>112</sup> Theodore's most consistent patron was the emperor John II, for whose favours he and others vied competitively. Another patron was Nikephoros Bryennios, to whom Theodore dedicated his novel *Rhodanthe and Dosikles*, which would thus have been written before 1138 (when Nikephoros died on campaign in Cilicia).<sup>113</sup> The epic-romance *Digenis Akritis*, Byzantium's *chanson de geste*, is parodied in the first Ptochoprodromic poem, which is dedicated to John II; *Digenis Akritis* was thus written before 1142 (when John II died, also when on campaign in Cilicia).<sup>114</sup> The strands of experimentation that led to these innovative texts would have been under fabrication in the *theatra* of the 1130s (and perhaps of the 1120s). Here the leading figure was Irene Doukaina: Irene the *sebastokratorissa* may well have been a part of these circles, but she is not mentioned

in the surviving texts, and she would have been out-ranked. Admittedly some of those whom she subsequently sponsored – most notably Theodore Prodromos – were leading figures in these decades. Admittedly also there are comments in the letters from the monk Jacob which imply that Irene had taken part in literary contests, both as an adjudicator and as a participant.<sup>115</sup> However, by the time we come to the years of Irene's active patronage after 1142 the innovations one might have liked to have associated with her have already been put in place. The situation is not as clear-cut as it once seemed.

Apart from the arguable case of the decorated manuscripts of the *Kokkinobaphos Homilies* (arguable because of questions over the connection to Irene, not because of their quality), it is hard to say that Irene's patronage stimulated fresh directions in Byzantine culture. It is difficult to suggest that, in the manner of Eleanor of Aquitaine, her near contemporary in the West, she instigated a literary movement. Her secretary, Manganeios, has left tantalising glimpses of her crises, as has her spiritual father Jacob. One yearns to construct Irene's biography. But in comparison with the documentation that, for example, Marjorie Chibnall could draw on for the life of the empress Mathilda, the Byzantine chancery archives are bare. We can never really know the *sebastokratorissa*, and questions over the reality of her patronage still remain.<sup>116</sup>

111 E. JEFFREYS, The Comnenian Background to the romans d'antiquité, in: *Byzantion*, 50, 1980, pp. 455–486.

112 The issue revolves around metrical and stylistic issues, and deserves a sober reassessment; in the meantime see H. EIDENEIER, *Ptochoprodromos: Einführung, kritische Ausgabe, deutsche Übersetzung, Glossar*, Cologne 1991.

113 E. JEFFREYS, A Date for Rhodanthe and Dosikles, in: A. AGAPITOS/D. REINSCH (ed.), *Der Roman im Byzanz der Komnenenzeit*, Frankfurt am Main 2000, pp. 127–136; P. ROILLOS, *Amphoteroglossia: A Poetics of the Twelfth-Century Medieval Greek Novel*, Cambridge, MA 2005, p. 7.

114 PTOCHOPRODROMOS I, 160–177, ed. EIDENEIER, *Ptochoprodromos* (cit. n. 112), presents a parodic wrestling scene with verbal links to *Digenis Akritis*, *Grottaferrata* 4. 112–138 (ed. JEFFREYS). There are also phrases in the abduction scene in *Rhodanthe and Dosikles* (2. 400–441; ed. MARCOVICH) which reflect *Digenis*' hunting ethos, reinforcing this dating.

115 Epp. 4.19–20, 5.64–69.

116 It is hoped that the forthcoming edition of Manganeios Prodromos will enable a firmer chronology to be established into which the production of the texts and objects associated with Irene can be slotted.

FEMALE CHURCH FOUNDERS:  
THE AGENCY OF THE VILLAGE WIDOW  
IN LATE BYZANTIUM

SHARON E. J. GERSTEL AND SOPHIA KALOPISSI-VERTI

Around the year 890 the Byzantine emperor Leo VI inherited vast properties in the northern Peloponnese. The contents of the bequest, which were inventoried by an imperial official, included gold coins, silver and gold vessels, copper objects, textiles, flocks of sheep, landed properties, and more than three thousand slaves.<sup>1</sup> Economic historians have analyzed this bequest in order to discuss issues of land ownership, cloth production, and slavery in the middle Byzantine period, particularly in the Empire's hinterlands.<sup>2</sup> But the inheritance – as a legal transaction – raises other questions that are of immediate concern for this volume, for the testator was a woman who had disinherited her own grandson in favor of the ruling emperor.<sup>3</sup> The seemingly independent financial position of women such as the Peloponnesian Danelis is at odds with the cliché of the impoverished widow, best exemplified by the Gospel story of the widow's mite,<sup>4</sup> a tale that was

picked up by Byzantine authors including John Moschos.<sup>5</sup> Yet, as the story of Danelis illustrates, widows were in a legal position to control their own property and wealth, which in some cases was substantial. This aspect of the story, which has been ignored by scholars, is the focus of this contribution.

This paper examines the involvement of widows in the construction or renovation of churches and monasteries, either as primary benefactors or as more modest contributors to village foundations. Owing to the uneven preservation of sources, both written and material, our focus will necessarily fall on late Byzantium, evoking comparisons from the middle Byzantine period when available. The ability of widows to participate in church foundation, as we shall see, reflected the strong juridical rites of widows in Byzantium and their critical position within families where they served, on occasion, as heads of household. As

<sup>1</sup> Ed. I. BEKKER, *Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia*, Bonn 1838, pp. 320–321.

<sup>2</sup> M. HENDY, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire, 1081–1261*, Washington, DC 1969, pp. 206–207; S. RUNCIMAN, *The Widow Danelis*, in: K. VARVARESSOS (ed.), *Études dédiées à la mémoire d'André M. Andréadès*, Athens 1940, pp. 425–431; M. KAPLAN, *L'aristocrate byzantine et sa fortune*, in: S. LEBECQ/A. DIERKENS/R. LE JAN/J.-M. SANSTERRE (ed.), *Femmes et pouvoirs des femmes à Byzance et en Occident (VIe–Xe siècles)*, Lille 1999, pp. 205–226; K. KOURELIS, *Fabrics and Rubble Walls: The Archaeology of Danielis' Gifts*, in: *Byzantine Studies Conference Abstracts*, 30, 2004, pp. 26–28.

<sup>3</sup> The Chronicle of Skylitzes succinctly notes: *During the reign of Leo VI, the son of Basil I, Danelis again visited Constantinople and offered the emperor similar presents. She appointed him her heir and died after a while.* ed. I. THURN, *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, 5)*, Berlin/New York 1973, p. 161: 94–98; V. TSAMAKDA, *The Illustrated Chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes in Madrid*, Leiden 2002, p. 137, fig. 230.

<sup>4</sup> Mark 12:42–44; Luke 21:2–4.

<sup>5</sup> Tale 127 tells the story of a widow of about 80 years of age who distributes two lepta to each person entering the church of Sts Kosmas and Damianos, text in *PG* 88.3, see tr. J. WORTLEY, *John Moschos, The Spiritual Meadow (Pratum Spirituale)*, Kalamazoo, MI 1992, pp. 104–105.

we shall suggest, the increased involvement of widows – even humble women of the Byzantine village – in the foundation of churches in the late Byzantine period, appears to benefit from changes in attitude toward the alienation of dowry properties in the last centuries of imperial rule.

Although scholars often note the marital status of female founders, the very agency provided by their widowhood has not received sufficient attention. Yet, an understanding of their legal and economic status is critical to any discussion of women and their ability to found churches. Laws regulating the distribution of property following the death of a spouse are included in the *Ecloga*, which were enacted by the Isaurian rulers in the year 726.<sup>6</sup> The second chapter of the *Ecloga* states: *If the husband predeceases the wife and there are children of the marriage, the wife being their mother, she shall control her marriage portion and all her husband's property as becomes the head of the family and household.*<sup>7</sup> Critical to the code, therefore, and to the issue of female agency, is the widow's assumption of the position of head of the family and her legal control of her dowry properties and funds. These laws, which gov-

erned inheritance and the guardianship of children, remained largely unchanged through the last days of the empire, although specific cases were brought before local magistrates when questions of dowry or guardianship of minor children were under dispute. Novels issued in the late Byzantine period also offered minor refinements to the earlier law code.<sup>8</sup>

Following a husband's death, the restoration of the dowry superseded other financial obligations of the estate, including debts to the State or to creditors.<sup>9</sup> According to Byzantine law, the dowry had to be inventoried within three months of the death of the spouse.<sup>10</sup> Thus the dowry of Maria, the widow of Manuel Dobylyzenos, was inventoried in August 1384 shortly after her husband's death at the Battle of Chortaites.<sup>11</sup> Although her marriage share had been assessed at 1585 hyperpyra, a portion had diminished in value. Manuel's estate was duly required to provide supplemental funds (or gifts in kind) to make up the shortfall; these included seven icons (valued at 32 hyperpyra), jewelry (valued at 87 ½ hyperpyra), horses (valued at 20 hyperpyra), properties, etc.<sup>12</sup>

6 Ed. L. BURGMANN, *Ecloga. Das Gesetzbuch Leons III. und Konstantinos' V.*, Frankfurt am Main 1983. For earlier legislation see D. WHITE, *Property Rights of Women: The Changes in the Justinian Legislation Regarding the Dowry and the Parapherna*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 32.2, 1982, pp. 539–548.

7 *Εἰ δὲ παίδων ὑπόντων ὁ ἀνὴρ πρὸ τῆς ἰδίας γαμετῆς τελευτήσῃ, τὴν γυναῖκα ἤγουν τὴν τῶν αὐτῶν τέκνων μητέρα ἐγκάτοχον τῆς τε προικὸς αὐτῆς καὶ ἀνδρώας ἀπάσης ὑπάρξεως εἶναι, καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν πᾶσαν τοῦ οἴκου ποιείσθαι φροντίδα τε καὶ διοίκησιν...* BURGMANN, *Ecloga* (cit. n. 6), 2. 5. 1, tr. E. FRESHFIELD, *A Revised Manual of Roman Law Founded upon the Ecloga of Leo III and Constantine V, of Isauria, Ecloga privata aucta*, Cambridge 1926, p. 28; G. BUCKLER, *Women in Byzantine Law about 1100 A.D.*, in: *Byzantion*, 11, 1936, p. 410.

8 For inheritance disputes concerning the dowry see J. BEAUCAMP/G. DAGRON (ed.), *La transmission du patrimoine: Byzance et l'aire méditerranéenne*, Paris 1998. See also R. MACRIDES, *Dowry and Inheritance in the Late Period: Some Cases from the Patriarchal Register*, in: D. SIMON (ed.), *Eherecht und Familiengut in Antike und Mittelalter*, Munich 1992, pp. 89–98.

9 After examining the more than 80 cases concerning dowry or other family property that were brought before the patriarchal court between the 1315 and 1402, Ruth Macrides noted that “certainly one generalization is possible: the protection of the woman's dowry is the most common outcome of the patriarchal decisions throughout the register”. MACRIDES, *Dowry* (cit. n. 8), p. 94.

10 N. MATSES, *Τὸ οικογενειακὸν δίκαιον κατὰ τὴν νομολογίαν τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τῶν ἐτῶν 1315–1401*, Athens 1962, pp. 157–163.

11 N. OIKONOMIDES (ed.), *Actes de Docheiariou (Archives de l'Athos, 13)*, Paris 1984, pp. 258–265.

12 For an interesting comparable case and especially on the required time to inventory the holdings see C. MALTEZOU, *Encore sur l'histoire des femmes: la dot d'une veuve grecque mariée à Durazzo*, in: B. DOUMERC/C. PICARD (ed.), *Byzance et ses périphéries: Hommage à Alain Ducellier*, Toulouse 2004, pp. 255–262.

As Angeliki Laiou has noted, the highly protected nature and intended purpose of the dowry placed limitations upon its economic use.<sup>13</sup> But, while the laws that safeguarded the dowry remained largely unaltered, its use and function changed, suggesting a relaxation in societal views about the administration of inherited properties, especially in times of economic hardship or political instability. In the middle Byzantine period, the alienation of dowry goods was restricted; by the later period, based on an analysis of property transactions, these assets could be used in more flexible ways. The increased number of sales or donations made by women to monasteries in the late Byzantine period may provide evidence for a changing approach to the alienation of dowry properties, which could be substantial when supplemented by other inherited or purchased properties.

The involvement of widows in church foundation is most easily documented in the lavish churches of Constantinople and in Byzantium's smaller urban centers. Among these, a number were renovated or newly constructed by imperial and upper class widows as pious offerings but also, more practically, as nunneries that could support them through infirmities and in old age. Such foundations, furthermore, housed the tombs of deceased husbands, members of their

extended family, and the women themselves.<sup>14</sup> The dowager empress Theodora, widow of Michael VIII Palaiologos, for example, reconstructed and endowed the Lips monastery, the convent of the Holy Anargyroi, and, perhaps, the convent of the Theotokos ta Mikra Romaïou.<sup>15</sup> As is well known, the bodies of Theodora, her family, and her descendants were entombed within the south church and ambulatory of the Lips monastery;<sup>16</sup> their eternal memories were recalled in services, as mandated by the institution's foundation document. At the convent of the Holy Anargyroi, according to its charter, commemorations were to be made for Theodora's ancestors and her descendants, *in the same manner as at Lips, but simply, and not with such great expense, but such as would not be onerous for the convent.*<sup>17</sup> The vast properties given to support the Lips monastery, as Alice-Mary Talbot has shown, derived from Theodora's own inheritance and from gifts from her son, importantly **not** from her late husband's estate.<sup>18</sup> Theodora is but one example of a large number of female founders – almost all of them widows – related by blood or marriage to the emperor Andronikos II.<sup>19</sup>

Involvement in church foundation in Byzantium's cities, however, was not limited to imperial women. Maria-Martha, widow of

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- 13 A. E. LAIOU, The Role of Women in Byzantine Society, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 31.1, 1981, pp. 236–241.
- 14 A.-M. TALBOT, Building Activity in Constantinople under Andronikos II: The Role of Women Patrons in the Construction and Restoration of Monasteries, in: N. ΝΕΣΙΠΟĞLU (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, Leiden 2001, pp. 329–343; V. KIDONOPOULOS, *Bauten in Konstantinopel 1204–1328: Verfall und Zerstörung, Restaurierung, Umbau und Neubau von Profan- und Sakralbauten*, Wiesbaden 1994.
- 15 A.-M. TALBOT, Empress Theodora Palaiologina, Wife of Michael VIII, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46, 1992, pp. 295–303. On the evidence for widows entering convents in the middle Byzantine period see D. ABRAHAMSE, *Women's Monasticism in the middle Byzantine Period: Problems and Prospects*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 50–51.
- 16 T. MACRIDY, The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 18, 1964, pp. 253–277; C. MANGO/E. J. W. HAWKINS, Additional Notes, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 18, 1964, pp. 299–315.
- 17 BMFD, III, p. 1292.
- 18 For an inventory of these properties see *ibid.*, pp. 1279–1280.
- 19 See A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina: Abbess of the Convent of Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 119–147; TALBOT, *Building Activity* (cit. n. 14), pp. 329–343.



1: Berroia, church of the Resurrection, west wall, 1314/15

Michael Glabas Tarchaneiotēs, erected the funerary chapel of the Pammakaristos monastery in Constantinople shortly after 1310.<sup>20</sup> The small church of the Resurrection of Christ in Berroia was completed in 1314/15 through the patronage of Euphrosyne, widow of Xenos Psalidas, who is named in an inscription on its west wall (Fig. 1).<sup>21</sup> Urban women, including widows, also presented monasteries with manuscripts, liturgical vessels, icons, and textiles used for a variety of church services, suggesting patterns of donation at a more modest level.<sup>22</sup>

Based on information published to date, one might presume that the ability of widows to

found or support ecclesiastical institutions was restricted to members of the economic and social elite. Connected with standing monuments of historical import and churches that still preserve impressive mosaic or fresco cycles, these female founders are well known in the field of Byzantine studies. Yet, even below the ranks of these women and far from Byzantium's urban centers, widows were involved in church foundation, suggesting a wider cultural pattern and, indeed, one that permeated all levels of Byzantine society.

The peasant widowhood in Byzantium has not yet been the subject of a comprehensive investigation.<sup>23</sup> Studies of rural widows in the me-

20 H. BELTING/C. MANGO/D. MOURIKI, *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St Mary Pammakaristos*, Washington, DC 1979. On the metrical inscription in the apse see recently A. RHOBY, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken. Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung*, I, Vienna 2009, pp. 402–403.

21 S. PELEKANIDES, *Καλλιέργης ὀλης Θεσσαλίας ἄριστος ζωγράφος*, Athens 1973; RHOBY, *Byzantinische Epigramme* (cit. n. 20), pp. 157–160 (with earlier bibliography).

22 See the paper by Alice-Mary Talbot in this volume.

23 A. M. KONIDARES, *Ἡ θέση τῆς χήρας στη βυζαντινὴ κοινωνία*, in: *Βυζαντινά*, 16, 1991, pp. 35–42. For information on widows in middle Byzantine hagiographical texts see K. ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ, *Ἡ γυναίκα στη μέση βυζαντινὴ εποχὴ. Κοινωνικὰ πρότυπα καὶ καθημερινὸς βίος στα αἰθολογικὰ κείμενα*, Athens 2005, pp. 172–182. For dowry and inheritance in traditional (modern) villages in Greece and Cyprus see C. ΠΑΥΛΤ (ed.), *Familles et biens en Grèce et à Chypre*, Paris 1985.

dieval West, however, are numerous, and these have much to offer, both in terms of methodology and comparative data.<sup>24</sup> Demographic analyses of the medieval population tell us that widows formed a large part of the rural community, one that likely increased substantially in times of war.<sup>25</sup> Their presence in the village can be tracked in tax registers, where they are listed as head of household or, less frequently, as living in the households of adult children. In the late medieval West, the percentage of widow-headed households on manorial estates has been estimated at 10–14 percent.<sup>26</sup> The number has been shown to be even higher – 17–22 percent – in Byzantine villages for the same period.<sup>27</sup> On occasion, the percentage could rise beyond these numbers. In 1262, for example, tax collectors assessed the land holdings of the Iviron monastery in the village of Ieressos in northern Greece. Of the 79 households listed in the *praktikon*, nineteen – roughly one-quarter – were headed by widows. Listed

as *χήρα* at the beginning of each entry, widows such as Irene, Zoe, Kale, Photeine, and Anna, were responsible for raising their children or, in some cases, grandchildren, maintaining the household and livestock, and paying rent or taxes.<sup>28</sup> The holdings of the female heads of household do not differ substantially from those of the male villagers who supported wives and children. The measured land, teams of oxen, mules, pigs, etc., are roughly similar to those of other villagers, as were the concomitant fiscal obligations. In composition, however, the families of the widows might be seen to present certain differences. Nearly all of the widows listed as head of household also had at least one son or grandson living at home. The demographics of such households, of course, speak to the intense agricultural labor that was necessary to maintain the land in order to support family and community, labor that is manifested in the skeletons of villagers, both male and female.<sup>29</sup> Widows who are not listed as

- 24 See, for example, J. M. BENNETT, *Widows in the Medieval English Countryside*, in: L. MIRROR (ed.), *Upon My Husband's Death. Widows in the Literature and Histories of Medieval Europe*, Ann Arbor, MI 1992; J. M. BENNETT, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside: Gender and Household in Brigstock before the Plague*, New York 1987; L. A. GATES, *Widows, Property, and Remarriage: Lessons from Glastonbury's Deverill Manors*, in: *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 28, 1996, pp. 19–35.
- 25 A. E. LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, *Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire. A Social and Demographic Study*, Princeton 1977, pp. 89–94.
- 26 For an analysis of the position of widows in tax registers in the medieval West see P. FRANKLIN, *Peasant Widows' "Liberation" and Remarriage before the Black Death*, in: *The Economic History Review*, n.s., 39.2, 1986, pp. 186–204.
- 27 LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, *Peasant Society* (cit. n. 25); A. E. LAIOU, *Family Structure and the Transmission of Property*, in: J. HALDON (ed.), *The Social History of Byzantium*, West Sussex 2009, pp. 51–75.
- 28 For the *Practicum Nicolai Campani* and *Demetrii Sparteni* of 1262 see V. KRAVARI/J. LEFORT/H. MÉTRÉVÉLI/N. OIKONOMIDÈS/D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU (ed.), *Actes d'Iviron*, III, de 1204 à 1328 (*Archives de l'Athos*, 18), Paris 1994, pp. 97–99. An additional two widows in the village, Maria and Photeine, were not heads of household. The number of widows in this village seems particularly high. See the population estimates in LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, *Peasant Society* (cit. n. 25), pp. 89–90; eadem, *The Role of Women* (cit. n. 13), p. 247; eadem, *The Byzantine Village (5th–14th Century)*, in: C. MORRISON/J. LEFORT/J.-P. SODINI (ed.), *Les villages dans l'Empire byzantin (IVe–XVe siècle) (Réalités byzantines, 11)*, Paris 2006, p. 32. In looking at the eleventh-century Cadaster of Thebes, Charles Brand found that 19.4 percent of the *stoichoi* recorded women as the heads of household. C. M. BRAND, *Some Byzantine Women of Thebes – and Elsewhere*, in: J. S. LANGDON/S. W. REINERT/J. S. ALLEN/C. P. IOANNIDES (ed.), *TO EΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΝ: Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis, Jr., I, Hellenic Antiquity and Byzantium*, New Rochelle, NY 1993, pp. 59–68. For the mention of women in the Cadaster of Thebes see also L. NEVILLE, *Taxing Sophronia's Son-in-Law: Representations of Women in Provincial Documents*, in: L. GARLAND (ed.), *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience, 800–1200*, Aldershot 2006, pp. 77–89.
- 29 See S. E. J. GERSTEL et al., *A Late Medieval Settlement at Panakton*, in: *Hesperia*, 72, 2003, pp. 202–204, for a discussion of osteological traces of agricultural labor. For similar conclusions derived from analysis of a large group of



head of household found a home with other relatives, indicating, in all likelihood, their inability – financially or physically – to administer their own estates.

Given their substantial numbers, village widows must have constituted a visible minority within small communities. In her groundbreaking study of the late medieval village of Brigstock, England, Judith Bennett concluded that “widows, although certainly not liberated, were nevertheless the most publicly active of all women in the medieval countryside”.<sup>30</sup> The evidence suggests that peasant widows in late Byzantium were equally active, both as heads of household and as church patrons. The evidence for this activity derives from written, archaeological and artistic sources – all documenting female involvement in church foundation at the village level.

The acts of Athos and monastic institutions in other parts of the Byzantine world record numerous land transactions between widows and churches or monasteries; these suggest widespread societal involvement of widows with, most often but not exclusively, local churches.<sup>31</sup> The records of sale (as demanded by law) carefully trace the lines of ownership so that the transactions would not be disputed. The records often stipulate that the transaction was made of free will and without coercion. Control of their inheritance or their dowry – their *γονικόν*, their

*θεώρητρον*, their *ὑπόβολον*, their *πατρικόν*, and their legal right to alienate inherited or dowry properties, placed widows in a powerful, but also vulnerable, position.<sup>32</sup> In an act of sale of 1007, for example, the nun Maria, a widow and mother of three children, Kale, Niketas and Styliane, sold a small piece of property for six nomismata. The act specifies that the property was part of Maria’s inheritance from her father, the priest Niketas Sidirokausites.<sup>33</sup> In 1010, the widow Kalida, mother of Basili and Zoe, sold properties inherited from her grandfather and uncle, to the abbot of a neighboring monastery for the price of fifteen nomismata.<sup>34</sup> A perusal of the acts contained in the Athos archives suggests that the number of widows involved in donating or selling property to the peninsula’s monasteries increased in the late Byzantine period. In ca. 1290, for example, Irene Panagiotou and her daughter, Maria, sold a field measuring three stremmata (*γονικόν ἡμῶν τριμοδιαίον χωράφιον*) to the Lavra monastery for the price of a cow and its calf.<sup>35</sup> Keladene and her son, Demetrios, are listed within a series of transactions that record the names of villagers who donated or sold property to the Xeropotamou monastery in the early fourteenth century. She is the only woman to appear without a husband and to sign a property transaction in her own right. Listed without the name of a husband and likely, therefore, a widow,

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skeletons of the late tenth/early eleventh century see C. PAPAGEORGIOU/N. I. XIROTIKIS, Anthropological Research on a Byzantine Population from Korytiani, West Greece, in: L. A. SCHEPARTZ/S. C. FOX/C. BOURBOU (ed.), *New Directions in the Skeletal Biology of Greece* (Hesperia Supplement, 43), Athens 2009, pp. 193–221.

30 BENNETT, *Widows* (cit. n. 24), p. 103.

31 A.-M. TALBOT, *Women and Mount Athos*, in: A. BRYER/M. CUNNINGHAM (ed.), *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism*, Aldershot 1996, pp. 67–79.

32 On the *θεώρητρον* and the *ὑπόβολον*, the financial contribution of the husband in marriage (the equivalent of the dowry offered by the wife), see S. PERENTIDES, Πώς μια συνθήκη μπορεί να εξελιχθεί σε θεσμό; Η περίπτωση του “θεωρήτρον”, in: *Αφιέρωμα στον Νίκο Σβορώνο*, II, *Rhethymno* 1986, pp. 476–485; A. ΚΙΟΥΣΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, Ο θεσμός της οικογένειας στην Ήπειρο κατά τον 13ο αιώνα, Athens 1990, pp. 56–59.

33 J. LEFORT/N. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΗΣ/D. ΠΑΠΑΧΡΥΣΣΑΝΘΟΥ/H. ΜΕΤΡΕΒΕΛΙ (ed.), *Actes d’Ivion*, I (Archives de l’Athos, 14), Paris 1985, pp. 179–182.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 190–193.

35 P. LEMERLE/A. GUILLOU/N. SVORONOS/D. ΠΑΠΑΧΡΥΣΣΑΝΘΟΥ (ed.), *Actes de Lavra*, II, De 1204 à 1328 (Archives de l’Athos, 8), Paris 1977, pp. 67–68.

Keladene sold fields of six stremmata to the monastery in 1312 and donated additional fields for the salvation of her soul and the commemoration of her memory and that of her son.<sup>36</sup>

The reasons for the sale or donation of properties were both economic and spiritual. Some sales were surely generated by economic hardship. The stated motivation for many independent widows (those who kept their deceased husbands' land holdings and did not remarry) to donate properties to the church stemmed from the desire to care and sustain themselves in old age through the sale of property to a monastery (the so-called *adelphaton*).<sup>37</sup> A southern Italian document of 1189 records the intent of Basile, the widow of Nicholas Mantellos, to donate her property, including a large number of sheep and goats, to the convent of the Virgin of Messene, which she had entered as a nun. Upon her death, the transfer of all goods would be complete and she would be buried in a tomb within the convent.<sup>38</sup> Yet many of the donations appear to reflect the simple desire to memorialize one's self or one's family members in perpetuity through a single charitable action – a contractual donation of a sacred type – the *ψυχικόν* or *ψυχική δωρεά* – that is paralleled in the language used in commemorative inscriptions painted on the walls of many small churches. Although earlier in date,

an eleventh-century will of the South Italian widow Gemma (Γέμμα) makes the timing and motivation of the bequest manifest: *I, Gemma, called by name the wife of Nikephoros of blessed memory... oppressed by grievous sickness, lying on my bed and having understood clearly as never before the power of death, make my will while my senses are clear and I am in my right mind.* She gives to the church as *a gift and a freehold* a garden, the surrounding estate and grottoes, and asks *that everyone who in the future offers the bloodless sacrifice shall remember me in the prayers that are made to God.*<sup>39</sup> In an act of 1482 from the Vazelon monastery, the nun Kataphyge Skoularopoulos donated her *γονικόν* and *πατρικόν* properties<sup>40</sup> to the monastery on behalf of her spiritual salvation and the remission of her sins as well as those of her son and parents.<sup>41</sup> In other cases, the women ask to have their names inscribed in the diptychs of the church, along with those of their husbands and parents.<sup>42</sup> Ierakina, the daughter of John Migidotos, donated a vineyard and the grapes harvested from the vines to the Xenophon monastery in 1348 in exchange for the commemoration of the memories of her parents in liturgical services and the inscription of their names in the holy brebion.<sup>43</sup>

The inscription of votive prayers in surviving chapels mirrors the spiritual transaction described

36 J. BOMPAIRE (ed.), *Actes de Xèropotamou* (Archives de l'Athos, 3), Paris 1964, pp. 117, 126.

37 See TALBOT, *Women and Mount Athos* (cit. n. 31), pp. 76–77, for additional examples.

38 A. GUILLOU, *Les actes grecs de S. Maria di Messina*, Palermo 1963, pp. 118–121.

39 G. ROBINSON, *History and Cartulary of the Greek Monastery of St Elias and St Anastasius of Carbone* (Orientalia Christiana, 15.2 = 53), Rome 1929, pp. 150–151. The Greek documents collected in the monastery of Sts Elias and Anastasios of Carbone in Southern Italy record a number of exchanges initiated by widows on behalf of local churches or monasteries. For a discussion of these documents as a source on Byzantine women see J. HERRIN, *In Search of Byzantine Women: Three Avenues of Approach*, in: A. CAMERON/A. KUHRIT (ed.), *Images of Women in Antiquity*, London/Canberra 1983, pp. 167–189.

40 On the occasional ambiguity of terminology see A. E. LAIOU, *Marriage Prohibitions, Marriage Strategies and the Dowry in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium*, in: BEAUCAMP/DAGRON, *La transmission* (cit. n. 8), p. 138.

41 T. OUSPENSKY/V. BÉNÉCHÉVITCH, *Actes de Vazelon: Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire de la propriété rurale et monastique à Byzance aux XIII–XV siècles*, Leningrad 1927, no. 7.

42 *Ibid.*, no. 76.

43 The property transaction is in the name of the woman who may be a widow. D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU (ed.), *Actes de Xénophon* (Archives de l'Athos, 15), Paris 1986, pp. 204–207.

in the texts. In a male hermitage located in the cliffs above the monastery of the Holy Forty Martyrs near Sparta, for example, is inscribed the name of *the servants of God Kyriake and Kale*.<sup>44</sup> An inscription in a hermitage dedicated to St John near Zoupena (Hagioi Anargyroi), close to Geraki, asks the Lord to *remember the soul of your servant, the nun Euphrosyne Glyka, and to forgive her on the Day of Judgment*.<sup>45</sup> Although it is impossible to know whether or not these women were widows, the absence of the name of a husband is suggestive. Like the recording of properties donated to male monasteries in institutional acts, the inscription of the name recalled the involvement of women in donating properties, finances, fields or vineyards for the sustenance of the hermitage; the inscribed text, used as a prompt by the monk, signaled the counter-gift, the offered prayers on behalf of the named supplicant.

Aside from mentions in texts such as wills, acts, and property assessments, there are also material remains that witness the participation of village widows in the foundation or renovation of local churches. Archaeological evidence from village sites or churches and painted inscriptions within humble churches provide important evidence that allows us, for the first time, to connect widows directly to modest foundations in late Byzantine villages and to conjecture about their role in the construction, furnishing, and support of churches used for family worship and burial. Clearly, it is difficult to interpret the skeletal data. However, widows can be identified in multi-burial graves where the female skeleton is the second to be placed in the tomb together with the disarticulated bones of a male adult. In such cases, the bones of the first adult are gathered in a corner

of the grave – most often adjacent to the head of the later body; on occasion, the long bones are placed over the body of the recently deceased. Many of the graves also include the bones of children, which are generally included with those of the parent. Such graves are common in Byzantium, although they have yet to be collected or studied. One site – Panakton – provides the kind of information that might be useful to considering familial relationships and church patronage through the location and analysis of skeletal remains. This gendered reading of the skeletal remains produces more meaning than the information included in a simple archaeological report.<sup>46</sup> Excavations in 1991 and 1992 unearthed the remains of a small, hilltop village that subsisted in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, a period when the lands between Athens and Thebes saw political and military unrest.<sup>47</sup> In the late fourteenth century, a narthex housing two tombs was added to the settlement's central church. The tomb, located in the northeast corner of the narthex, housed three skeletons, including the remains of a woman who died at the approximate age of forty-five. Buried ca. 1400, hers was the last of three bodies to be placed in the tomb and covered by a marble slab. When she was buried, the skulls of two males who had preceded her in death were stacked in the corner of the tomb next to her head; their long bones were scattered over the lower portion of her body. Based on the shape of the skulls (the male crania were long and ovoid; that of the woman was a broad pentagonoid), the skeletons with which she shared a tomb belonged to her husband and another male, perhaps an adult son (Fig. 2). Burial within the church narthex suggests that the woman and her

44 N. B. DRANDAKES, *Τὸ Παλιμονάστηρο τῶν Ἁγίων Σαράντα στὴ Λακεδαίμονα καὶ τὸ ἀσκηταριὸ τοῦ*, in: *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας*, 16, 1991–1992, p. 135.

45 S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece*, Vienna 1992, p. 107.

46 J. R. SOFAER, *Gender, Bioarchaeology and Human Ontogeny*, in: R. GOWLAND / C. KNÜSEL (ed.), *Social Archaeology of Funerary Remains*, Oxford 2006, pp. 155–167.

47 GERSTEL et al., *A Late Medieval Settlement* (cit. n. 29), pp. 199–204.



2: Panakton, skulls from northeast tomb of church, ca. 1400

husband were involved in the construction of this addition to the church or in charitable donations that would sustain the building. It is not impossible that the skeletons are the remains of the village priest and his family. As the last member of her immediate family to be buried within the tomb, it would have fallen to this widow to recall the memories of her husband and son, both financially, through donations to the church or the purchase of lamps to light over the tomb, and spiritually, through prayers offered over the grave. Indeed, the discovery of glass lamp fragments and ceramic bowls within the fill demonstrates that such commemorative practices did take place at this tomb.<sup>48</sup> Further evidence for the burial of a widow and her deceased husband within or adjacent to a church can be seen at a small church near Psinthos on the island of Rhodes. A female

skeleton was revealed within a cist grave built against the south exterior wall of the church. The bones of a second skeleton, perhaps the remains of her husband, were stacked next to her head. In all likelihood, the bones are the remains of the widowed founder of the church and of her husband.<sup>49</sup>

The most abundant artistic source for the study of the late Byzantine village is the painted church. Many of the programs of village churches have been studied and their inscriptions have been collected in *corpora*.<sup>50</sup> In the absence of well-studied archaeological data, the inscriptions within painted churches form the most important source for the study of the peasant widow as founder. Collected from numerous churches in Greece and Cyprus, monumental inscriptions provide a large enough body of evidence to ena-

48 Ibid., p. 188.

49 I. VOLANAKES, *Ναός Αγίας Τριάδας Ψίνθου*, in: *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον*, 50, 1995, B2, pp. 825–826; T. ARCHONTOPOULOS/H.K. PAPAVALLEIΟΥ, *Ρόδος: Πληροφορίες για την ιστορία του τόπου μέσα από το γεγονός του θανάτου. Ταφική τοπογραφία του νησιού από τον 4ο αι. μ. Χ. έως τις αρχές του 16ου αιώνα*, in: *Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα εξ Αθηνών*, 39, 2006, p. 209, no. 53. There is no explicit mention in the bibliography as to whether the second skeleton belonged to a man or a woman, although the taphonomy suggests the former.

50 See, for example, KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 45); G. GEROLA, *Monumenti Veneti dell'isola di Creta*, IV, Venice 1932; A. STYLIANOU/J. STYLIANOU, *Donors and Dedicatory Inscriptions, Supplicants and Suppli-*

ble us to assess the role of widows as a sub-group of donors within the general population. The inscriptions, primarily dated to the late Byzantine period, list the names of those who contributed modest amounts to support the construction, renovation, or decoration of local churches located either in provinces belonging to Byzantium or in rural areas that were nominally under Venetian or Latin rule. In addition to serving the liturgical needs of the named families, many of the churches were surrounded by graves, indicating that they were also intended for commemorative rituals. The inscribing of names in the building, therefore, had a double function, i. e., to record the donation, but also to recall the donor. Supplementary information is derived from votive portraits or inscriptions that appear in a number of rural churches, many requesting the viewer to remember the person depicted or named.

According to the inscriptions women frequently participated in church foundation or renovation together with their husbands and children. The women, however, are most often listed as “wife” rather than by individual name. For example, in the late thirteenth-century church of the Savior in Alepochori, Megara, Leon Kokalakes, the priest, is listed as the patron, *ἄμα συμβύου κ(αί) τ[έ]κν[οι]ς κ(αί) τῆς μ(η)τρ(ό)ς αὐτοῦ*.<sup>51</sup> The anonymity of Leon’s wife and mother demonstrates that it is the male who is the primary agent. Although a number of examples do exist where the name of the wife is included together with that of her spouse, individual names of the children are rarely cited. The vast majority of inscriptions follow this pattern. There are, however, a small num-

ber of inscriptions that list women, together with their children, without the names of their husbands. In these cases one can safely identify these women as widows, i. e., female heads of household, who are able, through their own financial means, to support the foundation and decoration of modest churches. The church inscriptions thus complement the information gleaned from property and tax inventories about village demographics and help us to extend the written source into the realm of the material world.

According to the evidence from church painting, widows were involved in church construction and decoration both as primary founders and as participants in collective family or village sponsorship. In three churches, widows are mentioned or represented as the primary founders. The donors’ inscription in the church of the Transfiguration in Pyrgi, Euboia (1296), lists the name of Kale Melledone followed by those of her two sons, George the priest and Demetrios, and their unnamed wives and children. There is no mention of Kale’s husband, suggesting that she was a widow.<sup>52</sup> Like Kale, Maria he Galatou, the primary sponsor of the painted decoration of the sanctuary in the church of St George at Maratho (1285/86) on the island of Naxos, is listed first in the dedicatory inscription. She is presented as the head of her family, which includes two generations: her two sons and their wives as well as her grandchildren.<sup>53</sup> The foundation and decoration of the church of Hagia Triada near Psinthos on the island of Rhodes (1407/08) is credited, according to the dedicatory inscription, to the initiative of the nun Kataphyge Alexena and her children.<sup>54</sup> Set against a white

cations in the Painted Churches of Cyprus, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft*, 9, 1960, pp. 97–128.

51 KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 45), p. 63.

52 KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 45), pp. 83–84, no. 31; A. KOUMOUSSI, *Les peintures murales de la Transfiguration de Pyrgi et de Sainte-Thèle en Eubée (Rapports avec l’art occidental)*, Athens 1987, pp. 13–15.

53 A. METSANE, *Ἡ χορηγία στις Κυκλάδες ἀπὸ τὸν 6ο μέχρι τὸν 14ο αἰ. Ἡ μαρτυρία τῶν ἐπιγραφῶν*, in: *Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, 52, 2004–2006, p. 425, no. 35.

54 I. CHRISTOFORAKI, *Χορηγικές μαρτυρίες στους ναούς της μεσαιωνικής Ρόδου (1204–1522)*, in: *Ρόδος 2400 χρόνια*, Athens 2000, pp. 460–461, pl. 181a; I. ΒΙΤΗΛΑ, *Ενδυματολογικές μαρτυρίες στις τοιχογραφίες της μεσαιωνικής Ρόδου*



3: Rhodes, Psinthos, Hagia Triada, portrait of the nun Kataphyge Alexena, 1407–1408

background decorated with the flowering plants of paradise, the widow Kataphyge is memorialized as a nun, who offers a model of her church to Christ (Fig. 3). As mentioned above, a cist grave built outside the church may have contained the bodies of the founder and her husband.<sup>55</sup> It appears that Kataphyge, following the death of her spouse, built the church to house her grave and that of her husband. When her body was placed in the tomb, her husband's bones were stacked in its northeast corner, as was the case at Panakton. Alternatively, the bones of the husband may have been translated from his initial tomb to be joined with those of his wife.

There is also evidence that village widows completed and embellished churches that had been begun by their husbands, like the widows who completed the Virgin Pammakaristos in Constantinople and the church of the Resurrection of Christ in Berroia. The foundation inscription painted over the entrance lintel of the church of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel at Blachiana Malevisiou in Crete states that the church was erected from the foundations and painted through the expenses of the late priest Michael Marmaras and his wife Stamatia in the year 1447.<sup>56</sup>

(1405 ai.–1523). Μία πρώτη προσέγγιση, in: Ρόδος 2400 χρόνια, Athens 2000, pp. 435, 445, fig. 2:1a, pl. 171γ; S. E. J. GERSTEL/A.-M. TALBOT, Nuns in the Byzantine Countryside, in: Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας, 27, 2006, p. 486.

55 VOLANAKES, Ναός Αγίας Τριάδας Ύψιθου (cit. n. 49), pp. 825–826; ARCHONTOPOULOS/ΠΑΠΑΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ, Ρόδος: Πληροφορίες για την ιστορία του τόπου (cit. n. 49), p. 209, no. 53.

56 GEROLA, Monumenti, IV (cit. n. 50), pp. 504–505, no. II: ... (δι' ἐξόδου τοῦ ἐν μακαρίᾳ τῇ) λήξει γενομένου πατῆρος Μιχαήλ τοῦ Μαρμαρᾶ καὶ τῆς (συμβίου αὐτοῦ) Σταματίας) ..... A modern cement floor prohibits the investigation of any medieval graves dug below it.

One of the most important changes in patterns of ecclesiastical foundation in the late Byzantine period is the increase in collective sponsorship of church construction and decoration in rural communities.<sup>57</sup> In inscriptions recording collective sponsorship, widows are listed as heads of household together with men who represent families. Five churches on the island of Crete reveal the involvement of widows in collective sponsorship. The large number of families listed on the north, west and south walls of St George at Troula in Hagios Theodoros Selinou (thirteenth–fourteenth century), includes that of Irene Sarakenoudena, likely a widow of the Sarakenos family, who is registered together with her children.<sup>58</sup> The inscription in the church of St George at Kometades in Sphakia (1313/14) includes two nuclear families, a single layman, two monks, *other people whose name God knows* (καὶ ἑτέρων ἀνθρώπων ὧν Κύριος γηνώσκει τὰ ὀνόματα αὐτῶν), and three widows with their children: kyra Kale Blastoudena, Anna Tzenaropole, and a third whose name has not been preserved.<sup>59</sup> The donor inscription in the

church of St George at Anydroi Selinou (1323) testifies to the initiative of a *protopapas* and a monk, who are mentioned first, and to the participation of twenty-two additional donors, mostly nuclear families, but also men with their children (probably widowers), single men (unmarried or widowers), a nun, and Irene he Anyphantou, evidently a widow, and her children (Fig. 4).<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the church of St George at Galata in Hagia Triada, Pyrgiotissa (1302) was founded or renovated and painted through the labor and expenses of a layman, a nun, and the nun Kataphyge, clearly a widow, along with her children.<sup>61</sup> The inscription in the church of the Virgin at Kakodiki Selinou (1331/32) includes a widow, he Sgourogeanou, with her *hetaireia* and her children among a *protopapas* and a priest and notary (*nomikos*) who took the initiative for the renovation of the church. The priests are mentioned first, as usual, and are followed by twenty-seven other donors mostly from nuclear families as well as single laymen, men with their children (widowers?), and families with their *hetaireia*.<sup>62</sup> The word *hetaireia*, men-

57 On this topic see KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 45), pp. 35–37; eadem, *Church Foundations by Entire Villages (13th–16th c.): A Short Note*, in: *Zbornik Radova Vizantinološkog Instituta*, 44, 2007, pp. 333–339.

58 GEROLA, *Monumenti*, IV (cit. n. 50), pp. 441–443, no. 14: Οἱ Ἐρίνη ἢ Σαρακηνοῦδένα καὶ τὸν τέκνον. Graves inside the church have been excavated. We wish to thank the archaeologists of the 28th and the 13th Ephorates of Byzantine Antiquities in Crete, especially Nikoleta Pyrrou, for their information on unpublished material regarding burials within the churches mentioned in this paper.

59 GEROLA, *Monumenti*, IV (cit. n. 50), pp. 472–473, no. 2: ... κυρὰ Καλῆς (τῆς) Βλαστοῦδένας καὶ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς, Ἄννης τῆς Τζήναρωπόλης καὶ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς, ... πούλας καὶ τὸν τέκ(νων) αὐτῆς, pp. 17–18, 32–33; I. SPATHARAKIS, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete*, Leiden 2001, pp. 33–35 (with previous bibliography).

60 GEROLA, *Monumenti*, IV (cit. n. 50), pp. 443–444, no. 15: ... Ἐρήνης τῆς Ἀνηφατοῦς καὶ τὸν τέκνο αὐτῆς; A. SUCROW, *Die Wandmalereien des Johannes Pagomenos in Kirchen der ersten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts auf Kreta*, PhD Thesis, Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn 1994, pp. 22–24, 34–35; SPATHARAKIS, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings* (cit. n. 59), pp. 63–66 (with complete bibliography).

61 GEROLA, *Monumenti*, IV (cit. n. 50), pp. 536–537, no. 5: ... καὶ Καταφηγῆς μοναχῆς καὶ τὸ τέκνο ...; SPATHARAKIS, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings* (cit. n. 59), pp. 22–23. Two arcosolia, probably of later date, are attached on the north and south side of the exterior. See also GERSTEL/TALBOT, *Nuns* (cit. n. 54), p. 488. Similar in context is the dedicatory inscription of the church of St Onouphrios at Kampanou Selinou painted by George Probatopoulos at the end of the fifteenth/beginning of the sixteenth century, in which a widow and her children are listed among four nuclear families headed by men, GEROLA, *Monumenti*, IV (cit. n. 50), pp. 468–469, no. 49: ... καὶ Σταμάτας τῆς Μαλο(ράχενας) ... αὐτῆς, probably to be completed (καὶ τῶν τέκνων) αὐτῆς.

62 GEROLA, *Monumenti*, IV (cit. n. 50), pp. 462–463, no. 41: ... ἡ Σγουρογοηανοῦ μετὴν ἑτερῆα τῆς καὶ μετὰ πεδηά τ(ης); SUCROW, *Die Wandmalereien des Johannes Pagomenos* (cit. n. 60), pp. 28–30, 37; SPATHARAKIS, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings* (cit. n. 59), pp. 82–84 (with bibliography); V. TSAMAKDA, *Die Panagia-Kirche und die Erzenkelkirche in Kakodiki*, Vienna 2012, pp. 37–144. A cemetery of uncertain date surrounds the church, SUCROW, p. 28.



4: Crete, Anydroi Selinou, St George, dedicatory inscription, 1323

tioned four times in this inscription, is unknown in Greek sources and should probably be related to the *societas* (συντροφία) recorded in fourteenth-century Venetian notarial documents.<sup>63</sup> The term seems to allude to a co-operative association aimed at the cultivation of agrarian products or at breeding animals. By sharing the costs and means of cultivation, such as land, working animals, seeds, personal labor etc., as well as the products, the partners could cultivate lands that were not exploitable on an individual basis. The term has also been related to the *fraterna societas* of the Venetian law according to which paternal property was inherited undivided mainly to the male descendants in order to secure an efficient cultivation of lands.<sup>64</sup> What is important for this study is the mention of a widow as the head of

an *betaireia*, essentially equal in status to men. In fact, thirteenth- and fourteenth-century notarial documents in Venetian Crete attest to the widows' rights to associate with other partners, to invest money, to incur debts, and to establish transactions of purchase and sale.<sup>65</sup>

In a number of churches in the late Byzantine period, short supplications are written alongside saints on behalf of members of the community. These short votive inscriptions, which are scattered among the wall paintings of a church, usually replace the long dedicatory inscriptions that record all of the donors in a single list. Two characteristic examples that testify to the participation of widows are found in churches on the island of Naxos. In Panagia stes Yiallous (1288), in the region of Hagiassos, one of the six votive inscrip-

63 C. GASPARIS, *Η γη και οι αγρότες στη μεσαιωνική Κρήτη, 13ος–14ος αι.*, Athens 1997, pp. 168–175. For examples of fourteenth-century contracts see pp. 388–395. We wish to thank C. Gasparis for his suggestions.

64 Τ. ΧΑΝΘΑΚΕ, *Ο ναϊσκος του Ευαγγελισμού στο Κακοδίκι Σελίνου: Οι τοιχογραφίες και η κτητορική επιγραφή*, in: *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*, 32, 2011, pp. 65–84.

65 C. ΜΑΛΤΕΖΟΥ, *Η παρουσία της γυναίκας στις νοταριακές πράξεις της περιόδου της Βενετοκρατίας*, in: *Κρητολογία*, 16–19, 1983–1984, pp. 62–79, especially pp. 66, 73, 75–76, 79.





5: *Naxos, Hagiassos, Panagia stes Yiallous, votive inscriptions in north blind arch, 1288*

tions found in the building records the name of Anna Koutenou and her son, referring, evidently, to a widow (Fig. 5).<sup>66</sup> The inscription is found between the portraits of the Virgin and St Kyriake. The discovery of burials adjacent to the church suggests that this isolated building served a commemorative function for those whose names were inscribed within.<sup>67</sup> Another widow, Kale Philotitisa, and her children are mentioned in a short invocation along with two other votive inscriptions in the church of St John the Theologian in Apeiranthos, Naxos (1309).<sup>68</sup> These short inscriptions are written next to a painted figure of the Virgin or a saint and they likely indicate that the named supplicant offered the expenses for the execution of a single painting.

These inscriptions demonstrate that widows in a rural milieu are regularly named in foundation

inscriptions and in short invocations that record the active participation of a large number of inhabitants of an agrarian community in founding, renovating, or decorating a village church. Placed among the other members of the village community, widows are listed by name together with their children as equal to families headed by men. The evidence from the inscriptions reflects the Byzantine inheritance laws outlined above. Laws mandating the widow's assumption of head of household following the death of her spouse were also common in Venetian Crete. According to thirteenth- and fourteenth-century notarial deeds on the island, once widowed, women took over the duties and privileges of their husband as head of the family and disposed freely of their property.

The consideration of church inscriptions that include widows as relatives – mainly moth-

66 KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 45), pp. 89–90, no. 38; METSANE, *Ἡ χορηγία* (cit. n. 53), p. 426, no. 37.

67 We thank C. Pennas for information on the burials found outside the church.

68 METSANE, *Ἡ χορηγία* (cit. n. 53), p. 428, no. 42.

ers or sisters – of the primary sponsors substantially augments the number of widows that can be found in the village. In this case it is not always possible to determine whether these widows had a share in funding the construction or renovation of the church; it is probable that they were mentioned in the inscriptions in order to be recalled in commemorative services.<sup>69</sup> The church of St George at Longanikos in Lakonia, dated 1374/75, was founded and painted through the collaboration and expenditure of two eminent members of the community: the *tzaousios* George Pelekases and his family, and the priest and notary (*nomikos*) Basil Kourteses, together with his mother, the nun Martha, his wife Anna, his children and his sister, the nun Magdalena (Fig. 6).<sup>70</sup> The nun Martha, the mother of one of the co-founders, was certainly a widow who took monastic vows later in life or following the death of her husband. It is not clear, however, whether the nun sold or donated any property to support the church. Similarly, the church of St Marina at Mournes, Hagios Basileios (ca. 1300) in Crete was founded or renovated and decorated by three brothers and their mother, the nun Eugenia.<sup>71</sup> Two additional inscriptions in Orthodox churches in Venetian-ruled Crete also present evidence of widows

participating in family foundations. The church of St Pelagia at Plaka in Apáno Biánnos, Belvedere (1360) was renovated and painted through the labor of two brothers with their families and their mother, Eudokia.<sup>72</sup> The church of the Virgin at Briomeni, Hierapetra (1401/02), was renovated through the expenses and labor of a monk and his mother, Paraskeve, and of his sister, the nun Sophrosyne.<sup>73</sup>

Church inscriptions also note spiritual relationships between donors, some of these involving widows. The church of St George at Phatreliana in Koxares, Hagios Basileios in Crete (fourteenth/fifteenth century) was renovated and painted through the expenses and labor of a hieromonk Theodosios and his spiritual sister Anna with her children. In this case Anna is obviously a widow. The word used in the inscription to describe the relationship between the primary donor and the widow is *συναδέλφη*. The same godparents probably baptized Theodosios and his spiritual sister, Anna.<sup>74</sup>

As the collected examples show, widows were deeply involved in founding or co-founding churches in Byzantium, both in urban and rural settings. Their ability to contribute financially to such enterprises reflects Byzantine inheritance laws, which guaranteed widows a certain degree

69 GERSTEL/TALBOT, Nuns (cit. n. 54), pp. 481–490.

70 D. FEISSEL/A. PHILIPPIDIS-BRAAT, Inventaires en vue d'un recueil des inscriptions historiques de Byzance, III. Inscriptions du Péloponnèse (à l'exception de Mistra), in: Travaux et mémoires, 9, 1985, pp. 339–340, no. 78; O. CHASSOURA, Les peintures murales byzantines des églises de Longanikos, Laconie, Athens 2002, p. 19: ...καὶ τῆς μ(η)τρ(ὸ)ς αὐτοῦ Μάρθας μοναχῆς. It is interesting to note that the name of the donor's mother precedes that of his wife. See also GERSTEL/TALBOT, Nuns (cit. n. 54), p. 484, fig. 3.

71 GEROLA, Monumenti, IV (cit. n. 50), pp. 490–491, no. 3: ...καὶ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτῶν Εὐγενίας μοναχῆς; J. ALBANI, Οι τοιχογραφίες του ναοῦ τῆς Ἁγίας Μαρίας στον Μορνέ της Κρήτης. Ένας ἀγνωστος βιογραφικὸς κύκλος τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας, in: Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας, 17, 1993–1994, pp. 211–222, esp. p. 212; GERSTEL/TALBOT, Nuns (cit. n. 54), p. 484.

72 GEROLA, Monumenti, IV (cit. n. 50), pp. 574–575, no. 5: ...καὶ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτῶν Εὐδοκίας.

73 GEROLA, Monumenti, IV (cit. n. 50), p. 581, no. 6: ...καὶ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ Παρασκευῆς(ς). At least two graves have been located within the church. On the frescoes see S. MADERAKES, Βυζαντινὴ ζωγραφικὴ ἀπὸ τὴν Κρήτη στα πρώτα χρόνια τοῦ 15ου αἰῶνα, in: Πεπραγμένα τοῦ ΣΤ' Διεθνoῦς Κρητολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου, II, Chania 1991, pp. 265–315, *passim*, pls. 93–98.

74 GEROLA, Monumenti, IV (cit. n. 50), p. 490, no. 2: ...διὰ σὴνδρομῆς ἐξόδου καὶ κόπου ἕρομωνάχου Θεοδοσίου τοῦ Ζαγραμᾶ καὶ τῆς σὴναδέ[λ]φῆς (αὐ)τοῦ Ἄνης καὶ τ(ῶ)ν <τ>τέκνον αὐ(τῆς).



6: Lakonia, Longanikos, St. George, dedicatory inscription, 1374/75

of financial independence following the death of their husbands. The relaxation of societal views on the alienation of dowry goods may have enabled many widows to participate more fully in church foundation in late Byzantium, a period that saw a dramatic increase in the construction of burial chapels. The same law codes frowned on re-marriage, thus keeping the dowry and inheritance intact and in the hands of the independent widow as guardian of her children. That Byzantine law protected the property rights of widows, whether laywomen with minor children, or widows whose children were grown, enabled these women – this relatively large percent of the population – to participate in founding churches, either with their families or with other members of the village. And, ironically, legal admonitions against re-marriage may have facilitated

church foundation by keeping the primary estate intact and allowing women to alienate parts of the dowry which, in the case of re-marriage, would have been partially forfeited or assigned to support children from the first marriage. As caretakers of family resources and as the principal supplicants for the salvation of deceased parents, spouses, and children, it is easy to imagine why and how widows played such a large role in founding or contributing to religious institutions.<sup>75</sup> It is not by chance that so many of the buildings founded by widows were also intended to house family tombs and to accommodate commemorative services.

Not every widow was a potential founder. A number of texts suggest that for many women, especially for those without children, widowhood meant financial and social hardship.<sup>76</sup> And,

75 On the role of female mourners see S. E. J. GERSTEL, *Painted Sources for Female Piety in Medieval Byzantium*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 52, 1988, pp. 89–111.

76 A. E. LAIOU, *Observations on the Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 66–67, repr. in: A. E. LAIOU, *Gender, Society and Economic Life in Byzantium*, Hampshire and Brookfield, VT

indeed, as we have suggested, inscriptions mentioning widows form only a fraction of the overall number collected from village churches. The relatively small number of surviving inscriptions suggests that most widows were not in a financial position to found, co-found, or support even modest chapels. Yet even the small number of widow founders in the village opens a window into a part of the rural population that has remained, for the most part, invisible.

**Illustration credits:** Figs. 1, 4, 5: S. Gerstel. – Fig. 2: E. Barnes. – Fig. 6: S. Kalopissi-Verti. – Fig 3: Research Centre for the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art of the Academy of Athens, research program “Corpus of the Byzantine Wall-Paintings of Greece” (photographer: N. Kasseris, 2005).

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1992, II. As many have noted, women – particularly unlettered women – were susceptible to fraud and clauses were inserted into contracts to protect those who were perceived to be most vulnerable. See H. SARADI-MENDELOVICI, A Contribution to the Study of the Byzantine Notarial Formulas: The *Infirmas Sexus* of Women and the *Sc. Velleianum*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 83, 1990, pp. 72–90.



## LE DON DE L'ÉGLISE – UNE AFFAIRE DE COUPLE?

TANIA KAMBOUROVA

La chose donnée produit sa récompense dans cette vie et dans l'autre écrivait Mauss. Des personnes de pouvoir disposant de moyens financiers importants offraient des dons, construisaient des églises ici bas, en espérant mériter le salut dans l'au-delà. Ces donateurs étaient remerciés pour leurs bienfaits par des inscriptions ou/et des images les mentionnant ou/et les représentant. Pour aborder la question du don, nous allons tout d'abord essayer de cerner la notion de *ktitor*, pour ensuite relever les occurrences figuratives de dons d'église présentés par des couples de nobles. Le rôle de la femme dans la *ktitoria* sera mis en évidence. Existe-t-il une différence fondamentale dans l'acte du don en fonction du donateur? Que l'on soit homme, femme ou couple, existe-t-il une façon spécifique de donner? Retrouve-t-on les mêmes schémas textuels et figuratifs dans les différentes images de don par une femme? Autrement dit une femme *ktitorissa* est-elle représentée de la même manière et dans la même posture qu'un homme *ktitor*? Quelle est la place de la femme lorsque la *ktitoria* est une affaire de couple, voire de famille?

Il me semble important de commencer par définir la notion de *ktitor/ktitorissa*. Le terme de *ktitor* en slavon se rapporte en même temps à la

fondation d'une église mais aussi à sa possession (et à sa reconstruction). Etymologiquement, il est à rapprocher de la racine de deux mots grecs – le mot *κτησις*, signifiant « possession », « acquisition » (et d'où proviendrait *κτήτωρ*), et celui de *κτίστης*, qui, lui, signifie fondateur, dérivant de la racine du verbe *κτίζω* – « bâtir », « créer ».

Pour illustrer le sens de possession, prenons l'exemple d'une aristocrate byzantine: Théodora Synadene. Le *typikon* qu'elle a fait rédiger, ainsi que les célèbres miniatures qu'il contient (cf. le manuscrit Lincoln College gr. 35), témoignent de la désignation de Théodora comme (ἐ)κτητόρισσα et des membres de sa famille comme (ἐ)κτήτωρ<sup>1</sup>. Ainsi le terme peut être élargi non seulement à la *ktitorissa* elle-même, mais aussi aux membres de sa famille (époux, enfants, parents, etc.)<sup>2</sup>.

L'idée de possession est renforcée par les motifs qui ont poussé Théodora à faire construire le monastère: avoir un endroit pour s'y retirer après la prise d'habit de son mari, qu'elle imitera et assurer un refuge pour sa fille – Euphrosyne.<sup>3</sup> Notons aussi que le don est très présent dans le vocabulaire des *typika*. Théodora évoque ainsi les raisons de sa construction: *J'ai fait cela comme un petit remboursement de ma grande dette, en remerciement de la protection et des grandes bénédictions,*

1 Delehaye donne la transcription des légendes. H. DELEHAYE, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues*, Bruxelles 1921, p. 18–105. Voir aussi Bebaia Elpis: *Typikon of Theodora Synadene for the Convent of the Mother of God Bebaia Elpis in Constantinople*, in: BMTD, IV, p. 1512–1578.

2 Sur l'extension des privilèges, BMTD, IV, p. 1518.

3 Sur les motivations de six femmes de pouvoir à construire des monastères, voir la thèse de A. GEORGIU, *The Role of Elite Women as Patrons of Religious Buildings and Book Production During the Early Palaiologan Period (1261–1355)*, MA Thesis, Birmingham 2006.

*au-delà de tout calcul quantifiable, que j'ai reçues d'elle pendant toute ma vie...<sup>4</sup>*

Et encore dans le *typikon* de l'impératrice Irène Doukaina Comnène pour le monastère de la Mère de Dieu Kecharitoméné: *Puisque tu as doucement évalué la foi de mon cœur, reçois mon offrande avec faveur et ne repousse pas mon oblation, « ne me cache point ta face » (Ps.27 [26]:9) à moi ton enfant, mais ajoute une fin heureuse à un commencement favorable, et toi, entièrement sans imperfection, déploie tes « ailes » comme Moïse dit (Deut. 32:11), « argentées » avec les dons de l'Esprit Tout saint (Ps. 67 [68]:15) et protège ensuite ce joli couvent du lion qui va à la recherche de qui il peut dévorer et rôde autour de ces environs saints dans la faim et la ruse.<sup>5</sup>*

Et on pourrait multiplier les exemples du vocabulaire du don.

**M**ais revenons aux règles instaurées en général par un *typikon*. La construction d'une église / d'un monastère donnait lieu à certains droits, comme celui d'administrer le monastère,<sup>6</sup> mais aussi et surtout de se faire dire des messes, de recevoir les prières des moines, et, après sa mort, le *ktitor* y était commémoré pour le salut de son âme et de celle de ses proches, il pouvait aussi se faire enterrer dans le monastère.<sup>7</sup> Mais le *ktitor/ktitorissa* avait aussi un autre droit qui

nous intéresse tout particulièrement: il pouvait se faire représenter à l'intérieur de l'église.<sup>8</sup> À peu d'exceptions près, le *ktitor/ktitorissa* profitait généralement de ce droit, et se faisait représenter aux côtés de personnages de l'histoire sainte.<sup>9</sup>

Non seulement une personne physique, mais aussi une personne juridique pouvait être *ktitor*. Aussi des villages entiers pouvaient-ils le devenir. Par ailleurs, il existait une hiérarchie entre le principal *ktitor*, celui qui avait bâti l'église, et un autre ou nouveau ou encore un second *ktitor* (ὁ δεύτερος κτήτωρ), qui avait fait quelque don à l'église.

**L**a construction d'églises est donc une affaire de moyens et reflète une position sociale. C'est pourquoi elle était souvent l'œuvre de gens riches et de personnes de pouvoir – femmes ou hommes. À Byzance, les *typika* des monastères témoignent de l'implication des femmes – impératrices ou aristocrates. Pour la Bulgarie, nous n'avons pas de témoignages – figuratifs ou textuels, conservés concernant des reines *ktitorissa*. Pour la Serbie, rappelons la *ktitoria* de la reine Hélène d'Anjou – épouse de Stefan Ier Uroš à Gradac, dédiée à l'Annonciation.<sup>10</sup> Il semblerait que la reine n'ait pas vécu dans le monastère.<sup>11</sup> Cependant, il a bien servi de mausolée à sa dépouille, qui se trouvait à l'endroit traditionnel –

4 BMFD, IV, p. 1525.

5 BMFD, II, p. 666.

6 Avec Léon VI et sa législation commence une nouvelle ère: l'innovation la plus remarquable est la pratique des *typika ktitorika*, voir L. BRÉHIER, Les institutions de l'empire byzantin, Paris 1949, p. 431–436. Selon Troicki, les droits du *ktitor* semblent avoir plus un caractère moral et spirituel qu'effectif: voir à ce sujet T. KAMBOUROVA, *Ktitor*: le sens du don dans les images byzantines, in: Byzantion, 78, 2008, p. 261–287.

7 Voir l'exemple de Théodora Palaiologina et le couvent qu'elle fait restaurer et agrandir à Constantinople – Lips. Et bien d'autres.

8 Pour plus de détails sur les obligations et les droits du *ktitor*, on peut se référer notamment à la communication de M. POPOVIĆ, Les funérailles du *ktitor*: aspect archéologique, in: Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies. London, 21–26 August 2006, I. Plenary Papers, Aldershot 2006, p. 99–121.

9 Citons le cas de *sebastokrator* Isaac Comnène, qui dans le *typikon* du monastère de la Mère de Dieu Kosmosoteira au XIIe siècle, interdit par piété qu'on dessine son image dans l'église. BMFD, II, p. 835.

10 O. KANDIĆ, The Monastery of Gradac, Belgrade 1987.

11 Voir S. DUSANIĆ, La sainteté féminine et les cultes dynastiques en Serbie médiévale: la sainte reine Hélène d'Anjou, communication au colloque international « Réseaux familiaux à la fin de l'Antiquité et au Moyen Âge »,

du côté sud –, dans le naos, avec une fresque de Stefan Uroš et de la reine avec le modèle de l'église l'offrant au Christ trônant.<sup>12</sup> Comme en témoigne Danilo II, la reine donne la règle au monastère, des terres, des livres, de la vaisselle liturgique ornée de gemmes, des icônes, des reliques encore de son vivant.<sup>13</sup> Notons qu'en parlant du couple de souverains, Danilo II, hagiographe royal, higoumène à Hilandar et archevêque de Serbie, évoque tout en termes de don: l'épouse est un don, l'enfant est un don, le pays et la couronne le sont aussi.<sup>14</sup>

Si ces cas de *ktitoria* féminine royale restent rares dans le monde slave, les (re)constructions aristocratiques se multiplient à partir du XIVe siècle. Ainsi, nous allons nous arrêter sur plusieurs exemples d'églises construites ou rénovées par de puissantes familles, proches du pouvoir royal (à en juger d'après les panneaux votifs sur lesquels celui-ci est figuré). Malheureusement, nous ne possédons que peu d'informations sur ces familles. Prenons quelques exemples d'églises

bulgares et serbes des XIIIe–XVe siècles, situées dans la même région, afin de constituer des séries d'images à comparer et à analyser de façon synchronique et diachronique à la fois. Ce qui nous intéressera tout particulièrement, c'est de mettre en série des panneaux de don dans des églises de la même région, sans différenciation « ethnique », et d'y analyser le rapport entre l'image et le texte du don. C'est un regard neuf que nous voulons poser sur des églises anciennes et dont l'iconographie a déjà fait l'objet d'études approfondies, pour les analyser du point de vue du don. Nous serons attentive tout particulièrement au rôle de la femme. On notera encore l'influence des événements politiques sur les panneaux de *ktitor* (ainsi, par exemple, lors de l'intégration du royaume bulgare à l'empire ottoman, seule l'autorité spirituelle figurera dans les panneaux votifs au XVe siècle). Nous verrons comment par l'intermédiaire du don les humains – pris dans un temps court et séquencé, intègrent le temps long et continu du sacré.

## I. LE DON DANS LES PANNEAUX VOTIFS DE L'ÉGLISE DE BOJANA

Il s'agit de panneaux votifs, datant du XIIIe siècle, situés dans le narthex inférieur et supérieur de Bojana.<sup>15</sup> Rappelons la disposition des fresques de don, qui est la suivante: sur les murs nord et sud se trouvent intégrés au programme décoratif les panneaux de deux couples de personnages historiques – le couple du *sebastokrator* Kalojan et de son épouse Dessislava, sur le mur nord (Fig. 1), et, disposé en face, sur le mur sud, le couple royal, formé par Constantin Tih Asen et Irène. Les inscriptions à côté des personnages

du narthex, sur le mur nord, sont: *Kalojan sebastokrator et ktitor, Dessislava, sebastokratorissa et ktitorissa* et, sur le mur sud, *Constantin, dans le Christ Dieu, fidèle tsar et autocrate de tous les Bulgares, Irène, très pieuse tsarine de tous les Bulgares*. À l'étage supérieur, l'inscription n'est pas conservée, et il est difficile de juger s'il s'agit d'un personnage différent (Fig. 2). Cependant, l'inscription dédicatoire du narthex ne mentionne pas d'autre *ktitor*, alors qu'elle lie les deux lieux, dédiés à deux saints patrons différents: *Il a été élevé*

12–13 Novembre 2010, [http://www.college-de-france.fr/chaieres/chaire23/pub/frameset\\_dernpub.htm](http://www.college-de-france.fr/chaieres/chaire23/pub/frameset_dernpub.htm) (consulté le 28. II. 2010).

12 Voir D. POPOVIĆ, *Srpski vladarski grob u srednem veku*, Beograd 1992.

13 Voir DANILO II, *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih*, trad. en serbe moderne par L. MIRKOVIĆ, préf. N. RADOJČIĆ, Belgrade 1935, p. 61, et surtout p. 63. Et comme la reine a été sanctifiée, son corps a été déterré et mis devant l'icône du Christ dans un reliquaire (p. 79).

14 Ibid., p. 10–14.

15 Sur Bojana, voir le numéro spécial dans: *Problemi na izkustvoto* de 1995.





1: Bojana, Dessislava et Kalojan, 1259, détail

de la terre et créé, [ce] très saint temple du saint hiérarque du Christ Nicolas et du saint et très glorieux martyr Pantéléimon, avec l'application et les soins et le grand amour de Kalojan, Sebastokrator, cousin du tsar, petit-fils de saint Etienne, le roi serbe. Il a été décoré sous le règne bulgare, au temps du très fidèle et très pieux et aimant le Christ tsar Constantin Asen. Indiction 7, l'an 6767.

Alors que l'inscription auprès du personnage nomme Dessislava comme *ktitorissa*, l'inscription dédicatoire ne mentionne pas Dessislava.<sup>16</sup> Cette inscription associe la construction de la chapelle à celle de l'église. Selon celle-ci l'église a été élevée de la terre, mais en vérité, elle existait déjà et n'a été qu'agrandie. Par conséquent, la désigna-



2: Bojana, ktitor de la chapelle, 1259, détail

tion de *ktitor* indique davantage la possession que la fondation. D'après la disposition actuelle des fresques différente de celle d'origine, le don *transite* par les soins du saint.<sup>17</sup> Notons que le don est à la fois inscrit dans une hiérarchie terrestre (par rapport au couple royal) et dans une hiérarchie céleste (adressé au Christ), en passant par la médiation du saint.

La chapelle supérieure est, quant à elle, dédiée à l'autre saint mentionné dans l'inscription dédicatoire, Pantéléimon. Selon l'inscription du narthex inférieure déjà mentionnée, la construction du temple, dédié aux deux patrons de l'église, doit être située à la même époque, et nul autre personnage n'est mentionné dans

16 Plus tardive, l'icône de l'ascension fabuleuse du prophète Elie au paradis de Bojana mentionne le nom de l'homme (Kolja) et de son père, mais pas de sa femme. Kolja y est dit *ktitor*: *Ktitor Kolya ot Bojana, bachta mu Boshko i jenu mu*.

17 Voir E. BAKALOVA, *Za Konstantinopolskite modeli v stenopisite na Bojanskata carkva*, in: *Problemi na izkustvoto*, 1, 1995, p. 10–21. L'auteure note une inversion des représentations de saint Nicolas et du Christ.

ladite inscription. Il n'est donc pas exclu qu'il s'agisse du même *ktitor*. Malgré sa détérioration, l'image laisse voir le *ktitor* seul offrant le modèle de l'église au second patron, les deux étant peints de part et d'autre de la fenêtre. Au-dessus du don de l'église est représentée la Crucifixion<sup>18</sup> – le don par excellence par lequel le Père offre son Fils pour le rachat des péchés des hommes.

Soulignons, donc, que, dans ce premier cas, l'inscription auprès du personnage nomme bien Dessislava en tant que *ktitorissa*, mais que la dédicace de l'église omet le personnage féminin. Par contre, l'image dans le narthex de l'église lui rend

bien hommage, alors que celle de la chapelle ne laisse voir qu'un personnage masculin. Enfin c'est le personnage masculin qui tient le modèle de l'église dans les deux panneaux votifs.

Le sens du don (en retour) est clairement explicité dans les compositions iconographiques: le *ktitor* cède au Christ sa *possession* en lui dédiant une demeure où il cherche son propre salut par l'intermédiaire des saints patrons de l'église. Comme en attestent les images du narthex inférieur et de la chapelle supérieure, la possession est une affaire d'individu, mais aussi de couple.

## 2. LE DON DANS LES PANNEAUX VOTIFS DE L'ÉGLISE DE DOLNA KAMENICA

L'église renferme quatre panneaux représentant des personnages historiques contemporains de sa construction (Fig. 3–5). L'un se trouve dans le narthex, deux autres sont peints dans le naos et un dernier est placé dans l'espace situé en dessous de l'une des deux tours. L'identité des personnages n'est pas connue, l'inscription votive n'étant pas conservée.<sup>19</sup> En l'absence de témoignage textuel, et à en juger d'après la disposition des panneaux, la famille représentée dans la tour (Fig. 3), offrant son don au Christ, pourrait être celle qui a fait construire les tours, alors que d'autres *ktitores* auraient contribué à la construction de l'étage inférieur, comme en témoignent les panneaux (Fig. 4–5). Vu leurs costumes, les deux groupes de *ktitores* devaient appartenir aux rangs élevés de la hiérarchie sociale.

Dans la décoration, est inclus aussi le panneau de deux moines qui ont certainement contribué à la construction de l'église, méritant ainsi leur représentation dans ce lieu sacré.

Le narthex ouest, du côté gauche de la porte, renferme l'image du couple de despotes, à l'époque desquels a eu lieu la construction de l'église. Ils ne sont pas des *ktitores*, mais représentent l'autorité temporelle et la référence hiérarchique par rapport auxquelles se situe la construction de l'église. Le despote a été identifié comme Michel, fils de Michel Šišman, despote et souverain de la région de Vidin, puis tsar de Bulgarie en 1323.<sup>20</sup> Cette attribution permet la datation du monument avant 1323. Le panneau des despotes atteste la hiérarchie sociale, dans laquelle s'inscrit la construction. Il sert à la fois de repère chro-

18 Voir B. PENKOVA, *Za pominalnija kharakter na stenopisite v paraklisa na vtorija etaž na Bojanskata carkva*, in: *Problemi na izkustvoto*, 1, 1995, p. 29–41.

19 Voir L. MAVRODINOVA, *Carkvata v Dolna Kamenica*, Sofia 1969; M. KIEL, *The Church of our Lady of Donja Kamenica in Eastern Serbia*, in: *Actes du XIVe congrès international des études byzantines*, Bucarest 1971, Bucarest 1975, II, p. 159–166; M. ĆOROVIĆ-LJUBINKOVIĆ/R. LJUBINKOVIĆ, *Crkva u Donjoj Kamenici*, *Starinar*, 1, 1950, p. 53–86. Voir aussi la monographie issue de la thèse de T. BURNAND, *L'église Notre-Dame dans le village Dolna Kamenitza (XIVe s.)*, Sofia 2008, p. 83.

20 Un document vénitien mentionne Michel avant qu'il soit devenu tsar comme *Michael dispoti Bulgariae, dominus de Vigdino, gener regis Urosii* (S. LJUBIĆ, *Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium*, I, Zagreb 1868, p. 192). Voir aussi I. BOŽILOV, *Familiata na Asenevtsi (1186–1460)*. *Genealoia i prosopografia*, Sofia 1994, p. 119.



3: Dolna Kamenica, panneau votif de la famille de ktitores, étage, mur ouest, au-dessus du narthex, vers 1320

4: Dolna Kamenica, vue sud-ouest, naos, la Vierge à l'Enfant reçoit le don de l'église de deux ktitores avec le modèle de l'église, et entre eux, un enfant (seulement la tête), vers 1320

5: Dolna Kamenica, panneau votif de deux moines en prière devant le Christ Emmanuel, naos, vers 1320

nologique (indiquant les dates d'un règne) et de référence à ceux qui ont autorisé la construction de l'église. La présence du couple royal est celle d'une image de l'autorité, comme celle à Bojana.

Arrêtons-nous sur le panneau de l'étage supérieur, en dessous des deux tours, où deux petites chapelles sont dédiées l'une à sainte Parascève<sup>21</sup> et l'autre à saint Nicolas, très populaires parmi la population. En face d'un escalier étroit, liant le narthex inférieur à ces mini-galeries, dans celle dédiée à saint Nicolas, sur le mur ouest, est représenté le panneau votif de la famille du *ktitor* avec sa femme et leurs deux enfants. C'est cette famille qui a vraisemblablement financé la construction de l'étage supérieur avec les tours. L'homme et la femme tiennent le modèle de l'église ensemble. Devant le modèle du côté de la mère est représentée la fille du couple et au-dessus de la famille apparaît, d'un segment du ciel, le Christ qui bénit des deux mains. Un peu en retrait, derrière le père est placé le jeune garçon de la famille. Par leur frontalité, ils semblent offrir leur don directement au Christ, sans l'intermédiaire d'un saint. Leurs costumes sont assez remarquables par la variété des coloris et la richesse ornementale des tissus. L'homme nu-tête porte une ceinture, et la femme est ornée d'une coiffe à voile, et a donc les cheveux couverts, comme le voulait la tradition à l'intérieur de l'église.

À l'étage inférieur, dans le naos, se trouvent deux panneaux votifs. L'un d'eux représente deux jeunes personnes avec le modèle de l'église, au milieu d'eux reste visible seulement la tête d'un petit enfant. À côté est placé le panneau représentant deux hommes en habit de moines, en prière devant le Christ. Ils reçoivent la bénédiction du Christ Emmanuel. Seule l'une des deux jeunes personnes de l'autre panneau tient le modèle de l'église qu'il offre à la Vierge (la Théotokos Eleussa), tandis que les deux moines ne portant pas de modèle d'église sont seulement en prière. Dans

21 Un culte était voué à la sainte dès sa translation à Târnovo sur l'ordre d'Ioan II Asen et l'église du palais était dédiée à la sainte.

cette composition, le destinataire du don est la Vierge à l'Enfant, qui bénit d'ailleurs ce don.

Dans les deux scènes où le don est présent il s'agit de la même église, dessinée sous un angle différent, et le don est reçu dans les deux cas par des personnages surnaturels. En l'absence

de texte, on peut déduire que la présence de la femme au sein du panneau familial est due à son rôle d'épouse, de mère de famille et sans doute de *ktitorissa* de l'église d'autant plus qu'elle tient le modèle de l'église avec son mari.

### 3. LE DON DANS LES PANNEAUX VOTIFS DE L'ÉGLISE DE STANIČANE

L'église Saint Nicolas est datée des années 30 du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle.<sup>22</sup> L'inscription dédicatoire qui se trouve au-dessus de la porte d'entrée sur le mur ouest à l'intérieur du naos, indique, après une formule trinitaire sur la volonté du Père et du Fils et du saint Esprit, qu'il a été construit et peint par la maison d'Arsenije, de Jefemie et de Constantin, la suite étant illisible, et donne l'année du règne durant lequel l'église a été élevée. Le tsar mentionné est nommé Ioan Asen, c.-à-d. Ioan Alexandre. Le nom d'un dignitaire est donné, mais il est détérioré. Il s'agit en toute vraisemblance de Belaur (dont l'épouse a aussi dû être mentionnée dans l'inscription).<sup>23</sup> L'année exacte est 1331/1332.

Sur tout le registre inférieur du naos sont disposés les membres de la famille de *ktitores*, parmi lesquels les défunts (les bras croisés sur la poitrine) côtoient les vivants faisant des gestes de prière (Fig. 6–9). Le large panneau de *ktitores* comporte dix personnages (neuf adultes et un enfant, sous le modèle de l'église offerte), disposés sur le mur sud, le mur ouest – des deux côtés de la porte, et sur le mur nord. La scène du don du modèle de l'église est placée sur le mur sud et elle est précédée de trois saints mili-

itaires et de saint Jean Baptiste, près de l'abside. C'est un couple de moines (un homme et une femme) – Arsenije et Jefemie, qui tient le modèle et l'offre au Christ apparaissant dans une partie du ciel. Sous le modèle se trouve la figure frêle d'un enfant se prénommant Kruban. À côté de Jefemie, sur le mur sud, est représentée une femme noble, les bras croisés sur la poitrine. Dans l'angle, sur le mur ouest, côté sud, deux hommes nobles défunts croisent les bras. De l'autre côté de la porte, sur le mur ouest, côté nord, un personnage en habit monacal croise les bras sur la poitrine et à ses côtés se tient la noble Areta levant les mains en signe de prière. À côté d'elle, sur le mur nord, en face du panneau avec le don, la composition se poursuit avec un couple d'aristocrates, introduit par le saint patron. Saint Nicolas guide le personnage masculin en le tenant par l'épaule, et en le conduisant auprès de la Vierge à l'Enfant.<sup>24</sup> Le couple est celui de Constantin et de son épouse (mentionnés dans l'inscription).<sup>25</sup> De l'autre côté de la Vierge à l'Enfant sont représentés un saint militaire et l'archange Michel. Cette composition peut être interprétée comme une immense scène de Déisis (au sens littéral

22 Cf. l'article que lui consacre R. LJUBINCOVIĆ, *Crkva Svetog Nikole u Staničenju*, *Zograf*, 15, 1984, p. 76–84. Voir aussi M. POPOVIĆ et al., *Crkva Svetog Nikole u Staničenju*, Beograd 2005.

23 Pour ces nouvelles données, voir B. CVETKOVIĆ, *Ktitorski portreti*, *ibid.*, p. 79–III (avec une reproduction de l'inscription, p. 79 et s.).

24 Sur le geste de l'accolade du saint psychopompe, voir les articles de S. DJURIĆ, *Svetiteljev zagrljaj – istoria teme do XII veka*, in: *Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia «St. Kliment Ohridski»*, Sofia 1999, p. 85–94, et de V.J. DJURIĆ, *Sevetiteljev zagrljaj u slikarstvu vizantijskog sveta od XII do XIV veka*, *ibid.*, p. 95–103.

25 CVETKOVIĆ, *Ktitorski portreti* (cit. note 23).





6: Staničane, panneau de *ktitores*, mur sud, vers 1330

7: Staničane, angle sud-ouest du naos, trois personnages défunts, vers 1330

8: Staničane, mur nord, st Nicolas introduit Constantin et son épouse auprès de la Vierge, vers 1330

de prière)<sup>26</sup> déployée sur l'ensemble du registre inférieur de l'église. Ainsi, au centre, l'abside, là où s'accomplit le sacrifice rituel eucharistique, résumant le dogme de la Rédemption, symbolise la place du Christ, et de part et d'autre, introduits par des saints, la Vierge et saint Jean, secondés du saint patron de l'église, accueillent les prières adressées au Sauveur. Face au don du Christ, l'homme lui rend hommage et se prépare pour le Jugement dernier.

Dans tous les panneaux, le visage des personnages est fortement endommagé. Il peut s'agir soit d'un usage des images, dû à leur fonction apotropaïque, soit d'un grattage intentionnel dans le but d'effacer leur identité à une époque postérieure. Les costumes des personnages laïcs sont extrêmement riches, significatifs de leur rang social élevé. Une partie des *ktitores* est représentée en habit monacal. Dans l'état actuel des fresques, il ne reste pas de traces dans les images du naos d'une éventuelle autorité terrestre, mais uniquement du souhait de rendre hommage à Dieu (directement à travers le don de l'église) ou /et de lui adresser des prières de salut (par l'intermédiaire des saints et de la Vierge). Pourtant, sur le mur ouest, côté nord, du narthex (l'actuelle façade de l'église, car le narthex est détruit) sont représentés deux figures de souverains, vraisemblablement Belaur et sa femme, et sur le mur ouest, côté sud, se trouve la figure d'un tsar, vraisemblablement Alexandre (aux côtés de Constantin et Hélène). C'est donc que l'inscription et les images font référence d'une manière parallèle au pouvoir, celui du tsar (des Bulgares) et du seigneur local.<sup>27</sup>

D'autre part, l'église témoigne de la pratique d'enterrer les membres de la famille de *ktitores* dans l'église même. Le droit du *ktitor*, dont il a déjà été question, rend compte de cette pratique. L'espoir de salut de l'âme sous-tend la pratique

26 A. CUTLER, Under the Sign of the Deësis. On the Question of Representativeness in Medieval Art, in: A. CUTLER, Byzantium, Italy and the North. Papers on Cultural Relations, London 2000, ch. III. L'auteur y remet à plat la notion de Déisis car différents contextes, usages et images ont pu avoir la même désignation signifiant « prière ».

27 Je remercie B. Cvetković pour la relecture de mon texte, pour ses remarques et précisions.



9: Saničane, un moine et une jeune aristocrate, mur ouest, côté gauche de la porte, vers 1330

de représenter des dons et des prières dans l'église et d'y placer des tombeaux. Des messes devaient aussi y être célébrées à la mémoire des défunts, apparentés en toute vraisemblance au couple de *ktitores* tenant le modèle de l'église. La représentation de ces derniers en habit monacal témoigne d'une autre pratique déjà évoquée – celle de construire un lieu pour y finir ses jours sur terre. Remarquons encore que le couple de *ktitores* se conserve même après la prise d'habit. L'appartenance *familiale* de la construction est attestée par la présence des membres de la maison d'Arsenije, de Jefemie et de Constantin, comme en témoigne l'inscription et les fresques qui occupent quasiment tout le registre inférieur du naos. Le statut particulier de *ktitor* permet aux personnages de côtoyer le surnaturel. Cette petite église renferme des panneaux à la fois commémoratifs, votifs et funéraires, et témoigne de la difficulté de classer ces panneaux formellement et fonctionnellement, cependant elle renvoie au sens universel dont ceux-ci étaient investis – se préparer à la vie éternelle en donnant du sens à ses actions sur terre.

#### 4. LE DON DANS LES PANNEAUX VOTIFS DE L'ÉGLISE DE LJUBOTEN

L'église est dédiée à saint Nicolas. L'inscription votive mentionne les noms des membres de la famille de *ktitores* comme étant la noble Danica et ses fils (dont l'aîné s'appelle Bojko),<sup>28</sup> seigneurs locaux respectivement de Matka et Sitnica, et la date de la dédicace (avec comme repère chronologique le règne de Dušan, à savoir 1336/7 pour la construction). On a pu noter la présence d'une autre couche de peinture. Le panneau avec les personnages historiques se trouve sur le mur nord du naos et il représente le couple royal Dušan et Hélène avec leur fils Uroš. Aux côtés de la famille prend place le Christ qui

bénit de la main droite et tient de la main gauche le livre fermé. Le panneau se termine par saint Jean Baptiste. Par contre, les *ktitores* de l'église ne sont pas représentés (ou ne sont pas conservés).

Ainsi donc, le don de la *ktitorissa* et de ses fils n'est pas figuré. Seules sont représentées l'autorité temporelle et l'autorité spirituelle qui rendent possible le don. S'agit-il d'un choix intentionnel, conditionné par l'humilité du personnage féminin? Rappelons le cas du *sebastokrator* Isaac Comnène qui demande expressément dans son *typikon* de ne pas être représenté. Cependant en absence d'indication précise, nous ne pouvons formuler

28 Sur l'identité du second, voir I. DJORDJEVIĆ, O monogramu Dmitar iz Ljubotena, in: Leskovackog zbornika, 35, 1995, p. 5–10. Il identifie le second fils comme Dmitar en fonction du monogramme près de l'inscription. Pour sa part, B. Cvetković est d'avis que le monogramme est plus ancien, en rapport avec saint Démètre.

que des conjectures. Le panneau peut pourtant être interprété comme étant lui-même une image-don en hommage au pouvoir temporel et divin. Il manifeste à la fois la gratitude des *ktitores* envers ces deux instances, leur soumission et leur prière.

C'est une prière pour la famille royale, bénie du Christ et un espoir de mériter la bénédiction et le salut à leur tour. Notons que cette scène reprend le schéma de la Déisis, où la Vierge est remplacée par la famille de « souche sainte ». <sup>29</sup>

##### 5. LE DON DANS LES PANNEAUX VOTIFS DE L'ÉGLISE DE KUČEVIŠTE

Deux fresques arrêteront notre attention : celle du naos – datée entre 1321 et 1331, et celle de l'exonarthex – entre 1334 et 1337. L'un des deux panneaux se trouve sur le mur sud de l'exonarthex et représente le couple royal et celui des despotes, l'autre, situé sur le mur nord du naos, représente trois *ktitores* : le même couple de despotes et une autre femme (cf. le schéma, Fig. 10). Ce sont les deux femmes qui tiennent le modèle de l'église qu'elles offrent à la Vierge à l'Enfant. <sup>30</sup> L'iconographie de la Vierge est celle de « l'Espérance Véritable », une des variantes de l'Hodigitria. L'un des panneaux est une image du pouvoir terrestre, grâce auquel la construction a pu se faire, et l'autre met en scène le don de l'église de la part des deux femmes en position de *ktitorissa*. Leur don est adressé à la Vierge à l'Enfant. <sup>31</sup>

Sur le mur sud de l'exonarthex figure donc un rapport de hiérarchie, voire même de vassalité/suzeraineté, ponctué par le geste d'hommage du couple de dignitaires envers le couple royal. Dans cette hiérarchie **horizontale** s'inscrit donc le don de l'église (sur le mur nord du naos). En fait, ces images sont très significatives de la ma-

nière dont était envisagé le droit du *ktitor*. Cette référence au pouvoir du pays et au pouvoir local montre aussi bien les obligations des dignitaires (inscrits dans la hiérarchie terrestre, même si le rapport de vassalité/suzeraineté est à étudier plus en détail) que la manière de présenter leur gratitude pour l'obtention de l'autorisation de construction et la façon d'exprimer leur reconnaissance en général. La Vierge accompagne, mais en même temps renverse le rapport entre les hiérarchies terrestres. Elle accueille le don, mais, par son *suppedion*, placée hors du temps et de l'histoire humaine, elle fait participer ce don à une temporalité universelle, celle du salut des hommes par l'Incarnation de Dieu.

Sur la base de l'inscription votive, partiellement conservée, l'un des personnages féminins, qui tient le modèle de l'église, est identifié comme une épouse de despote – Vladislava, figurant dans les deux panneaux, et l'autre comme Maréna (?). L'identité du personnage masculin fait l'objet de davantage de discussions. <sup>32</sup> L'inscription votive sur le mur sud du naos identifie les trois personnages comme *ktitor* et *ktitorissa*,

29 Voir Z. RASOLKOSKA-NIKOLOVSKA, O vladarskim portretima u Ljubotenu i vremenu nastanka zidne dekoracije, in: Zograf, 17, 1986, p. 45–53. L'auteure identifie aussi la composition comme une Déisis atypique avec la famille royale remplaçant la Vierge.

30 Les dessins sont de N. Conev.

31 Sur cette église, voir l'article de Z. RASOLKOSKA-NIKOLOVSKA, O ktitorskim portretima u crkvi Svete Bogorodice u Kučevištu, in: Zograf, 16, 1985, p. 42–54.

32 Un débat existe autour de l'identité du personnage masculin. Il a pu être identifié comme Radoslav par RASOLKOSKA-NIKOLOVSKA, O ktitorskim portretima (cit. note 31). Voir aussi G. GEROV/A. KIRIN, New Data on the Fourteenth-Century Mural Paintings in the Church of Sveti Nikola (St. Nicholas) in Kalotina, in: Zograf, 23, 1993–1994, p. 51–64. Ils identifient le couple de *ktitores* de cette église comme étant le même que celui de Kalotino – Dejan et Vladislava. H. Matanov encore identifie le personnage masculin comme Dejan Manjak.



10: Kučevište, scène du don du modèle de l'église, mur nord, naos, trois ktitores (partiellement reconstituée), 1321-1331, dessin (N. Conev)

par la peine et le travail desquels le temple de la très sainte Mère de Dieu a été créé et décoré. Cette église est un autre bon exemple du rôle de la femme en tant que *ktitorissa* d'une église. Malheureusement, on ne dispose pas d'autres informations sur ces personnages.

## 6. LE DON DANS LES PANNEAUX VOTIFS DE L'ÉGLISE DE PSAČA

L'exemple suivant de panneau votif seigneurial avec une figure féminine présenté ici est celui de l'église Saint Nicolas de Psača. Cette église a été terminée par le *sebastokrator* Vlatko et offerte, selon le désir du *ktitor*, au monastère de Hilandar.<sup>33</sup> Les fresques sont datées entre 1358 et 1360 (entrée d'Hélène au couvent et montée de son fils Uroš V au pouvoir).<sup>34</sup>

Le panneau votif de la famille du *ktitor* (Fig. 11) se trouve sur le mur sud et fait pendant à celui du pouvoir temporel personnifié par le tsar

Uroš et le roi Vukašin, sur le mur nord du narthex. Cette fois aussi la scène du don de l'église est inscrite dans une double hiérarchie.<sup>35</sup> D'un côté, il s'agit de la hiérarchie terrestre dont le sommet est occupé par le tsar (*basileus*, empereur), suivi du roi et, en l'occurrence, du *sebastokrator*.<sup>36</sup> D'un autre, les deux souverains terrestres partagent leur espace d'inscription dans l'image avec Constantin et Hélène: ils sont placés en filiation directe avec le couple de saints empereurs.<sup>37</sup> Le parallélisme entre la croix, instituée

33 Cf. V. J. DJURIC, *Vizantijske freske u Jugoslaviji*, Beograd 1974, p. 222.

34 Cf. Z. RASOLKOSKA-NIKOLOVSKA, *O istorijskim portretima u Psači i vremenu njihovog nastanka*, *Zograf*, 24, 1995, p. 39–53. En effet, le « portrait » de Vukašin s'avère avoir été peint ultérieurement sur une couche de mortier et il a dû être rajouté lors de la co-régence d'Uroš et de ce dernier entre 1365 et 1371. L'auteure exprime l'hypothèse que le personnage aux côtés du tsar avait été celui de sa mère en moniale, et qui avait pris le nom d'Elisabeth. Cela pourrait expliquer aussi la présence de sainte Hélène à proximité. Le panneau des *ktitores* remonterait aussi à cette première période 1358–1360 avant que Vlatko ne reçoive le titre de *sebastokrator* au temps de la co-régence. En fait, l'inscription le mentionne comme tel, mais les vêtements et attributs, comme l'absence de couronne, font émettre l'hypothèse que Vlatko avait été peint avant de recevoir sa titulature. Telle est la datation des fresques de la part de l'auteure de l'article, suite à des recherches sur le terrain en 1984. Pour plus de détails et une bibliographie, voir ce même article, p. 39.

35 Pour les schémas d'après N. Conev, voir fig. 1 et 5 de l'article de RASOLKOSKA-NIKOLOVSKA, *O istorijskim portretima u Psači* (cit. note 34).

36 Même si, comme le démontre l'étude de 1995 (ibid., p. 40), les deux souverains n'étaient pas simultanément représentés au début. La seule présence d'Uroš et de sa mère, qui avait quitté le pouvoir, suffit à inscrire le *ktitor* dans la hiérarchie.

37 D'ailleurs, et Frank Kämpfer, le note bien, aucun cadre ne sépare les deux couples de souverains (F. KÄMPFER, *Das russische Herrscherbild von den Anfängen bis zu Peter dem Grossen. Studien zur Entwicklung politischer Ikonographie im byzantinischen Kulturkreis*, Recklinghausen 1978). RASOLKOSKA-NIKOLOVSKA, *O istorijskim portretima u Psači* (cit. note 34), p. 40 insiste largement sur cette proximité.





11: Psača, panneau votif de la famille de *ktitor*, mur sud narthex, 1358–1360, dessin (N. Conev)

comme relique culturelle et le sceptre-croix porté par les deux souverains, renvoie dans un sens plus large à la revendication d'une filiation spirituelle entre les souverains serbes et l'archétype de la souveraineté chrétienne. De façon remarquable, il n'y a pas de différence dans le costume des trois souverains – Constantin qui est un empereur du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle, et dont le costume officiel est souvent actualisé, porte le même vêtement officiel qu'Uroš, dit *tsar* (= empereur, *basileus*), et que Vukašin qui n'est que roi (*kralj*), tous les deux du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Par contre, le sceptre d'Uroš est plus important que celui du roi. D'un autre côté, l'acte du *ktitor* s'inscrit dans cette double

référence temporelle et spirituelle. Les deux panneaux se font face.

Les souverains sont nimbés et couronnés, alors que les deux *ktitores*, le prince (*kniaz*) Paskač, le père de Vlatko, et le *sebastokrator* n'ont ni nimbe ni couronne, à part la femme (*sebastokratorissa* Vladislava) qui porte une belle couronne sur un fond de voile blanc.<sup>38</sup> En ce qui concerne la coiffe, nous rappelons que, dans la pratique, les hommes devaient paraître nu-tête, alors que les femmes devaient porter une coiffe à l'église. Il est fort probable que l'image reflète non seulement les costumes de l'époque, mais aussi une certaine pratique coutumière.

Par ailleurs, il semblerait que, d'après la plupart des exemples analysés dans les fondations seigneuriales, le *ktitor*/la *ktitorissa*, qui se situe par rapport à une double hiérarchie à la fois terrestre et céleste, ne porte pas d'autres marques honorifiques que ses vêtements. L'homme est généralement sans couronne ni nimbe et la femme porte une belle coiffe. L'humilité est fortement mise en évidence aussi à travers le geste du don de l'église, **souligné** par le geste de présentation. Notons enfin que le don est fait ici à une image – l'icône de saint Nicolas, le patron de l'église. Ce n'est pas la divinité ou le saint *en personne* qui reçoit le don dans la composition, mais une icône. C'est un cas rare.

## 7. LE DON DANS LES PANNEAUX VOTIFS DE L'ÉGLISE DE JOŠANICA

Sur le mur nord du narthex les traces de la composition mettent en scène les souverains, alors que sur le mur sud-ouest du narthex se trouve le panneau des *ktitores* de l'église de Jošanica, aujourd'hui dédiée à saint Nicolas.<sup>39</sup> Il s'agirait de la chapelle d'un seigneur local incon-

nu.<sup>40</sup> L'inscription dédicatoire n'est pas conservée. On a supposé qu'il s'agissait d'une construction du temps du despote Djurdj Branković (1427–1456) (à l'époque où une grande partie de la Serbie faisait partie de l'empire ottoman) et que des membres de sa famille y étaient peints – proba-

38 Pour plus de détails sur les identités de la famille de *ktitores*, voir RASOLKOSKA-NIKOLOVSKA, O istorijskim portretima u Psači (cit. note 34), p. 43–49.

39 Pour une reconstitution des images, voir les schémas d'I. Filipović.

40 Sur l'étude de cette église, cf. B. CVETKOVIĆ, Prilog najstarijoj istoriji crkve u Jošanici, in: Zograf, 24, 1995, p. 78 et s.

blement ses deux filles Mara et Cantacuzina ou son épouse et une de ses filles. Cette présence de l'autorité terrestre sert aussi de datation de l'église. C'est en raison de la présence féminine que nous avons inclus cet exemple malgré son mauvais état de conservation. Le panneau votif est composé d'une noble en *ktitorissa* (c.-à-d. tenant seule le modèle de l'église) accompagnée de ses trois fils et de sa fille (représentée dans la partie sud du mur ouest). Un saint guerrier (Georges ou Démétrios – ancien patron de l'église?) sert d'intermédiaire au don, placé près du fils aîné de la fondatrice. Sur le mur sud, deux autres personnages font partie de la composition: un homme en habit de moine avec une croix (l'époux décédé de la *ktitorissa*?) et un ecclésiastique inconnu est représenté à l'extrémité du mur sud.

Ces identifications autorisent à placer ce cas parmi ceux déjà envisagés des images du *ktitor* et de sa famille mises en rapport avec le pou-

voir temporel et ecclésiastique à la fois. Cette église est importante, moins pour la qualité de ses fresques que pour la constitution d'une série mettant en image les figures de *ktitores* en rapport avec celles du pouvoir temporel et ecclésiastique. Comme nous avons déjà pu le noter, l'usage du panneau des souverains situe l'acte de la fondation dans la hiérarchie terrestre. En revanche, la présence de l'autorité ecclésiastique est ambiguë: il s'agit soit d'une participation à la *ktitoria* soit, ce qui est plus probable, d'une référence à l'autorité de l'Église, de laquelle dépendait aussi l'octroi du droit de construction. En effet, s'il s'agissait d'une participation par ce personnage à la construction, il serait plus probable que l'ecclésiastique tienne aussi le modèle de l'église en signe de cette participation, comme à Kremikovci par exemple. Enfin, la présence du saint intermédiaire place le don dans la hiérarchie universelle et céleste.

#### 8. LE DON DANS LES PANNEAUX VOTIFS DE L'ÉGLISE DE KREMIKOVCI

L'église est dédiée à saint Georges. Elle existait déjà au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, et a été rénovée en 1493 par un certain Radivoj et sa famille – en leur qualité de *ktitores*. Les panneaux votifs sont placés dans le narthex de l'église. L'identité du *ktitor* a fait l'objet de controverses.<sup>41</sup> La représentation du don est figurée sur le mur nord du narthex. Sur le panneau votif, une famille de *ktitores* est représentée groupée du côté droit du panneau, puis le *ktitor* principal tient le modèle de la main gauche et, de l'autre côté, il est soutenu par le personnage ecclésiastique, identifié comme le métropolite de Sofia, Kalevit (Fig. 12). Radivoj et Kalevit sont cités tous les deux comme auteurs

de la (re)construction (*obnovi se i sazda se – a été renouvelé et créé*, selon la formulation habituelle).<sup>42</sup> Les personnages offrent leur don par l'intermédiaire du saint auquel est dédiée l'église. Saint Georges passe le bras gauche autour du cou et des épaules du métropolite, un peu à la manière de saint Nicolas à Staničane. Cette image montre la polysémie du geste et la nécessité de nuancer l'interprétation du geste du saint patron comme celui d'un psychopompe (car ici il ne s'agit pas d'un défunt). Au-dessus de cette scène de don, l'acte est *couronné* par la bénédiction du Christ, apparaissant d'une nuée céleste. Le *ktitor* laïc a enlevé son chapeau en signe de respect,

41 A. VASILIEV, *Ktitorski portreti*, Sofia 1960, p. 66. Selon l'auteur, il s'agit d'un noble local Radivoj, alors que N. IORGA/G. BALȘ, *Histoire de l'art roumain ancien*, Paris 1922, p. 92 et s., l'identifient comme Radu Voda. Ils prennent Voj comme une contraction de *voivode*. Depuis, les historiens ont donné raison au premier.

42 Pour l'inscription, voir A. KIRIN, *Ktitorskiat nadpis ot 1493 v Kremikovskia manastir*, in: *Palaeobulgarica*, 13, 2, 1989, p. 87–99.



tandis que la femme reste avec la coiffe, selon la coutume. Devant la femme se tient la fille du couple, Dragana, et devant l'homme leur fils, Todor. Les enfants croisent les mains sur la poitrine, ce qui signifie qu'ils sont morts. Les deux inscriptions conservées près de la tête des enfants mentionnent: *s'est présentée l'esclave de Dieu Dragana, fille de Radivoj, au mois d'août* et la seconde *s'est présenté l'esclave de Dieu Todor, fils de Radivoj*... Le panneau combine à la fois une intention votive, de dédicace de l'église, et un hommage à la mémoire des enfants défunts.

12: Kremikovci, panneau votif, mur nord, narthex, 1493

## 9. LE DON DANS LES PANNEAUX VOTIFS DE L'ÉGLISE DE DRAGALEVCI

L'église est dédiée à la Théotokos, et se trouve à Dragalevci. Le monastère avait été fondé encore au temps du tsar Ioan Alexandre au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, puis reconstruit et décoré en 1476 par la famille.<sup>43</sup> Sur l'angle, formé par les murs nord-ouest du narthex, est disposé le panneau du *ktitor* avec sa famille: sur le mur ouest, les deux fils Stakhna et Nicolas, et, à côté d'eux, sur le mur nord, le couple de *ktitores* Radoslav le Maur et son épouse Vida, avec le modèle de l'église entre eux (Fig. 13). Cependant, le *ktitor* semble le seul à le porter de la main droite. De part et d'autre de la tête du *ktitor* est disposée l'inscription: *Deisis (prière) du serviteur de Dieu Radoslav Mavar*. Celle de son épouse reprend la précédente: *Prière de l'esclave de Dieu Vida;*

la prière de l'un des fils est aussi formulée de la même manière: *Prière du serviteur de Dieu Stakh*... et celle du second fils dit: *Prière du serviteur de Dieu, l'anagnosta, Nicolas*. L'inscription dédicatoire se trouve au-dessus de la porte ouest: *Christ, toi qui, par ta divine providence, as tout ordonné avec sagesse, sois le juge et le sauveur du très pieux et fidèle Radoslav Mavâr, de sa compagne Vida et de leurs fils Nicolas le Grammairien et Stakhna*. Suit la formule trinitaire habituelle *grâce à laquelle a pu être décoré ce temple saint et divin de la sainte et glorieuse Théotokos, la Vierge Marie, par le labeur du kyr (seigneur) Radoslav Mavâr, son épouse et ses fils, à leur mémoire éternelle, en 1476, ind. 9, sous le règne de l'Ismail Mekhmed Celebi*.<sup>44</sup>

43 Cf. VASILIEV, *Ktitorski portreti* (cit. note 41), p. 58.

44 Cf. pour la transcription en bulgare, K. Mjatev dans VASILIEV, *Ktitorski portreti* (cit. note 41), p. 60 et s.



13: Dragalevci, panneau votif, angle nord-ouest, narthex, 1476

Le sens du don est explicite. La *ktitoria* est supposée œuvrer pour la mémoire éternelle du pieux bienfaiteur, de l'évergète fidèle à Dieu. Au nom de l'ordre instauré par le Christ, il lui adresse une prière pour que, lors du Jugement dernier, son âme soit sauvée. Mais cet acte prépare aussi la Rédemption de l'âme de ses enfants morts, et de l'ensemble de la famille. Il n'a pu accomplir la décoration du temple que grâce à la providence trinitaire et en son nom. Le propre de la qualité ambivalente de *ktitor* est, comme nous l'avons vu, à la fois la possession et l'abandon de la propriété dans l'intérêt de l'Église et en hommage à Dieu, même si le bien peut tout de même être transmis dans la famille.

#### CONCLUSION

Rappelons simplement que ces églises se trouvent dans la même région et datent entre les XIIIe et XVe siècles. Ceci permet de constituer des séries et de tirer certaines conclusions sur la représentation et le rôle de la femme dans la *ktitoria* d'églises. Nous avons cherché à construire une image de la mise en scène du don sans insister sur une différenciation stylistique, historique ou politique entre les églises bulgares et serbes, même s'il est certain que les changements, notamment politiques, influent directement sur la représentation du don.

Les monuments examinés ci-dessus nous ont permis de définir deux types de rapports exprimés à travers la *ktitoria*: une double (ou simple) référence hiérarchique terrestre (temporelle) et une référence hiérarchique céleste (atemporelle). Ainsi, le *ktitor*/la *ktitorissa* fait référence au pouvoir temporel ou / et spirituel, sous la houlette duquel il se place pour offrir son don. La double autorité est présente dans les églises à Bojana, Dolna Kamenica, Staničane, Kučevište, Jošanica, Psača. À Kremikovci et Dragalevci, l'autorité temporelle est absente pour des raisons historiques évidentes. Dans le premier cas, c'est l'autorité ecclésiastique qui était représentée. Nous

avons pu relever une hiérarchie sociale exprimée en image. Il est fort probable qu'en réalité toute construction devait se faire avec l'accord de l'autorité temporelle. Dans le cas assez exceptionnel, à Lujboten, seule l'autorité était figurée et le don était absent.

Comme nous venons de le voir à travers les images et les inscriptions, la construction d'églises est plus qu'une affaire d'individus, une affaire de couple, voire de famille, car souvent le couple est accompagné d'enfants ou d'autres proches, vivants ou déjà décédés. Cependant, c'est le *ktitor* principal qui porte l'église – seul ou en couple. À Kremikovci et Psača, le don est offert respectivement par le chef de famille et le métropolitain, et par les hommes des deux familles de *ktitores*. La présence de personnages masculins / féminins reste assez équilibrée, même si dans des églises comme celle de Kučevište et de Jošanica, c'est la femme qui est l'initiatrice du don et le tient seule. À Ljuboten, c'est encore une femme qui en est l'initiatrice, mais en l'absence d'image seule l'inscription l'atteste.

Dans certaines églises où le rôle de la femme est mis en évidence dans la *ktitoria*, comme à Kučevište, le don est offert à la Vierge à l'En-

fant. A Dolna Kamenica encore, dans le naos, le don des deux hommes est aussi offert à la Vierge à l'Enfant. Dans d'autres cas encore, le don est reçu par le Christ souvent par l'intermédiaire d'un saint – très souvent saint Nicolas. On peut donc conclure en ce qui concerne les intermédiaires que ce n'est pas le sexe des personnages qui crée l'affinité avec l'intermédiaire et/ou le destinataire du don. Simplement, la Vierge est une médiatrice privilégiée du genre humain en général. Par ailleurs, saint Nicolas est un saint très sollicité dans la région à cette époque et donc un des intermédiaires privilégiés du don. Il est celui qui présente le don à Bojana (même s'il n'est pas intégré dans le panneau votif), Staničane (saint Nicolas est présent dans le long défilé des membres de la famille, mais dans son rôle de psychopompe et non d'intermédiaire du don stricto sensu), Psača (mais en tant qu'icône). À Dolna Kamenica, le don est inscrit dans la chapelle qui est dédiée à saint Nicolas. À Jošanica, l'église est aujourd'hui dédiée à saint Nicolas (mais a pu anciennement être dédiée à un saint militaire). À Kremikovci encore, un saint est l'intermédiaire, mais il s'agit de saint Georges. Le Christ est dans tous les cas le destinataire ultime du don (même dans les cas où c'est la Vierge à l'Enfant qui le reçoit, car par son geste elle lui renvoie don). Nous avons rencontré beaucoup de variations, qui rendent difficile la systématisation. Mais il est certain que l'inscription de la scène du don dans un contexte iconographique spécifique est fortement soumise aux contraintes de l'espace architectural particulier de l'église.

Les inscriptions et les images témoignent encore que, conformément au droit de *ktitor*, hommes et femmes avaient les mêmes droits. En image, celui qui porte le modèle de l'église est très souvent l'initiateur du don. Aussi, lorsque la femme est *ktitorissa*, porte-t-elle obligatoirement le don, comme à Kučevište. Lorsque l'épouse participe à la *ktitoria*, elle soutient le modèle de l'église avec son mari; et lorsque le couple a des enfants, ils sont présents, mais ne portent généra-

lement pas le modèle de l'église. Ce sont les cas le plus souvent rencontrés comme à Dolna Kamenica, Staničane (le couple de donateurs est en habit monacal), ou encore à Dragalevci. Par contre, il peut arriver que la femme accompagne la scène de don sans y participer comme à Kremikovci, Psača ou à Bojana (même si elle peut y être explicitement mentionnée comme *ktitorissa*). Le panneau qui inclut l'autorité terrestre ne présente jamais le don de l'église: même dans le cas exceptionnel, comme à Kučevište, où les *ktitores* font partie des deux panneaux – autorité et don, le panneau avec l'autorité ne représente pas le don. L'inscription de la construction dans une hiérarchie sociale est significative de la place importante de cette action dans la société et de l'autorité temporelle qui la régit. Comme nous venons de le voir, de nombreuses variantes existent dans la figuration des personnages féminins: présence de l'épouse dans le panneau et dans l'inscription, présence de l'épouse uniquement dans le panneau ou dans l'inscription etc. Il est intéressant de noter un élément iconographique inspiré des coutumes vestimentaires de l'époque: le port du voile ou d'une coiffe spéciale dans l'église par la femme tandis que l'homme se découvre la tête en signe de respect.

Ainsi dans l'expression de la dévotion et de la foi individuelles, de la soumission à une autorité (terrestre ou céleste) nous avons pu observer beaucoup de variations formelles. Ce qui reste stable, c'est la sémantique du don: une nécessité d'offrir à la puissance surnaturelle, de prier pour le salut de l'âme, souvent par l'intermédiaire d'un saint ou de la Vierge. Les raisons de la construction d'églises sont profondément les mêmes: préparer la demeure pour soi et sa famille pour finir sa vie sur terre et dans l'au-delà, donner un lieu de prière pour les vivants et pour les défunts, et souvent un endroit pour y déposer la dépouille du *ktitor* (et souvent de ses proches). La *ktitoria* témoigne évidemment d'un statut social et d'une puissance économique de la famille, et en relation étroite avec ce statut, elle atteste d'une gé-

nérosité adressée à Dieu par l'offrande d'un don. On se dépossède de l'église qu'on a fait construire pour l'offrir au Christ / à la Vierge avec ou sans intermédiaires. Ce don est destiné à honorer Dieu, à le prier pour le salut de l'âme — celui des membres de la famille, à lui rendre hommage. La *ktitoria* pouvait ainsi préparer le passage du *ktitor* vers l'autre monde, le jour où il devait rendre des comptes pour ses actes. La bienfaisance, l'évergétisme était sans doute le meilleur moyen, car ce comportement supposait imiter celui du Christ, l'Évergète par excellence, source de tout bien terrestre et de tout don. Pour ses actes, le bienfaiteur recevait des prières, des offrandes, des commémorations, adressées à Dieu par les fidèles serviteurs. En contrepartie, les gestes des bénéficiaires terrestres du don témoignaient en faveur du *kti-*

*tor* devant Dieu et devaient aider son âme par la prière. Ainsi la perspective sotériologique éclaire la raison du geste de construire et/ou de rénover une église autrement qu'en termes de prestige social et d'influence politique. Par le geste du don, le *ktitor* devient l'imitateur du Christ et inscrit ses pas sur le chemin du divin.

**Crédits d'illustrations:** Fig. 1: A. Atzev, Musée national «Église de Bojana». — Fig. 2: L. KOJNOVA-ARNAOUDOVA, Istorija na izpisvaneto i restavratorskite namesi v Bojanskata carkva, in: Problemi na izkoustvoto, 1995, p. 45. — Fig. 3–9, 12–13: T. Kambourova. — Fig. 10: Dessin N. Conev, in: RASKOLSKA-NIKOLOVSKA, O ktitorskim portretima (cit. note 31), fig. 12. — Fig. 11: Dessin N. Conev, in: RASKOLSKA-NIKOLOVSKA, O istorijskim portretima (cit. note 34), fig. 5.



## FEMALE DONORS IN THIRTEENTH-CENTURY WALL PAINTINGS IN CAPPADOCIA: AN OVERVIEW

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The wall paintings in rock-cut churches in Cappadocia contain a great number of male and female portraits of donors, most of which are already known to the scholarly world.<sup>1</sup> In this paper, we shall focus on a group of such monuments in which women constitute an important element in the act of donation. Based on the fact that the paintings remain the only source of research on this subject, we shall comment on the role and identity of the female donors in thirteenth-century Christian society in Cappadocia. The examples in question will be discussed in chronological order.

The first example, dating from the beginning of the thirteenth century, is preserved in Karşı Kilise located in ancient Zoropassos, known today as Gülşehir. The pictorial program of this

church, already well known,<sup>2</sup> consists of paintings that have been dated to 1212–1213 by an inscription in the apse which mentions also the name of the emperor Theodore I Laskaris.<sup>3</sup>

Three donor panels run across the lower registers of the church. The first one, unknown until 1996, is situated on the east side of the north wall.<sup>4</sup> It appears to depict three male figures: in the centre, there is a large-scale figure wearing a turban and holding a model of the church. Here we certainly have the main donor, probably represented with his two sons, near the bema, and beneath the scene of Paradise in the upper register. The depiction of the Hand of God and two fragmentary inscriptions, one of which mentions Christ *photodotes*, contributes to this identification.

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- 1 For general information on patrons and donors in Cappadocia see L. BERNARDINI, *Les donateurs des églises de Cappadoce*, in: *Byzantion*, 62, 1992, pp. 118–140; C. JOLIVET-LÉVY, *La Cappadoce médiévale: images et spiritualité*, Paris 2001, pp. 82–88.
  - 2 H. ROTT, *Kleinasiatische Denkmäler aus Pisidien, Pamphylien, Kappadokien und Lykien*, Leipzig 1908, pp. 245–246; G. DE JERPHANION, *Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce: une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin*, Paris 1925–1942, II, pp. 1–16; J. LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *Nouvelles notes cappadociennes*, in: *Byzantion*, 33, 1963, pp. 123–127; M. RESTLE, *Die byzantinische Wandmalerei in Kleinasien*, Recklinghausen 1967, I, pp. 167–168 (no. LI), III, figs. 468–473; N. THIERRY, *La peinture de Cappadoce au XIIIe siècle: archaïsme et contemporanéité*, in: *Studenica et l'art byzantin autour l'année 1200*, Belgrade 1988, pp. 367–368; C. JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce: le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords*, Paris 1991, pp. 229–230; C. JOLIVET-LÉVY, *La Cappadoce: mémoire de Byzance*, Paris 1997, pp. 106–107; C. JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Images et espace culturel à Byzance: l'exemple d'une église de Cappadoce (Karşı Kilise, 1212)*, in: M. KAPLAN (ed.), *Le sacré et son inscription dans l'espace à Byzance et en Occident*, Paris 2001, pp. 163–181, repr. in: C. JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Études cappadociennes*, London 2002, XIV; BERNARDINI, *Les donateurs* (cit. n. 1), pp. 125–126.
  - 3 G. DE JERPHANION, *Les inscriptions cappadociennes et l'histoire de l'Empire grec de Nicée*, in: *Orientalia christiana periodica*, I, 1935, pp. 240–241; G. P. SCHIEMENZ, *Zur politischen Zugehörigkeit des Gebietes um Sobesos und Zoropassos in den Jahren um 1200*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 14, 1965, pp. 207–235.
  - 4 JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Images et espace* (cit. n. 2), p. 168, fig. 4.





1: *Gülşehir, Karşı Kilise, west wall, south niche, Irene with Kale, Maria and St Theodote*

The other two dedicatory panels belong to the female donors. They are located on the west wall, without particular iconographic and epigraphic attributes. A certain Irene is depicted in the south niche. A second secular female figure occupies the central niche. Two female figures, represented on a smaller scale and standing on either side of Irene, are identified as her daughters, Kale and Maria (Fig. 1). As was first suggested by Catherine Jolivet-Lévy,<sup>5</sup> it is probably the wife and the daughters of the main donor on the east panel. Irene, standing in the middle, places her

palms on the heads of her daughters. She wears a white dress and a long red undergarment beneath, of which only the lower part is visible. The white tunic, with wide sleeves inside the sleeves of the outer garment, is probably fastened with a belt just below the waist; it is adorned with circular and small star patterns. On the upper part, there is a vertical white band, similar to those on the daughters' dresses, which looks forward to the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century garments of some secular female figures in Crete and the Dodecanese.<sup>6</sup> Above her tunic Irene wears a red

5 JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Images et espace* (cit. n. 2), pp. 298–290.

6 In those examples this vertical band goes down to the knees and forms the so-called T form robe. In Crete: the female donor Kale in the monastery of Kera in Pediada and the donor Mazizani's wife in the church of Panagia Kera in Kritsa, K. ΜΥΛΟΡΟΤΑΜΙΤΑΚΙ, *Η ενδυμασία της γυναίκας στην Κρήτη επί Βενετοκρατίας*, in: *Αρχαιολογία*, 21, Νοέμβριος 1986, p. 49, figs. 1, 8; K. ΜΥΛΟΡΟΤΑΜΙΤΑΚΙ, *Η βυζαντινή γυναικεία φορεσιά στη Βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη*, in: *Κρητική Εστία*, 1, 1987, pl. 49. On Rhodes: the female donor Irene in the church of St John Prodomos in Archangelos, a certain Irene in the church of the Panagia Katholiki near Lardos and a certain Maria, donor's daughter in the church of St Nicholas at Phountoukli, I. ΜΡΙΓΗΛΑ, *Ενδυματολογικές μαρτυρίες στις τοιχογραφίες της μεσαιωνικής Ρόδου (14ος αι.–1523)*, in: *Ρόδος 2400 χρόνια*, Athens 2000, p. 440, pls. 172b, 172c, 173, and previous bibliography. On this discussion see also J. VERPEAUX (ed.), *Pseudo-Kodinos, traité des offices*, Paris 1966, p. 219; S. ΚΟΥΓΕΑΣ, *Αί ἐν τοῖς σχολίοις τοῦ Ἀρέθα λαογραφικαὶ εἰδήσεις*, in: *Λαογραφία*, 4, 1912–1913, p. 253.



2: *Gülşehir, Karşı Kilise, west wall, south niche, Irene, detail*

3: *Ortaköy (Başköy), church of St George, St Helena*

heavy mantle fastened at the front with a round clasp and patterned with medallions and a gold border band.

It is worth focusing on what appears to be an original headdress, a purple kerchief covering Irene's hair, the front of which is made up of a metal band imitating a diadem,<sup>7</sup> and which, until now, has gone unnoticed (Fig. 2). Long pendants are suspended on either side of the rim, bringing to mind the *pendulia* of the im-

perial crowns. The combination of a veil with a kind of diadem, which according to Maria Parani could help to keep the kerchief in place,<sup>8</sup> is already known from depictions of female saints of the tenth century<sup>9</sup> and seems to appear more frequently from the thirteenth century onward.<sup>10</sup> In Cappadocia, in an unusual thirteenth-century representation in the church of St George in Ortaköy (Başköy), St Helena is depicted in a similar way; the veil is wound

7 On the description of diadems see L. DINDORF (ed.), *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, [CSHB], Bonn 1831, LXII, 299.20 (New edition: H. THURN (ed.), *Ioannis Malalae chronographia*, Berlin / New York 2000); P. KOUKOULES, *Βυζαντινών βίος και πολιτισμός*, I–IV, Athens 1948–1955, IV, pp. 385–386.

8 M. PARANI, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)*, Leiden / Boston 2003, p. 77, no. 103.

9 Unknown female saint in the church of St Panteleimon, Ano Boularioi, Mesa Mani, N. DRANDAKIS, *Βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες της Μέσα Μάνης*, Athens 1995, p. 372, fig. 9.

10 Among several examples: St Kyriake in the church of the Hagioi Anargyroi at Kepoula, Mesa Mani, DRANDAKIS, *Βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες* (cit. n. 9), pl. 78. St Barbara in the church of the Virgin Hodegetria at Spelies, Euboia, M. EMMANUEL, *Die Fresken der Muttergottes-Hodegetria-Kirche in Spelies auf der Insel Euboia (1311). Bemerkungen zu Ikonographie und Stil*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 83, 1990, pp. 451–452. Anna, the donor's sister-in-law and wife of John Tzimiskes in the church of Panagia Bella in Boulgareli, Arta. Irene Palaeologina in the church of Taxiarches Metropoleos in Kastoria, S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece*, Vienna 1992, p. 99, figs. 81, 88, 94–96. Three noble women in the image of the procession of the Virgin in the Blacherna's monastery, Arta, M. ACHEIMASTOU-POTAMIANOU, *The Basilissa Anna Palaiologina of Arta and the Monastery of Vlacherna*, in: J. PERREAULT (ed.), *Les femmes et le monachisme Byzantin. Actes du Symposium d'Athènes*, Athens 1988, pp. 43–49. Princess Anna Dandolo in the narthex of Sopočani, R. LJUBINKOVIĆ, *Sur le symbolisme de l'histoire de Joseph du narthex de Sopočani*, in: *L'art byzantin du XIIIe siècle: symposium de Sopočani*, Belgrade 1967, pp. 235–236, fig. 6.



4: *Gülşehir, Karşı Kilise, west wall*

around the head while the diadem, covering a part of the latter (Fig. 3).<sup>11</sup> Going back to Irene's headdress, diadems with pendants are quite uncommon and, as far as we know, there is no evidence of a similar female secular donor representation with one. It is only in some late examples of diadems in which Byzantine ladies wear pendants attached to the lower rim in order to support large earrings,<sup>12</sup> a combination which does not correspond with Irene's image in Karşı Kilise. Whatever the interpretation of this particular headdress – for example it could be an iconographic solution to replace the absence of earrings or jewellery in her portrait – it clearly emphasizes Irene's social rank and seems to have been conceived as an attribute equivalent

to that of the husband's turban, depicted on the north-eastern dedicatory panel. It is quite possible that Irene, together with the anonymous female donor represented in the next panel, probably a relative of hers, had specified the decorations on the west wall of the church. In fact, three portraits of female saints, Theodote, Kyriake and Paraskeve, are depicted on the same scale as the female donors, completing the pictorial program of the west wall. As Sharon Gerstel suggests,<sup>13</sup> in Byzantium “the use of monumental decoration as a primary source for the space women occupied in the church was common”. In the light of this idea, we could possibly identify a women's space in the western part of our church, that may be connected with a

11 LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *Nouvelles notes cappadociennes* (cit. n. 2), fig. 17.

12 PARANI, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images* (cit. n. 8), p. 80.

13 On the role of women in non-official rituals often related to death and commemoration see S.E. J. GERSTEL, *Painted Sources for Female Piety in Medieval Byzantium*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 52, 1998, pp. 95–96, 99–103, with further bibliography.





5: Tatlarin, church no. 2, apse, dedicatory inscription, detail

kind of “nonofficial female devotional or commemorative practice” (Fig. 4). Karşı Kilise may have been the private chapel of a family of local aristocrats where the wife played an important role in its decoration. Irene is depicted with her daughters in a manner which expresses her female piety and emphasizes her personal devotion to her intercessors above.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, she is represented at the same scale as St Theodote, martyr saint of Nicaea, who stands on her left. The choice of St Theodote probably provides a clue concerning the geographic origins of the donor Irene, or at least, her possible connection with the Empire of Nicaea at the beginning of

the thirteenth century.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the mention of the name of the emperor Theodore I Laskaris on the dedicatory inscription of our church, as in two other contemporary monuments,<sup>16</sup> further enhances the possibility of a certain contact between this region and the Empire of Nicaea.

Another contemporary pictorial program probably commissioned by a woman, could also provide a possible link between the Empire of Nicaea and the condition of female patronage at the beginning of the thirteenth century. In 2001, soon after the restoration of the paintings in the church of Tatlarin, not far away from Karşı Kilise, Jolivet-Lévy was the first to observe a dedicatory inscription in the south apse.<sup>17</sup> The year 1215 is mentioned with regard to this inscription as well as the name of a certain Rodathy bearing the title of *protopapadia*, the priest’s wife (Fig. 5).

The epithet *protopapadia*, referring to the wife of a *protopapas* (i. e. the foremost in the hierarchy of priests and of the lower level clergy) is of special interest.<sup>18</sup> As far as the title of *protopapas* is concerned, the existing epigraphic evidence is far from abundant and is located in the Mani peninsula dating from the eleventh century and on, in Crete, dating from the four-

14 Irene places her palms on her daughters’ heads as they stand with their hands crossed over their chest. Even though there is no clear indication of a funerary inscription, or even of a tomb or an arcosolium present, we may have here a funerary painting in which the mother intercedes on behalf of her deceased children and she is also the donor of the composition. On other similar representations see T. PAPAMASTORAKIS, *Επιτύμβιες παραστάσεις κατά τη μέση και ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο*, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaologikes Hetaireias*, 19, 1996–1997, p. 298; S. T. BROOKS, *The Double Portrait of Kale Kavalasea from Mistra*, in: *Byzantine Studies Conference: Abstracts of Papers*, 21, 1995, p. 79; S. T. BROOKS, *Commemoration of the Dead: Late Byzantine Tomb Decoration (Mid-13th to Mid-15th Centuries)*, PhD Thesis, New York University 2002, pp. 47–51, 145–159.

15 JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Images et espace* (cit. n. 2), p. 168, no. 20, pp. 179–180.

16 The church of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia in Süveş (Şahinefendi), 1216–1217, DE JERPHANION, *Les églises rupestres* (cit. n. 2), II, p. 391, and the church of Archangelos near Cemil, 1217–1218, G. KIOURZIAN, *Une nouvelle inscription de Cappadoce du règne de Théodore Ier Laskaris*, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaologikes Hetaireias*, 29, 2008, pp. 131–138.

17 C. JOLIVET-LÉVY/N. LEMAIGRE DEMESNIL, *Nouvelles églises à Tatlarin, Cappadoce*, in: *Monuments et Mémoires. Fondation E. Piot*, 75, 1996, pp. 21–63; C. JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Art chrétien en Anatolie turque: le témoignage de peintures inédites à Tatlarin*, in: A. EASTMOND (ed.), *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, Aldershot 2001, pp. 133–145, repr. in: JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Études cappadociennes* (cit. n. 2), VIII.

18 On the office of the *protopapas* see J. DARROUZÈS, *Recherches sur les ὀφίκκια de l’église byzantine*, Paris 1970, pp. 116, 118–119, 121, 211.



6: Tatlarin, church no. 2, apse, Theotokos with Child

teenth century,<sup>19</sup> while two dedicatory inscriptions from Naxos<sup>20</sup> contain the name *papas*. However, to the best of our knowledge, the title of *protopapadia* has not been preserved elsewhere in church inscriptions. It was common, however, for priests' wives to use their husbands' title.<sup>21</sup> Monastic acts from later centuries refer to priests' widows being called *papadia* and at the beginning of the fifteenth century a certain Irene from Cyprus, wife of a *protopapas*, is men-

tioned in the same manner as Tatlarin's female donor.<sup>22</sup>

The altar niche of the apse presents an imposing image of the Virgin and Child flanked by two angels, with the Virgin's parents on both sides of the composition (Fig. 6). Above the Theotokos with Child appears the Hand of God, symbol of God the Father, coming from a section of heaven and giving the blessing in the direction of the Child's head. In between the Hand

19 S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, Epigraphic Evidence in Middle-Byzantine Churches of the Mani, in: *Λαμπεδών. Αφιέρωμα στη μνήμη της Ντούλας Μουρίκη*, Athens 2003, I, p. 340; S. N. MADERAKIS, *Η προσωπογραφία των δωρητών στις εκκλησίες της Κρήτης*, Chania 1988, pp. 44–45, fig. 5. See also F. EUANGELATOU-NOTARA, *Χορηγοί – κτήτορες – δωρητές σε σημειώματα κωδικών. Παλαιολόγειοι χρόνοι*, Athens 2000, pp. 47, 260.

20 A. MITSANI, *Η χορηγία στις Κυκλάδες από τον 6ο μέχρι τον 14ο αιώνα. Η μαρτυρία των επιγραφών*, Athens 2006, pp. 424–425, fig. 20.

21 E. MARGAROU, *Τίτλοι και επαγγελματικά ονόματα γυναικών στο Βυζάντιο. Συμβολή στη μελέτη για τη θέση της γυναίκας στη βυζαντινή κοινωνία*, Thessaloniki 2000, pp. 266–171.

22 On the title of *protopapadia* or *papadia* see *ibid.*, pp. 189, 192.



7: *Yüksekli church no. 1, north wall, west niche, dedicatory panel*

of God and Christ's nimbus there is an inscription containing verse three of Psalm 109.<sup>23</sup> As the inscription is partly preserved, we may hypothesize that the *protopapadia* Rodathy, the widow or wife of a priest, could have been responsible for the choice of this distinct iconographic formula. It should also be noted that the other contempo-

rary example of this composition, depicted in the church of the Archangelos in Cemil, was sponsored by clerics of low rank, simple priests and monks.<sup>24</sup>

The evidence from the surviving monuments, as well as from historical sources and studies, attests to social and religious interaction: an inevitable consequence of political exchange, which grew in importance along the Konya-Nicaea connection since the beginning of the thirteenth century.<sup>25</sup> Comparable social circumstances, but set against a slightly different political background, may also be found in the second half of the thirteenth century in the same region.<sup>26</sup> Important evidence about female patronage emerges from the church at Yüksekli, published in 1987.<sup>27</sup> Although the paintings of this chapel are of high quality, they are very badly preserved, yet they can be dated to the second half or the end of the thirteenth century, on the basis of their iconography and style. Today, the portrait of the female donor has completely disappeared; she was depicted in the west niche of the north wall, on the right side of St Christopher, in the place of honour on the spectator's left (Fig. 7). Another donor, possibly her husband, was probably depicted to the left.<sup>28</sup> The female donor is accom-

23 On the apse composition see JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Art chrétien* (cit. n. 17), pp. 136–137. Aside from the well-known ninth-century apse mosaic in the church of the Dormition in Nicaea, a further similar composition occurs in Cappadocia, in the church of the Archangelos near Cemil, dated to 1217, B. T. UYAR, *L'église d'Archangelos à Cemil: le décor de la nef sud et le renouveau de la peinture byzantine en Cappadoce au début du XIIIe siècle*, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaïologikes Hetaireias*, 30, 2008, p. 125.

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 128–129.

25 On this discussion see S. VRYONIS, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*, London 1971, pp. 216–223; M. BALIVET, *Romanie byzantine et pays de Rûm turc. Histoire d'un espace d'imbrication gréco-turque*, Istanbul 1994, pp. 85–89; M. BALIVET, *Entre Byzance et Konya: l'intercirculation des idées et des hommes au temps des seldjoukides*, in: M. BALIVET, *Mélanges byzantines, seldjoukides et ottomanes*, Istanbul 2005, pp. 47–81.

26 On the historical context of the second half of thirteenth century see VRYONIS, *Decline* (cit. n. 25), pp. 244–287; C. CAHEN, *La Turquie pré-ottomane*, Istanbul/Paris 1988, pp. 227–307; D. A. KOROBENIKOV, *Orthodox Communities in Eastern Anatolia in the Thirteenth to Fourteenth Centuries. Part 2: The Time of Troubles*, in: *Al-Masaq Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean*, 17.1, 2005, pp. 197–214; C. MELVILLE, *Anatolia under the Mongols*, in: K. FLEET (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, I, Cambridge 2009, pp. 51–101.

27 C. JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Nouvelle découverte en Cappadoce: les églises de Yüksekli*, in: *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 35, 1987, pp. 113–141, repr. in: JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Études cappadociennes* (cit. n. 2), IX.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 129, fig. 23.

panied by the inscription *Skribonissa* which seems to be used as a patronymic.<sup>29</sup> On the south-west side of the barrel vault, in front of this dedicatory panel, the Baptism of Christ is depicted with some distinct iconographic features. A Western-style sailing vessel with a praying sailor figure on board is represented below the figure of Christ making a protective gesture. Scholars<sup>30</sup> have seen in this an original iconographic formula consisting of an image imploring protection for an expedition at sea, or an *ex voto* offering for a successfully accomplished trip or pilgrimage.<sup>31</sup> In fact, the depiction of St Sabas holding the scroll near the donor portraits may suggest an affiliation with them, and maybe even with the Holy Land.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the depiction of these commissioners on either side of a monumental icon of St Christopher, the holy protector of travellers and pilgrims, may also point to this direction.

Whatever the interpretation of the above depiction, the visual link between this particular image of baptism and the dedicatory panel suggests that our *Skribonissa* was a member of a

rich local family in which mobility seems to have been an integral part of their lifestyle. Perhaps she was the wife of a rich merchant or of a senior civil servant under the Seljuk administration.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the *pax mongolica* at the end of the thirteenth century was an appropriate period for the expansion of Anatolian trade, in which Greek officials were involved, sometimes on behalf of the Seljuk Turks.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the higher stylistic features of the paintings and some iconographic components belonging to the Latin world,<sup>35</sup> raise questions about the background of the painters and the way in which they were associated with the donors who seem to have the financial resources and the aesthetic sensibility to choose a workshop of such quality. The presence of a nimbus<sup>36</sup> on *Skribonissa*'s portrait and her high-status position on the right of the saint's figure may reveal a particular eagerness to emphasize her high social rank. The places given to St Kyriake and St Barbara who frame the donor's image can be seen as a possible female influence on the decorative program, bearing in mind that three more

29 On the name of *Skribonissa* see *ibid.*, pp. 129, 131, no. 97.

30 *Ibid.*, pp. 119–122, 132; THIERRY, *La peinture de Cappadoce* (cit. n. 2), p. 374.

31 The latter hypothesis seems the most convincing especially when considering the social and commercial relations in the eastern Mediterranean and the prominent position of aristocrats and merchants with whom the *Yüksekli* donors may have been associated. Of special iconographic interest is the sailing ship. This element, not commonly depicted in the Baptism scene, is also attested in some thirteenth- and fourteenth-century churches: Holy Apostles in Longanikos, in Lakonia, monastery of the Hypapante in Meteora and three other churches in Crete, Panagia Kera in Kritsa, Transfiguration in Meskla and St Paul near Hagia Roumeli in Sphakia, K. MYLOPOTAMITAKI, *Ο ναός της Παναγίας Κεράς Κρίτσας*, Heraklio 2005, p. 25, fig. 15; O. CHASSOURA, *Les peintures murales byzantines des églises de Longanikos*, Athens 2002, pp. 112–113, and further bibliography. Despite the few preserved examples, the similarity of the vessel and its occurrence in different regions could possibly be seen as a further component of a common provincial tradition across the eastern Mediterranean lands.

32 JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Les églises de Yüksekli* (cit. n. 27), p. 122, no. 38.

33 THIERRY, *La peinture de Cappadoce* (cit. n. 2), p. 374.

34 A. E. LAIOU, *Byzantine Trade with Christians and Muslims and the Crusades*, in: A. E. LAIOU/R. ΜΟΤΤΑΗΕΔΗ (ed.), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, Washington, DC 2001, pp. 187–192; A. G. C. SAVVIDES, *Byzantium in the Near-East: Its Relations with the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum in Asia Minor, the Armenians of Cilicia and the Mongols*, A.D. c. 1192–1237, Thessaloniki 1981, pp. 141–142; M. BALIVET, *Integration et exclusion des chrétiens dans le sultanat seldjoukide d'Asie Mineure (XIIe–XIIIe siècles)*, in: BALIVET, *Mélanges byzantines* (cit. n. 25), pp. III–II8.

35 On the iconographic elements and stylistic trends see JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Les églises de Yüksekli* (cit. n. 27), pp. 122–124, nos. 53–55, p. 129, no. 85, p. 128, no. 81, pp. 130–131.

36 Based on the previous description, *ibid.*, p. 129.





8: Peristrema valley, Belisirma, *Kirk dam Altı Kilise (St George), dedicatory panel*

depictions of female saints are preserved on the west part of the church in their usual place and in visual connection with Skribonissa.<sup>37</sup>

Another case of an act of female patronage, in which the woman's initiative is examined in the particular political and social context of central Anatolia, is found at the well-known *Kirk dam Altı* church in the Peristrema valley, dated to the 1280s (1283–1295).<sup>38</sup> In the pictorial program of this funerary church dedicated to St George the patron saint is represented in five

different portraits. The main icon of St George in the centre of the north-western wall, to the right of the sanctuary, is flanked by Tamar and her husband Basil Giagoupes who bears the title *emir* (Fig. 8). According to some scholars, Tamar who is depicted in this dedicatory panel, may be identified as the well-known Georgian princess Gurjı Khatun, accompanied here by her third husband.<sup>39</sup> Another hypothesis suggests that she could be an otherwise unknown Georgian aristocratic woman married to a local Greek ruler,

37 On female saints' location and the hagiographical program of the church see *ibid.*, pp. 128–130, no. 99.

38 N. THIERRY/M. THIERRY, *Nouvelles églises rupestres de Cappadoce: région du Haşan Dağı*, Paris 1963, pp. 201–213, 202–207 (dedicatory inscription); LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *Nouvelles notes cappadociennes* (cit. n. 2), pp. 148–154; RESTLE, *Die byzantinische Wandmalerei* (cit. n. 2), I, pp. 176–177 (no. LX), III, figs. 510–516; THIERRY, *La peinture de Cappadoce* (cit. n. 2), p. 360; JOLIVET-LÉVY, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce* (cit. n. 2), pp. 318–319; BERNARDINI, *Les donateurs* (cit. n. 1), pp. 127–129, 132; U. WEISSBROD, "Hier liegt der Knecht Gottes..." *Gräber in byzantinischen Kirchen und ihr Dekor (II. bis 15. Jahrhundert) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Höhlenkirchen Kappadokiens*, Wiesbaden 2003, pp. 89–90, 202–203.

39 V. LAURENT, *Note additionnelle: l'inscription de l'église Saint-Georges de Beliserama*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 26, 1968, pp. 367–371; S. VRYONIS, *Another Note on the Inscription of the Church of St George of Beliserama*





9: Peristrema valley, Belisirma, Kirk dam Altı Kilise (St George), Tamar

10: Ortaköy (Başköy), church of St George, St Anastasia Pharmakolytria

the commander of some Christian troops and a vassal of the Seljuk sultan. In fact, high-ranking Christian officials bearing the title *emir* are known to have served in the Seljuk army.<sup>40</sup>

As for Tamar, it is evident that she is presented in the church in a way that highlights her Christian identity, even if the dedicatory inscription mentions both the Seljuk sultan Mas'ud II (1283–1305) and the Byzantine emperor Andronikos II (1282–1328).<sup>41</sup> Tamar is depicted wearing a modest costume recognizable in the eastern Christian tradition. She wears a white dress with

narrow patterned sleeves and over it a long green mantle with a white decorated collar, fastened at the neck and covering her shoulders. These details are also attested in several other contemporary portraits. A low round bonnet covers her head above a long white veil (Fig. 9). However, a more original feature is the double pair of earrings on each side, which have, until now, gone unnoticed and which may be considered belonging to an iconographic tradition common to the eastern Mediterranean world. Earrings are a regular part of female secular costume,<sup>42</sup> but

ma, in: *Byzantina*, 9, 1977, pp. 11–22; A. EASTMOND, *Art and Frontiers Between Byzantium and the Caucasus*, in: S. T. BROOKS (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557): Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture*, New York/London 2006, pp. 154–169.

40 The name of Giagoupes, “Yakoub” for the Greeks and for the Turks, and his rich “oriental” costume suggest his perfect integration into the multi-confessional society of the Seljuk state in the second half of the thirteenth century. VRYONIS, *Decline* (cit. n. 25), p. 232; BALIVET, *Entre Byzance et Konya* (cit. n. 25), p. 194.

41 On the other examples of dedicatory inscriptions from the thirteenth-century central Anatolia mentioning simultaneously both the Byzantine and Seljuk ruler see N. A. BEES, *Die Inschriftenaufzeichnung des Kodex Sinaiticus 508 (976) und die Maria-Spiläotissa-Klosterkirche bei Sille (Lykaonien)*, Berlin/Wilmersdorf 1922, pp. 5–80; A. MITSANI, *Το εικονογραφημένο ευαγγέλιο του Βασιλείου Μελιτηνιώτη (Καيسάρεια, 1226)*, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaio-logikes Hetaireias*, 26, 2005, p. 161.

42 PARANI, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images* (cit. n. 8), p. 79.

double pairs are rare. In the church of St George in Ortaköy, which may also be dated to the late thirteenth century, two holy women, St Helena (Fig. 2) and St Anastasia Pharmakolytria, also wear a double pair of earrings (Fig 10). This feature may also be observed on a fifteenth-century local aristocratic female donor on Rhodes, as well as on some icons from Sinai dated to the late thirteenth century, where the female saints are represented with three earrings on each ear.<sup>43</sup>

Tamar is depicted on the left side of St George with her husband on the right, in the place of honour. Moreover, her gesture, offering the model of the church to the titular saint, testifies to her role as the primary donor along with the dedicatory inscription that records the giving of a vineyard.<sup>44</sup>

Under different social circumstances, many religious foundations were erected or renovated

by women of the royal nobility and according to written sources, monastic archives, *typika* and dedicatory inscriptions, a large number of women also acted as donors either individually or with their children.<sup>45</sup> It is difficult to identify the precise role of women in religious patronage. We can point out, however, that there are frequent mentions or representations of nuns and widows as founders or relatives of the donors in late Byzantine churches.<sup>46</sup> The female donor Kale Meledone in the church of the Transfiguration in Pyrgi of Euboia and the otherwise unknown Maria in the church of St George at the village of Maratho in Naxos are already well-known.<sup>47</sup> In addition to the above, the nun Kataphyge in the church of Hagia Triada in the village of Psinthos on Rhodes is mentioned as the primary donor and appears to be offering a model of the church.<sup>48</sup>

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- 43 On a certain Irene in the church of Panagia Katholiki in Lardos, on Rhodes, see ΜΡΙΘΑ, *Ενδυματολογικές μαρτυρίες* (cit. n. 6), p. 435, pl. 1727. On the Sinai icons see J. FOLDA, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land, from the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187–1291*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 336–338, figs. 193, 195 and p. 540, fig. 371; K. WEITZMANN, *Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 20, 1966, pp. 70–73, figs. 46, 50; N. MOURIKI, *The Wall Paintings of the Church of the Panagia at Moutoullas*, in: I. HUTTER (ed.), *Byzanz und der Westen*, Vienna 1984, pp. 206–209.
- 44 THIERRY, *Nouvelles églises* (cit. n. 38), p. 207. On other examples which record donations on churches' walls see S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Church Inscriptions as Documents. Chrysobulls, Ecclesiastical Acts, Inventories, Donations, Wills*, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaialogikes Hetaireias*, 24, 2003, pp. 79–88, esp. pp. 84–85.
- 45 On the *typika* see PG 127, 991–1128; P. GAUTIER, *Le typikon de la Theotokos Kecharitomene*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 43, 1985, pp. 5–165 (monastery of Theotokos Kecharitomene); H. DELEHAYE, *Deux typika byzantins de l'époque de Paléologues*, Brussels 1921, pp. 18–105 (monastery of Bebaia Elpis), pp. 106–136 (monastery of Lips), pp. 136–140 (monastery of Sts Anargyroi); P. MEYER, *Bruchstücke zweier τυπικά κτητορικά*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 4, 1895, pp. 48–49 (monastery of Christ Philanthropos); BMFD, II, no. 27, pp. 649–724; III, no. 39, pp. 1254–1286, no. 40, pp. 1287–1294; IV, no. 47, pp. 1383–1388, no. 57, pp. 1512–1578. See also A. E. LAIOU, *Observations on the Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 59–102; C. GALATARIOU, *Byzantine Women's Monastic Communities: The Evidence of the Τυπικά*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 38, 1988, p. 264; V. DIMITROPOULOU, *Imperial Women Founders and Refounders in Komnenian Constantinople*, in: M. MULLETT (ed.), *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries*, Belfast 2007, pp. 87–106. On tomb epigrams in funerary chapels founded by wealthy widows see S. T. BROOKS, *Poetry and Female Patronage in Late Byzantine Tomb Decoration: Two Epigrams by Manuel Philes*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 60, 2007, pp. 223–248, esp. pp. 227–240.
- 46 S. E. J. GERSTEL/A.-M. TALBOT, *Nuns in the Byzantine Countryside*, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaialogikes Hetaireias*, 27, 2006, pp. 481–489; S. E. J. GERSTEL/S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Some Female Founders in the Village: The Widow's Tale*, in the present volume.
- 47 KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 10), pp. 83–84; ΜΙΤΣΑΝΙ, *Η χορηγία στις Κυκλάδες* (cit. n. 20), p. 425.
- 48 I. CHRISTOPHORAKI, *Χορηγικές μαρτυρίες από τους ναούς της Μεσαιωνικής Ρόδου (1204–1522)*, in: *Ρόδος 2400 χρόνια*, Athens 2000, pp. 460–461, pl. 181a.

However, the case of Kirk dam Altı Kilise seems quite different from the examples mentioned above. Tamar, depicted in our church with her husband, was the driving force behind the act of donation highlighting her high social status and origin. An analogous example could be the well-known portrait of the Georgian queen T'amara, the only successor of the Bagratid dynasty.<sup>49</sup>

To sum up, the iconographic and epigraphic representation of female donors in the thirteenth-century wall paintings in Cappadocia does not seem to diverge from the main Byzantine tradition of the later centuries. Women possessing financial resources and members of the landed aristocracy appear in a secondary position, as wives or relatives of the primary donor in an attempt to display their social, cultural and religious identity. Tamar's case, however, may be compared to those of Anna Radene in the church of Hagioi Anargyroi in Kastoria, and of Pepagomene in the church of Panagia Krena on the island of Chios, both portrayed in ways which underline their high aristocratic status and the prestige of their origins.<sup>50</sup>

It seems that the thirteenth-century complex political and social conditions of the area had contributed to the wealth of the female patrons along with the vitality of the Christian communities in the Seljuk territory. The female donor's faith in the power of images of the past has remained undiminished but it is now expressed in a social context in which the female patron seems to have become more significant.

The information deriving from the dedicatory inscriptions and donor portraits of the thirteenth-century wall paintings in Cappadocia adds to our knowledge of women's role in the Byzantine countryside and the part which is occupied by the Seljuk Turks, even in very different socio-economic conditions. They furthermore contribute to the research on the artistic quality of the wall paintings as well as to their connection with artistic trends of major art centres of the time.

**Illustration credits:** Figs. 1–6, 8–10: B. Tolga Uyar. – Fig. 7: C. Jolivet-Lévy.

49 On the portrait of queen T'amara in the church of Vardzia (1184–1186) and her status during her reign see A. EASTMOND, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia*, University Park, PA 1998, pp. 108–113; A. EASTMOND, *Royal Renewal in Georgia: The Case of Queen Tamar*, in: P. MAGDALINO (ed.), *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries*, London 1994, pp. 283–293. From the iconographical point of view, we could also mention the donor portrait in the church of St George in Pološko (1343–1345). The church was erected by the despot Joran Dragušin, depicted to the right of Christ, while his mother and daughter of the emperor of Bulgaria, the queen Maria, was responsible for the church's decoration. She is represented as a nun on the left of the Christ, offering the model of the church, C. GROZDANOV/D. ČORNACOV, *Les portraits historiques de Pološko*, 2, in: *Zograf*, 15, 1984, pp. 85–93.

50 The two aristocratic ladies, although they are not the main donors but the founders' wives, are shown in the place of honour, on the right side of the Virgin, and they are designated by their maiden names. See M. PANAYOTIDI, *Η προσωπικότητα δύο αρχόντων της Καστοριάς και ο χαρακτήρας της πόλης στο δεύτερο μισό του 12ου αιώνα*, in: *Δώρον. Τιμητικός τόμος στον καθηγητή Νίκο Νικονάνο*, Thessaloniki 2006, pp. 160–162 and further bibliography; C. PENNAS, *Some Aristocratic Founders: The Foundation of Panaghia Krena on Chios*, in: J. PERREAULT (ed.), *Les femmes et le monachisme byzantin. Actes du symposium d'Athènes*, Athens 1988, pp. 61–66; A. E. LAIOU, *The Role of Women in Byzantine Society*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 31.1, 1981, pp. 251–252. Thus, in the church of Kirk dam Altı, as in the two other cases, the husband's authority is probably influenced by Tamar's identity, who appears to be the primary donor.

AUF DER SUCHE NACH WEIBLICHEM  
STIFTERTUM IM „PROSOPOGRAPHISCHEN LEXIKON DER  
PALAIOLOGENZEIT“ – EINE ERSTE AUSWERTUNG

SYLVIE HERL

VORBEMERKUNG

Lange Zeit wurde kaum Wert darauf gelegt, den tatsächlichen Einfluss der Frau auf die Entwicklung von Kunst und Kultur aufzuspüren bzw. ihre wahre soziale und gesellschaftspolitische Position, im Speziellen als Gründerin und Stifterin, zu erforschen.<sup>1</sup> Gemäß Judith Herrin<sup>2</sup> attestierten Historiker Frauen bisher meistens – aufgrund von Fehlinterpretationen – geringere Stärke, grössere Abhängigkeit von Beratern und generell weniger Einfluss als Männern gleichen Ranges.

Erst in jüngeren Tagen<sup>3</sup> wurde der Thematik, wohl durch den „Gender“-Diskurs angeregt,

mehr Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt – so definiert etwa Elizabeth Gittings<sup>4</sup> Macht und Befugnisse aristokratischer Damen im byzantinischen Reich genauer und Riet van Bremen, bezugnehmend auf die ersten frühchristlichen Jahrhunderte, meint gar, Frauen „appeared to have rendered the same social, political and financial services to their cities as their male fellow citizens and they were honoured for those services in much the same way [...] Women were also active from an early period onwards as [...] benefactors; they competed with men in the building of temples, theatres, public baths, and in many other types of benefactions”.<sup>5</sup>

SYSTEMATISCHES AUFSPÜREN VON  
FRAUEN IN SCHRIFTLICHEN QUELLEN

Die Prosopographieforschung war in den letzten beiden Jahrzehnten des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts bemüht, mehr Vollständigkeit durch das Erfassen bisher vernachlässigter Daten

und Zeitabschnitte zu erreichen, was sich durch eine Vielzahl neuer Publikationen bemerkbar machte.<sup>6</sup>

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- 1 Eine der wenigen Ausnahmen ist das Werk von Charles Diehl, das sich eingehend mit dem Leben einiger byzantinischer Herrscherinnen befasst, CH. DIEHL, *Kaiserinnen von Byzanz*, Stuttgart 1956.
  - 2 J. HERRIN, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium*, London 2001, S. 6–8.
  - 3 Leena Mari Peltomaa ortet noch 2005, dass „interest in Byzantine women emerged in the 1980s“, jedoch „in the light of [...] international congresses of Byzantine studies the interest in women and gender study seems quite modest“, obwohl „Gender“ allgemein als „useful category of historical analysis“ anerkannt ist, L. M. PELTOMAA, *Gender and Byzantine Studies from the Viewpoint of Methodology*, in: *Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse*, 140, 2005, S. 25–27.
  - 4 E. A. GITTINGS, *Elite Women. Dignity, Power and Piety*, in: I. KALAVREZOU (Hrsg.), *Byzantine Women and Their World*, London 2003, S. 67–75.
  - 5 R. VAN BREMEN, *Women and Wealth*, in: A. CAMERON/A. KUHR (Hrsg.), *Images of Women in Antiquity*, London 1993, S. 225.
  - 6 R. W. MATHISEN, *Introduction*, zu: *Special Issue: Late Antiquity and Byzantium*, in: *Medieval Prosopography*, 17.1, 1996, S. 1–5.

Dazu gehört z. B. die Datenbank der „Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire“ (PBE), bei deren Erstellung man bereits darauf achtete, alle verfügbaren Details zum Leben der verzeichneten Personen in mehr als 40 Eingabefeldern festzuhalten; so auch – für diesen Artikel besonders wichtige – Fakten zur sozialen Stellung und Karriere, zu Bildung und Interessen, Einfluss und Vermögensverhältnissen sowie zum Geschlecht.<sup>7</sup>

Einen weiteren, methodisch effektiven Ansatz bietet die unter Johannes Hofmann erstellte „Prosopographische Frauenliste“, die die „in gedruckten Quellen und in der Forschung rezipierten Frauen des christlichen Ostens so vollständig wie möglich in ihren wichtigsten biographischen Daten stichpunktartig zu erfassen“ sucht.<sup>8</sup>

Desgleichen hat das Akademievorhaben unter der Leitung von Ralph-Johannes Lilie an der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zum Ziel, die „Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit“ (PmbZ) im Hinblick auf das Vorhandensein von Frauen in schriftlichen Quellen mit personenbezogenen Daten zu untersuchen.<sup>9</sup>

Neuesten Erkenntnissen gemäß lassen sich laut Thomas Pratsch in den byzantinischen Quellen der Jahre 641–867 innerhalb aller angegebenen Personen lediglich fünf Prozent Frauen eruieren; weniger als die Hälfte davon wird namentlich und autonom erwähnt (als Würdenträgerinnen, Regentinnen, Angehörige des Kaiserhauses, Verwandte byzantinischer Heiliger, Nonnen sowie als in Dedikations- und Grabin-

schriften Angeführte). Die meisten Frauen erscheinen nur ihrer Funktion nach als Familienmitglieder eines Mannes (z. B. als Dienerinnen eines Haushalts, Nonnen eines Klosters etc.), bleiben als Personen aber anonym.

Ähnliche Ergebnisse liefern die Jahre 867–1025: wiederum konnten bloß etwa fünf Prozent weiblicher Namen gefunden werden; davon sind immerhin mehr als vier Fünftel unabhängige Frauen zu verzeichnen, über ein Fünftel ist als einem Manne zugehörig benannt.<sup>10</sup>

Pratsch resümiert, „dass sämtliche Aussagen zu den konkreten Lebensumständen von Frauen in Byzanz auf einer sehr schmalen Quellengrundlage beruhen. Nur eines ist gewiss: Die Zahl der selbständig und unabhängig agierenden Frauen in Byzanz war [...] verschwindend gering.“<sup>11</sup>

Diese ungünstige Einschätzung resultiert vermutlich aus der Tatsache, dass Frauen allzu oft nur im Kontext eines männlichen Familienmitglieds, ihres Dienstherrn o. ä. wahrgenommen wurden oder sogar – ganz bewusst – ungenannt blieben: so ist bei Stiftungen von Frauen für das Seelenheil des verstorbenen Gatten häufig nur dessen Name überliefert.

Die gleiche Tendenz der Vorrangstellung von Männern zeigt sich bei gemeinschaftlichen Donationen von Ehepaaren oder ganzen Familien: Zahlreiche Beispiele im PLP nennen sowohl den Vor- und Zunamen und sogar die Profession bzw. gesellschaftliche Stellung des Mannes, seine nächsten weiblichen Verwandten werden aber le-

7 J. R. MARTINDALE, *Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire*, in: MATHISEN, *Medieval Prosopography* (zit. Anm. 6), S. 177–181.

8 J. HOFMANN, *Prosopographische Frauenliste des christlichen Ostens*. Internetprojekt an der Katholischen Universität Eichstätt, URL: <http://www.ku-eichstaett.de/Fakultaeten/THF/Akg/projekte> (Zugriff: 10. 11. 2007).

9 T. PRATSCH, *Nicht nur Kaiser und Heilige. Gesellschaftliche Gruppen in Byzanz*, in: *Pax et Gaudium Geschichte*, 5: *Byzanz. – Rom des Ostens*, 2007, S. 62–65. Hinweise auf eine statistische Auswertung der diversen Datengruppen ließen sich in den Prolegomena der PmbZ jedoch nicht finden, R. J. LILIE, *Prolegomena*, in: BBAW, *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit (PmbZ)*, I (641–867), Berlin/New York 1998, S. 1–11 und II (867–1025), Berlin/New York 2009, S. XXIX–XXXI.

10 Gemäß *Schriftverkehr mit Thomas Pratsch*, Freie Universität Berlin, 8. 9. 2008.

11 PRATSCH, *Kaiser und Heilige* (zit. Anm. 9), S. 65.



1: Asinou (Zypern), Panagia Phorbiotissa, Südwand des zentralen Naos-Bereichs, Stifterbildnis, 1105/06, übermalt 1332/33

diglich mit „Familie des“, „Schwester des“, „und seine Gattin“ etc. betitelt.

Vassiliki Dimitropoulou verweist in diesem Zusammenhang auf die gemeinschaftliche Neugründung des Pantokratorklosters durch Eirene Piroska und Ioannes II. Komnenos: Der außergewöhnliche Beitrag der Kaiserin hierzu wurde

im *synaxarion* von Konstantinopel sowie im *typikon* und in einer *ekphrasis* des Klosters festgehalten, doch „remains unacknowledged by the historical account of Choniates and of another historian, Skoutariotes [...] Both claim that it was John who founded Pantokrator“.<sup>12</sup>

#### ÖFFENTLICH SICHTBARE ZEUGNISSE WEIBLICHER PATRONAGE

Auch in zahlreichen auf uns gekommenen Stifterbildnissen zeigt sich diese geschlechtsspezifische Verteilung: Die Frau ist, sofern überhaupt abgebildet, meist in wesentlich geringerer (Bedeutungs-) Größe bzw. hinter dem Mann dargestellt (Abb. 1). Unter byzantinischen Stifterportraits finden sich im Lauf der Zeit nur wenige Beispiele von Frauen, die als ebenbürtig abgebildet werden. Diese entstammten vorwie-

gend aristokratischen Kreisen. Erwähnt seien stellvertretend die – gleich groß wie ihre Ehegatten mosaizierten – Kaiserinnen Zoe und Eirene in der Hagia Sophia (Abb. 2);<sup>13</sup> oder auch Anna Radene, recht dominant in einer Kirche im griechischen Kastoria freskiert (Abb. 3);<sup>14</sup> und natürlich der Prototyp der weiblichen Stifterfigur, die über Jahrhunderte vielfach dargestellte Kaiserin Helena, Mutter Konstantins des Großen.<sup>15</sup>

12 V. DIMITROPOULOU, Imperial Women Founders and Refounders in Komnenian Constantinople, in: M. MULLETT (Hrsg.), *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries* (Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, 6.3), Belfast 2007, S. 89.

13 C. L. CONNOR, *Women of Byzantium*, New Haven/London 2004, S. 210–211; C. MANGO, Die Mosaiken, in: H. KÄHLER, *Die Hagia Sophia*. Mit einem Beitrag von Cyril Mango über die Mosaiken, Berlin 1967, S. 60–62; G. FOSSATI u. a., Mosaiken der Kaiserporträts auf der Südepore, in: V. HOFFMANN (Hrsg.), *Die Hagia Sophia in Istanbul*. Bilder aus sechs Jahrhunderten, Kat. Ausst., Bern 1999, S. 204–206.

14 S. PELEKANIDIS, Hagioi Anargyroi, in: M. CHATZIDAKIS (Hrsg.), *Byzantine Art in Greece*. Mosaics – Wall Paintings, Naxos 1989, S. 22–28; M. CHATZIDAKIS, ebenda, S. 38–45; T. MALMQUIST, *Byzantine 12th-Century Frescoes in Kastoria*, Uppsala 1979, S. 85–86.

15 GITTINGS, *Elite Women* (zit. Anm. 4), S. 69–71; HERRIN, *Women in Purple* (zit. Anm. 2), S. 21.



2: Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, Ostseite der Südepore, Mosaik mit Muttergottes mit Kind, Kaiser Ioannes II. Komnenos und Kaiserin Eirene Piroška, 1122–1124

Desgleichen stößt man in Stifterinschriften auf wenige Frauennamen: Veronika Scheibelreiter untersuchte Mosaik im gesamten Raum Westkleinasiens und fand mit Ausnahme der Schenkung Kleopatras, einer *femina clarissima*, und einigen gemeinschaftlichen Familienstiftungen ausschließlich männliche Gaben vor.<sup>16</sup>

Die genannten Fakten veranlassen zu generellen Fragen wie etwa:

- War die Verhältnismäßigkeit von männlichem und weiblichem Mäzenatentum im byzantinischen Reich tatsächlich derart ungleich gewichtet?
- Welchen sozialen Schichten entstammen Stifter und Stifterinnen?
- Wurde im innerstädtischen Bereich mehr gespendet als in ländlichen Gegenden?
- Welche Arten von Schenkungen durften Frauen vornehmen bzw. welche Dinge stifteten sie für welchen Zweck?

#### ERSTMALIGES BETRETEN NOCH „UNENTDECKTEN TERRAINS“

Die nachstehenden Ausführungen resultieren aus dem Versuch, eben genannte Fragestellungen mithilfe einer ersten Auswertung des „Prosopographischen Lexikons der Palaiologenzeit“ (PLP)<sup>17</sup> zu beantworten. Diese primäre Sichtung konzentriert sich auf die Sammlung,

Kategorisierung sowie geographische und zeitliche Verortung weiblicher Donationen im Allgemeinen und intendiert, wo immer sinnvoll, die Gegenüberstellung von weiblichen und männlichen Stiftungen. Sie erhebt, da nicht auf das Detail fokussiert, keinerlei Anspruch auf Voll-

16 V. SCHEIBELREITER, Stifterinschriften auf Mosaiken Westkleinasiens, Wien 2006, S. 12–13, 52–64. Sophia Kalopissi-Verti bestätigt dies, S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece (ÖAW, Denkschriften Phil.-Hist. Klasse, 226), Wien 1992, S. 25–26.

17 E. TRAPP/H.-V. BEYER, Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit (PLP), Wien 1976–1996/2001. Verwendet wurde sowohl die gedruckte als auch die digitale Version in Ergänzung zueinander – letztere wurde schließlich aufgrund praktikabler Optionen wie Wortsuche und Textkopie zum rascheren Erstellen der Auswertungstabelle herangezogen.



3: Kastoria, Hagioi Anargyroi, nördliches Seitenschiff, Stifterbildnis, elftes/zwölftes Jahrhundert

ständigkeit. Eine genauere Untersuchung von stiftungsbezogenen Hintergründen und Quellen, von sozialer Herkunft und gesellschaftlichem Umfeld der Stifterinnen etc. muss Thema vertiefender Forschung sein, um vervollständigende und bindende Resultate zu erhalten.

Das Durchsuchen der über 25.000 Einträge des PLP auf Stiftungsleistungen von Frauen und Männern an bereits bestehende sowie auch Gründungen von neuen Einrichtungen brachte folgende Erkenntnisse:

Insgesamt ließen sich 1446 **Stifter und Gründer**<sup>18</sup> finden (Abb. 4) – davon 1168 männliche und 241 weibliche Personen, die mit ausgewählten Suchparametern<sup>19</sup> verbunden sind: stiften, gründen, fördern, schenken, vermachen, überlassen, weihen, übergeben, vererben, zur

Verfügung stellen, spenden; weiters (er)bauen, errichten, erneuern, ausstatten, restaurieren und renovieren, mosaizieren, freskieren, aus-/bemalen, abbilden, dekorieren und mit Begriffen wie *ktetor/issa*, Testament, (Stifter-)Bild(nis), Öl, Vieh, Wein, Geld o. Ä. Nur wenige Funde erzielten Wachs, Fett, Licht, Leuchter, Lampen, Gemälde, Brot, Nahrung/Ernährung, Textilien, Gewand, Kleidung, Stoff, Opfer, Kreuz etc., was u. a. auf die Kurzlebigkeit der Materialien und die mangelnde Dokumentation derartiger Kleinstiftungen zurückzuführen ist.

37 Wohltäter, deren Identität aufgrund mangelnder Angaben nicht eruiert werden kann bzw. deren Mitwirkung an diversen Projekten nicht klar ist, sind im kleinsten Segment der Graphik repräsentiert.

Nach reiflicher Überlegung, wie Stiftungen, Gründungen, Schenkungen etc. idealerweise in männliche und weibliche Urheberschaft sowie anteilmäßige Partizipation bei Gemeinschaftsgaben zu dividieren seien, wurde der **Stiftungsakt** zur optimalen Einheit erwählt (Abb. 5), der der Einfachheit halber auch Gründungen, Spenden, Erbschaften usw. mit einbezieht. Fast alle der folgenden Diagramme basieren daher auf insgesamt 1618 eruierten Stiftungshandlungen – was den Vorteil hat, dass auch mehrere unabhängige Schenkungen eines einzelnen Gönners gezählt werden können bzw. eine Kollektivdonation auf sämtliche genannte Beteiligte aufgeteilt werden kann.<sup>20</sup>

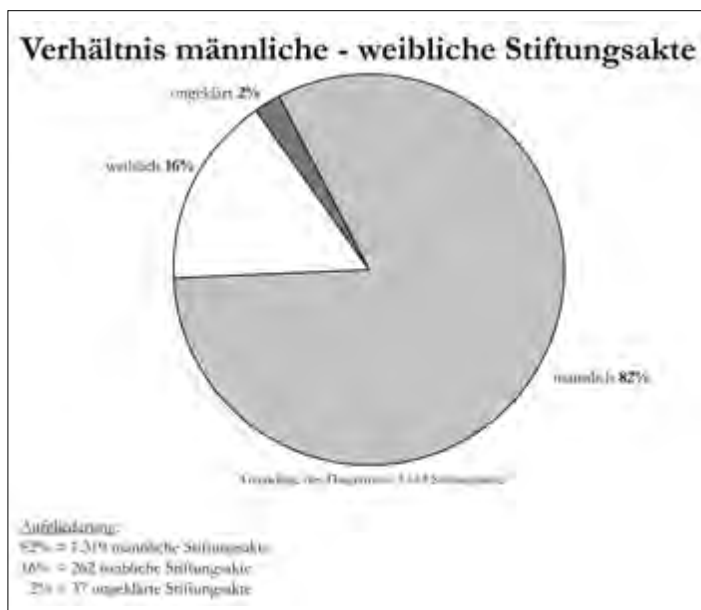
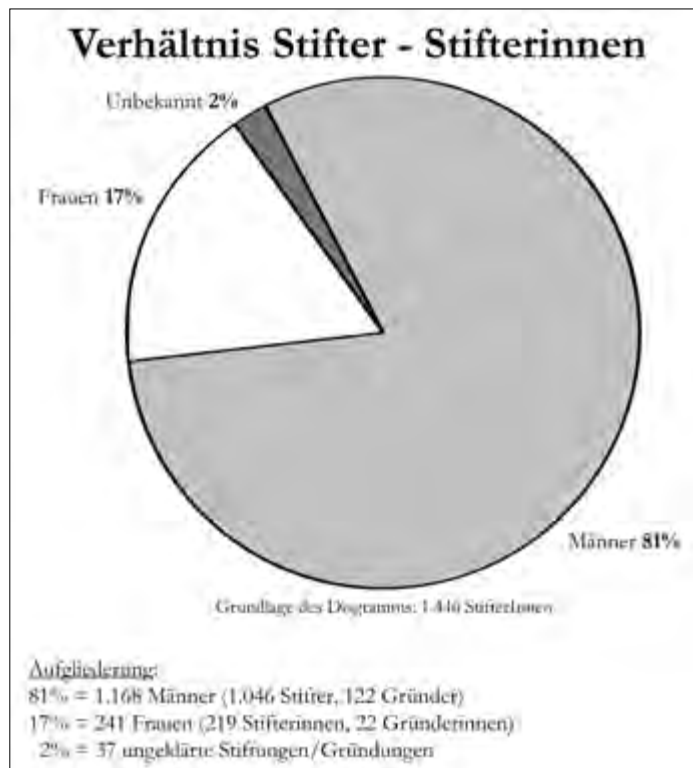
Die Segmentierung der zweiten Abbildung ist im Vergleich zur ersten kaum verändert: Nur ein Prozentpunkt wechselt, bedingt durch männliche Mehrfachstiftungen, vom weiblichen zum männlichen Anteil. Die 37 – aufgrund

18 Die erfassten Namen von Gründern werden im PLP jeweils gemeinsam mit der Gründung von Kirchen, Klöstern, Kapellen, Schulen, Mönchsgemeinschaften u. ä. genannt.

19 Als Suchparameter wurden sowohl Verba in mehreren Formen (z. B. stiftete/n, gestiftet) wie auch Substantiva (z. B. Stifter, Stifterin, Stiftung) bzw., wo irgend möglich, Wortstämme wie „stift“ eingesetzt.

20 In diesem Punkt sind allerdings oft nur sehr vage Angaben die Basis der – dadurch wahrscheinlich etwas verfälschten – Kalkulationen: bei Angaben wie „und Familie“ oder „Geschwister des“ wurden vorerst nur ein weiblicher und ein männlicher gemeinschaftlicher Stiftungsakt hinzugezählt, da die Anzahl und geschlechtsspezifische Aufteilung der restlichen an der Schenkung beteiligten Angehörigen im Dunkeln liegt.





4: Verhältnis Stifter – Stifterinnen

5: Verhältnis männliche – weibliche Stiftungsakte



6: Verhältnis männliche – weibliche – gemeinsame Stiftungsakte

mangelnder Daten – ungeklärten Stiftungen bleiben gleich, da es sich hierbei gleichermaßen um Stifter, Stifterinnen oder Stiftungsakte handeln kann.

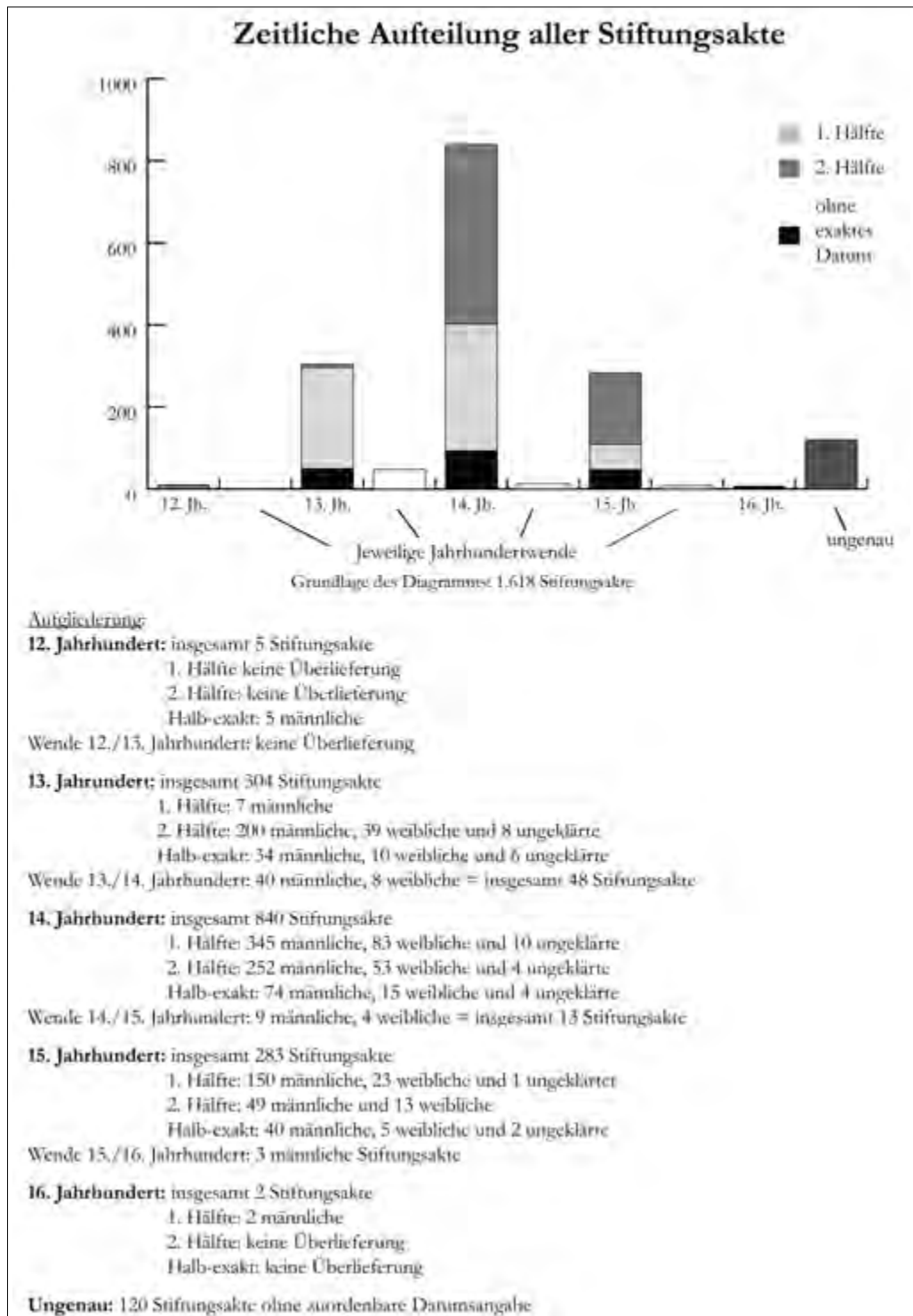
Werden darüber hinaus die gemeinsamen Spenden von Mann und Frau extrahiert, ergibt sich neben den dadurch geschmälernten, nunmehr rein männlichen und rein weiblichen Segmenten die Menge von 203 **gemeinschaftlichen Stiftungsakten** (Abb. 6). Die Menge der gemeinsamen Schenkungen ist zur genaueren Betrachtung abermals in die beiden Geschlechter unterteilt und „gemeinsam männlich“ (für an Gemeinschaftsstiftungen beteiligte Männer) bzw. „gemeinsam weiblich“ (für an Gemeinschaftsstiftungen beteiligte Frauen) bezeichnet.

Weitere interessante Ergebnisse liefert die Auswertung der zeitlichen und geographischen Aufteilung aller im PLP ermittelten Stiftungen:

Das Diagramm zur **chronologischen Aufgliederung** der Stiftungsakte (Abb. 7) zeigt, dass deren Hauptanteil eindeutig im vierzehnten Jahrhundert liegt, gefolgt von den Leistungen in den krisengeschüttelten Jahrhunderten davor und danach. 120 Dedikationen mit zu ungenauen zeitlichen Angaben mussten abgezogen und in einem separaten Balken rechts dargestellt werden.<sup>21</sup> Die restlichen 1498 Stiftungsakte weisen entweder exakte oder sog. „halb-exakte“ Datierungen (wie etwa „um 1500“, „zwölftes Jahrhundert“, „Wende vom dreizehnten zum vierzehnten Jahrhundert“) auf; die Selektion exakter Jahreszahlen, sofern vorhanden, erlaubte eine Zuteilung in die jeweils erste und zweite Jahrhunderthälfte.

Die Graphik zur **geographischen Verstreuung** aller Stiftungsakte (Abb. 8) zeigt eine sehr ungleichmäßige Verteilung der Donationen auf

21 Hierbei handelt es sich um Stiftungen und Gründungen, die z. B. mit „dreizehnten oder vierzehnten Jahrhundert“, „ab dem zwölften Jahrhundert“ oder „vor dem fünfzehnten Jahrhundert“ bezeichnet sind.



## Geographische Verteilung der Stiftungen



Grundlage des Diagramms 1.618 Stiftungsakte

### Aufgliederung:

**Schwarz** = Kreta (312 Stiftungsakte), Zypern (102), Konstantinopel (115) und Berg Athos (133)

**Dunkelgrau** = Trapezunt und die Halbinsel Mani (jeweils 60 Stiftungsakte)

**Mittelgrau** = Lemnos (34 Stiftungsakte), Serres (44), Thessaloniki (41) und das gesamte Gebiet von Chalkidiki (insgesamt 38)

### Hellgrau = Orte bzw. Regionen mit 1 bis 25 Stiftungsakten:

Heutiges Italien: Apulien, Berg Myron, Bologna, Ferrara, Florenz, Grottaferrata, Kalabrien, Mailand, Mantua, Modena, Otranto-Region, Padua, Pavia, Rom, Troja, Venedig.

Sizilien: Messina und einige benachbarte Ortschaften.

Ehemaliges Jugoslawien und Albanien: Arijje, Belgrad, Berat, Bistrica, Elbassan, Gmërnica, Kanina, Kavadar, Korca, Manastir, Melenikon, Ochridsee-Region, Paraćin, Peć, Preboj, Prespasee-Region, Prilep, Prizren, Skopje, Smederevo, Sopoćani, Strumica, Studenica.

Heutige Türkei: Antiochia, Belisirma, Chalke am Marmarameer, Ephesos, Ikonion-Region, Kallipolis, Kydnos, Kyzikos-Region, Lampsakos, Laranda, Larinos-Region, Nikata, Nikomedeia, Selymbria, Smyrna

Heutiges Griechenland: Achäa, Ägina, Ätholien, Akarnanien, Apollonia, Argos, Arkadien, Arta, Athen, Attika, Böotien, Chios, Epirus, Euböa, Gytheion, Imbros, Ioannina, Kastoria, Kephallenia, Korfu, Korinth, Krokai, Kythera, Lakadairnon, Lakonien, Larissa, Leros, Lesbos, Leukas, Mavromati, Mesembria, Meteon, Mistra, Monembasia, Nauplion, Naxos, Parnassos-Region, Patmos, Patras, Pelion, Peloponnes, Rhodos, Samos, Samothrake, Sparta, Strymon, Thasos, Thrakien, Trikala, Tsakarioionnou, Volos, Zakynthos

Heutiges Bulgarien: Kjustendil, Paroria, Pazardzik, Philippopol, Sliven, Sofia, Stenimachos.

Weitere Stiftungsorte: Ägypten (Sinai), Israel (Jerusalem, Zichnai), Tunesien (Tunis), Spanien (Tarragona, Pamplona), Syrien (Berrhoia), Rußland (Krim, Moskau, Niznij Novgorod), Rumänien (Radaui) und einige andere.

zahlreiche Orte bzw. Regionen.<sup>22</sup> Die Schwerpunkte mit jeweils über 100 Schenkungen liegen auf Kreta, Zypern, in Konstantinopel<sup>23</sup> und beim Berg Athos; etwas weniger stiftungsreich sind Trapezunt und die Halbinsel Mani (51–100 Stiftungen), gefolgt von Lemnos, Serres, Thessalonike und dem gesamten Terrain der Chalkidike (mit jeweils 26–50 Akten). Die letzte, größte Gruppe verzeichnet 1–25 Stiftungsakte.

Denkbare Gründe für die teils hohe Konzentration sind der – dank eines idealen Standorts günstige – Erhaltungszustand der Stiftungsobjekte bzw. der dazugehörigen überlieferten Quellen, auf der anderen Seite aber auch die Tatsache, dass das PLP eine Zusammenfassung griechischer Quellen darstellt, die keinerlei Augenmerk auf den kulturellen Hintergrund von Stiftungen legt.<sup>24</sup>

Nicht berücksichtigt werden konnten 125 Stiftungsakte, die nicht zu verorten sind – davon 57 ohne Ortsangabe und 68 anhand heute gültiger Ortsnamen nicht lokalisierbare („an den Dardanellen“, „im Sultanat von Ikonion“ u. a.) bzw. mit zu allgemeiner Nennung (z. B. „Nord-Griechenland“).

Ein weiterer reizvoller Aspekt war die Erhebung der stiftungsstärksten **sozialen Schichten und Berufe** (ohne Abb.)<sup>25</sup>. Die im Lexikon variantenreich genannten privaten und geschäftlichen Titel und Bezeichnungen liefern einen repräsentativen Querschnitt der byzantinischen Gesellschaft. Stiftungen kamen nämlich sowohl von Dienern, Paröken,<sup>26</sup> Novizen, Eremiten, Mönchen, Zureitern, Krankenpflegern, Seidenraupenzüchtern und Handwerkern wie auch Schiedsrichtern, Architekten, Lektoren, Handschriftenschreibern, Ministern, Notaren, Lehrern, Bankiers, Händlern und Schriftstellern. Neben Heerführern, Missionaren, Steuerbeamten, Admirälen, Gemeinderäten, Festungskommandanten und Besitzern von Häusern, Mühlen, Werkstätten oder Ländereien finden sich auch Adelige, Statthalter, Senatoren, Ritter, Äbte, (Erz)Bischöfe, Päpste, Patriarchen und weltliche Herrscher.

Bei den Stifterinnen zeigt sich eine ähnliche, wenn auch kleinere gesellschaftliche Vielfalt: Vertreten sind Parökinen, Nonnen, Private, Ehefrauen, Mütter, Töchter und Witwen, daneben auch Handschriftenschreiberinnen, Schriftstel-

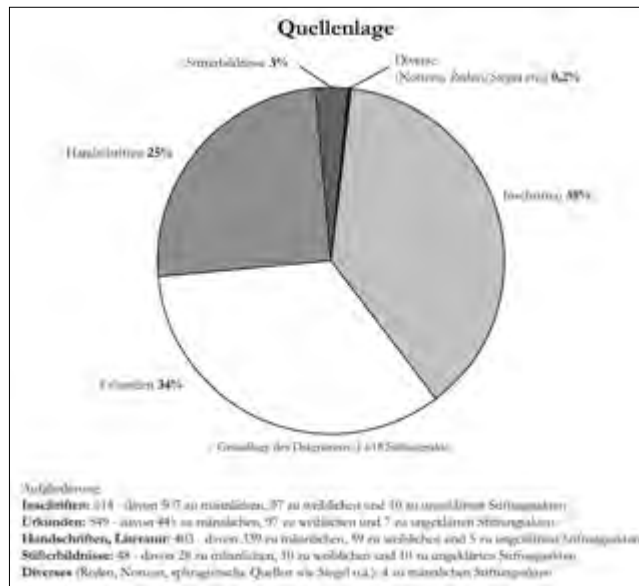
22 Wobei zu bedenken ist, dass die geographische Verteilung der auf uns gekommenen Stiftungen keinerlei Rückschluss auf die Wichtigkeit der jeweiligen Orte zulässt; wieviel wovon erhalten blieb, ist von einigen Faktoren abhängig, oft eine Frage des Zufalls.

23 Zum außergewöhnlich hohen Stellenwert von Gründungen/Bestiftungen monastischer Einrichtungen in der Reichshauptstadt bemerkt Margaret Mullett: „Constantinople in the 11th and 12th centuries was at the centre of Byzantine monastic development [...] Monasteries filled the skyline along the great aristocratic ridge dominating the Golden Horn, and in the Blachernai quarter, but they spread also to the west and north of the City.“ M. MULLETT, *Refounding Monasteries in Constantinople under the Komnenoi*, in: MULLETT, *Founders and Refounders* (zit. Anm. 12), S. 366, 369.

24 Ein gutes Beispiel hierfür ist Kreta: die hohe Stiftungsdichte des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts wird im PLP als byzantinische Leistung angenommen, wobei Kreta zu dieser Zeit freilich venezianisch dominiert war.

25 Da es nicht möglich ist, einen Großteil der klerikalen und profanen Positionen und Professionen miteinander zu vergleichen oder sie gar einer Hierarchie zu unterwerfen, konnte an dieser Stelle keine Graphik erstellt werden – eine diesbezügliche nachhaltigere Überlegung hierzu kann nur im Zuge weiterer Forschung erfolgen.

26 Die Paröken, Einwohner des byzantinischen Reichs mit nur geringem oder sogar ohne Bürgerrecht, sind immerhin mehr als 4200 Male im PLP festgehalten – interessanterweise häufig **nicht** im Zuge von Handels-Transaktionen o. ä., wo ihre Nennung logisch wäre. Dienen meistens Urkunden als Quellen zur Existenz von Paröken, so ist diese Standesbezeichnung oft in Kombination mit einfachen Berufen (z. B. Schneider, Fischer, Soldat, Schuster und Priester), aber auch mit etwas höheren Ständen (wie Grund- und Mühlenbesitzer/in) zu finden. In Zusammenhang mit Stiftungen scheinen Paröken allerdings nur sehr selten auf: Nur vier spendeten selbstständig (drei für Klöster, einer für die Errichtung einer Mühle), vier weitere waren selbst Stiftungsobjekt und eines letzten Paröken Grundstück wurde von dessen Dienstherrn einem Kloster vermacht.



9: Quellenlage

lerinnen, Mühlen-, Werkstätten-, Haus- und Grundbesitzerinnen sowie Äbtissinnen, Adelige, Despotinnen, Königinnen, Kaiserinnen, Zarinne, Sultaninnen bzw. weibliche Angehörige diverser Herrscherhäuser.

Peter Schreiner meint diesbezüglich, dass „aufgrund des römischen Rechts die Frau in Byzanz größere Selbständigkeit besaß als im lateinischen Westen“, sich doch ihre „Verwirklichung [...] in erster Linie in ihrer Tätigkeit in Haus und Haushalt“ vollzog. Die Kopie einer Handschrift etwa stellte „eine Auftragsarbeit dar“ und kam „daher schon unter dem Aspekt ‚Arbeit für andere‘ für eine Frau nicht in Frage“.<sup>27</sup> Schreiner

meint damit wohl, dass Frauen in den Gesellschaftsschichten zwischen Adel und einfachem Volk, wie die von ihm genannte Kopistin Eugenia an der Wende vom achten zum neunten Jahrhundert, selten Berufe ausübten – was die geringere Anzahl der im PLP genannten Frauenberufe erklären könnte.

Gegenstand der nächsten Untersuchung war die **Quellenlage** zu den aufgefundenen Stiftungsakten (Abb. 9).<sup>28</sup> Die erste überblicksorientierte Durchsicht stellte eine wahre Herausforderung dar, denn meistens ist die primäre Quelle im PLP nicht klar ersichtlich. Bei

27 P. SCHREINER, Kopistinnen in Byzanz. Mit einer Anmerkung zur Schreiberin Eugenia im Par. Lat. 7560, in: *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici*, n.s., 36, 1999, S. 35–45.

28 Die Reduktion auf eine Quelle pro Stiftungsakt ist sicher nicht korrekt oder optimal; dennoch musste sie zugunsten der Aufrechterhaltung der Verhältnismäßigkeit der einzelnen Diagramme zueinander und der Gewährleistung eines vergleichenden Überblicks über die jeweiligen Gewichtungen toleriert werden. Wie schon in den Prolegomena der PmbZ, I, angemerkt wurde, ist der Umgang mit Quellen problematisch und eine „grundlegende Beurteilung der Quellen [...] fast überhaupt nicht möglich“. Wie auch die Autorin dieses Artikels stießen die Mitarbeiter der PmbZ, I, bei der Sichtung und Beurteilung der verfügbaren Quellen, den Zeitaufwand und das Streben nach Vollständigkeit betreffend, rasch an ihre Grenzen und mussten sich in gewissen Bereichen ihrer Arbeit mit ungefähren Angaben zufrieden geben, LILIE, Prolegomena (zit. Anm. 9), S. I–II. Auch Martindale bewertet im Zuge der Arbeit an der „Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire“ (PBE) den Umgang mit dem überaus variantenreichen, oft fragmentierten Quellenmaterial als „both difficult to access and difficult to handle“, MARTINDALE, Prosopography (zit. Anm. 7), S. 180.

Mehrfachnennungen<sup>29</sup> wurde nach möglichst logischen Gesichtspunkten ausgewählt: So schien z. B. bei der kaiserlichen Förderung eines Klosters dessen *typikon* die geeignetste der zahlreich genannten Quellen zu sein.

Es muss betont werden, dass gerade bei diesem Kapitel eine wesentlich intensivere Beschäftigung mit den angebotenen Informationsquellen erforderlich ist, um eine möglichst exakte Zuteilung vornehmen zu können.

Zur Quellenlage ist auch anzumerken, dass zu Kleinstiftungen aufgrund ihrer meist sehr vergänglichen Grundstoffe (wie z. B. Nahrungsmittel, Textilien oder Lichtspenden wie etwa Öl, Wachs und Fett) sowie durch ihre – im Gegensatz zu großen Donationen – äußerst geringe Dokumentation kaum verlässliche Aussagen möglich sind.

## Zuletzt sollen die **Kategorien aller Stiftungsakte** beleuchtet werden.

Bei näherer Beschäftigung mit dem Thema „Stiftungswesen“ fallen einige wichtige Motive auf, die hinter der Mehrheit männlicher wie weiblicher Patronage zu stehen scheinen.

Im Bereich von Religion und Glauben sind dies:

1. Die Sühne von Sünden und die *memoria* weit über den Tod hinaus. Christine Sauer definiert jede Schenkung zugunsten einer kirchlichen / monastischen Gemeinschaft als „an die Person des Schenkers gebunden. Bei jedem Vollzug des Stiftungszweckes erneuerten

Stifter und Stiftungsempfänger die zwischen ihnen bestehenden Beziehungen [...] nicht nur die Verpflichtung zur Fürbitte, [...] auch die dauerhafte Anerkennung der Besitzübertragung“. So gesehen ist für Sauer die „*memoria* im Rahmen einer Liturgie“ außerdem ein „Element [...] mit rechtlicher und den Tod überdauernder Bindungskraft zwischen zwei Vertragspartnern“.<sup>30</sup>

2. Die Einlösung von Gelübden: Diese werden nicht nur in Quellen, sondern teils auch am Stiftungsobjekt selbst (z. B. in Inschriften) erwähnt.<sup>31</sup>
3. Schenkungen als öffentliche Kundgebung des Glaubens<sup>32</sup> und schließlich
4. die unausgesprochene, doch scheinbar angestrebte Option für Frauen, in Bereichen der Kirche bzw. bei Anlässen zugegen zu sein, die ihnen *in realiter* vorenthalten waren.<sup>33</sup>

EBenso wurden Stiftungen zur Unterstützung politischer Bestrebungen eingesetzt:

1. Das Stiftungswesen galt grundsätzlich als imperiale Tugend, bei weiblichen Mitgliedern des Herrscherhauses beinahe noch unabdingbarer als bei ihren männlichen Verwandten. Peter Weiss ergänzt dies mit der Erkenntnis, dass Familienverbände gleichwie Herrscherdynastien oft mehrere Jahrzehnte Patronagen verschiedenster Natur fortsetzten: „Häufig wurden Stiftungen, Unterstützungen oder Gründungen, die als *ketor*-Schaft an eine bestimmte Person gebunden waren, über

29 Mehrfachnennungen kommen vor allem bei Herrschern vor: So sind z. B. zwölf Stiftungen von Stefan Uroš II. Milutin, dem serbischen König an der Wende vom dreizehnten zum vierzehnten Jahrhundert verzeichnet – zumeist die Errichtung und/oder Ausmalung bzw. Restaurierung von Kirchen in Serbien, Makedonien, Thessalonike und auf dem Berg Athos. Als Quellen zu diesen Stiftungen werden jeweils etliche literarische Quellen, Urkunden, Inschriften und Fresken genannt – ihnen allen nachzugehen war im Sinne von Anm. 28 nicht möglich.

30 C. SAUER, *Fundatio und Memoria. Stifter und Klostergründer im Bild. 1100 bis 1350* (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 109), Göttingen 1993, S. 19–25.

31 SCHEIBELREITER, *Stifterinschriften* (zit. Anm. 16), S. 52–54.

32 B. PENTCHEVA, *The Virgin of Constantinople: Power and Belief*, in: KALAVREZOU, *Byzantine Women* (zit. Anm. 4), S. 113.

33 R. F. TAFT, *Women at Church in Byzantium: Where, When – and Why?*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 52, 1998, S. 27–79.

10: *Stiftungskategorien*

mehrere Generationen weitergereicht.“ Frauen konnten auch eine Vorbildfunktion für männliche Nachkommen innehaben: Isaakios Komnenos, der jüngere Bruder Kaiser Ioannes II. Komnenos, befand sich im zwölften Jahrhundert „als *ktetor* des Chora-Klosters [...] in der Stiftertradition seiner Großmutter Maria Dukaina“. In weiterer Folge fühlte sich der Logothet Theodoros Metochites noch im vierzehnten Jahrhundert „dieser imperialen *ktetor*-Schafft zugehörig“.<sup>34</sup>

2. Kunst als Mittel der Staatsführung und Diplomatie: Immer wieder stifteten in der Ge-

schichte Regenten beiderlei Geschlechts, sobald sie ihr Reich siegreich ausgedehnt oder wieder zurückerobert hatten, im gesamten Herrschaftsgebiet neue Kirchengebäude. Da gemäß Johannes Deckers in der Politik „Kunstwerke als Vermittler von Ideen und Ansprüchen seit je ein beliebtes Mittel“ waren, dienten die neuen Sakralbauten samt bildlicher Ausstattung als „unübersehbare Siegesmonumente“. Eines der bekanntesten Beispiele ist wohl die Kirche San Vitale in Ravenna, deren Mosaik das Kaiserpaar in festlichem Ornat zeigen.<sup>35</sup>

34 P. WEISS, Die Mosaiken des Chora-Klosters in Istanbul. Theologie in Bildern aus spätbyzantinischer Zeit, Stuttgart/Zürich 1997, S. 15–16.

35 J. G. DECKERS, Die frühchristliche und byzantinische Kunst, München 2007, S. III.



3. San Vitale steht, wie alle Sakralbauten mit derartigen Stifterbildnissen, auch für – quasi von Gott bestätigte – Repräsentation. Justinian und Theodora an den Seiten der Ravennatischen Apsis sind nicht nur perfekt im Sinne weltlicher Selbstdarstellung inszeniert, sondern auch in ihrer Funktion als – gen Osten schreitende – Oranten und Gabenbringer. John Haldon beschreibt die Reichshierarchie als ein „geordnetes System auf der Grundlage der Ideen von *harmonia* und *taxis*“, sie „symbolisierte die göttliche Ordnung des Himmereiches, der das christliche Reich auf Erden unter der Führung des von Gott eingesetzten Kaisers nachfolgen wollte“. Kirchliche wie weltliche Amtsträger des Staates waren „Teilhhaber an dieser hierarchischen Ordnung“ und hatten ihren Positionierungen entsprechende Befugnisse, die sie entsprechend repräsentiert wissen wollten.<sup>36</sup>
4. Schließlich wurden Stiftungsleistungen – von der Klostergründung bis zur Nahrungsverteilung an Arme – gern in den Dienst ideologischer Machtausübung gestellt.<sup>37</sup> Selbst höhere Gesellschaftsschichten wurden gern durch allerhöchste Zuwendungen und die Erteilung spezieller Befugnisse zur Loyalität animiert oder aber gezwungen – ganz im Sinne von „Wes’ Brot ich ess’, des’ Lied ich sing“.

Auch im Bereich des gesellschaftlichen Gefüges bediente man sich der Patronage, um sein Ziel zu erreichen, welches heißen konnte:

1. Die Konkurrenz zwischen Familien gleichen Ranges für sich zu entscheiden. Dieser Punkt

- ist eng mit dem Motiv der Selbstdarstellung und Repräsentation verknüpft, sind doch Politik und Gesellschaft bis heute Schauplatz regelrechter Kämpfe, den eigenen Status nachhaltig und publikumswirksam zu demonstrieren.
2. Im Gegensatz dazu wurden durch Stiftungen aber auch soziale Netzwerke unterstützt. Barbara Hill nimmt im Kapitel „Power through patronage“ auf die herausragende Forschungsleistung Margaret Mulletts in deren Publikation „Byzantium. A friendly society?“ von 1987 Bezug: Mullett identifizierte Stiftungen als machtvollere Unterstützung von „networks as the vital component of the system“. Denn „those lower on the social scale than the imperial family [...] were interested in creating networks of influential people to aid their endeavours“.<sup>38</sup> Das Unterhalten von Netzwerken kennt auch Haldon: „Viele reiche Personen unterhielten [...] ein weit verzweigtes Patronagesystem, [...] wobei die Prinzipien der gegenseitigen Unterstützung die Effektivität des Systems garantierten“.<sup>39</sup>
  3. Einzelpersonen wiederum, vor allem Frauen, wählten nach dem Tod des Ehepartners nicht selten den Eintritt in ein Kloster, um künftig abgesichert zu sein. In vielen Fällen brachten sie durch eine Stiftung ihren Besitz in das Vermögen der monastischen Gemeinschaft ein. Männer wie Frauen sorgten in diesem Sinne auch oftmals für die momentanen und künftigen Bedürfnisse ihrer Familienmitglieder und Nachfahren.<sup>40</sup>
  4. Stiftungen können aber auch als Ausdruck weiblicher Autoritäts-Gleichstellung gesehen

<sup>36</sup> J. HALDON, Byzanz. Geschichte und Kultur eines Jahrtausends, Düsseldorf 2007, S. 157–158.

<sup>37</sup> Dimitropoulou meint: „Personal patronage as well as patronage of art and architecture resulted in power and prestige for the patron [...]. It needs, therefore, to be seen in the context of an active political dimension [...]. Women founders [...] gained reputation for piety and holiness, which was instrumental in the enhancement of their power, prestige and social standing.“ DIMITROPOULOU, Imperial Women (zit. Anm. 12), S. 87, 105.

<sup>38</sup> B. HILL, Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025–1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology, New York 1999, S. 153–155.

<sup>39</sup> HALDON, Byzanz (zit. Anm. 36), S. 160.

<sup>40</sup> Bebaia Elpis wurde, so Mullett, von vier Generationen des Synadenos-Geschlechts unterhalten: Theodora-Theodul gründete das Kloster als ein „secure refuge for women who have chosen the ascetic way of life“, sie selbst einge-

werden. Liz James nennt Herrscherinnen einiger Jahrhunderte, die „Gender-Machtkämpfe“ in Form von Stiftungen austrugen: Kirchengründungen oder -ausstattungen wurden von Helena, Theodora, Pulcheria, Juliana Anicia u. a. als kraftvolles Vehikel genutzt, um ihre Position zu manifestieren und – vor allem durch die augenfällig präsentierte, spezielle Beziehung zu Gott – zu legitimieren, was davor nur männlichen Herrschern vorbehalten war.<sup>41</sup>

In Anbetracht all dieser Motive, die sicherlich oft miteinander verknüpft waren, war es besonders interessant festzustellen, wofür Zuwendungen von ihren Spendern gemäß PLP bestimmt wurden (Abb. 10): Überraschend groß erscheint im ersten Moment der Anteil der Stiftungsleistungen für den kirchlichen / monastischen Bereich, wobei – nach genauerer Überlegung – theoretisch fast alle der eben genannten Beweggründe dahinter stehen könnten. Insofern wäre die Vielfalt der Stiftungskategorien doch gegeben, obwohl knapp 97 Prozent der Donationen an religiöse Einrichtungen gingen.

Auch hier sei, wie bereits zur Quellenlage, angemerkt, dass die Quelldichte zu den verschiedenen Stiftungskategorien deutlich variiert – kleine Stiftungen des Alltagslebens wurden offenbar kaum verschriftlicht, wohingegen größere Spendenleistungen variantenreich dokumentiert wurden.

Grundlage dieses Diagramms sind ausnahmsweise 1623 Stiftungsakte, da sich fünf Stiftungen über jeweils zwei Kategorien erstrecken: So kam ein Stifter sowohl für die Errichtung und Ausstattung eines Sakralbaus auf, schenkte aber auch gleichzeitig einem Kloster Bargeld und Handschriften.

Eine Einteilung in fünf Kategorien erschien optimal, da eine finanziell wertende Reihung der Stiftungen aufgrund meist fehlender Angaben der Projektkosten bzw. des Schenkungswertes nicht möglich war.

An dieser Stelle ist auch wieder der Vergleich männlichen und weiblichen Stiftertums angebracht, um Gemeinsamkeiten bzw. Divergenzen in der Wahl der Donationsobjekte sowie etwaige Präferenzen herauszufiltern.

Der unterste Diagrammbalken zeugt von Einträgen, die die Stiftertitel *ktetor* und *ktetorissa* ohne weitere Details enthalten sowie von Stiftungsakten zugunsten religiöser Einrichtungen, deren Inhalt nicht oder nur vage genannt ist. Zu dieser Gruppe zählen bei männlichen Donatoren die Gründung von Schulen, Akademien und Spitälern im nicht-öffentlichen Bereich, die Restaurierung von Handschriften, Schenkungen zugunsten des Bibliothekswesens, der Humanisten, der Kunst und Literatur, der Bildung und Wissenschaft, weiters die Gründung von Kirchen, Klöstern und Kapellen sowie Spenden für die soziale Wohlfahrt im kirchlichen Bereich (wie etwa Ausspeisungen, Bedürftigenunterstützungen oder der Loskauf von Kriegsgefangenen). Frauen konzentrierten sich auf die Gründung von Kirchen, Klöstern, Spitälern und Hospizen und subventionierten kirchliche Ausspeisungen, Kollegs und die Armenhilfe.

Die Definition „Unterhalt von Kirchen und Klöstern“ faßt Natural- und Geldgeschenke an ebendiese zusammen: Bei Stifterinnen spannt sich der Bogen vom gesamten Vermögen oder gar von ganzen Dörfern über Gold, Münzen und Steuerfreiheit, Mühlen, Werkstätten, Läden und Häuser bis hin zu Vieh, Grundstücken und Gärten, Weinbergen und -gärten sowie Nuss- oder Ölbäumen. Hier sind zwei Kleinstiftungen

schlossen. Ihre Tochter Euphrosyne, ihre Enkelin Xene Philanthropene und deren Tochter Eugenia Kantakuzene, allesamt mit dem Kloster verbunden, unterstützten die Erhaltung der Anlage jeweils großzügig, MULLETT, *Founders and Refounders* (zit. Anm. 12), S. 22–23.

41 L. JAMES, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium*, London 2001, S. 151–159.

überliefert, bei denen Frauen Brot bzw. Getreide gaben. Männer sorgten neben all dem bereits Genannten (ausgenommen Steuerfreiheit und Kleinstiftungen) auch noch für Mönchszellen, Türme und Krankenhäuser.

Unter die Rubrik „Sakrale Gebäude“ fallen bei beiden Geschlechtern die Errichtung, Instandhaltung oder Renovierung ganzer Klöster bzw. von Anbetungsstätten aller Größenordnungen sowie die Schenkung von Kapellen, Kirchen und Klöstern an geistliche Einrichtungen.

Bei der „Ausstattung von Sakralbauten“ differieren die Stiftungsakte wieder geschlechtsspezifisch: Männliche Donatoren spendeten Handschriften, Reliefs und Ikonen, die Ausmalung von Kirchen und liturgische Goldgewänder. Frauen kamen für Handschriften, Ikonen, Kultgegenstände, Sakralgefäße, Wertgegenstände und die malerische Ausstattung von Anbetungsstätten auf.

Der oberste Balken bezeichnet schließlich den sehr geringen Teil der genau definierten Stiftungsleistungen, die zugunsten des Staats oder der Öffentlichkeit erbracht wurden: Dazu zählen bei Stifterinnen die Errichtung von Stadtmauern oder -toren und die Gabe eines Gartens für das Volk bzw. das Fördern der Kunst. Männer überließen der Allgemeinheit Grundstücke wie auch Festungen / Burgen, Stadtmauern, Wohnhäuser und Krankenanstalten, Stadttore, Türme und Mühlen (oder ließen dieselben errichten). Sie finanzierten auch die Erneuerungen ganzer Städte, Stadtmauern, Burgen und Tore gleichwie den Bau und die Erhaltung von Brücken.

**A**bschließend ist zu resümieren, dass sich aus der ersten Auswertung des PLP einige anregende Themenstellungen ergaben, deren Ausarbeitung zum Teil bereits abgeschlossen werden konnte. Andere Gebiete sind in jedem Fall noch intensiver zu erforschen, allen voran die Quellenlage und die soziale Stellung der Wohltäter.

Bei der Arbeit mit dem PLP war aber auch festzustellen, dass einige Schwachstellen hinsichtlich einer statistischen Auswertung existieren, die idealerweise künftig beim Erstellen prosopographischer Lexika zu eliminieren wären, sofern möglich. Dazu gehören unter anderem:

- der teilweise mangelnde Verweis zwischen gemeinsamen Stiftern, auf deren Verbindung man häufig nur durch gründliches Recherchieren bzw. durch Zufall stößt,
- die fast völlige Absenz von Kleinstiftungen wie Brot, Textilien oder Licht (d. h. Öl, Wachs und Fett) etc.,
- die fehlenden Angaben, ob es sich bei der Stiftung / Gründung einer Kirche bzw. monastischen Einrichtung um eine Neugründung oder die Erneuerung bereits bestehender Bauten handelt,
- und schließlich erhebt sich die Frage, ob nicht wenigstens ein Teil der Gemeinschaftsstiftungen ganzer Familien oder Bekanntenkreise genauer aufzuschlüsseln wäre, um eine exaktere Zuteilung in männliche und weibliche Donatoren vornehmen zu können.

Diese und andere offene Fragen werden auch weiterhin ein reiches Betätigungsfeld bieten, um verfügbare Quellen zu vereinen und eine möglichst vervollständigte Sammlung von Informationen präsentieren zu können, die eine breite Basis für effektive Byzanzforschung – auch im Hinblick auf die Frau und ihren Einfluss auf alle Bereiche des Lebens – darstellen können wird.

**Abbildungsnachweis:** Abb. 1: A. STYLIANOU / J. STYLIANOU, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus*, London 1985, S. 116. – Abb. 2: S. YERASIMOS, *Konstantinopel. Istanbul historisches Erbe*, Paris 2005, S. 104. – Abb. 3: S. Gerstel, mit freundlicher Erlaubnis von Dumbarton Oaks ICFA, Washington, DC. – Abb. 4–10: S. Herl.

## FEMALE PATRONAGE IN THE PALAIOLOGAN ERA: ICONS, MINOR ARTS AND MANUSCRIPTS

ALICE-MARY TALBOT

It is by now well established that elite women played a prominent role in the renewal of the cityscape of Constantinople following its recovery from the Latins in 1261, especially during the long reign of Andronikos II. They focused their attention on the restoration and revival of monasteries, both male and female, that had fallen into decline during the Latin occupation of 1204–61, as well as on the foundation of new convents. Nine of the twenty-two monastic institutions restored between 1282 and 1328 had female patrons, and four of the ten newly constructed monasteries were founded by women.<sup>1</sup> After this significant burst of building activity in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, the restoration of older complexes and the construction of new monasteries in the capital declined dramatically in the later fourteenth and fifteenth century, in large part due to the rapidly worsening financial condition of the empire. Emblematic of the reduced circumstances of the Constantinopolitan elite and their ability to support restoration activities are two notices at the end of the *typikon* of the convent of Be-

baia Elpis, which had been founded in the early fourteenth century. By the end of that century the buildings were evidently suffering from deferred maintenance, and we are told that in 1392 the nun Xene Philanthropene, desirous of achieving her future salvation, *restored at her own expense our venerable convent, which was threatening to collapse in several places*. Some eight years later her daughter, Eugenia Kantakouzene, sold a house in order to assemble the 200 *hyperpera* necessary to pay for the restoration and repair of the holy church and bell tower, which were in danger of collapsing. *These hyperpera were spent on tiles, nails, plaster, skilled labor and other appropriate expenses.*<sup>2</sup> Conditions in the capital had obviously deteriorated since a century earlier, when Maria-Martha Glabaina co-sponsored with her husband the addition to the church of the Pammakaristos of a parekklesion decorated with mosaics, which was to serve as his funerary monument,<sup>3</sup> and the dowager empress Theodora Palaiologina added the south church to the church at the Lips convent as a mausoleum for deceased members of the Palaiologan family.

1 A.-M. TALBOT, Building Activity in Constantinople under Andronikos II: The Role of Women Patrons in the Construction and Restoration of Monasteries, in: N. ΝΕΚΙΠΟΓΛΟΥ (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, Leiden 2001, pp. 329–343; V. ΚΙΔΟΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Bauten in Konstantinopel 1204–1328: Verfall und Zerstörung, Restaurierung, Umbau und Neubau von Profan- und Sakralbauten*, Wiesbaden 1994.

2 *Typikon* of Bebaia Elpis, ch. 159, tr. A.-M. TALBOT, in: BMFD, IV, p. 1568.

3 For the latest discussion of the dating of this construction see A. EFFENBERGER, Zur Restaurierungstätigkeit des Michael Dukas Glabas Tarchaneiotos im Pammakaristoskloster und zur Erbauungszeit des Parekklesion, in: *Zograf*, 31, 2006–7, pp. 79–94. I thank Andreas Rhoby for this reference. Effenberger argues that the parekklesion was built between 1302 and 1304, when Michael Tarchaneiotos was still alive, and that his wife was not the sole founder, as has been previously argued.

This paper will leave aside the monumental buildings of the early Palaiologan era, and focus rather on works of art of more modest size and cost commissioned by female patrons, such as icons with their frames and revetments; other objects which might be used in a church, such as lamps, liturgical textiles, and reliquaries; and manuscripts. Some of these works of art were no doubt donated to embellish a church founded or supported by the patroness; we know, for example, that Anna Komnene Raoulaina Strategopoulina donated manuscripts, liturgical vessels and other treasures to her newly established Constantinopolitan nunnery of Krataios,<sup>4</sup> while the dowager empress Theodora Palaiologina, widow of Michael VIII, commissioned liturgical books and vessels, evidently for the nunneries of Lips and Sts Kosmas and Damian, as well as textile furnishings for her tomb at Lips.<sup>5</sup> Maria Palaiologina, daughter of Michael VIII, donated golden textiles and a gospel book with new binding to the church at the Chora.<sup>6</sup> Other objects were

commissioned as specific individual donations, often as *ex votos* in thanksgiving for a healing miracle or the cure of barrenness.

I shall draw on the evidence of the relatively small number of still surviving objects with inscriptions linking them to female owners or donors, as well as on epigrams preserved only in manuscript form, which, I will argue, have become dissociated from the objects on which they were originally inscribed, but are still useful in reconstructing patterns of female patronage. For it is especially the epigrams that may shed light on the motivations of the women who commissioned these works of art and paid the poets to write the accompanying verses which illuminate the pious devotion that inspired their gifts. We must always be mindful, however, of the reality that, as far as we can tell, these verse inscriptions were all the work of male poets, and therefore we can only speculate as to the extent to which the sentiments expressed are those of the patroness or those deemed suitable by the poet.<sup>7</sup>

#### ICONS, ICON FRAMES AND REVETMENTS

##### *a. Surviving objects*

Let me begin with a group of surviving framed icons that are definitely connected with female patrons. Two of them are preserved at the Vatopedi monastery on Mt Athos. The earlier

one (Fig. 1), an icon of the Virgin Dexiokratoussa, that is, holding the Christ child in her right arm, dates to the first half of the fourteenth century, even though monastic tradition claims that it is one of the *ninia* or dolls of the ninth-century iconophile empress Theodora.<sup>8</sup> It is covered with

4 See the scribal note in S. LAMPROS, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos, I*, Cambridge 1895, no. 1040, pp. 92–94.

5 A.-M. TALBOT, *Empress Theodora Palaiologina, Wife of Michael VIII*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46, 1992, pp. 299, 301.

6 L. F. SHERRY, *The Poem of Maria Komnene Palaiologina to the Virgin and Mother of God, the Chorine*, in: *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 43, 1995, pp. 181–182; C. ASDRACHA, *A Brief Commentary to the Verses of Supplication to the Virgin, Dedicated to her by the Despoina of Mongoulion*, in: *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 43, 1995, pp. 183–184.

7 At the outset I should like to acknowledge gratefully the assistance given me by Andreas Rhoby, who together with Wolfram Hörandner is preparing for publication in Vienna a four-volume corpus of epigrams on works of art, *Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung*. The first volume, A. ΡΗΟΒΥ, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken*, was published in 2009, and volume two, A. ΡΗΟΒΥ, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten der Kleinkunst*, appeared in 2010. Dr. Rhoby kindly provided me in advance of publication with photocopies of the entries in vol. II on several inscribed objects that are included in this article.

8 *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi. Tradition – History – Art*, II, Mt Athos 1998, pp. 492–493, fig. 437.



1: Mt Athos, Vatopedi monastery, icon of the Virgin, with silver-gilt frame donated by Anna Philanthropene, fourteenth century



2: Freising Cathedral, Treasury, icon of the Virgin, with thirteenth-century silver-gilt frame donated by Manuel Dishypatos

a now much damaged silver gilt frame which retains three plaques from the original epigram, which no doubt was laid out in a manner similar to the somewhat earlier Freising icon of Manuel Dishypatos (Fig. 2). Much of the epigram can be reconstructed thanks to its transcription in an eighteenth-century manuscript at Vatopedi. The new edition of the epigram by Andreas Rho-by and Wolfram Hörandner slightly changes the word order, so that the verses now read:

*O Virgin, certain hope of those who are at a loss,  
Be thou my shelter and the salvation of my soul,  
For I know that Thou art <the protectress?> of  
orphans and strangers,*

*Washing away the slimy mud of my sins;*

.....  
*Anna Philanthropene cries out this prayer to Thee.<sup>9</sup>*

Anna used to be identified as the second wife of Manuel III Komnenos, emperor of Trebizond (1390–1416), but has recently been shown to be Anna Philanthropene Kantakouzene Komnene Palaiologina Bryennissa,<sup>10</sup> granddaughter of Theodora Synadene, the foundress of the Bebaia Elpis convent in Constantinople. Anna's portrait survives on fol. 4(8) of the Lincoln College Typikon (Lincoln College gr. 35) together with that of her husband, Michael Philanthro-

The Vatopedi volume accepts the earlier attribution to the Trapezuntine Anna, and hence dates the revetment to the late fourteenth–early fifteenth century.

9 My English translation is based on the Greek text in A. RHOBY, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten der Kleinkunst* (= W. HÖRANDNER/A. RHOBY/A. PAUL [ed.], *Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung*, II, Vienna 2010, no. Ik26, pp. 91–94.)

10 See PLP, no. 29737, which places Anna Philanthropene in the first half of the fourteenth century, and is followed by Rho-by in his analysis of the inscribed revetment (RHOBY, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten* [cit. n. 9], p. 93).

penos.<sup>11</sup> She obviously commissioned the manufacture of the silver frame for the icon and its epigram, inscribed with a prayer to the Virgin of Certain Hope, as a gift to the convent; we cannot know whether she commissioned the icon as well, or if the frame was intended to embellish an icon already in the possession of the convent. The motivation for her donation was to supplicate the Virgin to cleanse her of her sins so as to ensure the salvation of her soul. In her epigram she addresses the Virgin directly, and her words take the place of the donor portrait seen in some other revetments, such as that of Maria Akropolitissa who extends her hands from the lower right-hand corner of the frame toward an icon of the Virgin Hodegetria, now in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow.<sup>12</sup>

The second silver gilt icon frame at Vatopedi with the inscription of a female donor was commissioned by a certain Papadopoulina in honour of her sister Ioanna Arianitissa<sup>13</sup> (Fig. 3). The frame and revetment were intended for an icon of the Virgin Hodegetria, as shown by the inscription flanking the Virgin's head. A later, eighteenth-century icon of the same type of the Virgin has now been installed in the Palaiologan frame.<sup>14</sup> The twelve-line *dodecasyllable* epigram has been inscribed on two panels inserted at the base of the frame. The two panels were reversed



3: Mt Athos, Vatopedi monastery, icon of the Virgin, with fourteenth-century silver-gilt frame donated by Papadopoulina

at some point in time, no doubt in the course of a refurbishing of the icon. The verses are to be read horizontally, and can be translated as follows:

*Not every grace is the grace of man,  
Nor do natures have only one relationship.*

11 For an illustration see I. HUTTER, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften*, V.1 (Oxford College Libraries), Stuttgart 1997, pp. 60–61, illustrated in color plate 13 of V.2.

12 On this revetted icon, see most recently A. WEYL CARR, *Donors in the Frames of Icons: Living in the Borders of Byzantine Art*, in: *Gesta*, 45, 2006, pp. 189–190, 193–194, fig. 2.

13 The identity of this Arianitissa has been much discussed in the recent literature. The *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit* lists only one woman of this name, *eparchissa* in Berroia in 1375 (no. 1314, now replaced by 91321) and assumes that she was the recipient of the frame as a gift from her sister Papadopoulina (no. 21746). The Acts of Vatopedi, however, mention an earlier Arianitissa, wife of Michael Doukas Arianites (PLP, no. 1312) and daughter of Theodore Sarantenos (J. BOMPAIRE/J. LEFORT et al. [eds.], *Actes de Vatopedi*, Paris 2001, no. 64, pp. 348, 354.25–29). She had died by 1325 when Sarantenos drew up his will. I am grateful for this reference to Ivan Drpić, who also stated in a personal communication of February 10, 2010, that he believed the revetment was more likely to have been made in the first half of the fourteenth century.

14 On this icon and its revetment see A. GRABAR, *Les revêtements en or et en argent des icônes byzantines du moyen âge*, Venice 1975, pp. 49–52, figs. 47–52, and B. PENCHEVA, *Epigrams on Icons*, in: L. JAMES (ed.), *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, Cambridge 2007, pp. 121–122, 124, pl. I. See also *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi* (cit. n. 8), pp. 483–486, fig. 433, and RHOBY, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten* (cit. n. 9), no.

*For Papadopoulina bestows upon her sister Ariantissa, whose name is Grace,  
Not ordinary things,  
But the pure image of the bride of God  
Which the ranks of angels hesitate to look upon.  
Out of love adorning it with gilt silver,  
She gives it to her as a spark of wondrous love.  
Therefore may grace be bestowed upon the sisters  
..... of tender love  
And the most certain preservation of life.<sup>15</sup>*

Unusually this revetment seems to have been commissioned as a personal gift from one sister to another, although eventually the icon made its way into the treasury of the Prodromos monastery in Berroia and later ended up at Vatopedi.<sup>16</sup>

A remarkable group of icons associated with a Greco-Serbian princess was brought together for the first time in six centuries at the “Byzantium: Faith and Power” exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum in 2004.<sup>17</sup> All three icons date to the second half of the fourteenth century, and it is assumed that they were commissioned by Maria Palaiologina, the wife of a Serbian despot who ruled over a part of northern Greece. Maria was half Greek and half Serb, but she proudly bore the names of four Byzantine imperial families, since her full name was Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina.<sup>18</sup> In 1362, at the age of 12, she was married to Thomas Preljubović, who became ruler of Epiros and Thessaly, and

she held the title of *basilissa* of Epiros from 1366/7 until her death in 1394. It has been presumed by modern scholars that she ordered the manufacture of all three of these icons of extraordinary quality; two of them are preserved to this day at the monastery of the Transfiguration at Meteora, where her brother Ioasaph, the former emperor of Thessaly John Uroš Doukas Palaiologos, was second founder and abbot. Although the inscriptions give only her name and no prayer or vow, it has been assumed that the two icons were given to the monastery in exchange for the prayers of the monks for Maria and her husband Thomas. Because of Maria’s close ties with the abbot, it is likely that Maria rather than Thomas initiated the commission and donation. Maria is also known to have donated a cross, a *kratetera* (perhaps an *asteriskos*?), and two paterens to the same Transfiguration monastery. This donation was confirmed by a document of 1386, following her husband’s death in 1384.<sup>19</sup>

The first icon from Meteora depicts the Virgin and Child surrounded by bust-length images of saints (Fig. 4). Within the portrait of each saint is a small slot in which relics of the saint would have been placed. The donor Maria, identified by inscription, is depicted kneeling in prayer at the feet of the Virgin. Although the icon has been badly damaged and the relics are gone, the remaining faces of the saints reveal that this icon was painted by a skilled artist from

Ik25, pp. 88–91. Glenn Peers has published a recent study of frames and revetments in ch. 5 of his *Sacred Shock: Framing Visual Experience in Byzantium*, University Park, PA 2004, pp. 101–131.

15 The English translation (based on the Greek text of RHOBY, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten* [cit. n. 9], p. 89), is a slightly modified version of the one by Ihor Ševčenko included in A. GRABAR, *Revêtements* (cit. n. 14), p. 51. For a different modification of the Ševčenko translation see B. PENTCHEVA, *Epigrams on Icons* (cit. n. 14), p. 121.

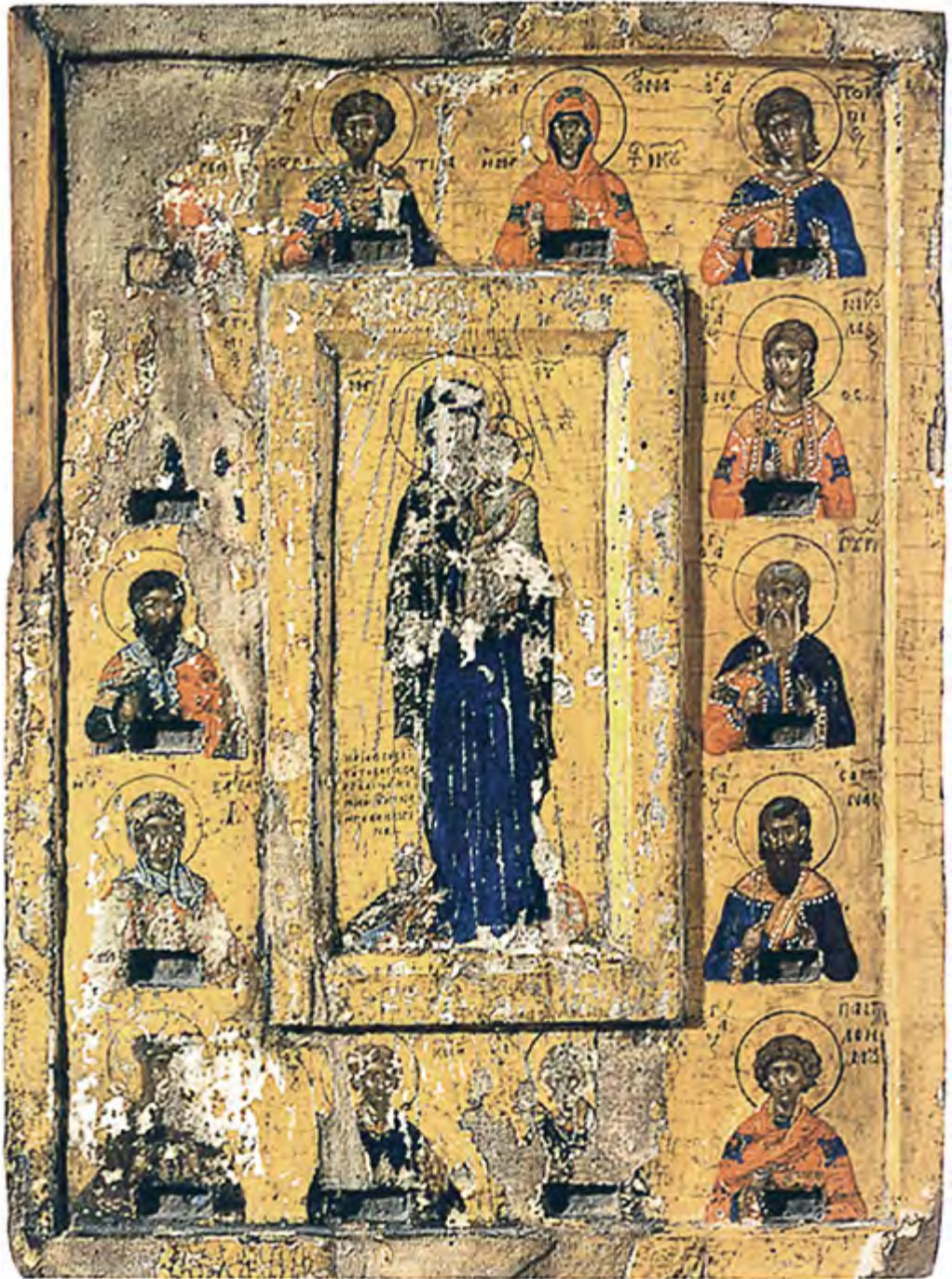
16 See A. RHOBY/W. HÖRANDNER, *Beobachtungen zu zwei Epigrammen auf byzantinischen Ikonen*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 100, 2007, pp. 155–165, at pp. 160–161.

17 See entries by A. WEYL CARR in: H. C. EVANS (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, New York/New Haven 2004, cat. nos. 24A–C.

18 PLP, no. 21393. These icons were analyzed by Maria Vassilaki in a still unpublished paper entitled “Maria Palaiologina and her Icons”, delivered at the 2001 International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Paris.

19 See N. VEES, *Σεβικά και βυζαντιακά γράμματα Μετέωρου*, in: *Byzantis*, 2, 1911–12, p. 22. The word *κρατητήρα* is unattested in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* or in E. TRAPP’s *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität*, but is inclu-





4: Meteora, Transfiguration monastery, icon of the Virgin and Child surrounded by saints, fourteenth century

northern Greece. It is theorized that originally a paired panel of Christ with a prostrate Thomas as donor formed a diptych.

The second icon from the Transfiguration monastery depicts the Doubting of Thomas, an appropriate subject since Maria's husband was named Thomas.<sup>20</sup> A remarkable, indeed unique, feature of the iconography is that Maria and her husband are depicted not as small kneeling donor figures, as was the usual custom, but are grouped with the apostles as full-size figures. Maria stands out particularly with her red dress and crown, while only the head of her husband is visible. In view of her dominant portrayal in the icon, I assume that she was the primary donor.

The third object associated with Maria, a lavishly decorated pair of icons, is housed in the Diocesan Museum at Cuenca in Spain, and is usually referred to as the Cuenca diptych.<sup>21</sup> The left-hand panel bears many similarities to the Meteora icon, with an image of the Virgin and Child surrounded by bust-length portraits of saints with slots for relics. Maria kneels at the feet of the Virgin. The right hand panel depicts a standing Christ figure with Thomas, now obliterated, kneeling at his feet. It is assumed that the figure of Thomas, a despised tyrant, was deliberately destroyed after his murder in 1384. The Cuenca diptych is famed not only for the quality of the painting, but for the extraordinary decoration of its silver gilt and jeweled revetment. Of an original 954 pearls, 939 still survive, but only sixty-seven of the original 312 gemstones, which included rubies, sapphires, garnets and turquoises, are intact. Once again the opulence of the ornamentation provides some idea of the wealth that was at the disposal of this princess and her husband.

### b. *The evidence of epigrams*

A group of eight epigrams by Manuel Philes from the first half of the fourteenth century provides additional evidence for the identity of female donors and the motivations for their commissioning of icons, frames or revetments. These epigrams range in length from 8 to 27 lines, and I would argue that most if not all of these poems were originally inscribed on silver gilt frames for icons. The lemmata or titles of these poems indicate that they were primarily intended for icons of the Virgin, while one was destined for the image of a female saint, Anastasia Pharmakolytria. It is possible that in some cases the verses were painted around the border of a wooden icon (as on an icon of the Virgin Dexiokratousa from Sinai),<sup>22</sup> but they were more likely to be engraved on the metal frames, either on panels, as in the Vatopedi and Freising icons, or around the border as in the middle Byzantine Limburg-an-der-Lahn reliquary. The longest surviving poem on a Palaiologan icon frame is the fourteen-verse epigram on the Freising icon (Fig. 2), distributed in panels around the border. The Vatopedi icon of Papadopoulina (Fig. 3) has twelve verses inscribed on two panels at the base of the icon; if two more such panels were added at the top, the frame could easily contain an epigram of 24 verses.

Most of these epigrams which have become dissociated from their original icons are *ex votos*, that is, objects given to a church or monastery in thanksgiving for the safe birth of a child or for recovery from illness, such as a headache or haemorrhage; one contains a prayer for deliverance from sterility. The donor may offer the object on her own behalf, or on behalf of a family

ded in E. KRIARAS, *Λεξικὸ τῆς μεσαιωνικῆς Ἑλληνικῆς δημόδου γραμματείας*, 1100–1669, VIII, Thessaloniki 1982, p. 370.

20 For further analysis and an illustration of this icon see the paper in this volume by Fani Gargova.

21 For an illustration see EVANS, *Faith and Power* (cit. n. 17), cat. no. 24C.

22 Illustrated in K.A. MANAFIS (ed.), *Sinai: Treasures of the Monastery*, Athens 1990, p. 187, pl. 62, with brief discussion by Doula Mouriki on p. 116.

member, such as a newborn infant who survived a dangerous sickness.<sup>23</sup> As an example of an *ex-voto* poem, we might consider the verses composed by Philes at the request of the nun Eulogia Komnene Palaiologina,<sup>24</sup> the niece of Andronikos II Palaiologos, who credited the Virgin with saving her from numerous illnesses:

*O Virgin, even before I <experienced> my mother's  
breast and swaddling clothes,  
Even before I saw the light and drew breath,  
I had Thou alone as my nurse and light and breath,  
And as a vigilant protectress with my Lord.  
For my ephemeral nature, easily susceptible <to  
disease>  
Straightaway afflicted me with frequent illnesses,  
So that sometimes I was on the point of death and  
ending my life;  
But Thou, Who art guarantor of a healthy (robust?)  
soul,  
Restored the vitality of my body,  
Refuting the judgments of the physicians.  
And now again Thou deliverest me from my pains,  
Concocting the antidotes of Thy miracles.  
Therefore accept the thank-offering of silver gilt,  
Receive also the love that lies ineffably within it.  
For Thou knowest, as I do, Thy grace,  
When I unmarried, having renounced vanity before  
vainglory,  
Donned the shabby monastic garment,  
For a marriage of good hopes.  
These verses <are addressed> to Thee, O venerable  
Maiden,  
By Eulogia Palaiologina, of Komnenian stock,  
Dearest <child> of the great stratopedarches,  
Niece of the most pious emperor.<sup>25</sup>*

These verses contain several elements of a standard miracle account, the woman who has been cured of numerous maladies by resorting to the miraculous assistance of the Virgin. As in hagiography, the poet slips in the typical criticism of doctors who despaired of healing a patient only to see her cured by divine intervention. Eulogia refers specifically to a silver gilt frame or revetment, the *sostron*.

An epigram recently analyzed by Edmund Ryder was addressed to St Anastasia Pharmakolytria ("the poison-curer") by Irene the *panhypersebaste*, daughter of Theodore Metochites, as a prayer for the recovery from illness of her son-in-law Stefan Uroš III Dečanski (ca. 1285–1331).<sup>26</sup> It specifically alludes to an image of the saint, with her traditional martyr's cross and flask of healing medicine, and was most probably associated with an icon of this holy woman venerated as a healer.

With the exception of the aforementioned dedication of an icon to St Anastasia and Maria Palaiologina's commission of the icon of the doubting Thomas, it is remarkable that all of these icons or icon frames known to have been commissioned by female donors were dedicated to the Virgin. At least two of them were dedicated to the Virgin of the Zoodochos Pege, the miraculous spring located at a monastery just outside the walls of Constantinople; others were for images of the Virgin Dexiokratousa or Hodegetria. Some of the epigrams reflect a special affinity between the female patron and the Virgin, especially when the donor is afflicted with a condition specific to women, such as infertility or a haemorrhage, which I interpret as menstrual problems. One of the epigrams addressed to the Theotokos of the Zoodochos Pege by the wife of Syrstephanos, in

23 The Greek text of the epigram is reproduced with English translation in A.-M. TALBOT, Epigrams of Manuel Philes on the Theotokos tes Peges and its Art, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 48, 1994, pp. 152–153.

24 PLP, no. 21370.

25 E. MILLER (ed.), *Manuelis Philae Carmina*, I, Paris 1855, pp. 77–78, no. 168.

26 MILLER, *Manuelis Philae Carmina* (cit. n. 25), I, p. 311. For analysis and English translation of this poem see E. C. RYDER, An Epigram for Saint Anastasia Pharmakolytria Commissioned by the Panhypersebaste Eirene Palaiologina, in: J. D. ALCHERMES/H. C. EVANS/T. K. THOMAS (ed.), *Anathemata Eortika: Studies in Honor of Thomas F.*

thanksgiving for her deliverance from an excessive flow of blood, begins with verses acknowledging the Virgin's preeminent role among women:

*Thou alone amongst women dost bear God as an infant,  
Thou alone amongst women dost remain a virgin while giving birth,  
Thou alone amongst women dost save the race of mortals.*<sup>27</sup>

Another epigram that could be described as expressing "female solidarity" was addressed by Maria Kasiane Raoulaina to the Virgin of the Pege in thanksgiving for the deliverance of her infant child from a near-fatal illness.

*O thou who delivered Eve from her intense suffering  
And dost sympathetically watch over my birth pangs  
(For God <was born> of Thee without the natural pain of childbirth) ...*<sup>28</sup>

Here Maria expresses the sentiment that the Virgin as a mother herself was particularly solicitous of women experiencing the pain of childbirth to which they were liable because of the original sin of Eve in the Garden of Eden.

It is also noteworthy that on several occasions when a married couple commissions a diptych with icons of Christ and the Virgin, the wife is associated with the Virgin, while her husband is linked with Christ. This arrangement can be seen

in the Cuenca diptych, and probably was true also of the diptych at the Metamorphosis monastery at Meteora, from which the icon of Christ is missing.<sup>29</sup> This same pattern can be observed in a pair of epigrams by Philes, which must have accompanied a diptych of the Virgin and Christ. The verses of the husband, Philanthropenos Doukas, are addressed to an icon of Christ, while those of his wife Philanthropene are addressed to the Virgin. Both poems pray for the wife to be released from sterility and be blessed with the birth of a child.<sup>30</sup>

This is not to imply by any means that the dedications of Byzantine patrons and patronesses were always gender-linked. There are numerous examples of women sponsoring churches and icons dedicated to Christ, and of men dedicating churches and icons to the Virgin. It is nonetheless remarkable that in this particular data set, almost exclusively of elite women from Constantinople, there seems to be such a clear preference for the Virgin on the part of female donors. This finding parallels the recent determination by John Cotsonis of the overwhelming tendency for women to select an image of the Virgin for their seals. He cautions, however, that men display a similar, if lesser, devotion to the Virgin on their seals, while women's seals show no special allegiance to female saints.<sup>31</sup>

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Mathews, Mainz 2009, pp. 265–270. I thank Dr. Ryder for sending me a draft of his article in advance of its publication.

27 See TALBOT, Epigrams of Manuel Philes (cit. n. 23), pp. 150–151.

28 TALBOT, Epigrams of Manuel Philes (cit. n. 23), pp. 152–153.

29 For a parallel in the frontispiece of an eleventh-century manuscript see the remarkable pair of miniatures of Theodore Gabras and his wife Irene in St Petersburg, State Public Library, MS 291, fols. 2v and 3r, dated to 1067. Here Christ lays his hand on the head of Theodore, while the Virgin clasps Irene's hand; both donor figures are standing. For color illustrations see A. CUTLER/J.-M. SPIESER, *Byzance médiévale, 700–1204*, Paris 1996, pls. 258–259.

30 MILLER, *Manuelis Philae Carmina* (cit. n. 25), I, pp. 318–319.

31 J. COTSONIS, Onomastics, Gender, Office and Images on Byzantine Lead Seals: A Means of Investigating Personal Piety, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 32, 2008, pp. 1–37, at pp. 10–18. See also idem, The Contribution

## OBJECTS OF MINOR ART

Devotion to the Virgin can also be seen in some epigrams originally inscribed on objects of minor art, such as lamps. Thus an anonymous female donor gave a glass lamp to the Pege monastery in thanksgiving for her cure from dropsy, for which the waters of the sacred spring were deemed particularly effective. Philes compresses many allusions and metaphors into a nine-line epigram:<sup>32</sup>

*Attaining light and life, O Virgin,  
I have contrived for thee a light-bearing vessel;  
For thou didst restore me again to good health  
When I was afflicted with the dread disease of  
dropsy.  
For through the showers of thy dew  
Thou didst dry out the fluids of my inner organs.  
For thou bearest a secret fire which consumes  
<moisture>.  
Therefore accept <this> light in a transparent lamp,  
So that such a miracle may not be hidden to  
mankind.*

Philes plays with the imagery of fire and water, particularly appropriate for a lamp in which one can imagine the wick immersed in a layer of oil floating on water, as he alludes to the fire of the Virgin, which can dry out the moisture of the dropsy. He also refers to the paradox of the water of the sacred spring being able to heal a disease

characterized by an over-accumulation of fluids and excessive thirst. Finally, the light and life of the first verse may well allude to the cross-shaped inscription of ΦΩΣ and ΖΩΗ that is sometimes found on Byzantine lamps.<sup>33</sup>

Another poem once associated with a lamp was written by Philes on behalf of a certain Theodora Komnene.<sup>34</sup> The husband whom she calls *blossoming from the purple*, hence, *porphyrogenetos*, may be the despot Demetrios Palaiologos, youngest son of Andronikos Palaiologos, who is also termed πορφυρανθής in another poem by Philes.<sup>35</sup>

*O Virgin, since you have the warmth of  
compassion,  
Graciously accept the lamp as a gift;  
And grant in exchange to shed your light  
On my sweet husband, blossoming from the purple,  
Chasing out the darkness of his spiritual suffering.  
Theodora, the scion of the Komnenoi, <addresses>  
these <words> to Thee.*<sup>36</sup>

Surviving objects of minor art known to have been commissioned by women are very rare in the Palaiologan period; I have been able to locate only one cross and one cross reliquary.<sup>37</sup> The cross reliquary, or *stavrotheke*, is in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice.<sup>38</sup> It is made of wood and was provided with its silver gilt adornment

of Byzantine Lead Seals to the Study of the Cult of the Saints (Sixth–Twelfth Century), in: *Byzantion*, 75, 2005, pp. 383–497, at p. 486.

32 MILLER, *Manuelis Philae Carmina* (cit. n. 25), 2:237, English tr. in: TALBOT, *Epigrams of Manuel Philes* (cit. n. 23), pp. 156–157.

33 L. BOURAS/M. G. PARANI, *Lighting in Early Byzantium*, Washington, DC 2009, pp. 26–27.

34 PLP, no. 12065.

35 MILLER, *Manuelis Philae Carmina* (cit. n. 25), II, p. 74.

36 *Ibid.*, II, p. 154.

37 One could also mention here an altar cloth jointly offered around 1300 by the *megas hetaireiarches* Progonos Sgouros and his wife Eudokia Komnene, as attested by an epigram; see RHOBY, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten* (cit. n. 9), no. Ter, pp. 369–371.

38 For a description see S. MOSCHINI MARCONI, *Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia. Opere d'arte dei secoli XIV e XV*, Rome 1955, pp. 191–194, no. 216. A poor black-and-white photo was published by G. FOGOLARI in: *La teca del Besarione e la croce di San Teodoro di Venezia*, in: *Dedalo*, 3.1, 1922–3, pp. 139–160, at p. 143.



by a certain Irene Palaiologina, as we are apprised by a four-line epigram. Irene, who describes herself as the *niece of the emperor*, has not been identified. Her verses, implicitly addressed to Christ, describe her commissioning of the silver decoration as a *petition for salvation*, <in hope of> *redemption from her sins*.<sup>39</sup>

The cross which now belongs to the Dionysiou monastery is particularly precious as a work of art commissioned by one of the last empresses of Byzantium (Fig. 5). It is made of wood sheathed with a silver gilt cover worked in high and low relief. The obverse features the Crucifixion, the reverse a figure of Christ standing in the Jordan River with a fish swimming at his feet. The cross is further embellished with floral ornament and cabochon gems. A plate at the base of the obverse vertical arm contains an inscription stating that the cross was a votive offering (*ἀνάθημα*) from Helena Palaiologina, wife of Manuel II Palaiologos.<sup>40</sup>



5: Mt Athos, Dionysiou Monastery, Cross sheathed in silver-gilt donated by Helena Palaiologina, Reverse, baptism of Christ, fifteenth century

#### MANUSCRIPTS

The final section of this paper will be devoted to female patrons and donors of manuscripts. With a couple of exceptions, epigrams were not included in these volumes, so we must rely on the information provided by scribal notes and inscriptions. Women commissioned a number of fine manuscripts that have survived from the Palaiologan period; the patroness who first comes to mind is the so-called “Palaiologina,” whose monogram is found in a gospel book in the Vat. Gr. 1158 (fols. 5v and 6). In their publi-

cation of 1978, Hugo Buchthal and Hans Belting assembled a group of late thirteenth-century manuscripts with similar figural decoration, and hypothesized an atelier patronized by the bibliophile Theodora Raoulaina, theorizing that many of the books were commissioned for the monastery of St Andrew in Krisei that she refounded.<sup>41</sup> Subsequent scholarship has added to the number of manuscripts associated with the Atelier of the Palaiologina, prompting John Lowden and Robert Nelson to reexamine the subject in a 1991 article.<sup>42</sup> There

39 RHOBY, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten* (cit. n. 9), no. Me79, pp. 248–251.

40 See *The Treasures of Mount Athos*, Thessaloniki 1997, cat. 9.23, pp. 346–347, with color illustrations of both sides of the cross, and EVANS, *Faith and Power* (cit. n. 17), pp. 122–123, fig. 5.6. For the text of the inscription see G. MILLET/J. PARGOIRE/L. PETIT, *Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos*, I, Paris 1904, no. 461, p. 159.

41 H. BUCHTHAL/H. BELTING, *Patronage in Thirteenth-Century Constantinople: An Atelier of Late Byzantine Book Illumination and Calligraphy*, Washington, DC 1978.

42 J. LOWDEN/R. NELSON, *The Palaeologina Group: Additional Manuscripts and New Questions*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 45, 1991, pp. 59–68.

they made a number of important correctives to the thesis of Buchthal and Belting, noting that the increasing size of the group of manuscripts (due to new attributions) and especially the large proportion of lectionaries made it unlikely that they should be attributed to one patroness. They also suggested that the workshop that produced these manuscripts was in operation for longer than originally thought, probably functioning well into the early fourteenth century. Finally, they showed that the copy of the *typikon* of the Lips convent now in the British Library should be added to the group, and demonstrated that the dowager empress Theodora Palaiologina, widow of Michael VIII, was the patroness of at least one manuscript associated with the group, and may have commissioned others as well.<sup>43</sup>

The work of Lowden and Nelson thus makes us reconsider the hypothesis that a single imperial patroness was responsible for such a large number of commissions, and replaces the Buchthal-Belting model with “a more complex, unstable and unpredictable model, one that would allow for constantly varying collaboration among artisans . . . and their equally diverse clients”.<sup>44</sup> The fact remains, however, that at least three manuscripts associated with the Palaiologina group were commissioned by women: the original Palaiologina gospel book; the *typikon* for the Lips convent, restored by Theodora Palaiologina; and the gospel book, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-

Laurenziana, Plut. VI, 28, dated by a colophon to 1285 and containing a prayer for a certain Anna and for the unnamed female owner of the manuscript (Fig. 6).<sup>45</sup> The unpublished prayer may be translated as follows:

*Verily, my Christ, <grant> to Anna and to me, the owner of this manuscript, to achieve salvation, and the forgiveness of sins, the inheritance of blessings, unspeakable joy, most radiant places, the choirs of all the righteous, the exceedingly bright choir of patriarchs and prophets, of apostles, martyrs, choirs of holy women, ascetics and saints, and with the female martyrs, the first of them, Thekla the apostle. Verily, verily, Christ, may these things come to pass through the intercessions of these <holy personages> and of your immaculate mother; verily may I attain this. This book was completed on the 28th of July, of the thirteenth indiction, in the year 6793.*<sup>46</sup>

The words of this prayer reflect the patroness's consciousness of her sex, since it mentions her hope to be eventually united in heaven with choirs of holy women and female martyrs, especially Thekla, the companion of St Paul who is deemed the first female saint. The emphasis on the serried ranks of holy women in heaven suggests that the patron may have ordered the gospel book for presentation to a convent, in the hope of the nuns' prayers for her salvation and that of Anna, whose relationship to the donor cannot be determined.

43 The association with Theodora Palaiologina was independently postulated by A.-M. TALBOT, *Empress Theodora Palaiologina, Wife of Michael VIII*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46, 1992, pp. 295–303, at pp. 301–302.

44 LOWDEN/NELSON, *The Palaiologina Group* (cit. n. 42), p. 68.

45 The colophon is on fols. 440r–v, not on 441v–442r as erroneously stated by Buchthal and Belting, who were confused by the double numbering of the folio. The sex of the owner is indicated by the feminine participle τῆ κτησαμένη. I should like to express my thanks to Robert Nelson who first drew my attention to this colophon. I should note that Anna has normally been identified as the donor/commissioner, but I believe that the Greek phrase Ἄννη δὲ κάμοι should be interpreted as referring to two separate individuals.

46 Here is a diplomatic transcription of the Greek text: Ἀμήν, Χριστέ μου, γένητο τυχεῖν τῆς σωτηρίας Ἄννη δὲ κάμοι τῆ κτησαμένη, καὶ τῶν κακῶν συγχώρησιν, καλῶν τὴν κληρουχίαν, χαρὰν τὴν ἀνεκλάλητον, φωτεινωτάτους τόπους, δικαίων πάντων τοὺς χωροὺς, τὸν ὑπέρλαμπρον χωρὸν πατριαρχῶν ται [lege τε] πρωφητῶν, ἀποστόλων, μαρτύρων, χωροὺς ἁγίων [fol. 440v], ἀσκητῶν καὶ ὠσιῶν, καὶ σὺν ταῖς μάρτοισ πρώτῃν δὲ Θεέκλαν τὴν ἀποστόλων. Ναὶ ναί, Χριστέ, καὶ γένητο ταῖς τούτων παρακλήσεις καὶ τῆς ἀχράντου σου μητρός, ἀμήν καὶ γένητό μοι. Εἴληφε τέλος δέλτος ἢ τεῖδε Ἰουλίῳ μηνὶ κη', ἰνδικτιῶνι ιγ', ἐν ἔτη ,ςψκγ'.



6: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Plut. VI, 28, Colophon on fols. 440r-v of Gospel book

While the donation to a convent is hypothetical in the case of the Laurentian gospel book, women's gifts of manuscripts to nunneries can be securely attested in a number of cases, as with the *typikon* for the Lips convent. In its present fragmentary condition it retains no elegant headpieces or portraits, but has titles in gold ink, ornamented initial letters, and occasional strips of ornament in pseudo-Kufic script or geometric designs, and the missing initial pages may have included portraits of the foundress's family. In contrast, the *typikon* for the Bebaia Elpis convent, founded by Theodora Synadene, is one of the masterpieces of early Palaiologan manuscript illumination with its impressive series of portraits of members of the foundress's family. This deluxe version of the *typikon*, often called the Lincoln College *Typikon*, was surely ordered by Theodora Synadene at the time of her foundation of the convent in the first part of the fourteenth cen-

tury.<sup>47</sup> No doubt it was reserved for use on special occasions, while a plain, unillustrated copy met the everyday needs of the convent.

Another patroness of a Constantinopolitan convent, Anna Komnene Raoulaina Strategopoulina, is known to have donated to the convent of Christ Savior Krataios several books, including a parchment manuscript of 319 folios now at the Pantokrator monastery of Mt Athos (Pantokrator 6). The book contains panegyric readings for feast days, as well as two hagiographical works on female saints, Gregory of Cyprus's *Logos* on St Marina and the tenth-century *vita* of St Irene of Chrysobalanton; it was thus particularly suited for a nunnery library. Anna, who was perhaps the daughter of Theodora Raoulaina, lived at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century. A scribal note informs the reader that Anna contributed other books and sacred vessels to the convent, and begs the nuns to

47 On this *typikon* and the relevant bibliography see I. HUTTER, Die Geschichte des Lincoln College Typikons, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 45, 1995, pp. 79–114.



treat the *deluxe and wondrous book* (πλουσιοπάτη και θαυμασία βιβλος) with reverence and care. The nuns should make sure their hands are clean before touching the book, and take care not to let the pages be spattered with oil or wax. The scribes further note that the book was expensive, and that they had gone to a great deal of trouble to assemble all the material in the volume.<sup>48</sup>

Other women donated books both old and new to male monasteries. Maria Palaiologina's gift of an eleventh-century gospel book to the Chora monastery in the early fourteenth century is commemorated in a 48-line epigram by Manuel Philes. Maria, often called "Mary of the Mongols" because of her marriage to the Mongol khan Abaga, is best known because of her inclusion in the Deesis mosaic in the esonarthex of the Chora church. Philes's verses inform us that she donated golden textiles to Chora and also commissioned a new deluxe binding for the gospel book (attested in the late nineteenth century at the Prodromos monastery near Serres, now in the library of the Dujčev Center in Sofia). Philes's poem was copied in the manuscript in two columns on two pages inserted at the end of the book (fols. 246r–v). The author of an unpublished catalogue entry on this manuscript, Jean-Marie Olivier, informs me that the present cover, in badly deteriorated purple silk, may be the remains of the Palaiologan rebinding.<sup>49</sup> Following the pattern of so many other female do-

nations, Maria notes that she has made these gifts to the Virgin Chorine in thanksgiving for the blessings and favors she has enjoyed from the Mother of God, and for compensation for her salvation from myriad dangers, perhaps an allusion to her dispatch to the court of a Mongol khan as a diplomatic pawn.<sup>50</sup> We also know that Maria donated to the convent of the Panagiotissa *very valuable <liturgical> vessels and books*.<sup>51</sup>

Other women made donations of manuscripts to monasteries on Mt Athos. Thus Theodora Raoulaina gave to the Lavra in 1300/1 a twelfth-century manuscript of commentaries by Theophylaktos of Ohrid on the Four Gospels.<sup>52</sup> A note at the end of the gospel book, next to the information about her donation, urges the monks of the Lavra to pray for Raoulaina. A ten-line epigram of 1455, penned by the Lavriote monk Dositheos, also exhorts the monks to be mindful of Raoulaina, the donor of the manuscript, and to pray for her spiritual salvation. This provides excellent proof that a century and a half after the original gift Raoulaina's soul could still be assured of the continuing prayers of the monks of Lavra.

A few years later, a large lectionary with evangelist portraits (Lavra A111) was donated to the Lavra monastery by a certain Irene, probably Irene-Yolanda of Montferrat, the estranged wife of Andronikos II. The note recording her donation requests the prayers of the monks who read the lectionary.<sup>53</sup> Unusually large in format

48 LAMPROS, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mt. Athos* (cit. n. 3), I, no. 1040, pp. 92–94. See also J. O. ROSENQVIST, *The Life of St. Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton*, Uppsala 1986, pp. lii–liii. On Anna Strategopoulina see PLP, XI, no. 26893.

49 Personal communication of September 1, 2008. Efforts to obtain a photograph of the binding and of the manuscript pages containing the poem have proved fruitless.

50 On this poem, first edited by P. N. PAPAGEORGIOU in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 3, 1894, pp. 326–327, see N. TETRIATNIKOV, *The Place of the Nun Melania (the Lady of the Mongols) in the Deesis Program of the Inner Narthex of Chora, Constantinople*, in: *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 43, 1995, pp. 163–180, at p. 177, and appendices by L. F. SHERRY/C. ASDRACHA, pp. 181–184. See also TALBOT, *Building Activity in Constantinople under Andronikos II* (cit. n. 1), pp. 334–346.

51 F. MIKLOSICH/J. MÜLLER, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, I, Vienna 1860, p. 313.

52 On this manuscript of 344 folios, now in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (Coislin gr. 128), see B. MONTEFAUCON, *Bibliotheca Coisliniana, olim Segueriana*, Paris 1715, p. 200–201.

53 Text of the notice in S. M. PELEKANIDES, *Οι θησαυροί του Αγίου Όρους, Α', Εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα*, Athens 1979, III, pp. 234–235 with images at pp. 57–61. The Greek text reads as follows:

(380 × 270 mm), this manuscript may have originated in Thessalonike, where Irene lived apart from her husband between 1303 and 1317.<sup>54</sup> Another gift of an empress to an Athonite monastery was the beautiful psalter (Ivion 1384) commissioned by Anna of Savoy, widow of Andronikos III. It was copied in 1346 by the scribe Chariton of the Hodegon monastery in Constantinople. A four-line epigram states that the empress Anna Palaiologina had the psalter made as a *thankoffering for herself and her imperial son*, i. e. John V.<sup>55</sup> The deluxe manuscript, of substan-

tial size (295 × 235 mm), has script in red-gold minuscules, titles in gold uncials, and some elegant headpieces.

In striking contrast to this large-scale psalter is a small one from the monastery of St Catherine's on Mt Sinai (Sinait. Gr. 61). Dated probably to the early fourteenth century, nothing is known of its origins except that it was somehow associated with the nun Theotime. In her donor portrait she is depicted prostrated before the Virgin, yet another reminder of female devotion to the Mother of God.<sup>56</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Let me begin with the caveat that the distinction between “commissioning” and “donation” of works of art is not always easy to establish. Clearly many of the objects I have discussed, such as icon frames for the Pege monastery, were specially ordered to be offered as *ex votos*. Lctionaries must have always been commissioned as gifts, rather than for personal use. Papadopoulina ordered an icon frame as a present to her sister. In the case of the nun Theotime, the small size of her psalter suggests that she ordered it for her private devotions, but that at some later time it made its way to the monastery at Sinai. It is noteworthy, however, that both Maria Palaiologina (Mary of the Mongols) and Theodora Raoulaina donated older (and presumably prized) manuscripts to monasteries; in the first case the book

was at least two centuries old, in the second case at least a century old.

I can summarize my overview as follows. Elite women continued to commission deluxe works of art in the Palaiologan period, just as they founded or refounded churches and monasteries. It is difficult to determine the marital status of most of these patronesses of minor arts and manuscripts, but only a few can be definitely identified as widows, in strong contrast to female founders and restorers of Palaiologan monasteries, most of whom had lost their husbands. The discrepancy can no doubt be explained by the much larger sums needed for building projects, necessitating access to the dowry which reverted to Byzantine women upon their husbands' death.

Προσετέθη τὸ παρὸν ἅγιον Εὐαγγέλιον ἐν τῇ λάβρα τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἀθανασίου παρὰ Εἰρήνης τῆς εὐσεβεστάτης αὐγούστης τῆς παλαιολογίσης καὶ οἱ ἀναγινώσκοντες αὐτὸ εὐχεσθε ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς.

54 R. NELSON, Theodore Hagiopetrites, a Late Byzantine Scribe and Illuminator, Vienna 1991, pp. 49–51.

55 I. SPATHARAKIS, Corpus of Dated Greek Illuminated Manuscripts, Leiden 1981, no. 258; S. M. PELEKANIDES et al. (ed.), The Treasures of Mount Athos: Illuminated Manuscripts, II, Athens 1975, pp. 325–326. The statement by Donald Nicol that Anna gave the psalter to Ivion because her husband died there (The Byzantine Lady: Ten Portraits, 1250–1500, Cambridge 1994, p. 94) has no basis in fact; Andronikos III died in Constantinople (PLP, no. 21437). The Greek text of the epigram reads as follows:

Ἄννα βασιλις ἡ Παλαιολογίνα  
 Δαβιδ θεόπνου πικτίον βασιλέως  
 ἔδρασε λαμπρὸν εἰς Θεοῦ μολπῆν λόγου  
 αὐτῆς τε σώστρον καὶ γόνου βασιλέως.

56 EVANS, Faith and Power (cit. n. 17), cat. 202, pp. 343–344, with earlier bibliography.

Female patrons ordered much the same type of objects as their male counterparts; but when it came to icons, women showed a distinct preference for the Virgin over Christ and male saints. They made their donations of commissioned works of liturgical art to both male and female monasteries, just as they founded male monastic houses as well as convents. The motivations for their donations, clearly expressed in both prose dedicatory inscriptions and in verse epigrams, fall into two primary categories: 1) gratitude for healing or benefactions, often fulfilling a vow to make a gift if their prayers were answered; 2) gifts to monasteries in the hope of prayers for salvation by the community of monks or nuns.

Finally, I should like to stress that the patronesses I have discussed in this paper all commissioned works of art for spiritual reasons. Although a *rara avis*, such as Theodora Raoulaina, might order secular manuscripts for her personal reading, to the best of my knowledge there is

virtually no specific evidence for Palaiologan elite women commissioning secular buildings or works of art.<sup>57</sup> I am convinced, however, that elite women also ordered their own clothing, linens, jewelry, and toilet articles, and perhaps even household furnishings such as furniture, ceramic vessels and tableware. Information on these secular commissions is inaccessible to the modern scholar, but we should not forget women's patronage of the artisans who manufactured both deluxe and more ordinary personal items and furnishings for aristocratic and imperial households.

**Illustration credits:** Figs. 1, 3: after The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi (cit. n. 8), Figs. 437, 433. – Fig. 2: after GRABAR, *Les revêtements en or et en argent* (cit. n. 14), Fig. 39. – Fig. 4: after EVANS, *Faith and Power* (cit. n. 17), cat. 24B. – Fig. 5: after *The Treasures of Mount Athos* (cit. n. 40), pp. 346–347. – Fig. 6: Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Florence.

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57 The sole exception that comes to mind is Anna of Savoy who commissioned a tower and gateway in the upper citadel at Thessalonike in the mid-fourteenth century. The only patroness mentioned in E. MAGUIRE/H. MAGUIRE, *Other Icons: Art and Power in Byzantine Secular Culture*, Princeton 2007, is Irene the *sebastokratorissa* of the twelfth century.

## KLOSTERGRÜNDUNGEN RUSSISCHER FÜRSTINNEN IM DREIZEHNTEN JAHRHUNDERT

ANNA MICHALOWSKA

Über den gesellschaftlichen Handlungsspielraum der Frau im vorpetrinischen Russland existieren zahlreiche Untersuchungen.<sup>1</sup> Über die historische Rolle der Frau als Klosterstifterin wissen wir jedoch wenig. Lückenhaft ist ebenso die Kenntnis russischer Frauenklöster. Eine Gesamtdarstellung fehlt bis heute.<sup>2</sup> Die Geschichte der

Frauenklöster vor und während der Tatarenherrschaft ist nur bruchstückhaft erfasst, ihre Entstehung liegt meist im Dunkeln. Dieser Umstand ist sicherlich durch die schwierige Quellenlage bedingt. Dass Klosteranlagen oftmals die Zeiten nicht überdauert haben bzw. bereits während des Mongolensturms zerstört worden sind,<sup>3</sup> erschwert

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- 1 C. CLAUS, *Die Stellung der russischen Frau von der Einführung des Christentums bei den Russen bis zu den Reformen Peters des Großen*, München 1959; C. GOEHRKE, *Die Witwe im alten Russland*, in: *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 38, 1986, S. 225–243; ders., „Mein Herr und Herzensfreund!“ Die hochgestellte Moskowiterin nach privaten Korrespondenzen des späten 17. Jahrhunderts, in: C. GOEHRKE/R. KEMBALL/D. WEISS (Hrsg.), *Primi sobran'e pestrých glav. Slavistische und slavenkundliche Beiträge für Peter Brang zum 65. Geburtstag* (Slavica Helvetica, 33), Bern u. a. 1989, S. 655–670; H. RÜSS, *Herren und Diener. Die soziale und politische Mentalität des russischen Adels, 9.–17. Jahrhundert*, Köln u. a. 1994; N. L. PUŠKAREVA, *Žensčiny drevnej Rusi*, Moskau 1989; N. L. PUŠKAREVA/E. LEVIN, *Žensčina v srednevekovom Novgorode XI–XV vv.*, in: *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta*, ser. 8, Istorija, 3, 1983, S. 78–89; dies., *Women in the Medieval Russian Family of the Tenth through Fifteenth Centuries*, in: B. EVANS CLEMENTS/B. ALPERN ENGEL/C. D. WOROBEC (Hrsg.), *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, Berkeley u. a. 1991; dies., *Women in Russian History: From the Tenth to the Twentieth Century*, (Hrsg. E. Levin), Stroud 1999; G. G. WEICKHARDT, *Legal Rights of Women in Russia, 1100–1750*, in: *Slavic Review*, 55.1, 1996, S. 1–23.
  - 2 Im 19. Jh. entstanden neben zahlreichen lokalgeschichtlichen Studien über einzelne Klöster auch Überblickswerke. Es wurde der Versuch unternommen, alle russische Klöster, die je existiert haben, in einem Lexikon zusammenzufassen, vgl. dazu: V. V. ZVERINSKIJ, *Material dlja istoriko-topografičeskogo issledovanija o pravoslavnyh monastyrych v Rossijskoj imperii* (s bibliografičeskim ukazatalem), I–III, ND d. Bde. I–III der Ausg. 1890–1897, St. Petersburg 2005; MAKARIJ (M. P. BULGAKOV), *Mitropolit Moskovskij i Kolomenskij, Istorija Russkoj Cerkvi*, I–IX, Moskau 1995–1997. Zverinskij zählt in dem dreibändigen Werk in alphabetischer Reihenfolge 2245 Klöster auf. Frauenklöster werden nicht gesondert von Männerklöstern behandelt. Zum Thema des russischen Frauenklosters s. CLAUS, *Die Stellung der russischen Frau* (zit. Anm. 1), S. 155–193; E. B. EMČENKO, *Ženskie monastiri v Rossii*, in: N. V. SINICYNJA (Hrsg.), *Monašestvo i monastiri v Rossii. XI–XX veka: Istoričeskie očerki*, Moskau 2002, S. 245–284; A. SCHMÄHLING, *Hort der Frömmigkeit – Ort der Verwahrung. Russische Frauenklöster im 16.–18. Jahrhundert* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa, 75), Stuttgart 2009; dies., *Vom Nutzen der Klausur: Religiöse und gesellschaftliche Funktionen der Frauenklöster im Moskauer Reich*, in: L. STEINDORFF (Hrsg.), *Religion und Integration im Moskauer Russland. Konzepte und Praktiken, Potentiale und Grenzen 14.–17. Jahrhundert* (Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte, 76), Wiesbaden 2010, S. 461–476.
  - 3 Vgl. dazu: *Polnoe sobranie russkich letopisej* (PSRL), *Lavrent'evskaja Letopis'*, I, Moskau 1997 (Laur. 6745), S. 462–463, dt. Übersetzung in: P. HAUPTMANN/G. STRICKER (Hrsg.), *Die Orthodoxe Kirche in Russland. Dokumente ihrer Geschichte (860–1980)*, Göttingen 1988, S. 130–132.

den Aufschluss über deren historische Situation. Entsprechend bedeutend sind in diesem Kontext die Chroniken als Informationsquelle. Darauf stützt sich primär auch diese Untersuchung.

Neben dem Bericht von der Zerstörung sakraler Gebäude, die der Überfall der Tataren mit sich brachte, gibt es in den Chroniken Einträge, dank derer wir in Erfahrung bringen können, dass im Laufe des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts auch neue Klöster entstanden sind. In einem der folgenreichsten Jahrhunderte der russischen Geschichte, zu denen das dreizehnte Jahrhundert zweifellos gehört, bestand offensichtlich die Notwendigkeit, Klöster zu gründen. In den Chroniken werden Namen der Stifter genannt, darunter auch weibliche Namen.

Den eigenen Namen überliefert zu wissen, heißt Teil der Geschichte zu bleiben, heißt im Gedächtnis zu bleiben. Und je größer die Stiftung, desto dauerhafter und greifbarer der Name und damit die den Namen tragende Person. Verschwindet die Stiftung, verblasst der Name. Die Zerstörung kann für den Namen des Stifters gar ein Herausreißen aus dem Lauf der Geschichte bedeuten. Schriftliche Quellen sind oftmals die einzigen Zeugen solcher historischen Ereignisse. Sie hüten die Namen. Die Errichtung eines frommen Werkes, das über den eigenen Tod hinaus wirkt, indem es ein kontinuierliches liturgi-

sches Gedenken sichert und Fürbitten bewirkt, zielt auf Ewigkeit ab, dies sowohl im Jenseits als auch auf Erden. Entsprechend liegt einer Stiftung stets der Memorialgedanke zugrunde.<sup>4</sup> Frömmigkeit und Macht, Sorge um das eigene Seelenheil, aber auch das Image, das man der Nachwelt von sich hinterlässt, finden in der Verwirklichung des architektonischen Komplexes Ausdruck. Denn Stiftung ist stets auch ein Mittel der sozialen Selbstdarstellung, abhängig vom Status und finanziellen Möglichkeiten der jeweiligen Person. So ist es nur zu verständlich, dass die große Leistung einer Klosterstiftung vor allem vornehmen Personen, Fürsten und Fürstinnen, geistlichen Würdenträgern, hohen Amtsinhabern und deren Angehörigen<sup>5</sup> vorbehalten war. Betrachtet man die Klosterstiftung als ein Anliegen, zu dessen Realisierung die Verfügbarkeit von materiellen Werten notwendig ist, so stellt sich die Frage nach den finanziellen Möglichkeiten der weiblichen Familienmitglieder russischer Fürstenhäuser, die Klöster gestiftet haben.

Die im Folgenden von uns zu betrachtenden Frauen sollen einen Einblick gewähren, aus welchen Lebenssituationen heraus eine Frau des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts ein Kloster stiften konnte, worauf ihre Stiftermotivation basiert haben könnte und inwieweit sie in dieser Entscheidung von ihrem Mann abhängig war.

## I

Die früheste Erwähnung eines im dreizehnten Jahrhundert von einer Fürstin gestifteten Klosters findet sich in der *Laurentius-Chronik* un-

ter dem Weltjahr 6708 (=1200). Am 15. Juli 1200 habe der Großfürst Vsevolod Jurevič<sup>6</sup> eine steinerne Kirche der Entschlafung der Heiligen Mut-

4 Zum Thema der *Memoria* s. L. STEINDORFF, *Memoria in Altrußland. Untersuchungen zu den Formen christlicher Totensorge* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa, 38), Stuttgart 1994; ders., *Donations and Commemoration in the Muscovite Realm – a Medieval or Early Modern Phenomenon?*, in: STEINDORFF, *Religion und Integration* (zit. Anm. 2), S. 477–499.

5 1238 soll die Witwe des *posadnik* (Statthalter) Semjon Borisovič (umgebracht von den Stadtbewohnern zur Zeit der Seuche) ein Frauenkloster bei der Kirche des hl. Paulus gegründet haben, die ihr Mann 1224 errichtet hat, vgl dazu: *Erste Novgoroder Chronik*, 6746 (1238), und EMČENKO, *Ženskie monstiri v Rossii* (zit. Anm. 2), S. 248.

6 Zu Person des Enkels von Vladimir Monomach, Vsevolod III., s. D. WÖRN, *Studien zur Herrschaftsideologie des Großfürsten Vsevolod III. „Boľšoe gnezdo“ von Vladimir (1176–1212)*. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der historiogra-

tergottes im Kloster der Fürstin errichtet.<sup>7</sup> Der Chronist führt das Kloster auf die Fürstin zurück, die Errichtung der Kirche spricht er dem Großfürsten zu. In derselben *Chronik* jedoch findet sich unter dem Jahr 6710 ein Eintrag, der die Großfürstin auch als Stifterin der Kirche bezeichnet, dies im Zusammenhang mit der am 9. September 1202 erfolgten Weihe jener Kirche. Dem Bericht des Chronisten zufolge habe der Bischof Ioann (23. 01. 1190–1214)<sup>8</sup> die Kirche der Entschlafung der heiligen Gottesmutter geweiht, die die rechtgläubige Großfürstin in ihrem Kloster gegründet hat.<sup>9</sup> In der *Stepennaja kniga* (Stufenbuch),<sup>10</sup> einer Quelle aus dem sechzehnten Jahrhundert, werden weitere Informationen überliefert. Die Großfürstin Maria, Frau des Selbstherrschers (*samoderžec*)<sup>11</sup> Vsevolod Dimitri Jurevič und Tochter des tschechischen Fürsten Ščvarnov habe einen wertvollen Teil des Landes gekauft für die Errichtung der Kirche und des Klosters zu Ehren Gottes und der Gottesmutter.<sup>12</sup> Dort habe ihr Gatte, der Großfürst Vsevolod, die steinerne Kirche der Entschlafung der heiligen Gottesmutter errichtet.<sup>13</sup> Das Stufenbuch nennt keine Jahreszahlen. Glaubt man der *Laurentius-Chronik* geschah dies im Jahre 1200. Zwei Jahre später fand die Weihe der steinernen Kirche statt. Gemäß der *Laurentius-Chro-*

*nik* wurde die Großfürstin am 2. März 1206 in ihrem Kloster, *im Kloster, das sie selbst gegründet hat*, zur Nonne geschoren.<sup>14</sup> Zu diesem Zeitpunkt litt die Stifterin bereits seit mehreren Jahren an einer schweren Krankheit. Den Chroniken zufolge war sie gezwungen, die letzten sieben Jahre ihres Lebens im Bett zu verbringen.<sup>15</sup> Sie starb am 19. März 1206 und wurde *in ihrem Kloster*, in der Kirche der Entschlafung der heiligen Muttergottes, (*von ihr errichtet*), beigesetzt.<sup>16</sup>

Als Grabstätte diente die Kirche bereits im Dezember 1201. Gemäß der *Chronik* wurde in jenem Jahr die Schwester<sup>17</sup> der Stifterin in deren Kloster bestattet.<sup>18</sup> 1205 fand die Tochter der Großfürstin, Elena, hier ihre letzte Ruhe.<sup>19</sup>

Fragt man nun nach der Stiftermotivation der Großfürstin Maria, so liegt die Vermutung sehr nahe, dass in diesem bestimmten Fall der Wunsch, ein Kloster zu stiften vor dem Hintergrund der schweren Krankheit, die die Großfürstin heimgesucht hat, entstanden sein könnte.<sup>20</sup> Es heißt, sie hätte sieben Jahre gelitten, bevor sie im März 1206 verstarb. Dies würde bedeuten, dass sie um das Jahr 1198/99 erkrankte. Die Nachricht in der *Laurentius-Chronik* von der Grundsteinlegung der Steinkirche fällt in das Jahr 1200. Die Jahreszahlen scheinen diesen Gedanken durchaus

phischen und künstlerischen Formen der Herrschaftsverherrlichung im russischen Hochmittelalter, in: Jahrbuch für Geschichte Osteuropas, 1979, S. 1–40.

7 PSRL, I (Laur. 6708), S. 415. ZVERINSKIJ, Material (zit. Anm. 2), Nr. 1317, S. 388–390.

8 Jahreszahlen nach MAKARIJ, Istorija Russkoj Cerkvi, II (zit. Anm. 2), S. 666.

9 PSRL, I (Laur. 6710), S. 417.

10 O blagodarnom trpenii velika knjagini Marii Vsevoloži i o monastyri eja, in: N. N. POKROVSKIJ (Hrsg.), Stepennaja kniga carskogo rodoslovija po drevnejšim spiskam, Stepeni I–X, I, Moskau 2007, S. 456–459.

11 Ebenda, S. 456.

12 Ebenda, S. 456.

13 Ebenda, S. 456.

14 PSRL, I (Laur. 6714), S. 424.

15 POKROVSKIJ, Stepennaja kniga (zit. Anm. 10), S. 456.

16 PSRL, I (Laur. 6714), S. 424–425. POKROVSKIJ, Stepennaja kniga (zit. Anm. 10), S. 458–459.

17 Auch die Schwester der Fürstin soll sich als Klostergründerin hervorgetan haben. 1199, nach dem Tod ihrer Söhne, gründete sie in Novgorod ein der Geburt der Gottesmutter geweihtes Kloster, vgl. J. N. ŠČAPOV, Gosudarstvo i cerkov' v Drevnej Rusi X–XIII vv., Moskau 1989, S. 149.

18 PSRL, I (Laur. 6709), S. 416–417.

19 PSRL, I (Laur. 6713), S. 421.

20 Vgl. EMČENKO, Ženskie monstiri v Rossii, (zit. Anm. 2), S. 248.

zu bekräftigen. Der sehr schlechte Gesundheitszustand der Großfürstin, das Leben angesichts des Todes, mag die Notwendigkeit der Klosterstiftung bereits in den ersten Jahren der Krankheit bedingt haben. Damit war es auch möglich,

dass in dem Kloster, das von Anfang an als Begräbnisstätte gedacht war, zuvor die Schwester (1201) und die Tochter (1205) der Stifterin ihre letzte Ruhe gefunden haben, bevor die Großfürstin Maria selbst 1206 hier begraben wurde.

## II

Die *Chronik* berichtet von der Existenz eines weiteren Klosters, das auf eine Fürstin des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts zurückgeht. Erwähnt wird das Kloster unter dem Jahr 6779. Die Nachricht ist sehr knapp und nicht zu vergleichen mit der ausführlichen Beschreibung, die der Stiftung der Großfürstin Maria zuteil wurde. Im Jahre 1271, am 8. Dezember, zu Mariä Empfängnis, wurde die Fürstin Maria Vasil'kova in der Erlöserkirche, *in ihrem Kloster*, bestattet. Anwesend war ihr Sohn Boris mit Frau und Kindern.<sup>21</sup>

Bei der Fürstin Maria, von der hier die Rede ist, handelte es sich um die Tochter des Fürsten Michail Vsevolodovič von Černigov und Gattin des Fürsten Vasil'ko Konstantinovič von Rostov, eines Enkels der Großfürstin Maria von Vladimir, der erstgenannten Klosterstifterin. Den Ausführungen Voronins zufolge haben sich Maria Michailovna und Vasil'ko Konstantinovič 1227 im Kloster der Großfürstin Maria in Vla-

dimir vermählt.<sup>22</sup> Wie die Großfürstin Maria fand auch diese Stifterin ihre letzte Ruhe in dem von ihr gestifteten Kloster. Während jedoch die Großfürstin noch zu Lebzeiten ihres Mannes (Vsevolod III. starb 1212) die Klostergründung initiierte, scheint das Erlöserkloster errichtet worden zu sein, als deren Stifterin bereits verwitwet war, nachdem ihr Gatte 1238<sup>23</sup> von den Tataren hingerichtet worden war. Zwischen dem Tod des Fürsten und dem seiner Frau liegen dreiunddreißig Jahre. In diesem Zeitraum könnte sie das Kloster gegründet haben.

Der Witwenstatus<sup>24</sup> hat eine Frau in ihrer Stellung gestärkt, insbesondere wenn sie Mutter von minderjährigen Kindern war. In diesem Fall sah die gesetzliche Erbregelung vor, dass sie, vorausgesetzt, dass sie nicht erneut heiratete, nach dem Tode ihres Mannes während der Minderjährigkeit der Kinder das Vermögen verwaltete.<sup>25</sup> Im Falle der Fürstin Maria Vasil'kova werden wir mit genau dieser Situation konfrontiert. Als der Fürst

21 PSRL, I (Suzd. 6779), S. 525.

22 N. N. VORONIN, *Zodčestvo Severo-Vostočnoj Rusi XII–XV vekov*, I, Moskau 1961, S. 443; PSRL, I (Laur. 6735).

23 PSRL, I (Suzd. 6746), S. 520.

24 Vgl. GOEHRKE, *Die Witwe im alten Russland* (zit. Anm. 1), S. 225–243.

25 Vgl. G. BARANOWSKI, *Die Russkaja Pravda – ein mittelalterliches Rechtsdenkmal* (Rechtshistorische Reihe, 321), Frankfurt am Main 2005, daraus Art. 99, S. 640–645: *Wenn im Hause (des Verstorbenen) kleine Kinder sind und sie nicht selbst für sich sorgen können, und verheiratet sich ihre Mutter (erneut), dann gibt man sie demjenigen in die Hand, der ihnen am nächsten steht, sowohl mit dem Vermögen als auch mit dem Haus, bis sie (selbst für sich sorgen) können; und das Hab und Gut übergibt man (dem Vormund) vor Leuten; und was er mit diesem Gut dazugewinnt oder dazubandelt, das (gehört) ihm selbst, aber das ursprüngliche Gut ist ihnen zurückzugeben, jedoch der Gewinn (gehört) ihm selbst, weil er sie ernährt und für sie gesorgt hat; wenn von der celjad' oder vom Vieh Nachkommenschaft da ist, dann ist das alles (durch die Kinder) als Klage-Objekt zu nehmen; was er jedoch eingebüßt hat, das soll er alles den Kindern bezahlen; und auch wenn ein Stiefvater die Kinder mit der Hinterlassenschaft annimmt, dann ist die Regelung die gleiche.* Art. 101, S. 647–650: *VON DER FRAU, WENN SIE VERSPRICHT (ALS WITWE) SITZEN ZU BLEIBEN. Wenn eine Frau verspricht, nach dem Mann sitzen zu bleiben, aber das Vermögen vergeudet und heiratet, so soll sie alles den Kindern bezahlen.*

1238 getötet wurde, blieb sie mit zwei Söhnen alleine, Boris (1231<sup>26</sup>–1277) und Gleb (gest. 1278). Der ältere war folglich zu dem Zeitpunkt sieben Jahre alt. Dem Artikel 102 der *Erweiterten Pravda Russkaja* (zwölftes Jahrhundert) ist weiters zu entnehmen, dass die Stellung der verwitweten Mutter auch nach dem Erreichen des Erwachsenenalters ihrer Kinder stark blieb. Für den Fall, dass die Söhne ihre Mutter vom Hof entfernen wollten, sie selbst aber nicht bereit dazu war, schreibt das Gesetz vor, den Willen der Mutter und nicht den der Söhne zu respektieren.<sup>27</sup> Die

Mutter durfte folglich im Haus ihres verstorbenen Mannes verbleiben.

Vor diesem Hintergrund lässt sich eine Klostergründung nicht zwangsläufig mit der Notwendigkeit verbinden, eine Frau müsse sich auf diese Weise einen Witwensitz erschaffen, da ihr der Verbleib im Hause gesichert war. Im Falle der Fürstin Maria scheint der Gründung des Erlöserklosters, in dessen Mauern sie 1271 bestattet wurde, primär die Sorge um das eigene Seelenheil zugrunde gelegen zu haben. Es diente ihr als Begräbnisstätte.

## III

Dem Bericht der ersten *Novgoroder Chronik* zufolge hat sich am 18. Mai des Jahres 6751 (1243) in Pskov beim heiligen Ioannes im Kloster ein Wunder ereignet. Am Grabe der Fürstin, der Gattin Jaroslav Vladimirovičs, die von ihrem Stiefsohn in Medvež'ja golova (im livländischen Odenpäh<sup>28</sup>) erschlagen wurde, sei zwölf Tage lang aus der Ikone des Erlösers eine wundersame Salbe geflossen.<sup>29</sup> Die *Chronik* nennt weder das Todesjahr der Fürstin, noch ihren Namen. Dass sie das Kloster gestiftet haben könnte, ist den Worten des Chronisten ebenfalls nicht zu entneh-

men. Die Gemahlin von Jaroslav Vladimirovič<sup>30</sup> wird aber im Allgemeinen als Evfrosinija (als Nonne Evpraksija) identifiziert.<sup>31</sup> Mit der Frage der Gründung des Klosters hat sich ausführlich Michael von Taube beschäftigt.<sup>32</sup> Seine Schlussfolgerungen sind vordergründig das Ergebnis einer kritischen Auseinandersetzung mit dem russischen Heiligenlexikon aus dem Jahre 1836. Darin wird der heiligen Evpraksija die Stiftung des Ioannes Klosters in Pskov zugeschrieben. Die Stiftung soll 1243 erfolgt sein. Sie selbst soll am 8. Mai desselben Jahres von ihrem Stiefsohn

26 PSRL, I (Laur. 6739).

27 Vgl. BARANOWSKI, Die *Russkaja Pravda* (zit. Anm. 25), Art. 102, S. 650–654: *Werden jedoch die Kinder sie nicht auf dem Hof (haben) wollen, sie aber unter allen Umständen es wollen und sitzen bleiben wird, dann ist stets (ibr) Wille zu erfüllen, und den Kindern ist (ibr) Wille nicht zu geben; aber was ihr der Mann gegeben hat, mit dem soll sie auch sitzen bleiben, oder sie bleibt gleichfalls sitzen, nachdem sie ihren <Versorgungs-> Teil genommen hat.*

28 Übersetzung des Ortsnamens entnommen aus: G. PICKHAN, *Gospodin Pskov. Entstehung und Entwicklung eines städtischen Herrschaftszentrums in Altrußland* (Forschungen zur europäischen Geschichte, 47), Wiesbaden 1992, S. 109.

29 J. DIETZE (Hrsg.), *Die erste Novgoroder Chronik nach ihrer ältesten Redaktion* (Synodalhandschrift) 1016–1333/1352, München 1971, S. 79; POKROVSKIJ, *Stepennaja kniga* (zit. Anm. 9), S. 515, hier als zweite Gattin des Fürsten Jaroslav bezeichnet.

30 Weitere biografische Angaben s. M. VON TAUBE, *Russische und litauische Fürsten an der Düna zur Zeit der deutschen Eroberung Livlands* (XII. und XIII. Jahrhundert), in: *Jahrbücher für Kultur und Geschichte der Slaven*, 11, 1935, S. 492–495; G. PODSKALSKY, *Christentum und theologische Literatur in der Kiever Rus' (988–1237)*, München 1982, S. 310.

31 Vgl. u. a. PICKHAN, *Gospodin Pskov* (zit. Anm. 28), S. 109; MAKARIJ, *Istorija Russkoj Cerkvi*, III (zit. Anm. 2), S. 129, und ZVERINSKIJ, *Material* (zit. Anm. 2), Nr. 841, bezeichnen sie zudem als Stifterin des Klosters, Gründungsdatum um 1240 bzw. 1243.

32 VON TAUBE, *Russische und litauische Fürsten* (zit. Anm. 30), S. 492–495.



in Odenpäh erschlagen worden sein. Sie liege *in ihrem Kloster* begraben. Von dem Grabwunder würden die Worte auf einem dort stehenden Leuchter zeugen. Das Heiligenlexikon berichtet schließlich von einer oberhalb ihres Grabes hängenden schwarzen Tafel mit der Inschrift: *Grobni-ca pod spudom Blagovernoj Knjagini Schimonachini Evpraksii*.<sup>33</sup> Von Taube identifiziert die Fürstin, deren Grab die *Novgoroder Chronik* nennt, als die zweite oder dritte Frau des Fürsten Jaroslav Vladimirovič von Novgorod (1182–1199). Ihm zufolge starb sie im frühen dreizehnten Jahrhundert. Entsprechend schließt er das Datum 1243 als Gründungsdatum aus. Das Klostergebäude würde außerdem architektonisch ins späte zwölfte oder frühe dreizehnte Jahrhundert gehören.<sup>34</sup>

Eine bemerkenswerte Informationen zur Person der Fürstin liefert Hartmut Rüss: Unglückliche Heiraten waren häufig der Grund dafür, dass vornehme Frauen ins Kloster gingen,

um sich auf diese Weise ihren Männern zu entziehen. Umgekehrt wurde Evpraksija, die Tochter des Polocker Fürsten Rogvolod, von ihrem Mann Jaroslav Vladimirovič verlassen (1214), der sich in Livland eine andere Frau genommen hatte.<sup>35</sup> Geht man nun davon aus, dass die Fürstin Evfrosinija (Evpraksija) an der Gründung des Klosters in irgendeiner Form beteiligt war, und dies zwischen 1214 und 1243 geschehen sollte, so hätten wir in diesem bestimmten Falle eine Frau vor uns, die selbst, obwohl von ihrem Mann verlassen oder vielleicht auch in der Zwischenzeit verwitwet,<sup>36</sup> über entsprechende finanzielle Mittel verfügte, die ihr dieses Vorhaben ermöglichten. Dass die Kirche in die Mitte des zwölften Jahrhunderts datiert wird, hindert diesen Gedanken nicht. Laut der *Novgoroder Chronik* hat im Jahre 1238 eine Frau nach dem Tode ihres Mannes ein Kloster um eine bereits bestehende Kirche gegründet.<sup>37</sup>

#### IV

**I**m Kontext einer Stiftung gilt es schließlich, die heilige Evfrosinija Suzdal'skaja, mit weltlichem Namen Feodulia, zu erwähnen. Die im sechzehnten Jahrhundert verfasste *Vita* der Heiligen ist grundlegend für die Kenntnis ihrer Person. Sie war die ältere Tochter des Fürs-

ten Michail Vsevolodovič von Černigov und ältere Schwester der bereits erwähnten Fürstin von Rostov, Maria Michailovna Vasil'kova. Mit 15 Jahren (1227)<sup>38</sup> sollte sie einen Fürsten von Suzdal' ehelichen. Zur Hochzeit kam es jedoch nicht. Der Verlobte soll ganz unerwartet kurz

33 Slovar' istoričeskij o svjatyh proslavlennyh v rossijskoj cerkvi i o nekotorych podvižnikach blagočestija mestno čtimych, St. Petersburg 1836, S. 99–100.

34 VON TAUBE, Russische und litauische Fürsten (zit. Anm. 30), S. 492–495; H. FAENSEN, Siehe die Stadt, die leuchtet. Altrussische Baukunst 1000–1700. Geschichte, Symbolik, Funktion, Weinheim 1990, S. 169, datiert die Kathedrale Ioannes des Täufers im Ioannes Kloster in Pskov um 1240. Laut A. KOMETSCH, Russische Klöster, München 2001, S. 16, geht das Kloster auf die Mitte des zwölften Jahrhunderts zurück. S. auch ders., Kamennaja letopis' Pskova XII–načala XVI v., Moskau 1993.

35 H. RÜSS, Herren und Diener. Die soziale und politische Mentalität des russischen Adels: 9.–17. Jahrhundert (Beiträge zur Geschichte Osteuropas, 17), Köln 1994, S. 256, darin v. a. Kap. VI.: Die adlige Frau, S. 228–258.

36 Das Todesdatum des Fürsten Jaroslav Vladimirovič von Novgorod ist nicht bekannt. Geburtsdatum bei PODSKALSKY, Christentum und theologische Literatur in der Kiever Rus' (zit. Anm. 30), S. 310, um 1155, hier wird Jaroslav Vladimirovič als Schwager Vsevolods III. bezeichnet (d. h. des Gatten der Großfürstin Maria von Vladimir, deren Schwester in ihrem Kloster 1201 bestattet wurde), vgl. PSRL, I, (Laur. 6709).

37 Vgl. Anm. 4.

38 MAKARIJ, Istorija Russkoj Cerkvi, II (zit. Anm. 2), S. 312. 1227 hat Maria Michailovna, die Schwester der hl. Evfrosinija, den Fürsten Vasil'ko Konstantinovič von Rostov geheiratet, vgl. PSRL, I (Laur. 6735).

davor gestorben sein. So trat Feodulia in das Suzdal' er Kloster der Gewandniederlegung ein, wo sie die ewigen Gelübde ablegte.<sup>39</sup> Die für uns relevante Information betrifft die Aufteilung des Klosters. Nachdem Evfrosinija ins Kloster eingetreten war, wird berichtet, dass die Äbtissin die Frauen nach ihrem Familienstand voneinander trennte. In das Kloster der Gewandniederlegung, in dem Evfrosinija selbst zur Nonne geweiht und später auch bestattet wurde, durften ausschließlich Jungfrauen eintreten, verheiratete und verwitwete Frauen wurden *ins andere Kloster* geschickt. Auf Bitten Evfrosinijas wurde dort die Dreifaltigkeitskirche errichtet. Von da an sollten die Jungfrauen in ihrem Kloster beten, die Verheirateten und Witwen in der für sie errichteten Kirche. Eine Kommunikation zwischen den Jungfrauen und den verheirateten und verwitweten Frauen wurde gänzlich verboten. Die Jungfrauen durften sich ausschließlich mit Jungfrauen unterhalten.<sup>40</sup>

Noch zu Beginn des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts befand sich auf dem Klostergelände die Troickaja cerkov' (Dreifaltigkeitskirche), was alte Fotografien bezeugen.<sup>41</sup> 1934 wurde das zweistöckige sakrale Gebäude gesprengt.<sup>42</sup> Stand diese Kirche, die ins siebzehnte Jahrhundert datiert wird, an dem Ort, an dem die heilige Evfrosinija im Zuge der Aufteilung des Klosters die Errichtung der Kirche für die verheirateten Frauen und Witwen anregte?

Dass im achtzehnten Jahrhundert das Suzdal' er Kloster der Gewandniederlegung eine durchgehende Mauer teilte bzw. dass daran ein weiteres Kloster anschloss, kann man auf einem Bebauungsplan von Suzdal' aus dem Jahr 1788 (Plan general'noj zastrojki Suzdalja, 1788)<sup>43</sup> mit

aller Deutlichkeit sehen. Auf dem südlichen Klostergelände sind zwei Kirchen zu erkennen, auf dem nördlichen, d. h. hinter der Trennungsmauer ist eine weitere Kirche vermerkt. Interessant erweist sich auch die Eingangssituation. Auf dem Plan sind drei Eingänge ins Kloster bzw. in die Klöster erkennbar, einer im Süden und zwei an der Ostmauer. Bemerkenswerterweise gibt es keine direkte Verbindung zwischen dem südlichen und dem nördlichen Klostergelände. Die Trennungsmauer weist keinen Durchgang auf. Um von einem Klostergelände ins andere zu gelangen – vorausgesetzt natürlich, dass dies gewünscht und erlaubt war – müsste man folglich zunächst das eine gänzlich verlassen und die Trennungsmauer umgehen. Wenn man jedoch bedenkt, dass die Errichtung der Dreifaltigkeitskirche auf die räumliche Trennung der Jungfrauen von den verheirateten und verwitweten Frauen abzielte, dann ist die Trennungsmauer als Barriere zu verstehen, um die Kommunikation zwischen den Frauen unterschiedlichen Familienstandes zu hemmen, von der in der *Vita* der Heiligen die Rede ist.

Wie ersichtlich, hängt die Stiftermotivation von der jeweiligen Lebenssituation ab, sie kann unterschiedlicher Natur sein. Sie hat sowohl metaphysische als auch ganz pragmatische Züge. Spiritualität und Repräsentation gehen dabei Hand in Hand. Einerseits möchte man sich des liturgischen Gedenkens gewiss sein, auf das Gebet, das nach dem Tode für einen gesprochen wird, bauen können, zugleich aber haftet an einem so großen Vorhaben wie dem Bau eines Klosters stets ein gewisser Repräsentationszweck. Der Wunsch der *Memoria* mit dem Wissen um

39 *Zitije Evfrosinii Suzdal'skoj*, in: B. M. KLOSS, *Izbrannye trudy*, II: Očerki po istorii russkoj agiografii XIV–XVI vekov, Moskau 2001, S. 374–408.

40 Ebenda, S. 390.

41 Die Fotografien sind zu sehen in: A. AKSENOVA, *Suzdal' XX vek*, Vladimir 2003, S. 98–104.

42 Ebenda, S. 100.

43 Ein Exponat des Museums im Suzdaler Kreml. Den Plan habe ich dort während meiner Reise nach Russland im Winter 2008 gesehen.

den eigenen Bestattungsort ist dabei aber grundlegend. Die Realisation dieses Wunsches setzt jedoch die Verfügbarkeit von materiellen Werten voraus. Es kann nicht jeder auf die gleiche Weise materielle Mittel einsetzen, auch wenn er es noch so sehr möchte, und Klöster gehören zu den großzügigsten Stiftungen. Eine entsprechende finanzielle Lage muss dafür gewährleistet sein. Es überrascht daher nicht, dass insbesondere Angehörige der Fürstenhäuser in der Lage waren, dies zu tun. Auch das turbulente dreizehnte

Jahrhundert hat diesem Wunsch nicht geschadet. Klöster wurden nach wie vor gegründet, auch von hochgestellten Frauen. Bemerkenswerterweise scheint der Familienstand der Frau dabei eine untergeordnete Rolle gespielt zu haben, was für eine gewisse finanzielle Unabhängigkeit einer altrussischen Frau spricht. Der Anspruch auf Dauerhaftigkeit, sowohl im liturgischen als auch im historischen Kontext, wurde somit auch von Frauen erhoben.

DIE STIFTERIN *PAR EXCELLENCE*:  
ZUR DEUTUNG DES STIFTERBILDES IN DER MARIEN-  
KIRCHE VON APOLLONIA, ALBANIEN

GALINA FINGAROVA

Auf der Ostwand der Vorhalle der Marienkirche in Apollonia befindet sich ein außergewöhnliches Stifterbild (Abb. 2, 3): Auf den ersten Blick erkennt man im Zentrum die Darstellung einer weiblichen Stifterin, aber sogleich offenbart sich der erstaunliche Sachverhalt, dass es sich bei dieser um keine gewöhnliche Person handeln kann, sondern hier die Muttergottes selbst mit einem Kirchenmodell repräsentiert ist. Diese Tatsache wirkt verwirrend und provoziert eine Reihe von Fragen, die auch für das Thema „Female Founders“ relevant sind: Wer ist der eigentliche Stifter bzw. die eigentliche Stifterin? Stellt diese Darstellung die fest verwurzelte Meinung in Frage, dass die modelltragende Figur stets die Stifterin oder den Stifter kennzeichnet? Welche Rolle wird der Muttergottes auf diesem Bild zugeschrieben? Kann man sie als Stifterin *par excellence* bezeichnen?

Um diese Fragen zu beantworten, ist es primär notwendig, das Bild näher zu beschreiben und objektiv zu deuten. Dies ist allein deswegen erforderlich, da sich das Fresko in einem äußerst schlechten Erhaltungszustand befindet. So wird diese Beschreibung den Weg zu einer differenzierteren Auffassung weisen, gegenüber der ein-

zigen tief greifenden Behandlung des Bildes von Heide und Helmut Buschhausen aus dem Jahre 1976,<sup>1</sup> welche in späteren Publikationen ohne kritische Hinterfragung übernommen wurde. In einem weiteren Schritt wird eine Deutung der zentralen Szene gegeben, die für das Verständnis des gesamten Stifterbildes grundlegend neue Aspekte liefert.

In Mittelalbanien, in der Nähe der adriatischen Küste, befindet sich das mittelalterliche Kloster, das unter dem Namen der Panagia von Apollonia (gr. Παναγία τῆς Ἀπολλωνίας oder alb. Shën Mëria e Apolonisë) bekannt ist, da es am Rand der im sechsten Jahrhundert verlassenen antiken Stadt Apollonia errichtet wurde. Das Kloster umfasst eine Reihe von Bauten, die aus verschiedenen Zeiten stammen; unter diesen nehmen das Katholikon in der Mitte des Komplexes und die westlich davon gelegene Trapeza mit ihren erhaltenen mittelalterlichen Fresken eine herausragende Stellung ein.<sup>2</sup>

Das der Panagia bzw. der Koimesis der Theotokos geweihte Katholikon (Abb. 1) zeigt den Typus einer komplexen Kreuzkuppelkirche,<sup>3</sup> die im Osten eine im Inneren hufeisenförmige und von

1 H. BUSCHHAUSEN/H. BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia in Albanien. Byzantiner, Normannen und Serben im Kampf um die Via Egnatia, Wien 1976.

2 Plan des Klosters R. GEGA/A. MEKSI, Punimet restauruese në manastirin e Apolonisë, in: Monumentet, 38.2, 1989, S. 5–18, hier Taf. XIV.

3 Der Grundriss des Baus ist so stark verzogen, dass er keinen geraden Winkel zeigt. Erstaunlicherweise haben BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), Fig. 10, einen Grundriss verwendet, der diese Besonderheit nicht wiedergibt. Ich verweise auf den Grundriss von A. MEKSI, Arkitektura dhe datimi i kishës së manastirit të Apolonisë, in: Monumentet, 1, 1971, S. 103–117, Fig. 1; GEGA/MEKSI, Punimet restauruese (zit.



1: Apollonia, Marienkirche von Nordwesten

außen fünfseitige Apsis aufweist. Am Ostende der Nordseite ist ein quadratischer Annexraum angeschlossen, westlich davon und mit seiner Westwand verbunden ist ein weiterer quadratischer Annexraum angebaut, der als Kapelle diente und dem hl. Demetrios geweiht war.<sup>4</sup> Im Westen endet der Bau in einem Narthex und einer Vorhalle, die sich in zwölf Bögen öffnet.

Über die Errichtungszeit des Katholikons existieren keine sicheren Hinweise. Allein eine Grabinschrift auf der Außenseite der Apsis besagt, dass an dieser Stelle ein Mönch namens Theodulos im Jahre 1250 begraben wurde, was als *terminus ante quem* herangezogen werden kann. Der Bau wird darum in die zweite Hälfte des zwölften bis in die erste Hälfte des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts datiert.<sup>5</sup>

Anm. 2), Taf. XIII. Charakteristische Merkmale der Kirche sind ihr Baumaterial, das ausschließlich aus Spolien aus der danebenliegenden antiken Stadt besteht, sowie die Architekturplastik, die die Charakteristika der süditalienischen romanischen Architekturplastik aufweist.

4 Im Inneren befand sich neben der Nordwand eine Grabanlage, GEGA/MEKSI, Punimet restauruse (zit. Anm. 2), S. 13–14, Taf. X. 1.

5 Für BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 16–17, 73–85, gilt eine Datierung in den 1080er Jahren als gesichert, allerdings kann ihre Argumentation, die noch von S. ĆURČIĆ, Review: Die Marienkirche von Apollonia in Albanien. Byzantiner, Normannen und Serben im Kampf um die Via Egnatia by Heide Buschhausen and Helmut Buschhausen, in: Speculum, 54, Nr. 2, Apr., 1979, S. 353–358, hier S. 354, als sehr schwach bezeichnet wird, nicht überzeugen. MEKSI, Arkitektura dhe datimi (zit. Anm. 3), S. 109–110, und ders., Mbi disa probleme të kishës së manastirit të Apollonisë, in: Monumentet, 12, 1976, S. 233–236, hier S. 234, datiert den Bau in die erste Hälfte des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts. G. KOCH, Albanien. Kunst und Kultur im Land der Skipteparen, Köln 1989, S. 228, setzt ihn ins zweite Viertel des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts. ĆURČIĆ, Review, S. 355, und ders., Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent, New Haven/London 2010, S. 428, ist in der Datierung vorsichtiger. Er setzt den Bau in die mittelbyzantinische Zeit, mit Bestimmtheit später als in



2: Apollonia, Marienkirche, Stifterbild auf der Ostwand der Vorhalle

Im Laufe der Jahrhunderte hat das Katholikon gewisse Reparaturen und Veränderungen erfahren. Als späteren Anbau kann man zweifelsohne die Kapelle des hl. Demetrios ansprechen.<sup>6</sup> Die meisten Forscher, die sich mit dem Bau beschäftigt haben, vermuten zudem die spätere Errichtung der Vorhalle, da auf jeder Seite zwischen dieser und dem Narthex eine Vertikalnaht besteht. Auffällig ist allerdings, dass das Baumaterial und die Bautechnik, mit dem die Vorhalle errich-

tet wurde, sehr ähnlich mit jenen des Hauptbaus sind, was den Gedanken nahe legt, dass die Vorhalle zu dem ursprünglichen Baukonzept gehörte.<sup>7</sup> Auch wenn man die Möglichkeit akzeptiert, dass die Vorhalle nachträglich errichtet wurde, hat sie sicher eine ältere ersetzt, weil die westliche Außenwand des Kernbaus Fresken trug, die auf jeden Fall geschützt werden sollten (s. u.).

Der obere Bereich der Vorhalle hat beträchtliche Veränderungen erfahren. Ursprünglich war

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die 1080er Jahren und bringt ihn in Zusammenhang mit Bauten aus der zweiten Hälfte des zwölften Jahrhunderts. Zu dieser Datierung passt die Angabe sehr gut, die die Inschrift auf dem hier behandelnden Fresko liefert (s. u.). Sie besagt, dass Kaiser Manuel ein Chrysbull für die Kirche erlassen hat, was die Vermutung nahe legt, dass zu seiner Zeit der Bau errichtet wurde.

- 6 Für die Datierung der Demetrioskapelle nördlich des Katholikon vor dem Jahre 1292 ist eine Grabinschrift aufschlussreich, die auf der westlichen Außenwand des älteren Nordannex unmittelbar über dem Boden angebracht worden ist. Die Inschrift bezeugt, dass in dem kleinen Raum zwischen dem Naos und der Kapelle im Jahre 1292 eine *sebastokratorissa* mit dem Namen Kale begraben wurde, BUSCHHAUSEN / BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 72, Taf. VIII. 20.
- 7 KOCH, Albanien (zit. Anm. 5), S. 227–228, ist auch der Meinung, dass die Vorhalle trotz der Baufuge nicht unbedingt als späterer Anbau gelten muss. Wie R. OUSTERHOUT, *Master Builders of Byzantium*, Princeton 1999, S. 162–163, gezeigt hat, stehen Vorhallen, die gleichzeitig mit dem Kernbau errichtet wurden, oft mit diesem nicht im Verband. Als Beispiele führt er den Exonarthex der Fatih Camii in Enez und den der Pantepoptes-Kirche in Istanbul an.



3: Apollonia, Marienkirche, Stifterbild auf der Ostwand der Vorhalle

sie mit einer Tonne überwölbt, deren Kämpferlinie auf der Ostwand der Vorhalle deutlich zu sehen ist. Die Tonne wurde später, vermutlich im achtzehnten Jahrhundert, durch ein hölzernes Pultdach ersetzt.<sup>8</sup>

Die Stifterdarstellung, die Gegenstand dieser Untersuchung ist, befindet sich auf der Ostwand der Vorhalle, nördlich des Eingangs zum Narthex (Abb. 2). Der Erhaltungszustand des Freskos ist sehr schlecht: die Farben sind erheblich verblasst, so dass einige Details nicht mehr zu erkennen sind; das Bild zeigt vier große Fehlstellen; der obere,<sup>9</sup> der untere sowie der südliche Abschluss fehlen zudem gänzlich.

Spuren einer älteren Ausmalungsschicht sind im nördlichen Teil erkennbar; sie erstrecken sich nach oben bis zur Kämpferlinie des älteren Tonnengewölbes und reichen nach unten fast bis zum Boden. Diese Spuren verraten, dass das hier zu behandelnde Fresko zu einer zweiten Ausmalungsphase der Ostwand der Vorhalle gehört.

Im heutigen Erhaltungszustand zeigt das Bild sechs stehende Personen,<sup>10</sup> die zu zwei Gruppen zusammengefasst werden (Abb. 3, 4). Beide sind deutlich voneinander differenziert: einerseits durch die Dominanz des blauen Hintergrundes in der Mitte der Komposition, wo sich die beiden Gruppen treffen und andererseits durch ihre

8 Das Pultdach erstreckt sich von außen auch über dem Narthex. Zu dieser Zeit wurde offensichtlich auch der offene Glockenturm darüber errichtet, KOCH, Albanien (zit. Anm. 5), S. 228.

9 BUSCHHAUSEN / BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 145, Fig. 19, Taf. XVIII. 84–85, XXI. 101, nehmen an, dass das Fresko nach oben durch ein gleichzeitig mit den Malereien angelegtes Stuckband begrenzt war. Mir scheint das Stuckband als nachträglich hinzugefügt, vermutlich im neunzehnten Jahrhundert, als die Darstellung einen Rahmen erhielt; das Fresko hat sich weiter nach oben wie nach unten erstreckt.

10 Laut Beschreibungen des Freskos von Alexudes und Aristarches aus dem neunzehnten Jahrhundert bestand das Bild aus acht Personen, in: BUSCHHAUSEN / BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 144, Anm. 5, 6. Im heute leeren Abschnitt zwischen dem Südabschluss des Freskos und der Tür wäre allerdings Platz nur für eine weitere Person.





4: Apollonia, Marienkirche, Stifterbild auf der Ostwand der Vorhalle, Umzeichnung (Sarah Teetor)

Bekleidung, welche die Personen im Norden als Angehörige der kaiserlichen Familie identifiziert, während sie jene im Süden dem sakralen Bereich zuordnet.

Die Nordhälfte des Bildes zeigt drei nimbierende kaiserliche Gestalten. Bei den beiden flankierenden, die die gleiche Größe aufweisen, handelt es sich um ein Kaiserpaar, während die mittlere Gestalt, die etwas kleiner dargestellt ist, ihren Sohn und Thronfolger visualisiert. Die Kaiserin am äußeren Rand des Bildes steht frontal mit einer leichten Wendung zur Mitte hin. Sie trägt ein dunkelviolettpurpurfarbenes Kleid mit sehr

langen und weiten Ärmeln, darüber einen reich verzierten *loros*, dessen Ende von ihrem linken Unterarm hängt und einen ebenfalls perlen- und gemmenbesetzten hohen Halskragen. In der Rechten trägt die Kaiserin ein Szepter.<sup>11</sup> Das Gesicht, dessen Züge nicht mehr zu erkennen sind, hat eine ovale Form.<sup>12</sup> Auf dem Kopf trägt die Kaiserin eine offene zylinderförmige Krone,<sup>13</sup> von der Pendilien herabhängen.<sup>14</sup>

Die jugendliche Herrschergestalt daneben ist ebenfalls leicht zur Mitte hin gewandt. Über der dunkelviolettpurpurfarbenen Tunika trägt er einen reich verzierten *loros*. Die Schulter und

11 Das Szepter ist von BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), Fig. 19, nicht verzeichnet, aber auf dem Bild klar zu erkennen.

12 Das Gesicht ist bei BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), Fig. 19, als etwas länglich wiedergegeben, das Bild zeigt aber eine eher ovale Form; sie haben auch die Gesichtszüge auf der Umzeichnung eingetragen, allerdings muss man wegen des schlechten Erhaltungszustandes diese Wiedergabe in Frage stellen.

13 Die Krone ist nicht so hoch wie bei BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), Fig. 19, wiedergegeben; sie entspricht mehr den Charakteristika, die M. PARANI, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Century)*, Leiden/Boston 2003, S. 29, den mittelbyzantinischen Kaiserinnenkronen zuschreibt.

14 Von den Pendilien ist die Perlenkette auf der linken Seite noch zu sehen. BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), Fig. 19, haben symmetrisch eine Perlenkette auch auf der rechten Seite gezeichnet, die auf der Darstellung nicht erkennbar ist.



der obere Teil der Brust sind von einem breiten gemmen- und perlenbesetzten Kragen bedeckt. Erkennbar sind noch die goldenen Bänder, die die Oberarme der Tunika dekorieren. Wie die Kaiserin hält auch ihr Sohn in der rechten Hand ein Szepter,<sup>15</sup> während um den linken Unterarm die Abschlusschleife des *loros* gewickelt ist. Das Gesicht, dessen Züge sich relativ gut erhalten haben, erscheint jugendlich bartlos. Die geschlossene halbkugelförmige Krone, die das kaiserliche Ornat vollendet, ist reichlich mit Perlen und Gemmen verziert, ein Juwel ist am höchsten Punkt befestigt. Die herabhängenden Pendilien rahmen das Gesicht.

Die Darstellung der kaiserlichen Familie wird durch die etwas größere Gestalt des Kaisers dominiert. Im Unterschied zu den beiden bereits beschriebenen Figuren wendet er sich merklich zur Mitte hin, womit er den Anschein erweckt, seine Familie anzuführen, um auf die rechte Figurengruppe zu treffen. Das Gewand und die

Insignien des Kaisers sind ident mit jenen des Thronfolgers,<sup>16</sup> seine Gesichtszüge, vor allem der Bart sowie seine Größe, heben allerdings den Altersunterschied zwischen den beiden hervor.<sup>17</sup> Mit leicht angewinkeltem linkem Arm reicht der Kaiser der kleinen Figur der gegenüberstehenden Gruppe ein Schriftstück.

Eine enorme Hilfe für die Benennung der Gestalten liefern die Inschriften, die bedauerlicherweise nur fragmentarisch erhalten sind. Die Inschrift oberhalb des jungen Kaisers identifiziert ihn als Andronikos II. Palaiologos.<sup>18</sup> Wenngleich die Inschrift rechts des Nimbus des Hauptkaisers keinen Eigennamen erhält, gilt seine Identifikation als Michael VIII. gesichert.<sup>19</sup> Bei der Kaiserin handelt es sich demnach um die Ehefrau von Michael VIII. und die Mutter von Andronikos II. – Theodora.

Die Gruppe der südlichen Bildhälfte wird von einer weiblichen Gestalt angeführt, die sich wie der Kaiser ihr gegenüber zur Mitte hinwen-

15 BUSCHHAUSEN / BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), Fig. 19, haben das Szepter nicht wiedergegeben.

16 Eine Abweichung könnte das Szepter in seiner rechten Hand bilden, das vermutlich mit einem Kreuz endet, was allerdings nicht klar erkennbar ist. Ein Kreuzzepter haben BUSCHHAUSEN / BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), Fig. 19, gezeichnet.

17 Die Beschreibung des Kaiserkopfes von BUSCHHAUSEN / BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 167, als „sehr greisenhaft“ und „vom Alter gezeichnet“ scheint mir übertrieben. Trotz des schlechten Erhaltungszustandes, der die einzelnen Details bes. die Alterszüge des Gesichts kaum erkennen lässt, ist es noch nachvollziehbar, dass der Bart nicht grau ist.

18 (1) Ἀνδρόνικος ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ πιστὸς  
(2) βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων Κομνηνὸς Δούκας Ἄγγελος  
(3) ὁ Παλαιολόγος  
(1) *Andronikos in Christus, Gott, gläubiger*  
(2) *Kaiser der Romäer, Komnenos, Dukas, Angelos*  
(3) *Palaiologos*

Transkription der Inschrift von E. Trapp, in: BUSCHHAUSEN / BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 146; Übers. J. Koder. Ich bedanke mich bei Prof. Johannes Koder für die Übersetzung der Inschriften und für die diesbezüglichen Diskussionen.

19 Die ältere Literatur hat den Hauptkaiser als Andronikos II. Palaiologos identifiziert, erst Erich Trapp hat ihn als Michael VIII. benannt, BUSCHHAUSEN / BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 149–150.

(1) [Μιχαήλ ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ πιστὸς  
(2) βασιλεὺς] καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥωμαίων]  
(3) νέος Κωνσταντίνος Κομνηνὸς Δούκας Ἄγγελος  
(4) ὁ Παλαιολόγος ὁ ὡς ἄλλη-  
(5) θῶς φιλόχριστος καὶ φι-  
(6) λομόναχος



5: Apollonia, Marienkirche, Stifterbild auf der Ostwand der Vorhalle, Detail

det. Anhand der Ikonographie kann sie unzweideutig als die Muttergottes identifiziert werden. Sie ist mit einem dunkelviolett-purpurnen Maphorion bekleidet, die Haare sind von einer weißen Haube verdeckt. Die Charakteristika des ovalen Gesichts sind nicht mehr erkennbar.<sup>20</sup> Mit der rechten Hand hält sie das Kirchenmodell zur Mitte des Bildes. Die Linke legt sie auf die Schulter einer kleinen männlichen Gestalt, die vor ihr

steht<sup>21</sup> und von einem Faltenbausch des Maphorion umgeben wird (Abb. 3–5). Diese Gestalt unterscheidet sich von den restlichen dargestellten Personen dadurch, dass sie beträchtlich kleiner ist und als einzige keinen Nimbus besitzt. Trotz des äußerst schlechten Erhaltungszustandes kann man noch erkennen, dass der Mann einen Mantel und eine Kapuze trägt. Sehr auffallend sind seine Gesten: die angehobene rechte Hand berührt genau in der Mitte der Komposition<sup>22</sup> die linke Hand des Kaisers, mit der sie zusammen ein Schriftstück hält; seine linke Hand deutet auf diesen Vorgang, wohl um seine Wichtigkeit zu unterstreichen.

Der Muttergottes folgt eine bärtige Gestalt, die sich auch zur Mitte hinwendet und mit ihrer linken Hand in ebendiese Richtung weist. Die verblassten Farben lassen ein breites mantelartiges Gewand erkennen, das mittig am Hals mit einer runden Fibel angeknöpft wird. Von der Fibel an zieht sich nach unten ein hellfarbiger Streifen, der von Heide und Helmut Buschhausen als die Zierborten des Mantelsaums erkannt wurde.<sup>23</sup>

- (1) [Michael in Christus, Gott gläubiger  
(2) Kaiser] und [Selbstherrscher der Romäer]  
(3) der neue Konstantinos, Komnenos, Dukas, Angelos  
(4) Palaiologos, der wahr-  
(5) haft Christus Liebende und Mönche  
(6) Liebende

Transkription der Inschrift von E. Trapp, in: BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 146–147; Übers. J. Koder.

- 20 BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), Fig. 19, haben die Gesichtszüge wiedergegeben, obwohl sie auf S. 171 zugeben, dass der Kopf und die Gestalt sehr stark beschädigt sind: „Einzig das kunstvoll gefaltete Maphorion, das das Gesicht umrahmt, und die erhaltene Kinnpartie mit kleinem Mund und breiten Lippen sprechen für die ehemals präziöse Ausführung.“
- 21 Von BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 155, 170–171, wird diese Gestalt ständig als kniend angesprochen, vermutlich ist diese Meinung von der Beschreibung von Rikakes (ebenda, S. 163, Anm. 77) beeinflusst; allerdings gibt es auf dem erhaltenen Bild keinen Hinweis dafür, dass die Gestalt in kniender Haltung dargestellt war. Natürlich kann diese Möglichkeit angesichts der Tatsache, dass das Bildfeld im unteren Bereich nicht mehr erhalten ist, nicht ausgeschlossen werden.
- 22 Die beiden Hände treffen sich nicht genau in der Mitte, wenn man vom heutigen Erhaltungszustand ausgeht. Sehr wahrscheinlich aber gab es noch eine siebente Figur ganz rechts (s. Anm. 10), was diese wichtige Symbolhandlung in den Mittelpunkt des Bildes stellt.
- 23 BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 171, Fig. 19. Was heutzutage auch nicht mehr nachvollziehbar ist, ist ein schmales Epitrachelion auf den Schultern, das von Heide und Helmut Busch-

Zu beiden Seiten der Muttergottes verläuft eine längere, jedoch lückenhaft erhaltene Inschrift.<sup>24</sup> Trotz des fragmentarischen Erhaltungszustandes liefert sie äußerst wichtige Informationen: So bestätigt Kaiser Michael VIII. das Chrysobull, das sein Vorfahre Kaiser Manuel I. Komnenos für das Kloster ausgestellt hatte, um dessen Privilegien und die Wünsche früherer Stifter abzusichern. Weiters überliefert die Inschrift den Namen des Abtes und Archimandriten Io-

annes, der dank der kaiserlichen Unterstützung für die Ausführung aktueller Renovierungs- und Restaurierungsarbeiten verantwortlich war und vermutlich auch die Ausmalung des Bildes veranlasst hatte.<sup>25</sup>

Heide und Helmut Buschhausen haben in der bärtigen nimbierten Gestalt, die der Muttergottes folgt, den in der Inschrift erwähnten Abt und Archimandrit Ioannes erkannt.<sup>26</sup> Gestützt ausschließlich auf Beschreibungen des Bildes aus

hausen auch überliefert ist, allerdings schreiben sie, dass seine „spezifische Form aber sich nicht mehr erkennen läßt“. Etwas verwirrend ist ihre Aussage, dass die Gestalt „mit hellbraunem Omophorion“ bekleidet ist, womit sie vermutlich das mantelartige Gewand meinen, denn ein „Omophorion“ ist der Schal, der von Bischöfen um die Schulter getragen wird.

- 24 (1) .....  
 (2) .....  
 (3) α ..... ο .....  
 (4) τῶν εἰδῶλων καὶ θεῶν αὐτῶν παραδολ.... (..) ο .....  
 (5) τρήσασα καὶ τὸν παρόντα υ. εἰον πατ..α εἰσ .....  
 (6) αὐτὸν τὸν τοῦτου ἀφηγοῦμενον καὶ ἀρχιμ[αν]δρίτ[ην]....  
 (7) α ἀββᾶν Ἰωάννην ὡς εἰς εὐσεβῆ φιλοχρί[στο.] (..)  
 (8) φιλομονάχου.... [ἀβ]βᾶν ἡμῶν....  
 (9) κων ἀποδιδου..... δε β. σ  
 (10) περιφρουρεῖ.. (.) παρὰ τοῦ ἀβᾶ αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀνέκα[θεν]  
 (11) προβεβασιλευκότων εὐσεβῶν βασιλέω[ν]  
 (12) τῶν ἁγίων κτητόρων τυπικῆν διατύπωσιν καὶ [ἀ]  
 (13) ποκύ[ρ]ωσιν ταύτης τοῦ θείου χρυσοβ[ούλλου]  
 (14) λόγου τοῦ ἀειμν[ήστου] βασιλέως κύρ Μανουήλ τοῦ καὶ ἀ  
 (15) ναδ..... νόμου.. οστας.. μ. ἐξ ὑμετ..  
 (16) ... τοῦ λόγου αὐτῆς εἰς [ἀ]ρέσ[κε]ι[αν]... τούτων... χρυ.  
 (17) δικων βουλο... γουμε..... τῶν τῶν..  
 (18) ... λῶν τῶν χ.. υ. π(.)αυρ. (.) νο (.) καὶ εἰς π...  
 (19).. μα αὐτῆς.. [δ]λων τῶν δικαιο[μάτων]...  
 (6) *den Abt dieses und Archimandriten*  
 (7) *Abt Ioannes... wie zum Christus Liebenden...*  
 (8) *Mönche Liebenden.... unseres Abtes...*  
 (9) ...  
 (10) *die seit jeher von seinem Abt bewahrte*  
 (11) *der zuvor geherrscht habenden frommen Kaiser*  
 (12) *der heiligen Stifter typike diatypsis (Stiftungsurkunde) und deren*  
 (13) *apokyrosis (Bestätigung) durch den göttlichen chrysobullos*  
 (14) *logos (Goldsiegelurkunde) des verewigten Kaisers Herrn Manuel, der auch*  
 (15) *wiedererrichtet hat...*

Transkription der Inschrift von E. Trapp, in: BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 147; Übers. J. Koder.

- 25 Außer Restaurierungsarbeiten an der Kirche selbst dürfte Ioannes meiner Meinung nach die Errichtung der Trapeza mit ihrer Ausmalung veranlasst haben, sowie die Errichtung der Kapelle des hl. Demetrios nördlich des Katholikons, die er vermutlich als seine Grablege vorsah.
- 26 BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 144, 147, 154–155.

dem neunzehnten Jahrhundert identifizieren sie die kleine Gestalt vor der Muttergottes als Michael IX. – den Enkelsohn von Michael VIII. und den Sohn von Andronikos II. mit seiner ersten Gemahlin Anna von Ungarn.<sup>27</sup> Diese Deutung der Gestalten ist von der späteren Literatur kritiklos übernommen worden.<sup>28</sup> Meiner Meinung nach widerspricht die Ikonographie solch einer Interpretation. Es gibt keine Anzeichen dafür, dass die kleine Gestalt vor der Muttergottes kaiserliche Kleidung trägt. Deutlich erkennbar sind der Mantel und die Kapuze, die typisch für Mönche sind. Auf die mönchische Kleidung haben noch Viktoria Puzanova und Dhorka Dharmo aufmerksam gemacht, die die kleine Figur als den in der Inschrift erwähnten Archimandrit und Abt des Klosters Ioannes identifiziert haben.<sup>29</sup> Ähnlich bekleidet erscheint z. B. der vor der Muttergottes kniende Hieromonachos in der Apsis der Panagia Mauriotissa in Kastoria, der für die Restaurierungsarbeiten zwischen 1259 und 1264, also während der Regierungszeit von Michael VIII., verantwortlich war.<sup>30</sup> Die Identifizierung des Mönchs in Apollonia als Stifter der Restaurierungsarbeiten bezeugt auch die Tatsache, dass er, wie für Stifterbilder üblich, bedeutend kleiner als die restlichen Personen ist und ohne Nimbus erscheint. Als Stifter steht er unter dem besonderen Schutz der Muttergottes, was nicht nur durch

das Auflegen ihrer linken Hand auf seine Schulter visualisiert wird, sondern auch durch den Faltenbausch ihres Maphorion, das ihn umhüllt, was bei Heide und Helmut Buschhausen die Assoziation mit einer Schutzmantelmadonna hervorrief.<sup>31</sup> Die bedeutende Stifterrolle des Mönches wird nochmals durch den Übergabegestus in der Mitte der Komposition bestätigt: er empfängt vom Kaiser das Chrysobull mit der Bestätigung der Privilegien für seine Stiftung, was in der Inschrift zu Seiten der Muttergottes explicit festgehalten ist.

Bei der bärtigen Gestalt, die von Heide und Helmut Buschhausen als der Abt und Archimandrit Ioannes angesprochen wurde, handelt es sich um einen Heiligen. Ein Blick auf die Ausmalung der Trapeza, die sich genau gegenüber der Vorhalle befindet und meiner Meinung nach zu gleicher Zeit ausgeführt wurde, bestätigt diese Annahme. Die bärtige Gestalt auf dem Stifterfresko ist durchaus vergleichbar mit den stehenden Heiligen der unteren Zone der Trapeza, die bis auf Gregorios den Theologen und Ioannes von Damaskus auf der Südwand westlich der Apsis (Abb. 6) nicht mehr identifizierbar sind. Keiner dieser Heiligen trägt ein liturgisches Gewand, die meisten präsentieren sich in ihrer Mönchsbekleidung: über dem Unterkleid tragen sie einen mittig zugeknöpften Mantel und eine Haube.<sup>32</sup> Der Mantel des barhäuptigen hl.

27 BUSCHHAUSEN / BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 155–156, 177–178. Diese Identifikation stützt sich auf Beschreibungen von Alexudes und Aristarches, die das Bild im neunzehnten Jahrhundert gesehen haben (s. Anm. 10). Trotz der Tatsache, dass zu dieser Zeit das Bild besser erhalten war, sind diese Beschreibungen mit Vorsicht zu genießen, da sie in vielen Punkten ungenau sind. So schreiben sie, dass alle dargestellte Personen Mitglieder der kaiserlichen Familie sind, da sie kaiserliche Kleidung tragen.

28 So z. B. KOCH, Albanien (zit. Anm. 5), S. 228; S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece, Wien 1992, S. 29–30.

29 V. PUZANOVA/D. DHAMO, Nekotorye pamjatniki monumentalnoj živopisi 13–14 vekov v Albanii, in: Studia Albanica, 1965, Nr. 2, S. 149–163, hier S. 159.

30 KALOPISSI-VERTI, Dedicatory Inscriptions (zit. Anm. 28), S. 29, 97, Fig. 83. Im Unterschied zu der Gestalt in Apollonia trägt der Mönch in Kastoria einen Nimbus, was nach Kalopissi-Verti (S. 97) bedeutet, dass er bereits verstorben war, bevor das Porträt erstellt wurde.

31 BUSCHHAUSEN / BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 171.

32 J. J. YANNIAS, The Palaeologan Refectory Program at Apollonia, in: S. ČURČIĆ/D. MOURIKI (Hrsg.), The Twilight of Byzantium. Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire. Papers from the Colloquium held at Princeton University 8–9 May 1989, Princeton 1991, S. 161–174, hier S. 169.



6: Apollonia, Trapeza, Südwand, hl. Gregor der Theologe und hl. Ioannes von Damaskus

Gregorios des Theologen ist rotfarbig mit einer kostbaren Fibel an der Brust zusammengehalten und sein Saum ist wie bei dem Heiligen des Stifterfreskos mit einer helleren Farbe hervorgehoben. Leider wird sich der Name der heiligen Gestalt, die Maria folgt, nicht bestimmen lassen. Man könnte die Vermutung anstellen, dass es sich um einen Ioannes handelt und dass er als Namenspatron des Stifters seinen Platz auf dem Bild gefunden hat.

Die Datierung des Freskos von Heide und Helmut Buschhausen beruht auf der Identifizierung der kleinen Figur vor der Muttergottes als Michael IX., der 1281 oder 1282 von seinem Großvater Michael VIII. zum Mitkaiser bestimmt wurde.<sup>33</sup> In den historischen Ereignissen finden sie auch eine Bestätigung für diesen Datierungsvorschlag: das Fresko sei nach dem Sieg über Karl von Anjou bei Berat (1281), als Apollonia wieder in den Besitz der Byzantiner

kam, und vor der Sizilianischen Vesper (1282) entstanden.<sup>34</sup>

Die Deutung der kleinen Gestalt als Stifter Ioannes stellt diese Datierung allerdings in Frage. Petar Miljković-Peppek datiert das Fresko in Apollonia zwischen 1272 und 1275,<sup>35</sup> was mir plausibler erscheint. Sein Argument ist das sichtbare Alter des Thronfolgers Andronikos II., dessen Gesichtszüge und bedeutend kleinere Gestalt ihn im Vergleich zu seinen Eltern als Jüngling zeigen. Zwischen 1272 und 1275 war Andronikos in einem Alter von 14 bis 17 Jahren, 1282 somit 24 Jahre alt. In diesem Alter wäre er ein erwachsener Mann gewesen und sicherlich als solcher dargestellt worden. Die historische Situation widerspricht einer solchen Datierung nicht, da diese Region auch vor der Schlacht von Berat dem byzantinischen Reich angegliedert war.<sup>36</sup>

Die Tatsache, dass nicht der Stifter, sondern die Muttergottes das Kirchenmodell in der Hand hält (Abb. 3, 4), macht das Bild in Apollonia einzigartig. In der Mitte der Komposition trifft sie auf den Kaiser, der ihr ebenbürtig erscheint und dessen Nimbus sogar etwas größer ist als ihrer. Die zentrale Szene vermittelt den Eindruck, dass die heilige Muttergottes dem Kaiser das Modell der Kirche überreicht, was der Umkehrung einer herkömmlichen Stifterkomposition gleichkommt.

Die Eigenart der zentralen Szene wurde von Heide und Helmut Buschhausen dadurch erklärt, „daß nicht Michael VIII. die Kirche erbaute, sondern daß er lediglich Privilegien Manuels I. erneuern wollte. Die Kirche also war bereits früher der Theotokos geweiht, und diese trägt als Patronin folgerichtig das Abbild des Baues in der Hand.“<sup>37</sup>

33 BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 157.

34 BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 161–162.

35 P. MILJKOVIĆ-PEPEK, Le portrait de l'empereur byzantin Michael VIII à l'église rupestre de Saint-Érasme près d'Ohrid, in: Cahiers Archéologiques, 45, 1997, S. 169–177, hier S. 171–173.

36 D. NICOL, The Despotate of Epirus 1267–1479, Cambridge u. a. 1984, S. 9–26; P. SOUSTAL, Nikopolis und Kephallenia (Tabula Imperii Byzantini, 3), Wien 1981, S. 64–66.

37 BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 179.

Die Szene ist meiner Meinung nach zu vielschichtig, als dass ihr solch eine simple Erklärung gerecht würde. Es steht außer Frage, dass auf der Ostwand der Vorhalle der Marienkirche in Apollonia kein Repräsentations- sondern ein Stifterbild gemalt wurde, das in Folge von Restaurierungsarbeiten entstand. Wie Liz James in ihrem Artikel dieses Bandes zeigt, waren Umbau- und Renovierungsarbeiten ähnlich wichtig wie Neugründungen, wenn nicht bedeutender, da sie dem Stifter die Möglichkeit boten, sich mit dem ersten *ktetor* zu assoziieren.<sup>38</sup> Michael VIII. hätte die Möglichkeit nicht verstreichen lassen, seine Funktion zu veranschaulichen. Wenn er das Kirchenmodell der Muttergottes überlässt, so muss es meines Erachtens andere, bisher nicht thematisierte Gründe gegeben haben.

Um die Absichten des Auftraggebers bzw. des Künstlers zu erkennen, erweist es sich als äußerst hilfreich, dieselbe Frage zu stellen, die auch Robin Cormack geholfen hat, das Mosaik über der kaiserlichen Tür im Esonarthex der Hagia Sophia in Konstantinopel objektiv zu analysieren: "How would this be understood by the observer?"<sup>39</sup> Was sehen wir bzw. was hat der Byzantiner gesehen: eine Stifterin, die dem Kaiser das Kirchenmodell überreicht! Da der byzantinische Betrachter mit der Ikonographie der Muttergottes vertraut war, hat er in der das Kirchenmodell tragenden Person sofort die Muttergottes erkannt. Er sah also eine vertraute Stifterkomposition, die umgedreht wurde, so dass sie gleichzeitig ganz ungewöhnlich erscheint: anstatt dass der Kaiser der Muttergottes das Kirchenmodell

überreicht, überreicht **sie** es ihm. Dadurch hat das Bild bestimmt die byzantinischen Betrachter irritiert, so wie es manche Wissenschaftler verwirrt hat. So streitet Christopher Walter die Identifizierung der weiblichen Gestalt mit der Muttergottes kategorisch ab, da normalerweise der Stifter das Kirchenmodell trägt. Nach ihm handelt es sich um eine Angehörige der kaiserlichen Familie, die in den Nonnenstand eingetreten sei.<sup>40</sup> Johannes Koder und Erich Trapp nehmen sogar an, dass als Stifterin Kaiserin Theodora fungiert.<sup>41</sup> Rikakes zufolge seien im Zentrum der Kaiser und die Kaiserin (*sic!*) dargestellt, die zusammen eine Ikone der Muttergottes mit dem Kind halten.<sup>42</sup>

Man kann aber mit Bestimmtheit davon ausgehen, dass dem Künstler hier nicht ein Irrtum unterlaufen ist, es war eine klare Absicht.

Die Darstellungen, in denen ein Heiliger das Kirchenmodell trägt, sind zwar selten, aber nicht unbelegt. Sie werden zum Großteil mit dem Apostel Petrus und seiner Rolle als Gründer der Weltkirche in Verbindung gebracht.

Ein aussagekräftiges Beispiel liefert die Himmelfahrts- oder Sveti-Spas-Kirche des Klosters Žiča in der Nähe von Kraljevo, Serbien. Auf der Bogenlaibung über dem westlichen Eingang der Vorhalle sind zu beiden Seiten die zwei Apostelfürsten dargestellt, die jeweils ein repräsentatives Objekt über ihren Köpfen tragen: Petrus – ein Kirchenmodell als Symbol der Weltkirche und Paulus – ein Buch als Symbol der kirchlichen Lehre. Durch die Positionierung der beiden Apostelfürsten und die Symbole in ihren Händen

38 L. JAMES, Making a Name. Reputation and Imperial Founding and Refounding in Constantinople, in diesem Band.

39 R. CORMACK, Patronage and New Programs of Byzantine Iconography, in: The 17th International Byzantine Congress, Major Papers, Dumbarton Oaks/Georgetown University Washington, DC, August 3–8, 1986, New Rochelle, NY 1986, S. 609–638, hier S. 621.

40 CH. WALTER, Review: Heide and Helmut Buschhausen, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia in Albanien, in: Revue des Études Byzantines, 35, 1977, S. 313–314.

41 J. KODER/E. TRAPP, Bericht über eine Reise nach Albanien, in: Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft, 15, 1966, S. 391.

42 E. RIKAKES, S. 20, zit. nach BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marienkirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 163, Anm. 77.



7: Veliko Tarnovo, Petrus- und Pauluskirche, hl. Petrus und Paulus mit Kirchenmodell, verm. sechzehntes Jahrhundert

8: London, British Library, Evangeliar des Zaren Ivan Alexanders, fol. 272v, 1355–56

werden sie als Stützen der Kirche und ihrer Lehre wahrgenommen.<sup>43</sup>

Eine ähnliche Aussage findet sich auf einer Darstellung in der Petrus- und Pauluskirche in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgarien aus dem sechzehnten Jahrhundert (Abb. 7). Sie ist auf der Nordseite des südwestlichen Pilasters, der die Kuppel stützt, angebracht und zeigt die beiden Apostelfürsten mit einem Kirchenmodell, das sie gemeinsam Christus im Himmelssegment darüber überreichen.<sup>44</sup> Da es sich bei dem Kirchenmodell offensichtlich nicht um das Modell der konkreten Kirche in Tarnovo handelt, welche eine Kreuzkuppelkirche ist, muss man annehmen, dass das Modell die Kirche allgemein symbolisiert, die von den beiden Apostelfürsten gestützt wird. Die

modelltragenden Patrone der Kirche in Tarnovo fungieren also in Analogie zu den beiden in Žiča, und zwar als Stütze der Kirche im Allgemeinen. Es ist dennoch anzumerken, dass sie im Unterschied zu dem Fresko in Apollonia keine Protagonisten einer Stifterkomposition sind.

Die Darstellungen eines Heiligen, welcher dem Kaiser ein Geschenk überreicht, sind ebenfalls selten, aber wiederum nicht ohne Parallele. Auf fol. 272v des Evangelienbuche, welches 1355/56 im Auftrag des bulgarischen Zaren Ivan Alexander in Veliko Tarnovo angefertigt wurde und sich heute im British Museum befindet, bekommt der Herrscher das Buch von seinem Namensheiligen Ivan Bogoslov (Ioannes dem Theologen) überreicht (Abb. 8). Wie in Apollonia

43 M. SAVAGE, The Interrelationship of Text, Imagery and Architectural Space in Byzantium. The Example of the Entrance Vestibule of Žiča Monastery (Serbia), in: W. HÖRANDNER/A. RHOBY (Hrsg.), Die kulturhistorische Bedeutung byzantinischer Epigramme. Akten des internationalen Workshop (Wien, 1.–2. Dezember 2006), Wien 2008, S. 101–111, hier S. 105, Abb. 5, 10, 11.

44 P. STEFANOV, The Frescoes of Sts Peter and Paul's Church in Veliko Tarnovo, in: *Palaeobulgarica*, 16, 1992, 1, S. 58–72, hier S. 68, Fig. auf S. 67.





9: Washington, DC, Dumbarton Oaks, *Electrontrachys* aus Thessalonike von Theodoros Komnenos Dukas (1224–1230), *Revers* und Umzeichnung (Konstantin Dočev)

sind die beiden Figuren gleich groß. Während der Zar frontal dargestellt ist und nur seine Hände dem Heiligen entgegenstreckt, schreitet der Evangelist in Dreiviertel-Profil auf ihn zu, das Geschenk in beiden Händen tragend. Wie Cormack vermutet, sollte das Manuskript die Macht des bulgarischen Zaren und seiner Dynastie preisen und seine Gleichstellung zum byzantinischen Kaiser veranschaulichen. Hierzu trägt beträchtlich die Darstellung auf fol. 272v bei, auf welcher der Zar direkt von dem heiligen Autor des Evangeliums beschenkt wird.<sup>45</sup>

Das Thema der Besenkung des Kaisers durch einen Heiligen ist oft auf Münzen anzutreffen. Besonders verbreitet ist es auf Münzprägungen aus Thessalonike, wobei der hl. Demetrios das Stadtmodell dem Kaiser übergibt. Das Thema erscheint zum ersten Mal auf *Electrontrachys* des ersten Kaisers Thessalonikes Theodoros Komnenos Dukas (1224–1230), die anlässlich

seiner Krönung geprägt wurden (Abb. 9). Der Schutzheilige Thessalonikes überreicht dem Kaiser das Stadtmodell in Form einer dreitürmigen Burg. In diesem konkreten Fall wird die Darstellung als Ausdruck der Selbständigkeit und Unabhängigkeit der Komnenoi Dukai gedeutet. Die Darstellung eines Kaisers, der vom hl. Demetrios das Stadtmodell ausgehändigt bekommt oder zusammen mit diesem das Stadtmodell hält, bleibt ein konstantes Thema auf Münzprägungen Thessalonikes bis zur Mitte des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts. Es drückt die Idee des himmlischen Schutzes der Stadt durch ihren Heiligen aus und visualisiert gleichzeitig den Segen, den der Heilige dem Kaiser gewährt, seine Stadt zu regieren und zu beschützen.<sup>46</sup> Somit sind im Bild der himmlische und der irdische Beschützer vereint.

Eine der zentralen Szene in Apollonia am nächsten stehende Parallele und das einzige mir bekannte Beispiel – abgesehen des Bildes

45 R. CORMACK, in: R. CORMACK/M. VASSILAKI (Hrsg.), *Byzantium 330–1453. Exhibition 'Byzantium 330–1453'*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 25 October 2008–22 March 2009, London 2008, Nr. 287.

46 A. CUTLER, *Transfigurations. Studies in the Dynamics of Byzantine Iconography*, University Park/London 1975, S. 112–113; V. PENNA, *Η απεικόνιση του αγ. Δημητρίου σε νομισματικές εκδόσεις της Θεσσαλονίκης: μεσοβυζαντινή και ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο*, in: P. ADAM-VELENI (Hrsg.), *Το νόμισμα στο μακεδονικό χώρο. Πρακτικά Β' επιστημονικής συνάντησης*, in: *Obolos*, 4, 2000, S. 195–210, hier S. 201–202; C. MORRISON, *The Emperor, the Saint and the City: Coinage and Money in Thessalonike from the Thirteenth to the Fifteenth Century*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 57, 2003, S. 173–203, hier S. 179–181.





10: Bleisiegel der *ekdikoi*, elftes Jahrhundert

in Apollonia –, wo die Muttergottes mit einem Kirchenmodell erscheint, sind die Bleisiegel der *ekdikoi* aus dem Zeitraum zwischen dem späten elften und dem vierzehnten Jahrhundert. Auf dem Avers zeigen sie die Muttergottes und den Kaiser Justinian I., die gemeinsam das zwischen ihnen platzierte Modell der Hagia Sophia in Konstantinopel tragen (Abb. 10).<sup>47</sup> Die *ekdikoi* (ἔκδικοι) oder *ekkleisiekdikoi* (ἐκκλησιέκδικοι) waren eine Gruppe von Klerikern, die ein Tribunal (ἐκδικεῖον) bildeten, das nach Verfügung Justinians I. der Hagia Sophia angehörte. In dem Zeitraum, in dem die Bleisiegel mit der Muttergottes und Justinian I. datiert werden, erstreckte sich der Verantwortlichkeitsbereich der *ekdikoi* auf die Verteidigung von Mördern und anderen Straftätern, Beaufsichtigung der Befreiung von Sklaven und Gefangenen, Anweisungen von Konvertiten und Sündern, aber vor allem auf Gewährung des Asylrechts in der Großen Kirche.<sup>48</sup> In Anbetracht ihrer gravierenden juristischen Verantwortungen hatte laut John Cotsonis die Darstellung der Muttergottes und des Kaisers Justinian I. mit dem Modell der Hagia Sophia auf den Bleisie-

geln für ihren Besitzer eine besondere Bedeutung: „Hagia Sophia was the locus of mercy and refuge; Justinian was not only the builder of this temple but regarded also as the patron of the tribunal and founder of the cathedral’s right of asylum. The Virgin, of course, was the most powerful of intercessors who seems especially attentive to the accused and the penitent. Turning to such effective mediators, the *ekdikoi* were certain to make wise and compassionate decisions, and those who fell into their hands surely had every reason to hope for a good outcome.”<sup>49</sup>

Allein das Mosaik über der in den Narthex führenden Tür im südwestlichen Vestibül der Hagia Sophia (Abb. 11) kann als Vergleichsbeispiel zu der einzigartigen Ikonographie der Siegel herangezogen werden. Die Muttergottes mit dem Kind thront in der Mitte der Komposition flankiert von zwei gabenbringenden Kaisern – dem Gründer Konstantinopels Konstantin I. mit dem Modell der Stadt und dem Gründer der Hagia Sophia Justinian I. mit dem Modell der Kirche. Die Darstellung, die als eine Verherrlichung der Muttergottes gedeutet wird, vi-

47 J. COTSONIS, The Virgin and Justinian on Seals of the *Ekklesiekdikoi* of Hagia Sophia, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 56, 2003, S. 41–55, mit älterer Lit.

48 Ebenda, S. 45–47.

49 Ebenda, S. 55.



11: Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, Mosaik im südwestlichen Vestibül, zehntes Jahrhundert

sualisiert ihre Schirmherrschaft über die Stadt, die Kirche und den Kaiser.<sup>50</sup>

In ähnlicher Weise verherrlicht das Bild in Apollonia (Abb. 3, 4) die Muttergottes als die wahre Besitzerin und himmlische Beschützerin der Kirche. Der Gestus der Übergabe des Kirchenmodells an den Kaiser veranschaulicht die Idee, dass er im Auftrag der Muttergottes der rechtmäßige Besitzer und Beschützer der Kirche auf Erden ist. Somit zeigt das Bild die beiden Beschützer der Kirche – die himmlische und den irdischen – als gleichgestellt. Dadurch wird eine

komplexe Darstellung der göttlichen Gunst für den Kaiser erreicht, der die Wiedereroberung der Region als Gottes Geschenk wiedergibt.

In den beiden von Michael VIII. herausgegebenen *Typika* für die Klöster des hl. Michael und des hl. Demetrios sowie im Chrysobull für die Sophienkirche in Konstantinopel bezeichnet sich der Kaiser als vom Gott benutztes Instrument, um Konstantinopel wieder zu erobern und die göttliche Ordnung im Reich wiederherzustellen.<sup>51</sup> Michael lehnt indirekt jede Verantwortung für die Geschehnisse des Jahres 1261 ab, um das ihm freiwillig gewährte Geschenk Gottes strenger zu betonen. Dieselbe Idee drückt auch sein Einzug in Konstantinopel aus, den er nicht als kaiserlichen Triumph vollzieht, sondern als eine Dankagung an Gott. Für seinen Einzug wählte er den Festtag der Koimesis der Theotokos, der Beschützerin Konstantinopels, und durchquerte die Stadt zu Fuß, die Ikone der Muttergottes Hodegetria über seinem Kopf tragend.<sup>52</sup> Die Verbindung des Stifterbildes in Apollonia mit diesen Ereignissen in Konstantinopel drängt sich unmittelbar auf. Die Tatsache, dass die Kirche der Koimesis der Theotokos geweiht war, bekräftigt dies.<sup>53</sup>

- 50 C. MANGO, Die Mosaiken, in: H. KÄHLER, Die Hagia Sophia. Mit einem Beitrag von Cyril Mango über die Mosaiken, Berlin 1967, S. 49–64, hier S. 58–59; R. CORMACK, The Emperor at St. Sophia: Viewer and Viewed, in: A. GUILLOU (ed.), Byzance et les images. Cycle de conférences organisé au musée du Louvre par le Service culturel du 5 octobre au 7 décembre 1992, Paris 1994, S. 223–253, hier S. 237; R. CORMACK, The Mother of God in the Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople, in: M. VASSILAKI (ed.), Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art. Exhibition Benaki Museum, 20 October 2000–20 January 2001, Milano 2000, S. 107–123, hier S. 107.
- 51 G. DENNIS (Übers.), Auxentios: Typikon of Michael VIII Palaiologos for the Monastery of the Archangel Michael on Mount Auxentios near Chalkedon, in: BMFD, III, S. 1215–1236; ders., Kellibara I: Typikon of Michael VIII Palaiologos for the Monastery of St. Demetrios of the Palaiologoi-Kellibara in Constantinople, in: BMFD, III, S. 1241–1253; D. J. GEANAKOPOLOS, The Byzantine Recovery of Constantinople from the Latins in 1261: A Chrysobull of Michael VIII Palaiologos in Favor of Hagia Sophia, in: D. J. GEANAKOPOLOS, Constantinople and the West. Essays on the Late Byzantine (Palaeologan) and Italian Renaissances and the Byzantine and Roman Churches, Madison, WI 1989, S. 173–188, I. Publ. in: F. F. CHURCH/T. GEORGE (Hrsg.), Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History, Leiden 1979, S. 104–117.
- 52 D. J. GEANAKOPOLOS, Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West 1258–1282: A Study in Byzantine-Latin Relations, Cambridge, MA 1959, S. 119–122; R. MACRIDES, The New Constantine and the New Constantinople – 1261?, in: Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 6, 1980, S. 13–41, hier bes. S. 13–14; R. MACRIDES, From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologoi: Imperial Models in Decline and Exile, in: P. MAGDALINO (Hrsg.), New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries. Papers from the Twenty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St Andrews, March 1992, Aldershot 1994, S. 269–282.
- 53 Es existiert außerdem die Überlieferung von Rikakes, S. 20, zit. nach BUSCHHAUSEN/BUSCHHAUSEN, Die Marien-

Im Bild von Apollonia wird dem eigentlich Verantwortlichen der Restaurierungsarbeiten eine untergeordnete Position im Schutz der Muttergottes zugeteilt. Dafür wurde die Rolle der Muttergottes als Besitzerin und Beschützerin der Kirche vor Augen geführt, indem man den Bildtypus einer Stifterin verwendete, der offensichtlich zu dieser Zeit weit verbreitet und geschätzt war. Auf diese Weise bringt das Bild die Idee der heiligen Person als Stifterin sehr stark zum Ausdruck, was mit dem christlichen Glauben in Zusammenhang gebracht werden kann, dass die Erde mit ihren Früchten zwar Gott gehöre, er sie aber der Menschheit zu ihrem Nutzen überlassen habe. Wenn der Mensch etwas Materielles stiftet, gibt er Gott das zurück, was ihm gehört.<sup>54</sup>

Die Byzantiner haben große Bauprojekte den himmlischen Mächten zugeschrieben, als Beispiel hierfür bietet sich die Legende über die Errichtung der Sophienkirche in Konstantinopel an, die berichtet, dass die architektonische Gestalt des Baus durch eine göttliche Vision bekundet wurde und die Finanzierung des Bauprojektes durch vom Himmel gesandtes Geld erfolgte.<sup>55</sup>

Die Idee des Heiligen als Stifter und Erbauer ist im Katholikon des serbischen Klosters Dečani visualisiert, wo der hl. Demetrios eigenhändig einen eingestürzten Turm wiedererrichtete.<sup>56</sup> Diese Beispiele hatten bestimmt einen Vorbildcharakter für den irdischen Stifter, der ein Leben in *imitatio dei* führte. Unter ihnen nimmt die Muttergottes als einzige weibliche Stiftergestalt im männerdominierten himmlischen Reich eine herausragende Position ein. Diese hat sie sich durch das göttliche Geschenk verdient, das sie der Menschheit für die Errettung der Welt gemacht hat – ihren Sohn. Dieses Geschenk gibt ihr die Macht, dem Reich ihren Schutz, dem Kaiser ihre Gunst und der gesamten Menschheit ihre Gnade zu spenden, und erhebt sie zu einer Stifterin *par excellence*.

**Abbildungsnachweis:** Abb. 1, 2, 5, 11: F. Gargova. – Abb. 3, 6, 7: G. Fingarova. – Abb. 4: Umzeichnung S. Teotor. – Abb. 8: nach I. SPATHARAKIS, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, Leiden 1976, Fig. 37. – Abb. 9: nach MORRISON, *The Emperor, the Saint and the City* (zit. Anm. 46), Fig. 7. – Abb. 10: nach COTSONIS, *The Virgin and Justinian* (zit. Anm. 47), Fig. 1.

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kirche von Apollonia (zit. Anm. 1), S. 163, Anm. 163, dass eine Ikone der Muttergottes mit Christuskind auf der Ostwand der Vorhalle dargestellt war. Heide und Helmut Buschhausen (ebenda, S. 169, 180–182) nehmen an, dass eine Hodegetria-Ikone auf dem Kirchenmodell über dem Eingang gemalt war. In der Inschrift wird Michael VIII. als „Neos Konstantinos“ bezeichnet (Anm. 19), was ihn als den zweiten Gründer von Konstantinopel auszeichnet, und dadurch eine weitere Verbindung zu Konstantinopel hergestellt wird; zu der Bezeichnung „Neos Konstantinos“: MACRIDES, *The New Constantine* (zit. Anm. 52); BUSCHHAUSEN / BUSCHHAUSEN, *Die Marienkirche von Apollonia* (zit. Anm. 1), S. 153–154.

54 Wie die Worte von Akropolites zeigen: *for I do not give this <money> to man, I offer it to God Who gave <it to me>*, A. M. TALBOT, *The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 47, 1993, S. 243–261, hier S. 257.

55 E. M. ANTONIADES, *Ἐκφρασις τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας*, I, Athen 1907, S. 33–36; A. BERGER, *Die Hagia Sophia in Geschichte und Legende*, in: V. HOFFMANN (Hrsg.), *Die Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Akten des Berner Kolloquiums vom 21. Oktober 1994*, Bern u. a. 1997, S. 11–28, hier S. 16.

56 A. STOJAKOVIĆ, *Quelques représentations de Salonique dans la peinture Médiévale Serbe*, in: *Χαριστήριον εἰς Ἀναστάσιον Κ. Ὀρλάνδον*, Athen 1966, S. 25–48, hier S. 25, Fig. 2; CUTLER, *Transfigurations* (zit. Anm. 46), S. 128.

## THEODORA RAULAINA ALS STIFTERIN UND PATRONIN

ALEXANDER RIEHLE

Als Theodora Raulaina (ca. 1240–1300)<sup>1</sup> nach ihrer Rückkehr aus dem politischen Exil das Kloster des hl. Andreas ἐν τῇ Κρίσει in Konstantinopel um 1284 neu gründete,<sup>2</sup> um dort künftig ihr Leben als Nonne zu verbringen, gab sie bei dem Gelehrten Maximos Planudes Epigramme in Auftrag, die aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach ein Stifterbild in der neu errichteten Kir-

che begleiten sollten.<sup>3</sup> Die drei literarisch überlieferten metrischen Stücke – eines in elegischen Disticha, zwei in 12-Silbern<sup>4</sup> – bilden reine enkomastische Genealogien, in denen Theodoras Abstammung von den nobelsten Familien der byzantinischen Gesellschaft ausschweifend gepriesen wird: Sie war Tochter von Ioannes Kantakuzenos – δοῦξ des Themas Thrakesion und

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Die Idee für den vorliegenden Beitrag ist einem von Prof. Dr. Michael Grünbart im Sommersemester 2007 an der LMU München abgehaltenen Seminar zur byzantinischen Aristokratie entsprungen, in dessen Rahmen ich ein Referat über „Aristokratie und παιδεία“ hielt. Für eine kritische Durchsicht des Aufsatzes und einige Korrekturen möchte ich mich herzlich bei Dr. Georg Martin bedanken. Dank sei auch dem anonymen Reviewer/der anonymen Reviewerin für dessen/deren Verbesserungsvorschläge ausgesprochen.

- 1 Zu Theodora s. PLP, Nr. 10943; A.-M. TALBOT, Raoulaina, Theodora, in: ODB, III, S. 1772; biographische Essays bieten D. M. NICOL, *The Byzantine Lady. Ten Portraits, 1250–1500*, Cambridge 1994, S. 33–47, und C. REGHELIN, *Un ritratto bizantino: Teodora Raulena*, in: *Porphyra*, 7, 2006, S. 6–20 (letzteres mehrmals fehlerhaft).
- 2 Zur Neugründung des Klosters, in dessen Kirche der Leichnam des Patriarchen Arsenios überführt und bestattet wurde, s. GEORGIOS PACHYMERES, *Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι* VII 31, ed. A. FAILLER, *Georges Pachymères, Relations historiques*, 5 Bde., Paris 1984–2000, III, S. 97,32–99,8; NIKEPHOROS GREGORAS, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ ἱστορία* VI 2,9, ed. L. SCHOPEN, *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina historia*, 3 Bde., Bonn 1829–55, I, S. 167,17–21; dazu R. JANIN, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l’empire byzantin* 1, 3: *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat œcuménique. Les églises et les monastères*, Paris 1969, S. 28–31; W. MÜLLER-WIENER, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls*, Tübingen 1977, S. 172–176; A.-M. TALBOT, *Bluestocking Nuns: Intellectual Life in the Convents of Late Byzantium*, in: C. MANGO/O. PRITSAK (Hrsg.), *Okeanos. Essays Presented to Ihor Ševčenko on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students* (*Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 7), Cambridge, MA 1984, S. 604–618, hier S. 605–606, 611–612, 616, ND: A.-M. TALBOT, *Women and Religious Life in Byzantium*, Aldershot u. a. 2001, Nr. 18; V. KIDONOPOULOS, *Bauten in Konstantinopel 1204–1328. Verfall und Zerstörung, Restaurierung, Umbau und Neubau von Profan- und Sakralbauten*, Wiesbaden 1994, S. 9–10; P. GUNARIDES, *Τὸ κίνημα τῶν Ἀρσενιατῶν (1261–1310). Ἰδεολογικὲς διαμάχες τὴν ἐποχὴ τῶν πρώτων Παλαιολόγων*, Athen 1999, S. 155–156; A.-M. TALBOT, *Building Activity in Constantinople under Andronikos II: The Role of Women Patrons in the Construction and Restoration of Monasteries*, in: N. NECIPOĞLU (Hrsg.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, Leiden u. a. 2001, S. 329–343, hier S. 334–335.
- 3 Ed. S. LAMPROS, *Ἐπιγράμματα Μαξίμου Πλανούδη*, in: *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων*, 13, 1916, S. 414–421, hier S. 415–418.
- 4 Die textlichen Überschneidungen (z. B. LAMPROS, *Ἐπιγράμματα* [zit. Anm. 3], Nr. 2, 9–11 [S. 416] = Nr. 3, 13–15 [S. 417–418]; Nr. 2, 28–35 [S. 417] – Nr. 3, 37–46 [S. 418]) legen die Vermutung nahe, dass es sich zumindest bei den Epigrammen Nr. 2 und 3 um Varianten handelt, die Maximos zur Auswahl vorlegte.

πιγκέρνης unter Ioannes III. Batatzes – und Eirene Palaiologina, einer Schwester des späteren Kaisers Michael VIII., wurde 1256 mit dem πρωτοβεστιάριος Georgios Muzalon<sup>5</sup> und nach dessen Ermordung 1261 mit dem πρωτοβεστιάριος Ioannes Raul Petraliphos<sup>6</sup> verheiratet. Maximos Planudes beruft sich immer wieder auf diesen Stammbaum und die verwandtschaftlichen Verbindungen mit den großen Familien des Reichs: Herkunfts- und Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen wie γενέτης, γόνος, σύγγονος, πορφυρογέννητος, ὄμαιμος, γένος, φύλον und σειρά, die Namen der Familienzweige (Παλαιολόγος, Κομνηνός, Ραούλ, Καντακουζηνός, Ἄγγελος, Δούκας) sowie die besonderen Ämter und Würden, die einzelne Familienmitglieder erlangten (πρωτοβεστιάριος, σεβαστοκράτωρ, δεσπότης), ziehen sich wie ein roter Faden durch die Epigramme.<sup>7</sup> Von diesen nimmt überhaupt nur eines am Rande auf den spirituellen Charakter der Stiftung Bezug, wenn von Andreas die entsprechende Gegenleistung für den Bau der ihm geweihten Kirche eingefordert wird.<sup>8</sup> Ansonsten sind die einleitenden Verse des zweiten von Maximos verfassten Gedichts Programm, in dem der Autor die Stifterin in der ersten Person sprechen lässt:

*Inschriften erklären von Sachen  
und Personen die bildlichen Darstellungen.  
Einer Inschrift gestatte auch ich zu erzählen,*

*wer und woher ich bin und welches Schicksal ich hatte.*

Ἐπιγραφαὶ δηλοῦσι τὰς τῶν πραγμάτων  
καὶ τῶν προσώπων ἐν γραφαῖς παραστάσεις.  
ἐπιγραφή δίδωμι καὶ γὰρ μανθάνειν  
τίς καὶ τίνων πέφυκα καὶ τίνος τύχης.<sup>9</sup>

Vor diesem Hintergrund gewinnt die Motivation für die Klosterstiftung neben dem spirituellen Charakter eine weitere Dimension: Dienten solche Stiftungen vornehmlich der Sicherung des Seelenheils sowie der Schaffung eines Refugiums für sich und die weitere Familie,<sup>10</sup> so waren sie doch **auch** Akte öffentlicher Repräsentation, mit denen die Stifter ihre hervorragende gesellschaftliche Stellung zur Schau stellten, um ihren Status zu festigen und sich und ihren Angehörigen Ruhm und ewiges irdisches Angedenken zu sichern. Dieser Aspekt, der m. E. in der Forschung bislang nicht ausreichend gewürdigt worden ist, soll im Folgenden am Beispiel der Theodora Raulaina beleuchtet werden. Dabei wird sich zeigen, dass Frauen eine genauso große Rolle wie den Männern zukommen konnte und in bestimmten Fällen auch tatsächlich zukam. Ob und inwiefern sich hierbei speziell „weibliche“ Formen der Repräsentation durch Stiftertätigkeit und Patronage herausbildeten, soll im Fazit diskutiert werden.

5 GEORGIOS PACHYMERES, *Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι* I 8 (zit. Anm. 2), I, S. 41,8–11; THEODOROS LASKARIS, ep. 63 (212), ed. N. FESTA, *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae CCXVII*, Florenz 1898, S. 263–264.

6 GEORGIOS PACHYMERES, *Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι* II 13 (zit. Anm. 2), I, S. 153,21–155,5.

7 Ed. LAMPROS, *Ἐπιγράμματα* (zit. Anm. 3), Nr. 1, 7–10 (S. 416); Nr. 2, 5–35 (S. 416–417); Nr. 3, 11–46 (S. 417–418). Auf ganz ähnliche Weise wird Theodoras Stammbaum in den Epigrammen gepriesen, die wir in den von ihr geschriebenen Handschriften finden (zu diesen s. u. Anm. 46).

8 Ed. LAMPROS, *Ἐπιγράμματα* (zit. Anm. 3), Nr. 1, 17–18 (S. 416): *Diese weihte Dir diesen so schönen Tempel, / so erweise auch Du, Andreas, im Gegenzug großzügig Deine Gunst* (Τοίη τῷ τοιῶδε τοιόνδε σοι εἴσατο νηόν, / Ἀνδρέα, καὶ σὺ χάριν πλοῦσιον ἀντιμέτρει).

9 Ebenda Nr. 2, 1–4 (S. 416).

10 A. E. LAIOU, *Observations on the Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, S. 59–102, hier S. 62–64, 74–77; C. GALATARIOU, *Byzantine Ktitorika Typika: A Comparative Study*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 45, 1987, S. 77–138, hier S. 91–101; dies., *Byzantine Women's Monastic Communities: The Evidence of the τυπικά*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 38, 1988, S. 263–290, hier S. 277–284.

## DIE ARISTOKRATIE IN DER FRÜHEN PALAIOLOGENZEIT

Mit dem Einsetzen der politischen und finanziellen Krise des byzantinischen Reichs im letzten Viertel des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts füllte die städtische Aristokratie zunehmend die vom Kaiser hinterlassene Lücke im Bereich der Stiftertätigkeit aus.<sup>11</sup> Diese Aristokratie setzte sich aus jenen traditionsreichen, durch Grundbesitz vermögenden und in den großen Städten des Reichs ansässigen Familien zusammen, die gerade Michael VIII. Palaiologos – nach der anti-aristokratischen Politik Theodoros' II. Laskaris auf komnenische Traditionen zurückgreifend – bei der Vergabe von hohen zivilen und militärischen Ämtern wieder zunehmend berücksichtigte sowie durch eine geschickte Heiratspolitik an die Kaiserfamilie band.<sup>12</sup> Da Ämter und Würden in Byzanz jedoch grundsätzlich nicht erblich waren, die Zugehörigkeit zur Aristokratie als gesellschaftlichem Stand nie juristisch fixiert wurde und daher auf rechtlichem

Weg auch nicht eingefordert werden konnte, war zumindest theoretisch eine gewisse vertikale Mobilität der Gesellschaft gegeben.<sup>13</sup> Daher war es für die Oberschicht von geradezu existentieller Bedeutung, sich zum Erhalt der gesellschaftlichen Akzeptanz mit all ihren Vorzügen der Öffentlichkeit zu präsentieren und ihren exklusiven Status zu demonstrieren.<sup>14</sup> Diese strukturellen Voraussetzungen in Verbindung mit dem bereits angesprochenen, von Michael VIII. eingeleiteten innenpolitischen Kurswechsel hatten zum Ergebnis, dass die aristokratischen Familien sich unter den ersten Palaiologenkaisern zu einer für byzantinische Verhältnisse relativ konsistenten Klasse formierten und ein gewisses Standesbewusstsein entwickelten. Dies trifft in gleichem Maße für männliche wie weibliche Aristokraten zu, was bezeichnenderweise gerade die *Typika* der Frauenklöster bezeugen.<sup>15</sup> Denn die noblen Damen, die sich nach ihrer Verwitwung zu Non-

- 11 I. ŠEVČENKO, Society and Intellectual Life in the Fourteenth Century, in: M. BERZA/E. STANESCU (Hrsg.), Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Études Byzantines, Bucarest, 6–12 Septembre 1971, Bukarest 1974, I, S. 69–92, hier S. 80–83, 92, ND: I. ŠEVČENKO, Society and Intellectual Life in Late Byzantium, London 1981, Nr. I; TALBOT, Building Activity (zit. Anm. 2), S. 329–330; K.-P. MATSCHKE/F. TINNEFELD, Die Gesellschaft im späten Byzanz. Gruppen, Strukturen und Lebensformen, Köln u. a. 2001, S. 29; T. S. MILLER, The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire, Baltimore/London 1997, S. 196; S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, Patronage and Artistic Production in Byzantium during the Palaiologan Period, in: S. T. BROOKS (Hrsg.), Byzantium: Faith and Power (1267–1557). Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture, New Haven/London 2006, S. 76–97, hier S. 77, 79.
- 12 P. CHARANIS, The Aristocracy of Byzantium in the Thirteenth Century, in: P. R. COLEMAN-NORTON (Hrsg.), Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honor of Allan Chester Johnson, Princeton 1951, S. 336–355, hier S. 351–355; G. OSTROGORSKY, Observations on the Aristocracy in Byzantium, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 25, 1971, S. 1–32, hier S. 18–19; A. E. LAIOU, The Byzantine Aristocracy in the Palaeologan Period: A Story of Arrested Development, in: *Viator*, 4, 1973, S. 131–151, hier bes. S. 133–135; D. KYRITSES, The Byzantine Aristocracy in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries, Diss. Cambridge, MA 1997, *passim*; MATSCHKE/TINNEFELD, Gesellschaft (zit. Anm. 11), S. 18–56. Zur Politik der Komnenenkaiser s. etwa A. P. KAZHDAN/S. RONCHEY, L'aristocrazia bizantina dal principio dell'XI alla fine del XII secolo, Palermo 1997, S. 144–152.
- 13 G. WEISS, Joannes Kantakuzenos – Aristokrat, Staatsmann, Kaiser und Mönch – in der Gesellschaftsentwicklung von Byzanz im 14. Jahrhundert, Wiesbaden 1969, S. 54–60, 157; H.-G. BECK, Die Mobilität der byzantinischen Gesellschaft, in: *Orient*, 14, 1978, S. 1–14; MATSCHKE/TINNEFELD, Gesellschaft (zit. Anm. 11), S. 16–17, 28–29, 83–85.
- 14 K.-P. MATSCHKE, Die spätbyzantinische Öffentlichkeit, in: S. TANZ (Hrsg.), Mentalität und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter. Gedenkschrift für Ernst Werner, Frankfurt a. M. u. a. 1993, S. 155–223, hier S. 195–198; MATSCHKE/TINNEFELD, Gesellschaft (zit. Anm. 11), S. 11, 29; vgl. auch WEISS, Joannes Kantakuzenos (zit. Anm. 13), S. 5: „Der Historiker begibt sich also mit der Frage nach dem Adel in Byzanz auf das unsichere, schwer faßbare Gebiet der öffentlichen Meinung. Das Urteil der Gesellschaft bestimmt, ob eine Persönlichkeit oder eine Familie zu dieser Eliteschicht gehört.“
- 15 A. E. LAIOU, The Role of Women in Byzantine Society, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 31.1, 1981, S. 233–260, hier S. 251–252, 259; LAIOU, Observations (zit. Anm. 10), S. 72–75; A.-M. TALBOT, The Byzantine Fa-

nen scheren ließen, legten ihren aristokratischen Stolz und Habitus mit dem Eintritt ins Kloster keineswegs ab. Eirene Chumnaina, Tochter des ἐπὶ τοῦ κανικλείου Nikephoros Chumnos und Witwe des δεσπότης Ioannes Palaiologos, gab beispielsweise nach ihrem Rückzug in das Kloster τοῦ Φιλανθρώπου Σωτήρος Χριστοῦ gegenüber ihrem spirituellen Vater als Grund dafür, dass sie das Kloster nicht verlasse, nicht etwa das monastische Ideal der Suche nach Ruhe und Frieden in der Abgeschiedenheit an. Vielmehr meinte sie, dass ihr als Verwandter des Kaisers bei öffentlichen Auftritten ein großes Gefolge gebühre, das sie jedoch nicht unterhalten könne.<sup>16</sup> Dennoch pflegte sie enge Beziehungen zur Außenwelt und empfing im Kloster regelmäßig ihre Verwandten zu Besuch, wofür sie sich sowohl von Theoleptos von Philadelphiea als auch von ihrem späteren spirituellen Vater, einem anonymen Mönch,<sup>17</sup> wiederholt Ermahnungen einhandelte.<sup>18</sup> Außerdem führte Eirene weiterhin den βασιλίσσα-Titel und den Namen Palaiologina, was ebenfalls von

ihrem Stolz auf die Verbindung zur Kaiserfamilie zeugt.<sup>19</sup> Auch Theodora Raulaina, die gleichfalls nach dem Klostereintritt gemäß dem Rang ihres verstorbenen Mannes πρωτοβεστιαρία oder nur Raulaina genannt wurde und deren geistlicher Name nicht einmal überliefert ist, führte als Nonne alles andere als ein zurückgezogenes Leben. Dies wird sich im Folgenden anhand ihres vielfältigen politischen, gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Engagements zeigen lassen. Zudem ließ Theodora in den Jahren ihres Daseins als Nonne offenbar auch nicht davon ab, ihre weltlichen Familienbande zu stärken: Man kann mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit davon ausgehen, dass die Hochzeit ihrer Tochter Eirene mit dem Kaisersohn Konstantinos (ca. 1290)<sup>20</sup> auf Theodoras Vermittlung zurückging.

Um der Öffentlichkeit dieses neue, kollektive Selbstbewusstsein vor Augen zu führen, wurden auch von den weiblichen Angehörigen der Aristokratie, denen die byzantinische Gesellschaft als Frauen eigentlich keine aktive öffent-

mily and the Monastery, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 44, 1990, S. 119–129, hier S. 124–125, ND: TALBOT, *Women* (zit. Anm. 2), Nr. XIII.

- 16 *Korrespondenz mit einem anonymen Mönch*: ep. 15, ed. A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *A Woman's Quest for Spiritual Guidance: The Correspondence of Princess Irene Eulogia Chumnaina Palaiologina*, Brookline 1986, S. 76,63–72; vgl. auch die Antwort des Mönches: ep. 16, ebenda, S. 80,34–37.
- 17 V. LAURENT, *La direction spirituelle à Byzance. La correspondance d'Irène-Eulogie Choumnaina Paléologine avec son second directeur*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 14, 1956, S. 49–86, hier S. 64–68, schlug eine Identifizierung mit dem Hesychasten Ignatios (PLP, Nr. 8076) vor; s. dazu A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina, Abbess of the Convent of Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, S. 119–147, hier S. 139–140. Auch die Möglichkeit, dass sich hinter dem Mönch Gregorios Akindynos verberge, wurde erwogen; s. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *A Woman's Quest* (zit. Anm. 16), S. 150–152; A. STOLFI, *La biografia di Irene-Eulogia Cumnena Paleologhina (1291–1355): un riesame*, in: *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 20, 1999, S. 1–40, hier S. 21–24.
- 18 NIKEPHOROS CHUMNOS, ep. 163, ed. J. F. BOISSONADE, *Anecdota Nova*, Paris 1844, ND: Hildesheim 1962, S. 181,18–182,1 (dass Nikephoros seine Tochter, wie in der Literatur häufig zu lesen ist, jedes Wochenende besuchte, lässt sich aus diesem Brief aber nicht schließen); THEOLEPTOS VON PHILADELPHIEA, ep. 3, ed. A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *The Life and Letters of Theoleptos of Philadelphia*, Brookline 1994, S. 70,22–25, 78,124–131; vgl. auch ep. 1 (kurz nach Eirenes Scherung zur Nonne), ebenda, S. 34,14–24; EIRENE CHUMNAINA, *Korrespondenz mit einem anonymen Mönch*: ep. 19, ed. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *A Woman's Quest* (zit. Anm. 16), S. 94,1–3; ep. 21, ebenda, S. 98,4–5. Idealerweise sollte die Klostergemeinschaft die weltliche Verwandtschaft ersetzen und daher der Kontakt der Mönche und Nonnen zu ihren Familien abgebrochen werden; s. TALBOT, *The Byzantine Family* (zit. Anm. 15).
- 19 S. etwa das fragmentarisch überlieferte *Typikon* des Klosters: ed. PH. MEYER, *Bruchstücke zweier τυπικά κτητορικά*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 4, 1895, S. 45–58, hier S. 48–49.
- 20 NIKEPHOROS GREGORAS, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ ἱστορία* VI 6,5 (zit. Anm. 2), I, S. 190,5–10.

liche Rolle zugestanden,<sup>21</sup> alle möglichen Medien genutzt. Dass sogar der sakrale Raum den noblen Damen dieser Zeit als Ort der Zurschaustellung von Reichtum und öffentlich inszenierter Abgrenzung vom Volk diente, veranschaulicht ein Brief des Patriarchen Athanasios an Andronikos II., der in die Jahre 1305–09 datiert werden kann. Athanasios schreibt dem Kaiser, dass er sich weigere, den noblen Damen (εὐγενεῖς γυναῖκες) Zutritt zur Hagia Sophia zu gewähren, solange diese ihre Plätze auf den Galerien dazu missbrauchten, sich hochmütig und aufgetakelt in ihren luxuriösen Gewändern, mit Gold und Edelsteinen behängt zu präsentieren und sich (buchstäblich)

über das Volk zu erheben, anstatt sich demütig dem Gebet hinzugeben.<sup>22</sup>

Ein weiterer erfolgversprechender und häufig genutzter Weg, um in der Öffentlichkeit wahrgenommen zu werden und seinen Namen zu verewigen, war es, Bauten erneuern oder errichten zu lassen – insbesondere Kirchen und Klöster, aber auch diesen zugeordnete karitative Einrichtungen<sup>23</sup> sowie öffentliche Bauten, z. B. Befestigungsanlagen.<sup>24</sup> Diese wurden häufig mit Bildprogrammen, zumindest aber mit Stifterepigrammen ausgestattet, die den noblen Auftraggeber commemorierten und feierten.<sup>25</sup> Beispiele für die Regierungszeit Andronikos' II. gibt es zur

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- 21 J. BEAUCAMP, Incapacité féminine et rôle public à Byzance, in: S. LEBECQ/A. DIERKENS/R. LE JAN/J.-M. SANSTERRE (Hrsg.), Femmes et pouvoirs des femmes à Byzance et en Occident (VIe–XIe siècles). Colloque international organisé les 28, 29 et 30 mars 1996 à Bruxelles et Villeneuve d'Ascq, Villeneuve d'Ascq 1999, S. 23–36. Dass die soziale Realität sich in dieser Hinsicht ab dem elften Jahrhundert zumindest für Frauen der Oberschicht ändert, unterstreicht LAIOU, Role of Women (zit. Anm. 15), S. 249–253; A. E. LAIOU, Addendum to the Report on the Role of Women in Byzantine Society, in: Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik, 32.1, 1982, S. 198–204, hier S. 199–202; s. auch L. GARLAND, The Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women: A Further Note on Conventions of Behaviour and Social Reality as Reflected in Eleventh and Twelfth Century Historical Sources, in: Byzantion, 58, 1988, S. 361–393.
- 22 Ep. 45, ed. A.-M. TALBOT, The Correspondence of Athanasius I, Patriarch of Constantinople: Letters to the Emperor Andronicus II, Members of the Imperial Family, and Officials, Washington, DC 1975, S. 94; s. dazu auch den Kommentar ebenda, S. 353–354.
- 23 S. allgemein D. J. CONSTANTELOS, Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare, New Rochelle, NY 1991; ders., Poverty, Society and Philanthropy in the Late Medieval Greek World, New Rochelle, NY 1992; D. CH. STATHAKOPOULOS, Stiftungen von Spitalern in spätbyzantinischer Zeit (1261–1453), in: M. BORGOLTE (Hrsg.), Stiftungen in Christentum, Judentum und Islam vor der Moderne. Auf der Suche nach ihren Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschieden in religiösen Grundlagen, praktischen Zwecken und historischen Transformationen, Berlin 2005, S. 147–157; vgl. die Bemerkungen von MILLER, The Birth (zit. Anm. II), S. 195–196, zu dem von Stefan Uroš II. Milutin in Konstantinopel nach 1291 gegründeten ξενών (zu diesem s. auch KIDONOPOULOS, Bauten [zit. Anm. 2], S. 218–221). Miller unterstreicht „the propaganda value of such a foundation“ und erläutert: „At a time when the legitimate East Roman ruler could restore only some of the capital's hospitals [...] the Serbian king was wealthy enough to endow an impressive facility for the sick in the emperor's very capital and thereby enhance his image as a leader among the Eastern Christians. In the fourteenth century, the Serbian royal house, not the Palaiologoi, were imitating the magnanimity of the great Byzantine dynasties.“
- 24 Als Beispiel sei die vielfältige Stiftertätigkeit von Michael Glabas Tarchaneiotes (ca. 1235–1304) und seiner Frau Maria genannt, die durch Gedichte des Manuel Philes gut dokumentiert ist; s. dazu die in Anm. 26 angeführte Literatur sowie KIDONOPOULOS, Bauten (zit. Anm. 2), S. 225–226. Dass die Stiftung von sakralen und säkularen Bauten von den Zeitgenossen als Bestandteil eines kohärenten Programms verstanden wurde, zeigt z. B. der Bericht des Nikephoros Gregoras über die Stiftertätigkeit Andronikos' II: Hier werden Ausbesserung und Ausbau der Mauern von Konstantinopel in einem Atemzug mit der Restaurierung von Kirchen genannt (NIKEPHOROS GREGORAS, Πρωμαϊκή ἱστορία VII 12,3 [zit. Anm. 2], I, S. 274,22–275,13).
- 25 Zumindes am Rande sei angemerkt, dass Aristokraten natürlich auch kleinere Kunst- und liturgische Gegenstände stifteten (s. etwa KALOPISSI-VERTI, Patronage [zit. Anm. II], S. 82–83, 85). Von Theodora Raulaina wissen wir aus einem Brief des Gregorios Kyprios, dass sie eine Heizpfanne (τήγανον) für ein Taufbecken finanzierte: ep. 22, ed. S. KOTZABASSI, Scholarly Friendship in the Thirteenth Century: Patriarch Gregorios II Kyprios and Theodora Raoulai-



Genüge – man denke etwa an das von Michael Glabas Tarchaneiotos und seiner Frau Maria renovierte und erweiterte Pammakaristos-Kloster, für das u. a. Darstellungen der militärischen Leistungen Michaels sowie bei Manuel Philes Epigramme in Auftrag gegeben wurden.<sup>26</sup> Stifterinschriften und Bildprogramme wurden hier wie auch sonst in dieser Zeit gut sichtbar – etwa über dem Haupteingang im Narthex, in der zentralen Apsis oder an der Außenfassade<sup>27</sup> – positioniert, sodass sie keinem Besucher entgingen. Auch die gestifteten Bauten an sich wurden bewusst an exponierten, zugänglichen und von der Bevölkerung frequentierten Orten in der Stadt errichtet – dies lässt sich zumindest für Stiftungen des Komnenenclans aus dem Bericht des Niketas Choniates folgern:

*Manuel [I. Komnenos] wurde außerdem nicht müde, seinen Vater [Ioannes II. Komnenos] und Großvater [Alexios I. Komnenos] und alle seine übrigen Verwandten zu rügen, die Klöster gebaut und diesen viele Hektar fruchtbares Land und grüne Wiesen zugeteilt hatten. Er klagte diese Leute aber nicht an und überschüttete sie nicht deshalb mit Schmähungen, weil sie einen Teil ihres Vermögens Gott hingegeben, sondern weil sie ein gutes Werk nicht gut vollbracht hätten. Denn Mönchen müsse man Hütten an entlegenen Orten, an einsamen Plätzen, in Höhlen und auf Berggipfeln zuweisen. [...] Jene aber hätten dem*

*Beifall der Menschen nachgejagt, sie hätten ihre getünchten Gräber den Kirchenbesuchern zum Begaffen hingestellt und liebten es noch als Tote, sich mit der Krone auf dem Haupt und mit glänzendem und strahlendem Antlitz zu präsentieren. Deshalb hätten sie auf dem Marktplatz und an den Straßenkreuzungen Klöster gebaut und in diese wahllos Leute hineingesteckt, die sich nicht durch Tugend, sondern allein durch das geschorene Haar, das Gewand und den langen Bart als Mönche auswiesen.*

Οὐ μὴν δὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ πάππῳ καὶ τοῖς καθ' αἶμα προσήκουσι λοιποῖς ἅπασιν, ὅποσοι μονὰς δειμάμενοι ὅλα πλῆθρα γῆς καρποφόρα καὶ λειμῶνας χλοεροῦς αὐταῖς προσεκλήρωσαν, ἐπεγκαλῶν οὐκ ἐπαύετο, οὐ κατὰ τοῦτο μεμψιμοιρῶν ἢ μυκτῆρα καταχέων πλατῶν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὅτι τῆς οὐσίας θεῶ τι ἀπένειμαν, ἀλλ' ὅτι μὴ καλῶς τὸ καλὸν εἰργάσαντο. δέον γὰρ ἐν τόποις δυσσερυνήτοις καὶ χωρίοις πανερήμοις καὶ σπηλαίων ὁπαῖς καὶ ὀρῶν περιωπαῖς τοῖς μονάζουσιν ἀποτάξαι τὸ σκῆνωμα [...], οἱ δὲ τὸν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων θηρώμενοι ἔπαινον καὶ τοὺς κεκονιαμένους ἑαυτῶν τάφους εἰς θέαν τοῖς εἰσιοῦσι τοὺς νεῶς προτιθέντες καὶ νεκροὶ ἐρώντες στεφανούμενοι δεῖκνυσθαι καὶ στιλπνοὶ καὶ φαιδροὶ τὰ πρόσωπα ἐπ' ἀγορᾶς τε καὶ τριόδων τὰ θεῖα ὠκοδόμησαν φροντιστήρια, ἐνλακκεύσαντες ἐν τούτοις καὶ ἐνσηκάσαντες οὐκ ἐπιλέγδην τὸ ἀρεταῖνον, τὸ δὲ μέχρι τριχῶν ἀποβολῆς καὶ τῆς

na, in: Parekbolai, I, 2011, S. 115–170, hier S. 161,5–162,10; s. A. E. LAIOU, The Correspondence of Gregorios Kyprios as a Source for the History of Social and Political Behaviour in Byzantium or, on Government by Rhetoric, in: W. SEIBT (Hrsg.), Geschichte und Kultur der Palaiologenzeit. Referate des Internationalen Symposions zu Ehren von Herbert Hunger (Wien, 30. November bis 3. Dezember 1994), Wien 1996, S. 91–108, hier S. 97.

26 H. BELTING/C. MANGO/D. MOURIKI, The Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) in Istanbul, Washington, DC 1978, S. 11–22; A.-M. TALBOT, Epigrams in Context: Metrical Inscriptions on Art and Architecture of the Palaiologan Era, in: Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 53, 1999, S. 75–90, hier S. 77–79; KALOPISSI-VERTI, Patronage (zit. Anm. 11), S. 79. In den einleitenden Versen des Epigramms, das den Bilderzyklus zu den militärischen Leistungen Michaels begleitete, erläutert Manuel Philes die Funktion von Bild und Wort (ed. E. MILLER, Manuēlis Philae Carmina, 2 Bde., Paris 1855/57, II, S. 240–241, 1–4): *Was dem Geiste entspringt, muss der Gelehrte beschreiben, /Taten hingegen der Künstler nachformen; /doch geht aus beidem gleicher Nutzen hervor: /das das Gute nicht mit der Zeit verschwinde* (Α νοῦς κατορθοὶ ζωγραφεῖν τῶν ἐν λόγοις, /πράξεις δὲ χειρὸς ἐκτυποῦν τῶν ζωγράφων, /ἴσον δὲ τὸ χρήσιμον ἐξ ἑκατέρων, /ὡς ἂν τὰ καλὰ μὴ παρέλθοι τῷ χρόνῳ).

27 S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece, Wien 1992, S. 24, 27.

τῶν ἐσθημάτων μεταβολῆς καὶ τοῦ ἀφειμένου πώγωνος χαρακτηρίζον τὸν μοναστήν.<sup>28</sup>

Eine ähnlich kritische Einstellung gegenüber der offenbar weit verbreiteten Praxis, religiösen Einrichtungen im Rahmen eines repräsentativen Programms zu stiften, wird auch Andronikos II. von Nikephoros Gregoras attestiert: Der Kaiser habe es bevorzugt, bereits bestehende heilige Häuser zu renovieren, anstatt diese, wie andere Kaiser es getan hätten, verfallen zu lassen und seinen Ehrgeiz (φιλοτιμία) ganz auf die Errichtung neuer Bauten zu richten, die sein eigenes Andenken (μνήμη) sicherten, während das der anderen mit dem Verfall der von ihnen gestifteten Häuser vergehe.<sup>29</sup>

Diese Tendenz hin zur Stiftertätigkeit aus Gründen der Repräsentation ist wie bei den Kaisern und ihren nächsten Angehörigen auch bei der Aristokratie zu beobachten, insbesondere in der frühen Palaiologenzeit, in der die noblen Familien ihre Blütezeit erfuhren, in vielen Bereichen mit dem Kaiserhof wetteiferten und kaiserliche Verhaltensweisen assimilierten. Dies manifestiert sich etwa in dem als Ethopoiie verfassten *Διάλογος πλουσίων καὶ πενήτων* des Alexios Makrembolites von 1343, der insbesondere mit dem Bericht des Niketas Choniates über die kaiserlichen Klosterstiftungen und Grabmale einige Parallelen aufweist. Die Reichen rechtfertigen darin ihren Geiz gegenüber den Armen mit dem Argument, dass sie ihr Vermögen aufbewahren müssten, damit ihnen sowohl zu Lebzeiten als auch nach dem Tod Ehre zuteil werde:

*Wenn unsere Verwandten nicht den Klang des Goldes bei uns wahrnehmen, würden sie sich niemals einfinden, um uns zu besuchen und für uns zu sorgen – weder Freund, noch Nachbar,*

*noch Bruder, noch irgendjemand anders. Und nach unserem Tod wird man uns ein gebührendes Begräbnis verwehren; es wird keinen Kampf der verschiedenen Kirchen um den Ort unserer Bestattung geben, noch werden uns strahlende und schöne Gräber aufnehmen, noch Psalmen und Lieder, noch Enkomia von Rednern vor diesen erklingen; keine Lichtermenge und Versammlung von Würdenträgern wird zu unserem Leichenzug ausziehen; keine Schreie, Tränen und Schläge auf die Brust wird es geben, keine Frauen, die solche Handlungen hervorrufen und die Klagen einleiten, und auch keine Ehre, die einem durch all dies zuteil wird. Vielmehr werden wir gleich einem Verfluchten für lange Zeit unberührt daliegen und alle werden ihre Augen von uns abwenden und, sobald man unser Haus benötigt oder den Gestank nicht mehr erträgt, wird man unsere Überreste schmählich mit dem Staub der Erde vermischen. Aber damit wir nicht all das verlieren und nicht auch wir ein Leben und Begräbnis erhalten, das Euch [die Armen] die Erfahrung gelehrt hat, ist es nur allzu verständlich, dass wir das Gold begehren und es selbst dem Seelenheil vorziehen und uns immerzu um dessen Erwerb und Bewahrung bemühen und bereit sind, alles dafür zu erleiden.*

εἰ μὴ ψόφον τοῦ χρυσοῦ οἱ κατὰ γένος προσήκοντες ἐν ἡμῖν αἰσθωνται, πρὸς ἡμετέραν ἐπίσκεψιν καὶ θεραπείαν οὐκ ἂν ποτε παραγένωνται, οὐ φίλος, οὐ γείτων, οὐκ ἀδελφός, οὐκ ἄλλος τῶν ἀπάντων οὐδεὶς, οὐδὲ τῆς προσηκούσης ὅσας ἡμᾶς μετὰ θάνατον ἀξιώσουσιν, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐκκλησιῶν διαφόρων πόλεμος ἔσεται ὑπὲρ τῆς ἡμετέρας ταφῆς, οὐ τάφοι περιφανεῖς καὶ ὠραῖοι ἡμᾶς ὑποδέξονται, οὐ ψαλμοὶ πρὸ αὐτῶν καὶ τερετίσματα, οὐ ῥητόρων ἐγκώμια, οὐ φώτων πληθὺς καὶ ἀρχόντων σύλλογος ἐκδραμεῖται ἐπὶ τῇ ἡμῶν ἐκφορᾷ, οὐ κραυγαὶ προσηκόντων καὶ δάκρυα καὶ στερνοτυπία, οὐ τὰ τοιαῦτα προκαλούμενα

28 NIKETAS CHONIATES, *Χρονικὴ διήγησις*, ed. J.-L. VAN DIETEN, *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, Berlin/New York 1975, I, S. 207,92–208,12. Übersetzung nach F. GRABLER, *Die Krone der Komnenen. Die Regierungszeit der Kaiser Joannes und Manuel Komnenos (1118–1180)* aus dem Geschichtswerk des Niketas Choniates, Graz/Wien/Köln 1958, S. 257–258. Ich danke Prof. Dr. Michael Grünbart für den Hinweis auf diese Stelle.

29 NIKEPHOROS GREGORAS, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ ἱστορία* VII 12,2 (zit. Anm. 2), I, S. 273,4–274,22. Die Kenntnis dieser Passage verdanke ich dem anonymen Reviewer/der anonymen Reviewerin.

γυναῖκες καὶ τῶν θρήνων ἐξάρχουσαι, οὐδὲ ἢ διὰ πάντων τούτων τιμῆ, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τι ἄγος ἐπὶ πολὺ κεισόμεθα ἅπατοι, καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς πάντες ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἀποστρέψουσι, καὶ μόλις ὀψέ ποτε τὸν χοῦν ἡμῶν οἱ τῆς οἰκίας δεόμενοι ἢ τῆς δυσωδίας μὴ ἀνεχόμενοι τῷ χοῖ ἀτίμως συγκαταμίξουσιν. ἀλλ' ἵνα μὴ τούτων πάντων ἐκπέσωμεν καὶ τοιαύτης ζωῆς καὶ ἡμεῖς τύχοιμεν καὶ ταφῆς, ἣν καὶ ὑμῖν ἢ πείρα ἐδίδαξεν, ὁ χρυσός ἐστιν εἰκότως ἡμῖν ἐπέραστος καὶ ψυχῶν αὐτῶν προτιμότερος καὶ ἢ τούτου κτήσις καὶ φυλακὴ πανταχοῦ περισπούδαστος, καὶ πάντα παθεῖν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ ἀνεχόμεθα.<sup>30</sup>

Auch wenn der mit den Armen sympathisierende Verfasser des Dialogs die Aussage der Aristokraten, sie stellten ihren das irdische Fortleben sichernden Reichtum über das Seelenheil, etwas pointiert formuliert, lassen sich die geschilderten Verhaltensweisen der Aristokratie der frühen Palaiologenzeit durchaus anhand weiterer Zeugnisse belegen. Das Streben nach Ansehen und ewigem Nachleben auf Erden ist demnach einer der wesentlichen Beweggründe für aristokratische Stiftungen der Zeit.<sup>31</sup>

Bei den Stiftertätigkeiten der noblen Familien kommt den Frauen eine gewichtige Rolle zu: Den Ausführungen Alice-Mary Talbots zufolge hatten 13 von 32 unter Andronikos II. erbauten und wiedererrichteten Kirchen und Klöstern **Stifterinnen**.<sup>32</sup> Auffällig ist neben der starken Präsenz von Frauen aber auch, dass Stifter zumeist ebenfalls als Mäzene im Bereich des literarischen Lebens auftraten, indem sie etwa Gelehrte mit dem Verfassen von Gedichten oder der Abschrift von Codices beauftragten, oder sich als Gastgeber sog. *θέατρα*<sup>33</sup> engagierten, in denen Literaten ihre Schöpfungen vortrugen und sich austauschten. Ein Mächtiger (*δυνατός*) konnte auch einem literarisch Gebildeten, der seine Gunst genoss, zu einer Laufbahn in der zivilen oder kirchlichen Hierarchie verhelfen. So scheint, um nur ein Beispiel zu nennen, Nikephoros Chumnos, der selbst aus einer wenig prominenten Beamtenfamilie stammte<sup>34</sup> und offenbar aufgrund seiner Bildung den Aufstieg in die höchsten Ämter und die nobelsten gesellschaftlichen Kreise schaffte, Gelehrte gefördert zu haben, die auf der sozialen Leiter weiter unten standen. Dies geht u. a. aus

30 Ed. I. ŠEVČENKO, Alexios Makrembolites and his „Dialogue between the Rich and the Poor”, in: Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta, 6, 1960, S. 187–228, hier 214,25–215,5, ND: ŠEVČENKO, Society and Intellectual Life in Late Byzantium (zit. Anm. II), Nr. VII.

31 I. ŠEVČENKO, Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and the Intellectual Trends of His Time, in: P.A. UNDERWOOD (Hrsg.), The Kariye Djami, IV: Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background, Princeton 1975, S. 18–91, hier S. 54–55 mit Anm. 253–256. Aus den bisherigen Ausführungen dürfte ersichtlich geworden sein, dass der von Ševčenko konstatierte profane Hintergrund der Stiftung des Chora-Klosters weniger dem egozentrischen Charakter des Theodoros Metochites (s. ebenda, S. 54) als vielmehr der zeitgenössischen aristokratischen Mentalität geschuldet ist.

32 TALBOT, Building Activity (zit. Anm. 2), S. 332. Zur Stiftertätigkeit von Frauen in der Palaiologenzeit s. ebenda, *passim*; TALBOT, Bluestocking Nuns (zit. Anm. 2); KALOPISSI-VERTI, Patronage (zit. Anm. II), S. 78–79; S.T. BROOKS, Poetry and Female Patronage in Late Byzantine Tomb Decoration: Two Epigrams by Manuel Philes, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 60, 2007, S. 223–248.

33 Zu diesen s. M. MULLETT, Aristocracy and Patronage in the Literary Circles of Comnenian Constantinople, in: M. ANGOLD (Hrsg.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries*, Oxford 1984, S. 174–180; I.P. MEDVEDEV, The So-called *Θέατρα* as a Form of Communication of the Byzantine Intellectuals in the 14th and 15th Centuries, in: N.G. MOSCHONAS (Hrsg.), *Ἡ ἐπικοινωνία στὸ Βυζάντιο. Πρακτικὰ τοῦ Β' Διεθνoῦς Συμποσίου*, 4–6 Οκτωβρίου 1990, Athen 1993, S. 227–235; N. GAUL, Thomas Magistros und die spätbyzantinische Sophistik. Studien zum Humanismus urbaner Eliten in der frühen Palaiologenzeit, Wiesbaden 2011, S. 17–53.

34 J. VERPEAUX, Notes prosopographiques sur la famille Choumnos, in: *Byzantinoslavica*, 20, 1959, S. 252–266; ders., Nicéphore Choumnos. Homme d'État et humaniste byzantin (ca. 1250/1255–1327), Paris 1959, S. 27–29. Dem Bericht des GEORGIOS PACHYMERES, *Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι* X 7 (zit. Anm. 2), IV, S. 319,20–22, zufolge sträubte

einem Brief seiner Tochter Eirene an ihren spirituellen Vater hervor: Sie hatte von ihm ein Werk erhalten, über dessen rhetorische Gestaltung (τὸ ῥητορικὸν πυρὸς μένος πνέον)<sup>35</sup> sie ihre Bewunderung ausdrückte,<sup>36</sup> um hinzuzufügen:

*Ich bin geneigt, die öffentliche Meinung anzuklagen, da sie etwas so Schönes ignoriert. Wären jene [der Kaiser und Eirenes Vater] noch zugegen, hätten sie, von Ehrliche bewegt, auch wenn Du den Ruhm flinken Fußes fliehst, mit den noch flinkerer Füßen der Ehrung Dich verfolgt und eingeholt, so wie sie es gewohnt waren zu tun.*

μικροῦ καὶ τὴν φήμην καταμέμφομαι ὡς ἀμβλυτέραν πρὸς τοσοῦτον καλόν. εἰ γὰρ παρήσαν ἐκεῖνοι, εἰ καὶ ὄξυτάτω ποδὶ φεύγεις σὺ τὴν δόξαν, ὄξυτέροις ἂν ἐκεῖνοι τοῖς ποσὶ τῆς τιμῆς, ὑπὸ φιλοτιμίας κινούμενοι, κατεδίωξαν ἂν καὶ κατέλαβον κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῖς κρατοῦσαν συνήθειαν.<sup>37</sup>

Der Gelehrte Theodoros Hyrtakenos bestätigt diese Äußerung wiederholt in seinen Schriften:

In seiner Monodie auf Nikephoros lobt er den Verstorbenen dafür, dass er Intellektuelle (οἱ κατ' ἐκεῖνον σοφοί) dem Kaiser bekannt gemacht habe (τῷ διὰ θεοῦ βασιλεύοντι προσωκείωσε) und ihnen zum Wohltäter (εὐεργέτης) wurde;<sup>38</sup> und in einem Brief an Theodoros Metochites bittet der Autor den Adressaten um finanzielle Unterstützung, indem er auf dessen Vorgänger (im Amt des μεσάζων) Theodoros Muzalon und Nikephoros Chumnos hinweist, die sich beide für die Literatur und Literaten eingesetzt und sowohl durch eigene Mittel als auch durch Zuwendungen aus der kaiserlichen Kasse gefördert hätten (πολλὴν περὶ τὸν Ερμῆν καὶ τοὺς Ερμού θεράποντας ἐπεδείκνυντο πρόνοιαν, οἰκοθέν τε, καὶ τῶν βασιλικῶν πρυτανείων ἀποσιτίζοντες... βασιλικῶν σιτηρεσίῶν ἠξίωσαν), wodurch sie den Geförderten Wohlstand (εὐδαιμονίαν) und sich selbst hohes Ansehen (εὐκλειαν) bescherten.<sup>39</sup>

#### THEODORA RAULAINA

Das das geschilderte, sich u. a. in Stiftertätigkeit und Patronage manifestierende, ständige Auftreten und Agieren in der Öffentlichkeit wesentlicher Bestandteil des aristokratischen Selbstverständnisses und Selbstbewusstseins war, lässt sich an Theodora Raulaina verdeutlichen.

Wenn man den überlieferten Quellen Glauben schenkt, war Theodora eine Frau, die man heute wohl als „tough“ bezeichnen würde: Als ihr Mann Georgios Muzalon von Soldaten unter der Führung ihres Onkels Michael Palaiologos im September 1258 während eines Gedenkgot-

sich Kaiserin Eirene (Yolanda von Montferrat) gegen die Verheiratung von Nikephoros' Tochter Eirene mit ihrem Sohn, dem δεσπότης Ioannes, da sie die Verbindung für alles andere als würdig hielt (οὐδ' ἴκταρ ἄξιον κρίνουσα τὸ συνάλλαγμα).

35 Eine Reminiszenz an Gregorios' von Nazianzos berühmte Grabrede auf Basileios den Großen: or. 43,23, ed. J. BERNARDI, Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 42–43, Paris 1992, S. 174,15.

36 Ep. 5, ed. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, A Woman's Quest (zit. Anm. 16), S. 34,3–8.

37 Ebenda, S. 36,47–52; vgl. auch die Antwort des Geistlichen: ep. 6, ebenda, S. 38,21–25. Allgemein zum Zusammenhang von Bildung, Amt und gesellschaftlichem Rang in der frühen Palaiologenzeit s. ŠEVČENKO, Society and Intellectual Life (zit. Anm. 11), *passim*; ders., Theodore Metochites (zit. Anm. 31), S. 20–21; MATSCHKE/TINNEFELD, Gesellschaft (zit. Anm. 11), S. 234–238; GAUL, Thomas Magistros (zit. Anm. 33), S. 30–32.

38 Μονωδία ἐπὶ τῷ κυρῷ Νικηφόρῳ Χούμνῳ, ed. J. F. BOISSONADE, Anecdota Graeca, I, Paris 1829, ND: Hildesheim 1962, S. 282–292, hier S. 288,7–10.

39 Ep. 74,13–24, ed. F. J. G. LA PORTE-DU THEIL, Notice et extraits d'un volume de la Bibliothèque nationale, coté MCCIX parmi les Manuscrits Grecs, et contenant les *Opuscules* et *Lettres* anecdotes de Théodore l'Hyrtacène, in: Notices et extraits des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale, 6, 1800, S. 1–48, hier S. 35.

tesdienstes für Theodoros II. Laskaris niedergemetzelt wurde, setzte Theodora dem Bericht des Georgios Pachymeres zufolge sich als einzige anwesende Person lauthals zur Wehr und musste von ihrem Onkel zum Schweigen gebracht werden, um nicht dem gleichen Schicksal wie ihr Gemahl zu erliegen.<sup>40</sup> Auch einige Jahre später, als Michael Kaiser geworden war, scheute sie die politische Opposition nicht: Für ihren Widerstand gegen die Kirchenunion wurde sie zusammen mit ihrer Mutter inhaftiert, ihr Vermögen konfisziert.<sup>41</sup> Nach der Rehabilitierung

durch Andronikos II. übernahm sie politische Verantwortung, indem sie zwischen dem Arsenitenkreisen nahestehenden Rebellen Alexios Philanthropenos und dem Kaiser in einer Gesandtschaft vermittelte.<sup>42</sup>

Das gleiche selbstbewusste Verhalten legt Theodora auch in anderen Bereichen an den Tag: Theodora war in einem für eine Frau ihrer Zeit außergewöhnlichen Maß literarisch gebildet<sup>43</sup> – das belegen nicht nur die Äußerungen ihrer Zeitgenossen, die ihre Bildung überschwänglich preisen,<sup>44</sup> sondern auch ihr Werk als Schriftstel-

40 GEORGIOS PACHYMERES, *Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι* I 19 (zit. Anm. 2), I, S. 89,17–20.

41 GEORGIOS PACHYMERES, *Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι* VII 2 (zit. Anm. 2), III, S. 23,23–25; Bericht des kaiserlichen πρωτονοτάριος Ogerius von 1278 (vgl. F. DÖLGER/P. WIRTH, Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453, 3. Teil: Regesten von 1204–1282, <sup>2</sup>München 1977, Nr. 2038a), ed. R.-J. LOENERTZ, *Mémoire d'Ogier, protonotaire, pour Marco et Marchetto nonces de Michel VIII Paléologue auprès du pape Nicholas III. 1278, printemps-été*, in: *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 31, 1965, S. 374–408, hier S. 392,120–136; zur Identifizierung der hier genannten Damen s. ebenda, S. 384–385 sowie bereits D. M. NICOL, *The Greeks and the Union of the Churches. The Report of Ogerius, Protonotarius of Michael VIII Palaiologos, in 1280*, in: *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 63, section C,1, 1962, S. 1–16, hier S. 14–15, ND: ders., *Byzantium: Its Ecclesiastical History and Relations with the Western World*, London 1972, Nr. VII; vgl. auch MAXIMOS PLANODES, *Epigramme*, ed. LAMPROS, *Ἐπιγράμματα* (zit. Anm. 3), Nr. 1, 15 (S. 416): *Um des rechten Dogmas willen erlitt sie viele Schmerzen* (δόγματος ὀρθοτόμοιο χάριν πάθεν ἄλγεια πολλά). Über Theodoras Mutter Eirene schreibt Gregorios Kyprios: *Sie kämpfte einen guten Kampf für Deine [i. e. Gottes] Ehre, sie ermannte sich gegenüber den Autoritäten, sie widersetzte sich den Gewalten, sie wehrte sich gegen die Sünde, damit sie den Glauben bewahre, was ihr auch gelang* (ἡγωνίσται καλῶς ὑπὲρ τῆς σῆς [sc. τοῦ θεοῦ] δόξης, ἠνδρίσατο πρὸς τὰς ἀρχάς, ἀντέστη πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας, ἀντικατέστη πρὸς τὴν ἀμαρτίαν, ἵνα τὴν πίστιν τηρήσῃ, ὡς δὴ καὶ τετήρηκεν; ep. 1 [V. LAURENT, *Les Regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople I: Les actes des patriarches, IV: Les registes de 1208 à 1309*, Paris 1971, Nr. 1477 (S. 266–267)], ed. KOTZABASSI, *Scholarly Friendship* [zit. Anm. 25], S. 146,26–28).

42 GEORGIOS PACHYMERES, *Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι* IX 12 (zit. Anm. 2), III, S. 255,13–21 (s. F. DÖLGER, Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453, 4. Teil: Regesten von 1282–1341, München/Berlin 1960, Nr. 2199). Zu Alexios' Revolte s. A. E. LAIOU, *Constantinople and the Latins: The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II, 1282–1328*, Cambridge, MA 1972, S. 80–84; dies., *Some Observations on Alexios Philanthropenos and Maximos Planoudes*, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 4, 1978, S. 89–99; H.-V. BEYER, *Die Chronologie der Briefe des Maximos Planudes an Alexios Dukas Philanthropenos und dessen Umgebung*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 51, 1993, S. 111–137; D. M. NICOL, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*, <sup>2</sup>Cambridge 1993, S. 123–124; B. S. GEORGIADU, *Η παρουσία και το κίνημα του πικέρνη Αλεξίου Φιλανθρωπινού στη Μικρά Ασία (1293–1295). Ένα παράδειγμα αποκλίσεων στις ιστορικές εκτιμήσεις του Παχυμέρη και του Γρηγορά*, in: *Σύμμεικτα*, 10, 1996, S. 143–162; GUNARIDES, *Τὸ κίνημα τῶν Ἀρσενιατῶν* (zit. Anm. 2), S. 125–126 mit Anm. 23.

43 Zum Thema Frauen und Bildung in Byzanz s. LAIOU, *Role of Women* (zit. Anm. 15), S. 253–257; E. V. MALTESE, *Donne e letteratura a Bisanzio: per una storia della cultura femminile*, in: F. DE MARTINO (Hrsg.), *Rose di Pieria*. Bari 1991, S. 362–393, ND: E. V. MALTESE, *Dimensioni bizantine. Donne, angeli e demoni nel Medioevo greco*, Turin 1995, S. 111–137; N. M. KALOGERAS, *Byzantine Childhood Education and its Social Role from the Sixth Century until the End of Iconoclasm*, Diss. Chicago 2000, S. 212–231; MATSCHKE/TINNEFELD, *Gesellschaft* (zit. Anm. 11), S. 238–239.

44 MAXIMOS PLANODES, *Epigramme* (zit. Anm. 3), Nr. 1, 5–6 (S. 416): *Die weiseste aller Frauen, Theodora, / die sich des Ruhms beider Bildungsrichtungen [i. e. der profanen und der religiösen] annahm* (ἡ πάσαις ἐνὶ θηλυτέρησι σοφῆ

lerin und Kopistin: Sie hinterließ eine höchst anspruchsvoll verfasste *Vita* der Graptoi Theodoros und Theophanes und war eine eifrige Verfasserin von Briefen, von denen heute leider keiner erhalten ist.<sup>45</sup> Weiterhin kennen wir mit dem Codex Vat. gr. 1899, der die Reden des Aelios Aristides überliefert, sowie einer heute in Moskau liegenden Handschrift (cod. Mosqu. Muz. 3649) mit dem Kommentar des Simplikios zur aristotelischen Physik zwei Codices aus ihrer Hand.<sup>46</sup> Schließlich können wir aus einer Reihe von Zeugnissen folgern, dass Theodora im Andreaskloster über eine gut ausgestattete Bibliothek mit Codices vorwiegend profanen Inhalts verfügte. Neben den beiden bereits angesprochenen, von ihr selbst geschriebenen Handschriften lassen sich die Thuky-

dides-Handschrift Monac. gr. 430<sup>47</sup> und der Coisl. gr. 128 mit dem Kommentar des Theophylaktos von Ochrid zu den vier Evangelien (ein Geschenk Theodoras an die *Μεγίστη Λαύρα*)<sup>48</sup> mit Theodora in Verbindung bringen. Darüber hinaus erfahren wir aus Briefen anderer Gelehrter, dass sie Bücher mit Werken des Aelios Aristides, Demosthenes und weiterer Rhetoren, Werke des Gregorios Kyprios, die *Ἠθικά* Basileios des Großen, eine Schrift über die Harmonik und überhaupt eine große Auswahl an Büchern besaß.<sup>49</sup>

Theodora stand außerdem mit den führenden Gelehrten ihrer Zeit in Kontakt und scheint einige von ihnen gefördert zu haben. Ob diese sozialen Kontakte im Einzelnen eine feste und dauerhafte Bindung zwischen Patronin und Pro-

Θεοδώρα / ἀμφοτέρων τε λόγων κύδος ἀναψαμένη); NIKEPHOROS GREGORAS, *Ρωμαϊκή ιστορία* VI 4,3 (zit. Anm. 2), I, S. 178,22–23: *Diese Frau war nämlich eine Liebhaberin der Literatur und hing geradezu an den Lippen des Patriarchen [i. e. Gregorios II. Kyprios] (φιλόλογος γὰρ ἦν ἡ γυνὴ καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τῆς γλώττης τοῦ πατριάρχου ἐξεχομένη)*. Für Belege aus der Briefliteratur s. u. Anm. 70.

- 45 BHG, 1793, ed. A. PAPADOPULOS-KERAMEUS, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, 5 Bde., St. Petersburg 1891–98, IV, S. 185–223 (Text), V, S. 397–399 (Korrekturen). Zu der *Vita* und ihrem politisch motivierten Hintergrund s. A.-M. TALBOT, *Old Wine in New Bottles: The Rewriting of Saints' Lives in the Palaeologan Period*, in: S. CΥRÍC/D. MOURIKI (Hrsg.), *The Twilight of Byzantium: Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire*. Papers from the Colloquium Held at Princeton University, 8–9 May 1989, Princeton 1991, S. 15–26, hier S. 20–21, ND: TALBOT, *Women* (zit. Anm. 2), Nr. X; F. RIZZO NERVO, *Teodora Raoulena: tra agiografia e politica*, in: *Σύνδεσμος*. Studi in onore di Rosario Anastasi, 2 Bde., Catania 1991, I, S. 147–161, hier S. 152–161. Hinweis auf eine rege Tätigkeit als Epistolographin finden wir in den Briefen der Gelehrten, mit denen sie in Kontakt stand; s. dazu u. Text zu Anm. 51–67 sowie Anm. 70.
- 46 E. GAMILLSCHEG/D. HARLFINGER/H. HUNGER, *Repertorium der griechischen Kopisten 800–1600*, Teil 3: Handschriften aus den Bibliotheken Roms mit dem Vatikan, Wien 1997, Nr. 206; zum Vaticanus s. auch I. PÉREZ MARTÍN, *El patriarca Gregorio de Chipre (ca. 1240–1290) y la transmisión de los textos clásicos en Bizancio*, Madrid 1996, S. 35–36. In beiden Handschriften wird Theodora als Kopistin in jeweils acht Zwölfsilbern genannt und gefeiert (abgedruckt u. a. bei B. L. FONKÍĆ, *Zametki o grečeskich rukopisjach Sovjetskich chranilišč*, in: *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, 36, 1974, S. 134–138, hier S. 134). Diese sind wahrscheinlich vor 1274, jedenfalls aber vor 1282 zu datieren, da Theodora in beiden Epigrammen mit ihrem weltlichen Namen genannt wird, den sie mit ihrer Scherung zur Nonne wohl umgehend nach ihrer Verwitwung ablegte, und es heißt, sie sei die Nichte des Kaisers.
- 47 S. KUGEAS, *Zur Geschichte der Münchener Thukydidshandschrift Augustanus F*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 16, 1907, S. 588–609; PÉREZ MARTÍN, *Gregorio de Chipre* (zit. Anm. 46), S. 270.
- 48 R. DEVREESSE, *Catalogue des manuscrits grecs, II: le fonds Coislin*, Paris 1945, S. 122.
- 49 GREGORIOS KYPRIOS, ep. 12, ed. KOTZABASSI, *Scholarly Friendship* (zit. Anm. 25), S. 154; ep. 17, ebenda, S. 157,1–4. 10–11, S. 158,18–20. 22–24 (die hier genannte Handschrift mit den *Ἠθικά* Basileios des Großen [CPG 2877] könnte laut S. KOTZABASSI, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der rhetorischen und hagiographischen Werke des Gregor von Zypern*, Wiesbaden 1998, S. 9 Anm. 65, möglicherweise mit dem cod. Lond. Harl. 5576 zu identifizieren sein; doch enthält dieser nur einen Pinax der *Ἠθικά*, nicht deren Text; s. ebenda, S. 131 mit Anm. 94); ep. 18 (LAURENT, *Regestes* [zit. Anm. 41], Nr. 1547 [S. 334–335]), ed. KOTZABASSI, *Scholarly Friendship* (zit. Anm. 25), S. 159,32–33; MAXIMOS PLANUDES, ep. 68, ed. P.M.A. LEONE, *Maximi Monachi Planudis Epistulae*, Amsterdam 1991, S. 103,11–12, 104,8–10. Eine Reihe von biblischen und liturgischen Prachthandschriften wurde von H. BUCHTHAL/H. BELTING,

tegé, eine einmalige Förderung oder eine Beziehung zwischen Statusgleichen bedeuteten,<sup>50</sup> lässt sich auf der Basis der überlieferten Quellen zu meist nicht mit Gewissheit feststellen. Zu folgenden *literati* lässt sich eine Verbindung herstellen:

Ein Verhältnis von Patronin zu Protegé könnte zwischen Theodora und Nikephoros Chumnos (ca. 1260–1327) bestanden haben. Nikephoros war Schüler des 1290 verstorbenen Gregorios Kyprios, mit dem Theodora ein sehr enges Verhältnis pflegte (s. gleich u.), und dürfte Theodora somit schon vor seinem 1293/94 beginnenden politischen und gesellschaftlichen Aufstieg<sup>51</sup> gekannt haben. Vielleicht in diese frühen Jahre seiner Karriere fällt eine Korrespondenz zwischen ihnen, in deren Rahmen Nikephoros Theodora unverblümt dazu aufforderte, ihn mit Büchern zu versorgen, damit er seiner schriftstellerischen Tätigkeit nachgehen könne, schließlich habe sie die Möglichkeit dazu.<sup>52</sup> Aus dem gleichen Brief geht hervor, dass Theodora Nikephoros wiederholt in der Öffentlichkeit lobte<sup>53</sup> – vielleicht ein Hinweis

auf eine systematische Förderung eines ihrer Protegés. Umgekehrt scheint auch Theodora von Nikephoros Bücher erben zu haben; dieser jedoch bedauerte, dass er den Bitten zumeist aufgrund von Büchermangel nicht nachkommen könne.<sup>54</sup> Es zeugt wohl von großem Respekt vor Theodoras literarischer Bildung, wenn Nikephoros sie dazu ermuntert, Korrekturen an der ihr geliehenen Aristoteleshandschrift vorzunehmen.<sup>55</sup>

Zum Schülerkreis des Gregorios Kyprios könnte auch der Schriftsteller und spätere μέγας λογοθέτης Konstantinos Akropolites († ca. 1324) gehört haben.<sup>56</sup> Ihm ließ Theodora ein Buch mit einer astronomischen Schrift zukommen.<sup>57</sup>

Maximos Planudes (ca. 1255–1305), den Theodora nicht nur mit dem Verfassen der eingangs angesprochenen Epigramme, sondern auch mit der Korrektur und Ergänzung von Handschriften aus ihrem Besitz beauftragte,<sup>58</sup> bezeichnete Theodora als seine Herrin (ἡ κυρία μου), woraus sich wohl ebenfalls auf ein asymmetrisches und von Patronage geprägtes Verhältnis schließen lassen

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Patronage in Thirteenth-Century Constantinople: An Atelier of Late Byzantine Book Illumination and Calligraphy, Washington DC 1978, S. 5–6, 99–102, einem „Atelier“ der Theodora Raulaina zugeschrieben. Grundlage dieser Zuweisung ist das Monogramm Τ(ΗΣ) ΠΑΛ(ΑΙΟΛΟ)ΓΙ(ΝΗΣ) – nicht ΠΑΛ(ΑΙΟΛΟ)ΓΙ(ΝΑΣ), wie gemeinhin aufgelöst – im cod. Vat. gr. 1158, das jedoch wohl eher zu Theodora Palaiologina, der Frau Michaels VIII., (so R. NELSON/J. LOWDEN, The Palaeologina Group: Additional Manuscripts and New Questions, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 45, 1991, S. 59–68, hier S. 65–68; A.-M. TALBOT, Empress Theodora Palaiologina, Wife of Michael VIII, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46, 1992, S. 295–303, hier S. 302, ND: TALBOT, Women [zit. Anm. 2], Nr. V) oder zu Eirene Chumnaina, der Witwe des δεσπότης Ioannes Palaiologos, (so I. PÉREZ MARTÍN, Irene Cumno y el ‘taller de la Paleologuina’, in: *Scrittura e Civiltà*, 9, 1995, S. 223–234, hier S. 232–234) gehört.

50 Zu dieser wichtigen Differenzierung und einhergehenden Problemen s. MULLETT, *Aristocracy and Patronage* (zit. Anm. 33), S. 173–201, hier S. 180–181; B. HILL, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025–1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology*, Harlow 1999, S. 155–156.

51 VERPEAUX, *Nicéphore Choumnos* (zit. Anm. 34), S. 38–40.

52 Ep. 77, ed. BOISSONADE, *Anecdota Nova* (zit. Anm. 18), S. 94,7–9: σὺ πρᾶξον ὅπως τε πολλὰ ταῦτα [sc. τὰ βιβλία] καὶ καλὰ κτήσωνται – δύνασαι γὰρ χορηγήσαι.

53 Ebenda, S. 94,5–6: οὗς αὐτὴ μόνη παρὰ τὴν τῶν πολλῶν γνώμην ἐπαινεῖν εἶλου (ἀκούω γὰρ συχνῶν μηνούντων).

54 Ep. 76, ebenda, S. 91,7–92,16.

55 Ebenda, S. 92,29–93,2: ὅσα δὲ καὶ τῆς λέξεως πλημελῶς ἔχει, προσάγουσα τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ κατὰ τὸ ὀρθὸν μεταλήψη.

56 C. N. CONSTANTINIDES, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries* (1204–ca. 1310), Nikosia 1982, S. 19–20.

57 Ep. 60, ed. R. ROMANO, *Costantino Acropolita, Epistole*, Neapel 1991, S. 155–156; Übersetzung und kurze Kommentierung ebenda, S. 77–78. Der Brief ist ohne Hinweis auf den Adressaten überliefert; zur Identifizierung der Empfängerin mit Theodora s. die ebenda angeführte Literatur.

58 MAXIMOS PLANUDES, ep. 68, ed. LEONE, *Maximi Planudis Epistulae* (zit. Anm. 49), S. 103,11–19.

kann.<sup>59</sup> Auch könnte die bereits erwähnte Thukydides-Handschrift Monac. gr. 430 ein Geschenk Theodoras an Maximos gewesen sein.<sup>60</sup>

Mit dem  $\rho\acute{\eta}\tau\omega\rho$  τῶν  $\rho\acute{\eta}\tau\acute{o}\rho\omega\nu$  Manuel Holobolos (ca. 1245–1310/14) war Theodora immerhin so gut bekannt, dass dieser ihr nach dem Tod ihres zweiten Gatten Ioannes Raul (1274) einen Trostbrief schrieb.<sup>61</sup>

Der Gelehrte, zu dem sie das engste Verhältnis pflegte, war jedoch Gregorios Kyprios (ca. 1241–90), 1283–89 als Gregorios II. Patriarch von Konstantinopel, der offenbar bereits von Theodoras Mutter Eirene gefördert worden war.<sup>62</sup> Aus einer Reihe von Briefen, die Gregorios an Theo-

dora adressierte – immerhin 29 an der Zahl<sup>63</sup> –, geht hervor, dass sie sich gegenseitig Bücher liehen und zum Geschenk machten.<sup>64</sup> An ihrem Verhältnis zu Gregorios werden auch mögliche Zusammenhänge zwischen der Stiftung eines sakralen Baus und säkularer Patronage aufgezeigt: Nach der Abdankung des Gregorios ließ Theodora das Kleinkloster τῆς Ἀριστινῆς in der Nähe des Andreasklosters restaurieren und für ihn als Wohnung einrichten, um so von seiner Gelehrsamkeit zu profitieren.<sup>65</sup> Dass sie sich deswegen aber keineswegs als diesem angesehenen Gelehrten unterlegen betrachtete, wird immer wieder deutlich: Während Eirene Chumnaina

59 VON KUGEAS, Zur Geschichte der Münchner Thukydideshandschrift (zit. Anm. 47), S. 602–603, Maximos zugeschriebene Notiz im Monac. gr. 430 (Zitierung und Erläuterung der Notiz ebenda, S. 588–592, sowie bereits M. THÉARVIC, Note de chronologie byzantine, in: *Échos d'Orient*, 9, 1906, S. 298–300; zur Autorschaft vgl. auch PÉREZ MARTÍN, Gregorio de Chipre [zit. Anm. 46], S. 270 Anm. 48); außerdem MAXIMOS PLANODES, ep. 65, ed. LEONE, Maximi Planudis Epistulae (zit. Anm. 49), S. 96,5. 12. 14. Allgemein zu dieser Anredeform s. M. GRÜNBART, Formen der Anrede im byzantinischen Brief vom 6. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert, Wien 2005, S. 183, 185, 187, 290.

60 Ed. KOTZABASSI, Scholarly Friendship (zit. Anm. 25), S. 145,11–13.

61 A. PAPADOPULOS-KERAMEUS, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 5 Bde., St. Petersburg 1891–1915, ND: Brüssel 1963, I, S. 345. Die Identifizierung des anonymen, im Titel als σοφώτατος  $\rho\acute{\eta}\tau\omega\rho$  bezeichneten Autors mit Manuel schlug M. TREU, Manuel Holobolos, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 5, 1896, S. 538–559, hier S. 552, vor. Der Brief ist m.W. noch unediert.

62 Trostbrief des Gregorios nach dem Tod Eirenes an Theodora und ihre Schwester Anna: ep. 1 (LAURENT, Regestes [zit. Anm. 41], Nr. 1477 [S. 266–267]), ed. KOTZABASSI, Scholarly Friendship (zit. Anm. 25), S. 145,11–13: *Ich heisse mein Leben unglücklich, da es des Trostes, der Linderung, des Rats, der Hilfe, ja aller guten Dinge beraubt wurde, die mir die Verstorbene zu Lebzeiten zukommen ließ* (τὴν δ' [sc. ζῶν ἐμαυτοῦ ταλανίζω] ὅτι παρακλήσεως ἐστέρηται, ἀνακαχῆς, συμβουλῆς, βοήθειας, πάντων ὁμοῦ τῶν καλλίστων, ἃ μοι περιόσα τῷ βίῳ παρείχεν ἡ ἐκδημήσασα).

63 Alle 29 Briefe wurden jüngst von KOTZABASSI, Scholarly Friendship (zit. Anm. 25) ediert. Zu diesen Briefen s. außerdem LAIOU, Correspondence (zit. Anm. 25), bes. S. 95–97.

64 So wie sie Gregorios einmal ein Buch mit den *Ἡθικά* Basileios des Großen schenkte (ep. 17, ed. KOTZABASSI, Scholarly Friendship [zit. Anm. 25], S. 158,26), machte der Patriarch Theodora einen Codex mit eigenen Werken zum Geschenk (ep. 12, ebenda, S. 154). Des Weiteren lieh sie ihm, wie es scheint auf Dauer, eine ganze Reihe von Büchern (ep. 17, ebenda, S. 157–158).

65 GEORGIOS PACHYMERES, *Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι* VIII 10 (zit. Anm. 2), III, S. 151,7–10; NIKEPHOROS GREGORAS, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ ἱστορία* VI 4,3 (zit. Anm. 2), I, S. 178,21–179,1; dazu KIDONOPOULOS, Bauten (zit. Anm. 2), S. 14–16. Bezeichnend für ihr offensichtlich vorrangig von literarischen Interessen geprägtes Verhältnis ist, dass Theodora, die wohl im Gegensatz zu ihrer Mutter eine Anhängerin des früheren Patriarchen Arsenios war (zu der schwer zu beantwortenden Frage nach ihrem Verhältnis zu den Arseniten s. GUNARIDES, *Τὸ κίνημα τῶν Ἀρσενιατῶν* [zit. Anm. 2], S. 155 Anm. 127), trotz der heftigen Opposition der Arseniten gegen Gregorios (s. dazu A. PAPADAKIS, Crisis in Byzantium. The *Filioque* Controversy in the Patriarchate of Grgeory II of Cyprus [1283–1289], Crestwood, NY 1997, S. 68–73, 143–144; GUNARIDES, *Τὸ κίνημα τῶν Ἀρσενιατῶν* [zit. Anm. 2], S. 139–141) weiterhin beste Beziehungen zu ihm unterhielt und sich nach seinem Tod für ein einem Patriarchen angemessenes Begräbnis beim Kaiser (vergeblich) einsetzte (s. GEORGIOS PACHYMERES, *Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι* VIII 17 [zit. Anm. 2], III, S. 169,25–32). Falls Theodora wirklich Arsenitin war, gehörte sie vermutlich zu jener Gruppe, die auf der Synode von Adramyttion im Jahr 1284 (s. GUNARIDES, *Τὸ κίνημα τῶν Ἀρσενιατῶν* [zit. Anm. 2], S. 138–140), auf der sie persönlich anwesend war, oder bald darauf (s. ebenda, S. 154–156) mit der Reichskirche ausgesöhnt wurden. Die Überführung des Leich-



sich in einem Brief für ihren literarischen Stil entschuldigen zu müssen glaubt, da sie (als Frau) eine geringe Bildung erhalten habe,<sup>66</sup> lässt es sich Theodora nicht nehmen, Gregorios für seinen *kunstlosen und allzu pfaffenhaften Brief* (ἀφελῆ γράμματα καὶ ἐκδήλως πρεσβυτερικά) zu rügen.<sup>67</sup>

Wenn wir nun einen Blick auf die Motivation für dieses umtriebige Engagement werfen, das sich wohl gemerkt größtenteils während Theodoras rund 26-jährigen Daseins als Nonne<sup>68</sup> abspielt, so dürfen wir mit Sicherheit von einem gewissen selbstlosen Interesse an der Förderung und Erhaltung geistiger Kultur ausgehen. Doch scheint mir hier gleichermaßen wie bei der Suche nach Beweggründen für die Stiftung von Bauten und Kunstgegenständen eine differenziertere Sichtweise angebracht: Wie bereits ausgeführt, entwickelt die Aristokratie in der frühen Palaiologenzeit ein Standesbewusst-

sein, das sie zur Konsolidierung ihres Status in die Öffentlichkeit zu tragen bestrebt war. Es ist nur natürlich, dass sie sich hierzu an die „wichtigsten gesellschaftlichen Meinungsbildner“,<sup>69</sup> d. h. an die Gruppe der literarisch Gebildeten (die sie in dieser Zeit z. T. selbst repräsentierten) sowie an die Geistlichkeit wandte. Überträgt man diese Beobachtung auf Theodora, so ist zu konstatieren, dass ihre literarische Bildung sowie ihre Aktivität zur Erhaltung und Förderung der *παιδεία* besonders in den Briefen der genannten Gelehrten hervorgehoben wird.<sup>70</sup> Diese Briefe zirkulierten auch in weiteren Kreisen und wurden etwa in den bereits erwähnten *θέατρα* vorgetragen, die Niels Gaul treffend als „Schauplätze der Macht“ bezeichnet.<sup>71</sup> Demnach waren die *θέατρα* in der frühen Palaiologenzeit der Raum *par excellence*, in dem über das Medium der rhetorischen Literatur Prestige und damit

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namens des Arsenios in die Hagia Sophia und anschließend in das Andreaskloster (s. o. Anm. 2) würde, als Versöhnungsgeste des Kaisers ausgelegt (vgl. GUNARIDES, a. a. O.), diese Vermutung untermauern.

- 66 Ep. 1, ed. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *A Woman's Quest* (zit. Anm. 16), S. 26,4–12; vgl. auch die lobende Antwort des Geistlichen (ep. 2, ebenda, S. 28,3–4): *Aus dem Mund einer Frau vernahmen wir eine Stimme, die einem weisen und edlen Mann gebührt* (φωνὴν [sc. εὐλόγηται] ἀνδρὶ σοφῷ τε καὶ γενναίῳ προσήκουσαν ἐκ γυναικείου τοῦ στόματος). Eirenes tatsächlich etwas eigenwillige und manchmal unbeholfen wirkende Sprache (einige Beispiele hierzu bei CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Irene-Eulogia* [zit. Anm. 17], S. 135–136 Anm. 48) könnte vielleicht auf einen Abbruch ihrer Ausbildung mit der Verheiratung im Alter von zwölf Jahren (Mädchen wurden in Byzanz fast ausnahmslos und unabhängig vom sozialen Stand ihrer Familie zuhause unterrichtet, i. d. R. von der Mutter oder einem Privatlehrer; s. von der in Anm. 43 angeführten Literatur bes. KALOGERAS, *Byzantine Childhood Education*) oder schlichtweg darauf zurückzuführen sein, dass ihr als Frau keine höhere, auch die profanen Schriftsteller umfassende Bildung zugedacht war (s. von der in Anm. 43 angeführten Literatur bes. MALTESE, *Donne e letteratura*).
- 67 GREGORIOS KYPRIOS, ep. 18 (LAURENT, *Regestes* [zit. Anm. 41], Nr. 1547 [S. 334–335]), ed. KOTZABASSI, *Scholarly Friendship* (zit. Anm. 25), S. 158,1. Zur ἀφελεία als Stilcategory s. D. HAGEDORN, *Zur Ideenlehre des Hermogenes*, Göttingen 1964, S. 58–59; G. L. KUSTAS, *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric*, Thessaloniki 1973, S. 34–39; G. LINDBERG, *Studies in Hermogenes and Eustathios. The Theory of Ideas and its Application in the Commentaries of Eustathios on the Epics of Homer*, Lund 1977, S. 222–229.
- 68 Theodora hatte sich wahrscheinlich bereits 1274 nach ihrer abermaligen Verwitwung zur Nonne scheren lassen.
- 69 MATSCHKE/TINNEFELD, *Gesellschaft* (zit. Anm. 11), S. 29.
- 70 MAXIMOS PLANUDES, ep. 68, ed. LEONE, *Maximi Planudis Epistulae* (zit. Anm. 49), S. 102,20–103,9: Lob eines empfangenen Briefs; KONSTANTINOS AKROPOLITES, ep. 60, ed. ROMANO, *Costantino Acropolita* (zit. Anm. 57), S. 155,1: *Meine edelste und weiseste Herrin* (εὐγενεστάτη καὶ σοφωτάτη κυρία μου); NIKEPHOROS CHUMNOS, ep. 76, ed. BOISSONADE, *Anecdota Nova* (zit. Anm. 18), S. 92,12–13: *Dich, Du weiseste und scharfsichtigste Seele* (σὲ τὴν σοφωτάτην καὶ διακριτικωτάτην ἅμα ψυχῆν); GREGORIOS KYPRIOS, ep. 2, ed. KOTZABASSI, *Scholarly Friendship* (zit. Anm. 25), S. 147,3: *Da ich weiß, dass Du Dich an der Literatur überaus erfreust und der Bildung zugetan bist* (λόγοις σε χαίρουσαν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν καὶ παιδεύσει προσκειμένην εἰδώς); epp. 7 und 27, ebenda, S. 151, 164: Lob empfangener Briefe.
- 71 GAUL, *Thomas Magistros* (zit. Anm. 33), S. 17–61.

auch Macht gewonnen werden konnte; Karrieren konnten hier beginnen, aber auch enden.<sup>72</sup>

Dass ein Prestigegewinn nicht nur für den Verfasser einer gefeierten Komposition erreicht werden konnte, sondern auch für die Adressaten dieser Werke, und dass die Briefliteratur hierbei eine wichtige Rolle spielte, wird von byzantinischen Epistolographen immer wieder betont. So meint etwa der Mönch Iakobos (Mitte des zwölften Jahrhunderts) in einem seiner Briefe an die σεβαστοκρατόρισα Eirene, dass der Name der Empfängerin durch die Briefe verewigt werde (δαιωνίσει τὸ ὄνομά σου ἄχρι τῆς συντελείας διὰ τῆς μνήμης τῶν ἐπιστολῶν);<sup>73</sup> und in einem wohl aus dem Jahr 1294 datierenden Brief preist Maximus Planudes die militärischen Erfolge des Alexios Philanthropenos ausgiebig und überschwänglich, um hinzuzufügen:

*Die Briefe werden bleiben (dies weiß ich gewiss) und Deine Tugenden überall bei den Griechen kundtun. Denn jetzt verbleiben sie zwar unpubliziert bei mir und Dir nur; sobald aber wir beide es für besser halten und sie so viele an der Zahl geworden sind, wie ich es wünsche, das heißt sie viele Deiner Errungenschaften gepriesen haben, werden wir sie auch der Außenwelt zugänglich machen – viele nämlich verlangen danach.*

Μενοῦσιν αἱ ἐπιστολαί (τοῦτο γὰρ εὖ οἶδα) τὰς σὰς ἀρετὰς πανταχοῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων κηρύττουσαι. νῦν μὲν γὰρ παρ' ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ μόνοις ἀνέκδοτοι μένουσιν· ἤνικα δ' ἂν ἄμφω βέλτιον κρίνωμεν καὶ δὴ καὶ τοσαῦται, ὅσας ἐγὼ βούλομαι, γένωνται, πολλὰ δηλονότι τῶν σῶν κατορθωμάτων ὑμνήσασαι, τότε καὶ τοῖς ἔξω (πολλοὶ δ' εἰσὶν οἱ αἰτοῦντες) ἐκδώσομεν.<sup>74</sup>

Für Theodora Raulainas ist davon auszugehen, dass die Patronin sich auch auf diesem Wege in das öffentliche Bewusstsein zu rücken und ihren Namen zu verewigen suchte. Diese Hypothese wird wiederum durch einen Brief des Maximus Planudes untermauert, in dem der Verfasser gegenüber Theodora die Befürchtung äußert, dass das griechische Kulturgut (τὰ μαθήματα/ἡ τῶν Ἑλλήνων διατριβή) bald verloren gehen könnte;<sup>75</sup> diese Befürchtung verflüchtigt sich jedoch im Vertrauen auf Theodoras Bemühungen um dessen Erhalt, die Maximus weithin zu verkünden gelobt:

*Und ich weiß, dass Deine ehrbare Seele die geistige Kultur so gut sie kann bewahren und jedes erdenkliche Hilfsmittel mit unermüdlicher Hand an allen Ecken und Enden bereitstellen wird – eine Sache, die weitaus bedeutender und ehrwürdiger ist, als wenn man ein einstürzendes Gebäude abstützt.<sup>76</sup> Und wir werden Dich in diesen Dingen zur Patronin ihrer Bewahrung ernennen, da Du nach Kräften ihr gänzlich Verschwinden verhindertest; und so werden wir den künftigen Generationen beweisen und verkünden, dass unsere Zeit nicht ganz und gar untätig und ungelehrt war, sondern es auch damals einige gab, denen sie für die von ihnen geerbten Güter höchsten Dank schuldig sind.*

καὶ τὴν σὴν δὴ τιμίαν ψυχὴν οὐκ ἀγνοῶ σώσουσαν ταῦτα [sc. τὰ μαθήματα] ἐκ τῶν ἐνόνητων καὶ τὰς ἐγχωρούσας εἰς βοήθειαν ἀφορμὰς φιλοπόνων πανταχόθεν πορισομένην χειρὶ· πράγμα λέγω ἀορίστῳ τῷ μέσῳ μεῖζόν τε καὶ σεμνότερον ἢ εἶ τις οἰκίαν καταπίπτουσαν ὑπερείδει. καὶ σε προστάτιν ἐν αὐτοῖς τῆς αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψομεν σωτηρίας<sup>77</sup> παντὶ σθένει κωλύσασαν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων

72 Ebenda, S. 23–38.

73 Ep. 15,45–47, ed. E. JEFFREYS/M. JEFFREYS, Iacobi Monachi Epistulae, Turnhout 2009, S. 55.

74 Ep. 119, ed. LEONE, Maximi Planudis Epistulae (zit. Anm. 49), S. 205,5–10. Zu dem Brief und seiner Datierung s. LAIOU, Some Observations (zit. Anm. 42), S. 96–97; BEYER, Chronologie der Briefe (zit. Anm. 42), S. 121–122.

75 Ep. 68, ed. LEONE, Maximi Planudis Epistulae (zit. Anm. 49), S. 104,25–105,2.

76 Das verstehe ich als verschmitzten Hinweis auf Theodoras Stiftertätigkeit im Rahmen der Neugründung des Andreasklosters. Eine „witzige Art“ in Maximus' Briefen beobachtet auch H.-G. BECK, Byzantinisches Lesebuch, München 1982, S. 168.

77 Zum Ausdruck ἐπιγράφειν/ἐπιγράφειν τινὰ προστάτην/προστάτιν s. H. G. LIDDELL/R. SCOTT/H. S. JONES/R. MCKENZIE, A Greek-English Lexicon, Oxford 1996, s. vv. ἐπιγράφω III. 5, προστάτης III. 2, προστάτις.

ταῦτα γενέσθαι καὶ δεῖξομεν καὶ κηρύξομεν τοῖς εἰσέπειτα, ὅτι μὴ παντάπασιν ἀργὸς μὴδ' ἀμελέτητος ὁ καθ' ἡμᾶς παρέφθαρται χρόνος,

ἀλλ' ἔφυσαν κὰν τούτῳ τινές, οἷς τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς καλλίστων κληρονομοῦντες ἐκεῖνοι δίκαιοι ἂν ἐς τὰ μάλιστα γινώσκων χάριτας εἶεν.<sup>78</sup>

#### FAZIT

Mit meinen Ausführungen habe ich versucht, anhand des Beispiels der Theodora Raulaina deutlich zu machen, wie Stiftertätigkeit und Patronage der Aristokratie im Byzanz der ersten Palaiologenkaiser ineinander greifen, um auf **ein** Ziel hinzuwirken, nämlich, die noblen Stifter, Spender und Beschützer mit all ihren Vorzügen der Öffentlichkeit zu präsentieren. Der damit einhergehende Prestigegewinn sollte sowohl den Status der Aristokraten, der maßgeblich von gesellschaftlicher Akzeptanz abhing, als auch die Bewahrung ihrer Namen und Taten für die Nachwelt sichern. Trotz der grundsätzlichen Benachteiligung der Frau und der ihr eigentlich zgedachten unsichtbaren, stillen Rolle in einer Gesellschaft, die wir heute gerne als „patriarchalisch“ bezeichnen,<sup>79</sup> standen die noblen Damen, und allen voran Theodora Raulaina, den Herren in diesem Bestreben in nichts nach. Ob sich hierbei speziell „weibliche“ Formen von Stiftertätigkeit und Patronage herausbildeten, lässt sich anhand des hier behandelten Beispiels schwer sagen – zu dünn und tendenziös ist die Quellenbasis: Archäologische Indizien fehlen im Falle Theodoras ganz, und die relativ spärlichen überlieferten Texte sind aus der Perspektive der Ideologie der Männer geschrieben,

die das öffentliche Auftreten und selbstbewusste Verhalten von Frauen, wie es sich z. B. in politischer Einflussnahme oder hoher Bildung niederschlägt, als „männlich“ etikettiert.<sup>80</sup> Klar ist, dass Theodora in mehrere von Männern dominierte Domänen eindrang: Sie ist neben der Kaiserin Eudokia, Kassia, Anna Komnene und Eirene Chumnaina eine von nur sehr wenigen Frauen aus dem byzantinischen Jahrtausend, von der ein literarisches Werk überliefert ist; Kopistinnen sind ebenso rar.<sup>81</sup> Dass ein solches Eindringen in Sphären, die gemäß der allgemein akzeptierten Ideologie den Männern vorbehalten blieb, möglich war, ließe sich mit Theodoras Rolle als Witwe, welche in der Führung des Namens und Titels ihres verstorbenen Mannes Ausdruck findet, im Falle der Stärkung der Familienbanden durch die Verheiratung ihrer Tochter auch mit ihrer Rolle als Mutter erklären – Rollen, in denen Frauen in Byzanz, insbesondere seit dem elften Jahrhundert, durchaus öffentlich wirken und Macht ausüben konnten: Mit der Verwitwung war ihnen ein öffentliches Engagement im Bereich der Politik, Kultur und Gesellschaft beschieden, das ihnen zu Lebzeiten ihres Mannes so nicht möglich gewesen wäre.<sup>82</sup> Demnach gelang es Theodora vornehmlich durch ihr langes

78 Ep. 68, ed. LEONE, *Maximi Planudis Epistulae* (zit. Anm. 49), S. 105,2–12.

79 HILL, *Imperial Women* (zit. Anm. 50), S. 24–25, hat zu Recht darauf hingewiesen, dass dieser Begriff problematisch, weil ahistorisch ist und teilweise erhebliche Differenzen und unterschiedliche Möglichkeiten der sozialen Rolle der Frau in Gesellschaften, denen man pauschal dieses Attribut zuspricht, verdeckt.

80 Vgl. etwa die Bemerkung des anonymen Mönchs über Eirene Chumnainas literarische Bildung, zit. o. Anm. 66, und bei Gregorios Kyrios die Wahl des Verbs *ἀνδρίζομαι* zur Beschreibung der Opposition von Theodoras Mutter gegen die Unionspolitik unter Michael VIII., zit. o. Anm. 41; s. auch HILL, *Imperial Women* (zit. Anm. 50), S. 185–187.

81 P. SCHREINER, *Kopistinnen in Byzanz*. Mit einer Anmerkung zur Schreiberin Eugenia im Par. lat. 7560, in: *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici*, n.s., 36, 1999, S. 35–45.

82 Vgl. HILL, *Imperial Women* (zit. Anm. 50), S. 178–179. Zur Rolle der Mutter s. ebenda, S. 78–83; speziell zur verwitweten Mutter s. B. HILL, *Imperial Women and the Ideology of Womanhood in the Eleventh and Twelfth Cen-*

Leben als Witwe, die ökonomischen Ressourcen, die ihr wohl nicht zuletzt durch die Verwitwung zur Verfügung standen, und die direkte Verbindung zum Kaiserhof, ein umfassendes Engagement zu entfalten, das nicht minder deutliche Spuren als bei anderen, männlichen Aristokraten in der Geschichte ihrer Zeit hinterließ. Auch wenn diese alte städtische Aristokratie mit der 1321 einsetzenden Phase von Bürgerkriegen

und der zunehmenden türkischen Landnahme Macht, Vermögen und Ansehen langsam einbüßen und so immer mehr an politischer und gesellschaftlicher Bedeutung verlieren sollte<sup>83</sup> – dass einige ihrer Vertreter das Anliegen, ihre Namen und Taten zu verewigen, tatsächlich verwirklichen konnten, zeigen auf eindrucksvolle Weise die Beiträge des vorliegenden Bandes.

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turies, in: L. JAMES (Hrsg.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium*, London/New York 1997, S. 76–99, hier S. 82–91, 93–94.

83 MATSCHKE/TINNEFELD, *Gesellschaft* (zit. Anm. 11), S. 54–62. Aufschlussreich ist in diesem Kontext wiederum der von Alexios Makrembolites wohl 1343 verfasste *Διάλογος πλουσίων και πενήτων*: Die Armen werfen hier den Reichen u. a. vor, dass diese nicht mehr wie in früheren Zeiten die Bedürftigen durch die Finanzierung von wohltätigen Einrichtungen unterstützten. Diese jedoch, so entgegenen die Reichen, verfügten durch die schlimme Lage des Reiches aufgrund von schweren Gebietsverlusten nicht mehr über genügend Mittel, um der zunehmend verarmenden Bevölkerung zu helfen (ed. ŠEVČENKO, Alexios Makrembolites [zit. Anm. 30], S. 213,1–23). Zur Neuformierung und ökonomischen Umorientierung der Aristokratie in der Mitte des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts s. jetzt auch die Besprechung neuerer Literatur von D. STATHAKOPOULOS, *The Dialectics of Expansion and Retraction: Recent Scholarship on the Palaiologan Aristocracy*, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 33, 2009, S. 92–101.



WOMEN'S AUTHORITY IN DEATH:  
THE PATRONAGE OF ARISTOCRATIC LAYWOMEN  
IN LATE BYZANTIUM

SARAH BROOKS

The rites associated with death, burial and commemoration represent a sphere of Byzantine Orthodox religion and culture where women played an exceptionally important role. Ample evidence for women establishing tombs for themselves and their family members, as well as the church buildings that housed them, survives in monastic *typika*, recorded epigrams, and inscriptions on extant works of art from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Female tomb patrons are attested from across the late medieval world, in territories both under direct Byzantine political control and in regions where Byzantine Orthodox communities lived under foreign domination, as for example on the island of Rhodes, controlled by the Latin Hospitallers since ca. 1310,<sup>2</sup> and in the western centre of Kastoria, under Ottoman control by the 1380s.<sup>3</sup> Despite regional and temporal variations in their patterns of tomb patronage, these women of the

thirteenth to fifteenth centuries shared their Orthodox faith, spoke Greek, and were governed in their religious and cultural responses to death by a common religious heritage.

While literary sources frequently provide rich details about such female founders, boldly proclaiming the agency and varied motivations of these wives, widows, mothers and daughters, when we turn to their portrayal in surviving artistic compositions, women's roles can often be difficult to pin down. A limited number of late Byzantine tombs survive where either the monument's pictorial composition or its inscriptions securely identify a female subject represented in the artistic program as the tomb's founder. This sphere of female patronage, the tomb and its architectural setting, has been little considered, a circumstance in Byzantine scholarship that the archaeological record has done much to encourage. Surviving tomb monuments from all pe-

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- <sup>1</sup> See for example: J. ALBANI, *Female Burials of the Late Byzantine Period in Monasteries*, in: J. PERREAU (ed.), *Women and Byzantine Monasticism: Proceedings of the Athens Symposium*, 28–29 March 1988, Athens 1991, pp. 111–117; A.-M. TALBOT, *The Death and Commemoration of Byzantine Children*, in: A. PAPAConstantinou/A.-M. TALBOT (ed.), *Becoming Byzantine. Children and Childhood in Byzantium* (Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia), Cambridge, MA 2009, pp. 293–309; A.-M. TALBOT, *Epigrams in Context*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 53, 1999, pp. 75–90, cf. pp. 77–83; S. BROOKS, *Poetry and Female Patronage in Byzantine Tomb Decoration: Two Epigrams by Manuel Philes*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 60, 2006, pp. 223–248.
- <sup>2</sup> T. GREGORY, *Rhodes*, in: ODB, III, pp. 1791–1792. The island of Rhodes was under the authority of the Byzantine emperor of Nicaea, John III Vatatzes, from 1232/3 to 1248, at which time control passed to the Genoese, who lost the island to the Hospitallers between 1306 and 1310. The Ottoman conquest was complete in 1522.
- <sup>3</sup> V. KRAVARI, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale*, Paris 1989, pp. 40–56; T. GREGORY/A. WHARTON, *Kastoria*, in: ODB, II, pp. 1110–1111. Kastoria has a complex political history for the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Between 1215 and 1252, the city was held by the Despotate of Epiros and intermittently by the independent Byzantine Empire of Thessalonike. In the period 1252/3–1334, Kastoria was controlled by the restored Byzantine Empire of the Palaiologoi. The King of Serbia held Kastoria from 1334 until its conquest by the Ottomans in the 1380s.

riods of Byzantine history are relatively scarce, as open-air cemeteries have been cleared away over the centuries, with tombstones and other grave markers removed for reuse in later building. For multimedia-tombs installed within churches, these monuments frequently have been reworked or removed to accommodate later Christian use of the space. In the case of Byzantine churches converted to serve as Ottoman mosques, tombs were also obscured or destroyed altogether in widespread efforts to remove figural decoration from the building's interior.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the unevenness of the material record, several significant examples of tomb monuments established by female patrons survive from the late Byzantine centuries. The invaluable evidence provided by this visual material and what it reveals about the strategies employed by female patrons represents a little-known but vastly significant area of Byzantine artistic production.

This paper will examine the patronage of tombs and the churches that housed them by women, and especially elite laywomen, in the late Byzantine period. Tomb portraits will be a major focus of this discussion, for they provide important evidence for the donors who commis-

sioned them. Several well-known tombs featuring female subjects who cannot be confirmed as tomb patrons, including those at the Chora monastery, will not be discussed in detail in this paper given the inconclusive evidence they provide.<sup>5</sup> Specific questions will be considered in this essay: To what degree were women involved in the social and popular religious rites surrounding death, and how might this inform their patronage of tomb monuments? Which individuals appear in tomb portraits, and how is the patron identified? Is there evidence for groups of women establishing tombs in a single church? What artistic strategies were used to announce the special role of the female patron of a church building, founded specifically for family burial? Such acts of patronage reinforced the prominent roles played by laywomen in the daily lives of their families and larger communities as they related to death and commemoration. The tombs and churches they established exalted their status and extended women's influence from the domestic sphere into the sacred space of the church.

Burial and commemoration have long been areas of research peripheral to the discipline of Byzantine studies,<sup>6</sup> but more recently there has

4 In Arta, Greece, the katholikon of the convent of St George once housed the complete tomb of Theodora (d. 1270), wife of the despot of Epiros, Michael II Doukas. The original monument was deconstructed at some point during centuries of the church's Christian use. Currently, the front of Theodora's sarcophagus, separated from its other sides and the larger tomb installation which it was once part of, has been re-employed in a later ciborium in the same church. In Constantinople, the two churches in the monastery of the Virgin Pammakaristos once housed tens of tombs from the Komnenian and Palaiologan periods, as recorded in the Trinity College Document of the sixteenth century (MS. o. 2. 36, Trinity College, Cambridge). At some time after 1586, when the monastery was taken over for use as an Ottoman mosque (Fethiye Camii), these numerous Byzantine tombs were cleared away from the buildings' interiors, leaving few traces of their locations and decoration. For Arta: A. K. ORLANDOS, *Ho taphos tes Hag. Theodoras*, in: *Archeion ton Byzantinon Mnemeion tes Hellados*, 2, 1936, pp. 105–115; ALBANI, *Female Burials* (cit. n. 1), p. 114. For Constantinople: P. SCHREINER, *Eine unbekannte Beschreibung der Pammakaristoskirche (Fethiye Camii) und weitere Texte zur Topographie Konstantinopels*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 25, 1971, pp. 217–250; H. BELTING/C. MANGO/D. MOURIKI, *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul*, Washington, DC 1978, cf. pp. 39–42.

5 For example, Tomb C and Tomb D in the south funerary chapel, and Tomb E and Tomb H in the narthexes of the church of Christ in Chora, Constantinople. See P. UNDERWOOD (ed.), *Kariye Djami, I*, Princeton 1975, pp. 269–300, and S. BROOKS, *The History and Significance of Tomb Monuments at the Chora Monastery*, in: H. KLEIN/R. OUSTERHOUT (ed.), *Restoring Byzantium: The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration*, New York 2004, pp. 23–31, cf. pp. 26–29.

6 An early study on the subject is: P. KOUKOULES, *Byzantinon bios kai politismos*, IV, Athens 1951, cf. pp. 148–248.

been increasing interest in investigating the practices and rituals associated with death in Byzantine society. This recent scholarship has significantly increased our understanding of how death was regarded by the Byzantines, although we do not have a complete picture for all periods, or for

all social levels. With it, we can now better situate women's patronage of the artistic monuments under consideration here within the social, cultural and religious matrices in which they were created by women and regarded by their broader audiences.

#### WOMEN AT HOME AND THE BODY'S INITIAL PREPARATION

For the laity the first rites of death most often began in the family home,<sup>7</sup> where preparations of the body for burial were initiated in the immediate hours, or in the day following death, if death occurred at home (or close to home) rather than at a great distance. Thus, in the customarily shared spaces of the Byzantine house,<sup>8</sup> the traditional domain of women,<sup>9</sup> family members and especially the women of the household would array the body in the reclining pose of sleep, with eyes and mouth closed and arms crossed over the chest. The disposition of the face and limbs was done as close to the time of death

as possible, wherever it occurred, as this placed the body in a posture of rest before the effects of *rigor mortis* took hold. In popular religious belief, the closing of the deceased's mouth prevented the soul from returning to the body, as well as the entrance of an evil spirit into the corpse through the mouth. After the proper arrangement of the limbs and head, the body was bathed in clean warm water. If a family's means allowed it, the body could also be anointed with wine as well as fragrant oils and perfumes such as myrrh and aloe, a costly practice which also helped to mask the effects of decomposition.<sup>10</sup>

- 7 For female and male monastics, on the other hand, these activities were carried out in the monastery. The immediate preparation of the corpse of a layperson by individuals other than the family members, as in the burial societies once popular in Roman antiquity, is not widely attested for in the middle and late Byzantine centuries. Evidence for their existence survives in the charter for the confraternity of the icon of the Virgin of the convent of Naupaktos (Thebes), founded 1048, see J. NESBITT/A. J. WITTA, A Confraternity of the Comnenian Era, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 68, 1975, pp. 360–384, and in the *Book of the Eparch* concerning the eleventh-century corporation of the *tabularioi* (notaries), see S. VYRONIS, Byzantine and Eleventh Century Guilds, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17, 1963, pp. 287–314, cf. p. 298.
- 8 On aspects of the Byzantine home see C. BOURAS, Houses in Byzantium, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaologikes Hetaireias*, 4.II, 1982–1983, pp. 1–26; P. MAGDALINO, The Byzantine Aristocratic Oikos, in: M. ANGOLD (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries* (BAR International Series, 221), Oxford 1984, pp. 92–111; K. KOURELIS, Medieval Settlements, in: F.A. COOPER/K. KOURELIS/H. BRADLEY FOSTER/M. B. COULTON/J. D. ALCHERMES (ed.), *Houses of the Morea: Vernacular Architecture of the Northwest Peloponnesos (1205–1955)*, Athens 2002, pp. 52–80, and K. KOURELIS, The Rural House in the Medieval Peloponnesos: An Archaeological Reassessment of Byzantine Domestic Architecture, in: J. J. EMERICK/D. DELIYANNIS (ed.), *Archaeology in Architecture: Studies in Honor of Cecil L. Striker*, Mainz 2005, pp. 119–129. I wish to thank Kostis Kourelis for discussing this material with me.
- 9 A. KAZHDAN, Women at Home, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 52, 1998, pp. 1–17, and A. WALKER, Home. A Space Rich in Blessing, in: I. KALAVREZOU (ed.), *Byzantine Women and Their World*, New Haven 2003, pp. 161–166.
- 10 N. CONSTAS, Death and Dying in Byzantium, in: D. KRUEGER (ed.), *Byzantine Christianity. A People's History of Christianity*, III, Minneapolis, MN 2006, pp. 124–148, cf. pp. 126–128; D. ABRAHAMSE, Rituals of Death in the Middle Byzantine Period, in: *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 29.2, 1984, pp. 125–134, cf. pp. 129–130; J. KYRIAKAKIS, Byzantine Burial Customs: Care of the Deceased from Death to the Prothesis, in: *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 29.1, 1974, pp. 37–71, cf. pp. 38–54. Note that Kyriakakis draws primarily on early Byzantine sources in this discussion, and while he asserts that burial societies existed widely, the author offers no evidence in support of this assertion (see n. 5 herein).



After the cleansing of the body, the corpse would be dressed in the newest and finest garments available, or alternatively, in the case of more modest burials, a long, winding sheet. The importance of selecting and preparing these burial garments and textiles, followed by the dressing or wrapping of the dead, situated these next activities centrally in the domain of women, the primary producers of cloth as well as garments for the family.<sup>11</sup> White (to be understood most commonly as the color of undyed cloth),<sup>12</sup> which symbolized the soul's purity, was especially popular for burial garments or wrappings. For girls dying before marriage, as in their early adolescence

(approximately twelve to fifteen years of age, the common age for girls to marry),<sup>13</sup> their burial garments could include dresses in the traditional color of red for a bride; in death this signaled that the young girl was now married to Christ.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, in the setting of the family home, these initial and intimate preparations of the corpse by the family launched women's entry into the series of ritual actions leading to the final interment of the body. Only after burial would family members and friends return to the home for a common meal, ending the ritual once again in the private sphere.

#### LAMENTING THE DEAD: WOMEN IN PUBLIC PROCESSION

After the body's preparations, the arrayed and dressed corpse was next carried in public procession through the village, town or city streets to the church for celebration of the funeral. The role of female mourners in the public ritual of the funeral procession has been addressed by Margaret Alexiou in her broad study of mourning from antiquity to the modern period, and more recently by Nicholas Conostas, who focuses on Byzantine practices in particular. Their findings

not only emphasize the important role played by women in these acts of mourning, but they also attest that mourning female family members, as well as professional female mourners (affordable only to households of significant means), were frequently reproached by church authorities for their undignified behavior in the public sphere. Critics maligned their excessive wailing, tearing of hair and clothing, and personal mutilation such as scratching and chest-beating, symbolizing

- 11 A. E. LAIOU, *The Role of Women in Byzantine Society*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 31.1, 1981, pp. 233–260, cf. p. 243; WALKER, *Home* (cit. n. 9), pp. 161–166, cf. p. 163.
- 12 Most “white” garments in museum collections, from the early to the late Byzantine period, are made of undyed cloth rather than cloth that has been bleached white. See for example A. ANTONARAS, *Sleeved Linen Chiton* (3rd–4th Century), in: *Everyday Life in Byzantium*, Athens 2002, cat. no. 468, pp. 384–385, and P. KALAMARA, *Female Dress (chemise)* (15th Century), in: A. ABRAMEA (ed.), *The City of Mystras. Exhibition*, Athens, Thessaloniki, Mystra, August 2001 – January 2002, Athens 2001, cat. no. 2, pp. 149–150. There do survive exceptional silk examples where silk thread, usually light in color, is bleached white, as in the case of a Byzantine textile now in the treasury of Sens Cathedral: A. GONOSOVA, *Textile Fragment from the Reliquary of Saint Siviard*, in: H. EVANS/W. WIXOM (ed.), *The Glory of Byzantium*, New York 1997, cat. no. 150, pp. 226–227. See also E. IVISON, Chapter 10. *Burial Clothes and Jewelry*, in: *Mortuary Practices in Byzantium* (ca. 950–1453). *An Archaeological Approach* (Ph.D. dissertation), University of Birmingham 1993, pp. 174–192, cf. pp. 174–176, concerning textiles and dress. I am grateful to Jennifer Ball for discussing this material with me.
- 13 On the legal age for marriage see G. PRINZING, *Observations on the Legal Status of Children and the Stages of Childhood in Byzantium*, in: PAPACONSTANTINOU/TALBOT, *Becoming Byzantine* (cit. n. 1), pp. 15–34.
- 14 IVISON, Chapter 10. *Burial Clothes and Jewelry* (cit. n. 12), pp. 174–192, cf. pp. 174–176. For red garments worn by a young girl upon her death in the medium of painted-panel icons see A. WEYL CARR, *A Palaiologan Funerary Icon from Gothic Cyprus*, in: *Acts of the Third International Congress of Cypriot Studies*, Nicosia 2001, pp. 599–619, cf. p. 601.

the shared grief of family and friends. Alexiou has connected these immodest acts by some Byzantine women with the long tradition of mourning rituals from the pagan past, recounted in ancient Greek drama, which was the cornerstone of Byzantine literature and education.<sup>15</sup>

Upon arriving at the church, the unregulated expression of mourning concluded and the official rite of the funeral began under the leadership of the male clergy. Through patronage of a church, women continued over time to play

a critical role in the official sphere of Byzantine death. These acts of foundation could include a church's initial foundation, endowments associated with the funeral and continued commemoration, or the commissioning of a tomb monument within the building, on its façade, or in the church's open-air cemetery. This last area of patronage – the tomb – provided female donors with a unique opportunity to record visually as well as in written inscriptions their active participation in Byzantine religious and family life.

### WHO'S WHO IN TOMB PORTRAITS

The most prestigious tombs were located inside the church building or on its façade and featured large-scale painted programs, including most often a portrait. Portraiture was the primary visual means for Byzantine founders, both men and women, to announce their role as sponsors of an artistic project or building. In general the artistic repertoire of Byzantine portraits was rather limited; we can deduce that this was preferred by Byzantine audiences sensitive to subtle differences in detail and gesture. Tomb portraits do not always make clear the roles

played by each individual represented, including the tomb's patron. Among the cast of characters to be found are the **dedicatee(s) of the tomb**, the person/s honoured by the tomb, with whose burial the tomb was associated. The dedicatee could be either living or deceased at the time of the construction. Also represented in tomb portraits were **the patron(s)**, of special interest to us here, and in larger group portraits, **additional family members**.<sup>16</sup> But not all of these individuals are represented in every tomb portrait, and the patron's identity in particular often proves elusive.

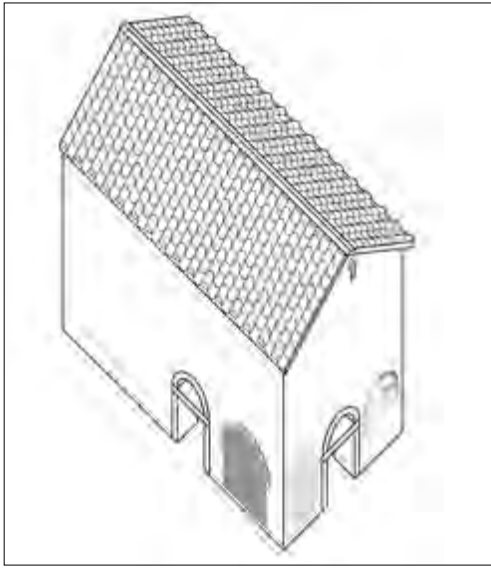
### THE SINGLE DEDICATEE WITH DIVINE FIGURES

Consistently represented is the **dedicatee**, who often may be the only non-saintly figure represented in the portrait. In cases where the dedicatee had died before a tomb was founded in her memory, she was then frequently portrayed in strict frontal view, standing with arms crossed over her chest, mirroring the pose of the arrayed corpse. This figure type was to be unequivocally identified as the deceased by the Byzantine viewer.

A prime example is the fourteenth-century tomb fresco depicting Maria Synadene, located on the west façade of the Anastasis church in the monastery of Christ the Savior (Figs. 1, 2); the church's exterior walls served as the location for at least three tombs of Synadene family members living in the provincial center of Berroia, Greece. Maria, who is shown standing frontally with crossed arms, is arrayed in a red dress with

15 M. ALEXIOU, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, 2nd ed., New York 2002, cf. pp. 24–35; CONSTAS, *Death and Dying in Byzantium* (cit. n. 10), pp. 124–148.

16 For example, Tomb C and Tomb E in the south funerary chapel of the church of Christ in Chora, Constantinople, are decorated with frescoed portraits featuring large family groups, with four persons appearing in Tomb C and eight individuals in Tomb, UNDERWOOD, *Kariye Djami* (cit. n. 5), pp. 272–276 (Tomb C) and pp. 280–288 (Tomb E).



1: Berroia, church of the Anastasis, elevation drawing, as seen from the north-west



2: Berroia, church of the Anastasis, tomb of Maria Synadene (d. 1326) on the west façade

white mantle, likely signaling that she died before marriage. She stands on the viewer's right hand side and looks out from the arched composition. The brief painted inscription incorporated within this image, to the right and left of her face, records her name and death date of 1326.<sup>17</sup> At the composition's center, the Virgin stands in a three-quarter pose extending both arms towards the deceased in a gesture of presentation. At the same time the Virgin also turns her head backwards towards Christ, who stands on the composition's left side. By doing so, the Virgin recommends the deceased to Christ, interceding on her behalf.

The action in this unfolding short story moves from right to left, from the passive to the active, with the two divine figures, Mary and Christ, discussing the fate of the deceased

laywoman. The passivity of the female subject, who is identified as already having died by her posture, argues that Maria Synadene is not the patron of her own tomb. In this case, the founder is not represented in the portrait. Her or his anonymity today may not have been intended originally, and additional inscriptions or painted portraits once located elsewhere on the church exterior, which is now badly effaced, likely clarified who commissioned this laywoman's tomb.<sup>18</sup>

When the dedicatee is represented alone in a gesture of prayer, as if still alive, it is possible – if not likely – that the tomb's construction predated her death. The tomb of a presently unidentified laywoman in the lower chapel of the Myrelaion church in Constantinople, a late Byzantine monastic foundation, offers a well-pre-

17 *The servant of the Lord, Maria Synadene, fell asleep in the month of May, in the year 1326* (tr. by the author)

18 T. PAPAȒOTOS, *He Veroia kai oi naoi tes* (110s–180s ai.): *Historike kai archaiologike spoude ton mnemeion tes poles*, Athens 1994, cf. pp. 172–174, 253–257, 308–309; T. PAPAȒOTOS, *Christianikes Epigraphies Makedonias*, in: *Makedonika*, 21, 1981, pp. 401–410, cf. pp. 404–405; G. GOURNARIS, *The Church of Christ in Veroia* (Guides of the Institute for Balkan Studies, 12), Thessaloniki 1991, cf. pp. 45–46, pl. 48.



3: Constantinople, church of the Myrelaion, lower chapel, frescoed tomb portrait of a laywoman before the Virgin and Child, fourteenth century



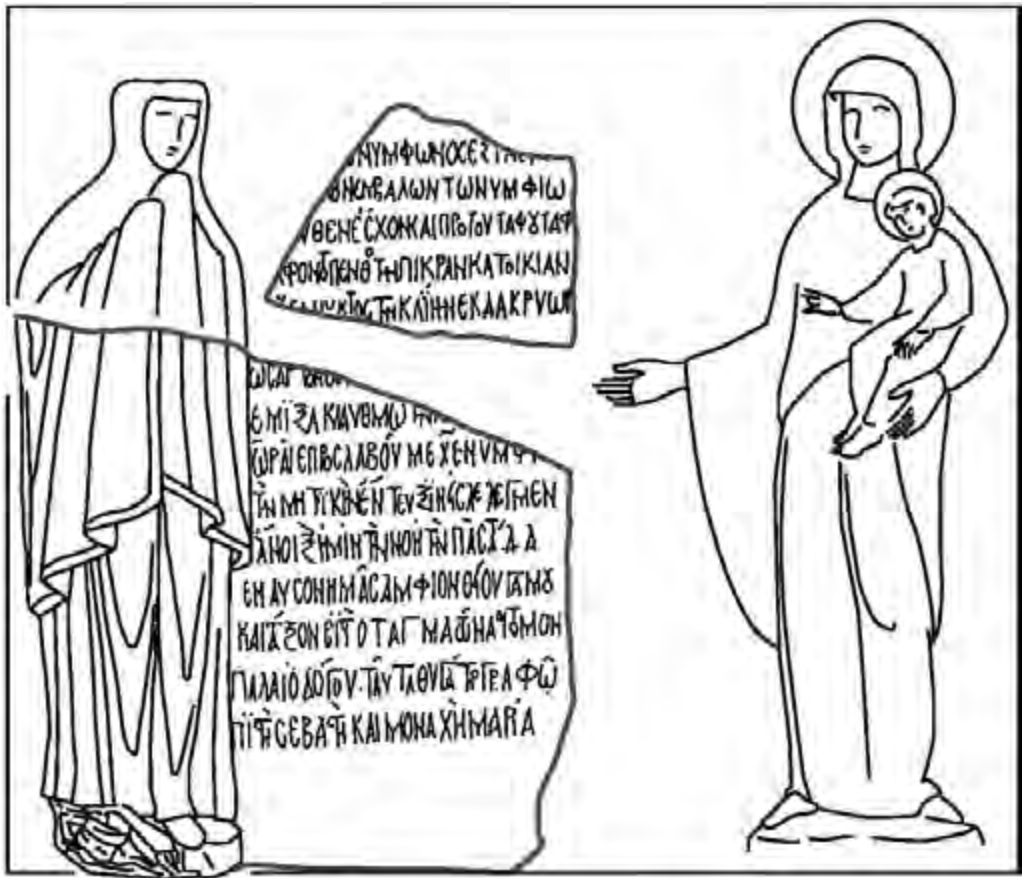
4: Constantinople, church of the Myrelaion, lower chapel, reconstruction of tombs, highlighting the location of the laywoman's tomb, fourteenth century

served example of this portrait type (Figs. 3, 4).<sup>19</sup> The overall design of the tomb is a trompe l'oeil niche with rounded arch supported by delicate colonnettes, and a pseudo-sarcophagus<sup>20</sup> below resting on the floor. Appearing within the frescoed arch at left is the kneeling dedicatee, who turns in three-quarter view towards the Virgin and Child, standing on the right. The female subject wears a richly-dyed red dress and white

mantle with transparent veil, again suggestive of the burial garments symbolizing marriage to Christ in death. In such single-figure compositions as this, where there is only one human subject (joined by one or more divine figures), it is unclear if the female dedicatee is the patron of the frescoed tomb, or if a family member established the monument on her behalf.

19 C. STRIKER, *Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul*, Princeton, NJ 1981, cf. pp. 3–5, 30–31. Although the identity of this laywoman in the frescoed tomb is unknown, the burial of the nun Eugenia, formerly Euphrosyne Doukaina Bale(ane), is attested at the Myrelaion or in its environs by a partial funerary inscription decorating a marble slab found in excavations at the site. The partial inscription has been dated to the fourteenth century, based on its epigraphy. W. H. BUCKLER, Appendix. Three Inscriptions, in: D. TALBOT RICE, *Excavations at the Bodrum Camii*, 1930, in: *Byzantion*, 8, 1933, pp. 151–176, cf. pp. 175–176, fig. 12 (2).

20 In the late Byzantine period, monolithic stone sarcophagi with closure lids were rarely employed, as had been the prevailing practice for elite burials in the Roman and late antique periods. In Palaiologan niche burials, the tendency instead was to form a symbolic casket from multiple stone panels, a pseudo-sarcophagus; such a pseudo-sarcophagus could also incorporate a section of the church wall to form its back panel. The result was a casket that could not contain the decomposing corpse, as its component parts were not sealed. Thus the pseudo-sarcophagus was a purely decorative form designed to highlight the funerary function of the tomb monument. The body of the deceased was laid to rest elsewhere, for example, beneath the church floor within or before the tomb niche, T. PAZARAS, *Anaglyphes sarkophagoi kai epitaphies plakas tes meses kai hysteres byzantines periodou sten Hellada*, Athens 1988, cf. pp. 58–81, 168–171.



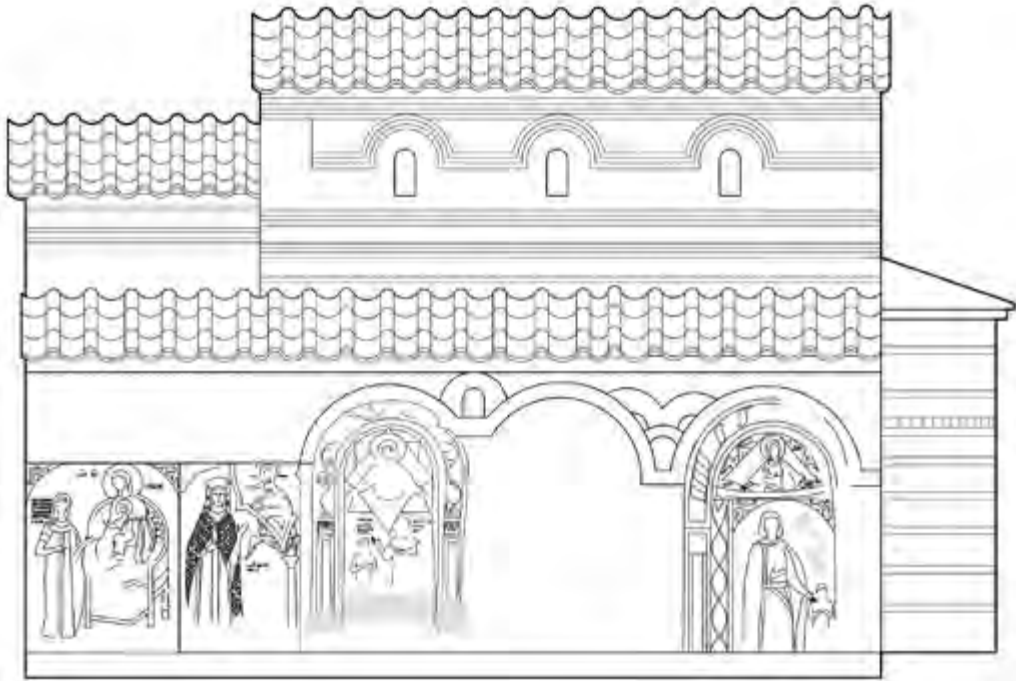
5: Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, Inv. No. 4020; reconstruction drawing of the fragmentary tomb panel commissioned by the nun Maria Palaiologina, epigram attributed to Manuel Philes, early fourteenth century (Reconstruction drawing after T. Papamastorakes)

#### IDENTIFYING THE FEMALE DONOR: A TOMB OF ONE'S OWN

Despite this ambiguity in the iconography of some tombs, there is significant evidence that Byzantine women commonly established tombs for themselves, and that setting up one's own tomb before death was a regular practice in Byzantium in all periods. A ready example is offered by the patron Maria Palaiologina, a nun who is thought to have been a member of Theodora

Palaiologina's convent of the Lips in Constantinople. The epigram commissioned by the nun Maria for her own tomb was inscribed on a sculpted relief panel, now in fragmentary condition in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum (Fig. 5). The funerary poem is written in the first person, in the voice of the patron Maria,<sup>21</sup> and confirms that she established her own decorated tomb before death.

21 T. PAPAMASTORAKIS, *Epitymbies parastaseis kata te mese kai hystere byzantine periodo*, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaialogikes Hetaireias*, 19.4, 1996–1997, pp. 285–304, cf. fig. 14, and TALBOT, *Epigrams in Context* (cit. n. 1), pp. 80–81, fig. 9. *Receive me, Christ, <my> handsome bridegroom; heeding the intercession of Thy mother, open for*



6: Kastoria, church of the Taxiarches, elevation drawing of south exterior, five extant tombs

The elegant, crisp letters of the poem appear at the panel's center. At left is a partial figure who turns in a three-quarter pose towards the inscribed text. This individual, based on details of her monastic dress, has been convincingly identified by Titos Papamastorakis as the nun Maria, the patron of the epigram and the tomb. Maria strikes an active pose – one of address and engagement – rather than appearing with arms crossed over her chest, in a frontal view. On the panel's right side, now lost, was most likely a figure of the Virgin, to whom Maria addresses her

inscribed prayer. The inclusion of an intercessory prayer on one's own behalf or for a deceased family member is common in late Byzantine tombs. These written assertions of patronage go hand in hand with visual manifestation of patronage: the three-quarter pose and intercessory gestures that frequently characterize donor figures in these tomb portraits. In monuments (now) lacking a patron's inscription, such as the Myrelaion tomb, the three-quarter posture with gesturing hands can suggest that a female dedicatee is also the patron of her own tomb.

#### TOMB GROUPS

Most Byzantine tombs were not set up as isolated monuments, but instead were part of a larger constellation of tombs fitted to-

gether vertically into existing wall spaces within a vibrantly painted church interior, or situated horizontally in outdoor cemeteries encircling

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*us the spiritual bridal chamber. Clothe us in the garment of divine marriage, and place us in the ranks of your <fellow> banqueters. I, the nun Maria, faithful sebastē and daughter of a Palaiologos, write these words.* (tr. by A.-M. Talbot)

the church building. The former was the case at the Myrelaion (Figs. 3, 4). The church's middle Byzantine foundations were converted in the Palaiologan period into a functioning lower chapel whose walls were lined with tombs similar in form and decoration to the laywoman's tomb discussed above. Regrettably the painted decoration of most of these monuments was lost by the time of the church's excavation, with the example of the laywoman's tomb being a remarkable survival. Therefore the context for this young

woman's burial was as one in a larger group of family or related tombs; an additional portrait or inscription naming the donor of the laywoman's tomb may have been placed in close proximity to it. Yet another example of this trend towards constellations of related tombs are the Synadene family burials on the façade of Berroia's Anastasis church (Figs. 1, 2). In both of these cases the much greater burial ensemble has now been lost, thereby depriving us of the many details about female patronage.

#### TOMB GROUPS AND THE FEMALE DONOR: KASTORIA'S CHURCH OF THE TAXIARCHES

One of the most extensive tomb groups from late Byzantium survives in Kastoria's church of the Taxiarches, a foundation that may have served a local parish or a small urban monastery.<sup>22</sup> The ensemble of six tombs on the building's south façade features three monuments made either by or for women, including both girls and adult laywomen (Fig. 6). In one of the six tombs a female donor can be conclusively identified: the laywoman Anna, who founded a niche tomb in honor of her deceased daughter (her name is now lost) (Figs. 7, 8). This monument, a recessed niche tomb, is the third tomb from the east (labelled "C" on the elevation drawing) (Fig. 6). Tombs dedicated in the memory of two additional laywomen also decorate the south facade: the tomb for Euphrosyne who died in 1436, according to the inscription of

her portrait (labelled "F"), and the tomb of another laywoman whose identity is now lost (labelled "D") (Fig. 6).<sup>23</sup>

Before examining these painted compositions in detail, let us survey the fascinating process by which this exterior space was taken over by burial monuments. It is instructive of how patrons, including female patrons, negotiated with the church authority – whether the church's clergy or a *ktetor* (subsequent restorer) or the descendants of the *ktetor* – in order to make room for family tombs in a setting with little available real estate. The co-opting of the exterior wall for family monuments was not part of the building's original ninth- or tenth-century design when a simple blind arcade extended across the nave's south wall; the south wall of the adjacent narthex was left undecorated. By the late 1430s, the full south façade

22 A second and better known example of a large tomb group surviving with portions of its decoration intact is the series of eight niche tombs in the Chora monastery, UNDERWOOD, *Kariye Djami* (cit. n. 5), cf. pp. 269–299; R. OUSTERHOUT, *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 25), Washington, DC 1987, pp. 54–61, 110–114, and BROOKS, *The History and Significance of Tomb Monuments* (cit. n. 5), pp. 23–31.

23 Of the three remaining tombs, one was destroyed by the cutting through of a later door into the nave (Tomb C, Phase I). The last two monuments of the six commemorate boys: the adolescent boy, Manuel Moustaki, son of Michael, who died in 1439 (details recorded in the accompanying inscription) (Tomb E, Phase II); and a now unidentified boy whose tomb was commissioned by the adult male represented in his portrait, possibly his father (Tomb A, Phase I), A. ORLANDOS, *Ta byzantina mnemeia tes Kastorias*, in: *Archeion ton Byzantinon Mnemeion tes Hellados*, 4, 1938, pp. 61–106; S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in the Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece* (ÖAW, *Denkschriften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse*, 226), Vienna 1992, pp. 94–96, no. B1; N. K. MOUTSOPOULOS, *Ekklesies tes Kastorias 90s–110s aionas*, Thessaloniki 1992, pp. 113–201.



7 and 8: Kastoria, church of the Taxiarches, line drawing and photograph: tomb for the daughter of Anna, Tomb C

including the nave and narthex was converted for tomb display. This can be deduced from the layering of fresco additions, with the three eastern tombs added first (Phase I, eastern end, *terminus ante quem*: 1436), followed next by the three western tombs, two of which are dated 1436 and 1439 (Phase II, western end, ca. 1436–1439).<sup>24</sup>

Belonging to Phase I, the tomb Anna established for her young daughter is a rare example

of the portrait type which clearly identifies the tomb patron (Figs. 6–8). In this composition, a deceased figure in frontal view with crossed arms (the child) is paired with the donor (the mother) who raises her arms to present the deceased to a divine figure. This same portrait type was employed by fathers as well as mothers, as in a layman's tomb for his son (Tomb A), also on the Taxiarches south façade (Fig. 6).

24 Prior to the redesign of the south exterior to accommodate fifteenth-century tombs, the church underwent a series of additions and restorations during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. On the exterior, in the thirteenth century a fresco program was added to the western narthex façade, and this included the portrait of Michael Asen II, king of Bulgaria (r. 1246–1256/7), with his mother Irene, daughter of the despot of Epiros, Theodore Angelos Komnenos, and the wife of Ivan Asen II (r. 1218–1241). The two figures of Michael and Irene flank a monumental image of the archangel Michael with raised sword. Kalopiissi-Verti suggests that this decoration served as a thank-offering for the 1255 Bulgarian conquest of territories in Thrace and Macedonia; these territories perhaps included Kastoria, formerly under the control of the despot of Epiros. In the church interior, an inscription in the nave over the central door records that the nave's frescoes were restored in 1359/60 on the occasion of the death of the *hieromonachos*, Daniel. This second campaign of nave decoration is recorded during the reign of the Serbian king (1356–1371) and ruler of Kastoria (1356–1359), Symeon Palaiologos Uroš, with his son John Doukas Palaiologos Uroš. Thus many donors over the centuries contributed to the decoration and support of this single church, KALOPISSI-VERTI, Dedicatory Inscriptions (cit. n. 23), pp. 94–96 (no. B1); ORLANDOS, *Ta byzantina mnemeia tes Kastorias* (cit. n. 23), pp. 97–99.



In Anna's monument for her daughter, the painted composition takes the form of a tall, narrow niche, formed from the original ninth- or tenth-century blind arcade. Painted columns with Corinthian capitals support a rounded arch above filled with scrolling vines (Figs. 7, 8). Within the niche on the back wall, the laywoman Anna stands at right facing forward. Her arms are raised in a gesture of presentation towards her daughter at left. The accompanying inscription reads: *O Lord, remember me your servant Anna by the side of <my> young girl*. Christ, addressed by the mother's prayer, is pictured above in the arch tympanum, where he is surrounded by a highly illusionistic blue and white mandorla. Christ reaches down with both hands to bless the mother Anna and her daughter, the dedicatee of the tomb. The child is clearly represented as deceased with arms crossed over her chest and facing frontally. The inscription above the child's head records a second prayer: *O Lord, remember the daughter of your servant Anna*.<sup>25</sup>

It is noteworthy that the mother and tomb patron does not make mention of her child's name, but instead refers to her as *the daughter of Anna*, emphasizing the mother's role in determining the child's identity. Anna also does not refer to her spouse, or to the child's father. Rather her painted prayers would recollect ongoing prayers to be spoken in memory of her daughter, an act of private devotion encouraged in the Byzantine popular religious practice. The very prominent display of this image on the façade of the Taxiarches church publicly announced Anna's pious acts and maternal care. For viewers of the tomb, this painted portrait presented Anna as a paradigm of familial piety, and a model for other mothers in the community.

The outdoor location, while exposing the tomb frescoes to damage from the elements (as well as from modern vandals), gave the young girl's tomb a prominence of place in the public

sphere and an ongoing accessibility that tombs inside the church could not match. The topography of medieval Kastoria and the church's situation in a fourteenth-century network of streets is difficult to reconstruct, but certainly the exterior location of this tomb and the five others on the south façade would have been highly visible to passers-by. This audience would have included participants in contemporary as well as future funeral processions that conveyed the dead from home to the church, as on the day of the daughter's funeral.

The other two Kastoria tombs memorializing women represent the single dedicatee praying before a figure of Christ (Tomb E) or the Virgin and Christ child (Tomb F) (Fig. 6). The gestures of these two women do not explicitly identify them as patrons, but this possibility certainly exists (as discussed above).

The fact that half the tombs on this church façade feature female dedicatees, as well as a female patron, gives women a prominence of place that is not usually evidenced in the surviving artistic programs of late Byzantine church buildings. It cannot be confirmed if all the individuals represented here were members of the same family, but it is indeed possible that they were related to one another. To judge from the evidence provided by monastic *typika*, the burial and commemoration of multiple family members in the same foundation could be beneficial (it is unconfirmed if the Taxiarches served an urban monastery). With greater involvement and therefore oversight, a family could ensure the regular and required performance of commemorative rites for its members as well as the upkeep of relatives' tombs. In churches where women were the major founders of tomb monuments and endowments for commemoration, such portraits as those seen on the Taxiarches façade would have asserted the authority of female patrons, serving as a reminder of the community's responsibility to honor them.

25 Translations by the author. ORLANDOS, *Ta byzantina mnemeia tes Kastorias* (cit. n. 23), pp. 97–99.

CHURCHES FOR FAMILY BURIAL AND THE FEMALE FOUNDER:  
HAGIOS NICHOLAS ON RHODES

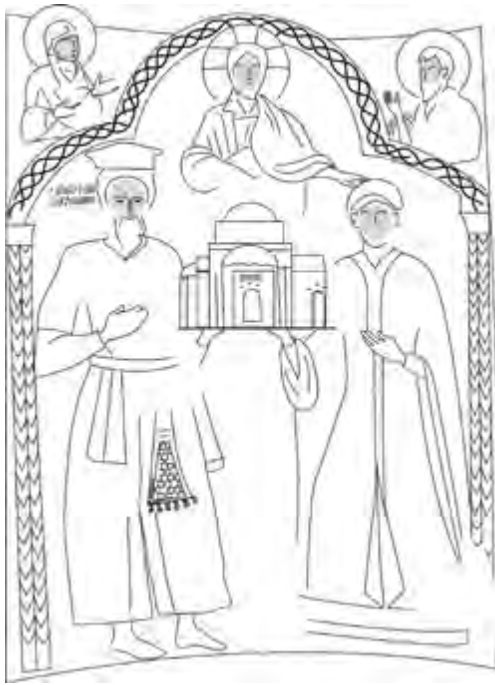
While only rarely do tomb portraits explicitly identify a patron, as in the case of Anna's tomb for her deceased daughter in Kastoria, dedicatory portraits recording a church's foundation or its renovation by a later sponsor (a *ktetor*) commonly identify the donor by visual cues, as well as in written inscriptions. In these widespread examples, the donor holds before her/him or offers forward an architectural model of the sponsored building, an artistic convention popular in Greco-Roman antiquity. This portrait type has a long pedigree in Byzantine tradition, with early examples going back to the fourth century, and its popularity extending far both in the medieval East and West.<sup>26</sup> This composition, which makes clear in visual terms the founder who was to be credited with the church's construction (or renovation), provides a generalized image of the building's architectural features and decoration.

A superb example in this tradition is the fifteenth-century dedication image representing a laywoman (her name is now lost) with her husband Nicholas Bardoane, who is described as *pansebastos* and who holds the title *logothetes*

(Fig. 9). The couple's portrait commemorates the founding of the church of Hagios Nicholas, located in the interior of the island of Rhodes, Greece, at the settlement of Phountoukli (now Dimylia). It is unknown if Hagios Nicholas served as a parish church, as a private family chapel on Bardoane lands, or whether it was part of a rural monastery.<sup>27</sup>

The dedication portrait is painted in fresco on the walls of the church's west exedra, beside the western door into the nave. A framed dedicatory inscription flanking the couple's portrait, while fragmentary, makes clear that Hagios Nicholas was established on the occasion of a family member's death.<sup>28</sup> As the church's original wall decoration includes a tomb commemorating the couple's three deceased offspring, Maria, George and a second son (whose name is now lost), it can be assumed that the church was founded after the death of one or all of the couple's offspring (Fig. 10). The children's tomb portrait, in which all three figures are shown frontally with arms crossed over their chests, faces their parent's dedication image in the west exedra,

- 26 T. VELMANS, *Le portrait dans l'art des Paléologues*, in: *Art et société à Byzance sous les Paléologues. Actes du Colloque organisé par l'Association internationale des études byzantines à Venise en septembre 1968*, Venice 1971, pp. 91–148; KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 23); E. LIPSMAYER, *The Donor and his Church Model in Medieval Art from Early Christian Times to the Late Romanesque Period*, Ph.D., Rutgers University 1981.
- 27 M. ACHEIMASTOU-POTAMIANOU, *Oi toichographies tes oikogenias Bardoane ston Agio Nikolao sto Phountoukli tes Rodou*, in: *Thorakion: apheroma ste mneme tou Paulou Lazaride (epimeleia keimenon, Loula Kypraiou; kallitechnike epimeleia, Dora Chrysotomidou)*, Athens 2004, pp. 247–262 and pp. 77–84 (color plates); I. CHRISTOPHORAKI, *Choregikes martyries stous naous tes mesaionikes Rodou (1204–1522)*, in: *Rodos. 2. 400 chronia. He pole tes Rodou apo ten idryse tes mechri ten katalepsi apo tous tourkous (1523)*, Athens 2000, pp. 449–472; A. ORLANDOS, *Byzantina kai metabyzantina mnemeia tes Rodou. Hai toichographiai*, in: *Archeion ton Byzantinon Mnemeion tes Hellados*, 6, 1948, pp. 113–215, cf. pp. 182–197, and A. ORLANDOS, *Byzantina kai metabyzantina mnemeia tes Rodou. He architektonike*, in: *Archeion ton Byzantinon Mnemeion tes Hellados*, 6, 1948, pp. 55–112, cf. pp. 99–106. On the inscriptions indentifying the husband see CHRISTOPHORAKI, *Choregikes martyries stous naous tes mesaionikes Rodou*, cf. p. 463 no. 107; ORLANDOS, *Byzantina kai metabyzantina mnemeia tes Rodou. Hai toichographiai*, p. 196, fig. 150.
- 28 *The all-holy and divine naos ... of God ... was built ... after the death of ... <by> the pancebastos Nikolaos and <by his> wife ...* (tr. by the author). CHRISTOPHORAKI, *Choregikes martyries stous naous tes mesaionikes Rodou* (cit. n. 27), p. 463 no. 107.
- 29 See for example: the dedication portrait of Michael Katzouroubes with his wife (1317) in the church of St Demetrianus, Dali, Cyprus; the portrait of Nikephoros Magistros with his wife (fourteenth century) in the church of the



9: Rhodes, church of Hagios Nicholas, dedicatory portrait of a laywoman and her husband Nicholas Bardoane

thus forming a pendant image to it. As has been seen in the majority of compositions discussed thus far, illusionistic painted architecture is employed in both portrait compositions to suggest elaborate architectonic frames.

In the parents' dedicatory image, the couple together holds an architectural model of the elegant tetraconch church with single dome, and

offers it symbolically to the bust figure of Christ above them. In Byzantine portraits recording a church foundation, when laywomen appear with their husbands they are rarely represented holding such architectural models.<sup>29</sup> Remarkably at least two other examples of women holding a church model, paired with their husbands, survive in the Byzantine churches on Rhodes, albeit from more modest foundations.<sup>30</sup> Thus, in this local community the unusual portrait type seems to have been popular.

The more common practice, whereby the husband alone holds the church model, reflected a wife's economic and legal inequality in relationship to her husband. As compared with the circumstances of laywomen, widows who founded churches operated under a very different set of economic and legal circumstances. As a result, a widow acted with relative independence and economic autonomy.<sup>31</sup> This privileged status of the widow in Byzantium is given visual form in Theodora Synadene's dedication portrait, with her daughter, decorating the Lincoln College Typikon (Fig. 11). In the manuscript painting, the widow and nun Theodora carries a model of her family's burial church, which she founded anew in the fourteenth century, and she approaches the Virgin on the composition's left side to offer the church to her.<sup>32</sup> The female founder of the church of Hagios Nicholas falls somewhere in between these two poles, for she

Virgin Phorbiotissa, Asinou, Cyprus; and the portrait of Theodore Limniotes with his wife, Anna Radene, and their son (ca. 1180) in the church of the Anargyroi, Kastoria, Greece, A. STYLIANOU/J. STYLIANOU, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus*, 2nd ed., Nicosia 1997, fig. 256 (Dali); fig. 57 (Asinou); S. PELEKANIDES/M. CHATZIDAKIS, *Kastoria. Mosaics-Wall Paintings*, Athens 1985, fig. 55 (Kastoria).

30 See the portrait of Irene and Constantine holding the church model (1372/3) in the church of the Sts Theodore at Archangelou, Rhodes; and the portrait of Irene and George holding a church model, with their son (ca. 1428) in the church of St John the Baptist at Archangelou, Rhodes, I. BITHA, *Endymatologikes martyries stis toichographies tes mesaionikes Rodou*, in: *Rodos. 2. 400 chronia* (cit. n. 27), pp. 429–448, fig. 1.6 (St John the Baptist, Archangelou), fig. 2.12 (Sts Theodores, Archangelou).

31 LAIOU, *The Role of Women* (cit. n. 11), pp. 233–260; A.-M. TALBOT, *Late Byzantine Nuns, by Choice or Necessity?*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 103–117.

32 Oxford, Lincoln College gr. 35, fol. 11r; I. SPATHARAKIS, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, Leiden 1976, pp. 190–206; A. CUTLER/P. MAGDALINO, *Some Precisions on the Lincoln College Typikon*, in: *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 27, 1978, pp. 179–198.



10: Rhodes, church of Hagios Nicholas, funerary portrait of the founders' three children

is neither the subservient wife nor the independent widow.

In the dedication portrait at Hagios Nicholas, besides the wife's presentation of the church model with her husband, what is also remarkable is the fact that the laywoman alone receives a blessing from Christ above. Christ places his left hand on the female patron's head and his right hand on the church model. In middle and late Byzantine church dedications, it is uncommon for divine figures to intimately touch a suppliant, such as the church donor.<sup>33</sup> In this portrait, Christ's blessing hand on the laywoman's head is the visual means by which this female patron takes precedence over her husband and highlights her status as the donor favored by Christ.

To date, we have no further evidence concerning the identity of this laywoman or her family members, other than that recorded in the decoration and inscriptions of their church, making it difficult to consider this unusual case of a lay female founder in the fuller social and economic contexts of late medieval Rhodes. By comparison, for late Byzantine Constantinople there are several wealthy aristocratic female patrons, all widows, whose church foundations are well documented, both archaeologically and in written sources. These monasteries, as one of their central functions, were first established in the Palaiologan period, or they were refurbished then, to serve as the location of family burials. The most famous examples include the tenth-century Lips monastery, restored by Theodora-Eugenia Palaiologina ca. 1281–1303, the widow of emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos;<sup>34</sup> the now-destroyed convent of the Virgin of Certain Hope, established by Theodora Synadene ca. 1300 and documented in the foundress's surviving *typikon*; and the late eleventh- or early twelfth-century monastery of the Virgin Pammakaristos, expanded by Maria-Martha Glabas Tarchaneiotas after 1304. The wealth and status of these women and the prestige of their foundations, located in the imperial capital, provides a picture of the wealthiest female patrons, all of whom are widows and monastics.

By comparison, the female donor of Hagios Nicholas on Rhodes and its tomb for the patron's three children attests to privileged female founders who are married laywomen and whose spouses were alive at the time of benefaction. She is represented in the dedication image

33 A paradigmatic example is the dedication portrait of the restorer Theodore Metochites, presenting a church model to the enthroned Christ in the church of Christ in Chora, Constantinople, ca. 1316–1321, UNDERWOOD, Kariye Djami (cit. n. 5), pp. 42–43.

34 V. MARINIS, *The Monastery tou Libos: Architecture, Sculpture, and Liturgical Planning in Middle and Late Byzantine Constantinople*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 2004, and V. MARINIS, *Tombs and Burials in the Monastery tou Libos in Constantinople*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 69, 2009, pp. 15–34.



**11:** *Lincoln College Typikon, Theodora Synadene with her Daughter offering the Model of the Church of the Virgin of Certain Hope to the Virgin*

standing with her spouse and taking equal hold of the church model. The wife's privileged position over her husband in this act of donation is signaled by the gesture of a third party, Christ. At the church of the Taxiarches in Kastoria, the patron Anna, also a laywoman, founds a tomb for her daughter. She is represented alone in this act of dedication, without the figure of her husband (the father of her child) or any mention of him in the portrait's surviving inscriptions, and thus it cannot be known with certainty that he is surviving. These female donors each had the economic means to commission a tomb monument, and were not part of a community of nuns removed from the life of the secular community and domestic life. Rather, their benefactions of tombs and churches for burial reinforced the

very prominent role women played in the daily life of the family. This included the raising of children in the family home until marriage in adolescence, spinning and weaving to produce family clothing, and the burial of a child after an untimely death. For the laity, the strong connections between the family home and proper burial allowed women to take on pivotal roles in this sphere of religious life. In turn, female donors with means could establish lasting monuments to the dead that exalted their social roles and extended their influence from the domestic sphere into the sacred space of the church.

**Illustration credits:** Figs. 1, 2, 5–10: S. Brooks. – Figs. 3, 4: after STRIKER, *Myrelaion* (cit. n. 19), Figs. 62, 32. – Fig. 11: Lincoln College, Oxford.

## FRAUEN ALS GRÜNDERINNEN VON DOPPELKLÖSTERN IM BYZANTINISCHEN REICH

EKATERINI MITSIOU

Der Begriff „Kloster“ ist in unserer Denkweise in erster Linie mit Männer- bzw. Frauenklöstern verbunden, weil das weit verbreitete Bild des byzantinischen Mönchtums durch den Stereotyp der strengen Trennung der zwei Geschlechter und des *abaton* geprägt ist. Das byzantinische Klosterwesen wies jedoch eine größere Vielfalt in Bezug auf die Geschlechtstrennung auf, als man denken mag. Zeugnis dafür sind die eher unbekannteren Doppelklöster, die die Zugehörigkeit zur selben klösterlichen Ge-

meinschaft von Männern und Frauen voraussetzen.<sup>1</sup> Dies mag auch heute noch provokant scheinen. Dennoch zeichnete sich das Frühchristentum,<sup>2</sup> dessen Erscheinung die Doppelklöster sind, durch keine strenge Haltung gegenüber einer solchen Art des Zusammenlebens der zwei Geschlechter aus. Dies lässt sich an Hand verschiedener Phänomene dokumentieren: von den sogenannten *Symeisakten* (*Virgines subintroductae*) und *Agapetai*,<sup>3</sup> bis zum Familienasketismus und zu den verschiedenen häretischen Gruppen, wie

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Der vorliegende Beitrag ist eine überarbeitete Version meines im Rahmen des Internationalen Colloquiums „Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond“ gehaltenen Vortrages.

- 1 Das Werk von P.S. HILPISCH, *Die Doppelklöster. Entstehung und Organisation*, in: *Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens*, Münster in Westf. 1928, bes. S. 5–24, ist immer noch die einzige Monographie zum Thema. Den Doppelklöstern sind einige spezielle Artikel gewidmet: s. M. BATESON, *Origin and Early History of Double Monasteries*, in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, n.s., 13, 1899, S. 137–198; J. PARGOIRE, *Les monastères doubles chez les Byzantins*, in: *Échos d'Orient*, 9, 1906, S. 21–25; D.F. STRAMARA JR., *Double Monasticism in the Greek East: Fourth Through Eighth Centuries*, in: *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 6.2, 1998, S. 269–312, und idem, *Double Monasticism in the Greek East: Eighth Through Fifteenth Centuries*, in: *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 43.1–4, 1998, S. 185–202. Zu den wirtschaftlichen Aspekten dieser Klöster und für weitere Literatur s. E. MITSIOU, *Das Doppelkloster des Patriarchen Athanasios I. in Konstantinopel: Historisch-prosopographische und wirtschaftliche Beobachtungen*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 58, 2008, S. 87–106. Es sei hier nur vermerkt, dass der vorliegende Beitrag nicht auf eine detaillierte Analyse der Doppelklöster abzielt, sondern versucht, einen von der Forschung eher vernachlässigten Aspekt, nämlich den der Frauen als Gründerinnen solcher Klöster zu analysieren.
- 2 M. VILLER/K. RAHNER, *Aszese und Mystik in der Väterzeit: Ein Abriß der frühchristlichen Spiritualität*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1939, ND: Freiburg/Basel/Wien 1989; K. HEUSSI, *Der Ursprung des Mönchtums*, Tübingen 1936, ND: Aalen 1981; U. RANKE-HEINEMANN, *Das frühe Mönchtum. Seine Motive nach den Selbstzeugnissen*, Essen 1964; J. GRIBOMONT, *Mönchtum und Aszese, I. Östliches Christentum*, in: B. MC GINN/J. MEYENDORFF/J. LECLEERCQ (Hrsg.), *Geschichte der christlichen Spiritualität, I: Von den Anfängen bis zum 12. Jahrhundert*, Würzburg 1993, S. 115–137; K.S. FRANK, *Geschichte des christlichen Mönchtums*, Darmstadt 1996; P. BROWN, *The Body and Society. Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, Twentieth-Anniversary Edition with a New Introduction (Columbia Classics in Religion), New York 2008, bes. S. 213–338.
- 3 S. ELM, 'Virgins of God'. *The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford Classical Monographs), Oxford 1994, S. 48–51 (*Symeisakten*) und S. 185–186 (*Agapetai*); BROWN, *Body and Society* (zit. Anm. 2), S. 266–267.

die Lampetianer,<sup>4</sup> in deren Klöstern Männer und Frauen zusammen lebten. Bei den Eustathianern wurde die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter sogar im Äußeren deutlich, denn die Frauen konnten ihre Haare schneiden und auch männliche Kleidung anziehen, andere Gruppen wieder wie die Messalianen gestatteten Frauen auch das Predigen.<sup>5</sup>

In diesem Rahmen muss man die „Doppelklöster“ (διπλᾶ μοναστήρια) verstehen; sie wurden oft von Mitgliedern derselben Familie gegründet, die zur selben Zeit in den Mönchsstand eintraten und im selben Kloster, welches möglicherweise ihr früheres Haus war, lebten. Diese Mönche und Nonnen brachen also nicht jegliche Beziehungen zur Welt ab, und ihr Koinobion war keine reine geistliche Verwandtschaft, sondern auch eine Blutsverwandtschaft, die zusätzlich einen geistlichen Charakter annahm.<sup>6</sup> In der *Vita* des Nikephoros I. ist zu lesen, wie Männer offenbar zur Zeit des Ikonoklasmus unter dem Vorwand der Verwandtschaft nah zu Nonnenklöstern ihre ἀσκητήρια errichtet hatten. *Auf diese Weise vermieden sie zwar das offene Zusammen-*

*wohnen, vermochten aber nicht völlig das aus den Gedanken kommende Einverständnis (zur Sünde) zu verbannen. Denn sie besaßen alles gemeinsam, sowohl die (immobilen) Besitzungen als auch die (beweglichen) Vermögenswerte.*<sup>7</sup> Auf Beschluss des Patriarchen und der Synode wurden alle diese Klöster 811/814 geschlossen.

Einige Doppelklöster bildeten sich jedoch um „religiöse Experten“,<sup>8</sup> so wie wichtige mönchische Persönlichkeiten bzw. Heiligen, die sowohl Männer als auch Frauen zu Jüngern hatten. Zur Unterbringung der „JüngerInnen“ wurden derartige Klöster errichtet, wie der Fall der Anthusa von Mantineion im Folgenden verdeutlichen wird.

Die Nähe zwischen Mönchen und Nonnen, die eine Abweichung von den Normen der offiziellen Kirche darstellte, provozierte zweifellos ihre soziale Umgebung. Staat und Kirche versuchten in ihrer Rolle als regulierende Mächte durch juristische und kanonische Maßnahmen, die Doppelklöster abzuschaffen, meist allerdings nicht mit großem Erfolg.<sup>9</sup> Der Terminus „Doppelklös-

4 A. GUILLAUMONT, *Aux origines du monachisme chrétien. Pour une phénoménologie du monachisme* (Collection spiritualité orientale et vie monastique, Spiritualité orientale, 30), Paris 1979, S. 38–45; B. FLUSIN, *Das Aufblühen des östlichen Mönchtums*, in: L. PIETRI (Hrsg.), *Die Geschichte des Christentums, III: Der lateinische Westen und der byzantinische Osten (431–642)*, Freiburg 2005, S. 584–646, bes. S. 592.

5 Diesbezüglich vor allem ELM, ‘Virgins of God’ (zit. Anm. 3), S. 106–III, 189–196.

6 Vgl. die Wahrnehmung des Klosters als Familie in Byzanz, D. SAVRAMIS, *Zur Soziologie des byzantinischen Mönchtums*, Leiden/Köln 1962, S. 16–17; A.-M. TALBOT, *The Byzantine Family and the Monastery*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 44, 1990, S. 119–129.

7 Βίος τοῦ ἐν ἀγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Νικηφόρου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως καὶ νέας Ῥώμης συγγραφεὶς ὑπὸ Ἰγνατίου διακόνου καὶ σκευοφύλακος τῆς ἀγιωτάτης μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἀγίας Σοφίας, ed. C. DE BOOR, *Nicophori Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Opuscula Historica accedit Ignatii diaconi Vita Nicephorii*, Leipzig 1880, ND: New York 1975, Appendices, Nr. I., S. 139–217, hier S. 159.15–20. Für das Verbot der Doppelklöster durch den Patriarchen Nikephoros I. s. P. ALEXANDER, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople. Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire*, Oxford 1958, S. 76–77.

8 Zur Bedeutung dieses Begriffes s. J. D. ELLER, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion*, New York 2009, S. 76–77.

9 I. M. KONIDARIS, *Die Novelle 123 Justinians und das Problem der Doppelklöster*, in: *Ζητήματα Βυζαντινοῦ Δικαίου*, 1, 1990, S. 257–269; idem, *Die Rechtsstellung monastisch lebender Frauen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Unterschiede zwischen Nonnen und Mönchen*, in: R. POTZ/C. G. FÜRST (Hrsg.), *Mutter, Nonne, Diakonin. Frauenbilder im Recht der Ostkirchen (= Kanon 16)*, Egling an der Paar 2000, S. 131–143; idem, *Τὸ δίκαιον τῆς μοναστηριακῆς περιουσίας ἀπὸ τοῦ 9ου μέχρι καὶ τοῦ 12ου αἰῶνος*, Athen 1979, S. 27 und Anm. 42, 43; idem, *Νομικὴ θεώρηση τῶν μοναστηριακῶν τυπικῶν*, Athen 1984, S. 121–122; s. auch STRAMARA, *Double Monasticism*, I (zit. Anm. 1), S. 269–312, und idem, *Double Monasticism*, II (zit. Anm. 1), S. 185–202; F. T. SCHIPPER, „Wir erlauben nicht, dass in einem Kloster Mönche und Nonnen wohnen“ (Just. Nov. 123.36): Doppelklöster im spätantiken

ter“ (διπλᾶ μοναστήρια) ist sogar erstmals in Justinians *Novelle 123*<sup>10</sup> (546) belegt, die sie verbot und die Zukunft der vorhandenen Doppelklöster regelte. Die Mönche und Nonnen solcher bereits existierenden monastischen Gemeinden sollten keine Kontakte mehr zu einander haben, und ihr Vermögen war aufzuteilen. Die Frauen sollten im bisherigen Klosterbau verbleiben, während die Männer einen neuen errichten sollten. Falls es mehrere Doppelklöster in einem Sprengel gab, hatten sich die Nonnen in (bestehende) Frauenklöster und die Mönche in (bestehende) Männerklöster zu begeben, damit es nicht notwendig würde, (mehrere) neue Klöster (für die Männergemeinschaften) zu gründen.<sup>11</sup>

Mehr als 200 Jahre später wandten die Kirchenväter des Nicaenum II (787) weniger Strenge an. Der 20. Kanon gestattete die weitere Existenz der schon bestehenden Doppelklöster, wobei deren Mönche und Nonnen gemäß der Mönchsregel des Basileios<sup>12</sup> und in getrennten Gebäuden wohnen sollten. Nur die Gründung neuer derartiger Klöster wurde verboten.<sup>13</sup> Die mildere Vorgangsweise des zweiten Konzils von

Nikaia kann die Erwähnung des kappadokischen Kirchenvaters erklären. Aus dieser und späteren Textstellen<sup>14</sup> lässt sich erschließen, dass die Byzantiner diese monastische Form der Doppelklöster auf Basileios den Großen zurückführten. Angesichts des Ansehens, welches dieser Kirchenvater in Byzanz genoss, könnte man die weitere Präsenz der Doppelklöster in Byzanz trotz des gesetzlichen und kanonischen Verbots eventuell erklären.

Faszinierend wirkt ein interessantes Merkmal dieser Klöster, nämlich ihre Flexibilität. Die Byzantiner selbst und die modernen Forscher sind uneinig über die Art und Weise, in welcher die zwei Gemeinden räumlich gelebt haben. Ioannes Konidaris hat brillant gezeigt, wie die Gründer dieser Klöster in Reaktion auf die Gesetzgebung die Kohabitationsformen ändern konnten.<sup>15</sup> Was in allen Fällen gleich blieb, waren die folgenden Punkte:

- Sie hatten denselben Abt/dieselbe Äbtissin.
- Dieselben Regeln ordneten ihr mönchisches Leben.

ostmediterranean Raum, in: E. M. SYNEK (Hrsg.), *Frauenrollen und Frauenrechte in der Europäischen Orthodoxie* (= Kanon 17), Eglting an der Paar 2005, S. 56–77. Im Rahmen des Versuchs der Kirche, das Zusammenleben von Asketen und Asketinnen zu verhindern, ist auch die Abfassung (besonders ab dem vierten Jahrhundert) von Werken zu verstehen, die der Jungfräulichkeit gewidmet waren (*de Virginitate*), sie hervorhoben und auf die Gefahren der Annäherung von Frauen und Männern aufmerksam machten, s. BROWN, *Body and Society* (zit. Anm. 2), S. 267–268. Zu diesem Thema s. auch T. M. SHAW, *The Burden of the Flesh. Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity*, Minneapolis 1998.

10 JUSTINIAN, *Novella 123*, c. 36, ed. R. SCHOELL/G. KROLL, *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, III: *Novellae*, Hildesheim<sup>19</sup>1993, S. 619.26–33.

11 Für die früheren justinianischen Novellen zur Regelung des Problems s. KONIDARIS, *Die Novelle 123* (zit. Anm. 9), S. 263–266.

12 BASILEIOS DER GROSSE, *Regulae fusius tractatae*, cap. 33, in: *PG XXXI*, Sp. 997–1000 und *Regulae brevius tractatae*, cap. 108–III, cap. 154, cap. 220, in: *PG XXXI*, Sp. 1156–1157, 1184, 1228. Zu Basileios s. P. ROUSSEAU, *Basil of Caesarea*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1998, bes. S. 190–232; A. HOLMES, *A Life Pleasing to God. The Spirituality of the Rules of St Basil* (Cistercian Studies Series, 162), Kalamazoo, MI 2000, bes. S. 209–222; A. SILVAS, *The Asketikon of St Basil the Great* (Oxford Early Christian Studies), Oxford 2005.

13 *Kanon 20 des Nicaenum II*, ed. G. ALBERIGO/A. M. RITTER/L. ABRAMOWSKI u. a., *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum generaliumque decreta*, I (Corpus Christianorum), Turnhout 2006, S. 340.855–341.368.

14 Vgl. das *Typikon* des Neilos Damilas, der im vierzehnten Jahrhundert eindeutig die Doppelklöster Basileios dem Großen zuschrieb, S. PÉTRIDÈS, *Le typikon de Nil Damilas pour le monastère de femmes de Baëonia en Crète* (1400), in: *Izvestija Russkogo Arheologičeskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole*, 15, 1911, S. 95–109, hier S. 101.10–102.24.

15 KONIDARIS, *Die Novelle 123* (zit. Anm. 9), S. 262–269.



- Sie besaßen ein gemeinsames Vermögen, was auf eine finanzielle Abhängigkeit hinweist.
- Die Mönche kümmerten sich um die materielle Versorgung der Nonnen.

Die Verbreitung der Doppelklöster war vor allem in den ersten Jahrhunderten des Christentums groß. Bis zum sechsten Jahrhundert sind διπλᾶ μοναστήρια in Ägypten, Palästina und Syrien, aber auch in Kleinasien belegt. In der mittel- und spätbyzantinischen Zeit sind sie in der Nähe von Konstantinopel lokalisiert (z. B. in Honorias und Bithynien) und später in der Hauptstadt selbst und auf dem Balkan.<sup>16</sup> Bis zum neunten Jahrhundert sind die Doppelklöster eher ein ländliches Phänomen, aber ab dem zehnten/elften Jahrhundert ist die Tendenz erkennbar, solche monastischen Gemeinschaften vermehrt in der Stadt zu gründen. Unterschiede zwischen ländlichen und städtischen Doppelklöstern sind leider nicht eindeutig belegt. Man könnte jedoch annehmen, dass die ländlichen Klöster möglicherweise kleiner bzw. wirtschaftlich schwächer waren.

Die wirtschaftlichen Aspekte des Lebens in einem solchen Kloster bleiben fast völlig unbekannt, obwohl man hinter ihrer Errichtung Gründe wie Steuervermeidung oder Steuererleichterungen vermutet.<sup>17</sup> Genauere Zahlen und Fakten haben wir für das Athanasios-Kloster in Konstan-

tinopel (gegründet am Ende des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts). Das *Sigillion* aus dem März 1383 berichtet, dass die Nonnen den Mönchen unterstanden, andererseits sollten die Mönche zur materiellen Versorgung der Nonnen beitragen. Im Laufe der Zeit fühlten sich jedoch die Mönche von der Arbeit für sich selbst und für die Frauen überfordert. Ihre Leistung ließ nach, und das Kloster geriet in finanziellen Schwierigkeiten.<sup>18</sup> Anhand der nachfolgenden „gerechten“ Aufteilung seines unbeweglichen Vermögens erhielten die Mönche, die zahlreicher als die Frauen waren, ein Vermögen im Wert von rund 3000 Hyperpyra, während jenes der Nonnen die Summe von 2000 Hyperpyra nicht überschritt.<sup>19</sup> Die finanzielle Absicherung der Klosterschwester gab anscheinend der offiziellen Kirche eine gewisse Garantie gegen ein neues Zusammenleben der beiden Gruppen.<sup>20</sup>

Aus dem Gesichtspunkt der Gender Studies ist von Belang, dass in der Mehrheit der byzantinischen Doppelklöster die Nonnen unter der Aufsicht der Mönche standen und auf die wirtschaftliche Tätigkeit der Männer angewiesen waren. Sie waren von ihnen abhängig, obgleich sie, wie in solchen monastischen Gemeinden üblich, an der handwerklichen Produktion beteiligt waren.<sup>21</sup> Es soll uns also nicht verwundern, dass Frauen selten als Gründerinnen bzw. Stifterinnen von Doppelklöstern<sup>22</sup> auftreten

16 SCHIPPER, Doppelklöster (zit. Anm. 9), S. 66–77.

17 SCHIPPER, Doppelklöster (zit. Anm. 9), S. 69–70; KONIDARIS, Die Novelle 123 (zit. Anm. 9), S. 264.

18 F. MIKLOSICH/J. MÜLLER, Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana, II, Wien 1862, Nr. 375 (März 1383), S. 80–83; J. DARROUZÈS, Les registres des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople, I. Les actes des patriarches, Fasc. 6: Les registres de 1377 à 1410 (Le patriarcat byzantin, série 1), Paris 1979, Nr. 2754.

19 MITSIOU, Das Doppelkloster des Patriarchen Athanasios I. (zit. Anm. 1), S. 87–106; A.-M. TALBOT, A Comparison of the Monastic Experience of Byzantine Men and Women, in: The Greek Orthodox Theological Review, 30.1, 1985, S. 1–20, bes. S. 5–7, ND: eadem, Women and Religious Life in Byzantium, Aldershot 2001, XII.

20 Vgl. DE BOOR, Nicephori Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani (zit. Anm. 7), S. 159–160: πόρρω μὲν ἀνδρῶν τὴν γυναικωνίτιν διαίταν ἀφορίσαντες καὶ ἀφθονία τῶν ἐπιτηδείων ἐπιτειχίσαντες, ὡς ἂν μὴ τῇ τούτων ἐνδείᾳ πιέζοιντο καὶ ἀκολασίας ὑπόμνημα δέχοιντο καὶ γένοιτο τὰ ἔσχατα χεῖρω τῆς πρώτης συναλίσεως.

21 STRAMARA, Double Monasticism, I (zit. Anm. 1), S. 306–308, bestreitet anhand der Regeln des Basileios jegliche Abhängigkeit der Nonnen von den Männern. Aber wie das Beispiel des Athanasios-Klosters beweist, kann man dies im vierzehnten Jahrhundert ohne Zweifel belegen.

22 Fraglich ist, ob man die Gründungen der Melania der Jüngeren in Jerusalem und das Paula-Kloster in Bethleem als Doppelklöster betrachten muss. Für Melania die Jüngere s. H. DELEHAYE, S. M. Iunioris, Acta graeca, in: Analecta

und nur in einigen von ihnen als Äbtissinnen wirkten, wie im Thekla-Kloster (384) in Seleukeia,<sup>23</sup> dessen Leitung eine Diakonissin namens Marthana<sup>24</sup> innehatte. Für unsere Fragestellung ist aber relevant, dass wir die Namen und die Geschichte solcher Frauen in den Quellen belegt finden.

Zumindest zwei Gründerinnen waren Gegnerinnen der offiziellen kirchlichen Politik des byzantinischen Kaisers. Das Susanna-Kloster in Ägypten<sup>25</sup> gründeten im sechsten Jahrhundert Nonnen unter der Perserin Susanna, die wegen

ihrer monophysitischen Ansichten Gaza verließen und in der Wüste Mendis<sup>26</sup> Zuflucht fanden. In ähnlicher Weise war Anthusa (s. u.) Gründerin eines Doppelklosters und gleichzeitig Gegnerin des Ikonoklasmus.<sup>27</sup>

In späteren Perioden erfolgte die Gründung von Doppelklöstern durch sozial hochgestellte Frauen und zwar in Städten: Anfang des zwölften Jahrhunderts stiftete Eirene Dukaina Komnene in Konstantinopel das Doppelkloster von Kecharitomene und Soter.<sup>28</sup> Zwei Jahrhunderte später renovierte und leitete Eirene-Eulogia Chumnaina

- Bollandiana, 22, 1903, S. 5–50, bes. cap. 49, S. 34.15–35.4; vgl. D. GORCE, *Vie de Saint Mélanie* (Sources Chrétiennes, 90), Paris 1962, cap. 49, S. 222. Für Paula, s. *Hieronymi Epitaphium Sanctae Paulae*, ed. J. W. SMIT, in: C. MOHRMANN/A. A. R. BASTIAENSEN (Hrsg.), *Vita di Martino. Vita di Ilarione, in Memoria di Paola* (Scrittori Greci e Latini. Vite dei Santi, 4), Verona 1975, S. 148–236, hier cap. 20, S. 202.1–9; C. BUTLER, *The Lausiac History of Palladius: a Critical Discussion Together with Notes on Early Egyptian Monachism* (Texts and Studies, 6.1), Cambridge 1898–1904, ND: Hildesheim 1967, cap. 41, S. 128.6–13; C. MOHRMANN/G. J. M. BARTELINK, *Palladio, La Storia Lausiaca* (Scrittori Greci e Latini. Vite dei Santi, 2), Verona 1975, cap. 41, S. 210.6–14; C. KRUMEICH, *Hieronymus und die christlichen feminae clarissimae* (Habelts Dissertationsdrucke, Reihe Alte Geschichte, 36), Bonn 1993, S. 80–91; C. KRUMEICH, *Paula von Rom. Christliche Mittlerin zwischen Okzident und Orient. Eine Biographie*, Bonn 2002, S. 106–121.
- 23 A. FRANCESCHINI/R. WEBER (Hrsg.), *Itinerarium Egeriae. Itineraria et alia geographica, I* (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina, 175), Turnholt 1965, S. 37–90, hier: cap. 23, S. 66.1–29; P. MARAVAL, *Égérie. Journal de voyage* (Itinéraire) (Sources Chrétiennes, 296), Paris 1982, cap. 23, S. 226.1–230.28; N. NATALUCCI, *Egeria, Pellegrinaggio in Terra Santa. Itinerarium Egeriae* (Biblioteca patristica, 17), Florenz 1991, ND: Bologna 1999, cap. 23, S. 150–152. Für das Kloster s. G. DAGRON, *Vie et Miracles de St. Thècle* (Subsidia Hagiographica, 62), Brüssel 1978, S. 59–63, 74–76; MARAVAL, *Égérie*, S. 227–228, Anm. 4, und vor allem F. HILD/H. HELLENKEMPER, *Kilikien und Isaurien* (Tabula Imperii Byzantini, 5), Wien 1990, S. 441–443, Abb. 383–390.
- 24 Für Marthana s. DAGRON, *St. Thècle* (zit. Anm. 23), S. 74 mit Anm. 8 und Wunder Nr. 44, S. 406. 43; MARAVAL, *Égérie* (zit. Anm. 23), S. 228–229, Anm. 1; ELM, 'Virgins of God' (zit. Anm. 3), S. 178.
- 25 E. W. BROOKS (ed. und Übers.), *John of Ephesus, Lives of the Eastern Saints, II*, Paris 1924, ND: (Patrologia Orientalis, 18, fasc. 4), Turnhout 1974, S. 541–558, bes. S. 546–548.
- 26 BROOKS, *John of Ephesus, Lives of the Eastern Saints, II* (zit. Anm. 25), S. 547–548. Die Wüste Mendis lag 12 Meilen entfernt von Mar Menas; FLUSIN, *Aufblühen* (zit. Anm. 4), S. 627.
- 27 Für den Ikonoklasmus s. J. HERRIN, *The Formation of Christendom*, Princeton, NJ 1989, S. 307–343; L. BRUBAKER/J. HALDON, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca. 680–850): the Sources. An Annotated Survey* (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs, 7), Aldershot u. a. 2001; A. BRYER/J. HERRIN (Hrsg.), *Iconoclasm: Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham March 1975, Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, IX, Birmingham 1977*; A. GRABAR, *L'iconoclasm byzantin: dossier archéologique*, Paris 1984.
- 28 P. GAUTIER, *Le typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitôméné*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 43, 1985, S. 5–165 (Text: S. 19–155); R. JORDAN, *Kecharitomene: Typikon of Empress Irene Doukaina Komnene for the Convent of the Mother of God Kecharitomene in Constantinople*, in: *BMFD*, II, Nr. 27, S. 649–724, bes. S. 652; s. ebenso M. MULLETT, *Refounding Monasteries in Constantinople under the Komnenoi*, in: M. MULLETT (Hrsg.), *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries* (Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, 6.3), Belfast 2007, Nr. 16, S. 366–378; E. C. Koubena, *A Survey of Aristocratic Women Founders of Monasteries in Constantinople between the Eleventh and the Fifteenth Centuries*, in: J. Y. PERREAULT/E. Koubena/M. TOLI (Hrsg.), *Women and Byzantine Monasticism. Proceedings of the Athens Symposium 28–29 March 1988* (Publications of the Canadian Archaeological Institute in Athens, 1), Athen 1991, S. 25–32, bes. S. 26–27.

(PLP, Nr. 30936) das Doppelkloster des Barmherzigen Soter ebenfalls in der Hauptstadt.<sup>29</sup>

Die Beispiele der heiligen Anthusa von Mantineion<sup>30</sup> und der Eirene Chumnaina lassen den Schluss zu, dass sowohl die Heiligkeit als auch der soziale Status der Gründerinnen/Stifterinnen zur Tolerierung der von Frauen gegründeten Doppelklöster beigetragen haben. Gleichzeitig machen sie den Prozess klarer, der zu einer solchen Gründung führte.

Die heilige Anthusa (700–775) wirkte in der Provinz Honorias im achten Jahrhundert und hatte, so ihre *Vita*, bereits als kleines Kind das asketische Leben gewählt. Später wurde sie Schülerin des Priestermonchs Sisinnios, von dem sie auch die monastische Tonsur erhielt.<sup>31</sup> Nach Sisinnios Anweisung lebte Anthusa auf einer Seeinsel, wo sie geistliche Perfektion erlangte.<sup>32</sup> Kurz vor Sisinnios Tod besuchte sie ihn und ersuchte seine Zustimmung für den Bau einer

- 29 P. MEYER, Bruchstücke zweier τυπικὰ κτητορικά, in: Byzantinische Zeitschrift, 4, 1895, S. 45–58; A.-M. TALBOT, Philanthropos: Typikon of Irene Choumnaina Palaiologina for the Convent of Christ Philanthropos in Constantinople, in: BMFD, III, Nr. 47, S. 1383–1388; V. LAURENT, Une princesse byzantine au cloître: Irène-Eulogie Choumninos Paléologue, fondatrice du couvent de femmes τοῦ Φιλανθρώπου Σωτήρος, in: Échos d'Orient, 29, 1930, S. 29–60, hier S. 30–36; A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, A Woman's Quest for Spiritual Guidance. The Correspondence of Princess Irene Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina (The Archbishop Iakovos Library of Ecclesiastical and Historical Sources, 11), Brookline, MA 1986; vgl. R. JANIN, Les Monastères du Christ Philanthrope à Constantinople, in: Revue des Études Byzantines, 4, 1946, S. 135–162; R. JANIN, La géographie ecclésiastique de l' Empire byzantin, I. Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat oecuménique, III: Les églises et les monastères, Paris 1969, S. 527–529; R. H. TRONE, A Constantinopolitan Double Monastery of the Fourteenth Century: The Philanthropic Saviour, in: Byzantine Studies/Études Byzantines, 10.1, 1983, S. 81–87; A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina Abbess of the Convent of Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople, in: Byzantinische Forschungen, 9, 1985, S. 119–146; A. STOLFI, La Biografia di Irene-Eulogia Cumnena Paleologhina (1291–1355): un riesame, in: Cristianesimo nella storia, 20.1, 1999, S. 1–40; KOUBENA, Aristocratic Women Founders (zit. Anm. 28), S. 30–31.
- 30 Mantineion lag in Honorias, östlich von Klaudiupolis, s. C. MANGO, St. Anthusa of Mantineion and the Family of Constantine V, in: Analecta Bollandiana, 100, 1982, S. 401–409, hier S. 405, und in: idem, Byzantium and its Image: History and Culture of the Byzantine Empire and its Heritage (Collected Studies Series, 191, Variorum Reprints), London 1984, Nr. IX; K. BELKE, Paphlagonien und Honorias (Tabula Imperii Byzantini, 9), Wien 1996, S. 249–251. Mantineion steht als „Tomantion“ in einer georgischen Version des Textes P. PEETERS, S. Romain le Néomartyr († 1. Mai. 780) d' après un document géorgien, in: Analecta Bollandiana, 30, 1911, S. 393–427, hier S. 394. Die *Vita* von Anthusa bestätigt die Ansicht, dass Frauen in den Heiligenviten immer in einer Beziehung mit einem Mann stehen, sei er Vater, Ehemann oder geistlicher Vater, s. S. CONSTANTINOU, Subgenre and Gender in Saints' Lives, in: P. ODORICO/P. AGAPITOS (Hrsg.), Les Vies des Saints à Byzance. Genre littéraire ou biographie historique? Actes du IIe colloque international philologique, Paris, 6–7–8 juin 2002 (Dossiers Byzantins, 4), Paris 2004, S. 411–423, bes. S. 417.
- 31 Ed. H. DELEHAYE, Vita Anthusae. Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e codice Sirmondiano nunc Berolinensi adiectis synaxariis selectis (Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris), Brüssel 1902, S. 848–852, hier S. 849. Englische Übersetzung und Kommentar, A.-M. TALBOT, Life of St. Anthusa of Mantineion, in: A.-M. TALBOT (Hrsg.), Byzantine Defenders of Images. Eight Saint Lives in English Translation, Washington, DC 1998, Nr. 3, S. 13–19; s. auch A.-M. TALBOT, Female Sanctity in Byzantium, in: A.-M. TALBOT, Women and Religious Life in Byzantium (Variorum Collected Studies Series: CS 733), Aldershot 2001, Nr. VI, S. 1–16, hier S. 5–6; BRUBAKER/HALDON, Iconoclast Era (zit. Anm. 27), S. 207, und P. HATLIE, The Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople ca. 350–850, Cambridge 2007, S. 314–315. Zum hagiographischen Topos der Entsagung mit Eintritt in den Mönchsstand und dem Topos des Lehrers s. T. PRATSCH, Der hagiographische Topos. Griechische Heiligenviten in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit (Millennium-Studien, 6), Berlin 2005, S. 122–124, 184–188.
- 32 DELEHAYE, Vita Anthusae (zit. Anm. 31), S. 849: ἔπειτα κείρεται τὴν κόμην καὶ ἐν τῷ νησυδρίῳ τῆς πελαζούσης τῆ Περικλῆ κώμῃ λίμνης; R. LOUIS, A travers l'Asie Mineure. Poètes et prosateurs, monnaies grecques, voyageurs et géographie (Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome), Paris 1980, S. 143–145, und BELKE, Paphlagonien (zit. Anm. 30), S. 249, identifizierten den See mit dem Çığa Gölü. MANGO, Anthusa of Mantineion (zit. Anm. 30), S. 405–406, plädierte fälschlich für Eftene.

Anna-Kirche, die sie tatsächlich errichtete. Um Anthusa sammelten sich 30 Nonnen. Als ihr Lehrer starb und seine Schüler ohne spirituelle Leitung blieben, schlossen sich diese Mönche Anthusa an. Wegen der Vergrößerung der Gemeinde baute sie eine große Kirche für die Nonnen und eine für die Männer.<sup>33</sup>

Die Gründung des Klosters ist nicht später als 740 zu datieren.<sup>34</sup> Dass es sich um ein Doppelkloster handelte, beweist die Information, dass der Lehrer des heiligen Petros von Atroa im Kloster in Mantineion ἐκ παιδότην sein monastisches Leben begann.<sup>35</sup> Auch der heilige Romanos trat im jungen Alter ins Kloster ein, als Anthusa noch am Leben war. 771 sandte sie ihn für eine Angelegenheit des Klosters in ein Gebiet, in dem er von den Arabern gefangen genommen wurde. Obwohl Romanos *Vita* behauptet, dass das Frauenkloster auf der Seeinsel nahe dem Dorf Perkile und das Männerkloster am Seeufer lag, können wir beide Gemeinschaften auf der Seeinsel loka-

lisieren und diese (Fehl-)Information der *Vita* eventuell als durch das Verbot der Doppelklöster durch Patriarch Nikephoros motiviert erklären.<sup>36</sup> Im Mantineion-Kloster gab es einen zuständigen Mönch für die Abteilung der Männer,<sup>37</sup> aber die allgemeine Leitung hatte Anthusa inne.

Die Heilige bekämpfte die ikonoklastische Politik des Kaisers Konstantin V. (reg. 741–775) und wurde dafür gefoltert und an einen Ort, der aber wahrscheinlich nicht sehr weit von ihrem Kloster entfernt lag, verbannt.<sup>38</sup> Während eines Feldzuges gegen die Araber (756/757) wollte der Kaiser Anthusa persönlich verhören. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt geriet aber die Kaiserin Eudokia bei der Geburt ihrer Zwillinge in Lebensgefahr. Als die Prophezeiung der Heiligen über die Geburt eines Jungen und eines Mädchens bestätigt wurde, machte die Kaiserin verschiedene Schenkungen an das Doppelkloster.<sup>39</sup>

Die *Vita* schildert also sehr deutlich den Weg, auf welchem das Doppelkloster entstanden

33 DELEHAYE, *Vita Anthusae* (zit. Anm. 31), S. 849–850: *πληθυννομένην δὲ τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἢ μεγάλη Ἀνθουσα βλέπουσα, δύο ναοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν βάρων μεγίστους ἀνέστησε τῇ τε Θεομήτορι καὶ τοῖς ἀποστόλοις. ὦν τὸν μὲν τῆς Θεομήτορος ταῖς μοναζούσαις ἀδελφαῖς, τὸν δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῖς μοναχοῖς ἀπεκλήρωσε.* In der im Codex Paris. gr. 1587 überlieferten Version der *Vita* werden Klöster und nicht Kirchen erwähnt, s. E. RUGGIERI, *Anthusa di Mantineon ed il canone XX del concilio di Nicea II (anno 787)*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 35, 1985, S. 131–142, hier S. 138.

34 MANGO, *Anthusa of Mantineon* (zit. Anm. 30), S. 408.

35 V. LAURENT, *La vie merveilleuse de Saint Pierre d'Atroa (+837)* (*Subsidia Hagiographica*, 29), Brüssel 1956, S. 77–81, bes. cap. 5, S. 77–81, hier S. 77.3–79.6.

36 PEETERS, *S. Romain le Néomartyr* (zit. Anm. 30), cap. I, S. 409.23–410.3: *Est autem Mantineon lacus, in quo medio locus est siccus, ubi aedificatum fuit monasterium sanctarum virginum; itemque in litore huius lacus monasterium alterum aedificatum est, quod incolunt sancti patres monachi, prodigiorum patratores;* DE BOOR, *Nicephori Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani* (zit. Anm. 7), S. 159.15–20; BELKE, *Paphlagonien* (zit. Anm. 30), S. 250.

37 Vgl. auch DELEHAYE, *Vita Anthusae* (zit. Anm. 31), S. 850: *ὁ δὲ πολλοὺς ἄλλους μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ παραλαβὼν καὶ κατασχὼν καὶ πάμπολλα τῶν ἁγίων ἐκτυπωμάτων, ὅσα ἐν πινάξι καὶ ὅσα ἐν ῥάκεσι, συναγαγὼν καὶ τὴν μεγάλην μετὰ γε τοῦ ἀδελφίδου, ὃς τῆς ἀνδρώας μονῆς τότε τὴν προστασίαν ἐγκεχειρισμένος ἦν.*

38 DELEHAYE, *Vita Anthusae* (zit. Anm. 31), S. 850; G. L. HUXLEY, *Women and Byzantine Iconoclasm*, in: PERREAULT/KOUBENA/TOLI, *Women and Byzantine Monasticism* (zit. Anm. 28), S. 11–24, esp. S. 13–14; A. P. KAZHDAN/A.-M. TALBOT, *Women and Iconoclasm*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 84–85, 1991–1992, S. 391–408; K. NIKOLAOU, *Η γυναίκα στη Μέση Βυζαντινή εποχή. Κοινωνικά πρότυπα και καθημερινός βίος στα αγιολογικά κείμενα* (*Ethnikon Idryma Ereunon, Monographien*, 6), Athen 2005, S. 229–236; S. GERO, *Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Constantin V with Particular Attention to the Oriental Sources* (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Subsidia*, 41), Louvain 1973, und (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Subsidia*, 52), Louvain 1977; I. ROCHOW, *Kaiser Konstantin V. (741–775). Materialien zu seinem Leben und Nachleben mit einem prosopographischen Anhang von C. Ludwig/I. Rochow/R.-J. Lilie* (*Berliner Byzantinische Studien*, 1), Frankfurt am Main u. a. 1994, S. 57, 66, 204–205.

39 Vgl. auch DELEHAYE, *Vita Anthusae* (zit. Anm. 31), S. 851; vgl. und TALBOT, *St. Anthusa of Mantineon* (zit. Anm. 31), S. 18.

war: Ein geistiger Vater führte die spätere Heilige zum Mönchsleben, sie organisierte gemäß seiner Anweisungen ein Nonnenkloster, in den nach dem Tod ihres Lehrers seine Mönche in die Frauengemeinde integriert wurden. Die Tugend und spirituelle Überlegenheit der Heiligen ermöglichten die Zusammenführung der Mönche und Nonnen. Eine Prophezeiung, das Zeichen der Kommunikation der „religiösen Expertin“ mit dem göttlichen Willen,<sup>40</sup> gewährleistete sogar die kaiserliche Unterstützung und sicherte demzufolge die weitere Existenz der Gemeinschaft.

Diese Geschichte teilt Ähnlichkeiten mit der des Susanna-Klosters in Ägypten.<sup>41</sup> Auch in diesem Fall schlossen sich einer monastischen Gemeinschaft von Frauen Mönche an, die von der Tugend der Gründerin gehört hatten und unter ihrer Leitung leben wollten. In beiden Geschichten handelt es sich um eine allmähliche Entwicklung hin zum Doppelkloster und nicht um eine absichtliche Einrichtung der Gründerin in dieser Form von Anfang an.

Das Kloster der *basilissa*<sup>42</sup> Eirene-Eulogia Chumnaina Palaiologina beweist die Bedeutung des sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Status der Gründerin für die Existenz eines Doppelklosters. Eirene Chumnaina, die Tochter des *epi tu kanikleiu* und späteren *Mesazon* Nikephoros Chumnos (PLP, Nr. 30961), wurde im Jahre 1291 geboren. 1303 heiratete sie den Sohn des Kaisers Andronikos II., den Despoten Ioannes Palaiologos (PLP, Nr. 21475),<sup>43</sup> der vor April 1307 verstarb. Einerseits wegen der Depression, die Eirene danach erlitt, und andererseits wegen des Einflusses des Metropoliten Theoleptos von Philadelpheia (PLP, Nr. 7509),<sup>44</sup> entschied sie sich, Nonne<sup>45</sup> (vor 1310) mit dem Namen Eulogia zu werden. Theoleptos führte sogar ihre monastische Tonsur durch.<sup>46</sup>

Nachdem Eirene-Eulogia viel Geld unter den Armen und zur Befreiung von Gefangenen verteilt hatte,<sup>47</sup> renovierte sie mit der Hilfe ihrer Eltern das Philanthropos-Soter-Kloster in Konstantinopel (sicher vor 1320).<sup>48</sup> Es handelte sich um

40 ELLER, *Anthropology of Religion* (zit. Anm. 8), S. 76.

41 BROOKS, John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, II (zit. Anm. 25), S. 551–554.

42 Da sie die Frau eines Despoten war, wurde Eirene bis zu ihrem Tod als *basilissa* adressiert, S. I. KURUSES, *Μανουήλ Γαβαλάς, εἷτα Ματθαῖος μητροπολίτης Ἐφέσου (1271/2–1355/60)*, I: Τὰ βιογραφικά (Ἀθηνᾶ. Σειρὰ Διατριβῶν καὶ Μελετημάτων, 12), Athen 1972, S. 189, Anm. I.

43 CONSTANTINIDES HERO, Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina (zit. Anm. 29), S. 120–121; STOLFI, Irene-Eulogia Cumnena (zit. Anm. 29), S. 7.

44 Zu Theoleptos von Philadelpheia s. A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *The Life and Letters of Theoleptos of Philadelphia* (The Archbishop Iakovos Library of Ecclesiastical and Historical Sources, 20), Brookline, MA 1994, S. 11–29; R. E. SINKIEWICZ, *Theoleptos of Philadelphia. The Monastic Discourses. A Critical Edition, Translation and Study* (Studies and Texts, 111), Toronto 1992; S. SALAVILLE, *Un directeur spirituel à Byzance au début du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle: Théolepte de Philadelphie. Homélie sur Noël et la vie religieuse*, in: *Mélanges Joseph de Ghellinck* (Museum Lessianum. Section historique, 14), II, Gembloux 1951, S. 877–887.

45 J. F. BOISSONADE (Hrsg.), Theodoros Hyrtakenos, *Μονωδία ἐπὶ τῷ περιποθῆτῳ συμπενθέρῳ τοῦ κρατίστου καὶ ἀγίου αὐτοκράτορος ἡμῶν κυροῦ Ἀνδρονίκου τοῦ Παλαιολόγου κυρῷ Νικηφόρῳ Χούμνῳ τῷ ἐπὶ τοῦ κανικλείου* (Anecdota Graeca, I), Paris 1829, ND: Hildesheim 1962, S. 282–292, hier S. 287; STOLFI, Irene-Eulogia Cumnena (zit. Anm. 29), S. 9–10.

46 CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Letters of Theoleptos of Philadelphia* (zit. Anm. 44), Nr. 1, S. 34.1–6: *Θεολήπτου Φιλαδέλφειας ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς βασίλισσαν Εἰρήνην καὶ κτητόρισσαν τῆς σεβασμίας καὶ βασιλικῆς μονῆς τοῦ Σωτήρος Χριστοῦ τοῦ Φιλανθρώπου, τὴν διὰ τοῦ θείου καὶ ἀγγελικοῦ σχήματος μετονομασθεῖσαν Εὐλογίαν μοναχὴν καὶ γνησίαν πνευματικὴν θυγατέρα αὐτοῦ χρηματίσασαν, ἣν καὶ οἰκείαις χερσὶν ἀπεκέρατο*; vgl. STOLFI, Irene-Eulogia Cumnena (zit. Anm. 29), S. 15.

47 Ed. I. BEKKER, *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia* (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, 27), Bonn 1855, III, S. 238. 13–20. Zu dieser sozialen Funktion und Tätigkeit des byzantinischen Mönchtums s. SAVRAMIS, *Soziologie* (zit. Anm. 6), S. 31–33.

48 MEYER, *Bruchstücke* (zit. Anm. 29), S. 48–49; TALBOT, *Typikon of Irene Choumnaina Palaiologina* (zit. Anm. 29), S. 1383–1388.

ein älteres Kloster im Mangana-Komplex, dessen Überreste noch erhalten sind.<sup>49</sup> Laut Nikephoros Gregoras (PLP, Nr. 4443) wurde das Kloster vor allem aufgrund der Tugend seiner Bewohner und nicht wegen seiner Bauten berühmt.<sup>50</sup> Russische Reisende des vierzehnten und fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts lokalisierten es hinter der Kirche des Hagios Georgios ton Manganon. Darüber hinaus berichteten sie von der Erscheinung Christi an der Mauer der Kirche, von einer wundertätigen Christus-Ikone, von der Reliquie des heiligen Aberkios und einem *hagiasma* unter der Kirche, wo viele Gläubige ihre Genesung suchten.<sup>51</sup>

Der Grundriss der Anlage bestätigt, dass es ein Doppelkloster mit einer gemeinsamen Kirche und einem gemeinsamen Refektorium war.<sup>52</sup> Letzteres wird im uns erhaltenen Teil des *Typikon*s erwähnt.<sup>53</sup> Es gibt auch weitere Hinweise dafür, dass es sich um ein Doppelkloster handelte; dies beweist etwa der Eintritt sowohl des Nikephoros Chumnos als auch seiner Frau in dieses Kloster. Als er 1327 als Mönch Nathaniel starb, wurde er im Männerkloster begraben.<sup>54</sup> Darüber hinaus geht aus einer Osterpredigt des Theolep-

tos von Philadelphiea hervor, dass ein vor kurzem verstorbener Mönch, Leo Monomachos (PLP, Nr. 19303), zusammen mit den Nonnen gespeist hat, wobei er als ihr *συνδοιοπóρος* bezeichnet wird.<sup>55</sup> In einer anderen seiner Predigten beschreibt Theoleptos folgendermaßen das Kloster: ἡ περιοχὴ τῶν μονῶν μία, ὁ οἶκος τῶν ἱερῶν ὕμνων ὁ αὐτός, τῆς ἐστίασεως ἡ τράπεζα ἡ αὐτή.<sup>56</sup> Das aus diesen Aussagen gewonnene Bild entspricht auch der Situation des heutigen Klosters des Ioannes-Prodromos in Essex in Großbritannien, in welchem Nonnen und Mönche in getrennten Gebäuden schlafen, aber die Kirche und das Refektorium gemeinsam nutzen. Im Gegensatz allerdings zu den anderen Klöstern finden Akoluthien nicht jeden Tag, sondern nur am Dienstag, Donnerstag, Samstag und Sonntag statt. An den übrigen Tagen müssen Mönche und Nonnen getrennt beten.<sup>57</sup> Es wäre also denkbar, dass so auch das Leben der Mönche und Nonnen des Philanthropos-Soter-Klosters verlief, an die Theoleptos von Philadelphiea auch Briefe<sup>58</sup> und Predigten sandte, um die zwei Gemeinschaften geistlich zu stärken.

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- 49 JANIN, *Monastères du Christ Philanthrope* (zit. Anm. 29), S. 135–150; JANIN, *Constantinople* (zit. Anm. 29), S. 527–529; V. KIDONOPOULOS, *Bauten in Konstantinopel 1204–1328: Verfall und Zerstörung, Restaurierung, Umbau und Neubau von Profan- und Sakralbauten* (Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik, 1), Wiesbaden 1994, S. 33–36.
- 50 BEKKER, *Nicephori Gregorae, III* (zit. Anm. 47), S. 238.17–22: καὶ ἅμα τριβώνιον ὑποδύσα τὸν ἅπαντα πλοῦτον διένευε αἰχμαλώτους καὶ πένησιν ἄλλοις, πλὴν ἢ ὅσον εἰς τὴν πολυτελεῆ τοῦ θείου φροντιστηρίου κατασκευὴν ἐκείνου κεκένηκεν, ὃ περιβόητον μάλλον εἰς ἀρετὴν κατεστήσατο ἢ πρὸς κατασκευὴν. δαψιλῆσι μὲν γὰρ καὶ πολυτελεῖσι δαπάναις ὠκοδομήσατο.
- 51 G. P. MAJESKA, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 19), Washington, DC 1984, S. 371–374.
- 52 W. MÜLLER-WIENER, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls. Byzantium–Konstantinupolis–Istanbul bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen 1977, S. 109; R. DEMANGEL/E. MAMBOURY, *Le Quartier des Manges et la première région de Constantinople*, Paris 1939, S. 49–68; KIDONOPOULOS, *Bauten* (zit. Anm. 49), S. 33.
- 53 MEYER, *Bruchstücke* (zit. Anm. 29), S. 48.33.
- 54 BOISSONADE, Theodoros Hyrtakenos, *Μοναξία* (zit. Anm. 45), S. 287; s. auch V. LAURENT, *Un fondation monastique de Nicéphore Choumnos. Ἡ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει μονὴ τῆς Θεοτόκου τῆς Γοργοεπηκόου*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 12, 1954, S. 32–44, bes. S. 42–44; STOLFI, *Irene-Eulogia Cummene* (zit. Anm. 29), S. 10.
- 55 SINKEWICZ, *Theoleptos of Philadelphiea* (zit. Anm. 44), Nr. 17, S. 302–307, hier S. 302.1–14, bes. S. 302.13–14. Οἶδατε, ἀδελφαί μου, ὅτι ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδίοις ἐώρακατε αὐτὸν καὶ συνεσιτίατορα καὶ συνοδοιοπóρον εἶχετε αὐτόν; LAURENT, *Une princesse byzantine* (zit. Anm. 29), S. 48–49; TRONE, *Philanthropic Saviour* (zit. Anm. 29), S. 85–86.
- 56 SINKEWICZ, *Theoleptos of Philadelphiea* (zit. Anm. 44), Nr. 9, S. 218–233, hier S. 220.45–46.
- 57 *Freundliche Mitteilung des Mönches Benedikt Ioannou vom 13.10.2008*. Zum Kloster s. SCHIPPER, *Doppelklöster* (zit. Anm. 9), S. 56–57.
- 58 CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Letters of Theoleptos of Philadelphiea* (zit. Anm. 44).

Als Theoleptos 1322 verstarb,<sup>59</sup> suchte Eirene nach einem Nachfolger. Um 1335 hatte sie endlich einen anderen geeigneten geistlichen Vater gefunden, wie eine Sammlung von 22 Briefen beweist.<sup>60</sup> Eirene wollte, dass er sie regelmäßig besuche, aber er war anfangs nicht bereit, ihren Vorschlägen zu folgen.<sup>61</sup> Auf ihren Druck hin sagte er zum Schluss zu, sechs Mal pro Jahr dem Kloster einen Besuch abzustatten. Umstritten bleibt die Identität dieser Person; viele Namen wurden vorgeschlagen: Theoktistos Studites (PLP, Nr. 7498), Ignatios (PLP, Nr. 8076) und zuletzt mit sehr überzeugenden Argumenten Gregorios Akindynos (PLP, Nr. 495).<sup>62</sup> Wenn die Identifizierung mit Akindynos zutrifft, erklärt dies auch leichter Eirenes späteres Engagement für den Antipalmitismus,<sup>63</sup> durch welches sie die Bewunderung ihrer Freunde und sarkastische Bemerkungen ihrer Gegner<sup>64</sup> auf sich zog. Zu ihren Bewunderern gehörten Gre-

gorios Akindynos,<sup>65</sup> Matthaios Gabalas (PLP, Nr. 3309)<sup>66</sup> und Nikephoros Gregoras,<sup>67</sup> die ihre Bildung und ihren Einsatz für die richtige Sache lobten.

Laut Gregoras wurde Eirene wegen ihrer Ansichten verfolgt, aber er erwähnt nichts Genaueres. Aus einer Analyse der Urkunden aus dem Ioannes-Prodromos-Kloster auf dem Berg Menoikeion bei Serrhai in Makedonien geht hervor, dass Chumnaina vor 1355 Konstantinopel und ihr Kloster verlassen hatte. Sie blieb für eine unbestimmbare Zeit in der Gegend von Serrhai, wo sie Besitzungen und Ländereien innehatte.<sup>68</sup> Ob dieser Aufenthalt in Serrhai bzw. Zichnai eine Folge ihres Antipalmitismus war, bleibt unklar. Vielleicht steht er im Zusammenhang mit der Flucht des Akindynos aus Konstantinopel im Jahr 1347. Außerdem kann man die nicht genau datierten Urkunden von Eirene aus dem Prodromos Chartular in den Zeitraum

- 59 L. PREVIALE, *Due Monodie inedite di Matteo di Efeso* (Cod. Vindob. Theol. Gr. 174 Nessel), in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 41, 1941, S. 4–39, hier S. 26–31; NIKEPHOROS CHUMNOS, *Ἐπιτάφιος εἰς τὸν μακάριον καὶ ἀγιώτατον μητροπολίτην Φιλαδέλφειας Θεόληπτον*, in: J. F. BOISSONADE, *Anecdota Graeca*, V, Paris 1833, ND: Hildesheim 1962, S. 183–239.
- 60 CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Correspondence of Irene Eulogia Choumnaina* (zit. Anm. 29).
- 61 CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Correspondence of Irene Eulogia Choumnaina* (zit. Anm. 29), Nr. 16, S. 78–82.
- 62 J. N. CAÑELLAS, *La résistance d'Akindynos à Grégoire Palamas. Enquête historique, avec traduction et commentaire de quatre traités édités récemment* (Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 51), Leuven 2006, S. 30–83. Zu diesem Thema s. auch E. ASENTOLIDOU-LEITGEB, *Die Hymnen des Theoktistos Studites auf Athanasios I. von Konstantinopel. Einleitung, Edition, Kommentar* (Wiener Byzantinistische Studien, 27), Wien 2008, S. 33–38; STOLFI, *Irene-Eulogia Cumnena* (zit. Anm. 29), S. 19–27.
- 63 In einer Notiz im Vat. Gr. 1096 mit den Namen der Antipalmiten steht auch ihr Name, s. G. MERCATI, *Notizie di Procoro e Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Caleca e Teodoro Meliteniota ed altri appunti per la storia della teologia e della letteratura bizantina del secolo XIV* (Studi e Testi, 56), Vatikanstadt 1931, Nr. 26, S. 223.12: +*Εὐλογία ἡ βασίλισσα*.
- 64 GREGORIOS PALAMAS, *Πρὸς τὸν τὰ θεῖα σοφὸν Ἀρσένιον μοναχὸν τὸν Στουδίτην*, ed. P. K. CHRESTOU, *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ συγγράμματα*, II, Thessaloniki 1966, S. 315–324, hier S. 323.15–17: *κἄν γυναῖοι μανίαν περιβεβλημένην τινὰ δυναστείαν καθ' ἡμῶν ἐπάγεται, καθάπερ οἱ ἱερεῖς τῆς αἰσχύνης τὴν Ἰεζάβελ καὶ οἱ περὶ Θεόφιλον τὴν Εὐδοξίαν*.
- 65 A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Letters of Gregory Akindynos* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, 21), Washington, DC 1983, Nr. 60, S. 246.88–103.
- 66 D. REINSCH, *Die Briefe des Matthaios von Ephesos im Codex Vindobonensis Theol. Gr. 174*, Berlin 1974, Nr. 32 und 44.
- 67 BEKKER, *Nicephori Gregorae, III* (zit. Anm. 47), S. 238.2–240.7.
- 68 A. GUILLOU, *Les archives de Saint-Jean-Prodrôme sur le mont Ménécée* (Bibliothèque Byzantine, Documents, 3), Paris 1955, Nr. 46, S. 142–144, und L. BÉNOU, *Le codex B du monastère Saint-Jean-Prodrôme (Serrès). A (XIIIe–XVe siècles)* (Textes, Documents, Études sur le Monde byzantin, néohellénique et balkanique, 2), Paris 1998, Nr. 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 201, bes. Nr. 175, S. 311–313.

zwischen 1345 und 1355 setzen. Sicher ist allerdings, dass sie vor ihrem Tod nach Konstantinopel zurückkehrte, wo sie auch starb. Anlässlich ihres Todes wurde Gregoras von Freunden darum gebeten, eine Grabrede für sie zu verfassen, doch ist uns ein solcher Text nicht überliefert.<sup>69</sup> Der Historiker berichtet über Wunder, die an ihrem Grab stattfanden, was ein Beweis ihres wahren Glaubens war. Aber Eirene-Eulogia konnte als Antipalaminin nicht heiliggesprochen werden. Im Gegensatz zu Anthusa von Mantineion hatte diese Gründerin in den kirchlichen Unruhen des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts die falsche Seite gewählt.

Im Fall des Philanthropos-Soter-Klosters war also seine Gründung als Familienkloster von Anfang an eine bewusste Entscheidung. Dies bezeugen die finanzielle Unterstützung durch Eirenes Eltern und ihr eigener Eintritt ins Kloster. Andererseits beschäftigte sich die *basilissa* auch oft mit den Angelegenheiten der Familie, was Theoleptos von Philadelpheia stark kritisierte. Als Vorsteherin eines Doppelklosters und trotz ihrer Beteiligung an den theologischen Kontroversen ihrer Zeit wurde allerdings Chumnaina, so wie Anthusa, nie das Faktum, dass Männer und Frauen in einer klösterlichen Einheit zusammenlebten, zum Vorwurf gemacht.

#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Als Phänomen der ersten Jahrhunderte des Christentums verkörpern die Doppelklöster einen anderen Umgang der zwei Geschlechter mit einander. Unter dem Schutzschild des Namens Basileios des Großen und trotz der gesetzlichen und kanonischen Regelungen blieben sie in Byzanz immer präsent. Die Versuche des Staates und der Kirche, sie zum „Schweigen“<sup>70</sup> zu bringen und demzufolge zu kontrollieren, blieben erfolglos.

Aber die Abhängigkeit der Nonnen von den Mönchen war wie in der Gesellschaft generell auch in diesen Gemeinschaften vorhanden, besonders wenn sie von Männern gegründet und geleitet wurden. Gründerinnen von Doppelklöstern sind weniger zahlreich, aber ihre Gründun-

gen folgten bekannten Mustern: entweder wurden sie als Familienklöster konzipiert oder sie wurden im Laufe der Zeit um eine Heilige gebildet. Der soziale Status dieser Frauen bzw. ihr Status als Heilige schützten ihre Gründungen vor einem Angriff des Staates und der Kirche. In solchen Klostergemeinden kann man interessanterweise das seltene Phänomen beobachten, dass Frauen in der Funktion von Äbtissinnen eines Doppelklosters Macht über Männer ausüben. Liz James meint „Christianity above all is a site of gender constructions“.<sup>71</sup> Die Doppelklöster können eventuell beweisen: Christianity is as well a site of gender opportunities.

69 BEKKER, Nicephori Gregorae, III (zit. Anm. 47), S. 238.9–13.

70 Der Begriff wird hier in der Bedeutung, die ihm Michel Foucault gab, nämlich eines Ausschlussmechanismen, verwendet, s. M. FOUCAULT, „Two Lectures“ (Lectures from Collège de France, 7 und 14 Jan. 1976), in: C. GORDON (Hrsg.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, New York u. a. 1980, S. 78–108, hier S. 101; s. auch J. R. CARRETTE, *Foucault and Religion. Spiritual Corporality and Political Spirituality*, London/New York 2000, S. 25–43.

71 L. JAMES, *Men, Women, Eunuchs: Gender, Sex, and Power*, in: J. HALDON (Hrsg.), *The Social History of Byzantium*, Oxford 2009, S. 31–50, hier S. 39.





A LATE BYZANTINE PATRONESS:  
HELENA KANTAKOUZENE PALAIOLOGINA

FLORIN LEONTE

Despite the dwindling of economic resources in the second half of the fourteenth century, Byzantine emperors and empresses continued to rely on patronage and donation practices as instruments of social and political intervention. In this paper, based on the study of several late Byzantine texts, I will examine the patronage activities of a late Byzantine empress, Helena Kantakouzene Palaiologina (1333–1397), the wife of emperor John V Palaiologos (r. 1354–1391).<sup>1</sup>

Raised in the court of her father, John VI Kantakouzenos (r. 1347–1354), for a time her husband's regent and rival to the Byzantine throne, Helena played a significant role in the political dramas of the second half of the fourteenth century. At first, following her father's theological interests she took part in the debate over the orthodoxy of Hesychasm and supported the Palamites.<sup>2</sup> Once this debate was settled, we find her involved in her son's, Andronikos IV's, rebellion from 1376–1379, when she was imprisoned to-

gether with many members of the ruling family.<sup>3</sup> Due to the internal strifes and the external pressures, in the following decades, the situation of the Byzantine state deteriorated considerably. In 1391, after the death of John V, her son, Manuel II, became emperor. Yet, since he was the vassal of the Ottomans, in the first year of his reign he had to leave Constantinople and join the Ottoman forces in Asia Minor. According to a contemporary instruction by the Venetian Senate, during this time Helena acted as regent, although we have no precise details on her activity.<sup>4</sup> In the following year, 1392, she participated in the ceremony organized for the new emperor's coronation<sup>5</sup> and shortly afterwards she entered the monastery of Kyra Martha in Constantinople under the name of Hypomone.<sup>6</sup> Her retirement did not deter her from continuing to get involved in the affairs of the state. Manuel makes her speak in a dialogue written in 1396 where she was pictured as a person possessing the abilities of a political

1 A short biography of Helena Kantakouzene Palaiologina (PLP, no. 21365) is included in D. M. NICOL, *The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos ca. 1100–1460. A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study*, Washington, DC 1968, pp. 135–138. Cf. also A. ANGELOU, *Manuel Palaiologos. Dialogue with the Empress-Mother on Marriage. Introduction, Text, and Translation*, Vienna 1991, pp. 39–40.

2 O. HALECKI, *Un empereur de Byzance à Rome*, London 1972, p. 142.

3 J. CHRYSOSTOMIDES, *Manuel II Palaeologus: Funeral Oration for his Brother, Theodore, Despot of Morea*, Thessaloniki 1985, pp. 101–103.

4 F. THIRIET, *Régestes des délibérations du sénat de Venise concernant la Romainie*, I, Paris 1958, p. 196. The document was edited by R.-J. LOENERTZ, *Démétrius Cydonès: Correspondance*, II, Vatican 1960, pp. 444–445.

5 S. W. REINERT, *Political Dimensions of Manuel II Palaiologos' 1392 Marriage and Coronation*, in: C. SODE/S. A. TAKÁCS/P. SPECK (ed.), *Novum Millennium. Studies on Byzantine History and Culture Dedicated to Paul Speck*, Aldershot 2001, pp. 291–302; P. SCHREINER, *Hochzeit und Krönung Kaiser Manuels im Jahre 1392*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 60, 1967, pp. 70–85.

6 P. SCHREINER, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, I, Vienna 1975, p. 22.

adviser and a deep understanding of the political problems of Byzantium.<sup>7</sup> From the same period, we also have strong evidence for her role in the sale of several Peloponnesian strongholds to the Hospitaller Knights, during the reign of her son, Theodore, in Morea (1382–1407).<sup>8</sup>

Not only had her marriage with John V been meant to put an end to the dissensions between John VI and the Palaiologoi, but now there was also an increasingly established group of individuals active in the Constantinopolitan court with a preference for the Latins whom they considered an appropriate choice for an alliance that would reinforce the autonomy of Byzantium.<sup>9</sup> Under such circumstances Helena took several steps to package her acts of imperial favor for the sake of retrieving the weakened position of imperial authority with tact and subtlety. By and large, her patronage indicates an understated attempt to re-establish firm imperial influence over an increasingly independent grouping of men, previously in John V's service but, beginning in the 1370s, alienated by his politics of rapprochement with the Ottomans.<sup>10</sup> In this paper my contention is that she used donation and patronage mostly in

order to counterbalance her husband's, John's, political actions after 1371 when the emperor failed to secure the support of Latin Christian leaders. In doing so she appears to have cultivated the Kantakouzenian side of her family as opposed to the Palaiologan one, which testifies to a prolonged rivalry between the two families even after John VI Kantakouzenos's abdication in 1354.<sup>11</sup>

Before we can decide whether this contention is true, one has to examine in detail first the question of how her patronage worked in the second half of the fourteenth century even if this activity is not always well documented and the information at our disposal is restricted to several allusions included in letters addressed by her *protégés*.<sup>12</sup> Apart from the picture of her direct involvement in the affairs of the empire, a different facet of her personality surfaces in the textual sources of the late fourteenth century. A writer herself, we know that when she was still a teenager she wrote several classicizing *epinikioi logoi* celebrating a military victory of her father John VI.<sup>13</sup> In his chronologically first letter addressed to the empress (L 389), Demetrios Kydones praised her literary achievements as well as

7 ANGELOU, Manuel Palaiologos (cit. n. 1).

8 For instance, Helena's involvement in the sale of Corinth to the Knights Hospitallers by Theodore in 1397, her youngest son is attested in CHRYSOSTOMIDES, Manuel II Palaeologus (cit. n. 3), p. 167.18–19.

9 HALECKI, Un empereur (cit. n. 2), p. 91. The emergence of such a group is connected with John V's negotiations with the papacy for the Union of the Churches. Among other such individuals, we may count here John Laskaris, Kalopheros, the Kydones brothers Demetrios and Prochoros, and Manuel Kalekas.

10 On John V's change of attitude in the relation with the Ottomans see N. NECIPOĞLU, Byzantium Between the Ottomans and the Latins, Cambridge 2009, p. 29.

11 This idea was first put forward by M. DABROWSKA, Ought One to Marry? Manuel II Palaiologos' Point of View, in: Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 31, 2000, pp. 146–156. Dabrowska argues that Helena promoted the Kantakouzenoi through her children, Manuel, the future emperor, and Theodore, the despot of Morea. On the contrary, John V, while neglecting Manuel and Theodore, favored Andronikos who was under his tutelage. On the conflicts between the Kantakouzenoi and the Palaiologoi in Morea see also NECIPOĞLU, Byzantium (cit. n. 10), pp. 235–250.

12 We have six letters addressed by Demetrios Kydones: letters 25 (1371–1374), 134 (after 1374), 143 (1371–1374), 222 (1392), 256 (after 1374), and 389 (1352), in: LOENERTZ, Correspondance (cit. n. 4). An English translation of these letters (except for letter 222), which I am using here, has been provided by F. KIANKA, The Letters of Demetrios Kydones to Empress Helena Kantakouzene Palaiologina, in: Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 46, 1992, pp. 155–164. The letter addressed by Nikephoros Gregoras to Helena has been edited by R. GUILLAND, Correspondance de Nicéphore Gregoras, Paris 1927, Letter I. 42.

13 Letter 389.22–23: εἴη δὲ καὶ τὸν βασιλέα τοῖς σοῖς λόγοις ἀφορμὰς παρασχόμενον παρὰ φίλης φωνῆς τοὺς ἐπινικίους ἀκοῦσαι, καὶ οὕτω διχῆ καρποῦσθαι τὴν ἡδονήν.

the fact that Helena succeeded in doing a man's job, namely to produce a literary text: *And what is surpassing <regarding the beauty of your poems> is that the sounds are those of a girl and that men yield to a woman in literary matters, and that what nature too recoils from, your zeal and labor have obtained for you.*<sup>14</sup> In another letter accompanying a translation from Augustine's texts (L 25), Kydones justifies the choice of this text by alluding to the Latin Father's wide theoretical knowledge: *Who knew more than he did what parts of Plato and Aristotle are in agreement with the faith?*<sup>15</sup> Kydones rhetorically asked. Likewise, Nikephoros Gregoras's sole letter addressed to the empress praises the model of the learned individual, οἱ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ ὅσοι τῆς λογικῆς ἐπιστήμης ἐφευρεταί, and assumes that Helena was one of them.<sup>16</sup> Adopting a rather didactic tone, Gregoras includes frequent allusions to the classical Greek philosophers, Demokritos and Empedokles, or other ancient figures such as Adrastus and Croesus.<sup>17</sup> Further contours of the image of her refined education and rhetorical skills can be grasped from the elaborated letter of consolation Manuel II addressed to her in the 1380s<sup>18</sup> as well as from the above mentioned *Dialogue on Marriage*, where she plays the part of a character able to respond with ease to her son's arguments.<sup>19</sup> These multiple allusions to her education were most often integrated into her representation as

a model of learning for other individuals. Another letter addressed by Kydones suggests that the empress's enthusiasm for literature could prompt others to acquire a similar type of knowledge: *if what is honoured by rulers has many admirers, perhaps someone who looks toward your example will also covet the honor that comes from learning and will advise hard for its sake. Thus through you learning will speak up boldly once again and what is truly good will also be considered good.*<sup>20</sup>

Doubtless, when Gregoras and Kydones described Helena as a paragon of education, they envisaged a concrete situation: by that time scholars used to meet frequently in the so called *theatra* organized at the imperial court where authors were performing and discussing their texts.<sup>21</sup> Since John V, unlike other Palaiologan rulers, did not display much interest in cultivating learning and rhetorical skills,<sup>22</sup> it is likely that Helena undertook the role of patron of arts and was considered by other scholars of the time as a sort of a catalyst of such meetings of scholars whom she probably has also supported financially.<sup>23</sup>

Helena's contemporaries did not only notice her propensity for scholarly activities but also her theological interests. As she embraced the doctrine of Hesychasm recently adopted in the Byzantine Church, she entertained a close friendship with some of its supporters. Among them was Philotheos Kokkinos, Gregory Pala-

14 Letter 389.8–11.

15 Letter 25.22–24.

16 GUILLAND, *Correspondance* (cit. n. 12), ep. I. 42.

17 Ibid.

18 Letter 1 in: G. T. DENNIS, *The Letters of Manuel II Palaeologus: Text, Introduction, and Commentary*, Washington, DC 1977, pp. 3–4.

19 In the end of the dialogue Manuel concedes that her mother's arguments were better. ANGELOU, *Manuel Palaiologos* (cit. n. 1), pp. 115–117.

20 Letter 25.30–31.

21 Strong evidence for *theatra* in this period comes from the letters of Manuel II: 9, 24, 27, in: DENNIS, *The Letters of Manuel II* (cit. n. 18), pp. 24–25, 66, 70.

22 John was rarely associated with scholars, in the same way as John Kantakouzenos or Manuel II, see HALECKI, *Un empereur* (cit. n. 2), p. 42.

23 Cf. the end of Nikephoros Gregoras's letter asking the empress for further support in his scholarly activities: ἡ σὴ δ' ἐρρώσθω μοι σύνεσις καὶ μὴ λήγοι τοιαῦτα προβάλλουσα. Cf. also Kydones's letter 222.

mas's friend and hagiographer. However, the relation with him moves slightly out of the sphere of patronage. Kokkinos, born in 1300, was much older than Helena and had lived for a long time on Mount Athos, before he was appointed patriarch twice.<sup>24</sup> From this position he dedicated three of his sermons on beatitudes (*μακαρισμοί*) to the empress,<sup>25</sup> which constitutes an indication of the acknowledgment of her efforts in promoting Hesychasm. It can thus be assumed that the patriarch was trying to prompt her to further promote Hesychasm, at a time which witnessed reverberations of the mid-fourteenth century religious debates.

These debates were also reflected by Demetrios Kydones's letters addressed to the empress. Despite their different religious options – Kydones had previously converted to Catholicism – each of them had rather nuanced positions. Even more so, Kydones's attacks against Philotheos Kokkinos, Helena's close acquaintance and Prochoros Kydones's prosecutor,<sup>26</sup> does not appear to have affected in any way his relationship with the empress. As in other texts of his, he states that, in his view, the differences between Orthodoxy and Catholicism are insignificant. In this respect, the end of L 25 is telling: *you will laugh at those who divide Helene and Scythian in Christ, and who ask about the native lands of writers rather than their ideas*. Following this path, the translation of Augustine's work which he sent together with L 25 becomes an element in his defence against those accusing him of heresy; about Augustine he states: *and*

*who fought more vigorously than he did those parts that are contrary to it?* It is therefore possible that, when addressing Helena on questions of faith, Kydones was well aware that the empress in the debate over Hesychasm had a rather moderate position.<sup>27</sup>

But Kydones did not make use of his close acquaintance with Helena only for scholarly purposes. In 1373, after having served John V as *mesazon* for two decades, he left Constantinople and went to Lesbos where his friend, Francisco Gattilusio, a Latin ruler with strong anti-Ottoman views, had his residence.<sup>28</sup> The emperor, who suspected a pro-Latin plot at a time when he was endeavoring to approach the Ottomans, called him back to Constantinople. Under such circumstances, the former *mesazon* summoned Helena's protection. A letter in his collection reflecting this episode reveals the degree of instrumentality of their relationship.<sup>29</sup> Kydones asks for Helena's intervention so that the emperor John V and his son, Manuel, stop suspecting him of treason: *I beg you, he says, to make them more indulgent toward me, and I ask you to send me a letter containing your advice on this, which I will receive as if it were an oracle, and I promise to do nothing contrary to what seems best to you*. Kydones's change in the attitude towards John V reflected in this letter was not a secret for the emperor: after having accompanied the emperor in his travel to Italy in 1369–1371 (?), he stepped out from the position of *mesazon* and subsequently, upon Helena's intervention, he managed to avoid the emperor's sanctions.<sup>30</sup>

24 1353–1354 and 1364–1376.

25 *Orations* 6, 7 and 8, in B. S. PSEFTONKAS, *Φιλοθέου Κοκκίνου λόγοι και ὁμιλίαι*, Thessaloniki 1981, pp. 23–233.

26 Cf. Kydones's letter to Kokkinos, LOENERTZ, *Correspondance* (cit. n. 4), letter 129, I, p. III.

27 Cf. HALECKI, *Un empereur* (cit. n. 2), pp. 141–142.

28 Cf. Kydones's letters to Francisco Gattilusio, LOENERTZ, *Correspondance* (cit. n. 4), pp. 242, 321.

29 Letter 134.

30 Kydones's letters 70 and 117 criticize heavily the emperor's behavior. For instance, in his L 70 addressed to the emperor himself, upon requesting his due wages from the emperor, he describes John an evil ruler in case he refuses to pay his servants. Yet, it seems that their relationship was much more complex and knew many variations for, in the 1350s and 1360s Kydones played a role in John's dealings with the papacy, see HALECKI, *Un empereur* (cit. n. 2), pp.

Although, if we take into consideration these letters, at its most basic level, Helena's good relations with the scholar-*mesazon* can hardly be disputed, the question of how their relation developed remains. Apart from their common literary interests their relationship was also based on political support and distribution of largesse. Political support originated in the previous connections between his family in Thessalonike and the wealthy Kantakouzenoi who ruled Byzantium for a while.<sup>31</sup> During the Zealots' uprising, his family lost most of the properties and, as a result, young Demetrios moved to the imperial court of Constantinople in the service of John VI Kantakouzenos. Once he arrived in the City, he had a rapid ascension in the court hierarchy and was soon appointed the emperor's *μεσάζων τοῖς πράγμασιν*, one of the most important court offices of the time.<sup>32</sup> Following John VI's abdication and John V's accession to power in 1354, he remained in the imperial administration and was active especially in the diplomatic service due to his connections in the Western world and his knowledge of Latin. Later on, his rhetorical training helped him to become one of the tutors of Helena's son, Manuel.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, along the lines of the major topics approached in his letters addressed to the empress –

learning and theology –, Helena's protection and support is frequently summoned by Kydones. The shift to a patron-client relation is marked by a change in Kydones's attitude occurring in a letter written after 1374:<sup>34</sup> here, he does not speak anymore like an instructor to his diligent student and aspiring author, but asks the empress to show benevolence in receiving the sermon on St Lawrence as a gift in exchange for her generosity. The same attitude surfaces in another letter sent to Helena together with a fruit from his garden again as an expression of gratitude: *and would I not appear to be unjust if I shared it with others before sending it (the gift of fruit) to you, to whom it is more just to bring the whole crop even, as if I were bringing it to my lady and the mistress of everything I own and the one who cultivates the farmer himself by her favors every day?*<sup>35</sup>

But the most illustrative document indicating how Helena fashioned her relationship with the *mesazon* remains the last letter which Kydones sent to the empress (L 222), in celebration of her entrance in the monastery of Kyra Martha.<sup>36</sup> More importantly, in this letter, Kydones also gives thanks for the gifts she offered to him and to other individuals on this occasion thus pointing to the breadth and context of Helena's patronage. Arguably, this extensive text although

95–110; F. TINNEFELD, *Demetrios Kydones. Briefe*, I, Stuttgart 1981, p. 27; J. R. RYDER, *The Career and Writings of Demetrios Kydones: A Study of Fourteenth-Century Byzantine Politics, Religion, and Society*, Leiden 2010, pp. 174–175.

31 In 1347 Kydones addressed a panegyric to John VI Kantakouzenos in which he recounts the friendship between his father and the emperor: *ἐμοὶ πατὴρ ἦν ὃν πολλὰ μὲν ἐκόσμησε συνελθόντα, μέγιστον δ' ἦν εἰς εὐτυχίαν ἐκείνω τὸ σοὶ φίλον εἶναι τὸν ἄνδρα, καὶ τὸ πάντων ἡμεληκότα πρὸς σε μόνον βλέπειν, καὶ ὃ τι νεύσεις τοῦτο νόμον ἡγεῖσθαι καὶ τοσοῦτον αὐτῷ τὸ τὰ σὰ θεραπεύειν συνήνεγκεν, ὥστ' οὐχ ὅπως οἴκοι τῆς σῆς εὐνοίας ἀπάνατο, ἀλλὰ καὶ φίλοις ὑπισχνεῖτο τὰ παρὰ σοῦ, καὶ τοῖς ἄλλως δεομένοις ἀπὸ τῶν σῶν ἐδίδου θαρρεῖν. *Ad Ioannem Cantacuzenum Oratio* I, in: LOENERTZ, *Correspondance* (cit. n. 4), I, 4.23–25, p. 2.*

32 Cf. RYDER, *Demetrius Kydones* (cit. n. 30), pp. 170–173.

33 DENNIS, *The Letters of Manuel II* (cit. n. 18), XXXVII.

34 Letter 256.

35 Letter 143.20–23.

36 On the monastery of Kyra Martha, which had many connections with the Palaiologos and Kantakouzenos families, see the account of Stephen of Novgorod in G. MAJESKA, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, Washington, DC 1984, pp. 306–309; V. LAURENT, *Kyra Martha. Essai de topographie et de prosopographie byzantine*, in: *Échos d'Orient*, 38, 1939, pp. 296–320.

included by the author himself in his epistolary collection was written not only as a letter but also as a fully-fledged panegyric. There are several clues that qualify this text for a rhetorical composition intended for public performance. First, its unusual length makes it by far the longest composition in Demetrios's epistolary corpus and second, its units largely correspond to the sections traditionally employed in panegyrics. Thus, it includes an extensive part describing the empress's ordeals during her son's, Andronikos IV's, rebellion in 1376–1379 and praising her attitude adopted in that situation. As for the public performance of this letter-panegyric we know from one of Manuel II's letters that it was read out loud so that *everyone judged it to be a perfectly marvelous letter*.<sup>37</sup>

It is worthwhile to investigate more in depth the contents of this text which offers an image of the extent of Helena's donation as well as an overview of the reasons why the empress made a donation to a scholar and retired state official like Kydones.<sup>38</sup> Taking into account that Helena's entrance in the monastery did not exclude her from the political decision process, one may ask what was the upshot of her donation upon entering the monastery while at the same time maintaining an active role at the court. Kydones was surely aware of that and, consequently, he must have formulated his eulogy with great care.

The debut of the text praises Helena's largesse which Kydones frames into a more general idea of divine charity: *To some God gave other kinds of benefits, as it seemed proper to Him... but to me He gave your protection* (πρόνοια).<sup>39</sup> Then, following closely in the steps of a well-staged modesty *topos*, Kydones gives thanks for the numerous

gifts he and his fellows received from the empress. Thus, in addition to having been granted a significant part of Helena's possessions upon her entrance in the convent of Kyra Martha, he adds that she created special official positions at the imperial court in order to have him closer.<sup>40</sup> This statement, albeit it lacks further specific details, points to concrete benefits which Helena could offer: remunerated public offices and occasional gifts. To a certain extent, this piece of information reflects Kydones's situation in the 1370s when he stopped working on a regular basis for the emperor and pursued his scholarly interests.

While in addressing Helena Kydones alludes to his economic troubles,<sup>41</sup> he readily states that her patroness's precious gift came as a blessing for him: *And by offering me [such gift] you went beyond my need, so that richness became not a consolation for my poverty, but a blessing*.<sup>42</sup> This statement sets the coordinates of a closer connection with the empress, further reinforced by a list of a range of situations when her support (εὐεργεσία, 222.34) proved helpful: ἐν ἀπορίαις, ἐν νόσοις, ἐν συκοφαντίαις, ἐν παντὶ βοηθείας δεομένῳ καιρῷ. (222.26–27), *in difficulties, in sickness, in false accusations, and at any time requiring support*.

Interestingly enough, this epistolary encomium is centered around a sole event from Helena's life, namely, her son's, Andronikos's, usurpation (1376–1379). This episode had had negative implications for both the ruling family and the Byzantines' dealings with the neighbouring Genoese and Ottomans: during the rebellion, Andronikos, having obtained foreign help, put into prison his father John V, his mother Helena, and the brothers, Manuel, and Theodore. Furthermore, after the end of the rebellion, the agree-

37 DENNIS, *The Letters of Manuel II* (cit. n. 18), letter 23, p. 64.

38 A short commentary on facts from Kydones's life connected to the letter has been provided by KIANKA, *The Letters of Demetrios Kydones* (cit. n. 12), pp. 162–163.

39 Letter 222.1–2.

40 Ibid., 11–12: τιμὰς τε ταῖς δωρεαῖς προσετίθει, τὰς μὲν παρ' ἑαυτῆς ἀνευρίσκουσα.

41 Ibid., 9–10: καὶ γὰρ μοι καὶ χρημάτων δεήσαν πολλῶ.

42 Ibid., 10–11.

ment between the two sides stipulated that Helena and her father John VI had to stay for two more years as captives in the Genoese colony of Pera.<sup>43</sup> In narrating Andronikos's *coup*, Kydones presents the events in chronological order<sup>44</sup> and describes the critical circumstances in which Helena was forced to side with one part of the family against the eldest of her sons.<sup>45</sup> Nonetheless, the text's focus remains on Helena's motherly trials compared to Job's troubles<sup>46</sup> and reveals her dual position in the conflict: on the one hand she had to show loyalty to her husband and legitimate ruler, and on the other hand she tried to protect her son, Andronikos. By using extremely negative terms with regard to the actions of the first-born son, Kydones's understated aim was to contrast the rebellious Andronikos with her second born son, Manuel, indicated in these circumstances as the legitimate successor of John V. Moreover, even her husband, John Palaiologos, is criticized for getting involved in dynastic battles instead of dealing with the common enemy, the Ottomans.<sup>47</sup>

In the last section of the letter-panegyric, Helena's capacity to deal with difficult situations is

connected to the idea of the empress's benevolent attitude expressed by her generous gift towards both poor people or friends,<sup>48</sup> including Demetrios himself.<sup>49</sup> In addition, when referring to the previous δωρεαί, he asserts that this final donation, which represented a sign of his own prestige,<sup>50</sup> was the last and most consistent instalment in a series of numerous gifts: *καὶ τοῦτου ταῖς πολλαῖς εὐεργεσίαις ἐπέθηκας κολοφῶνα*. (222.176–177) *and you placed this <present gift> on the top of your many good deeds*. In this way, by praising the empress's generosity as her chief virtue, Kydones shows himself always alert to remind of this connection which places him in a privileged position among the empress's *protegés*.

The language used in this epistolary oration echoes the terms employed in other panegyrics of the Palaiologan period. At a time of constrained finances and resources, the emperor's generosity was constantly evoked among the cardinal king-ly virtues in different oratorical addresses.<sup>51</sup> The members of the ruling family knew that the dispensation of imperial bounty was both virtuous and had effects on the grateful recipients who, like Kydones, could further advertise the rulers'

43 J. BARKER, *Manuel II Palaeologus. A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship*, New Jersey 1969, pp. 70–72.

44 His account which relates details of this episode (222.50–52: the suspicions among the emperor and his first born son Andronikos; 56–59: reciprocal attacks of the emperor and his son; 101–102: the escape from prison of John V and Manuel; 134–135: her release from prison hailed by the population) ends however happily: *τῇ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπανόδῳ λύσας τοῦτο τὸ νέφος, ἔδειξε σε πάλιν ἡμῖν, αὐγὴν καθαρὰν, εἶπέ τις, μετὰ τὸ σκότος ἐκείνο τὸ τὰς ἀπάντων ψυχὰς ἐπισχόν.* (*and dissolving with the return of the emperor this cloud, it showed you again to us, in guise of a clear dawn, after the darkness which possessed the souls of everybody*) (L 222.130–131).

45 The author often shows his antagonism towards Andronikos: *ἀπιστίας δὲ καὶ φθόνους τοῖς οικειοτάτοις ἐμφυτεύσας καὶ ἐριδας (implanting distrust, jealousy, and envy among the members of the family)* (L 222.50). Later on, he describes the condition of the imprisoned members of the family by comparing it to a plague added to famine: *καὶ ταῦτα λιμῶ λοιμοῦ προστεθέντος (as the plague was added to famine)* (L 222.114). Cf. also CHRYSOSTOMIDES, *Manuel II Palaeologus* (cit. n. 3), pp. 100–103.

46 Letter 222.45.

47 *Ibid.*, 56–58.

48 *Ibid.*, 169–174.

49 *Ibid.*, 174–175: *τις τῶν οικείων καὶ φροντίδος ἄξιός σοι δοκῶν (considering myself one of your friends worthy of your protection)*.

50 *Ibid.*, 185–186: *μνημεῖον τῆς σῆς ἀρετῆς, ἄθλον δὲ τῆς ἐμῆς εὐνοίας, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ἄλλους ἐνδειξίς τιμῆς ἢ τετιμημῆαι παρὰ σοῦ. (a memorial of your virtue, a prize for goodwill towards me, a proof of the honour by which I was honoured by you)*.

51 D. ANGELOV, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium (1204–1330)*, Cambridge 2007, pp. 134–138.



dynastic claims. At a different level, a look at other contemporary panegyrics may also enable us to establish several distinctively female elements of Helena's acts of patronage and donation. In an early βασιλικὸς λόγος addressed to John VI Kantakouzenos (1347) whom he was praising for his military victories, Kydones weaves into the encomium allusions to the emperor's previous acts of generosity alongside requests of protection and support.<sup>52</sup> Similar requests for benefits and acknowledgment of merits in imperial administration surface in the panegyric addressed later on to John V (1371), where, in addition, Kydones offered a short overview of his career.<sup>53</sup> The function of this last panegyric was not to praise the emperor's generosity or protection but to serve as a defence against the calumnies of those who influenced the emperor's opinion about his *mesazon*.<sup>54</sup> Both examples coming from the same author indicate a difference of approach in addressing Helena. While in these two earlier texts the expression of gratitude for various benefits was attached to different virtues and further appeals for support, in the panegyric letter addressed to Helena gratitude not only for present gifts but also for other previous benefits<sup>55</sup> was celebrated as the central feature of the empress's ethos. The tone of the letter is also different from the other panegyrics, as the inclusion of many consolatory features when describing the empress's ordeals in prison generates a certain intimacy between the author and the addressee. By contrast, such intimacy is absent in the panegyrics addressed to the emperors despite the fact that according to various sources Kydones was very close to both

of them.<sup>56</sup> We can thus conclude that Helena's support for the *mesazon* was surely more discreet than of the emperors, since only in the last years of her life he wrote an encomium for her, but it was also more efficient.

Arguably, advertising this donation in the public sphere had more implications for the empress's image than for old Kydones. By and large, patrons and clients were aware of the symbolical power embedded in an act of offering or receiving gifts and, for that reason, it was imperative that a patron's generous deed become widely known. In such circumstances, Kydones's letter with its marked features of a public encomium served as a platform for making known the empress's position vis-a-vis an influential supporter of the newly installed emperor, Manuel II, as well as the interests of the ruling family in the process of arousing the public awareness with regard to their activities.

Having established the details of Helena's relationships with Kydones as it emerges from his letters, I will now conclude by tracing inasmuch as possible the social and cultural implications of her patronage. Doubtless patronage, a mutually beneficial business, structured large sections of medieval society.<sup>57</sup> In Kydones's case it is also true that his skills and knowledge of Latin helped him in his long career in the public service at a time of many political changes. Yet, his talents do not entirely explain his continuity in office after the usurper Kantakouzenos left the throne in 1354 and was replaced by the legitimate John V Palaiologos. It is likely that Kydones became part of an agreement between the two rul-

52 δειξον ὡς κοινή τις εἶ τοῖς ἀτυχοῦσι καταφυγή, *Ad Ioannem Cantacuzenum Oratio I*, in: LOENERTZ, *Correspondance* (cit. n. 4), I, p. 7.

53 *Ad Ioannem Palaeologum Oratio*, in: LOENERTZ, *Correspondance* (cit. n. 4), I, 10.1–11.2, 12.27–39, 13.1–25.

54 *Ibid.*, 11.3–28, 15.10–16.5.

55 Letter 222.26–27.

56 RYDER, *Demetrius Kydones* (cit. n. 30), pp. 170–175.

57 For a discussion of patronage in the Western medieval world see for instance J. S. BOTHWELL, *Edward III and the English Peerage. Royal Patronage, Social Mobility and Political Control in Fourteenth-Century England*, Woodbridge 2004, pp. 1–8.

ers<sup>58</sup> and that Helena, in her double role of the usurper's daughter and the new emperor's wife, was involved in his rehabilitation after having served John VI. Thus, she might have wished to pay a tribute to her father's friendship with the Kydones family, for, in fact, the bright educated *mesazon* came to Constantinople at John VI's invitation following the confiscation of the family properties in Thessalonike and, during his first years at court, he acted as a kind of tutor to the teenage princess, as he himself suggests (L 389).

The attested connections with several literati of the second half of the fourteenth century place Helena in a series of Palaiologan educated women who supported scholarly endeavors. John V's wife helped her intellectual friends in various ways, including financial support and the organization of

scholarly meetings. Yet, unlike them, her patronage was politically charged, as her involvement in the public and religious life indicates. She used patronage and donation for the cultivation of her father's, John Kantakouzenos's, former supporters and thereby of a set of interests different from those of her husband, John Palaiologos. The only evidence that we have points to a strategy that combined comradeship based on common interests in learning, political support, and distribution of imperial largesse. In this way, she tried to build bridges between scholars holding different views in theological or political issues. The type of patronage she assumed explains why she was equally revered by both hard-line Palamites like Philotheos Kokkinos and anti-Palamites, like Kydones and Gregoras.

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58 By this agreement between John V and John VI entailed, the former one offered the Despotate of Morea in the administration of the Kantakouzenoi. Cf. D. ZAKYTHINOS, *Le Despotat grec de Morée*, I, London 1975, pp. 95–97.



NOTES ON FEMALE PIETY IN  
HERMITAGES OF THE OHRID AND PRESPA REGION:  
THE CASE OF MALI GRAD

SAŠKA BOGEVSKA

When we discuss women donors in Byzantium, we must take into consideration their economic power. Byzantine society privileged males;<sup>1</sup> consequently women were economically subordinated either to their fathers or to their husbands, who had almost exclusive rights regarding the management of their property.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, women were allowed to manage their dowries and, in some cases, almost all their possessions, which gave them certain economic autonomy. Religious piety and patronage practised by empresses, aristocratic women,

nuns, etc. were women's greatest vocation and a public manifestation of devotional zeal.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, charitable work (help for the poor, prisoners, orphans, hospitals), the founding of monasteries, and financial support for the decoration or building of churches, testify to the economic power of women.

The hermitages on the shores of the Lakes of Ohrid and Prespa, which date from the middle of the thirteenth to the middle of the sixteenth century, confirm the presence and the continuity of Byzantine art and monasticism in the Byz-

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- 1 D. C. SMYTHE, *Women as Outsiders*, in: L. JAMES (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs, Gender in Byzantium*, London/New York 1997, pp. 149–167. On female power in Byzantium and the West see S. LEBECQ/A. DIERKENS/R. LE JAN/J.-M. SANSTERRE (ed.), *Femmes et pouvoirs des femmes à Byzance et en Occident (VIe–XIe siècle)*, International Colloquium held on 28th, 29th and 30th March 1996 in Brussels and Villeneuve d'Ascq, Lille 1999.
  - 2 A. E. LAIOU, *Women in the History of Byzantium*, in: I. KALAVREZOU (ed.), *Byzantine Women and Their World. Catalogue of the Exhibition*, Harvard University Art Museum, Cambridge, MA 2003, p. 29. The Byzantine family was principally patriarchal, with men playing the primary role as heads of households, as owners of property, and as those responsible for the payment of taxes. A. E. LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, *Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire: A Social and Demographic Study*, Princeton, NJ 1977, p. 78.
  - 3 A. E. LAIOU, *Observations on the Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women*, in: A. E. LAIOU, *Gender, Society and Economic Life in Byzantium (Variorum Collected Studies Series)*, Aldershot 1992, II, p. 62; A.-M. TALBOT, *Building Activity in Constantinople under Andronikos II: The Role of Women Patrons in the Construction and Restoration of Monasteries*, in: N. NECIPOĞLU (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople, Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, Leiden/Boston/Cologne 2001, pp. 329–343. On patronage in Byzantium see R. CORMACK, *Patronage and New Programs of Byzantine Iconography*, in: *Acts of the 17th International Byzantine Congress, Major Papers*, Dumbarton Oaks/Georgetown University (August 3–8, 1986), New Rochelle, NY 1986, pp. 609–638; A. CUTLER, *Art in Byzantine Society: Motive Forces of Byzantine Patronage. XVI. Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress, Wien 4–9 Oktober 1981*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 31.2, 1981, pp. 759–787. Donors' influence on the iconographic program of the monument is treated by M. PANAYOTIDI, *The Question of the Donor and of the Painter. A Rudimentary Approach*, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaialogikes Hetaireias*, 17, 1993/1994, pp. 143–156, n. 1 (with bibliography); M. EMMANUEL, *Religious Imagery in Mistra: Donors and Iconographic Programs*, in: M. GRÜNBART/E. KISLINGER/A. MUTHESIUS/D. STATHAKOPOULOS (ed.), *Material Culture and Well-Being in Byzantium (400–1453)*, Proceedings of the International Conference, Cambridge 8–10 September 2001, Vienna 2007, pp. 119–127.

antine provinces, even after the fall of Constantinople. All ktitorial inscriptions still legible and all donor portraits still preserved in these monuments mention or depict monks, except for the hermitage of Mali Grad in what is today Albania.<sup>4</sup> In this church we find proof of female patronage, which is the subject of this chapter, and which we hope will help us comprehend the status of female founders in the Byzantine province<sup>5</sup> of Macedonia.

Situated on a small island on the Lake of Great Prespa, facing the village known today as Liqenasi but from medieval sources as Pustec,<sup>6</sup>

the hermitage (Fig. 1) is found in a natural cave on the south side of the island, where monks' cells are still recognizable in the rock. The church that served as a *kyriakon* for the brothers is a single-aisled church covered with a barrel vault.

Two inscriptions found in the interior of the church give us information on the date and the name of the donors. The second, later inscription is of less interest for our topic, and informs us that the monument was decorated through the generous donation of the *kaisar* Novakos in 1368/69.<sup>7</sup> The portraits<sup>8</sup> of the

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- 4 This church was already the subject of scholarly interest: P. MILJUKOV, Hristijanske drevnosti Zapadnoj Makedonii, in: *Izvestija Russkago Arkheologicheskago Institute v Konstantinopole*, 4.1, 1899, pp. 65–74; V. R. PETKOVIĆ, Pregled crkvenih spomenika kroz povescnicu srpskog naroda, Belgrade 1950, pp. 261–262; D. DHAMO, L'église de Notre-Dame à Maligrad, in: *Studia Albanica*, no. 2, 1964, pp. 107–119; V. J. DJURIĆ, Mali Grad – Sv. Atanasije u Kosturu – Borje, in: *Zograf*, 6, 1975, pp. 31–50; V. J. DJURIĆ, Vizantijske freske u Jugoslaviji, Belgrade 1974, pp. 88–89; P. THOMO, Byzantine Monuments on Great Prespa, in: *Papers from the Melbourne Conference, July 1995*, Melbourne 2001, pp. 104–106; G. ANGELIČIN, Pešternite crkvi vo Ohridsko-Prespanskiot region (R. Makedonija, R. Albanija, R. Grcija), *Struga* 2004, pp. 144–157.
- 5 On donor images in Byzantine provinces see S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches, Vienna 1992, p. 7; A. STYLIANOU/J. STYLIANOU, Donors and Dedicatory Inscriptions, Supplicants and Supplications in the Painted Churches of Cyprus, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft*, 9, 1960, pp. 97–128; L. RODLEY, Patron Imagery from the Fringes of the Empire, in: D. C. SMYTHE (ed.), *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*. Papers from the Thirty-Second Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, March 1998, Aldershot 2000, pp. 163–178; M. TATIĆ-DJURIĆ, L'iconographie de la donation dans l'ancien art serbe, in: *Acts of the 14th International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, III, Bucharest 1976, pp. 311–322; L. BERNARDINI, Les donateurs des églises de Cappadoce, in: *Byzantion*, 62, 1992, pp. 118–140; T. VELMANS, Le portrait dans l'art des Paléologues, in: *Art et société à Byzance sous les Paléologues*. Actes du Colloque organisé par l'Association internationale des études byzantines à Venise en septembre 1968, Venice 1971, pp. 93–148; N. PATTERSON-ŠEVČENKO, Close Encounters: Contact between Holy Figures and the Faithful as Represented in Byzantine Works of Art, in: A. GUILLOU (ed.), *Byzance et les images*. Cycle de conférences organisé au Musée du Louvre du 5 octobre au 7 décembre 1992, Paris 1994, pp. 257–285. On donor portraits in manuscripts see I. SPATHARAKIS, The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts, Leiden 1976, p. 5; H. BELTING, Das illuminierte Buch in der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft, Heidelberg 1970, p. 72; V. J. DJURIĆ, Portreti na poveljama vizantijskih i srpskih vladara, in: *Zbornik Filozofskog Fakulteta*, 7.1, 1963, pp. 251–272, etc. On patrons, donors and owners from notes on manuscripts (Palaiologan period) see F. EUANGELATOU-NOTARA, Χορηγοί, κτήτορες, δωρητές σε σημειώματα κωδίκων, Παλαιολόγιοι χρόνοι, Athens 2000, p. 13.
- 6 The village Pustec is mentioned in 1568 in Turkish census books. That year the village had 77 households. V. JOVANOVIĆ, Naselbite vo Prespa, mestopoložba, istoriski razvoj i minato, Skopje 2005, pp. 492, 495.
- 7 It reads in English translation: *This holy and very venerable church of our very holy Lady and Mother of God, was built from the foundations with the work and labour and was decorated by the master himself, the very happy kaisar Novakos, under the hegoumenos Iona, the monk. In the reign of the high kral Vukašin and the holy archbishopric Prima Justiniana, year 1368/69*. DJURIĆ, Mali Grad (cit. n. 4), p. 32 (n. 1 with bibliography).
- 8 On the question of the "portrait" in Byzantine art see G. DAGRON, L'image de culte et le portrait, in: GUILLOU, *Byzance et les images* (cit. n. 5), pp. 121–150; BERNARDINI, Les donateurs (cit. n. 5), p. 121; SPATHARAKIS, The Portrait (cit. n. 5), pp. 1–6 (with bibliography).



1: Mali Grad, church of the Virgin, west façade

*kaisar* Novakos<sup>9</sup> and his family are painted on the west façade,<sup>10</sup> on both sides of the standing Virgin<sup>11</sup> (Figs. 2, 6). He and his wife, the *kaisarissa* Kale,<sup>12</sup> are painted to the right of the

Virgin (Figs. 3, 6), whereas his daughter Maria and his son Amiralis are on the other side.<sup>13</sup> The *kaisar* is represented at a larger scale than the other members of the family,<sup>14</sup> and he is the

- 9 The status of *kaisar* Novakos in the Serbian hierarchy was analysed by: B. FERJANČIĆ, *Sevastokratori i kesari u srpskom carstvu*, in: *Zbornik Filozofskog Fakulteta*, 11.1, 1970, p. 268; I. DJORDJEVIĆ, *Zidno slikarstvo srpske vlastele u doba Nemnjića*, Belgrade 1994, p. 24; DJURIĆ, *Mali Grad* (cit. n. 4), p. 49; VELMANS, *Le portrait* (cit. n. 5), p. 125.
- 10 Ktitors' effigies occupy mostly the interior of the churches. In Cappadocia, for example, they are frequently found on the south and on the north walls of the nave, and sometimes funerary portraits are to be found in annexed chapels, BERNARDINI, *Les donateurs* (cit. n. 5), p. 119. Nevertheless, some examples from different periods testify to the practice of painting portraits on church exteriors: west facade of Kurbinovo (1191), C. GROZDANOV/D. BARDZIEVA, *Sur les portraits des personnages historiques à Kurbinovo*, in: *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta*, 33, 1994, figs. on pp. 72–73; south facade of the church of the Virgin Mavriotissa in Kastoria (1259–64), M. CHATZIDAKIS/S. PELEKANIDIS, *Kastoria*, Athens 1985, fig. 20 on p. 81; west facade of the Holy Archangels, Kastoria (1254–44), KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 5), figs. 79–81; CHATZIDAKIS/PELEKANIDIS, *Kastoria*, figs. 21–22 on p. 105; west facade of Pološko (1343–45), C. GROZDANOV/D. ČORNAKOV, *Istorijski portreti u Pološkom*, II, in: *Zograf*, 15, 1984, ill. 1; south facade of St Nicholas Bolnički (1345), and on the facade of the parekklesion of St John the Theologian in the church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid (1364–65), C. GROZDANOV, *Ohridskoto zidno slikarstvo od XIV vek*, Ohrid 1980, figs. 7, 30. Titos Papamastorakis mentions also donors' portraits on the west facade of Zaum, T. PAPANASTORAKIS, *Ἐνα εἰκαστικό ἐγκώμιο τοῦ Μιχαήλ Ἡ' Παλαιολόγου, Οἱ ἐξωτερικὲς τοιχογραφίες στὸ καθολικὸ τῆς μονῆς τῆς Μαυριώτισσας στὴν Καστοριά*, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaialogikes Hetaireias*, 15, 1989/1990, p. 224, but actually there are none, GROZDANOV, *Ohridskoto zidno slikarstvo*, fig. 27. We must take into consideration also the portraits of Vukašin and Marko, that today occupy the south facade of the Marko monastery near Skopje, but originally (fourteenth century) they were situated in a small annexe, destroyed in 1963, Z. GAVRILOVIĆ, *The Portrait of King Marko at Markov Manastir (1376–1381)*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 16, 1991, pp. 418–419. On the facade of the south portico of the church Panagia Pantanassa, Philippia at Epiros (ca. 1290), there are donor portraits of Nikephoros I Komnenos Doukas (1276–1296) with Anna Komneno-Doukena Palaiologina and their son Thomas, P. VOKOTROPOULOS, *Ἡ κτιτορικὴ τοιχογραφία στὸ περίστωο τῆς Παντανάσσης Φιλιππιάδος*, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaialogikes Hetaireias*, 29, 2008, pp. 73–80, ills. 1–7. On the south facade of the exo-narthex of St John the Baptist, in vicinity of Serres, a monk is represented in proskynesis in front of the Virgin Peribleptos. This painting is dated by Xyngopoulos to the seventeenth century, A. XYNGOPOULOS, *Αἱ τοιχογραφίαι τοῦ καθολικοῦ τῆς μονῆς Προδρόμου παρὰ τὰς Σέρρας*, Thessaloniki 1973, pp. 75–76, pl. 64, but Ivan Djordjević placed it in the fourteenth, DJORDJEVIĆ, *Zidno slikarstvo* (cit. n. 9), p. 18 n. 85. Ktitors' portraits rarely occupy the facade of the hermitages. Exceptionally, this is the case in the hermitage of St Nicholas at Dradanj (1346–1355), near Kavadarci, Macedonia, M. RADUJKO, *Dradanjki manastirić Sv. Nikole*, II (živopis), in: *Zograf*, 24, 1995, fig. 5, and on the west facade of St Marina at Karlukovo, Bulgaria (fourteenth century), D. PIGUET, *Les monuments bulgares à l'époque des Paléologues*, 3 vols., PhD Thesis, University of Paris I Pantheon Sorbonne, directed by J.P. Sodini, Paris 1982, ill. 30. Sculpted donor portraits on the south facade of churches are a tradition in Georgia. For several examples see R. MEPISACHVILI/V. TSITSANDZE, *L'art de la Géorgie ancienne*, Leipzig 1978, pp. 84, 87, 127, 140, etc.
- 11 On the diverse types of the Virgin in donor compositions see TATIĆ-DJURIĆ, *L'iconographie de la donation* (cit. n. 5), pp. 311–315.
- 12 The transfer of title from husband to wife was a common practice in Byzantium. See for example: *protostrator* Theodore Tzimiskes and his wife *protostratorissa* Maria at Kokkine Ekklesia, Boulgareli (1259–96), KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 5), pp. 98–99, fig. 87; *despotissa* Maria, who was the wife of the despot Jovan Oliver in the Oliver parekklesion at Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid (1347–1350), GROZDANOV, *Ohridskoto zidno slikarstvo* (cit. n. 10), pp. 62–63, fig. 9, ill. 44; *sebastokrator* Kalojan and *sebastokratorissa* Desislava at Bojana (1259), A. GRABAR, *La peinture religieuse en Bulgarie*, II, Paris 1928, pl. XXI, etc.
- 13 On the identification of the family members see MILJUKOV, *Khristijanske drevnosti* (cit. n. 4), p. 68; FERJANČIĆ, *Sevastokratori i kesari* (cit. n. 9), p. 265; DJURIĆ, *Mali Grad* (cit. n. 4), p. 35.
- 14 On the hierarchy of donor portraits see BERNARDINI, *Les donateurs* (cit. n. 5), pp. 120, 126–127.





2: Mali Grad, church of the Virgin, west façade, Christ blessing the donors, 1368/69

only one to be represented with a nimbus. He is shown receiving a double benediction, once from Christ above, and a second time from the Infant Christ in the arms of the Virgin;<sup>15</sup> furthermore, he is the only member of the family to be cited in the dedicatory inscription inside the church.<sup>16</sup> It is obvious that *kaisar* Novakos

is the main donor, and that the other members of the family are of lesser rank. In this case, the husband is the principal financer of the church, and his wife is not mentioned as an individual *ktitor* but as his companion, a situation which was very common in Byzantine and Serbian society.<sup>17</sup>

- 15 One comparable representation, among many others, is the very famous mosaic from Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (south gallery), representing John II Komnenos (1118–1143) and Irene on either side of the Virgin. Here, the Virgin is slightly larger than John and Irene. The emperor to the right of the Virgin is the only one of the pair to be blessed by the Infant Christ, shown in his mother's arms, T. WHITTEMORE, *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul, Third Preliminary Report, Work Done in 1935–38: The Imperial Portraits of the South Gallery*, Boston 1942, pl. XX. In Hagia Sophia all participants are frontal, whereas in Mali Grad, Christ is turned toward *kaisar* Novakos in an attitude of benevolence. Couples or families flanking the Virgin are often found in donor compositions, see for example M. G. PARANI, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th centuries)*, Leiden/Boston 2003, p. 326 no. 5, p. 327 no. 27, p. 330 no. 30, p. 335 no. 55, p. 337 no. 61.
- 16 The same is noted in the church of the Ascension in Leskovec (1461/62), where the portraits of a man named Tode and his wife Vulka are painted inside the church, whereby the dedicatory inscription mentions only the men, G. SUBOTIĆ, *Ohridskata slikarska škola od XV vek*, Ohrid 1980, p. 95, figs. 74, 77, ills. 67–68.
- 17 For some representations in the monumental art of the capital see WHITTEMORE, *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia* (cit.





3: Mali Grad, church of the Virgin, west façade, donors' composition, detail: kaiser Novakos and his wife kaiserissa Kale, 1368/69

Of greater importance for this paper is the inscription found on the band under the apse conch (Fig. 4), which is a very common location for donor inscriptions.<sup>18</sup> The inscription (Fig. 5) is written in a standard supplication form<sup>19</sup> and reads: Δέησης του δουλου του Θ(εο)υ Μπώεϊκου και Ευδῶκειας τῆς εὐγενεστάτης και τὸν τέκνον

αὐτης. Ανῆστωριθὲν τὸ βίμα παρ αὐτ(ῶν). Ἐτ(ου)ς σωνγ. – Prayer (supplication) of the servant of God Bojko and the most noble Eudokia and her child. The sanctuary was decorated by them in (6853) 1344/45.<sup>20</sup> It is difficult to establish from this inscription the relationship between Bojko and Eudokia. In numerous inscriptions we find the

n. 15), pls. III, XX. For some Serbian examples see DJORDJEVIĆ, *Zidno slikarstvo* (cit. n. 9), ill. 4, 5, 7–10, 17, 19, 21–24, 19, 53. For Bulgarian examples: GRABAR, *La peinture* (cit. n. 12), pl. XXI, and for some fifteenth-century examples from Ohrid, SUBOTIĆ, *Ohridskata slikarska škola* (cit. n. 16), figs. 66, 69, 77, 92. See also the example from Kokkine Ekklesia, Boulgareli (1259–96), KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 5), fig. 87, etc.

18 For example, in the churches of Kalithea, the donor inscriptions are written above the apse in St Antony, Palaiochora (late fifteenth century), St George, Dourianika, (1275), St Polykarpos, Phoinikies (thirteenth century), M. CHATZIDAKIS/I. BITHA, *Corpus of the Byzantine Wall-Paintings of Greece: The Island of Kythera*, Athens 2003, fig. 4 p. 90; fig. 4 p. 136; fig. 4 p. 288. The same is noted in Karşı kilise, Cappadocia (1212), C. JOLIVET-LEVY, *Images et espace cultuel à Byzance: L'exemple d'une église de Cappadoce (Karşı kilise, 1212)*, in: M. KAPLAN (ed.), *Le sacré et son inscription dans l'espace à Byzance et en Occident: études comparées sous la direction de Michel Kaplan*, Paris 2001, p. 167, pl. VI; in Platsa, D. MOURIKI, *Les fresques de l'église de Saint-Nicolas à Platsa du Magne*, Athens 1975, p. 17, etc.

19 On the diverse types of donor inscriptions see KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 5), p. 25; BERNARDINI, *Les donateurs* (cit. n. 5), pp. 129, 132, 139.

20 DJURIĆ, *Mali Grad* (cit. n. 4), p. 32, n. 2 with bibliography.

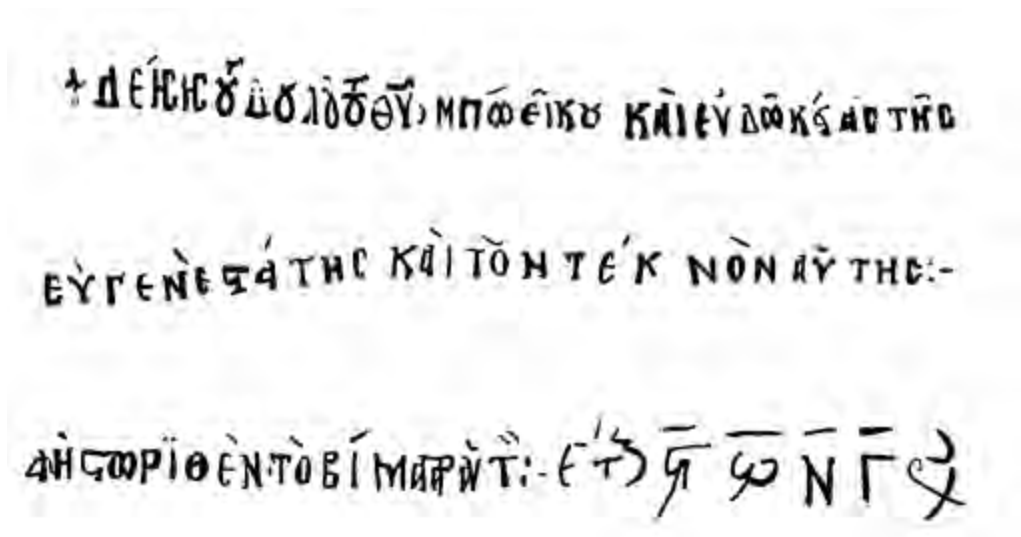


4: Mali Grad, church of the Virgin, apse decoration and ktitorial inscription, 1344/45

name of the man, for example “Dimitrios”, followed by “and his wife” (καὶ τῆς συμβίου αὐτοῦ,<sup>21</sup>

καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ),<sup>22</sup> but sometimes without even mentioning the name of the woman.<sup>23</sup>

- 21 See the examples: KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 5), pp. 67–68, 70, 81, 86, 87, 88, 89, 92, 98, 99, 109, 110; M. P. PAISIDOU, *Οι τοιχογραφίες του 17ου αιώνα στους ναούς της Καστοριάς: συμβολή στη μελέτη της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής της δυτικής Μακεδονίας*, Athens 2002, p. 41; E. DRAKOPOULOU, *Η πόλη της Καστοριάς τη βυζαντινή και μεταβυζαντινή εποχή (12ος–16ος αι.): ιστορία, τέχνη, επιγραφές*, Athens 1997, p. 89; CHATZIDAKIS/BITHA, *Corpus* (cit. n. 18), pp. 87, 129, 200, 245, 248, 284–285, 296; A. XYNGOPOULOS, *Τὰ μνημεία τῶν Σερβίων*, Athens 1957, p. 80; C. ASDRACHA, *Inscriptions proto-byzantines et byzantines de la Thrace Orientale et de l’île d’Imbros (IIIe–XVe siècles)*, Athens 2003, pp. 485–486; G. DE JERPHANION, *Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce: une nouvelle province de l’art byzantin*, Paris 1925–42, II, p. 381; E. N. TSIGARIDAS, *Τοιχογραφίες της περιόδου των Παλαιολόγων σε ναούς της Μακεδονίας*, Thessaloniki 1999, p. 158; STYLIANOU/STYLIANOU, *Donors* (cit. n. 5), pp. 102–104, 109–111, 113–115, 120; D. FEISSEL/A. PHILIPPIDIS-BRAAT, *Inventaires en vue d’un recueil des inscriptions historiques de Byzance, III: Inscriptions du Péloponnèse (à l’exception de Mistra)*, in: *Travaux et Mémoires*, 9, 1985, pp. 305, 307, 312, 319, 321, 327, 329, 331, 333, 338, 351; MOURIKI, *Les fresques de l’église de Saint-Nicolas* (cit. n. 18), pp. 14, 17–18; D. MOURIKI, *The Wall Paintings of the Church of the Panagia at Moutoullas*, in: I. HUTTER (ed.), *Byzanz und der Westen*, Vienna 1984, pp. 172, 192; N. B. DRANDAKIS, *Βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες της Μέσα Μάνης*, Athens 1995, pp. 76, 310, 340, 391, 458; SUBOTIĆ, *Ohridskata slikarska škola* (cit. n. 16), p. 86.
- 22 DE JERPHANION, *Les églises rupestres* (cit. n. 21), p. 98. In the church of the Holy Trinity (1244/45), Kranidion in Peloponnesos, we find the citation... *Manuil Mourmoura and his spouse Theodora*... —... *Μανου(ήλ) Μουρμουρά και Θεοδώ(ρας) τῆς αὐτοῦ γαμετ(ῆς)*..., FEISSEL/PHILIPPIDIS-BRAAT, *Inventaires* (cit. n. 21), p. 311.
- 23 See for example the inscription from the Holy Apostles (1547) and the Virgin Eleousa (1551), both from Kastoria, E. DRAKOPOULOU, *Inscriptions de la ville de Kastoria (Macédoine) du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle: tradition et adaptation*,



5: Mali Grad, church of the Virgin, ktitorial inscription from 1344/45, copy

In our inscription, Eudokia follows the name of Bojko without any precision. Further information on their relationship is the fact that the child is not cited as being theirs, but as hers alone. Two hypotheses are possible: either Bojko and Eudokia were not spouses and they combined their donations to the Church, or they had a relationship which is difficult to determine based on the evidence of the inscription alone.

If we conjecture that Bojko and Eudokia were not husband and wife, we might suppose

that Eudokia was a widow or a divorcee. In the majority of dedicatory inscriptions that mention only a woman and her children, it is thought that the husband was already deceased,<sup>24</sup> divorce being less common than widowhood.<sup>25</sup> Such is the case of Kale Meledone and her children in the church of the Transfiguration from Euboea (1296),<sup>26</sup> or that of Kale Magalokonomisas and her children from the church St Andrew, Livadi, on the island of Kythera.<sup>27</sup> We know from fourteenth-century Byzantine legal documents that

in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 63, 2005, pp. 20, 33. See also the examples published by KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 5), pp. 70, 88, 108.

24 The same thing can be observed for the opposite sex. For example, the supplication of Nicholas Koronas and his children on the votive painting representing the Nativity of the Virgin in the church of St John, Sanidia, Kythera (first half of the seventeenth century), CHATZIDAKIS/BITHA, *Corpus* (cit. n. 18), p. 201.

25 From 97 cases of dissolved marriages in thirteenth-century Epiros, 18 percent were due to divorce, and more than 40 percent were due to the death of the conjoint, A. E. LAIOU, *Contribution à l'étude de l'institution familiale en Epire au XIIIe siècle*, in: LAIOU, *Gender* (cit. n. 3), ch. V, p. 319. Statistics for the region of Macedonia have not been compiled, but we presume that the situation was similar.

26 KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 5), p. 84; S. E. J. GERSTEL, *Painted Sources for Female Piety in Medieval Byzantium*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 52, 1998, p. 93 n. 19.

27 It is a post-byzantine graffito probably from the seventeenth century on the painting of St Paraskeve in the church of St Andrew, Livadi: Δ(έησι)ς τῆς δούλης τοῦ Θ(ε)οῦ Καλῆς Μεγαλοκονόμησας καὶ τὸν τέκνον αὐτῆς ἀμήν, CHATZIDAKIS/BITHA, *Corpus* (cit. n. 18), p. 72. See also the supplication of Anna and her children in the church of the Pannagia at Naxos (1288/89), KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions* (cit. n. 5), p. 89. In the dedicatory inscription



6: Mali Grad, church of the Virgin, west façade, donors' composition, 1368/69, drawing

in aristocratic circles women after the death of their husband, as long as they did not remarry,<sup>28</sup> had close control over the family property, espe-

cially concerning the management of their dowries, which remained almost inalienable from them.<sup>29</sup> We suppose that Eudokia found herself

from the church of the Virgin at Matka, near Skopje, end of the fifteenth century, the main donor of the church is Milica, represented together with her son Nicholas. At the end of the inscription she asks for remembrance for her husband Tošinko, who was already deceased at the time the church was finished, SUBOTIĆ, *Ohridskata slikarska škola* (cit. n. 16), p. 142, figs. 107, 115, ill. 104–105.

28 When widows remarried, their second husband assumed the role of head of household, LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, *Peasant Society* (cit. n. 2), p. 94.

29 A. E. LAIOU, *The Role of Women in Byzantine Society*, in: LAIOU, *Gender* (cit. n. 3), ch. I, p. 246; A.-M. TALBOT, *Women*, in: A.-M. TALBOT, *Women and Religious Life in Byzantium*, Aldershot 2001, pp. 119, 122. On the legal measures that protect the dowry see R. J. MACRIDES, *Dowry and Inheritance in the Late Period: Some Cases from the Patriarchal Register*, in: R. J. MACRIDES, *Kinship and Justice in Byzantium, 11th–15th Centuries*, Aldershot 2000, ch. V, pp. 89–98, esp. p. 94; J. BEAUCAMP, *Les filles et la transmission du patrimoine à Byzance: dot et part successorale*, in: J. BEAUCAMP/G. DAGRON (ed.), *La transmission du patrimoine: Byzance et l'aire méditerranéenne*, Paris 1998, pp. 11–34; A. E. LAIOU, *Marriage Prohibitions, Marriage Strategies and the Dowry in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium*, in: BEAUCAMP/DAGRON, *La transmission du patrimoine*, p. 135. The situation was more complicated for women who remained childless because the dowry was specifically designed to promote the well-being of her children, LAIOU, *Observations* (cit. n. 3), p. 66; D. M. NICOL, *The Byzantine Lady: Ten Portraits (1250–1500)*, Cambridge 1994, p. 5. In rural society in Macedonia, widows could keep their dowry and marriage portion, and share in the property of the man, along with the children of the marriage. A woman could inherit the entire property of her husband only if the husband had no children, no surviving brothers, and no surviving parents. In the fourteenth century, households headed by widows

in this particular situation, which permitted her to make this donation personally.<sup>30</sup> Data for certain villages in early fourteenth-century Macedonia indicate that around 20 percent of households were headed by widows.<sup>31</sup>

The second hypothesis supposes that Bojko and Eudokia had ties of consanguinity (brother/sister, father/daughter),<sup>32</sup> or that they lived in an illegal union, which although condemned by civil and canon law was nevertheless very common in the fourteenth century.<sup>33</sup> In the second case, after the death of her husband or as a divorcee, she opted to live with Bojko without marrying in order to preserve the inheritance rights of her child. Legally, this permitted her to retain control over her estate. This phenomenon was very widespread in this period because of conjugal instability within marriage. The death of one of the spouses, divorce, and the social and economic movement of individuals were the conditions for this kind of conjugal situation, which

although not considered a legal marriage was nevertheless more stable and was tolerated more easily than an adulterous union.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the institution of concubinage concerned primarily poorer women without sufficient dowries who consequently had few rights regarding the property of their male partners.<sup>35</sup> We assume that this was not the case for Eudokia because of the epithet that qualifies the woman as *most noble*, which is not the case for the man.

The epithet *εὐγενέστατος/εὐγενεστάτη* is attested in civic honorary inscriptions dating from the third century CE in the Peloponnesos, and is always related to noble families or citizens.<sup>36</sup> In later centuries the epithet *noble* was used by Byzantine aristocrats who could claim at least one imperial ancestor.<sup>37</sup> In the Palaiologan period, dignitaries such as despots, *sebastokrators*, and others were designated as *most and all noble* (*πανευγενέστατος/πανευγενεστάτη*), testifying to the late Byzantine taste for exaggeration.<sup>38</sup> It

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seem to have been taxed in the same manner and with the same norms as households headed by men. This was not the case in the fifteenth century under Ottoman administration, when female heads of households were taxed at a lower scale than men, LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, *Peasant Society* (cit. n. 2), pp. 90–91.

- 30 The same phenomenon is noticed for widows from aristocratic circles in Constantinople and in the Palaiologan period, TALBOT, *Building Activity* (cit. n. 3), p. 341, table at p. 343.
- 31 Unfortunately, we do not know the exact figures for remarriage in Macedonia, LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, *Peasant Society* (cit. n. 2), 89, table III. 4 at p. 90; TALBOT, *Women* (cit. n. 29), p. 129. In thirteenth-century Epiros, from 97 cases of dissolute marriage, 40 percent were due to the death of the husband. 75 percent of these widows remarried, LAIOU, *Contribution* (cit. n. 25), pp. 280, 319.
- 32 Although a great majority of households consisted of nuclear families, for economic reasons, people from fragmented households (widowed sisters or orphaned nephews and nieces) rejoin the household of their relatives, LAIOU, *Women in the History of Byzantium* (cit. n. 2), pp. 26–27. In rural Macedonia at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the census books enumerate a small number of single women – head of household. Angeliki Laiou thinks that unmarried women could not keep authority for very long, the phenomenon being transitory. The woman is in most cases orphaned and she is the head of the household until she marries, LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, *Peasant Society* (cit. n. 2), chs. III and IV. The same phenomenon is found in Epiros, LAIOU, *Contribution* (cit. n. 25), p. 299.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 284.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 299.
- 35 LAIOU, *Women in the History of Byzantium* (cit. n. 2), p. 27.
- 36 See for example the funerary inscription of the *most noble Herakleia* (mid third century CE) from Sparta etc. A. D. RIZAKIS/S. ZOUMBAKI/C. LEPENIOTI, *Roman Peloponnesos, II: Roman Personal Names in Their Social Context (Laconia and Messenia)*, Athens 2004, pp. 71, 98, 109, 116, 118, 142, 143, 148, 155, 167, 244.
- 37 A. E. LAIOU, *The Byzantine Aristocracy in the Palaeologan Period: A Story of Arrested Development*, in: LAIOU, *Gender* (cit. n. 3), ch. VI, p. 137 n. 25.
- 38 The epithet *πανευγενέστατος* is found in three dedicatory inscriptions from Kastoria. The first is from St George (Omorhokklisia) around 1300, and the other is from the church Panagia Koubelidiki dating from 1260–80, KALO-



is significant that among the aristocracy it was a common occurrence for children to use only the name of their female parent, especially when their mother's ancestry was more exalted than that of their father, or when the mother's name conferred a particular dignity.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the noble Eudokia and her child did not specify the name of the child's father, her own name being sufficient.<sup>40</sup>

In the case of Bojko we presume that his origins were not as dignified as those of the woman, his name being mentioned without any title.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the epithet given to Eudokia does not automatically imply that her estate and her contribution to this donation were more important than those of Bojko. The name of the man is

listed first, and if we follow the Byzantine tradition of digressively listing the names from most to least important donations, Bojko seems to be the main donor. In one late inscription from Kastoria (church of St Nicholas, 1663), we find the name of *the very honourable archontissa Theologina and her husband Petzios*.<sup>42</sup> What is interesting in this case is the fact that the main donor of the church is obviously the woman, who has a higher social status than her husband and who is listed first.

In any case, inscribing a woman's name or painting her portrait in the sanctuary was the only way for Orthodox women to enter the most sacred part of the church.<sup>43</sup> Their physical presence in the sanctuary was strictly forbidden al-

PISSI-VERTI, Dedicatory Inscriptions (cit. n. 5), pp. 48, 103. The last example is found in the church of St Athanasios tou Mouzaki (1383/84), DJURIĆ, Mali Grad (cit. n. 4), p. 39 n. 14. It is also the case with the *sebastokrator* Oliver in the narthex of Lesnovo (1349), S. GABELIĆ, Manastir Lesnovo: istorija i slikarstvo, Belgrade 1998, pp. 171–172, fig. 78, pl. XLIV. In Ohrid, the *župan* Andreas Gropa is designated with the same epithet in Small St Clement (1378), GROZĐANOV, Ohridskoto zidno slikarstvo (cit. n. 10), p. 152. One inscription from Serbia, painted in the cave of St George, mention certain *kyriou* Theodore Komnenos from Livadari, also qualified as *πανευγενεστάτου*, ΧΥΝΓΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, Τὰ μνημεία τῶν Σερβίων (cit. n. 21), p. III. In one later inscription from the church of the Virgin Plaghia, KONITSA (1656), the *archon* John-Nicholas is described as *εὐγενέστατος*, A. G. TOURTA, Οι Ναοὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικολάου στὴ Βίτσα καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Μηνᾶ στο Μονοδένδρι, Athens 1991, p. 40, etc. In the church of Hypapanti at Meteora (1366/67), *kyrios* Constantine is designated as *πανευγενέστατος*, which is the case for the *archon* George Mousoures in the church of the Virgin Monochoro (1345). In the church of St John the Evangelist at Lakkoi/Kroustas in Mirabello (1347–48), the *archon* John Klontzias is named *εὐγενέστατος*, etc. KALOPISSI-VERTI, Dedicatory Inscriptions (cit. n. 5), p. 364 n. 5, pp. 367–368.

39 The daughter of Nikephoros Bryennios and granddaughter of Alexios I Komnenos adopted the name of her maternal grandmother, Irene Doukaina, LAIOU, The Role of Women (cit. n. 29), p. 252. See also the phenomenon of the long names listing all the families to which women were connected by birth or by marriage, i. e., Theodora Palaiologina Angelina Kantakouzena (mother of emperor John Kantakouzenos, 1347–54), or Theodora Branina Komnene Laskarina Kantakouzena Palaiologina (niece of emperor Michael VIII), NICOL, The Byzantine Lady (cit. n. 29), pp. 3–4.

40 Research on Macedonian peasant society (fourteenth and fifteenth century) shows that widows are mostly known by the name of their husbands, marriage ties being more usual than blood relations. Nevertheless, some examples show that sometimes women took the name of their fathers' family, and not that of their husbands', LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, Peasant Society (cit. n. 2), pp. 96–97, 137, 140; LAIOU, Observations (cit. n. 3), p. 65 n. 18.

41 In many cases, when a man has only his baptismal name without any reference to his family, it is because of his poor background, LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, Peasant Society (cit. n. 2), pp. 96–97.

42 DRAKOPOULOU, Inscriptions (cit. n. 23), p. 17.

43 In the Canon 69 of the Sixth Council (Constantinople III) (680), access to the sanctuary by laymen is also forbidden. The only exceptions were in female monasteries where, in order to prevent frequentation by men, nuns were authorised to clean and to decorate the sanctuary, J. BEAUCAMP, Les femmes dans la tradition canonique, in: SMYTHE, Strangers to Themselves (cit. n. 5), p. 90; J. BEAUCAMP, Les femmes et l'église: Droit canonique, idéologie et pratiques sociales à Byzance, in: Kanon, 16, 2000, p. 87. These women were called *ekkleksiarchisses*, TALBOT, Women (cit. n. 29), p. 139.

ready in Canon 44 of the Council of Laodikeia of 364 and confirmed in numerous later texts.<sup>44</sup> This position privileges contact with the altar, a place where the Holy Spirit descends upon the sacred offerings and that is visible only to officiating priests.<sup>45</sup> The invocation of the founders' names during the commemorative offices is one of the fundamental rights of donors,<sup>46</sup> thus assuring the *kititor's* salvation after death.

The precise identification of our donors is not possible. Judging by onomastics, their origin is mixed. Bojko is of Slavic origin, derived from the word "boj" which means "battle"; therefore Bojko means "the fighting one". The name is mostly found in the form of Bojko,<sup>47</sup> but also, as Bojan.<sup>48</sup> Eudokia, on the other hand, is a very common but also exclusively Greek name meaning "good appearance, seems

- 44 The only ecclesiastical ordination accessible to women from the third century was the diaconate. The ordination took place in the sanctuary, authorising this particular category of women to enter the most sacred part of the church, R. TAFT, *Women at Church in Byzantium: Where, When and Why?*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 52, 1998, p. 63. The deaconesses were attested in the early church, but did not exist in the middle Byzantine period. Although *de lege* interdiction was not made, *de facto*, women were banished from the bema, M. ANGOLD, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni (1081–1261)*, Cambridge 1995, p. 430. On canonical literature explaining the non-extensibility of the diaconate to women see BEAUCAMP, *Les femmes dans la tradition canonique* (cit. n. 43), p. 88. On their place in the ecclesiastical hierarchy see G. KIORTZIAN, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques chrétiennes des Cyclades, de la fin du IIIe au VIIe siècle après J. C.*, Paris 2000, pp. 90–91. Nevertheless, the portrait of the deaconess Anna is painted next to St Anna in the narthex of the church in Asinou, Cyprus (around 1333), C. L. CONNOR, *Female Saints in Church Decoration of the Troodos Mountains in Cyprus*, in: N. P. ŠEVČENKO (ed.), *Medieval Cyprus: Studies in Art, Architecture and History in Memory of Doula Mouriki*, Princeton, NJ 1999, p. 218; C. L. CONNOR, *Women of Byzantium*, New Haven, CT 2004, p. 199, fig. 35. This isolated case must be analysed locally. Cyprus was under Latin occupation in that moment and the Catholic Church authorises women to enter the sanctuary. Consequently, the deaconesses were probably permitted to be present at the liturgy, ANGOLD, *Church and Society*, p. 430 n. 16; BEAUCAMP, *Les femmes dans la tradition canonique*, (cit. n. 43), p. 91.
- 45 The inscription of the Andronikos *aer* from Ohrid says that the textile was donated by the emperor Andronikos II so that he would be *remembered by the shepherd of the Bulgars in the liturgy*, which means that the archbishop should pray for the salvation of the emperor, G. MILLET, *Broderies religieuses de style byzantin*, Paris 1947, p. 89, pls. CLXXVIII, CXCII. I. In Cappadocia and Cyprus, there are few inscriptions that read: *You who read, pray the Lord for them*, BERNARDINI, *Les donateurs* (cit. n. 5), p. 129; STYLIANOU / STYLIANOU, *Donors* (cit. n. 5), pp. 108, 109–110, 111, 112, 114, 116–118. In Crete, inscriptions ask for explicit mention of painters' name by priests, S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Painters in Late Byzantine Society. The Evidence of Church Inscriptions*, in: *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 42, 1994, pp. 144, 147. The same formula is written by the painter Onouphrios at the Holy Apostles (1554), and the Holy Anargyroi (1550), both from Kastoria, DRAKOPOULOU, *Inscriptions* (cit. n. 23), pp. 22–23.
- 46 GERSTEL, *Painted Sources* (cit. n. 26), p. 94; DRAKOPOULOU, *Inscriptions* (cit. n. 23), pp. 21–22. See the example of the nun Nymphodora, who in her Testament from 1445 demanded that her name be mentioned twice a week in return for all property she left to the monastery Xeropotamou. The same thing is noticed in the case of Theodora Kantakouzene for the monastery of Koutloumousiou etc., LAIOU, *Observations* (cit. n. 3), p. 62.
- 47 In the Turkish census books from the fifteenth century and from 1583, this name is mentioned many times, M. SOKOLOSKI (red.), *Turski dokumenti za istorijata na makedonskiot narod. Opširni popisni defteri od XV vek, II*, Skopje 1973, pp. 25, 27, 28, 31, 36, 41, 43, 45, 50, 54, 56, 61, 75, 101, 107; A. STOJANOVSKI (red.), *Turski dokumenti za istorijata na makedonskiot narod. Opširen popisni defter na Ohridskiot Sancak od 1583, VIII. I*, Skopje 2000, pp. 30, 37, 42, 43, 62–63, 65, 86, 91, 95, 103, 107, 128, 132, 136, 149, 152, 172.
- 48 One *pansebastos* probably from the region of Deabolis (the region where the church of Mali Grad was built), named Constantine Bojanos, brother of one Eudokia, is cited in a letter to the patriarch of Constantinople in 1199. *PG* 119, col. 892; ANGOLD, *Church and Society* (cit. n. 44) p. 415; J.-C. CHEYNET, *Aristocratie et héritage (XIe–XIIe siècle)*, in: BEAUCAMP / DAGRON, *La transmission du patrimoine* (cit. n. 29), pp. 72–73.

well<sup>49</sup>. The ethnic composition of the population living in Macedonia is, however, difficult to establish simply on the evidence of the names.<sup>50</sup> We can be certain that both of them were wealthy locals who financed the painting of the church; however the inscription clarifies the fact that Eudokia had a noble origin and that she acted quite independently with her donation, proving once more the particular status of wealthy widows<sup>51</sup> and their economic autonomy.

The role of women other than nuns and aristocrats<sup>52</sup> in the religious life of Byzantine and post-Byzantine society is difficult to determine. We can be certain that female contributions to the material prosperity of the Church were particularly significant, since numerous inscriptions, donor portraits and diverse texts testify to this phenomenon. In the apse of the church of Mali

Grad, the noble Eudokia is one of these women who materially contributed to the decoration of a church, stepping out in her own name and at her own expenditure, manifesting her independence and initiative in a largely male-dominated medieval society. She is significant in our study because she belonged to the small provincial nobility of which little is known from the sources. Texts often speak only about exceptional women as empresses, and as wives of aristocrats.<sup>53</sup> The presence of Eudokia, together with that of Bojko, also suggests the popularity that the hermitage enjoyed among the local population, which is furthermore confirmed by the later donation of the *kaisar* Novakos.

**Illustration credits:** Figs. 1–6: S. Bogevska.

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- 49 LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, Peasant Society (cit. n. 2), p. 109. The name is mentioned 10 times in the inscriptions dating from the middle Byzantine period: R.-J. LILIE (ed.), *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, I, Berlin u. a. 1999, pp. 516–522. In the Palaiologan era the name is also cited 10 times, women with this name having different status: nun, empress, *sebastokratorissa*, *despotissa*, princess, etc., E. TRAPP (ed.), *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, III, Vienna 1978, pp. 120–122. See the examples of female donors in Cappadocia also: DE JERPHANION, *Les églises rupestres* (cit. n. 21), I, pp. 173, 246, II, pp. 339, 363.
- 50 For the onomastic study in the region of Thessalonike and Strumitsa see LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, Peasant Society (cit. n. 2), p. 132; A. E. LAIOU, Peasant Names in Fourteenth-Century Macedonia, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 1, 1975, pp. 71–96.
- 51 In his book on Serbian nobles, Ivan Djordjević mentions the case of Bojko and Eudokia and presumes that they were husband and wife. He thinks that Bojko was a Serbian who arrived as a functionary in the region, after the conquest of this part of the Byzantine Empire by king Dušan, and that he married a local Greek named Eudokia, DJORDJEVIĆ, *Zidno slikarstvo* (cit. n. 9), pp. 20, 150.
- 52 On female monastic foundations in Byzantium see E. KOUBENA, A Survey of Aristocratic Women Founders of Monasteries in Constantinople Between the Eleventh and the Fifteenth Centuries, in: J. Y. PERREAULT (ed.), *Les femmes et le monachisme byzantin*. Acts of the Symposium held in Athens on the 28th and 29th March 1988, Athens 1991, pp. 25–32; TALBOT, *Building Activity* (cit. n. 3), pp. 329–343; M. LOUKAKI, *Monastères de femmes à Byzance du XIIe siècle jusqu'à 1453*, in: PERREAULT, *Les femmes et le monachisme byzantin*, pp. 32–42.
- 53 All female monasteries in Constantinople under Andronikos II (1282–1328) were founded by rich widows from the upper class, TALBOT, *Building Activity* (cit. n. 3), pp. 329–343, esp. pp. 340–342. See also the lives of exceptional Byzantine women such as Helena Doukaina (1258–1266), Irene Palaiologina (1288–1317), Irene Asenina Kantakouzene (1347–1354) etc., NICOL, *The Byzantine Lady* (cit. n. 29), p. 5.





## THE METEORA ICON OF THE INCREDULITY OF THOMAS RECONSIDERED

FANI GARGOVA

During the late Byzantine period the evidence for female piety expressed through foundations, donations or commissions can be considered widespread and visible. One figure who stands out in this phase of history is the *basilissa* Maria Angelina Doukaina Palaiologina, who is not only considered to have generously donated icons, liturgical vessels and reliquaries especially to the monastery of the Metamorphosis in Meteora, but who is also attested as having founded, together with her husband Thomas Komnenos Preljubović, a monastery dedicated to the Virgin Gabaliotissa in Vodena, present-day Edessa.<sup>1</sup>

This couple became despots of Ioannina in 1366/67, when Symeon Uroš, the emperor of Epiros and Thessaly from 1359 to 1371, delegated his son-in-law Thomas Preljubović to aid the residents of Ioannina against an Albanian conquest. Thomas ruled until his death at the hands of his guards on 23 December 1384. The most important written source for the knowl-

edge of the history of Epiros in the second half of the fourteenth century, the so-called *Chronicle of Ioannina*, draws a clear picture of Thomas as being an incapable and tyrannical ruler, who was largely influenced by his personal advisors, while his wife and the true heir of the throne of Epiros is seen as the exact opposite of him.<sup>2</sup> Very shortly after Thomas's assassination the *basilissa* married Esau de Buondelmonti for political reasons as the Albanians under the rule of Gjin Spata were threatening Ioannina; although not more successful than Thomas in this respect, Esau de Buondelmonti was considered to have been a much better lord than his predecessor.<sup>3</sup> Maria Palaiologina herself died in 1394. Esau outlived her and reigned until 1411.

Although the richness of surviving donations by Maria Palaiologina and Thomas Preljubović is already exceptional, one object in this corpus stands out: the small icon<sup>4</sup> depicting the Incrudulity of Thomas that is preserved in the mon-

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- 1 For the Virgin Gabaliotissa see P. LEMERLE/A. GUILLOU/N. SVORONOS/D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU (ed.), *Actes de Lavra, de 1329 à 1500*, III, Paris 1979, pp. 100–107; N. RADOŠEVIĆ/G. SUBOTIĆ, *Bogorodica Gabaliotisa u Vodenu*, in: *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta*, 1989, pp. 217–263; for the objects donated to the monastery of the Metamorphosis see A. V. SOLOVIEV/V. A. MOŠIN, *Grčke povelje srpskih vladara*, Beograd 1936, pp. 290–297; N. A. BEES, *Meteoron pinax aphierotheis hypo tes basilisses Marias Angelines Doukaines Palaiologines*, in: *Archaiologike Ephemeris*, 1911, pp. 177–185; S. CIRAC ESTOPAÑAN, *Bizancio y España, el legado de la basilissa María y de los despotas Thomas y Esaú de Joannina*, Barcelona 1943; H. C. EVANS (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power, 1261–1557*, New Haven/London 2004, pp. 51–53; for the liturgical vessels on Mount Athos see A. BALLIAN, *Liturgical Implements*, in: EVANS, *Faith and Power*, pp. 117–124; J. DURAND, *Innovations gothiques dans l'orfèvrerie byzantine sous les Paléologues*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 58, 2004, pp. 333–354.
  - 2 For the *Chronicle of Ioannina* see especially L. I. VRANOSSIS, *To chronikon ton Ioanninon kat' anekdoton demode epitomen*, in: *Epeteris tou Mesaionikou Archeiou*, 1962, pp. 57–115.
  - 3 For Esau as ruler of Epiros see D. M. NICOL, *The Despotate of Epiros, 1267–1479: A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge/New York 1984, pp. 157–178.
  - 4 The icon is made of tempera on wood and measures 38 by 31,8 centimetres.

astery of the Metamorphosis in Meteora may be regarded as one of the rare Byzantine examples of a donor intruding in the depiction of a canonical scene (Fig. 1).

This icon has been of great interest to Byzantine scholars since its discovery by Andreas Xyngopoulos in the early 1960s,<sup>5</sup> as its uniqueness is immediately noticeable: the common iconography of the Doubting Thomas is disrupted by a female figure wearing a red imperial garment and a splendid crown. She is standing just behind the apostle Thomas, who is as usual shown on the point of touching Jesus's wound. Christ on the other hand does not react to Thomas, but rather to the presence of the woman dressed in the imperial garment by touching and blessing her crown. In this gesture Jesus incorporates another, a twelfth, male figure, whose body is hidden behind the woman and the apostle Thomas, but who looks straight out of the picture and at the viewer.

Xyngopoulos interprets this unusual composition persuasively in his article of 1964, by showing that the icon should be attributed to a donation of the couple Maria Palaiologina and Thomas Preljubović. Comparing the portraits on two other well-known icons, one also preserved in the monastery of the Metamorphosis and the other, which forms part of a precious diptych belonging to the treasury of the cathedral of Cuenca in Spain since the

seventeenth century and which shows Maria Angelina in proskynesis at the feet of the Theotokos, he argues that the imperial woman in the icon of the Incredulity of Thomas depicts Maria Angelina herself intruding in the gospel scene.<sup>6</sup> On these icons she is unmistakably identified through the inscription above her head: ΜΑΡΙΑ Η ΕΥΣΕΒΕΣΤΑΤΗ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΑ ΑΓΓΕΛΙΝΑ ΚΟΜΝΗΝΗ ΔΟΥΚΕΝΑ Η ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΝΑ on the icon in Meteora; ΜΑΡΙΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΑ ΑΓΕΛ[Ν]Α ΔΟΥΚΕΝΑ ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟ[ΓΙΝΑ] on the diptych in Cuenca.<sup>7</sup>

The fact that the person positioned between Maria and Thomas in addition forms a twelfth apostle, who also should not be part of this gospel scene, and that, as Xyngopoulos states, this face is rather portrait-like with individual traits, makes him assume that the only possible person here depicted could be Thomas Preljubović himself. Xyngopoulos also proposes a rather narrow dating from 1372 to 1383, arguing that the donation could not have been made before Maria's brother, with the monastic name Ioasaph, entered the monastery and not after Thomas's official recognition as despot by the Byzantine emperor in 1383, as he is not shown in an imperial garment.<sup>8</sup>

This hypothesis has remained largely unquestioned until today.<sup>9</sup> Major new opinions have

5 A. XYNGOPOULOS, *Neai prosopographiai tes Marias Palaiologinas kai tou Thoma Preljubović*, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaialogikes Hetaireias*, 4, 1964–65, pp. 53–70.

6 The icon of the Theotokos in the Megalo Meteora has been seen in a direct connection with the so-called Cuenca diptych ever since its thorough study by Cirac Estopañán in 1939 resp. 1943. The Cuenca diptych depicts on its other leaf a standing Jesus at whose feet there has once been depicted Thomas Komnenos Preljubović, as the inscription ΘΩΜΑΣ ΔΕΣΠΟΤΗΣ Κ[ΟΜΝ]ΗΝΟΣ Ο Π[ΡΕΛΟΥΜΠΙΟΣ] above this area states (cited after M. LASCARIS, *Deux chartes de Jean Uroš, dernier Némanide*, in: *Byzantion*, 25–27, 1955–1957, p. 322). See CIRAC ESTOPAÑAN, *Bizancio y España* (cit. n. 1); A. MARTÍNEZ SÁEZ, *El díptico bizantino de la Catedral de Cuenca*, Cuenca 2004.

7 Cited after EVANS, *Faith and Power* (cit. n. 1), pp. 51–52.

8 On John Uroš and his retreat into monastic life see LASCARIS, *Deux chartres* (cit. n. 6), pp. 277–323; D. M. NICOL, *Meteora: The Rock Monasteries of Thessaly*, London 1975, pp. 101–111; On Thomas as despot and his recognition by the emperor, which has actually been dated to the year 1382, see NICOL, *Despotate of Epiros* (cit. n. 3), p. 152; C. ΜΑΤΑΝΟΒ, *The Phenomenon Thomas Preljubović*, in: E. K. CHRYSOS (ed.), *Praktika diethnous symposiou gia to despotato tes Epeirou*, Arta 1992, pp. 63–68.

9 See e.g. K. WEITZMANN/M. CHADZIDAKIS/K. ΜΙΑΤΕΒ/S. RADOICIC, *Frühe Ikonen*, Sinai, Griechenland, Bulgari-



1: *Meteora, Metamorphosis monastery, icon of the Incredulity of Thomas, after 1384*

only agreed on the possibility that the icon was commissioned and donated by Maria Palaiologina alone and possibly after Thomas's death for his commemoration.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly all interpretations fail to acknowledge adequately and interpret the part of this icon that makes it stand out from the majority of icons of this size:<sup>11</sup> the presence of the woman in this gospel scene. The intrusion of a female person into a clearly fixed and hardly changing iconography is unparalleled in Byzantine painting and is thus a feature that requires a more thorough investigation than has been carried out so far.

Byzantine depictions in which donors are actually integrated within the field of a gospel scene can hardly be found before the same period, the second half of the fourteenth century, and it never becomes a common practice.<sup>12</sup> It is worthy to note that the context of origin of these few instances must be sought within a Latin society. Examples include a depiction of the Incredulity of Thomas with portraits of two persons from the Lusignan family in the church of the Holy Cross in Pelendri, Cyprus, dated before

1375, and the portraits of king Janus and queen Charlotte at the lower end of the Crucifixion and a Latin bishop that bends over the Virgin in the Koimesis in the Royal Chapel in Pyrga, Cyprus, dated to 1421.<sup>13</sup> This phenomenon is exceptional considering the fact that in the fourteenth century there is a sudden emergence of donor depictions within gospel scenes in Italian art.<sup>14</sup> Among those are scattered instances of depictions, in which the protagonists of the gospel scene actually react to, or even interact with, the donor.<sup>15</sup>

But most notable on the icon of the Incredulity of Thomas is that this female figure not only witnesses the event, but she forms an active part of it. Firstly she becomes the main content of this depiction, equal to the apostles and conscious of it, and secondly this fact is emphasized not only through her glorious appearance, but through the unmistakably expressive reaction of Christ.

To begin, the manner in which Jesus touches the forehead and crown of the woman evokes strong similarities to the common iconography

en, Jugoslawien, Vienna 1965, pp. 32, 85; D. Z. SOPHIANOS, *Meteora*, Meteora 1991, pp. 132, 138; EVANS, *Faith and Power* (cit. n. 1), p. 51.

10 P. MIJOVIĆ, O ikonama s portretima Tome Preljubovica i Marije Paleologove, in: *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti*, 2, 1966, pp. 185–194; G. SUBOTIĆ, Dora kai dorees tou despote Thoma kai tes basilissas Marias Palaiologinas, in: E. K. CHRYSOS, *Praktika* (cit. n. 8), pp. 69–86; N. PATTERSON ŠEVČENKO, The Representation of Donors and Holy Figures on Four Byzantine Icons, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias*, 17, 1994, pp. 162–164.

11 Its size corresponds to that of icons intended for use in the upper zone of the templon within a dodekaorton cycle.

12 For earlier examples see PATTERSON ŠEVČENKO, *Representation of Donors* (cit. n. 10), pp. 163–164.

13 For both frescoes see A. W. CARR, Byzantines and Italians on Cyprus, *Images from Art*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 49, 1995, pp. 345–348, figs. 11, 14.

14 For a catalogue of such examples see D. KOCKS, *Die Stifterdarstellung in der italienischen Malerei des 13.–15. Jahrhunderts*, Cologne 1971, pp. 248–257.

15 E.g. a depiction of the Adoration of the Magi in the Abbazia Santa Maria in Vezzolano from around 1350 with a representation of the donor from the Rivalba family, who is being presented to the Virgin by an angel. Exceptional in this depiction is that both Maria and Joseph turn away from the main subject of the scene and towards the donor. Maria even reaches out her hand. Cf. M. BERNARD (ed.), *Tre Abbazie del Piemonte*, Torino 1962, pl. 16; for two later examples from San Lorenzo in Piacenza see KOCKS, *Stifterdarstellung* (cit. n. 14), pp. 488, 490. Another example dated to the same period is the Crucifixion in the baptistery of San Marco in Venice commissioned by Andreas Dandolo. Here the scene is already an extended version of the common iconography and thus not directly useful for comparison, as in addition to John the Evangelist and the Virgin, one can also see John the Baptist and St Mark, who is performing a gesture of blessing towards one of the donors, cf. G. HORN, *Das Baptisterium der Markuskirche in Venedig, Baugeschichte und Ausstattung*, Frankfurt am Main 1991, pp. 87–90, fig. 12.

of crowning scenes,<sup>16</sup> although it is noteworthy that Jesus does not merely bless her symbol of regency while maintaining a frontal and sublime posture. In the majority of crowning scenes, i. e. scenes in which Jesus blesses a regent by touching his crown and thus legitimizing his or her power, Christ is depicted either as a celestial phenomenon seated in a mandorla, as a bust figure within a celestial segment or as a seated or standing frontal figure gazing at the viewer.<sup>17</sup> In this icon of the Incredulity of Thomas Christ's attention is instead focused on the presence of the imperial woman. He reaches in a most unnatural gesture over the head of the apostle Thomas to perform his blessing and he underlines this conscious act by also turning his eyes to her.

The kind of emphasis of Christ facing the crowned person – although completely unknown in this special mode – nevertheless exists in some few instances. Examples are the ivory plaque with Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, today in the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, or the portrait of Roger II in the church of Santa Maria dell'Amiraglio in Palermo.<sup>18</sup> But a crowning scene of this kind has not been preserved that includes an empress as its main protagonist.

Also exceptional is the existence of a female figure within a gospel scene and amongst the apostles. A single comparison for this kind of representation of a female person integrated within the group of the twelve disciples of Christ

can be sought among the scenes of the Pentecost and the Ascension of Christ. A mode of depiction of both scenes includes the Theotokos herself, a female person shown at the centre of the apostles. Well-known early examples are folio 13v (Ascension) and folio 14v (Pentecost) of the Rabbula codex.<sup>19</sup> Both show the Theotokos in the centre of the apostles and in this instance standing out within her function. While the composition of the Ascension of Christ remains basically unchanged up to the late Byzantine period and maintains a strong similarity to the common iconography of this subject in Western art, the scene of the Pentecost evolved in different directions in the East and in the West. The familiar image type in Byzantium would show exclusively the twelve apostles sitting in a semi- or full-circle receiving the flames that ray out from a celestial segment or from the Hetoimasia, as in the mosaics in the dome of San Marco in Venice or in the inner narthex of Nea Mone.<sup>20</sup> In Western depictions of the Pentecost from the twelfth century onwards, however, the Theotokos becomes an integral and central part of the composition.<sup>21</sup> As such she is most notably shown on the triptych by Orcagna from the high altar of SS Apostoli in Florence dated to around 1362, visually forming the highlighted centre of the scene (Fig. 2).<sup>22</sup>

These comparisons point out that viewing the female figure within the icon of the Incredulity of Thomas as a representation of the donor of

16 This fact has recently been stressed by B. CVETKOVIĆ, *Christianity and Royalty, the Touch of the Holy*, in: *Byzantion*, 72, 2002, pp. 363–364.

17 Cf. A. GRABAR, *L'empereur dans l'art Byzantin*, Paris 1936, pp. 112–122, e.g. pls. XXIV 2, XXV 2.

18 On the similarity between those two scenes see E. KITZINGER, *The Mosaics of St. Mary of the Admiral in Palermo*, Washington, DC 1990, pp. 190–191, pl. 23, fig. 190.

19 Cf. K. WEITZMANN, *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination*, New York 1977, pp. 101, 105, pls. 36, 38.

20 For San Marco see O. DEMUS, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice, I–II*, Chicago/London 1984, pl. 4; for Nea Mone see D. MOURIKI, *The Mosaics of Nea Moni on Chios, Athens* 1985, pl. 280.

21 Cf. LCI, III, pp. 415–423.

22 Cf. G. KREYTENBERG, *Orcagna, Andrea di Cione, Ein universeller Künstler der Gotik in Florenz, Mainz* 2000, pp. 158–162, pls. 44, 45, with further examples of the Pentecost scene from the fourteenth century including the Virgin by Taddeo Gaddi (fig. 190) and Jacopo di Cione (fig. 191).





2: Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia, Orcagna, triptych with Pentecost, ca. 1362

this object is not the only possible interpretation. As a matter of fact the woman could be seen as the Virgin herself being crowned by Jesus.<sup>23</sup> The postures of those two figures recall the Coronation of the Virgin in the manner that emerges in the late thirteenth century throughout Western art.<sup>24</sup> Although the prominent mosaic by Jacopo Torriti dating from around 1290 in the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore still shows its protagonists sitting rather statically next to each other, this depiction of a crowning already reveals the strong connection of Jesus towards the Virgin, which is uniformly missing towards worldly emperors, but which is found in the icon of the Incredulity

of Thomas.<sup>25</sup> Throughout the fourteenth century the composition becomes more dynamic and the devotion of both Jesus and Maria towards each other increases, before this connection gets dissolved and ideologized by the development of a trinity-composition and thus a frontal posture of the Virgin by the fifteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

The two versions of this iconography by Jacopo di Cione from the early 1370s are chronologically close to the icon of the Incredulity of Thomas. They show the Virgin sitting in veneration with her head lowered, arms crossed before her chest and turned towards Jesus, whose whole attention is focused on the act of blessing

23 The first depiction of Christ and of the Mother of God in imperial garments is found in the church of Hagios Athanasios tou Mouzaki in Kastoria and dates to 1384/1385, cf. H. MAGUIRE, *The Heavenly Court*, in: H. MAGUIRE (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, Washington, DC 1997, pp. 257–258, fig. 17.

24 LCI, II, p. 673.

25 Cf. A. TOMEI, *Jacobus Torriti pictor, Una Vicenda Figurativa del Tardo Duecento Romano*, Rome 1990, pls. 18, 24.

26 LCI, II, pp. 673–674.



3: Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia, Jacopo di Cione, panel with Coronation of the Virgin, ca. 1372/1373

his mother's crown with both hands, which is an honor that seems reserved only for her (Fig. 3).<sup>27</sup>

It becomes clear that it is possible to consider the compositional singularity as an integration of an altered Coronation scene within the Incredulity of Thomas. The direct connection between this scene and the Mother of God

is additionally given through the tradition of her Ascension in the *Legenda Aurea*: The apostle Thomas had missed the Dormition of the Virgin and demanded as in the case of Jesus a proof for this miraculous event. Thus the Virgin hands him over her girdle, while she ascends.<sup>28</sup> The narrative moment right after this would be the Coronation of the Virgin. In this manner, through the associative integration of both instances of doubt, the circle of a narration that includes a theological demonstration of the divinity of Jesus is complete.

The fact that this interpretation of the icon of the Incredulity of Thomas introduces a strong influence of trends in Italian art in the second half of the fourteenth century could be explained by the affiliation of the donor of this artefact, who can nevertheless be identified as Maria Palaiologina. This different reading makes such a commission even more plausible, as Maria Palaiologina could act as a disguised donor within the picture, identifying herself with the Virgin and merely inserting her face, especially when considering Xyngopoulos's starting point for the identification of the royal female figure within the icon with Maria Palaiologina. He relied on the strong facial similarity of this female figure to the portraits of Maria Palaiologina on the Cuenca diptych and the icon of the Theotokos in Meteora.<sup>29</sup> Such a form of identification is not unknown in Byzantine art. A prominent example of the hidden participation of a donor in an apocryphal event is the case of Constantine Monomachos, whose features can be seen in the figure of king

27 The monumental polyptych dating to the years 1370/1371 is today preserved in the National Gallery in London and the smaller panel from 1372/1373 is in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence. Cf. KREYTENBERG, *Orcagna* (cit. n. 22), p. 181, figs. 203, 204.

28 J. DE VORAGINE, *Die Legenda Aurea*, tr. Richard Benz, Heidelberg 1979, pp. 588–589. A relic of the girdle is still venerated in Prato, where it was brought, according to the local legend, by a Michele Dagomari from Jerusalem in 1141. Its popularity grew especially from the beginning of the fourteenth century on, when a transept chapel to house the relics and a marble pulpit to display them on feast days were annexed to the cathedral and the depiction of the miraculous moment became a common motif in Italian art. Cf. A. MCLEAN, *Prato, Architecture, Piety and Political Identity in a Tuscan City-State*, New Haven/London 2008, pp. 152–158, 173–193.

29 Cf. XYNGOPOULOS, *Neai prosopographiai* (cit. n. 5), p. 55, pl. 21.





4: Mount Athos, Vatopedi monastery, chalice, 1367–1384

Solomon in the scene of the Anastasis in Nea Mone on Chios.<sup>30</sup>

If Maria Palaiologina commissioned this icon and placed herself in a very central position, although not as herself but as her name patron the Virgin Maria, the reference to Italian art does not surprise. Maria Palaiologina as *basilissa* and regent of Ioannina derived from the Orsini family, which had ruled over Kephallenia since the end of the twelfth century and over the Despotate of Epiros since 1318. Her legitimacy over the throne of Epiros was assured through the heritage of her mother, Thomais Orsini. Although the Orsinis were well established in the region of the Ionian Islands and Epiros, it is clear that they maintained good relations with Italy and other Italian families settled on Greek territory, which is demonstrated by their decision to make Esau de Buondelmonti, who derived from the Florentine family of Acciajuoli, the second husband of Maria Palaiologina.<sup>31</sup>

The connection to Italy can also be traced in other artefacts that are assuredly associated with Maria and her first husband Thomas Preljubović, especially with a chalice preserved in the monastery of Vatopedi (Fig. 4). This precious liturgical vessel shows formal and technical features that originated in Western art. Its shape with a six-lobed foot, a knop with projecting bosses and a bell-shaped bowl with a crown, the leaves of which form a fleur-de-lys, are typically Italian. The technique of translucent basse-taille enamel, as known from Siena and Venice, is nevertheless used to depict Byzantine iconography and the Greek donor inscription ΘΩΜΑ / Σ ΔΕΣ / ΠΟΤΗΣ Κ / ΟΜΝΗΝ / ΟΣ ΠΙΡΕ / ΛΟΥ-ΜΠΟΣ<sup>32</sup>. The

30 Cf. MOURIKI, Nea Moni (cit. n. 20), pp. 136–139, pls. 48, 53; R. OUSTERHOUT, Rebuilding the Temple, Constantine Monomachus and the Holy Sepulchre, in: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 48.1, 1989, p. 78. This is a point that makes Nancy Patterson Ševčenko underline the singularity of the icon, by assuming that it is common practice in Byzantine art to add the donor's own portrait to the body of a holy person, but unknown to participate as evident donor in a holy scene, cf. PATTERSON ŠEVČENKO, Representation of Donors (cit. n. 10), pp. 162–163.

31 For the Orsini family on the territory of Epiros see NICOL, Despotate of Epiros (cit. n. 3), pp. 40–43, 57–61, 80–83, but also the revealing genealogical tables 2 and 5.

32 Cited after K. LOVERDOU-TSIGARIDAS, Byzantine Small Art Works, in: I. PAPANGELOS / P. GRAVVALOS (ed.), *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi, Tradition, History, Art, Mount Athos 1998*, p. 657.



5: *Island of Ioannina, Hagios Nicholas ton Philanthropinon monastery, scene of the Incredulity of Thomas, 1542*

most unusual feature, however, remains the little statuette of an enthroned Christ making a gesture of blessing with both hands. The visibility of the back of his throne is singular in fourteenth-century Byzantine and Italian art. It has been suggested that such a statuette is best suited for the top of a monstrance reliquary.<sup>33</sup>

It becomes evident that it would not be unusual for the rulers of Ioannina, the *basilissa* Maria Palaiologina and the despot Thomas Preljubović, to commission artefacts that combine features current in the regions beyond the sea and beyond the mountains and that create unique ar-

tistic outcomes. In the case of the icon of the Incredulity of Thomas it is even possible to trace a regionally broad impact of this newly found iconography. This icon that foregrounds the importance of a female figure within a narrative that originally excludes such a presence was copied throughout Epiros and the environs of Meteora in six frescoes dating from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.<sup>34</sup> All of these post-Byzantine copies are found in the naos of the katholikon of a monastery and have in common the presence of the female imperial figure standing behind the apostle Thomas.

33 Cf. DURAND, *Innovations gothiques* (cit. n. 1), pp. 339–341, and BALLIAN, *Liturgical Implements* (cit. n. 1), pp. 119–120, agree on all major points concerning this object.

34 The probability that more representations existed in other post-Byzantine monasteries in Epiros can not be excluded, although the state of preservation on one hand, and the state of documentation on the other hand do not allow for further speculation.



6: Meteora, Barlaam monastery, scene of the Incredulity of Thomas, 1548

The earliest depiction is on the west wall of the katholikon of the monastery Hagios Nicholas ton Philanthropinon on the island of Ioannina and can be dated to the year 1542 (Fig. 5) and attributed to Frangos Katelanos and his workshop.<sup>35</sup> The scene has a traditional composition including two groups of apostles on either side of the main event, and Jesus is shown frontally with his right hand raised to the sky and his left hand uncovering his wound. On his right side behind the apostle Thomas a woman in imperial garment is depicted, although in this instance Christ does not react to her presence; she becomes a part of the uniform group of the apostles.

In 1548 the same workshop painted the naos of the katholikon of the Barlaam monastery in Meteora.<sup>36</sup> Here they integrated once again the scene of the Doubting Thomas with the imperial female figure (Fig. 6).<sup>37</sup> This depiction nevertheless stands out amongst the other copies. On the one hand it is painted on a prominent position above the south entrance and also exactly above the donor inscription, thus it is meant to be particularly visible. On the other hand Christ is again blessing the present woman in an exaggerated gesture. It can be assumed that the painters knew the “original icon”, which was on display in the neighboring monastery of the Metamorphosis.

35 Cf. M. ACHEIMASTU-POTAMIANU, *He Mone ton Philanthropon kai he prote phase tes metabyzantines zographikes*, Athens 1983, pp. 173–175, and idem, *Hoi toichographies tes Mones ton Philanthropon sto nesi ton Ioanninon*, Athens 2004, pp. 70, 90–92.

36 Cf. ACHEIMASTU-POTAMIANU, *Philanthropon* (cit. n. 35), p. 173; SOPHIANOS, *Meteora* (cit. n. 9), pp. 22–27; T. STEPPAN, *Meteora*, in: M. RESTLE (ed.), *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, VI, Stuttgart 1997, pp. 253, 339.

37 Mentioned in WEITZMANN, *Frühe Ikonen* (cit. n. 9), p. 85; ACHEIMASTU-POTAMIANU, *Philanthropon* (cit. n. 35), pp. 174–175; MARTÍNEZ SÁEZ, *El díptico* (cit. n. 6), p. 43.





7: Meteora, monastery of Hagia Triada, scene of the Incredulity of Thomas, 1692

The direct influence of the icon can also be seen in the depiction of the same scene on the west side of the pier that divides the naos and the narthex of the katholikon of the monastery of Hagia Triada in Meteora. In the paintings that date to 1692<sup>38</sup> Christ reaches out to bless the imperial woman (Fig. 7). It is clear that the spatial proximity to the “original icon” have inspired the painters in those two instances, as this most expressive gesture by Jesus only occurs in Meteora, although in frescoes dating 150 years apart.

Sixty kilometers northeast of Meteora in the katholikon of the monastery Hosios Nikano-



9: Tsoukas monastery near Ioannina, scene of the Incredulity of Thomas, 1779

ras in Zavorda, the scene of the Incredulity of Thomas is painted on the south wall of the diakonikon (Fig. 8). Although the composition integrates the woman, and places her centrally in between Thomas and the rest of the apostles to the right of Jesus, there is no reaction to her presence, just as in the version on the lake of Ioannina. The paintings of the katholikon are generally attributed to Frangos Katelanos, although the only secure dating can be made through an inscription on the lower part of the drum, which indicates the year 1592.<sup>39</sup>

In the katholikon of the Tsoukas monastery 20 kilometres west of Ioannina the composition-

38 Cf. SOPHIANOS, *Meteora* (cit. n. 9), p. 91; STEPPAN, *Meteora* (cit. n. 36), p. 254.

39 For the attribution to the workshop of Frangos Katelanos see ACHEIMASTU-POTAMIANU, *Philanthropenon* (cit. n. 35), pp. 178–179; N. MOUTSOPOULOS, *Grevena, Antiquities, Fortifications, Villages, Monasteries and Churches of the Prefecture of Grevena*, Thessaloniki 2006, p. 142. For the inscription of the year 1592 see S. BOGIATZES, *Symbole sten historia tes ekklesiastikes architektonikes tes kentrikes Hellados kata to 160 aiona, hoi mones tou Hagiou Bessarionos (Dousiko) kai tou Hosiou Nikanoros (Zaborda)*, Athens 2000, p. 75, pl. 57b. The discrepancy between the attribution and the dating might not have been addressed so far, although in the area of the depiction of the Incredulity of Thomas a small part of the painting has been cleaned and it shows an underlying layer, which could belong to the original décor, while the layer which is now visible is that of 1592.



8: Zavorda, monastery of Hosios Nikanoras, scene of the Incredulity of Thomas, 1592



10: Arta, church of Hagia Theodora, scene of the Incredulity of Thomas, late seventeenth or early eighteenth century

al type of the imperial woman merely part of the apostle group has been used in such a way that it bears a strong resemblance to the fresco in the monastery Hagios Nicholas ton Philanthropinon (Fig. 9). This depiction is situated on the northern wall of the western cross-arm and is dated to the year 1779.<sup>40</sup>

The last citation of the Meteora icon of the Incredulity of Thomas is found in the church of Hagia Theodora, formerly the *katholikon* of the monastery dedicated to that saint, and the frescoes have been dated to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.<sup>41</sup> In the center of the northern wall of the main nave, the figural composition of the scene resembles most closely the solution found in the monastery of Hosios Nikanoras, although the architectural setting is different. The imperial woman is again central, but not participating (Fig. 10).

These depictions show that the reference to the icon of the Doubting Thomas in the monastery of the Metamorphosis is not a scattered phenomenon that might for example be associated with the fact that Maria Palaiologina is depicted as the donor. What can be seen is the development of an image type that must have been regionally well distributed and popular. This recep-

tion may have been fostered by the knowledge that Maria Angelina had donated this object. Her memory was indeed kept alive in Meteora and in Ioannina.<sup>42</sup> But the development of the image type integrating the imperial woman points to a theological understanding of this figure. In this regard, an identification with the Mother of God as Maria Regina is most logical as, contrary to the Byzantine period, this iconographic variant was in post-Byzantine times already accepted and often depicted.<sup>43</sup>

The icon of the Incredulity of Thomas is a telling example of the modes adapted in a late Byzantine society to express concepts of oneself. In this case the artefact refers to a close connection to Italy, although using a typically Byzantine means of expression that facilitated a dissemination of this newly invented iconographic version in large scale and over more than four centuries.

**Illustration credits:** Fig. 1: after EVANS, *Faith and Power* (cit. n. 1), pl. 24A. – Figs. 2, 3: after KREYTENBERG, *Orcagna* (cit. n. 22), pl. 44a, fig. 204. – Fig. 4: after N. BONOVAS (ed.), *Le mont Athos et l'Empire byzantine, trésors de la sainte montagne*, Paris 2009, pl. 72. – Figs. 5–10: F. Gargova.

40 The inscription is reproduced in D. KAMAROULIAS, *Ta Monasteria tes Epeirou*, I, Athens 1996, p. 451.

41 Cf. V. PAPAPOPOULOU, *Byzantine Arta and its Monuments*, Athens 2007, p. 54.

42 Cf. N. A. BEES, *Geschichtliche Forschungsergebnisse und Mönchs- und Volkssagen über die Gründer der Meteorenklöster*, in: *Byzantina kai Neohellenika Chronika*, 3, 1922, pp. 372–375.

43 See e.g. the main icon of the monastery of the Metamorphosis in Meteora dating to 1790, whose Theotokos is shown wearing a crown, cf. SOPHIANOS, *Meteora* (cit. n. 9), p. 134.



## IS THERE A FEMALE MODE OF CHARITY AND PATRONAGE?

DIONYSIOS STATHAKOPOULOS

A widow, a married woman, an unmarried one – if they had the purse and the penchant to be charitable, to sponsor an object, an idea, an institution, would they behave differently from their husbands, deceased or alive, their fathers, brothers or sons? Is gender a useful tool in studying charity and patronage? These are questions that may appear superfluous amidst the contributions in this volume, but they are not if we want to position the results of our research within a larger framework both in the territory of those looking to reconstruct the past as well as those seeking to understand and shape the present. As a social historian who is working on late Byzantine charity I aim to do two things: first to understand the context of women and giving in our current scholarly environment and second to survey and analyze the available data from the later Byzantine period. It is easier to begin with what this article is not: it is not exhaustive, but rather eclectic in its pickings; it does not at this stage offer definitive answers, but seeks

to establish a framework for further research (which, I am confident will be made much easier after the publication of this collection of essays) and suggest orders of magnitude; finally it is an attempt to piece together a body of evidence and put some basic questions to it.

The sources at our disposal largely determine the amount and quality of data at hand. Documentary sources such as testaments, donation charters and *typika* constitute the most fruitful type of evidence; they will be privileged over other genres. However, without the use of narrative sources such as histories and hagiography, a lot of information on the way women practised charity would be lost, and as such they will also be included in this overview. Finally, for reasons of space, I will limit my investigation to the period from the Komnenoi onwards, occasionally using older material to support a point. Also for reasons of clarity I will not refer to charitable donations or patronage performed by married couples.

### I. THE SEMANTICS OF DIFFERENCE

Beyond the biological differences between the sexes should one emphasize the differences or the similarities between them? At this particular point in our cultural history it seems

that difference is the dominant discourse. From the pope to pop culture, men and women are perceived and more importantly presented as essentially different.<sup>1</sup> If divergence is really that

<sup>1</sup> Pope Benedict XVI to participants in the International Convention “Woman and Man, the Humanum in Its Entirety”, promoted by the Pontifical Council for the Laity on the 20th anniversary of the Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, 9 February 2008: “Faced with cultural and political trends that seek to eliminate, or at least cloud and confuse, the sexual differences inscribed in human nature, considering them a cultural construct, it is necessary to



general and intrinsic, I suppose that this could be expected to apply to most areas of human behaviour – in our case also to attitudes towards and the practice of patronage and charity. To examine our current outlook on charity and gender difference is not mere pedantry: such views inform the attitudes of historians (for example) and I cannot help but think that they influence his/her outlook on the past. By debating this issue of divergence, we can expect not perhaps to resolve the question, but at least to place it in a conscious context of enquiry.

The exploration of women's attitudes towards others forms in a way the backbone of this project. Women have been regarded as more altruistic than men, as displaying a higher level of empathy, as being more prone to help others and as having a stronger concern of care towards others.<sup>2</sup> In a popular and quite influential study Carol Gilligan assumed a moral superiority of women and emphasized an almost natural female inclination towards connectedness, the care of others and nurturing.<sup>3</sup> Her work has provoked quite a strong reaction from feminist scholars for being blind to the social construction of difference and thus suggesting that differences may be "fixed", and "essentialist".<sup>4</sup>

If the question of women and attitude to others has been principally explored by psychologists the fairly recent topic of gender and charity is mainly situated in the social sciences and economics and the goals of research undertaken therein are fairly clear: to investigate gender differences in giving, to understand the underlying mechanisms and to express findings in a practical way, above all in formulating more precise ways to attract significant donations from women – in short most of the research is driven by fundraising concerns.<sup>5</sup> The underlying impetus must be a belief that women are not yet as active in charity as their social and economic status would suggest. On the one hand there are seemingly deeply rooted beliefs, which may be summarized as follows: "Women are more likely to give of their time than their money; [...] when they give money, they give small amounts; [...] women are very parochial in their giving. [...] Men have sought a 'naming opportunity', that is, perhaps having a building or program with their name on it. Women, on the other hand, more characteristically give to make a difference, giving to causes that tug at their heart strings and that help others."<sup>6</sup> According to a study commissioned in 1999 by the Center for Women's Business Research entitled "Philanthropy Among Business Wom-

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recall God's design that created the human being masculine and feminine, with a unity and at the same time an original difference and complementary." See: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2008/february/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20080209\\_donna-uomo\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/february/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080209_donna-uomo_en.html). On pop culture it will suffice to point to the vastly successful book by J. GRAY, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, New York 1992, and its dozens of spin-offs.

2 D. J. MESCH/P. M. ROONEY et al., *Race and Gender Differences in Philanthropy: Indiana as a Test Case*, in: *New Directions for Philanthropic Fundraising*, 37, 2002, p. 66. I would like to thank Patrick M. Rooney, Executive Director of the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, for his help in obtaining useful data.

3 C. GILLIGAN, *In a Different Voice*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, MA/London 1993.

4 N. WEINSTEIN, *Power, Resistance and Science*, in: *New Politics*, 22, 1997, at: <http://www.wpunj.edu/~newpol/issue22/weisst22.htm>, see also the review of Gilligan's book by J. AUERBACH et al., in: *Feminist Studies*, 11, 1985, pp. 149–161. For a more positive response which also suggests the lasting influence of the work see A. LE GOFF, *Care, empathie et justice: Un essai de problématisation*, in: *Revue du MAUSS*, 32, 2008, pp. 129–141.

5 See, for example, the Women's Philanthropy Institute at Indiana University <http://www.philanthropy.iupui.edu/PhilanthropicServices/WPI/>.

6 J. OPPEDISANO, *Giving Back: Women's Entrepreneurial Philanthropy*, in: *Women in Management Review*, 19, 2004, p. 174.

en of Achievement” the primary giving motivations of women identified through this research were “desiring to support an issue or cause about which these women were passionate” (66 percent of respondents) and “wanting to give back to the community” (40 percent of the respondents). Also, 40 percent “did not want or need to be recognized for their philanthropy”.<sup>7</sup> There is evidence that contradicts this and shows that women do make substantial gifts and do seek naming opportunities.<sup>8</sup> Single women usually occupy the top of the list for donations to charity.<sup>9</sup> In economic experiments one study found no difference in giving between men and women when funds and possibilities are equal – but one should be wary of over-extrapolating from idealized studies that do not reflect actual reality.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, there is also evidence that seems to suggest that women’s giving levels tend to be lower than men’s, and that women tend to donate late in life (or arrange their gifts as bequests).<sup>11</sup>

But there are reasons behind such attitudes: first and foremost women’s earning power and net worth are still lagging behind that of males, and in what has been called “the bag-lady syndrome”, women, who as a rule outlive men by several years, are concerned about a potential lowering of their financial status and as a result only make their largest donations after their death.<sup>12</sup>

The evidence from contemporary studies on women and giving is, to say the least, inconclusive and the projected results of this research at times contradictory. Leaving aside what this may suggest for their methodologies and scopes, for the purpose of this study it will suffice to note the differences in charitable behaviour and activities between men and women and therefore to survey possible reflections of such divergence in the past. Moreover, it can serve as a warning about the possible answers we can obtain from our material if these had been in a way implied in the questions put to it.

## II. A PURSE OF ONE’S OWN

The absolute prerequisite we need to address before scrutinizing the evidence for charity and patronage in the later Byzantine world is the material basis of women: did women own property and could they, and under which circumstances, dispose freely of it? It is telling that

this topic has not been adequately explored: one would look in vain for monographs or articles devoted to it while the references to women in the recent works on Byzantine economic history are very sparse.<sup>13</sup> There are two avenues to be explored here: the legal basis for women holding

7 Cf. OPPEDISANO, *Giving Back* (cit. n. 6), pp. 176–177.

8 H. HALL, *Gender Differences in Giving: Going, Going, Gone?*, in: *New Directions for Philanthropic Fundraising*, 43, 2004, pp. 75–77.

9 Who gives to Charity? A new analysis from the Family Expenditure Survey by nfp synergy (May 2007) online at: [http://www.nfpsynergy.net/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/w/who\\_gives\\_to\\_charity\\_updated.pdf](http://www.nfpsynergy.net/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/w/who_gives_to_charity_updated.pdf), pp. 3, 11. See also D. J. MESCH/P. M. ROONEY/K. S. STEINBERG/B. DENTON, *The Effects of Race, Gender and Marital Status on Giving and Volunteering in Indiana*, in: *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 35, 2006, pp. 567–569.

10 G. E. BOLTON/E. KATOK, *An Experimental Test for Gender Differences in Beneficent Behavior*, in: *Economics Letters*, 48, 1995, pp. 287–292.

11 MESCH/ROONEY/STEINBERG/DENTON, *Effects of Race* (cit. n. 9), p. 569; HALL, *Gender Differences* (cit. n. 8), pp. 77–78.

12 HALL, *Gender Differences* (cit. n. 8), pp. 78–79.

13 For example in A. E. LAIOU (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium from the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, 3 vols. (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 39), Washington, DC 2002, or in the recent A. E. LAIOU/C. MORRISON, *The Byzantine Economy*, Cambridge 2007.

property and its manifestation on the ground, that is in actual records of women independently holding and exploiting property.

Since at least the Justinianic era women owned personal property, either in the form of dowry (as a rule, instead of inheritance)<sup>14</sup> or any other property given to them called *parapherna*.<sup>15</sup> During the marriage, although the husband could not (or only with great difficulty and as a rule only with the wife's permission) alienate the dowry, he was still the one managing it – although she had the right to bequeath it as she wished: a clear case of usufruct versus ownership. By if widowed, the dowry returned to the woman, and she could dispose of it as she desired.<sup>16</sup> We will see later that this concerns the vast majority of cases at our disposal. Angeliki Laiou found evidence that seemed to suggest that in the Palaiologan period the inviolable character of the dowry had been eroded or, that at least some property given by parents to a bride was not classed as dowry but as patrimony to release it from the above related limitations.<sup>17</sup> Despite possible restrictions, however, we can safely assume that women, and especially widows who did not choose to remarry, owned property that they could dispose of freely. Charity and patronage was, of course, merely one avenue of use of such property – and, at this point, it is impossible to quantify how important it was when compared to other ways of female use of property. The next remarks should be read against such

a background.<sup>18</sup> It follows from the above that women held and used property independently. They could and did donate, sell and buy land, found monasteries, sponsor works of art and manuscripts, and dispose of their property freely in testaments.

The rich material from Mount Athos was the first (and to date the only) body of documentary sources to have been explored in tracing the topic of women and property. In a pioneering study, Laiou looked at the structure of households in the first half of the thirteenth century in Macedonia among the property of the Athonite monasteries and came up with remarkable data: around 20 percent of households were headed by widows and a further very small percentage, less than one percent, by unmarried women.<sup>19</sup> A similar figure derives from Alice-Mary Talbot's research on Athonite documents [up to 1996]: 16 percent concern transfers of property by women alone; 27 percent by men and women.<sup>20</sup>

One example can help to illustrate such transactions. In 1338 the formidable Theodora Kantakouzene, mother of John VI, made a substantial donation to Koutloumousiou: she begins by lamenting the fact that so far she has not given as much as she should have; she proceeds by donating a number of properties to Koutloumousiou; while she lives she demands three *euchelaia* per year, daily mention in the monks' prayers, one *paraklesis* and one liturgy for her extra per week (for which she has given extra money and live-

14 A. E. LAIOU, The Role of Women in Byzantine Society, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 31.1, 1981, p. 240.

15 D. WHITE, Property Rights of Women: The Changes in the Justinianic Legislation Regarding the Dowry and the Parapherna, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 32.2, 1982, pp. 539–548.

16 LAIOU, Role of Women (cit. n. 14), pp. 237 ff.

17 LAIOU, Role of Women (cit. n. 14), pp. 238, 240–241; A. E. LAIOU, Marriage Prohibitions, Marriage Strategies and the Dowry in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium, in: J. BEAUCAMP / G. DAGRON (ed.), *La transmission du patrimoine: Byzance et l'aire méditerranéenne*, Paris 1998, pp. 137–138.

18 On a more general overview of foundation acts by women see the contribution by Sylvie Herl in this volume.

19 A. E. LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire: A Social and Demographic Study, Princeton 1977, Table III 4, p. 90, and also the discussion on pp. 89 ff.

20 A.-M. TALBOT, Women and Mt Athos, in: A. BRYER / M. CUNNINGHAM (ed.), *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism*, Aldershot 1996, p. 72.

stock); once she dies (as well as her son, John, the apple of her eye) the monks should double their prayers, since they will be even more necessary then.<sup>21</sup> This is a transaction that concerns exclusively the two parties: Kantakouzene and the monastery. The document includes no stipulations about any provisions for others, say charitable donations to the poor to benefit the donor allegedly so anxious for redemption – and we will see that this is a fixed pattern.

I have looked at two more substantial collections of documents. The chartulary of the monastery of Lembos preserves some 181 documents from around 1081 to 1294.<sup>22</sup> Around 45 of these documents refer to donations.<sup>23</sup> In these there are 13 donations made by women alone (8 of which were widows<sup>24</sup>, and 5 were nuns<sup>25</sup>), around 10 by men and women<sup>26</sup> (not necessarily couples) and 62 by men alone.<sup>27</sup> The chartulary furthermore

preserves some 40 documents referring to sales (mostly of land). In 11 of them (27.5 percent) women are the main signatories (and as such most probably the heads of households); in all cases the women were widows.

The data from Lembos corroborates Laiou's findings in Macedonia: widows sell and buy land (nos. 93, 104, 111, 151) and are active in the pursuit of the financial interests of their families (no. 105).

Another chartulary, that of the monastery of St John Vazelon in the hinterland of Trebizond, preserves some 190 charters, 157 of which date to the period 1261–1453.<sup>28</sup> 102 of these are land donations to the monastery for the perpetual commemoration and salvation of their donors. About 20 of them concern women donating property to the monastery – roughly 20 percent.<sup>29</sup> Widows represent around half of the

21 P. LEMERLE (ed.), *Actes de Kutlumus*, 2 vols. (Archives de l'Athos, 2.2), Paris 1988, no. 18.

22 F. MIKLOSICH/J. MÜLLER (ed.), *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, IV, Vienna 1871, pp. 1–289. See H. AHRWEILER, *L'histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081–1317)*, in: *Travaux et Mémoires*, 1, 1965, pp. 1–204, and M. ANGOLD, *A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society under the Laskarids of Nicaea, 1204–1261*, London 1975, esp. pp. 121–143, although both publications include only passing references to women. For the latest work on the monastery and its holdings cf. K. SMYRLIS, *La fortune des grands monastères byzantins (fin du Xe–milieu du XIVe siècle)* (Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, 21), Paris 2006, pp. 56–61, 251–255 and *passim*.

23 This is the total number of documents that refer to donations: I have excluded imperial donations (but have included one donation by an empress, no. 99), documents confirming property and such that settle disputes. In what follows I have counted instances of donation: therefore I have not counted people who are mentioned more than once regarding the same donation. As I am counting people and not documents the number may appear somewhat odd.

24 The use of the term widow needs some explanation. In most cases it is not clearly stated that a woman who signs the document (and has children) is a widow – I have assumed she is, because although in principle and according to the law a woman could use her dowry property without her husband's consent this was a highly unusual and socially hardly accepted practice, see LAIOU, *Role of Women* (cit. n. 14), pp. 237–238.

25 In two instances the women were both widows and nuns: Martha Thrakesina, Irene Zagaromatina.

26 In four of these documents women appear as the main signatories and as such can be assumed to have been the heads of the respective household. On women as heads of households that included adult males cf. LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, *Peasant Society* (cit. n. 19), pp. 89–91.

27 This number is somewhat problematic, because in some documents (e.g. nos. 2, 6) only the men are mentioned as having donated, but in some instances further documents in the chartulary make clear that a donation was made by men and women (e.g. Theodore Garares appears alone in no. 6, but in no. 101, we learn that he donated together with his wife).

28 I have used the following edition which includes a reprint of the original one by Uspenskij and Benešević with additions and corrections: K. K. PAPOULIDES (ed.), *Τα Acta της μονής Βαζελώνος*, Thessaloniki 2007. Hereafter I will cite the number of the document.

29 17 documents concern women donating and 3 are documents in which women are the main signatories.

cases, and nuns one quarter of them.<sup>30</sup> The transactions recorded in the documents do not exclusively refer to donations to the monastery, but occasionally include donations to third parties. Donors do find space to consider people they would like to benefit by their acts: in the second half of the thirteenth century, Kalana Speli-anitopoulos donates property to Vazelon, to her husband, siblings, to her spiritual father, but also leaves her earrings to her servant (τὸ κορίτζιν), Irene, daughter of Lazaros (no. 118). The vast majority of the women recorded in these documents are widows and nuns<sup>31</sup> (in that order), and one could safely assume that perhaps some of the latter had been widows as well (expressly recorded only in no. 123). There are three cases in which the women were possibly unmarried (nos. 17, 114, 142): no children or husbands are mentioned, but this may be a mere matter of fragmentary data.

Close relatives are included in the stipulations for the salvation of the testators' souls, or *psychika*: children, husbands, siblings and parents. One can assume that if the donor had children, she would have transferred the property to them – as the people mentioned in these acts come from a rural environment and we can assume that most of them were not particularly wealthy, as to have a surplus of assets that would allow them to bequeath property both to their offspring and the monastery. We can safely assume that because there are cases where the donors specify that they had already provided dowries for their daughters (no. 123) or their dependent sisters (no. 143). Occasionally, we get a glimpse of personal stories behind the formulaic documents: In 1261, Maria Tzarchalina do-

nates property to Vazelon as a *psychikon* for her parents and husband; her five sons are prisoners; were they to come back, their mother makes sure they should receive their legal share (μοίρα); if not the property will fall to the monastery.<sup>32</sup> And lest we forget the “bag-lady syndrome”, here is an unnamed woman of the second half of the thirteenth century in her own dangling diction: after leaving property to children and family, she goes on: *Kamasia, belonging to me, when I live, I eat it* (τρώγω το), *but if I die, may it go to the Vazelon for my funeral.*<sup>33</sup>

Stray evidence can also help to strengthen the case of women donating land (and also to suggest the loss of evidence in those cases where the land was not donated to an institution whose archives have been preserved) as the following case suggests. Tamar, wife of the emir kyr Basil Giagoupes donated a vineyard to the church of St George at Belisirama in Cappadocia she had founded and recorded the act in an inscription.<sup>34</sup>

While the transfer of property was practiced by women from a wider socio-economic stratum, elite women had additional means of using their property such as founding monasteries or sponsoring monuments and art.

In the period in question there is a significant number of monasteries founded or restored by women: Chora by Maria Doukaina (1077–81), Pantepoptes by Anna Dalassene (before 1087), monasteries on the Princes' Islands by Maria of Alania (late 1080s?), Kecharitomene by Irene Doukaina (before 1110), Pantanassa by Maria of Antioch (after 1143), Lips and Anargyroi by Theodora Palaiologina (last years of the thirteenth century), Mouchliotissa by Maria Palaiologina (around 1282), Andrew *en te krisei* by Theodora

30 On problems defining widows see n. 24. It is quite remarkable that in most cases the (supposed) dead husband is not included in the *psychika* stipulations, which as a rule refer to parents, siblings and offspring.

31 No. 37 records the remarkable case of Giagoupena, a nun, buying land.

32 No. 38.

33 No. 119.

34 S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, Church Inscriptions as Documents: Chrysobulls, Ecclesiastical Acts, Inventories, Donations, Wills, in: *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaialogikes Hetaireias*, 24, 2003, pp. 84–85.

Palaiologina Kantakouzene Raoulaina (around 1284), Philanthropos by Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina (around 1307), Bebaia Elpis by Theodora Synadene (after 1300), Kyra Martha by Maria-Martha Palaiologina (early fourteenth century).<sup>35</sup> I will discuss the evidence of the surviving *typika* for five of these foundations below, but at this point it will suffice to point out the implications of this data: elite women disposed of considerable means that enabled them to erect, restore and endow monasteries.

Turning now to other monuments, Sophia Kalopissi-Verti collected dedicatory inscriptions and donor portraits in thirteenth-century Greece.<sup>36</sup> Her data yields the following results. Out of a total of 79 inscriptions and portraits 34 were commissioned by (or at least mention) men and women (43 percent), 5 mention women only (6 percent) and 40 mention men only (51 percent). As no similar study exists for any other period or region of the Byzantine empire, it will suffice to refer to a number of cases out of a large pool of data.

Funerary monuments sponsored by widows make up a large percentage of female activity in this area. Some of the most well-known examples include the funerary chapel built by the

*protostratorissa* Maria (at that stage already the nun Martha), widow of Michael Tarchaneiotos Doukas Glabas at the Pammakaristos monastery in Constantinople in the early fourteenth century along with the commission of the epigrams that adorned it by Manuel Philes.<sup>37</sup> At around the same time another widow, Theodora Doukaina Komnene Palaiologina, widow of Michael VIII restored the monastery of Lips (see below). But such monuments were of course not limited to the highest echelons of the Constantinopolitan aristocracy. In 1314/15 the widow Euphrosyne Psalida completed the building and decoration of the church of Christ in Berroia.<sup>38</sup> Nor was this practice limited to the Greek-speaking part of the “Byzantine Commonwealth”: in 1405/6 the widow of the Serbian despot Milica sponsored the paintings of the church at Ljubostinja.<sup>39</sup>

Aristocratic ladies, however, did not need to wait for their husbands’ death to sponsor less expensive, but equally prestigious objects. In the Komnenian period we can identify the donations of icons by members of the imperial family – the icons may not have been preserved, but the epigrams commissioned to adorn them do as in the case of those by Irene-Dobrodeja,

35 This list is based on E. C. KOUBENA, *A Survey of Aristocratic Women Founders of Monasteries in Constantinople between the Eleventh and the Fifteenth Centuries*, in: J. Y. PERREAULT (ed.), *Les femmes et le monachisme byzantin* (Publications of the Canadian Archaeological Institute in Athens, 1), Athens 1991, pp. 25–32; V. DIMITROPOULOU, *Imperial Women Founders and Refounders in Komnenian Constantinople*, in: M. MULLETT (ed.), *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries* (Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, 6.3), Belfast 2007, pp. 87–106, and A.-M. TALBOT, *Building Activity in Constantinople under Andronikos II: The Role of Women Patrons in the Construction and Restoration of Monasteries*, in: N. NECIPOĞLU (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography, and Everyday Life* (The Medieval Mediterranean, 33), Leiden 2001, pp. 329–343.

36 S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece* (Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für die Tabula Imperii Byzantini, 5), Vienna 1992.

37 A. RHOBY, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken* (Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung, 15), Vienna 2009, no. 215 and M15, pp. 307–310, 402–403; S. T. BROOKS, *Commemoration of the Dead: Late Byzantine Tomb Decoration (Mid-13th to Mid-15th Centuries)*, PhD Thesis, New York University 2002, pp. 277–287. On the epigrams see A.-M. TALBOT, *Epigrams in Context: Metrical Inscriptions on Art and Architecture of the Palaiologan Era*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 53, 1999, pp. 77–79.

38 RHOBY, *Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken* (cit. n. 37), no. 81, pp. 157–161.

39 RHOBY, *Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken* (cit. n. 37), p. 273. See the contribution in this volume by Alexandra Vukovich on the activities of Milica’s daughter, Jelena Balšić.

wife of Alexios Komnenos,<sup>40</sup> the son of John II,<sup>41</sup> or by Maria of Antioch (PBW, Maria 103), wife of Manuel I Komnenos.<sup>42</sup> We are more fortunate in having the object of such a donation preserved from the Palaiologan period. Around the middle of the fourteenth century Anna Philanthropene Kantakouzene Komnene Palaiologina Bryenissa<sup>43</sup> donated an icon with silver revetment (now preserved at the monastery of Vatopedi): the inscription makes an allusion to the Virgin as Bebaia Elpis, which is important as Anna (under her monastic name of Xene) was the granddaughter of the foundress of the monastery of the same name in Constantinople and an important benefactress to it in 1392.<sup>44</sup> Further objects commissioned by women include a Psalter by the nun Theotime dated to ca. 1274 at Saint Catherine's monastery, Mount Sinai,<sup>45</sup> another Psalter donated in 1346 by Anna of Savoy (now at the monastery of Ivron),<sup>46</sup> or a wooden cross covered in silver and gems donated by the empress Helena Dra-

gas, wife of Manuel II, before 1448 (now at the monastery of Dionysiou).<sup>47</sup>

Another obvious way of exploring the financial power of women (and of course also their attitudes towards charity, as we shall see later on) would be the scrutiny of testaments. A preliminary corpus of later Byzantine testaments, that is from roughly the year 1080 to 1453 amounts to 49 documents, 7 of which are by women, so far as we can tell all widows).<sup>48</sup> The bulk of the documents concern bequests to monasteries (Lembos near Smyrna, Timios Prodromos near Serres, Xeropotamou on Athos) as *psychika*; only one of the women included stipulations for charity within them: Kale-Maria Pakouriane (see below). But each of the documents includes details that add to the overall picture (and, as expected, make it harder to generalize): the nun Hypomone only gives part of her property to the monastery of St John; the bulk of her belongings was distributed to her children, and even her gift is to generate an annual donation of food to her (and after her

40 Alexios 103 in: Prosopography of the Byzantine World (thereafter PBW) accessed at <http://www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/>.

41 T. PAPAMASTORAKIS, The Display of Accumulated Wealth in Luxury Icons: Gift-Giving from the Byzantine Aristocracy to God in the Twelfth Century, in: M. VASSILAKI (ed.), Byzantine Icons: Art, Technique and Technology, Heraklion 2002, p. 42.

42 PAPAMASTORAKIS, Display (cit. n. 41), pp. 39–40.

43 PLP, no. 29737.

44 On Anna see D. M. NICOL, The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100–1460: A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 11), Washington, DC 1968, no. 40, pp. 150–151. On the icon see Le Mont Athos et l'Empire byzantin, trésors de la Sainte montagne. Petit Palais – Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, 10 avril–5 juillet 2009, Paris 2009, no. 67, p. 162. On the monastery see below.

45 H. C. EVANS/W. D. WIXOM (ed.), The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261, New York 2000, no. 202, pp. 343–344.

46 Ivron 1384, fol. 262v; see now Le Mont Athos (cit. n. 44), no. 60, pp. 152, 155.

47 A. A. KARAKATSANES (ed.), Θησαυροί του Αγίου Όρους, Thessaloniki 1997, no. 9.23, pp. 314–315.

48 1. Anna Angelina, MIKLOSICH/MÜLLER, Acta et diplomata graeca (cit. n. 22), IV 93, dated to 1267; 2. nun Martha Thraquesina, MIKLOSICH/MÜLLER, Acta et diplomata graeca (cit. n. 22), IV 112–113, dated 1281; 3. nun Magdaline, L. BENOÛ, Le codex B du monastère Saint-Jean-Prodrome (Serrès). A (XIIIe–XVe siècles), textes, documents (Études sur le monde byzantin, néohellénique et balkanique, 2), Paris 1998, nos. 12, 13, (pp. 43–45), dated to 1304 or 1319; 4. Anna, wife of the priest Kyriales, Codex B of Serres A, no. 151 (pp. 263–264), dated to 1338–1340; 5. nun Hypomone, A. GUILLOU, Les archives de Saint-Jean-Prodrome sur le mont Ménécée (Bibliothèque Byzantine, Documents, 3), Paris 1955, no. 34, dated to 1339, and 6. nun Nymphodora, J. BOMPAIRE (ed.), Actes de Xéropotamou (Archives de l'Athos, 3), Paris 1964, no. 30, dated to 1445. There is a fragment of the testament of Anna Komnene largely comprising of the proemium and as such of no interest to us here, as the section dealing with the transfer of property is missing: E. KURTZ, Unedierte Texte aus der Zeit des Kaisers Johannes Komnenos, in: Byzantinische Zeitschrift, 16, 1907, pp. 93–101.

death it should benefit her heirs). Anna Kyriaulina writes her testament on the brink of death and has it signed in the presence of her children

so that they may not contest her donation of a field that will pay for her funeral.

### III. CHARITY

So far we have seen women use their property in a variety of ways. It is now time to explore one particular path that this could take, the practice of charity.

Charity took two main avenues: direct and institutional. The most straightforward way of giving would be directly to the needy. While everyone was called to do so (and probably many did) the documentation of non-institutional charity at a horizontal level of ordinary, simple citizens offering assistance to people among their ranks is virtually non-existent.<sup>49</sup> On the rare occasions when such people are on record donating, they do so to existing institutions, preferably monasteries, in purely personal transactions, as we have seen.

Crisis- or situation-driven direct charity was common in times of catastrophe: during famines, and/or epidemics, after earthquakes or in the midst of warfare producing numerous refugees and prisoners to be ransomed. It could take the form of a financial assistance or that of material aid: distribution of victuals, care for the sick,

burial of the dead, money for the ransoming of prisoners. High church dignitaries, and less so the imperial government, were the central authorities behind such measures. Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina, the wealthy widow (and thus almost empress) of John Palaiologos, son of Andronikos II, distributed large sums of her vast property to the poor and for the ransoming of prisoners before she entered the convent that she had restored.<sup>50</sup>

Of course the crisis could be a personal one. There are many instances of elite women distributing alms during the illness of a close family member. Irene Doukaina, Alexios I's wife, for instance, distributed cash to the poor, sick and prisoners as her husband lay dying,<sup>51</sup> but then so did male emperors for themselves.<sup>52</sup> There is also the remarkable case of Eudokia, mother of St Philotheos, who found herself a refugee in Macedonia, without any relatives, as her two sons had been captured by the Turks; she distributed all her belongings to the poor and entered a monastery.<sup>53</sup>

49 There is evidence (mainly from late antiquity) of people giving money to beggars or to begging monks: R. FINN, *Almsgiving in the Later Roman Empire. Christian Promotion and Practice (313–450)*, Oxford 2006, pp. 99–110; D. CANER, *Wandering, Begging Monks. Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage, 33)*, Berkeley, CA 2002, esp. chs. 4–5. The little evidence that I have found regarding giving alms to the poor (who are not beggars) mainly comes from the *vitae* of a group of female saints who attained sanctity while (or despite of) being married: Mary the Younger, Thomais of Lesbos, the empress Theophano. I will discuss some of these women below. For an overview see the Introduction by A.-M. TALBOT in her edited volume: *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation (Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation, 1)*, Washington, DC 1996.

50 I. BEKKER (ed.), *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina historia*, III. I, Bonn 1855, p. 238; On Irene-Eulogia see A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina, Abbess of the Convent of Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 119–157.

51 A. KAMBYLIS/D. R. REINSCH (ed.), *Anna Komnene, Alexias, I (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, 40.1)*, Berlin 2001, XV 11,9.

52 As illustrated by the case of John Vatatzes: A. FAILLER/V. LAURENT (ed.), *George Pachymeres. Relations historiques, I (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, 24.1)*, Paris 1984, pp. 99–103.

53 B. PAPOULIA, *Die Vita des heiligen Philotheos vom Athos*, in: *Südostforschungen*, 22, 1963, pp. 274–276; see al-



Direct almsgiving to the poor which was not crisis-driven is rarely attested. Witness this eleventh-century parvenu, the judge and senator Michael Attaleiates, who founded two poorhouses and a monastery in 1077 investing a substantial part of his property. *I have not made this offering, in which I place my hope, for lack of an heir and legitimate and natural succession*, Michael tells us *for I have a legitimate son, the mystographos and imperial notary lord Theodore*.<sup>54</sup> And to make sure that Theodore would not lose out on his inheritance he decreed that he (and his agnatic succession) would act as *ephoroi* of the institutions and receive two-thirds of any surplus revenues.<sup>55</sup> His wife Sophia (PBW, Sophia 104), however, had been quite different. This is what Michael writes of her: *When I lost my wife, who died in her prime, I received nothing from her final will and testament except for a small house, a pittance, since I approved her desire to give everything to God through distribution to the poor. By virtue of my right as executor I cooperated with her mother, without any hindrance, in carrying out her will, and together with her distributed everything. Additionally, the entire price of the property of Banitzes [that she owned] was wholly allocated for distribution to the poor*.<sup>56</sup> This is a mother with at least one surviving child, who nevertheless chose to give out her inheritance

directly, that is without any strings attached, to the poor. It remains to see whether this was typical or extraordinary.

A further example comes from the testament of Theodore Sarantenos in 1325 in which he states that his deceased wife Eudokia Doukaina Angelina had for many years shod and fed the poor on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.<sup>57</sup> Occasional almsgiving was certainly part of the repertory of virtues that imperial and aristocratic women were expected to demonstrate. Anna Komnene writes that both her grandmother, Anna Dalassene, and her mother Irene excelled at this.<sup>58</sup> Even when authors could only be vague about the charitable attitudes of such ladies, it was important to include the information, as on the wife of Loukas Notaras who, as Doukas tells us on the occasion of her death, was a lady *famous for her almsgiving and her mercy of the poor*.<sup>59</sup>

Such charitable actions were as a rule impersonal.<sup>60</sup> The days when Jerome lauded Fabiola's hands-on approach to charity feeding and caring for the patients herself at the hospital she had founded seem long gone.<sup>61</sup> Theoleptos of Philadelphia, her spiritual advisor, had to admonish Eulogia Choumnaina to do that even in her own monastery: *Visit your ailing sisters, if possible, and try to minister to them with your own hands. Be present when a sister lies at the last*

50 A.-M. TALBOT, Byzantine Women, Saints' Lives, and Social Welfare, in: E. A. HANAWALT/C. LINDBERG (ed.), *Through the Eye of a Needle: Judeo-Christian Roots of Social Welfare*, Kirksville, MO 1994, p. 121.

54 P. GAUTIER, La diataxis de Michel Attaliate, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 39, 1981, p. 30, tr. A.-M. TALBOT, in: *BMFD*, I, p. 337.

55 GAUTIER, Attaliate (cit. n. 54), § 35–37. Only in the case of no existing (or suitable) male descendants should the ephorate go to a female one: § 37.

56 GAUTIER, Attaliate (cit. n. 54), § 20; *BMFD*, I, p. 333.

57 J. BOMPAIRE/J. LEFORT/V. KRAVARI/CH. GIROS (ed.), *Actes de Vatopédi*, I (Archives de l' Athos, 21), Paris 2001, no. 64, pp. 141–142.

58 KAMBYLIS/REINSCH, Anna Komnene, Alexias (cit. n. 51), III 8 and XIII 3.

59 V. GRECU (ed.), *Michael Dukas, Istorica Turco-Bizantina (1341–1462)*, Bucharest 1958, XLII 4, p. 395.

60 TALBOT, Byzantine Women (cit. n. 53), p. 114.

61 I. HILBERG (ed.), Jerome, Letter 77 to Oceanus = eulogy for Fabiola [died in 399]: *Epistulae*, II, 2nd ed., Vienna 1996, section 6, p. 43, tr. W. H. FREMANTLE/G. LEWIS/W. G. MARTLEY, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, VI, Buffalo, NY 1893, p. 160. A similar attitude to helping the needy with her own hands is attributed to Flaccilla, the wife of Theodosios I, see TALBOT, Byzantine Women (cit. n. 53), p. 108.

*gasp and observe the agony of the soul as it leaves the body.*<sup>62</sup>

It would seem logical to search for potential cases of direct charity in testaments, but the data does not confirm this. As indicated above of a total of forty-nine testaments only eight include charitable stipulations. There is only one woman among them.

It is the case of the nun Maria, (formerly Kale, PBW, Kale 102), the wife of the *kouropalates* Symbatios Pakourianos (PBW, Symbatios 101). Kale-Maria was the daughter of a *kouropalates*; she had married Symbatios sometime in the late 1080s and received 50 pounds of gold in cash as dowry with which he bought silver vessels now in her possession. He died young and left her those of his possessions remaining after implementing the clauses of his will and appointed her executor of his will together with his brother. Of interest is the clause in his will according to which he bequeathed to the poor 12 pounds of gold, in grain and coin, the latter to be distributed to those free men who had served him.<sup>63</sup>

In Kale's elaborate testament dated to November 1098 she made bequests to more than 30 persons and to Iviron.<sup>64</sup> Most of those receiving bequests were her kin, but other members of the household received gifts of lower value. Many bequests involved money, but decorated bowls, fabrics and a book were also given. She donated estates to the monks of Iviron (the monastery chosen by Symbatios as his final resting place) on behalf of hers and her husband's spiritual sal-

vation; the rest (animals, the whole harvest and stocks) would be distributed (*διασκορπισθήναι*) upon her death to her own people regardless of age, sex or status to sustain them for a year; on the year of her death her people were to be freed from their tax obligations so they should pray on her behalf; the rest of her fortune (mobile, immobile and animals) shall be distributed to the poor for the absolution of her sins (lines 67–68). Some interesting facts should be emphasized: Kale and Symbatios did not have children; hence perhaps her overall generosity, which does not account for the preservation of patrimony. Furthermore, she does not seem to care where her grave will be, nor does she wish to establish a focal point for her remembrance, unlike her husband. In her last will she follows the general pattern of her husband's testament, but seems to surpass him in her direct charity to the poor, which, although it cannot be exactly quantified, must have been significant.

Another type of source that could potentially include instances of direct charity would be donations for an individual's personal salvation, as surveyed above. These include no such mentions, although, obviously, some of the capital generated through the transfer of property by the women mentioned above could have been used by the monasteries to provide charity linked to their commemoration.

It remains to survey the other, much better documented, type of charity which channelled giving through foundations and institutions, es-

62 A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *The Life and Letters of Theoleptos of Philadelphia*, Brookline, MA 1994, Ep. 2 (66–67). This is contradicted by GREGORAS III 239, who suggests that she did the vilest tasks in the monastery herself, but his flattering account of Eulogia is not to be preferred over that of Theoleptos. It is interesting to note the resurfacing of this motif of caring for the sick and the needy with one's own hands in the near contemporary West as suggested by the great popularity of female saints such as Marie of Oignies (died 1213) and especially the noble Elizabeth of Hungary (died 1231); on the latter see G. KLANICZAY, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses. Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, Cambridge 2002, pp. 202–203, 246–251.

63 J. LEFORT/N. OIKONOMIDÈS/D. PAPACHRYSAANTHOU (ed.), *Actes d'Iviron, II* (Archives de l'Atos, 16), Paris 1990, no. 44, pp. 150–156.

64 LEFORT/OIKONOMIDÈS/PAPACHRYSAANTHOU, *Actes d'Iviron, II* (cit. n. 63), no. 47, pp. 170–83; A. E. LAIOU, *Observations on the Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, p. 64, characterizes the testament as "a document which combines piety and pragmatism".

pecially monasteries. Monasteries functioned as focal points of charity by linking liturgical commemorations, both for the living and the dead but mostly for the dead, with charitable distributions. This is charity practised at a vertical level, from above to below, and quite visible. Members of the secular and ecclesiastical elite come off extremely well in their charitable attitude, a fact which is linked to their writing down the exact nature and extent of their donations and to these acts having been preserved up to the present. Emperors and their kin, high government, army as well as church officials, demonstrated their charity mostly by founding monasteries, and less so, charitable institutions (hospitals, hostels, orphanages, houses for the poor, for lepers, or for the old, while newly founded shelters for widows or “fallen women” are not recorded in that period).<sup>65</sup>

The only foundation of a charitable institution by a woman in the period in question was made by Michael VIII's widow, the dowager empress Theodora Doukaina Komnene Palaiologina in the last years of the thirteenth century.<sup>66</sup> During the reign of her son Andronikos II (1282–1328) Theodora restored the tenth-century monastery of Constantine Lips, adding a second church dedicated to St John the Baptist and a hospital for women. According to the *typikon* drafted for her foundation the monastery was to be independent and self-governing and house fifty nuns while the hospital should accommo-

date twelve patients.<sup>67</sup> Theodora dedicated a substantial amount of her estates to the monastery in which she retired as a nun; these comprised property that belonged to her and her ancestors, property given to her by her son Andronikos, property bought by her and property donated to the foundation by her mother, Eudokia Angelina.<sup>68</sup> The monastic complex comprised the churches and the hospital, as well as at least two store-rooms, a kitchen, a laundry and some auxiliary buildings. The twelve beds provided by the hospital (plus three for the attendants) form a direct analogy to the women's ward at the famous Pantokrator *xenon* and invite a comparison of both institutions.<sup>69</sup>

But the founder's emphasis lay not on the hospital, but on the monastery around it. The regulations for the monastery take up almost the entire space of the *typikon*; those for the hospital are limited to two sections.<sup>70</sup> In establishing a monastery Theodora was following an ancient imperial line of patronage. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that *memoria* was a central aspect of her foundation. The liturgical commemorations for her family and kin, both those that are already deceased and those that will die in the future were central to her. Furthermore, she had intended Lips to become a mausoleum for her family, as the Pantokrator had been designed (and indeed had functioned) for the Komnenian dynasty.<sup>71</sup> The *typikon* includes

65 There seems to be some scanty evidence on the involvement of women in the establishment and upkeep of orphanages, but it dates to the period prior to this study's focal point; see T. MILLER, *The Orphans of Byzantium*, Washington, DC 2003, pp. 132–136.

66 On Theodora (PLP, no. 21380) see A.-M. TALBOT, *Empress Theodora Palaiologina, Wife of Michael VIII*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46, 1992, pp. 295–303.

67 Text of the *typikon*: H. DELEHAYE, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues*, Brussels 1921, pp. 106–136, tr. A.-M. TALBOT, in: *BMFD*, III, pp. 1254–1286. See also TALBOT, *Building activity* (cit. n. 35).

68 DELEHAYE, *Deux typica* (cit. n. 67), § 43–49, pp. 130–134; *BMFD*, III, pp. 1279–1280.

69 There is now a vast amount of literature on the Pantokrator; I will only refer to some of the most important and recent studies: see the translation of its *typikon* by R. JORDAN, in: *BMFD*, II, pp. 725–781; P. HORDEN, *How Medicalized Were Byzantine Hospitals?*, in: *Medicina e Storia*, 10, 2005, pp. 45–74. For the comparison see T. MILLER, *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*, 2nd ed., Baltimore 1997, p. 203, Table 1.

70 DELEHAYE, *Deux typica* (cit. n. 67), § 50–51, pp. 134–135; *BMFD*, III, p. 1281.

71 TALBOT, *Empress Theodora* (cit. n. 66), p. 299.

precise instructions as to where her family and kin should be buried. At least six members of the Palaiologoi were buried at Lips. Her husband, Michael VIII, was not among them as a result of his pro-Union (and therefore anti-Orthodox) policy. The memory of the founder and her kin was kept not only by the presence of their graves within the monastic complex.<sup>72</sup> A number of liturgical actions to be performed throughout each year were also included in the *typikon*. The document itself should be recited three times a year while at the end of each session the nuns were to exclaim *eternal be the memory of the founders*. Eight breads were to be consecrated each week for each of the four times that liturgy was to be celebrated. Of these one should be in the name of the deceased ancestors of Theodora, one for her son, the emperor, and his wife, one for all her other children and another for herself and her mother. Furthermore, each Saturday a number of liturgical breads stamped with a cruciform stamp should be offered on behalf of her deceased ancestors and children as well as those of them that would die in the future.<sup>73</sup> The care of Theodora's memory was completed through a number of charitable donations which were channelled through the monastery: distributions of food and coins to the Christian brethren (that is the poor) on at least two occasions per year.<sup>74</sup>

The last aspect I should like to explore is the institutional charity provided in monasteries founded by women. Again there are inherent difficulties due to the limitation of the available data. Only five *typika* of monasteries founded by women survive: three by empresses (Kecharitomene, Lips and Anargyroi) and two by women with close

ties to the ruling dynasty of the Palaiologoi and great wealth (Philanthropos and Bebaia Elpis).

As I have already discussed Lips above, I will restrict the following account on Kecharitomene and Bebaia Elpis, as the *typikon* of Philanthropos survives only as a very short fragment.<sup>75</sup> The convent of Kecharitomene was founded by Irene Doukaina while her husband, Alexios I, was still alive which makes it unique in our documentation.<sup>76</sup> Unlike Lips, there were daily charitable distributions at the gate of the monastery and more lavish ones on the days of the commemoration of the founder's kin (ancestors, parents, siblings, children and her husband). It is obvious that the distributions were an important part of the founder's remembrance strategies; as such they are frequent and considerable. Another remarkable (and unique) feature of this *typikon* is the designation of an *ephoros* exclusively from the matrilineal descent of Irene's heirs.<sup>77</sup>

The convent of Bebaia Elpis (Sure Hope) founded by Theodora Synadene, an aristocratic lady of peerless lineage in Constantinople in 1327 is the last monastic foundation by a woman in the period in question.<sup>78</sup> Not only her own substantial means were invested in this enterprise, but also those of fourteen other members of her extensive family, who having all donated property, acquired the right to be commemorated.

Commemorations of the founder's immediate family were particularly lavish: eleven priests should be invited, so that the liturgy would be celebrated by twelve priests, the church would be decorated, six candelabra should be lit, memorial offerings distributed to those attending the ceremony, the nuns would be offered better food for

72 BROOKS, Commemoration (cit. n. 37), pp. 255–269.

73 DELEHAYE, Deux typica (cit. n. 67), § 8, p. III, § 30, pp. 122–123; BMFD, III, pp. 1268, 1274–1275.

74 DELEHAYE, Deux typica (cit. n. 67), § 38, p. 127; BMFD, III, p. 1277.

75 See BMFD, IV, pp. 1383–1388.

76 *Typikon*: P. GAUTIER, Le typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitóménè, in: Revue des Études Byzantines, 43, 1985, pp. 5–165, tr. R. JORDAN, in: BMFD, II, pp. 649–724.

77 GAUTIER, Le typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitóménè (cit. n. 76), § 80, pp. 144–145; BMFD, II, p. 709.

78 *Typikon*: DELEHAYE, Deux typica (cit. n. 67), pp. 18–105, tr. A.-M. TALBOT, in: BMFD, IV, pp. 1512–1578.

the day, and some bread and wine distributed to the poor at the door. In this case, the charitable distributions are clearly subordinate to the commemorations and the monastery rightly credited with a *minimal, ritualistic commitment to institutional philanthropy*.<sup>79</sup>

It might appear pointless to attempt to generalize based on such a small sample of texts, but

it seems as if the *typika* written for foundations of women do not differ in any substantial way from those written for male ones. After the Evergetis reform they all duly include institutional charity among their duties, but this is always subordinate to the liturgical and commemorative aspects of monastic life.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this overview it is important to summarize our findings and try to place them in context. If the initial working hypothesis as suggested by our current understanding of women and giving was one that emphasized difference, the late Byzantine data does not seem to corroborate it. Women's donations, sales, foundations and patronage while significant (and deserving of more in-depth research) are structurally identical to those practised by men.

But an indication of difference may still be perceptible. The few cases (and we can assume that they are perhaps underrepresented in the extant evidence) that indicate that some women preferred to give directly to the poor (as a rule, as bequests), that is without establishing an institution as a go-between, require discussion. Clearly the women who chose to follow this path had both the means and the know-how to act otherwise. In fact, in some instances we know that their husbands chose precisely the way of institutional philanthropy as was the case with Symbarios Pakourianos, Michael Attaleiates and Theodore Sarantenos. Were these cases of a marital strategy of diversification to ensure maximum

security in afterlife management prospects? Or did perhaps women, who were by now excluded from any active role in the Church (which controlled both charitable institutions and monasteries) feel distrustful of such institutions when it came to the expression of their personal faith?<sup>80</sup> *If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me* (Matthew 19:21). Did women follow this commandment literally? Or was this merely the reflection of a Christian ideal built in the texts that preserve such information? One could suppose that the practice of direct charity, if it meant going out to meet and help the poor personally, would appeal to women ordinarily leading a life centred on their family, but although the evidence suggests that Komnenian and Palaiologan women (at least those of the upper class, on whom most of our evidence rests) were not constrained,<sup>81</sup> there is hardly any evidence for such practice. Looking back at an earlier hagiographic model of pious housewives, sainted for their charitable activities as exemplified by Mary the Younger, we can see a pattern that was no longer followed. In Mary's life her

79 DELEHAYE, *Deux typika* (cit. n. 67), § 113–119, pp. 134–143. See BROOKS, *Commemoration* (cit. n. 37), pp. 173–180.

80 I am following here a train of thought developed by Judith Herrin to explain female devotion to icons as a result of their exclusion from the official Church, see J. HERRIN, *Women and the Faith in Icons in Early Christianity*, in: R. SAMUEL/G. STEDMAN JONES (ed.), *Culture, Ideology and Politics*, London 1982, pp. 68 ff., and J. HERRIN, *Public and Private Forms of Religious Commitment Among Byzantine Women*, in: L. ARCHER et al. (ed.), *Women in Ancient Societies: An Illusion of the Night*, London 1994, pp. 181–203.

81 LAIOU, *Role of Women* (cit. n. 14), pp. 249–250; A. P. KAZHDAN, *Women at Home*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 52, 1998, pp. 1–17, disagrees with her opinion.

ardent almsgiving was, at least partly, inspired by her meeting of poor people and beggars on her daily outings to the Church, and it would be safe to assume that help towards those one actually witnesses as in need comes more easily.<sup>82</sup> Michael Psellos writes of his mother that once a year she would give out money to the needy and tend to them herself.<sup>83</sup> This middle Byzantine model of pious housewives was prominent from the ninth to the eleventh century,<sup>84</sup> but it seems to have declined thereafter. In the data surveyed above there do not seem to be reflections of it.

Perhaps it was a matter of realistic expectations. Mary the Younger had been absolute in her charity: she not only gave away all her personal property – even her clothes – to the poor and beggars, but this resulted in her leaving no inheritance at all for her children.<sup>85</sup> Our women did

not follow this path; their donations (in those cases when they had children) did not put their offspring's inheritance in danger.

A final, unsurprising, finding derives from the above overview: the social and economic importance of widows. Widows formed a significant percentage of the population and had access to property, much of which, as our documentation shows, flowed as bequests to the Church. What part of such transactions was motivated by piety and what by various types of pressure is difficult to say,<sup>86</sup> but there is evidence to suggest that monasteries could be perceived as safe havens by women who could not rely on their kin for caring for them in their final days, making sure they would get a proper burial and perhaps even enhance their chance for salvation through commemoration.<sup>87</sup>

82 TALBOT, *Byzantine Women* (cit. n. 53), p. 110.

83 U. CRISCUOLO, Michele Psello, *Autobiografia. Encomio per la madre: Testo critico, introduzione, traduzione e commentario*, Naples 1989, lines 665–677.

84 Cf. TALBOT, *Byzantine Women* (cit. n. 53), pp. 109–114. See also the contribution by Sharon Gerstel and Sophia Kalopissi-Verti in this volume.

85 TALBOT, *Byzantine Women* (cit. n. 53), pp. 110–112.

86 As an allusion to CTh 16. 2. 27 (issued June 21, 390 at Constantinople) and CTh 16. 2. 28 (issued August 23, 390 at Constantinople) suggest; see CANER, *Wandering* (cit. n. 49), pp. 199–200 with nos. 213–214.

87 As the case of Irene Apokaukissa (PLP, no. 1193) shows: MIKLOSICH/MÜLLER, *Acta et diplomata graeca* (cit. n. 22), II, no. 655, pp. 509–510; see TALBOT, *Byzantine Women* (cit. n. 53), p. 116.



THE EPISTLES OF PRINCESS JELENA BALŠIĆ:  
AN EXAMPLE OF FEMALE CULTURAL PATRONAGE  
IN THE LATE MEDIEVAL BALKANS

ALEXANDRA VUKOVICH

Acts of female cultural and religious patronage became prominent, gaining visibility and recognition, in the medieval Balkans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. There are many examples of female patrons such as Jelena of Serres and princess Milica who wrote liturgical poetry, commissioned works of art, and built churches and convents. Princess Jelena Balšić, a Serbian lady of Nemanjid lineage and daughter of prince Lazar, is an example of women who were related to or in direct contact with the Nemanjid princely family and played a role in the production of literary works and religious patronage in late medieval Zeta.

After the death of her second husband, Sandalj Hranić, in 1411, Jelena Balšić consecrated herself to a life of piety and to the construction of

a church dedicated to the Holy Mother on Lake Skadar in Zeta. Zeta had been a possession of her first husband Djuradj II Stracimirović Balšić and later of her son, Balsa III who died in 1421, at which point the territory was integrated into the Kingdom of Serbia.<sup>1</sup> During her reclusion at a convent on the Isle of Gorica, Jelena Balšić began a correspondence with the well-travelled and erudite monk, Nikon of Jerusalem, who would later become hieromonk of the monastery of St Nicholas on Lake Skadar. Three epistles still exist from their correspondence, of which two can be attributed directly to princess Jelena Balšić (the third epistle is a paraphrase composed by Nikon of Jerusalem).<sup>2</sup> The epistles are consistent with Byzantine epistolary form<sup>3</sup> and are representative of the literary production of the Serbian despot-

1 Zeta mostly remained under the suzerainty of the Kingdom of Serbia, but was a contested territory throughout the 1430s and 1440s until 1443/4 when it was resituated to Djuradj Branković of Serbia. A full bibliography of articles and works on the *Goricki Zbornik* is provided in: HIEROMONK J. ČULIBRK, Nikon Jerusalimac: Vrijeme–ličnost–djelo. Zbornik radova sa međunarodnog simposiona na Skadarskom jezeru, 7–9 septembra, 2000, Cetinje: Svetigora 2004, and in: B. BOJOVIĆ, L'idéologie monarchique dans les hagio-biographies dynastiques du Moyen Age serbe, Rome 1995, pp. 177–216.

2 The epistles are contained in a single manuscript located in the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade: MS 446. Two of the epistles were reproduced in an article by Djordje Trifunović: D. TRIFUNOVIĆ, Dve poslanice Jelenne Balšić i Nikonova – Povest o jerusalimskim crkvama i pustinjским mestima, in: Knjizevna Istorija, 18, 1972, pp. 289–315. In this article we find a transcription of two epistles in Old Serbian and a translation into Modern Serbian.

3 The letters exchanged between Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzos set the "rules" for good letter-writing practices; in Letters 51–52 by Gregory of Nazianzos the characteristics of a good letter are described emphasizing brevity, clarity, and elegance, ed. and tr. P. GALLAY, Saint Grégoire de Nazianze Lettres, I, Paris 1964–1967, pp. 66–69. On the conventions of letter-writing in the Byzantine world, particularly, on letter genres and rhetoric in letter-writing see M. MULLETT, Epistolography, in: E. JEFFREYS/J. HALDON/R. CORMACK (ed.), The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies, Oxford 2008, ch. III. 18.6, pp. 882–893. See also M. GRÜNBAIT, Byzantinische Briefkultur, in: Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, 47, 2007, pp. 117–138; S. PAPAIOANNOU, Letter-Writing, in: P. STEPHENSON (ed.), The Byzantine World, London/New York 2009, pp. 188–199.



ate in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The level of literary expression and the content of the epistles demonstrate princess Jelena Balšić's capacity to engage in theological conversation and her interest and queries regarding monasticism. The three epistles of Jelena Balšić are integrated into the corpus entitled *Goricki Zbornik* (The Corpus of Gorica)<sup>4</sup> and were inserted by princess Jelena's "spiritual father", Nikon of Jerusalem in 1441/2 as framing devices for the articles he wrote for the volume based on Jelena's queries.<sup>5</sup> Examples of medieval Serbian epistolography are few,<sup>6</sup> and the epistles of princess Jelena Balšić are a relatively unknown source describing the literary and book-culture of her monastic community on Lake Skadar.<sup>7</sup> The authority of the princess in contributing to, commissioning, and directing a literary work derives from the legitimacy conferred to her by kinship with the Nemanjid princely family. Consequently, her literary oeuvre is a demonstration of princess Jelena's authority as a patron of literature and of a monastic community.

In the first compendium of princely hagiographies in the Nemanjid kingdom, *Vitae regum et archiepiscoporum Serbiae* (1223–1375), archbishop Danilo II stresses the ideal of heavenly and earthly harmony, represented by the

отъчство (patrimony) belonging to the saintly Nemanjid lineage that must not be divided. The concept of отъчство is elaborated in the hagiographies dedicated to Simeon Nemanja. In the *Life of Simeon Nemanja* by archbishop Sava I, the monk Simeon is referred to as the отъць (father) of his people and хтитор (founder) of his realm.<sup>8</sup> The portrayal of women as patrons is very rare in the dynastic literature of the Nemanjids, which generally outlines the role of Nemanjid princes in securing their dynastic legitimacy through acts of cultural patronage that further elucidate the cooperation of the Church in supporting the legitimacy of one Nemanjid prince over another.

Within the framework of dynastic competition, the role of female patrons such as Jelena Balšić is presented as instrumental in securing the legitimacy of a prince born of either a Nemanjid mother or of a Nemanjid consort during a period of dynastic upheaval. The earliest example of female patronage can be found in the second half of the thirteenth century in Zeta and Trebinje, the *appanage* of queen Jelena, consort of Stefan Uroš I.<sup>9</sup> In the *Life of queen Jelena* written by archbishop Danilo II,<sup>10</sup> there is mention of her correspondence with the monks of

4 BOJOVIĆ, L'idéologie monarchique (cit. n. 1), pp. 221–238, provides an overview of the corpus and reproduces the table of contents of the corpus.

5 On the date of the *Corpus of Gorica*: D. BOGDANOVIĆ/R. MIHAJLIĆ, *Istoriija Srpskog Naroda, II* (1371–1537), Belgrade 1994, pp. 372–373.

6 The latest evaluation of medieval Serbian epistolography can be found in: T. SUBOTIN-GOLUBOVIĆ, *Srednjovekovna Srpska epistolografija*, in: *Pismo*, Belgrade 2007, pp. 9–16.

7 The epistles of Jelena Balšić have only been published in an article by Djordje Trifunović and, to this day, no edition of the *Goricki Zbornik* has been published. Thanks to the help and support of Professor Trifunović, I was able to undertake the examination of the *Goricki Zbornik* in April, 2009. The excerpts from the text that I have produced here are based on an independent palaeographic and philological study of the manuscript in facsimile form. Therefore, any mistakes or omissions in the transcription and translation of the epistles are purely my own.

8 P. J. SAFARIK, *Zivot sv. Symeona od sv. Savu*, in: *Památky dřevního písmnictví Jihoslovanů*, 2, 1873, section 8,30.

9 The identity of queen Jelena has been subject of scholarly debate; on the most recent analysis of the question see G. McDANIEL, *On Hungarian-Serbian Relations in the 13th Century: John Angelos and Queen Jelena*, in: *Ungarn-Jahrbuch*, 12, 1983, pp. 1–12, see especially no. 1. For the historical context of the period see J. V. A. FINE, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Study from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*, Ann Arbor 1994, pp. 137–142.

10 DANILO II, *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih*, ed. D. DANIČIĆ, an introd. by D. TRIFUNOVIĆ, London repr. 1972, pp. 43–76.

the monasteries of Jerusalem and Sinai.<sup>11</sup> These monks are represented in the *vitae* as her *spiritual fathers*;<sup>12</sup> they served as confessors, counselors and general correspondents, answering her questions regarding various theological topics.<sup>13</sup> It must also be mentioned that queen Jelena was a prolific founder of churches. Danilo II describes her as the founder of several churches and a convent in her *appanage* Zeta and Trebinje.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, queen Jelena's personal piety and her pious acts served in the legitimisation of her sons as rulers<sup>15</sup> and demonstrated the political implication of her pious activities.<sup>16</sup> Queen Jelena's role as the ruler of Zeta and Trebinje and as a cultural patron is subsumed by her role as the mother of two Nemanjid kings. Danilo II describes her reputation as that of a God-fearing and Christ-loving woman and a serene ruler who (unlike her husband Uroš I)<sup>17</sup> creates balance and harmony between her sons; these characteristics are the main considerations in the creation of a saintly Nemanjid queen.

Later, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the women of princess Jelena Balšić's immediate family, notably her mother, princess Milica, were also involved in acts of patronage.<sup>18</sup> The princess founded Ljubostinja where she is represented as *ktitor*.<sup>19</sup> This church experienced a cultural effervescence at the time of the Battle of Kosovo; particularly after the translation of St Lazar's relics to Ravanica.<sup>20</sup> Princess Milica, like the celebrated poetess the nun Jefimija,<sup>21</sup> produced literary works and received praise in the works of both Constantine of Kostenec<sup>22</sup> and Grigorij Camblak<sup>23</sup> who mention her political talent as a regent and her piety. Princess Milica is known to have written the *proimion* to the charter of the monastery of Dečani in Metochija for her son, the despot Stefan Lazarević<sup>24</sup> and she is believed to have written a *Panegyric to prince Lazar*.<sup>25</sup>

Acts of patronage and an abundant dynastic literature (dynastic hagio-biographies) were components of the legitimacy of the reigning dy-

11 DANILO II, *Životi kraljeva* (cit. n. 10), pp. 61–65.

12 DANILO II, *Životi kraljeva* (cit. n. 10), p. 65.

13 DANILO II, *Životi kraljeva* (cit. n. 10), p. 65.

14 DANILO II, *Životi kraljeva* (cit. n. 10), pp. 65–72.

15 DANILO II, *Životi kraljeva* (cit. n. 10), pp. 71–72.

16 B. KREKIĆ, La Serbie entre Byzance et l'Occident au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, in: Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Oxford 1967, pp. 62–65. In 1242 and 1247, Uroš I had a strong following amongst his Catholic subjects in Zeta and Primorje since he supported their claim to an autonomous archbishopric against the political initiative of Pope Innocent IV who attempted to integrate the Catholic Church of Bosnia under the Archbishop of Hungary as a strategic step in the Hungarian Dominicans' battle against the Bogomils. This balanced political structure was later upheld by queen Jelena when she became the sole administrator of these regions.

17 See the *Life of Uroš I*, in: DANILO II, *Životi kraljeva* (cit. n. 10), pp. 42–45.

18 Z. GAVRILOVIĆ, Women in Serbian Politics, Diplomacy and Art, in: E. JEFFREYS (ed.), *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilization*. In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman, Cambridge 2006, pp. 72–90.

19 N. ANTIĆ-KOMNENOVIĆ, Zidno slikarstvo manastira Ljubostinje, in: *Zbornik Narodnog Muzeja*, II, Belgrade 1982, pp. 17–53.

20 BOGDANOVIĆ/MIHAJLIĆ, *Istorija* (cit. n. 5), pp. 208–210.

21 The definitive work on the subject of Jelena of Serres and her oeuvre remains: L. MIRKOVIĆ, *Monahinja Jefimija* (Hrišćanski život, 5), Sremski Karlovci 1922, pp. 3–35.

22 KONSTANTIN FILOZOF, *Povest o Slovima: Žitije Stefana Lazarevića*, ed. D. BOGDANOVIĆ, *Stara srpska književnost*, XI, Belgrade 1989.

23 GRIGORIJE CAMBLAK, *Književni rad u Srbiji*, ed. D. BOGDANOVIĆ, *Stara srpska književnost*, XI, Belgrade 1989.

24 P. IVIĆ/M. GRKOVIĆ, *Dečanske hrisobulje*, Novi Sad 1976, pp. 280–282.

25 D. S. RADOJIČIĆ, *Antologija stare srpske književnosti (XI–XVIII veka): izbor, prevodi i objašnjenja*, Belgrade 1960, p. 128.

nasty and had contributed to the recognition and even to the sanctification of a Nemanjid king or queen.<sup>26</sup> In the third section of the *Corpus of Gorica*, Nikon of Jerusalem elaborates an article on the “Ancestors of princess Jelena”,<sup>27</sup> insisting on her *Saintly Lineage*.<sup>28</sup> Nikon cites the *vita* of the founder of the Nemanjid dynasty, St Simeon by Stefan Prvovenčani<sup>29</sup> and the *Life of St Sava* by the monk Theodosios<sup>30</sup> and draws a historical genealogy (родословіе)<sup>31</sup> of princess Jelena’s saintly ancestors. This section of the *Corpus of Gorica* presents the first Nemanjid “great *zoupan*” Stefan Nemanja as the founder of the monastery of Hilandar on Mount Athos where he retired in his old age and as the first *ktitor* of the Nemanjid dynasty by which he set the precedent for future acts of religious patronage which were almost exclusively undertaken by his descendants. Princess Jelena Balšić was a descendant of this saintly family through her mother and while her estate was neither a kingdom nor a vast demesne, she acted with liberality towards the religious institutions in Zeta and founded a small church dedicated to the Holy Mother, intended as her burial place, on Lake Skadar near the convent where she had retired in 1435.<sup>32</sup> The church was constructed ca. 1439 near the church of St George that was founded by princess Jelena’s first husband, Djur-

adj II Stracimirović Balšić. The inscription above the main entrance indicates the names of the founder and church, and identifies princess Jelena Balšić as the daughter of *prince Lazar, who died beatifically, and the wife* (подрогжіе) of Lord Djordje Starcimirović.<sup>33</sup>

This survey demonstrates a pattern of cultural and religious female patronage practiced through a network of kinship structures that conferred wealth and reputation on the female descendants and consorts of the Nemanjid dynasty. No explicit matrilineal preference<sup>34</sup> can be distinguished in any of the acts of patronage in the late medieval Balkans. It can be interpreted that in the cases presented above, female patrons initially undertook their acts of patronage as an exceptional complement to their feminine duties – to honour a dead male relative, to protect the rights of their children or to enhance the prestige of the family.<sup>35</sup> As in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, when queen Jelena (consort to Uroš I) was viewed as the holy protagonist safeguarding the dynastic legitimacy of the Nemanjid kingdom, the political and, by extension, dynastic situation of the fifteenth century demanded the revivification of family (Nemanjid) sentiment to recast the legitimacy of the new rulers (of Lazar Hrebeljanović and of the

26 Z. GAVRILOVIĆ, *Wisdom and Philanthropy of the Ruler in the Person of Stefan Nemanja. Examples of the Tradition in Serbian Medieval Art*, in: *Colloques scientifiques de l’Académie serbe des sciences et des arts*, 94, ed. Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade 2000, p. 24.

27 BOJOVIĆ, *L’idéologie monarchique* (cit. n. 1), p. 229, wherein this section of the corpus is described.

28 Ms 446: fols. 110v–152r, wherein the author insists on the “saintliness” of the descendants of Stefan Nemanja.

29 Boško Bojović edited the section relating the life of Stefan Nemanja (Ms 446: fols. 110v–134v) with commentary: BOJOVIĆ, *L’idéologie monarchique* (cit. n. 1), pp. 240–300.

30 BOGDANOVIĆ/MIHAJLIĆ, *Istorija* (cit. n. 5), pp. 375–376.

31 Ms 446: fols. 107–110v, in which the ancestors of princess Jelena are described.

32 RADOJIČIĆ, *Antologija* (cit. n. 24), pp. 184–189, 341–343. He also provides a translation of the second epistle of Jelena Balšić.

33 For the inscription: D. RADOJIČIĆ, *Izbor patrijarha Danila III*, Belgrade 1952, pp. 58–62.

34 S. KETTERING, *Patronage and Kinship in Early Modern France*, in: *French Historical Studies*, 16, 1989, pp. 408–435, esp. p. 409.

35 M. SHADIS, *Piety, Politics, and Power: The Patronage of Leonor of England and Her Daughters Berenguela of Leon and Blanche of Castile*, in: J. HALL-McCASH (ed.), *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, Athens, GA 1996, pp. 202–227.

Branković clan) and maintain the integrity of the отъчство (patrimony).<sup>36</sup>

Jelena Balšić's role as a literary patron is derived from two documents: her testament, written between 1405 and 1442 by Nikon of Jerusalem and conserved with the Archives of Dubrovnik in the second document, the *Corpus of Gorica*.<sup>37</sup> The testament lists Jelena Balšić's possessions and her fortune; it shows her to be a great benefactor and piously inclined. In her will, princess Jelena bequeaths part of her personal library to her pious institution, the church of the Holy Mother, and another part to that of her first husband, the church of St George.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, we do not have a list of the contents of princess Jelena's library; we do however know that she commissioned a large volume on a variety of subjects, the *Corpus of Gorica*, to which she contributed the three aforementioned epistles. The *Corpus of Gorica* is unique in that it contains original pieces penned by this female literary patron. In this case of literary patronage, the patron is established as an individual and her intellectual

and religious pursuits are described in the corpus that she commissioned for her religious foundation. Two of the three epistles attributed to Jelena are believed to have been written by her hand because of their stylistic and linguistic distinction from the text written by Nikon of Jerusalem. The style shows great aesthetic balance and has a high literary quality; Trifunović noted that the language and sentence structure reflect the "artistic literary style" of Old Serbian as it was practised in courtly circles in the later medieval period.<sup>39</sup> The difference between Nikon of Jerusalem's contribution to the *Corpus of Gorica* and his patron's becomes evident once we remark the various hellenisms<sup>40</sup> that he employs, probably due to his long sojourn at the monastery of the Holy Archangels in Palestine.<sup>41</sup> The epistles follow the general conventions of Byzantine epistolography, specifically the "question-answer" form of ἐρωτοαποκρίσεις<sup>42</sup> (вьпрос(ь)и от(ь)вьтъ),<sup>43</sup> a common patristic mode.<sup>44</sup>

The three epistles introduce the three sections of the corpus, each longer than its prede-

36 See the conclusions of A. ВУКОВИЧ, *Le mécénat princier et la rhétorique du pouvoir princier féminin dans le royaume némanide du XIIIe au XVe siècle*, Paris 2007 (unpublished Master's thesis, EHESS).

37 For a transcription of the testament of Jelena Balšić see F. VON MIKLOSICH, *Monumenta Serbica Spectantia Historiam Serbiae, Bosnae, Ragusii*, Vienna 1858, pp. 415–417. For a commentary on the testament see ČULIBRK, *Nikon Jerusalimac* (cit. n. 1), pp. 151–165.

38 GAVRILOVIĆ, *Women in Serbian Politics* (cit. n. 18), pp. 82–83.

39 TRIFUNOVIĆ, *Dve poslanice* (cit. n. 2), p. 297.

40 Djordje Trifunović lists the hellenisms apparent in the description of Nikon's travels in Sinai and the Holy Land: TRIFUNOVIĆ, *Dve poslanice* (cit. n. 2), pp. 305–308. See also fols. 49r–50r. Note the difference evident in the paraphrased epistle (επιστολία третїа) wherein several hellenisms are employed, for example, the adjective περιβόητον (перивоѣтон) to describe a church: fol. 49v, line 11.

41 TRIFUNOVIĆ, *Dve poslanice* (cit. n. 2), p. 297.

42 For this commonly used form see G. DAGRON, *Le saint, le savant, l'astrologue: Étude de thèmes hagiographiques à travers quelques recueils de "Questions et réponses" des Ve au VIIe siècles*, in: *Hagiographie, Cultures et Sociétés IVe–XIIe siècles. Actes du colloque organisé à Nanterre et à Paris (2–5 mai 1979)*, Paris 1981, pp. 140–157. On the modes of spiritual discourse and methods of its articulations see J. MUNITIZ, *Writing for the Heart. The Spiritual Literature of Byzantium*, in: P. STEPHENSON (ed.), *The Byzantine World*, London/New York 2009, pp. 248–259, 253–254. See also TRIFUNOVIĆ, *Dve poslanice* (cit. n. 2), p. 290.

43 Ms 446: fol. 16r and fol. 18v. The question-answer format is clearly demonstrated by the delineation of these two sections.

44 See tr. J. CHRYSAVGIS, *Barsanuphius and John. Letters, I*, Washington, DC 2006. The series of letters of Barsanuphius and John exchanged with various lay and ecclesiastical figures, offering counsel and delving into spiritual problems are exemplars of the question-answer style in Byzantine epistolography.

cessor. The sections are thematic and are mediated by Jelena Balšić's open-ended queries. The first epistle is damaged; we can only read the introduction (the first seven lines), but we can infer its contents from Nikon of Jerusalem's response: an introduction including a rather extensive exchange of salutations and biblical citations regarding spiritual life.<sup>45</sup> The second epistle entitled *Correspondence on the Love of God* (ΩΤΠΙΣΑΝΙΕ БОГОЛЮВНО)<sup>46</sup> starts off with an account of princess Jelena's relationship with Nikon of Jerusalem and the value of his presence and conversation:

Да вѣсть твоа с(в)етиніа· ѡтнелиже спод[о] бих' се съ б(о)гомъ познати те, порадовах' се вес(е)лѣемъ д(оу)ховнымъ нъ вьмалѣ и вькратцѣ быис(тъ) нам'видѣніе, ꙗкож(е) би кто рекълъ вь зрьцалѣ ѡбраз оузрѣхомъ, или вь нѣкыи сънь тѣнкъ сънѣсеноу ми бывшоу. И скорости дѣліа не полоучи мое окаан'ство желаема миѣ. Нъ оваче еже тогда слышахом ѡт твоего прѣпод[о]вїа словеса д(оу)ховнаа и еже възмогахом постигнути, и ѡт срѣд моес д(оу)ше любезно и вьсеср[ъ]д[ъ]чно, паче же и вѣрнѣше вьспрїехомъ и тѣми б(о)ж(ъ) ст'вными словеси еже слышахом тогдашнїе врѣм(е), окрѣмленїе д(оу)ховно имѣхомъ дажд(ь) и д(ь)и(ь)сь и слышах твоее д(оу)ше б(о)голюбныи н'равь, и невеществное агг(е)льское прѣбыванїе и еще ж[е] ѡт нас(ь) коньчное оудаленїе.<sup>47</sup>

*Your Saintliness must know that from the time you spoke [to me] of God, spiritual happiness and*

*joy have become known to me. And since we were able to meet only for a short time, it was, as it is said, like a sudden apparition traced by the sun's glare or as if I had been awoken from a dream. And due to the rapidity [of that meeting] my need was left unsatisfied. But what we heard from your teachings, your spiritual words, and what we were able to comprehend [from them] immersed my soul with loving kindness and filled my heart. And, what is more, we received [your words] with great faith. Thus, with those heavenly words that we listened to then, we have been satiated until today. And remembering your soulful and heavenly demeanour and beatitude, [we are reminded] that you are at a great distance from us forever.*

As in other medieval male-female epistolary relationships,<sup>48</sup> Nikon of Jerusalem assumes the role of “spiritual father”, “teacher” and “guide” in matters of religion and monastic life.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, the beginning of the letter serves as a panegyric to Nikon of Jerusalem – who appears to have recently visited princess Jelena at her convent, to her great pleasure – coupled with an admonition to her spiritual guide to visit her again. According to the forty-sixth canon of the Synod in Trullo, members of religious communities were allowed to leave the community in extraordinary circumstances (such as to visit an ill relative); however, it appears that princess Jelena did not leave her convent to visit her spiritual guide at his monastery.<sup>50</sup>

45 Ms 446: fols. 1r–16r. For analysis see TRIFUNOVIĆ, *Dve poslanice* (cit. n. 2), p. 291.

46 Ms 446: fols. 16r–18v. For the modern version of the text see TRIFUNOVIĆ, *Dve poslanice* (cit. n. 2), pp. 303–304.

47 Ms 446: fols. 16r–16v.

48 A Byzantine example of a male-female epistolary relationship is the correspondence of princess Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina with a monk Theoleptos of Philadelphia, tr. A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Irene Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina: A Woman's Quest for Spiritual Guidance. The Correspondence of Princess Irene Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina*, Brookline, MA 1986. Letters 2 and 3 contain the same *topoi* of the female recipient's ignorance and ineptitude and her entreaties and gratitude for her spiritual guide's attention and visits.

49 Ms 446: fol. 16v.

50 We do not have a *typikon* for princess Jelena's religious community, and constraints on the circulation of its members are not mentioned in the digest in the third letter. However, it appears that it may have been a convention to have a spiritual guide call upon his pupil, see CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Irene* (cit. n. 48), pp. 131–132.

Jelena Balšić is a secular figure, a noble widow; in her relations with Nikon of Jerusalem she is a student, showing her interest in theology by posing numerous questions, stating Бсеч(ь)стномуу ѡ[ть]цоу оучителю с(ве)т(а)го їев(аг)гелїа, нам'же о г(оспод)и д(оу)ховномуу наставникуу (*To the Glorious father, teacher of the Holy Gospels, our guide to the Holy Spirit*).<sup>51</sup> Jelena Balšić played a productive part in the spiritual life of her religious foundation since many of her questions relate to the settling of debates that had arisen in her convent regarding the nature of monastic life. She begins by asking Nikon of Jerusalem to clarify the notion of humility and charity towards the afflicted and poor and how these concepts relate to monastic solitude.<sup>52</sup> It appears that the main debate at the convent revolved around whether coenobitic or eremitic life was the appropriate model to follow, therefore princess Jelena asks како нѣции хвалет м(и)л(о)стинюу къ трѣбоующим, м(и)л(о)ст паце инѣх добродѣтѣлїен вьсѣх. или же истин'ное иноцьское житїе и цинь бл(а)жьеть множае (*How do some praise charity towards the indigent, since charity is above all other virtues; yet others praise genuine monastic life and divine status above all else*).<sup>53</sup> Following the theme of monastic solitude, she asks Nikon of Jerusalem's opinion regarding St Basil the Great and his guidelines regarding monastic community life:

и паки друзи г(лаго)лїют(ь), како с(ве)тїи Великїи Василїе, похвалїает оп'щаа житїа и съ мнозѣми прѣвыванїе имѣти · овы же ошьл'ство и безмалвиїе вмѣнише б(о)гоугодно житїе, и самомоу ѡ себе вьнимати

· и просимь оувѣд[ѣ]ти исвѣстнѣишее и мльвоу прѣрѣканїа ѡт на(ь) ѡтгнати · и къ свѣтоу разоума наставити · и еще молимь твое бл(а)гон'равїе и трудолюбное ти ср[ѣ]д[ѣ]це, и еже къ б(о)гоу и намь нелицемѣрные любви.<sup>54</sup>

*And still others say that Saint Basil the Great praises communal life and that one ought to live life among the many. And yet others believe that solitude and silence are essential to a godly life along with attending to the self. Thus we beg to know the most correct [way of living] to settle this heated debate and to dispel our ignorance and lead us towards the light of understanding. And we beg the graciousness and industriousness of your heart and to God we dedicate our unlimited love, to enlighten our minds. Furthermore, may your saintliness know that we should [thus] be awakened from our laziness and our ignorance become [knowledge].*

She begs him to и къ свѣтоу разоума наставити (*guide [her] towards Holy Wisdom*)<sup>55</sup> and to просвѣти се мыслию, и ина елика вѣсть твоя свѣтость, еже нашоу лѣность възбоудити, и гроубости прѣмѣнити (*enlighten [her] with [his] thoughts, since [his] holiness is very great, and it can rouse [her] from her sloth and dispel her ignorance*)<sup>56</sup> on these matters. Although princess Jelena asks a general question regarding how monastic communities are commonly organized based on the various monastic models, her mode of expression is augmented by the rhetoric of friendship,<sup>57</sup> within the accepted conventions of address: to address one's correspondent as a superior and to make allowances for one's shortcom-

51 Ms 446: fol. 17v.

52 Ms 446: fol. 18v.

53 Ms 446: fol. 17v.

54 Ms 446: fol. 17v.

55 Ms 446: fol. 18v.

56 Ms 446: fol. 18v.

57 On the rhetoric of friendship in Byzantine epistolography, see the section entitled "Power, Relations and Networks in Medieval Europe", in: *Revue Belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 83.2, 2005, pp. 255–313. Michael Grünbart provides a summary of types of relationships in Byzantine epistolographic networks and notes the varying forms of address

ings.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, the depiction of one's correspondent as superior involves their virtue as a friend and, in this case, as a spiritual guide. Since, it is out of charity and commitment to the amelioration of princess Jelena's "ignorance" of these and other matters that Nikon of Jerusalem's advice is requested and deserved.

In the third epistle (епистолиа третiа),<sup>59</sup> Nikon of Jerusalem paraphrases the content of princess Jelena's letters, referencing the completion of the church of the Holy Mother (which dates this correspondence to 1439 at the earliest), and outlines the rules to be followed at the convent where Jelena Balšić resided.<sup>60</sup> The third section of the corpus provides insight into a great variety of questions and preoccupations of the princess. This section includes articles or answers (отъвьт) regarding: universal history,<sup>61</sup> monastic life,<sup>62</sup> natural history,<sup>63</sup> geography<sup>64</sup> and pilgrimage sites in the Holy Land;<sup>65</sup> most of the articles

correspond to a specific question (въпросъ)<sup>66</sup> posed by the princess. The various subjects incorporated into the corpus provide an "universal knowledge" composed of instructional and religious texts meant to educate the reading public. The concluding sections of the corpus include a short letter by Jelena Balšić dedicating the *Corpus of Gorica* to her church, followed by a prayer.<sup>67</sup>

As an author, princess Jelena displays a fluid and elegant style with an interrogative macrostructure and rhetorical amplifications and figures of speech such as hypokatastasis, parache-sis and zeugmas. As in other preserved volumes containing letter collections, princess Jelena's letters contain only one side of her correspondence with Nikon of Jerusalem.<sup>68</sup> His responses are compiled as a series of erudite articles, however the question-answer – containing more answers than questions – exchange provides the structure

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based on the type of relationship and rank of the correspondents, see M. GRÜNBART, 'Tis love that has warm'd us. Reconstructing Networks in 12th Century Byzantium, in: *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 83.2, 2005, pp. 301–313. On p. 309, Grünbart notes the discrepancy between the rhetorical uses of official terminology and epideictic and the actual contents of a friendly exchange. Grünbart alights upon the uses of "wisdom" and praising a correspondent's erudition as a formal aspect of the epistolographic genre. See also M. MULLETT, *Theophylact of Ochrid. Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop* (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs, 2), Aldershot 1997, pp. III–123.

58 For the *topoi*, cf. Letter I of Irene-Eulogia Palaiologina to the *Correspondence on the Love of God*, CONSTANTINIDES HERO, Irene (cit. n. 48), letter I. Discussions of epistolographic *topoi* can be found in: M. GRÜNBART, *Formen der Anrede im byzantinischen Brief vom 6. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert* (Wiener byzantinische Studien, 25), Vienna 2005, pp. 131–136. Grünbart discusses the use of humility in letters; his examples demonstrate that humility before a correspondent was a common trope amongst clerics who referred to their humility, simplicity and servitude before their correspondent. See also MULLETT, *Theophylact of Ochrid* (cit. n. 57), pp. 133–134.

59 Ms 446: fols. 49r–50r.

60 ČULBRK, *Nikon Jerusalimac* (cit. n. 1), pp. 151–165.

61 See the "Table of Contents" of the *Goricki Zbornik* transcribed by Boško Bojović, in: BOJOVIĆ, *L'idéologie monarchique* (cit. n. 1), pp. 233–238, 228–229. In the corpus: fols. 55r–83v.

62 Ms 446: fol. 165r and fol. 185v.

63 Ms 446: fols. 258r–259r.

64 Ms 446: fol. 264r.

65 Ms 446: fols. 266r–271v. Djordje Trifunović transcribed and translated the Old Serbian text from the *Corpus of Gorica* and pointed out the various examples of hellenisms in Nikon of Jerusalem's article on the churches and monasteries of Sinai and the Holy Land, see TRIFUNOVIĆ, *Dve poslanice* (cit. n. 2), pp. 305–310 (Old Serbian version) and pp. 312–314 (modern version).

66 See "Table of Contents" in: BOJOVIĆ, *L'idéologie monarchique* (cit. n. 1), p. 238.

67 Ms 446: fols. 272v–273r.

68 See: MULLETT, *Epistolography* (cit. n. 3), p. 883.

of the volume. In the correspondence of Jelena Balšić and Nikon of Jerusalem, the role of student and teacher or of holy man and lay figure at first overshadows the relationship of patron and client, which is the basis for the entire correspondence: princess Jelena is directing Nikon's work through her queries. Princess Jelena refers to her personal relationship with Nikon of Jerusalem frequently, elaborating on the emotions involved in their spiritual friendship. The *topoi* of ignorance and humility before a holy man are found in other letter collections,<sup>69</sup> but it is Jelena's rhetorical flourishes as well as her references to her meetings and reception of Nikon of Jerusalem's teachings that are central to identifying the relationship (one of spiritual kinship) and pedagogic network (Nikon's teachings benefit the entire monastic community) outlined in this correspondence. The connection between epistolography and patronage in this letter collection further demonstrates an inherited tradition of aristocratic female patronage or *matronage* in the late medieval Balkans since, as in other times of dynastic upheaval, women (mainly consorts of rulers) gain visibility in the domain of cultural patronage.<sup>70</sup>

Owing to its polyvalence, the *Corpus of Gorica* is a unique volume in the canon of the dynastic literature of the Nemanjids. Although unique in this period, the *Corpus of Gorica* was the product of a literary milieu composed of women – and animated by her mother, the princess (*knjegina*) Milica, and her companion, the nun Jefimija – that had formed during a time of foreign conquest and internal strife and was specific to the cultural environment of the fifteenth-century Balkan peninsula. Princess Jelena Balšić was an important and strategically useful figure as a consort and as a political agent in her own right within this context, as the incarnation of the double legitimacy of the saintly Nemanjid kings and of St Lazar the megalomartyr. Furthermore, as a widow, Jelena was allowed to retire to her intellectual pursuits and continue the oeuvre of church foundation and literary patronage that had been the *loci* of power of her forebears. These two practices provided tangible evidence that Jelena was not only wealthy and powerful, but also had a double charismatic legitimacy to commission the production of literary works related to the hagio-biographies of the Nemanjids and become a *ktitorissa* in her own right.

69 GRÜNBART, *Formen der Anrede* (cit. n. 58), pp. 128–136.

70 L. BRUBAKER, *Memories of Helena: Patterns in Imperial Female Matronage in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries*, in: L. JAMES (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, London 2007, pp. 52–75.





## SINS OF FEMALE FOUNDERS IN LATE BYZANTIUM AND TREBIZOND

PETRA MELICHAR

Distinguished by piety as well as generosity, late medieval female founders<sup>1</sup> had reasons to expect public approval and acclaim. The primary sources however mention some who despite their donations, foundations and monastic vows compromised their pious images by “controversial” political or moral choices. The following six stories gleaned from a variety of late Byz-

antine chronicles, letters and documents reflect what the emperor, the church authorities, the narrator and, possibly, public opinion considered inappropriate behavior in a female founder.<sup>2</sup> Let us now inquire into the nature of the founders’ transgressions and if the written evidence permits, their connection with the monastic establishments.

### OPPOSING IMPERIAL DECISIONS

Following the chronological line, we must begin our survey with Martha Palaiologi-

na,<sup>3</sup> founder of the Kyra Martha convent, who played an important role in the Arsenite move-

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- 1 The theme of (female) foundation and re-foundation is the subject of several studies (of which due to limited space I only mention a few): L. JAMES, *Building and Rebuilding: Imperial Women in Constantinople in the Fourth to Eight Centuries*, in: *Basilissa*, 1, 2004, pp. 50–64; M. MULLETT (ed.), *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries* (Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, 6.3), Belfast 2007; A.-M. TALBOT, *Building Activity in Constantinople under Andronikos II: The Role of Women Patrons in the Construction and Restoration of Monasteries*, in: N. NECIPOĞLU (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, Brill/Leiden/Boston/Köln 2001; J. P. THOMAS, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 24), Washington, DC 1987. As for the body of literature on female political power, sanctity and gender in Byzantium, I again include only selected titles: C. L. CONNOR, *Women of Byzantium*, New Haven/London 2004; L. GARLAND, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527–1204*, London/New York 1999; L. GARLAND (ed.), *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience, AD 800–1200*, Aldershot/Burlington 2006; L. GARLAND, *The Eye of the Beholder: Byzantine Imperial Women and Their Public Image from Zoe Porphyrogenita to Euphrosyne Kamaterissa Doukaina (1028–1203)*, in: *Byzantion*, 64, 1994, pp. 19–39; L. GARLAND, *The Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women: A Further Note on Conventions of Behavior and Social Reality as Reflected in Eleventh and Twelfth Century Historical Sources*, in: *Byzantion*, 58, 1988, pp. 361–393; J. HERRIN, *Women in Purple: Rulers of Medieval Byzantium*, Princeton 2001; B. HILL, *Imperial Women in Byzantium, 1025–1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology*, Harlow 1999; L. JAMES, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium*, London 2001; A. E. LAIOU, *Observations on the Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 60–102; A. E. LAIOU, *The Role of Women in Byzantine Society*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 31.1, 1981, pp. 233–260.
- 2 In order to fit the ascribed space, the stories of the six founders had to be discussed in an abbreviated form focusing mainly on the “controversial” parts of their lives. I hope that readers will find the works cited in the footnotes a helpful link to further details on the lives and actions of the princesses.
- 3 For more information and sources see PLP, no. 21389; GEORGIOS PACHYMERES, *Chronikon*, ed. A. FAILLER, Rela-

ment protesting against the emperor's deposition of patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos. She supported an important leader of the Arsenite movement, Hyakinthos, whom she provided with food and a

hiding place. A document addressed to the Pope informs us that Martha was also involved in protests against the Union of Lyons for which she was strictly punished by the emperor.<sup>4</sup>

THWARTING THE EMPEROR'S POLITICAL AIMS  
THROUGH SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES AND WRITTEN WORK

Another founder, Theodora Raoulaina,<sup>5</sup> became a prominent figure among those opposing the Union with the Catholic Church.<sup>6</sup> Along with her mother Irene-Eulogia Palaiologina,<sup>7</sup> the princess separated herself from the unionist communion and by her imperial status protected numerous refugees and dissidents.<sup>8</sup> Very effective in her efforts, the emperor Michael VIII depicted Theodora as one of the ringleaders in a list of those who challenged his endeavour to implement the decrees of the Council of Lyons (1274) into the Orthodox ritual.<sup>9</sup> In order to prove to the Pope the sincerity of his intentions, he had her imprisoned in Nikomedia where she wrote the *Lives of Sts Theodore and Theophanes*<sup>10</sup>

tortured by emperor Theophilos for refusing to obey the iconoclast edict. The heroes of her work created a tacit parallel with her own brothers-in-law, Isaac and Manuel Raoul, blinded and imprisoned by Michael for resisting the Union. Drawing a link between the emperor and his iconoclast predecessor, Theodora proved her determination to defy Michael with her pen in absence of other means.

After the emperor's death (1282), she returned to the capital and lived as the nun Kyriake in her foundation of St Andrew en te Krisei<sup>11</sup> engaged in intellectual and religious pursuits, much admired for her steadfast adherence to the Orthodox faith, which she helped re-establish.<sup>12</sup> Her

tions historiques, éd., trad. française et notes, Paris 1984, II, pp. 381, 385; A. FAILLER, Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymères, in: Revue des Études Byzantines, 39, 1981, pp. 145–149, at p. 174.

4 The re-installation of Arsenios was not the only aim of this group, which officially existed until 1310, several decades after the death of the ex-patriarch. Outlining the motives of the Arsenites, Donald M. Nicol registers "high ideals of canon law, of moral scruple and of the precedence of church over state confused with loyalty to the house of Laskaris and antipathy to the policies of Michael VIII." (D. M. NICOL, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*, New York 1972, p. 50.) For further information and literature on the movement see ODB, I, p. 188. R.-J. LOERNETZ, *Memoire d'Ogier, protonotaire, pour Marco et Marchetto nonces de Michel VIII Paleologue auprès du Pape Nicholas III. 1278 printemps etc*, in: *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 31, 1965, pp. 374–408. For information and literature on the Council of Lyons see ODB, II, p. 1259.

5 PLP, no. 10943. For an overview of Theodora's life and works see D. M. NICOL, *The Byzantine Lady: Ten Portraits, 1250–1500*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 33–47.

6 NICOL, *The Byzantine Lady* (cit. n. 5), pp. 38–40; S. FASSOULAKIS, *The Byzantine Family of Raoul-Ral(l)es*, Athens 1982, pp. 25–27; D. M. NICOL, *The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus), ca. 1100–1460. A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 11), Washington, DC 1968, pp. 16–18.

7 PLP, no. 21360.

8 PACHYMERES, *Chronikon* (cit. n. 3), p. 545.

9 See n. 4.

10 A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς σταχυολογίας*, St Petersburg 1897, IV, pp. 185–223, V, pp. 397–399.

11 L. SCHOPEN (ed.), *Nicéphori Gregorae Byzantina Historia*, Bonn 1829–1855, I, pp. 167, 178; S. KUGEAS, *Zur Geschichte der Münchner Thukydidhandschrift Augustanus F*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 16, 1907, pp. 588–609, at p. 593.

12 NICOL, *The Byzantine Lady* (cit. n. 5), pp. 37–47. On her learning see KUGEAS, *Zur Geschichte der Münchner Thukydidhandschrift* (cit. n. 11), pp. 594–607; S. LAMPROS, *Ἐπιγράμματα Μαξίμου Πλανοῦδη*, in: *Νέος Ἑλληνομνημίων*, 13,

reputation newly without blemish, the princess could afford to offer support<sup>13</sup> to the ex-patriarch

Gregory II of Cyprus<sup>14</sup> (1283–1289), friend and fellow scholar, forced to resign his office.

#### SUPPORTING THE HERETICAL POLICY OF THE EMPEROR

The third lady to be introduced, Theodora Palaiologina,<sup>15</sup> wife of Michael VIII, had, unlike the two above-mentioned princesses, little freedom to choose her side. While during her husband's life she was compelled to support the Union, once the opposing clique took over, she had to reject it in writing in order to protect her son's position as well as her own.<sup>16</sup> She rebuilt two nunneries and took the veil in one of them, the convent of Lips.<sup>17</sup> Having reclaimed her pi-

ous image, the empress also saw her son established on the Byzantine throne.<sup>18</sup> Her victories, however, seem meagre in comparison with another empress Theodora<sup>19</sup> who reinstated Orthodoxy (843) after her iconoclast husband's death. Not only was her trespass fully forgiven but this formidable predecessor also secured a full absolution for her spouse and a halo for herself, both of which remained out of reach for the late Byzantine *basilissa*.

#### SUPPORTING THE EXCOMMUNICATED OPPONENTS OF AN ORTHODOX SAINT AND ARGUING AGAINST HIS TEACHINGS

Not unlike Theodora, Irene Choumnaina,<sup>20</sup> “the most influential abbess of the Palaiolo-

gan period”,<sup>21</sup> learned the consequences of associating with the “wrong” set. An imperial princess

1916, pp. 414–421, at pp. 415–418; P. A. M. LEONE (ed.), *Maximi monachi Planudis epistolae* (Classical and Byzantine Monographs, 18), Amsterdam 1991, pp. 102–105; NICOL, *Family of Kantakouzenos* (cit. n. 6), pp. 17–18; J. BOISSONADE, *Anecdota nova*, Nicephorus Chumnus, *Epistolae*, Paris 1844, repr. Hildesheim 1962, pp. 91–94.

13 The text says that the patriarch moved to the small monastery of Aristenos, which was close to Theodora's convent: *Καὶ γὰρ τῷ τῆς Ἀριστηνῆς μοναστηρίου, ἐχόμενά που κειμένῳ τῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀνδρέου τοῦ ἐν τῇ Κρίσει μονῆς – ἐκεῖ γὰρ ἡ πρωτοβεστίαρισα Ραούλαινα συνήγεν, ἐξ αὐτῆς περιθάλλουσα τὰ μεγάλα –, φέρων αὐτὸν δίδωσιν.* PACHYMERES, *Chronikon* (cit. n. 3), III, p. 151.

14 For details on the patriarch see ODB, II, p. 876.

15 PLP, no. 21380. I would like to thank Alice-Mary Talbot for reminding me of this important founder.

16 For edition and analysis of the document rejecting the Union see S. PETRIDÈS, *Chrysobulle de l'empératrice Théodora* (1283), in: *Échos d'Orient*, 14, 1911, pp. 25–28. For further information: PACHYMERES, *Relations historiques* (cit. n. 3), IV, pp. 513, 515.

17 Beside the convent of Lips, Theodora also renovated a smaller nunnery known as the Anargyroi. In her work, Alice-Mary Talbot stresses the role of repentance in Theodora's foundations, see A.-M. TALBOT, *Empress Theodora Palaiologina, Wife of Michael VIII*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46, 1992, pp. 295–303, at p. 303. For an edition of the *typika* of both foundations see H. DELEHAYE, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues*, Brussels 1921, Lips: pp. 106–136; Anargyroi: pp. 136–140. Also see BMFD, III, Lips: pp. 1254–1286, Anargyroi: pp. 1287–1294. For further details about Theodora's life and participation on the controversy over the Union of Lyons see D. POLEMIS, *The Doukai*, London 1968, p. 190; F. BARIŠIČ, *Povelje vizantijskih carica*, in: *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta*, 13, 1971, pp. 143–202, at pp. 146–158; TALBOT, *Empress Theodora*, pp. 298–302.

18 TALBOT, *Empress Theodora* (cit. n. 17), pp. 297–298.

19 ODB, III, pp. 2037–2038; ed. A. MARKOPOULOS, *Βίος τῆς αὐτοκράτειρας Θεοδώρας* (BHG 1731), in: *Symmeikta*, 5, 1983, pp. 257–271, tr. M. VINSON, *Byzantine Defenders of Images*, Washington, DC 1998, pp. 353–382.

20 For further details and literature see PLP, no. 30936.

21 A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina: Abbess of the Convent of Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 119–147.

by marriage widowed at an early age, Irene established the double monastery of Christ Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople and as the nun Eulogia assumed leadership of a large community of nuns. However, as Vitalien Laurent points out, “prisons, even the voluntary ones, are not made for fiery characters.”<sup>22</sup> An important figure of the anti-hesychast movement, Eulogia supported Akindynos and Gregoras in their struggle against the teachings of Gregory Palamas.<sup>23</sup> Palamas, for his part, had little love for this highborn abbess. In his writings, he called her Eudoxia, the adversary of John Chrysostom, and mainly Jezebel, the evil Old Testament queen, enemy of the prophet Elijah.<sup>24</sup> Eulogia certainly was a formidable foe; intelligent, outspoken and powerful, the letters of her mentors censure her outbursts of temper and lack of patience.<sup>25</sup>

Of the six women, this abbess was also the only one known to have used her foundation as a base for her party. After Gregory Akindynos was condemned (1341), Eulogia’s nunnery became his hiding place for several years.<sup>26</sup> Choumnaina’s

support of Akindynos, however, could not be tolerated by Palamas who in one of his works depicted her as Jezebel entertaining false prophets, his opponents, at her table.<sup>27</sup> The convent also witnessed some of the exchanges of the two cliques for in his 7th *Antirrhetic* the future saint mentions that whenever the hesychasts arrived looking for Akindynos, Eulogia arrived instead and engaged in theological discussion with them.<sup>28</sup>

Rather than Jezebel, the abbess resembles another formidable Byzantine founder, the empress Theodora,<sup>29</sup> known for her charity and support of the Monophysite monks whom she concealed in a Constantinopolitan monastery and even offered their patriarch a safe refuge in the women’s quarters of the Sacred palace. Like this famous spouse of Justinian, Eulogia found herself defending the losing side. Her family background and imperial marriage could shield the princess-nun from excommunication imposed on several of her partisans<sup>30</sup> but the defeat embittered the end of her life. Despite the fact that she built a nunnery, was praised for her generosity to the poor and prison-

22 V. LAURENT, *La direction spirituelle à Byzance: La correspondance d’Irène-Eulogie Choumnaina Paléologine avec son second directeur*, in: *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 14, 1956, pp. 48–86, at p. 48.

23 For further background see J. MEYENDORFF, *Introduction à l’étude de Grégoire Palamas*, Paris 1959, for Irene and the anti-Palamite party see pp. 125–126.

24 For epithets see ed. P. CHRESTOU, *Γεωργίου του Παλαμά Συγγράμματα*, II, Thessaloniki 1966, pp. 307–309, 535. The epithet “Jezebel” seems to have been first used by Joseph Kalothetos, a Palamist, who elsewhere depicts the princess as δεινή πολέμιος του Παλαμά. See ed. D. G. TSAMIS, *Ἰωσηφοῦ του Καλοθέτου Συγγράμματα*, Thessaloniki 1980, pp. 50, 68–69.

25 See for example A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO (ed.), *A Woman’s Quest for Spiritual Guidance: The Correspondence of Princess Irene Choumnaina Palaiologina*, Brookline, MA 1985, p. 94, letter 19; V. LAURENT, *Une princesse byzantine au cloître*, in: *Échos d’Orient*, 29, 1930, pp. 29–60, at pp. 55–56. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina* (cit. n. 21), pp. 124–126, 138. See also THEOLEPTOS OF PHILADELPHIA, *Θεολήπτου Φιλαδέλφειας του Όμολογητου (1250–1322). Βίος και έργα*, I-II, ed. I. K. GREGOROPOULOS, Katerini 1996; R. E. SINKEWICZ, *Theoleptos of Philadelphia: the Monastic Discourses (Studies and Texts, III)*, Toronto 1992; A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *The Life and Letters of Theoleptos of Philadelphia*, Brookline 1994.

26 For the correspondence of Akindynos and Eulogia and for other sources see A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO (ed.), *Letters of Gregory Akindynos*, Washington, DC 1983, pp. 246, 318–319. Also see CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *A Woman’s Quest* (cit. n. 25), pp. 141–144.

27 CHRESTOU, *Γεωργίου του Παλαμά Συγγράμματα* (cit. n. 24), pp. 307–309.

28 L. KONTOYANNIS/B. PHANOURGAKES, *Γεωργίου του Παλαμά Συγγράμματα*, III, Thessaloniki 1970, p. 468. For further details see CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina* (cit. n. 21), pp. 141–144.

29 For further sources see ODB, III, pp. 2036–2037.

30 Beside Barlaam, Akindynos and Gregoras note especially another anti-Palamite abbess, Maroulina, who was excom-

ers of war, and her followers revered her grave as miracle-working,<sup>31</sup> the worthy abbess never became a saint of the Orthodox Church.<sup>32</sup> In one of his writings, Palamas commented that Eulogia was not like St Theodora, the ninth-century

empress who re-established Orthodoxy. Indeed she was not; failing to prevail over the hesychasts, the historian may only speculate what would have happened if, instead of Akindynos and Gregoras, the great abbess had joined the Palamite side.<sup>33</sup>

#### BROKEN MONASTIC VOWS

The following story involves Anna Anachoutlou Komnene,<sup>34</sup> whom the primary sources identify as founder of a monydrion in Jerusalem.<sup>35</sup> After emperor Basil I of Trebizond died without legitimate heirs, only one obstacle separated his sister Anna from the throne; her monastic vows. The chronicle of Michael Panaretos tells us that the princess was by no means daunted by this impediment. Putting off the veil and enlisting the help of an armed force, she assumed the imperial title for a period of thirteen months (1340–1341). In the end, however, she was not able to stabilize the political situation of the country, the opposition took over and the new emperor John III gave his supporters a free hand regarding the fate of his predecessor. Not backed by the popularity of the

dynasty like the two middle Byzantine empress-nuns Zoe and Theodora the Macedonians, Anna was strangled in prison.<sup>36</sup>

In order to understand the seriousness of her breaking the monastic vows, it is necessary to remember the stress put by the Palaiologan founders on the period of novitiate. As no provisions were made for women wishing to cancel their sacred promises or permanently leave the convent, the *typika* sought to make sure that the prospective nuns weighed carefully the consequences of tonsure. Although the chronicler did not openly castigate her, a similar case mentioned in the patriarchal register of Constantinople<sup>37</sup> indicates the gravity of Anna's trespass. Wishing to return into the world, a nun called Pepagomene<sup>38</sup> left

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municated and chased out of her convent after refusing to renounce the teaching of Barlaam and Akindynos. For details see PLP, no. 17161.

- 31 Nikephoros Gregoras writes a detailed eulogy of the abbess, depicting her strong character and remembering beside her charity to the poor and the prisoners of war also Eulogia's passionate defense of the Orthodox Church. SCHOPEN, *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia* (cit. n. 11), III, pp. 238–240.
- 32 In her famous article on Byzantine women, Angeliki Laiou makes an important observation noting that "Irene's greatest shortcoming was that she never entirely left the world." See LAIOU, *Observations* (cit. n. 1), p. 95. For details on canonization in Byzantium see ODB, I, p. 372.
- 33 John Meyendorff points out to Eulogia's background as a rich aristocrat, who actually should have joined the Kantakouzenos-Palamite camp. See MEYENDORFF, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas* (cit. n. 23), pp. 125–126.
- 34 PLP, no. 12059.
- 35 PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Ἀνάλεκτα* (cit. n. 10), p. 256.
- 36 O. LAMPSIDES (ed.), *Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Παναρέτου Περὶ τῶν μεγάλων Κομνηνῶν*, Athens 1958, pp. 66–67; M. KURŠANSKIS, *Relations matrimoniales entre Grands Commènes de Trébizonde et princes géorgiens*, in: Bedi Kartlisa, *Revue de Kartvelologie*, 34, 1976, pp. 112–127, at p. 116. O. LAMPSIDES, *Ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς Τραπεζούντος κατὰ τὸ χρονικὸν Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Παναρέτου*, in: *Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinon Spoudon*, 23, 1953, pp. 567–576, at pp. 573–574.
- 37 F. MIKLOSICH/I. MÜLLER (ed.), *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevii*, Vienna 1860–1890, II, pp. 458–460; J. DARROUZÈS, *Les registes des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople*, Paris 1979, VI (1.6: *Les registes de 1377 à 1410*), no. 3183. Also see A.-M. TALBOT, *Late Byzantine Nuns: By Choice or Necessity?*, in: *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9, 1985, pp. 103–117, at p. 113.
- 38 PLP, no. 22340; MIKLOSICH/MÜLLER, *Acta et diplomata graeca* (cit. n. 37), II, pp. 458–460; DARROUZÈS, *Les registes* (cit. n. 37), VI, p. 411, no. 3183.

the convent, putting off the veil. She was immediately excommunicated and her punishment

was not lifted until she returned to the nunnery and completed the necessary penance.

#### ADULTERY

Theodora Komnene<sup>39</sup> and her husband, Alexios IV of Trebizond, are known as founders of the Pharos monastery.<sup>40</sup> Their story, however, was apparently not a happy one. The historiographer accuses the empress of adultery with one of her husband's officials, an event which marked the beginning of a family tragedy. Forced to flee upon killing Theodora's lover, her eldest son John only returned three years later, when his mother was already dead. Perhaps it was better so; at least she did not witness how he had his father murdered in order to ascend the throne.<sup>41</sup>

If the account of the empress's failing is true, the foundation may have been a semi-public act of repentance. Unfortunately, although the original *chrysobull* of the imperial couple exists, it was never signed and thus does not provide any date that would specify the circumstances under which the monastery was established.<sup>42</sup> Neither the text of the document nor the name Pantokrator reveals anything specific about its founders'

motivation, except, as Laurent notes, the wish to introduce a famous name from Theodora's homeland into the Trebizond environment.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, the fact that the document was ready but not yet signed by the time Alexios was assassinated in 1429 (three years or less after the death of his wife) indicates a possible connection between the foundation and the sad events preceding John's flight.<sup>44</sup>

In her study "Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender", Catia Galatariotou concludes that "the good woman is denied power; power becomes a characteristic of the evil female."<sup>45</sup> Juxtaposed to this model, the misplaced nature of the founders' deeds becomes evident. Unrelated to foundation and charity, their initiative in private, religious and political matters was censured in the judgment of the emperor, the wording of the document condemning the Union, in Palamas's choice of epithets and the chronicler's between-the-lines con-

39 PLP, no. 12069.

40 V. LAURENT, Deux chrysobulles inédits des empereurs de Trébizonde Alexis IV – Jean IV et David II, in: *Archeion Pontou*, 18, 1953, pp. 241–278, at pp. 245–250.

41 LAMPSIDES, *Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Παναρέτου* (cit. n. 36), p. 81; E. DARKÓ (ed.), *Laonici Chalcocondylae Historiarum Demonstrationes*, II, Budapest 1927, pp. 219–220. The passage was apparently inserted by a second hand, see NICOL, *Family of Kantakouzenos* (cit. n. 6), p. 170, n. 22. Also see I. BEKKER (ed.), *Laonici Chalcocondylae Atheniensis Historiarum libri decem*, Bonn 1843, p. 462; V. GRECU, Zu den Interpolationen im Geschichtswerk des Laonikos Chalkokondyles, in: *Académie Roumaine, bulletin de la section historique*, 28, 1946, pp. 92–94; W. MILLER, *Trebizond. The Last Greek Empire*. Chicago 1969 (new enlarged edition, first published in London 1926), p. 81; CHRYSANTHOS, Metropolitan of Trebizond, *Ἡ Ἐκκλησία Τραπεζούντος*, in: *Archeion Pontou*, IV–V, 1936, pp. 386–387. Also see LAURENT, *Deux chrysobulles* (cit. n. 40), p. 251; NICOL, *Family of Kantakouzenos* (cit. n. 6), pp. 169–170.

42 Or rather renovated as the sources report that it was built on the ruins of a former convent. For further information regarding the foundation documents see LAURENT, *Deux chrysobulles* (cit. n. 40), pp. 250–255. For texts *ibid.*, pp. 258–270.

43 LAURENT, *Deux chrysobulles* (cit. n. 40), p. 247.

44 For reconstruction of the circumstances of signing the document see LAURENT, *Deux chrysobulles* (cit. n. 40), pp. 254–255.

45 C. S. GALATARIOU, *Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender*, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 9, 1984–1985, pp. 55–94, at p. 82. Also see the details of this case in TALBOT, *Late Byzantine Nuns* (cit. n. 37), pp. 103–117, at p. 113.

nection of the queen's adultery with the violent death of her husband.

The stories of the six princesses, all members of imperial families, confirm that even though establishment and renovation of religious institutions certainly brought the founders prestige and recognition of their contemporaries, they did not safely shield their persons and reputations when they pursued their private beliefs, and

personal or political goals. By social status naturally endowed with power and greater freedom, the main challenges for these women involved choosing the "right" side in the ecclesiastical and political controversies and remaining faithful to their marital or monastic vows. For those who failed in either were disapproved of and almost always punished.





## FEMALE FOUNDERS – IN CONCLUSION: THE DYNAMICS OF FOUNDATION

MARGARET MULLETT

Juliana Anicia, Theodosian princess turned Viennese female founder, addresses her world as she sits at the centre of an intricate geometrical intertwining (above, THEIS, Figs. 1, 2), both practical and ideological,<sup>1</sup> which inspired the logo of conference and volume, connecting the famous faces of female founding through network and theme. Many more have been connected in the course of our work, even if the interconnections have taken second place to other issues. Indeed by this stage of the volume it is salutary to reflect on what had been the aims of the exercise in the planning stage.

I may be forgiven a little autobiography. I first came to Vienna for the Congress in 1981 (at which Juliana Anicia ruled from the congress poster, and at which Angeliki Laiou gave her iconic plenary address<sup>2</sup>) and was of course hugely impressed. The chance to come back and work with my friends and collaborators Lioba Theis and Michael Grünbart was a wonderful one. I was already teaching gender modules in Belfast as well as working one day a week for the wom-

en in the university so it seemed quite natural to launch into Vorlesungen on Gender in Byzantium, and Sex and The City, and Proseminars on Women and Power, and Women and Sanctity. At the time I was struggling to get to the printer a volume on “Founders and Refounders”<sup>3</sup> and the questions I was asking in that book came to take on a distinctly gendered nature as I wrote its conclusion. Wolfram Hörandner noticed that the cover image (from the Lincoln College Typikon) could serve just as well for this conference and volume as it did for “Founders and Refounders” itself. For me the image (above, BROOKS, Fig. 11) of Theodora Synadene and her daughter Euphrosyne offering the *typikon* and church of the convent of True Hope in Constantinople<sup>4</sup> is a symbol not just of female founding but also of a resident genius of Vienna and the Institute of Art History, Dr Irmgard Hutter, whose work on the Lincoln College Typikon<sup>5</sup> is a model of what can be learned about processes of foundation from scrupulous and minute understanding of an artefact.

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1 Above, L. THEIS, *Female Founders – Das Projekt: Netzwerke oder Seilschaften? Überlegungen zum Dedikationsbild der Anicia Juliana im Wiener Dioskurides* (Codex Vindobonensis Med. gr. 1, folio 6 v).

2 A. E. LAIOU, *The Role of Women in Byzantine Society*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 31.1, 1981, pp. 233–260.

3 M. MULLETT (ed.), *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries* (Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, 6.3), Belfast 2007.

4 Lincoln College Typikon, fol. 11r.

5 I. HUTTER, *Die Geschichte des Lincoln College Typikons*, in: *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 45, 1995, pp. 79–114.

## WHAT WE HOPED FOR

In “Founders” I was interested in the rhythm of monastic renewal, when work was called re-foundation and when not, what a second founder was, the status attached to various roles, the nature of a *ketor*. This colloquium was to address various issues associated with patronage in Byzantium and neighbouring states, but through the perspective of gender. Like the spectrum of Founding (founding, second founding, re-founding, patronage), we intended to look at processes of Stiftung (as I learned to call it) from the founding of a monastery through the building of a church to the production of a monumental programme or church furniture or icons or manuscripts or ivories or items of jewellery. Donation was a subset of Stiftung rather than the other way round as we learned with Linda Safran in her paper.<sup>6</sup> And in Vienna we were determined not to ignore in particular “kleine Stiftungen”, the gifts without which society and the church could not function – like bread and light.<sup>7</sup> As in “Founders” we wanted to look at the relationship of different processes: at patronage and exchange, as suggested by Rico Franses nearly twenty years ago,<sup>8</sup> at philanthropy and euergetism, a line which has been taken by three Byzantinists in King’s College London: Charlotte Roueché as

well as Judith Herrin and Dionysios Stathakopoulos who appear with us in this volume.<sup>9</sup> We wanted to return to debates opened up but not concluded in the 1980s, when at the Washington Congress Ihor Ševčenko longed for the day when literary scholars would return to editing texts, art historians to studying style and nobody would be working on patronage.<sup>10</sup> In those days I believe we never really concluded discussion on the differences between the patronage of art, of literature, and individuals, or the differences between patronage in monasteries, the secular church and the world.<sup>11</sup>

Nor did we consider very seriously the clues for patronage and how far they can lead us: literary accounts of acts of patronage are very few. One of the very few is the description in Anna’s *Alexiad* of the act of patronage, by her father Alexios I Komnenos, of the *Panoplia dogmatike* of Euthymios Zygabenos.

*He sent for a monk named Zygabenos, known to my grandmother on the maternal side and to all the clergy, who had a great reputation as a grammarian, was not unversed in rhetoric and had an unrivalled knowledge of dogma. Zygabenos was commanded to publish a list of all heresies, to deal with each separately and append in each case the*

6 Above, L. SAFRAN, Deconstructing “Donors” in Medieval Southern Italy.

7 See the forthcoming PhD dissertation of Irene San Pietro at Columbia on the way sub-elite groups and individuals gave donations to religious institutions in the early years of legalized Christianity (313–565), and the Vienna Master’s thesis of Marietta Klenner on donations of light.

8 H. FRANSES, Symbols, Meanings, Belief: Donor Portraits in Byzantine Art, unpublished PhD Thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1992.

9 D. STATHAKOPOULOS (ed.), *The Kindness of Strangers: Charity in the Pre-Modern Mediterranean*, London 2007, pp. 21–35.

10 I. ŠEVČENKO, Byzantium, Antiquity and the Moderns, in: *Association Internationale des Études Byzantines: Bulletin d’information et de coordination*, 15, 1987, pp. 1–10.

11 R. CORMACK, Aristocratic Patronage in the Arts in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Byzantium, in: M. ANGOLD (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX–XIII Centuries*, Oxford 1984, pp. 158–172; R. CORMACK, Patronage and New Programmes of Byzantine Iconography, in: *17th International Byzantine Congress, Major Papers*, Washington, DC 1986; M. MULLETT, Aristocracy and Patronage in the Literary Circles of Comnenian Constantinople, in: ANGOLD, *The Byzantine Aristocracy*, pp. 173–201; L. BRUBAKER, Politics, Patronage and Art in Ninth-Century Byzantium: The Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus in Paris, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 39, 1985, pp. 1–14.

*refutation of it in the texts of the holy fathers. The Bogomilian heresy was included, just as the impious Basil had interpreted it.*<sup>12</sup>

When we have them they are often read in order to explain visual depictions of the act of donation. Without the Anna passage would we be able to read the images in Vat. 666 or Moscow syn. gr. 387, in which we see the fathers of the church offering their writings to Alexios across the opening, and then Alexios offering the open codex to a seated Christ (Fig. 1)?<sup>13</sup> Or would we read them better? We should notice of course that there are several acts of patronage going on at once: first, the anonymous commission and donation of the smart manuscript (one of two) and its complex opening sequence involving a prose encomium, a verse encomium and the little poems as well as the three images (in which the author is invisible), second, the commission of the work itself by the emperor, and third, the evidence of personal patronage of the author by the *protovestiaria*, both evidenced in the passage from Anna. The text alerts us to the cases of liter-

ary and personal patronage but cannot explicate the case of artistic patronage. But without it we would not have known of the agency of the *protovestiaria*.

Another case is the image of the patroness *sebastokratorissa* Irene and the author Constantine Manasses (Fig. 2).<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Jeffreys told us to read this image with caution.<sup>15</sup> We cannot safely deduce the form of a presentation copy from this and the other later manuscript which we saw during the conference in the National Library.<sup>16</sup> They, and a third witness,<sup>17</sup> have different headpiece layouts and so cannot be used to deduce an original. Both dedications and dedication images have problems all of their own and I had hoped that we would engage with both sets of problems. We saw at the beginning of this volume<sup>18</sup> how the most famous image of all (above, THEIS, Fig. 2), what Hans Gerstinger called “die früheste erhaltene Darstellung einer Buchwidmung (Dedikation) in der Buchmalerei”,<sup>19</sup> the portrait of Juliana Anicia in the Vienna Dioskorides<sup>20</sup> is a gift to a patroness in exchange for her work of building, not proof that she was the do-

12 ANNA KOMNENE, *Alexiad*, XV.ix.1, ed. D. R. REINSCH/A. KAMBYLIS, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, 2 vols. (*Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae*, 40.1), Berlin 2001, p. 489, tr. E. R. A. SEWTER, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, Harmondsworth 1969, p. 500.

13 G. R. PAPPULOV, The Presentation Copies of the *Panoplia dogmatica* (Moscow, Gos. Ist. Muz., Syn. gr. 387; Vatican, BAV, Vat. gr. 666), in: *Byzantine Studies Conference: Abstracts*, 34, 2008, pp. 84–85, on the relationship of these witnesses. He does not demonstrate that both were presentation copies. See I. KALAVREZOU, *Imperial Relations with the Church in the Art of the Komnenians*, in: N. OIKONOMIDES (ed.), *To Byzantio kata ton 12o aiona: kanoniko dikaio, kratos kai koinonia*, Athens 1991, pp. 23–56; M. MULLETT, *The Imperial Vocabulary of Alexios I Komnenos*, in: M. MULLETT/D. SMYTHE (ed.), *Alexios I Komnenos, I, Papers* (Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, 4.1), Belfast 1996, pp. 359–397, at pp. 373–376, and W. HÖRANDNER, *Les conceptions du bon souverain dans la poésie byzantine*, in: P. ODORICO (ed.), *L'éducation au gouvernement et à la vie. La tradition des “règles de vie” de l'antiquité au moyen âge. Actes du colloque international Pise, 18 et 19 mars 2005 (Autour de Byzance, 1)*, Paris 2009, pp. 103–114, at pp. 110–113.

14 Vindob. phil. gr. 149, fol. 10r (fourteenth–fifteenth century).

15 Above, E. JEFFREYS, *The Sebastokratorissa Irene as Patron*.

16 Vindob. hist. gr. 91, fl. 10r (fourteenth–sixteenth century).

17 Jerusalem, Patr. bibl. 65 (fifteenth–sixteenth century).

18 Above, THEIS, *Female Founders*.

19 H. GERSTINGER (ed.), *Der Wiener Dioskurides. Codex [palatinus] Vindobonensis Graecus I, II. Kommentarband zur Faksimileausgabe (Codices selecti, 12)*, Graz 1970, p. 33.

20 Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, cod. med. gr. 1, fol. 6v; see L. BRUBAKER, *The Vienna Dioskorides and Anicia Juliana*, in: A. LITTLEWOOD/H. MAGUIRE/J. WOLSCHKE-BULMAHN (ed.), *Byzantine Garden Culture*, Washington, DC



**1:** *Vatican Library, Vat. gr. 666, fols. 1v, 2r, 2v, The fathers of the church offering their writings to Alexios across the opening, and then Alexios offering the open codex to a seated Christ*



2: Vienna, Austrian National Library, Vind. phil. gr. 149, fol. 10r, *The patroness sebastokratorissa Irene and the author Constantine Manasses*

nor of the manuscript. Literary dedications are by no means *prima facie* evidence of commission or patronage either.

Portraiture is another issue: if we can be sure that the enamel portrait of Michael VII and Maria of Alania (Fig. 3), now part of the Khakhuli triptych, and seen in the 1981 exhibition of Georgian enamels in Vienna,<sup>21</sup> is indeed a contemporary portrait, and not, like so many enamels, a Fabergé confection,<sup>22</sup> can we be as sure that it is there to record some process of exchange or commission? Is the fact that the actors are identified at all significant?<sup>23</sup> Of course, even if we know the name of donor, scribe and illuminator, even if text helps us, and he holds an object, we still may not know who he actually was (Fig. 4),<sup>24</sup> or indeed in a similar case she. The male figure is labelled as Theophanes the monk, but it is his worldly identification, perhaps as a Komnenos, we would wish to know.<sup>25</sup> But would she be so represented in a similar case? Is he there as patron? Or scribe? Or illuminator? Or perhaps as all three? How many Byzantine women played those multiple roles?<sup>26</sup> But how can we be sure who the portrayed person actually is? Does it

2002, pp. 189–214; B. KIILERICH, *The Image of Anicia Juliana in the Vienna Dioscurides: Flattery or Appropriation of Imperial Imagery?*, in: *Symbolae Osloenses*, 76, 2001, pp. 169–190.

- 21 S. AMIRANASHVILI, *The Khakhuli triptych*, Tbilisi 1972, figs. 8, 9; see also I. KALAVREZOU, *Irregular Marriages in the Eleventh Century and the Zoe and Constantine Mosaic in Hagia Sophia*, in: A. E. LAIOU / D. SIMON (ed.), *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth–Twelfth Centuries*, Washington, DC 1994, pp. 241–259, at p. 251.
- 22 D. BUCKTON, *Bogus Byzantine Enamels in Baltimore and Washington, DC*, in: *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 46, 1988, pp. 11–24.
- 23 Lynda Garland suggests in: L. GARLAND / S. RAPP, *Mary “of Alania”: Woman and Empress between Two Worlds*, in: L. GARLAND (ed.), *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience, AD 800–1200*, Aldershot 2006, pp. 91–124, at p. 102, that “this may have been sent as a gift to Bagrat on the occasion of their coronation”.
- 24 H. BUCHTHAL, *An Illuminated Gospel Book in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne*, Melbourne 1961.
- 25 N. P. ŠEVČENKO, *Spiritual Progression in the Canon Tables of the Melbourne Gospels*, in: J. BURKE (ed.), *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott (Byzantina Australiensia, 16)*, Melbourne 2006, pp. 334–343.
- 26 A.-M. TALBOT, *Bluestocking Nuns: Intellectual Life in the Convents of Late Byzantium*, in: C. MANGO / O. PRITSAK (ed.), *Okeanos. Essays Presented to Ihor Ševčenko on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students (Harvard Ukrainian Studies, 7)*, Cambridge, MA 1984, pp. 604–618, considers women painters only at the very end, but draws up a possible list of patron–author–scribes. Annemarie Weyl Carr in her article “Women as Artists in the Middle Ages, ‘The Dark is Light Enough’”, in: D. GAZE (ed.), *Dictionary of Women Artists, I*, London / Chicago 1997, pp. 14–18, lists five scribes, and quotes Pauline Johnstone on signatures on embroidery; she cannot produce any example of a woman painter, but shows that patterns are very similar to the medieval West where we know of many more scribes and illuminators.



3: Tbilisi, *Kakhuli Triptych*, Enamel portrait of Michael VII and Maria of Alania



4: Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria, *Cod. 710/5, fol. IV*, Theophanes the monk, scribe, illuminator and patron

matter? Why are early Byzantine empresses so very difficult to identify?<sup>27</sup> Are the Ariadne ivories really of Ariadne?<sup>28</sup> Inscriptions, epigrams and monograms present their own difficulties, as the epigram project in Vienna knows really well, not least of visibility.<sup>29</sup>

Above all we wanted to look at the role of women and the nature of female patronage, the exercise of female economic power, the chalice

in the hand of Theodora at San Vitale, the charter in the hand of Irene Pirotska in Hagia Sophia. This was one of the three avenues of approach advocated by Judith Herrin twenty-five years ago,<sup>30</sup> and called “matronage” by Leslie Brubaker.<sup>31</sup> We also wanted to focus on objects in Vienna and it has been a pleasure to read papers which did just that.

27 L. JAMES, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium*, London 2001, pp. 26–49.

28 JAMES, *Empresses and Power* (cit. n. 27), pp. 136–145; A. McCLANAN, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses: Image and Empire*, New York/Basingstoke 2002, pp. 65–92.

29 A. RHÖBY, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken* (Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung, 1), Vienna 2009; idem, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten der Kleinkunst* (Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung, 2), Vienna 2010.

30 J. HERRIN, *In Search of Byzantine Women: Three Avenues of Approach*, in: A. CAMERON/A. KUHRIT (ed.), *Images of Women in Antiquity*, London 1983, pp. 167–190.

31 L. BRUBAKER, *Memories of Helena: Patterns in Imperial Female Matronage in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries*, in: L. JAMES (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, London 1997, pp. 52–75.

## WHAT WE LEARNED

We can now see that the papers have admirably answered our questions, and have encouraged us to ask others.

*Processes*

We said that we wanted to focus on process rather than on collecting longer lists of women patrons. Well, we certainly have met a lot of new women, not all the usual suspects of our logo. Of the expected elite women, besides our poster-girl Juliana Anicia, only Theodora and Sophia have made it to the volume, both in student papers; many more, including Helena, the empress Irene, Zoe, Irene Doukaina, and Irene Piroska featured in block-seminar papers and in the student posters. The logo itself shows these imperial women mingling with provincial founders from Cyprus and Kastoria, and we met many new founders: queen Keran and her stunning manuscripts as introduced by Joanna Rapti at the conference, Jelena Balšić

and her enviable three letters,<sup>32</sup> women on walls in Italy<sup>33</sup> and Cappadocia<sup>34</sup> and Prespa,<sup>35</sup> women founders in Russia<sup>36</sup> and Albania,<sup>37</sup> Sharon Gerstel's village woman, buried with husband and son.<sup>38</sup> We have learned more about women we thought we knew: notably the empress Sophia<sup>39</sup> and the *sebastokratorissa* Irene,<sup>40</sup> but also Helena Kantakouzene Palaiologina and Theodora Raoulaina;<sup>41</sup> but we've met a lot more Theodoras also, including a postfeminist sixteenth-century Theodora who should be credited for founding **with** her husband as well as independently,<sup>42</sup> and a rather patronised eleventh-century Theodora, with Zoe and Eudokia, surrounded by competing counsellors.<sup>43</sup> Were our female founders in charge of their clients, we wondered, or vice versa? Who was running the relationship? We have also interestingly considered women founding not just alone or with husband and sons<sup>44</sup> but as a village community group,<sup>45</sup> and as groups of elite women in a single assemblage as at Chora or Kastoria.<sup>46</sup>

32 Above, A. VUKOVICH, The Epistles of Princess Jelena Balšić: An Example of Female Cultural Patronage in the Late Medieval Balkans.

33 Above, SAFRAN, Deconstructing "Donors".

34 Above, N. KARAMAOUNA/N. PEKER/B. T. UYAR, Female Donors in Thirteenth-Century Wall Paintings in Cappadocia: An Overview.

35 Above, S. BOGEVSKA, Notes on Female Piety in Hermitages of the Ohrid and Prespa Region: The Case of Mali Grad.

36 Above, A. MICHALOWSKA, Klostergründungen russischer Fürstinnen im dreizehnten Jahrhundert.

37 Above, G. FINGAROVA, Die Stifterin *par excellence*. Zur Deutung des Stifterbildes in der Marienkirche von Apollonia, Albanien.

38 Above, S. E. J. GERSTEL/S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, Female Church Founders: The Agency of the Village Widow in Late Byzantium.

39 Above, J. RADLEGGGER, Die Stifterinnentätigkeit der Kaiserin Sophia: Impuls für die Gleichberechtigung mit dem Kaiser?

40 Above, JEFFREYS, The *sebastokratorissa* Irene.

41 Above, F. LEONTE, A Late Byzantine Patroness: Helena Kantakouzene Palaiologina, and A. RIEHLE, *Καί σε προστάτιν ἐν αὐτοῖς τῆς αὐτῶν ἐπιγράφομεν σωτηρίας*. Theodora Raulaina als Stifterin und Patronin.

42 Above, U. UNTERWEGGER, The Image of the Empress Theodora as Patron.

43 Above, E. LIMOUSIN, La rhétorique au secours du patrimoine: Psellos, les impératrices et les monastères.

44 Above, T. KAMBOUROVA, Le don de l'église – une affaire de couple?

45 Above, GERSTEL/KALOPISSI-VERTI, Female Church Founders.

46 Above, S. BROOKS, Women's Authority in Death: The Patronage of Aristocratic Laywomen in Late Byzantium.



But we have not just added to the rollcall of famous female founders. We started very well with Liz James's insistence on looking at patronage over time, on the quest for reputation.<sup>47</sup> And we wondered if that was so important why did women not put their names on these statues and ivories we wonder so much about? Marion Meyer suggested that perhaps men are more concerned to have their foundational acts remembered and recorded,<sup>48</sup> but there is a bigger issue here about naming, which lay behind Rico Franses's crucial work: he, and the Cormack school with him, started from the fact that the narthex mosaic in Hagia Sophia is not named.<sup>49</sup> Memory became a process and issue that we were concerned with. Were dead women represented in wall paintings? Sophia Kalopissi showed us one in Paradise.<sup>50</sup> Should we be thinking of women represented in wall paintings, even as outrageously, perhaps **especially** as outrageously as Maria at the Metamorphosis Meteora, as commemoration by grateful relatives rather than as personal claim to equality with the apostles?<sup>51</sup> We

also thought about how you might do this (either ensure your own name survived, or that of a beloved relative): why might you choose an epigram over a figure incorporated in icon or wall-painting, or simply an additional inscription? We have seen both models in the same church.<sup>52</sup> What does this tell us?

We have thought about other processes as well, notably mimesis<sup>53</sup> and performance,<sup>54</sup> but also the complex origins in guestfriendship and elite asceticism and the structural importance of hospitality as matronage in pilgrimage.<sup>55</sup> Mimesis comes into play where iconic acts of patronage are reinvented and emulated over centuries, most notably of course the new Helenas, but also Macrina as a model female founder.<sup>56</sup> And performance was everywhere: at Iviron: how was the Synodikon biblion used?<sup>57</sup> at the Bebaia Elpis lifting the veils,<sup>58</sup> on Skyros.<sup>59</sup> Performance does not of course, even in the Clanchy model,<sup>60</sup> erode the importance of text, of the care of the text that Alice-Mary Talbot reminded us of.<sup>61</sup> But it does focus on memory, on the need for sustenance

47 Above, L. JAMES, *Making a Name. Reputation and Imperial Founding and Refounding in Constantinople*.

48 Above, M. MEYER, *Visibility of Female Founders: The Case of Ancient Greece*.

49 CORMACK, *Patronage and New Programs* (cit. n. 11), p. 621; R. CORMACK, *Interpreting the Mosaics of St Sophia at Istanbul*, in: *Art History*, 4, 1981, pp. 131–149.

50 Above, GERSTEL/KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Female Church Founders*.

51 Above, F. GARGOVA, *The Meteora Icon of the Incredulity of Thomas Reconsidered*.

52 Above, BOGEVSKA, *Notes on Female Piety*.

53 As in A. RHOBY/E. SCHIFFER (ed.), *Imitatio–Aemulatio–Variatio: Akten des internationalen wissenschaftlichen Symposions zur byzantinischen Sprache und Literatur*, Vienna 2010.

54 As in M. MULLETT (ed.), *Performing Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-Eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, Queen's University, Belfast, March 2005, forthcoming.

55 Above, K. KLEIN, *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: The Patronage of Aelia Eudocia in Jerusalem*; M. WHITING, *Asceticism and Hospitality as Patronage in the Late Antique Holy Land: The Examples of Paula and Melania the Elder*.

56 In the paper on Helena at the conference by Adriana Kapsreiter; S. CONSTANTINO, *Male Constructions of Female Identities. Authority and Power in the Byzantine Greek Lives of Monastic Foundresses*.

57 In a paper given by Eka Tchikoidze at the conference.

58 The paper given by Niels Gaul at the conference made a case for the veils in the Lincoln College Typikon being contemporary with the manuscript, and being raised performatively for the viewer.

59 Above, L. NEVILLE, *The Adventures of a Provincial Female Founder: Glykeria and the Rhetoric of Female Weakness*.

60 M. T. CLANCHY, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, London 1979.

61 Above, A.-M. TALBOT, *Female Patronage in the Palaiologan Era: Icons, Minor Arts and Manuscripts*.

which came through at Iviron, of a succession of women sustaining a male foundation, manned by men.<sup>62</sup> Again the idea of foundation over time was important. I loved the idea of getting a lot of foundation-acts out of the same patrimony,<sup>63</sup> rather as in my adopted province voting early and voting often is commended. (If once is good, many times is better.) The other side of this coin though was the issue of consent: consent to donation was not something considered in Laiou's classic study of rape,<sup>64</sup> but we saw it as just as much a feminist issue. But we saw temporary donation also, a way to gain prestige while not losing old-age care in exchange for long-term support for the institution. And that with a commodity that is so easy not to see, the gift of labour.<sup>65</sup>

#### *Clues for patronage*

This leads me to my next head, clues for patronage, because there is something about Egypt that focuses the mind, and makes us wish that we all had evidence like that. But it does allow us to see what Marianne Klemun asked us to remember at the very beginning of the conference, that it is all interpretation. We were careful about what can be known and how to read sources. We questioned the learnedness of the learned patronesses, but we should also be careful not to patron-

ise them from a distance of centuries.<sup>66</sup> We heard attempts to find patrons, at Hosios David, at Prophetes Elias both in Thessalonike, the mysterious lady of the Siena relics.<sup>67</sup> And these attempts took us into wider territory than the immediate detective story puzzle, into high politics or female spirituality. We had some hard figures thanks to the Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit, at least as a start, and we were relieved to find that the acts of foundation we are concerned with are at least in double figures.<sup>68</sup> We (in passing) saw artists as anonymous and writers as named, both as clients, but of different social status.<sup>69</sup> This we need to revisit. The major concern here was one of the two great provocative papers of the colloquium, on "donor images", the clarion call by Linda Safran for caution, to judge each case on its merits.<sup>70</sup> It is the counterpart to the conviction that in literary works dedication does not without further evidence mean commission.<sup>71</sup> Clues to reading the images were suggested by most of our art historians: the donor is the one whom Christ blesses,<sup>72</sup> or the one whose forehead and crown are touched,<sup>73</sup> or the one with the church.<sup>74</sup> Galina Fingarova's scrupulous and exemplary analysis of a single donation composition leads to the surprising conclusion that the holy can also be donors.<sup>75</sup> So we will be more careful in future, but we may still find after

62 In Eka Tchikoidze's paper.

63 Above, NEVILLE, *The Adventures of a Provincial Female Founder*.

64 A. E. LAIOU (ed.), *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies*, Washington, DC 1993.

65 Above, C. RÖMER, *Female "Donors" in Eighth-Century Egypt*.

66 Above, JEFFREYS, *The sebastokratorissa Irene*.

67 In papers by Christine Stephan-Kaissis, and by Stefania Gerevini.

68 Above, S. HERL, *Auf der Suche nach weiblichem Stiftertum im „Prosopographischen Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit“ – eine erste Auswertung*.

69 Above, JEFFREYS, *The sebastokratorissa Irene*.

70 Above, SAFRAN, *Deconstructing "Donors"*.

71 M. MULLETT, *The "Disgrace" of the Ex-Basilissa Maria*, in: *Byzantinoslavica*, 45, 1984, pp. 202–211.

72 Above, BROOKS, *Women's Authority*.

73 Above, GARGOVA, *The Meteora Icon*.

74 Above, KAMBOUROVA, *Le don de l'église*.

75 Above, FINGAROVA, *Die Stifterin par excellence*.

further investigation that in some cases these red frocks are worn by patrons, not the dead, or those needing to be protected.<sup>76</sup> What we shall also be careful about is the underlying set of values that we do not automatically question: is foundation pious or is it vainglorious – or is it meritorious for men, but not for women?<sup>77</sup> And so to matronage.

### *Matronage*

Stavroula Constantinou started<sup>78</sup> with the salutary reminder that “the lady vanishes”, recalling that Clark had spotted the fact that once we pay attention to the way our information is presented and we realise its male origins, sex begins not to be about sex, women are good to think with and hard-discovered women, even founders, are only strategies or arguments.<sup>79</sup> Eirene Panou offered us a classic case of the stories about churches, imperial childbirth and St Anna, who clearly needs more work.<sup>80</sup> Judith Herrin’s magisterial survey of literature on Byzantine women since 1983, given in the year of her retirement, may not have been equally interested in the linguistic turn, and it failed utterly to underline her own achievement over twenty-five years, but it did single

out areas of achievement (canon law, eunuchs, matronage, icons) and areas for further work (mothering, food, prostitution, work).<sup>81</sup> These of course bear on matronage: food and work we did think about, and the role of the mother as patron and founder was coming through very clearly. We were glad to see that recent certainties were being challenged: for example that women’s devotion to the Virgin was less than to other saints,<sup>82</sup> though we heard both that *enkolpia* may have been made to assist particularly female devotion to the Virgin, and that it might be possible to diagnose a patron on the basis of a particular devotion to the Theotokos.<sup>83</sup> But we asked more basic questions. Was founding in itself a male act? Stavroula Constantinou suggests it was, on the basis of hagiography, and Leonora Neville supports her on the basis of charters.<sup>84</sup> But Liz James suggests that foundation was the area of opportunity for women, that patronage and power are closely connected and that women took advantage.<sup>85</sup> Was there a special female form of patronage? We might think so in the middle Byzantine *theatron*, but perhaps that was only a function of male absence on campaign, a “parlement of women” kind of solution.<sup>86</sup> Dionysios

76 Above, SAFRAN, Deconstructing “Donors”, at n. 32; above, BROOKS, Women’s Authority, at n. 14.

77 Petra Melichar beautifully explodes the idea that virtue and foundation always go hand-in-hand, above, P. MELICHAR, Sins of Female Founders in Late Byzantium and Trebizond.

78 Above, CONSTANTINO, Male Constructions.

79 E. CLARK, The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the “Linguistic Turn”, in: Church History, 67.1, 1998, pp. 1–31.

80 Above, E. PANOU, Patronage in the *Patria*, Matronage and Maternity.

81 Her handout is published here as an annotated bibliography, below.

82 The intelligent work of C. RAPP, Figures of Female Sanctity: Byzantine Edifying Manuscripts and their Audience, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 50, 1996, pp. 313–344; S. GERSTEL, Painted Sources for Female Piety in Byzantium, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 52, 1998, pp. 89–112; J. COTSONIS, Onomastics, Gender, Office and Images on Byzantine Lead Seals: A Means of Investigating Personal Piety, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 32, 2008, pp. 1–37, has already finessed extreme views on this point. In this volume (above, TALBOT, Female Patronage), Alice-Mary Talbot demonstrates that icons donated by women were more likely to be of the Virgin than of Christ. See now L. BRUBAKER/M. CUNNINGHAM (ed.), *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images*, (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies), Aldershot 2011.

83 In a paper by Andrea Olson on *enkolpia*, and above, JEFFREYS, The *sebastokratorissa* Irene (she rejects this view).

84 Above, CONSTANTINO, Male Constructions; NEVILLE, The Adventures of a Provincial Female Founder.

85 Above, JAMES, Making a Name.

86 Variably convincing cases have been made for Komnenian *theatra* held by Maria of Alania, Anna Dalassene, Irene Doukaina, Anna Komnene and the *sebastokratorissa* Irene, see MULLETT, Aristocracy and Patronage (cit. n. 11), at

Stathakopoulos asked this in the second provocative paper of the colloquium: was there any difference in male and female activity at the level of philanthropy, in the “kindness of strangers”?<sup>87</sup> And we struggled to find answers. Were women more prone to support Arsenites<sup>88</sup> (as we once and perhaps still believe they did the icons in Iconoclasm)<sup>89</sup>? Did they favour particular kinds of buildings, and endow galleries, or chapels for the mediation of women saints?<sup>90</sup> This really deserves further discussion.

A last remark is simply to highlight the importance in paper after paper of the contribution

of widows. This is an area where we look forward to very fruitful results and we thank Sharon Gerstel and Sophia Kalopissi-Verti in particular for making us aware of the *Widow's Tale*.<sup>91</sup> The contributions were various but often helpful for prosopography or dating, or with wider significance for the nature of women's patronage: for example Elizabeth Jeffreys considers whether the *sebastokratorissa* was most active in patronage as a widow, and Alice-Mary Talbot suggests that her elite Constantinopolitan women donated objects (icons, metalwork, textiles) as wives but built as widows.

#### FOR THE FUTURE

I think we need more work from prosopography, more detailing of acts of foundation, however small, a positivist phase as we collect evidence. I thought I saw at the beginning the next conference: after “Founding and Refounding”, and “Female Founders”, perhaps “Founding and Naming”, the connexion between identity and the act of patronage, the issue of recognition. Marion Meyer, Liz James, Ulrike Unterweger and Judith Radlegger have shown the way here. Dionysios Stathakopoulos's modern figures from the Center for Women's Business Research are interesting, suggesting that forty percent of women do not want recognition for their patronage, that women donate late in life, and that they prefer to make direct donation to individuals rather than to institutions. If this were true

of Byzantine women (and the last two assertions certainly seem to be supported by evidence in this volume), it might also suggest that the six percent of women in Sophia's figures, and the five percent at Vazelon who were women but neither widows nor nuns grossly underestimate the amount of female founding in Byzantium. After all, neither the Pantokrator model (in which a woman does the work of founding, a man claims the credit, but some sources give her credit nonetheless) nor the Kecharitomene-Philanthropos Soter model (a woman does the work but tries to give a man the credit) may be the norm.<sup>92</sup> It may be more like this: a woman does the work, a man gets the credit and we never know otherwise. So collecting women donors may after all be what we need to do at this point.

pp. 177–179; for Helena Kantakouzene Palaiologina (Hypomone) running a *theatron* for John V Palaiologos see above, LEONTE, A Late Byzantine Patroness.

87 Above, D. STATHAKOPOULOS, *I seek not my own*: Is There a Female Mode of Charity and Patronage?

88 In a paper by Panagiotis Fragkiadakis at the conference; see also above, MELICHAR, Sins of Female Founders.

89 For the debate see J. HERRIN, Women and the Faith in Icons in Early Christianity, in: R. SAMUEL/G. STEDMAN JONES (ed.), *Culture, Ideology and Politics*, London 1982, pp. 56–83; R. CORMACK, Women and Icons, and Women in Icons, in: L. JAMES (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, London/New York 1997, pp. 24–51.

90 In a paper given by Anastasios Tantsis and above, KARAMOUNA/PEKER/UYAR, Female Donors.

91 See above, GERSTEL/KALOPISSI-VERTI, Female Church Founders.

92 M. MULLETT, Founders, Refounders, Second Founders, Patrons, in: MULLETT, *Founders and Refounders* (cit. n. 3), pp. 1–27, at pp. 19–21.

We clearly need to do more work on “kleine Stiftungen”; they figured large in posters and block-seminar papers during the year, and Marlena Whiting has made us see that hospitality is just as much patronage as it is guestfriendship.<sup>93</sup> And we need to focus more (though Cornelia Römer, Leonora Neville, Sharon Gerstel, Sophia Kalopissi-Verti are shining examples) on what non-elite women we have access to, using literary texts, including hagiography, with the same subtlety and skill that classicists and scholars in early Christian Studies have recently shown. We need to follow up the papers given on Armenia and Georgia and stretch to looking at Umayyad, Abbasid, Seljuk and Ottoman female founding, making the “beyond” of “Byzantium and beyond” more of a reality.

Here we are in tune with a recent call from Amy Richlin,<sup>94</sup> who sees Byzantium as key in her desire for a pedagogy in all colleges – not just

those that can afford a Byzantinist – that will allow each academic generation “to explain who we are” over a long span of time and space. The exercise of economic and social power seems as worthy a focus as the veil, one of her examples, and more significant for Byzantium than the disappearance of pederasty<sup>95</sup> or divorce.<sup>96</sup> But we need a firm basis of research before we can offer the theoretically sophisticated readings she calls for, or before we can put the finishing touches to the source-books, the pedagogy, the praxis, the surveys that she desires and which the Gastprofessur in 2007–08 allowed professors and assistants and students in Vienna most happily to achieve.

**Illustration credits:** Figs. 1, 2, 4: after I. SPATHARAKIS, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, Leiden 1976, Figs. 78–80, 100, 43. – Fig. 3: D. I. Ermakov, provided by DiFaB, Vienna.

93 G. HERMAN, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, Cambridge 1987.

94 A. RICHLIN, *What We Need to Know Right Now*, in: *Journal of Women's History*, 22.4, 2010, pp. 268–281.

95 On the (partial) survival of pederasty see M. LAUXTERMANN, *Ninth-Century Classicism and the Erotic Muse*, in: L. JAMES (ed.), *Desire and Denial in Byzantium. Papers from the Thirty-First Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, University of Sussex, Brighton, March 1997, Aldershot 1999, pp. 161–172.

96 On divorce see commentary for example by P. KARLIN-HAYTER, *Indissolubility and the “Greater Evil”: Three 13th-Century Divorce Cases*, in: R. MORRIS (ed.), *Church and People in Byzantium*, Birmingham 1990, pp. 87–105, on cases in Demetrios Chomatenos and in the acts of Athos which suggest that women sometimes had the better of the late Byzantine legal system.

# ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

JUDITH HERRIN

In the last twenty-five years there has been significant progress in studying the lives of Byzantine women, enhanced by a more sophisticated analysis of gender and by using comparative

data from other medieval societies. The following references reflect my personal appreciation of existing developments and are in no way comprehensive.

## GENDER IN BYZANTIUM

J. HARRIS (ed.), *Palgrave Advances in Byzantine History*, Basingstoke 2005, includes Dion Smythe's contribution on Gender. The Dumbarton Oaks website hosts a bibliography on Gender in Byzantium, begun by Thalia Gouma-Peterson, maintained by Alice-Mary Talbot, and reconfigured in 2011 by Nate Aschenbrenner at [http://www.doaks.org/research/byzantine/women\\_in\\_byzantium.html](http://www.doaks.org/research/byzantine/women_in_byzantium.html). The path-breaking study by C. GALATARIOTOU, *Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender*, in: *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 9, 1984/5, pp. 55–94, was followed by L. JAMES (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, London 1997, and eadem,

*Men, Women, Eunuchs: Gender, Sex and Power*, in: J. HALDON (ed.), *The Social History of Byzantium*, Chichester 2009, pp. 31–50, cf. A. KALDELLIS, *The Study of Women and Children: Methodological Challenges and New Directions*, in: P. STEPHENSON (ed.), *The Byzantine World*, London 2011, pp. 61–71. For a challenge to Byzantinists see A. RICHLIN, *What We Need to Know Right Now*, in: *Journal of Women's History*, 22.4, 2010, pp. 268–281; K. BIDDICK, *Genders, Bodies, Borders: Technologies of the Visible*, in: N. F. PARTNER (ed.), *Studying Medieval Women: Sex, Gender, Feminism*, Cambridge, MA 1993.

## A WIDER CONTEXT

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ded by E. Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe*, Princeton 2007; J. E. HAMBURGER/S. MARTI (ed.), *Crown and Veil. Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, New York 2008;

E. MALAMUT/A. NICOLAIDES (ed.), *Impératrices, princesses, aristocrats et saintes souveraines de l'Orient chrétien et musulman au Moyen Âge et au début des temps moderne*, Aix-en-Provence 2013.

#### THE THEOTOKOS

A major exhibition devoted to images of the Mother of God produced not only a magnificent catalogue: *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, Milan/Athens 2000, but also the volume of essays: *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, Aldershot 2005, both edited by Maria Vassilaki, where the most recent bibliography will be found. The proceedings of a conference

held in Oxford in 2006 have recently appeared: L. BRUBAKER/M. CUNNINGHAM (ed.), *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images*, Aldershot 2011. I have investigated the cult as a possible model for Byzantine mothers in: *Mothers and Daughters in Byzantium*, in: J. HERRIN, *Unrivalled Influence: Women and Empire in Byzantium*, Princeton 2013, pp. 80–114.

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#### VISUAL EVIDENCE

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## THE LINGUISTIC TURN

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## CROSS-DRESSING, TRANSGENDERING, SAME-SEX RELATIONS

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Der Patronage von Frauen im byzantinischen Reich war 2008 erstmals eine Tagung in Wien gewidmet, deren Erkenntnisse hiermit vorgelegt werden. Im Blickpunkt standen besonders Gründungen, Wiedergründungen und Stiftungen im großen, viel häufiger aber noch im kleineren finanziellen Rahmen, die im weiten Spannungsfeld zwischen Philanthropie und Euergetismus liegen. Denn gerade hier lag wohl das wirksamste Aktionsfeld von Frauen in der byzantinischen Gesellschaft.



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