

**APSE MOSAICS OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN EARLY BYZANTINE CYPRUS**

by  
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Vol. I

A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Baltimore, Maryland  
October, 2013

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## ABSTRACT

The dissertation examines three early Christian apse mosaics preserved in medieval churches on the island of Cyprus. The mosaics of the Panagia Kanakariá at Lythrankomi, the Panagia Angeloktistos at Kiti, and the Panagia tes Kyras at Livadia portray the Virgin Mary as a central figure, representing a significant development after the Council of Ephesos in 431, when she was confirmed as Theotokos (God-bearer). Similar depictions of the Virgin or Virgin and Child would occupy the apse consistently in middle and late Byzantine programs. Despite the notable subject matter and the rare survival of wall and vault mosaics in the Eastern Mediterranean, the group has never been the subject of an extensive inquiry. Part one of the dissertation determines the dates of the apse mosaics using conventional art historical methods and evaluates the original production, decline, and preservation of the mosaics. Part two analyzes and contextualizes the mosaics more fully by concentrating on a set of themes: sacred space and liturgy, metaphor, and intercession. Through these themes, the dissertation explores the prominence of the Virgin Mary in the apse mosaics of Cyprus and investigates the multiple functions of apse decoration in the early Christian period. Prevailing theological interpretations of early Christian apse decoration emphasize the importance of the Virgin for Christology, but overlook other essential functions elaborated here. Additionally, early Byzantine homiletic, hymnographic, hagiographic, and liturgical texts are used to illuminate various aspects of the mosaics and issues of their contemporary reception.

Advisor: Henry Maguire

Second Reader: Herbert L. Kessler

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In researching and writing the dissertation, I have benefited from the help and support of many individuals and institutions. I am especially grateful to my advisor, Henry Maguire, for taking me on as his last student, for helping to formulate and organize the project, and for giving generously of his time and expertise. My second reader, Herbert L. Kessler, has also been a tremendous influence in my years at Johns Hopkins. His most recent comments and criticisms will make the dissertation a much better book. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee for carefully reading the dissertation and offering valuable suggestions: Nino Zchomelidse, Alan Shapiro, and Richard Jasnow. For her enduring interest and crucial observations at home and abroad, I would like to thank Eunice Dauterman Maguire.

The Department of the History of Art and Zanvyl Krieger School of Arts and Sciences at Johns Hopkins University provided four years of funding for the Ph.D. The Sadie and Louis Roth Fellowship and the Adolf Katzenellenbogen Memorial Prize allowed me to travel to conferences, archives, and libraries in London and Athens in the summers of 2006 and 2007, and enabled my participation in the Medieval Greek Summer Session at the Gennadius Library in Athens in 2009. Among the staff at Johns Hopkins, I would like to thank Sally Hauf, Don Juedes, Ann Woodward, and more recently Leslie Bean for help with practical matters. At the Milton S. Eisenhower Library, the people of Eisenhower Express and Interlibrary Loan made it possible to work anywhere in the world.

The Samuel H. Kress Foundation generously funded a two-year institutional fellowship at the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute in Nicosia from 2009 to 2011. At CAARI, I would like to thank the former director, Tom Davis, the administrator, Vathoulla Moustoukki, and the librarian, Evi Karyda, for making important introductions and supporting the Byzantine library during my tenure. The many students and scholars who came through CAARI provided good company and helpful advice, especially Jill Bierly, Cathy Carigiet, Agata Dobosz, Hedvig Enegren, Sherry Fox, Jody Gordon, Paul Keen, Angelos Papadopoulos, Elizabeth Ridder, Richard Rutherford, Matthew Spigelman, and Ella Young. While in Cyprus, the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus granted access to and permission to photograph various sites. Above all, I would like to thank the Director, Maria Hadjicosti and the Curator of Ancient Monuments, Marina Solomidou-Ieronymidou. In the Photographic Archive and Publications Department, I am indebted to Maria Hadjinicolaou, Sofia Hadjizorzi, and Efthymios Shaftacolas for supplying scans of photographs that are available nowhere else. Also at the Department of Antiquities, Fryni Hadjichristophi and Eleni Procopiou shared information about unpublished and ongoing excavations. At the Byzantine Museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Foundation, I offer special thanks to the Director, Ioannis Eliades, for providing photographs of the repatriated Kanakariá mosaics and permission to handle, inspect, and photograph the smaller mosaic fragments. At the University of Cyprus, I would like to thank Demetrios Michaelides, who sorted through Megaw's personal papers on my behalf before they were available for consultation; Maria Parani, who invited me to give a paper at the interdepartmental colloquium in Byzantine Studies; and Panagiotis Agapitos, who made valuable suggestions on that

occasion. Also in Cyprus, I would like to thank Nikolas Bakirtzis for his hospitality and advice, and the many caretakers, whose names I do not know, for providing special access to local museums, churches, and archaeological sites.

Archival and photographic collections outside of Cyprus also made essential contributions to the dissertation. Current and former staff members at the Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington DC supplied digital copies of high-quality color transparencies and allowed me to examine the Byzantine Institute and Dumbarton Oaks Fieldwork Records and Papers. At the Dumbarton Oaks library, I would like to thank Deb Brown. Nicholas Orchard facilitated access to Hawkins' slides at the Slide Library of the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and Amalia Kakissis facilitated access to Megaw's papers and photographs at the British School at Athens.

I am especially grateful to Alexander Alexakis, Stratis Papaioannou, Jeffrey Rosenberg, and Michael Sullivan for teaching me ancient and medieval Greek. Despina Christodoulou helped me with modern Greek. Ingela Nilsson and Charles Stewart invited me to give papers in Sweden and Cyprus respectively. At Johns Hopkins, I am grateful for the friendship, encouragement, and insights of my fellow graduate students, especially Doron Bauer, Laura Blom, Rachel Danford, Andrea Olsen Lam, Jamie Magruder, Ruth Noyes, Riccardo Pizzinato, and Meredith Raucher. I would also like to thank my friends and colleagues Rebecca Dubay and Naomi Pitamber, the latter in particular for engaging a *mukhtar* in Turkish at a most critical time. For timely advice and support, I am grateful to Richard Anderson, Leslie Brubaker, Annemarie Weyl Carr,

Madeline Caviness, Robin Cormack, Maria Georgopoulou, John Hayes, and Judith Herrin.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my family, especially my parents, Michael and Renée Shilling, and also my brothers and sister-in-law, Hale, Reid, and Meredith, for a lifetime of sustenance and confidence, even as they must have wondered what I was doing all this time. Along with my family, my friends Monica West Porter and Sara Rothleder provided welcome distractions from the dissertation. Finally, I am forever indebted to my husband, Paul Stephenson, who found me in a basement and helped me climb to a much better room on the twelfth floor. I would never have undertaken the dissertation without him, nor would it have taken the same form without his intellectual engagement and expert advice.

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## INTRODUCTION

The apse mosaics of Cyprus have long been recognized as important works of early Byzantine art. They account for approximately one-quarter of all apse mosaics outside of Rome to have survived into the late twentieth century, and yet the group has never been the subject of an extensive inquiry. The mosaics of the Panagia Kanakariá at Lythrankomi, the Panagia Angeloktistos at Kiti, and the Panagia tes Kyras at Livadia portray the Virgin Mary as a central figure, representing a significant development after the Council of Ephesos in 431, when she was confirmed as Theotokos (God-bearer), and before the consolidation of middle Byzantine sanctuary programs.<sup>1</sup> Studies on the evolution of apse decoration in Byzantium depend heavily on this material, and yet the mosaics of Cyprus are rarely incorporated into detailed syntheses. This may be attributed to their fragmentary state, which presents a fundamental challenge, and to the relative problem of their dating: only one of the mosaics survives in situ, while two have suffered irreparable damage in past and recent decades. The apse mosaic at Lythrankomi was damaged severely in 1978-9 when it was looted from the church in the early years of the Turkish occupation. Returned to Cyprus in 1985, 1992, and 1997, seven mosaic fragments are now preserved in the Byzantine Museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Foundation in Nicosia, while four additional fragments await repatriation in Germany. Under similar circumstances, the apse mosaic in the church at Livadia was destroyed completely in the early 1980s. The same church continues to be threatened by poor security, neglect, and most recently illegal excavation.

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<sup>1</sup> O. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (London, 1948). S. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary* (Seattle, 1999).

The dissertation analyzes the mosaics individually and collectively as it investigates their common subject matter in a period characterized by diversity in Christian representation and belief. The topic could not be pursued without the documentation and conservation of the mosaics by A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins on behalf of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus and the Byzantine Institute of America in campaigns of the 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>2</sup> With the devastation of the churches of Lythrankomi and Livadia in northern Cyprus, their efforts remain crucial to the preservation of the mosaics in print and in memory and to any future study. But whereas their approach was primarily archaeological, my own is art historical, incorporating iconographic, stylistic, technical, and textual analysis. While no contemporary text describes the mosaics of Cyprus in particular, early Byzantine sermons, hymns, saints' lives, and liturgical commentaries illuminate various aspects of the mosaics and issues of their contemporary reception.

The scholarly emphasis on theology in studies of early Christian apse decoration, along with the exclusion of monumental art from debates on the pre-iconoclastic cult of icons,<sup>3</sup> has left open avenues for interpretation. The first major synthesis by Christa Ihm surveys and analyzes apse decoration at fifty-nine sites from the fourth to the eighth centuries and supplies a catalogue of surviving and reconstructed programs organized by

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<sup>2</sup> A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins, *The Church of the Panagia Kanakariá at Lythrankomi: Its Mosaics and Frescoes* (Washington, DC, 1977); "A Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin in Cyprus," in *Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Études Byzantines, Bucarest, 6-12 septembre 1971*, vol. 3, ed. M. Berza and E. Stanesco, Bucharest, 1976, 363-6.

<sup>3</sup> On the cult of icons, with an emphasis on texts and panel painting: E. Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm," *DOP* 8 (1954) 83-150; L. Brubaker, "Icons before Iconoclasm?" in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1998), 1215-54. One exception is J. Elsner, "The Viewer and the Vision: The Case of the Sinai Apse," *Art History* 17:1 (1994) 81-102. Also focused on panel painting, Pentcheva argues that icons remained peripheral to a relic-based cult of the Virgin Mary until the middle of the tenth century, when they were first carried in public processions in Constantinople: B. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 2006).

region.<sup>4</sup> Concerned primarily with the development of representations of Christ, Ihm focuses on the relative emphasis given his human and divine natures. Maintaining a distinction between West and East, she devotes one chapter to theophanies of Christ in the Byzantine East and their liturgical significance. The Virgin Mary appears in the fifth and sixth centuries as a symbol of the Incarnation and also of the Church in scenes of Christ's Ascension. Almost four decades later, Jean-Michel Spieser provided a new evolutionary scheme for early Christian apse decoration, which enabled the recognition of subtle changes in composition and the identification of new elements or figures.<sup>5</sup> Like Ihm, Spieser focuses on representations of Christ, but abandons the distinction between West and East and presumes uniformity before the end of the sixth century. In general, apse decoration conveys the presence of Christ in the sanctuary, but evolves in response to continuing theological controversy and the desire to impose greater distance between Christ and the space of the church, reflecting a reluctance to represent God. Little attention is paid to the theme of the Virgin and Child except in the context of the distancing of God and the diversification of apse decoration in the sixth century. The contribution of Robin Cormack to the monumental *Mother of God* catalogue takes as its focus apse mosaics of the Virgin Mary.<sup>6</sup> Once again, works produced before the seventh and last ecumenical council in 787 are interpreted in light of doctrinal disputes. The three mosaics in Cyprus are cited as examples of expressive variation and proof of the importance of the Virgin Mary by the sixth century. The idea that early images retained

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<sup>4</sup> C. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1960).

<sup>5</sup> J.-M. Spieser, "The Representation of Christ in the Apses of Early Christian Churches," *Gesta* 37:1 (1998) 63-73.

<sup>6</sup> R. Cormack, "The Mother of God in Apse Mosaics," in *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. M. Vassilaki (Milan, 2000), 91-105.

an element of polemic is shared by Beat Brenk, whose very recent monograph sees the development of apse decoration in the context of early Christian image debates and in particular the problem of the Second Commandment prohibition.<sup>7</sup> Conceived in opposition to the pagan cult room, the early Christian sanctuary functioned not as the house of the divine, but as a place for priests. At the center of Brenk's argument, the earliest figural apse mosaics in Italy show Christ seated among the apostles and propose an analogy between the apostles and the clergy, who were charged with communicating the Word of God. No longer concerned with specific iconographic types and the question of imperial sources treated by Ihm and Spieser, Brenk examines the apse as a space for images and a backdrop for ecclesiastical ritual, although he rejects any connection between apse decoration and the liturgy. Discussion of the expanding private cult of the Virgin Mary provides a point of contrast for monumental images of the Virgin and Child, which continue to reflect doctrinal concerns and inspire admiration for the Virgin. The emphasis on theology also pervades studies of individual monuments, including the two monographs on Lythrankomi published by Megaw and Hawkins and Marina Sacopoulo, both of which are discussed in the context of the dissertation.<sup>8</sup>

In light of the predominance of theology in studies of early Christian apse decoration and images of the Virgin in general, the dissertation focuses on the alternate or more neglected functions of apse decoration in the early Byzantine period. The omission should not be taken as a rejection of prevailing theological interpretations or an assertion that Christological clarification was not an important function of the mosaics at

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<sup>7</sup> B. Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon: An Historical Perspective of the Apse as a Space for Images* (Wiesbaden, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *The Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*. M. Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle de Lythrankomi* (Paris, 1975).

Lythrankomi and Kiti, where the Virgin and Child appear together. Moreover, theology is not really absent from the discussion: liturgical interpretations of the mosaics proposed in chapter four rely on the understanding of the Virgin as a symbol of the Incarnation; the visual and textual metaphors collected in chapter five extol the virginity and humanity of Mary in relation to her Son; and the various texts cited in chapter six demonstrate that the Virgin's capacity to intercede proceeded from her role in the Incarnation.

The dissertation is divided into two parts. Part one introduces the mosaics and determines their respective dates using conventional art historical methods. One chapter is devoted to each of the mosaics with subsections on architectural context and motifs, the most effective means of dating early Byzantine mosaics in the absence of written sources. Other sections on materials and technique, early photographs, and conservation evaluate the original production, decline, and preservation of the mosaics. Chapter one focuses on the apse mosaic at Lythrankomi, the only mosaic that has received comprehensive analysis in the form of two monographs. The chapter reconsiders the evidence presented in these studies, challenges the *termini* they employ, and concludes that the very precise dates offered by Sacopoulo and Megaw and Hawkins are not supported. A final report on the excavation and restoration of the apse mosaic at Kiti, the subject of chapter two, was never published by Megaw and Hawkins. As a consequence, the archaeological context of the mosaic remains largely unknown and the date of the mosaic remains controversial, despite the appearance of two recent articles derived from MA theses. The chapter examines the mosaic independently and arrives at a similar conclusion with respect to date. Chapter three investigates the apse mosaic at Livadia, which is by far the most neglected of the three mosaics with critical analysis limited to a

four-page article by Megaw and Hawkins. Even before the destruction of the site, the terrible state and uncertain archaeological context of the mosaic deterred scholarly interest. The conclusion to part one summarizes the established dates of the mosaics, evaluates the materials and techniques employed by the mosaicists, and identifies characteristic features of mosaic making in Cyprus.

The second part of the dissertation analyzes and contextualizes the mosaics more fully by concentrating on a set of themes: sacred space and liturgy, metaphor, and intercession. Chapter four explores the apse as a site of representation conceived in relation to the Eucharist. After establishing the apse as a locus of divine presence, the notion of presence is considered in relation to the Virgin Mary. Two pictorial devices, the mandorla at Lythrankomi and the projecting footstool at Kiti and Livadia, create alternative visions of the Virgin inspired in part by the liturgy. The chapter also examines the peculiar iconography of the archangels at Kiti, the wings of peacock feathers, influenced by prophetic visions and liturgical invocations of angels. Chapter five compares the theme of the fountain of paradise, illustrated in the upper border at Kiti, to the metaphors of nature, springtime, and fertility that served to praise the Virgin Mary in early homilies and hymns. The imagery of abundance functions exegetically in relation to the Virgin and Child and presents the Virgin as the successor to pagan personifications of nature. The chapter concludes by examining the rejection of natural themes and the preference for architectural metaphors in the mosaic at Livadia, where the rising scale pattern of the background creates a physical barrier to heaven and the garden of paradise. Chapter six surveys visual and textual evidence for the intercession of the Virgin in the early Byzantine period to elucidate the apse mosaic at Livadia, the earliest



surviving image of the solitary orant Virgin in the apse of a church. It examines the relationship between the mosaic and the domestic and liturgical arts and explores the private function of the apse mosaic. The conclusion to part two of the dissertation asks whether the apse mosaics of Lythrankomi, Kiti, and Livadia provide evidence of special devotion to the Virgin in early Byzantine Cyprus. A negative answer implies that the proposed liturgical, metaphorical, and intercessory functions of the mosaics have broader implications for apse decoration in the late antique and medieval Mediterranean.

PART I:  
THE APSE MOSAICS

## CHAPTER 1

### THE APSE MOSAIC AT LYTHRANKOMI

The Church of the Panagia Kanakariá is located in the village of Lythrankomi, now the Turkish Boltaşlı, on the Karpas peninsula in northern Cyprus (Fig. 1.1). As the subject of two monographs published in 1975 and 1977, the mosaic in the main apse of the church has received the most detailed treatment of the three mosaics in this study. In the earlier of the two monographs, Marina Sacopoulo focused on the dating and interpretation of the apse mosaic.<sup>1</sup> Two years later, A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins published their long-awaited monograph based on many years of on-site investigations.<sup>2</sup> The study was more archaeological in focus and provided a careful analysis of the architecture of the church, a detailed description of the apse mosaic, and a short description of the wall paintings surviving in the church. In both studies, iconographic and stylistic analysis led to similar conclusions on the date of the apse mosaic: Sacopoulo proposed a date in the second quarter of the sixth century with a preference for the years 536-547, while Megaw and Hawkins proposed a date in the third decade of the sixth century with a preference for the years 526-530. However, the existing evidence, and the nature of that evidence, cannot support so narrow a range.<sup>3</sup> This chapter reconsiders the evidence presented in these studies, challenges the *termini* they employ, and contributes new observations in order to establish a more plausible date for the mosaic in the absence of textual and epigraphic evidence.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle de Lythrankomi* (Paris, 1975).

<sup>2</sup> A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins, *The Church of the Panagia Kanakariá at Lythrankomi: Its Mosaics and Frescoes* (Washington, DC, 1977).

<sup>3</sup> Similar caution is expressed in a book review by F. W. Deichmann, Review of Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 74 (1981) 348-50.

## 1. History and Naming of the Site

The village of Lythrankomi has been associated with the ancient Erythra or Ἐρυθρὰ κώμη (red village).<sup>4</sup> The remains of an ancient site were identified to the east of the church by D. G. Hogarth in 1888, to the north of the church by Einar Gjerstad in 1924, and to the northwest of the church by Athanasios Papageorghiou in 1960.<sup>5</sup> Its ruins may have been a source of stone for the church, according to Megaw and Hawkins, who noted a large block with mortar-grip channels built into the northeast corner.<sup>6</sup> The continued existence of Erythra as the site of a church in late antiquity is confirmed in the seventh-century *Life of St. Spyridon*, which records a miracle there.<sup>7</sup> However, nothing more is written of the site until the early modern period. The earliest written reference to the name Kanakaria is contained in the *Chronicle* of Leontios Makhairas (1432), where it is used to locate the neighboring village of Agios Andronikos, the site of the tomb of St. Poteini.<sup>8</sup> In the early sixteenth century, the *Relatione del regno di Cipro*, written for the new Venetian administration, listed both Kanakaria and Lythrankomi as former Lusignan

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<sup>4</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 3 n. 13-14, citing on the derivation S. Menardos, “Τοπωνυμικὸν τῆς Κύπρου,” *Ἀθηνᾶ* 18 (1906) 348. See also J. Goodwin, *An Historical Toponymy of Cyprus*, 3rd edn. (Nicosia, 1978), 528.

<sup>5</sup> These remains are now lost: D. G. Hogarth, *Devia Cypria: Notes of an Archaeological Journey in Cyprus in 1888* (London, 1889), 70-1. E. Gjerstad, “Topographical Notes,” *Κυπριακὰ Χρονικά* 2 (1924) 246-53, esp. 250. A. Papageorghiou, in *Ἀπόστολος Βαρνάβας* 28 (1967) 349, cited incompletely by Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 3 n. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, fig. 20.

<sup>7</sup> The miracle at Erythra, where a deacon is struck mute by St. Spyridon, appears in the earliest dated *Life* by Theodore of Paphos (655): P. van den Ven, *La légende de S. Spyridon, évêque de Trimithonte* (Louvain, 1953), 52\*, 56, 119, 158, cited also in T. Papacostas, *Byzantine Cyprus: The Testimony of Its Churches, 650-1200* (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1999), 50-1.

<sup>8</sup> Leontios Makhairas, *Recital concerning the Sweet Land of Cyprus entitled “Chronicle,”* ed. R. M. Dawkins, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1932), I: 32-5, II: 65. See also Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 4 n. 15.

possessions and contemporary maps identify two separate villages.<sup>9</sup> Around the same time, the name Kanakaria was inscribed as an epithet of the Virgin Mary on the painted lunette above the south door of the church (Fig. 1.2).<sup>10</sup> The village of Lythrankomi would outlast the village of Kanakaria and acquire, or perhaps re-acquire, the Panagia Kanakariá as its main church. It is not until 1750 that Alexander Drummond, the English Consul at Aleppo, first refers to a monastery on the site.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, an inscription of 1779 over the west door of the church names a certain Chrysanthos monk and abbot (Fig. 1.3). Records of the Archbishopric cite repairs to the church in 1780 and rank it among monastic properties in 1788, along with the Panagia tes Kyras at Livadia.<sup>12</sup> According to Megaw and Hawkins, the monastery may have been established upon the recovery of the church by the Orthodox diocese of Famagusta after the Ottoman expulsion of the Venetians in 1570-1, but likely did not endure beyond the early nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

Several interpretations of the name Kanakaria have been put forward. All assume that the church was named for a lost icon of the Virgin *Kanakariá*, which lent its name to the village, not vice versa, and inspired the painted lunette.<sup>14</sup> In some traditions, Kanakaria derives from the Turkish *kan* (blood) and *akar* (flowing) and alludes to bloody

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<sup>9</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 4 and n. 18. See now M. Iakovou, "The European cartographers of Cyprus (16th-19th centuries)," in *Byzantine Medieval Cyprus*, ed. D. Papanikola-Bakirtzis and M. Iakovou (Nicosia, 1998), 289-323 with Ortelius' copper engraving, *Cypri Insulae Nova Descript*, Antwerp, 1573, on 303, no. 208. This map was based on the 1570 map of Cyprus by Jacomo Franco: A. and J. Stylianou, "An Important Venetian Map of Cyprus in the Map-Room of the British Museum, London," *Kypriakai Spoudai* 34 (1970) 145-58.

<sup>10</sup> The name was probably incised later on one of the stones incorporated into the south door jamb of the west door, which was renovated in 1779: Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, fig. 13.

<sup>11</sup> D. Martin, ed., *English Texts: Frankish and Turkish Periods*, vol. 5 of *Sources for the History of Cyprus* (Altamont, NY, 1998), 97. C. D. Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus* (Cambridge, 1908), 304.

<sup>12</sup> J. Hackett, *A History of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus* (London, 1901), 364-5. Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 5-6.

<sup>13</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 5-6.

<sup>14</sup> The icon would not have been named as such until the post-iconoclastic period with the proliferation of toponymic and qualitative epithets of the Virgin.

encounters with Muslims. Because the name of the village predates the Turkish presence on the island, scholars have widely rejected this derivation. Nevertheless, one tradition holds that a Muslim attempted to destroy the icon with a knife, but instead the knife was turned against him and he died from loss of blood.<sup>15</sup> Another tradition connects the Virgin *Kanakariá* to the more famous account of a bleeding icon shot by an Arab in the sixteenth-century work of Damaskenos of Thessalonike, derived from the ninth-century account of the spurious *Letter of the Three Patriarchs to the Emperor Theophilos*.<sup>16</sup> Both accounts describe a miraculous mosaic of an enthroned Virgin and Child in a church in Cyprus; only the later source by Damaskenos reports its location on an exterior wall above a door, which does not correspond to our mosaic. Those who would ascribe the legend to the Panagia Kanakariá also ignore the given geographical location of the mosaic in the south of the island, just as the Russian monk Vasyl Hryhorovyc-Bars'kyj ignored the description of a seated Virgin when he ascribed the legend to the Panagia Angeloktistos at Kiti.<sup>17</sup> Alternatively, Pharmakides hypothesizes a founder of the church named Kanakaris, based on the modern Greek surname,<sup>18</sup> while Smirnov infers a topographical epithet related to the place name Canacar in Syria.<sup>19</sup> Following Xioutas, Megaw and Hawkins favor derivation from the Byzantine Greek *κανάμι* for “caress,” making *κανακαρέα* or *κανακαρία* “the one who caresses,” a poetic or qualitative type

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<sup>15</sup> M. Paraskevopoulou, *Researches into the Traditions of the Popular Religious Feasts of Cyprus*, trans. P. Bosustow (Nicosia, 1982), 139.

<sup>16</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 161-70. On the letter: J. A. Munitiz et al., *The Letter of the Three Patriarchs to Emperor Theophilos and Related Texts* (Camberley, 1997); R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (New York, 1985), 121-40.

<sup>17</sup> A. Grishin, ed. and trans., *A Pilgrim's Account of Cyprus: Bars'kyj's Travels in Cyprus*, vol. 3 of *Sources for the History of Cyprus* (Altamont, NY, 1996), 100. See my chapter 2.1.

<sup>18</sup> X. P. Pharmakides, *Κυπριακά σκηνογραφήματα* (Famagusta, 1922), 65, cited in Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 8-9. See also Paraskevopoulou, *Researches into the Traditions of the Popular Religious Feasts of Cyprus*, 139.

<sup>19</sup> J. Smirnov, “Hristianskija mozaiki Kipra,” *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 4 (1897) 1-93, esp. 66 n. 1, cited in Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 7.

of the Virgin Mary, although the painted lunette shows the Virgin in the Hodegetria pose.<sup>20</sup> The correspondence of portrait type and epithet is not required, however, and the two occasionally diverge in Byzantine and post-Byzantine painting. The medieval Greek *κανάκι* is related to the modern Greek *κανακάριος* or “beloved,” which seems to have influenced Dawkins’ translation of “darling,” and Goodwin’s “overly-protected child.”<sup>21</sup>

While the derivation from *κανάκι* is plausible, it might be worth looking again at blood-related derivations, if only to suggest a possible source (or source of confusion) for the various bloody traditions. Recalling the derivation of Lythrankomi from Ἐρυθρὰ κόμη, the word *λύθρον* describes defiled blood and specifically the blood of the martyrs, while *ἐρυθρός* denotes the color red and was applied to blood.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, *Kanakariá* need not derive from the Turkish to indicate pouring blood. The epithet may also come from the verb *κανάσσω*, meaning “to pour with a gurgling sound.”<sup>23</sup> According to Liddell and Scott, the verb is found only in the aorist infinitive *κανάξαι* or participle *κανάξας*. The root *κανακ-* could yield *κανακαρέα* or *κανακαρία* as “the one who pours.” Since water also pours, the Virgin *Kanakariá* could be analogous to the Virgin *Zoodochos Pege*, the life-bearing source, but to my knowledge there is no trace of a spring or a fountain at Lythrankomi. The principal icon of the church in 1815 bore the name *Kanakariá* and was believed to make rain, according to Megaw and Hawkins, but many icons of the Virgin in Cyprus are credited with the same powers, which is no

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<sup>20</sup> P. Xioutas, in *Κυπριακαὶ Σπουδαί* 1 (1937) 135f, cited in Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 6-7.

<sup>21</sup> Leontios Makhairas, *Chronicle*, ed. Dawkins, II: 65. Goodwin, *Historical Toponymy of Cyprus*, 368.

<sup>22</sup> G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), 813-14. H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1996), 693, 1064.

<sup>23</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 874.

surprise on an island prone to drought.<sup>24</sup> The association of the village of Erythra-Lythrankomi with a bleeding icon of the Virgin *Kanakariá*, or by extension an icon that induces bleeding or heals blood,<sup>25</sup> might have preceded the division of the site into two villages by the fifteenth century and may also explain the attachment of the medieval legend of the miracle-working icon, providing the attachment is not relatively recent.<sup>26</sup> Regardless, the dedication is not contemporary with the apse mosaic and has no bearing on its early Christian context. In an unrelated tradition, tesserae from the mosaic were said to cure skin diseases, a claim that was also made for the mosaic at Livadia.<sup>27</sup> At Lythrankomi, however, one would have to rely on fallen tesserae or erect a ladder as the apse hovers between c. 4.34 and 7.00 meters above the floor of the bema.<sup>28</sup>

Prior to Smirnov's study of 1897, there is no mention of the apse mosaic in travelers' accounts.<sup>29</sup> The church was noted briefly by Hogarth in 1888, but the archaeologist was more concerned with three large blocks in the vicinity of the church belonging to the ancient settlement.<sup>30</sup> More than a century earlier, Alexander Drummond provided a basic description of the church during his second visit to Cyprus in 1750:

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Paraskevopoulou, *Researches into the Traditions of the Popular Religious Feasts of Cyprus*, 136, 137, 140, 147.

<sup>25</sup> The healing of blood is probably a later twist: G. Jeffery, *A Description of the Historic Monuments of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1918), 263.

<sup>26</sup> According to Megaw and Hawkins, the earliest written source to associate the legend with the church dates to the late nineteenth century: Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 169.

<sup>27</sup> R. Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus: A Guide to Its Towns and Villages, Monasteries and Castles* (London, 1936), 328, 332. Paraskevopoulou, *Researches into the Traditions of the Popular Religious Feasts of Cyprus*, 135, 139.

<sup>28</sup> Derived from measurements given in Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 21 and 37.

<sup>29</sup> Smirnov, "Hristianskija mosaiki Kipra," 1-93.

<sup>30</sup> Hogarth, *Devia Cypria*, 70-1.



We returned through a variety of good and bad, beautiful and bleak grounds, until we arrived at the convent Canakarga; where, recollecting that it would be proper to give you an idea of a Greek church in their true taste, I pulled out my pencil and made the sketch ... I shall only inform you that it is built exactly according to the mode of the ancient Greek churches, which ... consisted of a νόρθηξ, or porch, πρόναος, or outward chapel, ναος, body or nave, βημα, the chancel, and θυσιαστήριον, the altar.<sup>31</sup>

The sketch that accompanies Drummond's description is a view of the church from the southwest (Fig. 1.4). The view does not permit inclusion of the east end or exterior main apse and is rendered in a rather awkward perspective. The exaggerated domes of the narthex and south porch, however, draw attention to the ruined central dome, which would be repaired almost thirty years later by the monk and abbot Chrysanthos.<sup>32</sup>

## 2. Architectural Context

Before the new plans produced by Megaw and Hawkins, early plans of the church were published by Jakov Smirnov, Camille Enlart, and Georgios Soteriou. As the least functional among them, Enlart's plan contains many errors and does not differentiate phases of construction, although he describes the church as an old Byzantine basilica replaced by a Romanesque church, later modified in the Byzantine style.<sup>33</sup> Smirnov represents three phases of construction, sketching the principal three-aisled church as a

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<sup>31</sup> Martin, ed., *English Texts: Frankish and Turkish Periods*, 97. A shorter excerpt is published in Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria*, 304.

<sup>32</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 36.

<sup>33</sup> C. Enlart, *L'art gothique et la renaissance en Chypre*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1899), 401-3, fig. 268; repr. as *Gothic Art and the Renaissance in Cyprus*, ed. and trans. D. Hunt (London, 1987), 308-9, fig. 277.

single phase with pier additions and a later narthex (Fig. 1.5).<sup>34</sup> Notable is the inclusion of a single throne elevated on three steps at the back of the main apse, which Enlart also noted in his text. The “mere square block of stone” was described by George Jeffery in 1914, but does not appear in Soteriou’s plan of 1935 (Fig. 1.6).<sup>35</sup> During a limited excavation of the church in 1966, Papageorghiou found no trace of it.<sup>36</sup> Like Smirnov, Soteriou delineates three phases of construction, the last corresponding to the narthex and additional supports for the central dome. He assigns the main apse and piers to the original basilica, and the two aisles, pier additions, and outer apse wall to phase two.

Megaw and Hawkins remain the most valuable source on the architecture of the church and the architectural context of the mosaic.<sup>37</sup> The numerous ground plans, elevations, cross sections, and reconstructions are the products of many years of investigations and supercede all previous plans (Figs. 1.7-11).<sup>38</sup> We now know that the earliest church on the site was a columnar basilica with three aisles, a narthex, and a wooden roof. Only the main apse, the mosaic, and assorted column fragments survive from this church. The restoration of the apse in 1954 exposed large ashlar blocks recycled from an older building and bonded by gypsum mortar (Fig. 1.12).<sup>39</sup> These stones are also exposed on the interior of the apse conch now that the mosaics and the underlying plaster have been destroyed (Fig. 1.13). Three windows pierced the original

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<sup>34</sup> Smirnov, “Hristianskija mosaiki Kipra,” 68.

<sup>35</sup> Jeffery, *Description of the Historic Monuments of Cyprus*, 263. G. Soteriou, *Τα Βυζαντινά Μνημεία της Κύπρου, Α* (Athens, 1935), 30-1.

<sup>36</sup> A. Papageorghiou, “Η παλαιοχριστιανική και Βυζαντινή Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνη εν Κύπρω,” *Άποστολος Βαρνάβας* 29 (1968) 15.

<sup>37</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 11-36.

<sup>38</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, figs. B-H. Five of their drawings (C, E, F, G, H) are reproduced here. One plan drafted more recently seems less convincing for its reliance on Enlart: C. Stewart, “Domes of Heaven: The Domed Basilicas of Cyprus” (PhD diss., Indiana University–Bloomington, 2008), 49-50, fig. II.78; “The First Vaulted Churches in Cyprus,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69:2 (2010) 162-89, esp. 174-7.

<sup>39</sup> Megaw, *ARDAC 1954* (1955), 12.

apse wall, one of which retains a fragment of its original molding. The floor of the early Christian apse, probably composed of local stone or marmara slabs, does not survive below the present floor.<sup>40</sup> Crucial to the reconstruction of the early basilica is the limestone shaft of an engaged column discovered by Megaw and Hawkins in a probe of the north wall of the bema (Fig. 1.11). At approximately one-half meter, the diameter of the shaft is consistent with some of the column capitals and bases found around the church. A total of five capitals, five bases, and a partial shaft may still be counted among the stone fragments that remain on site, albeit out of place. Most of the loose fragments are now collected in front of the west façade (Figs. 1.1, 1.14). Two of the capitals are concealed below the floor of the thirteenth-century south porch, where they were used as column bases for the inner columns.<sup>41</sup> The capitals were discovered by Papageorghiou in 1966 and subsequently re-covered. Likewise, two column bases were incorporated into the portico of the adjacent monastery, while a third base supported an altar in the main apse.<sup>42</sup> The base continues to reside in the apse, but has been divided into two sections and lacks a table top.

The dimensions of the original church were roughly preserved in subsequent renovations. As detailed in plan G by Megaw and Hawkins, the west wall is believed to lie immediately outside the present west wall, while the north and south walls are believed to lie immediately inside the present north and south walls (Fig. 1.10). The longer and narrower proportions hypothesized by Megaw and Hawkins are consistent with other early Christian churches on the Karpas and account for the fact that the walls

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<sup>40</sup> Papageorghiou, “Η παλαιοχριστιανική και Βυζαντινή Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνη εν Κύπρω,” 15.

<sup>41</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, fig. 16.

<sup>42</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, figs. 14-15.

of the first restoration do not stand on earlier foundations.<sup>43</sup> While there is no evidence for lateral apses in this church, their exclusion would have been unusual in Cyprus and especially on the Karpas.<sup>44</sup> A narthex or western annex is also deemed an original feature due to the discovery of a section of the original north wall beyond the west wall of the present narthex.<sup>45</sup> A late fifth-century date for the original basilica is based on the use of local limestone versus marble colonnades, the documented existence of a single elevated throne in the main apse rather than a semi-circular synthronon, and stylistic parallels for the limestone acanthus capitals.<sup>46</sup> The contention that the apse was left undecorated for a short time after the construction of the church is based not only on stylistic and iconographic analysis of the mosaic, but on the discovery of a pilaster on the north side of the east wall, which projected south and carried an arch across the front of the apse conch (Fig. 1.11). The arch was dismantled and the pilaster concealed by plaster soon thereafter, presumably with the setting of the mosaic.<sup>47</sup>

The destruction of the early Christian basilica has been dated to the middle of the seventh century in connection with the Arab raids.<sup>48</sup> It must be said that there is no evidence for the destruction of this church in particular by the Arabs. Whatever the cause of its collapse, a near complete reconstruction took place around 700, referred to by Megaw and Hawkins as the first restoration. This second phase of construction is

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<sup>43</sup> The proposed length of 16.00 meters for the original church was calculated from the span of the colonnades, estimated at 5.90 meters, against a ratio of 1:2.71: Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 24-5.

<sup>44</sup> The narrow passages that exist between the main apse and later side apses are probably not original.

<sup>45</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 25. Papageorgiou, “Η παλαιοχριστιανική και Βυζαντινή Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνη εν Κύπρω,” 14.

<sup>46</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 26-30. Megaw and Hawkins adopt Smirnov’s rendering of the elevated throne. Objections to the reconstruction are made by J.-P. Sodini, Review of Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, in *Révue archéologique* (1984) 159-60.

<sup>47</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 30.

<sup>48</sup> See my chapter 3.6a.

characterized by the replacement of limestone columns with pier arcades, the addition of high lateral walls and north-south passages in the bema, and the addition or restoration of the lateral apses (Fig. 1.7). Opinions diverge, however, with respect to the type of roof that covered the eighth-century basilica. Megaw and Hawkins believe that the relatively small piers were too weak to support a barrel vault and instead supported a second wooden roof. There are parallels for piered, wood-roofed basilicas in Cyprus in the second basilicas of St. Spyridon at Tremithos, St. Herakleidos at Tamassos-Politiko, and St. Ephiḗphanios at Salamis-Constantia, and in the second or third phase of the Panagia Angeloktistos at Kiti.<sup>49</sup> A high superstructure over the bema at the location of the present dome is reconstructed as a transverse wooden roof, although the authors concede that the bema may have been domed at this stage (Fig. 1.9). In a review of the monograph, Slobodan Ćurčić objected to the reconstruction, arguing that the stone piers and enhanced lateral walls of the bema suggest that the area was vaulted when the piers were first erected.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, he observed that the uniform bowing of the eighth-century walls and piers of the nave is a consequence of lateral pressure exerted over time (Fig. 1.8). This type of distortion is consistent with a barrel vault and not with the sudden force of an earthquake, as Megaw and Hawkins had assumed. Other barrel-vaulted churches in Cyprus have been dated to the same period, including four basilicas on the Karpas: the

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<sup>49</sup> A. Papageorghiou, "L'architecture de la période byzantine à Chypre," *Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina* 32 (1985) 325-35, esp. 325. Megaw, "Archaeology in Cyprus, 1957," *Archaeological Reports* 4 (1957) 43-50, esp. 49-50. Papacostas, *Byzantine Cyprus: The Testimony of Its Churches*, 6-7.

<sup>50</sup> S. Ćurčić, Review of Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, in *Speculum* 55:4 (1980) 812-16. Papageorghiou also states that the second basilica was vaulted before changing his mind at a later date: A. Papageorghiou, *Masterpieces of the Byzantine Art of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1965), 37; "Constantinopolitan Influence on the Middle Byzantine Architecture of Cyprus," *JÖB* 32:4 (1982) 469-78, esp. 470; "L'architecture de la période byzantine à Chypre," 325.

Panagia Chrysiotissa and the Asomatos Church at Aphendrika, St. Barbara at Koroveia, and the Panagia Aphendrika at Sykhada.<sup>51</sup>

The earthquake of 1157 or 1160 is believed to have occasioned the second restoration or third phase of construction, which accounts for much of the appearance of the present church (Fig. 1.7).<sup>52</sup> The church was vaulted either for the first or second time and incorporated three domes along the central axis, in the nave, narthex, and bema. The north and south aisles and lateral apses were rebuilt and the existing piers and walls were reinforced. The third phase also included the erection of the present narthex and the first layer of masonry around the exterior of the central apse. A twelfth-century date is suggested by the cross-shaped window of the west wall and the sharp curvature of the central dome, which may be compared to the domes of the Holy Apostles at Perachorio and the Panagia tes Kyras at Livadia.<sup>53</sup>

The fourth phase of construction took place in the thirteenth century with the rebuilding of the south aisle in the Frankish style with thicker walls and pointed arches (Fig. 1.7). The vault of the south aisle was raised to a new height, which blocked the eighth-century windows of the nave wall. The walls of the nave were also repaired some time in the fourteenth century, prior to the last major building campaign. According to Ćurčić, the aisles may have functioned as independent chapels with the expansion of the interior walls and greater separation of the nave and aisles, as in the fourth phase of the

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<sup>51</sup> Papageorghiou, "L'architecture de la période byzantine à Chypre," 325.

<sup>52</sup> The earthquakes are recorded in the panegyric of St. Neophytos: H. Delehayé, ed., "Saints de Chypre," *Analecta Bollandiana* 26 (1907) 161-301, esp. 207-12.

<sup>53</sup> On Perachorio: Megaw and Hawkins, "The Church of the Holy Apostles at Perachorio, Cyprus, and Its Frescoes," *DOP* 16 (1962) 277-348.

basilica at Polis, dated to the thirteenth or fourteenth century.<sup>54</sup> The fifth phase or third restoration involved the reconstruction of the central dome with new supporting arches, following a collapse that may be associated with the earthquake of 1491 (Fig. 1.7). The church also received a new cycle of wall paintings at this time, which suggest a date for the building around 1500 and include a *terminus ante quem* in the form of a graffito dated 1598.

Additional works are commemorated in an inscription inserted above the lintel of the west door, which names the donor, Chrysanthos, monk and abbot, and the date of March 15, 1779 (Fig. 1.3). The refashioning of the west entrance and narthex vault, the repair of the central dome, and the erection of a second layer of masonry around the main apse are all attributed to Chrysanthos. Later, the stone cross over the dome and the first belfry were set up in 1859 and 1888 respectively.<sup>55</sup> By 1914, a large crack had developed in the apse conch, letting in sunlight at the feet of the Virgin Mary and prompting repairs to this area of the church.<sup>56</sup> The crack was probably sealed in 1920, when the original throne and steps were removed from the apse and a third layer of masonry was built around the exterior.<sup>57</sup> More sophisticated repairs took place after an earthquake in 1941, when the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus inserted reinforced concrete collars around the dome and east end of the church. The west end was similarly reinforced in 1949. Minor repairs in the same year included the removal of plaster from the nave vault, the

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<sup>54</sup> S. Ćurčić, *Middle Byzantine Architecture on Cyprus: Provincial or Regional?* (Nicosia, 2000), 11-12; "Byzantine Architecture on Cyprus: An Introduction to the Problem of the Genesis of a Regional Style," in *Medieval Cyprus: Studies in Art, Architecture, and History in Memory of Doula Mouriki*, ed. N. P. Ševčenko and C. Moss (Princeton, 1999), 71-91, esp. 76-7. W. Childs, "First Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Polis Chrysochous by Princeton University," *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (1988) 121-30, esp. 128.

<sup>55</sup> The inscription on the cross includes the name of the sculptor in Arabic and Greek: Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 36, fig. 133.

<sup>56</sup> Jeffery, *Description of the Historic Monuments of Cyprus*, 262.

<sup>57</sup> A "disastrous" restoration in 1920 is mentioned by Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus*, 332.

repointing of masonry, and the unblocking of windows on the north side of the nave.<sup>58</sup> Similar repairs to the narthex, including the unblocking of the arched recesses of the west wall,<sup>59</sup> were completed in 1950, when the modern belfry above the central door was pulled down and rebuilt on the northwest corner.<sup>60</sup> The apse was restored again in 1954, when three layers of accumulated masonry dated c. 1160, 1779, and 1920 were removed, its windows were unblocked, concrete collars were inserted at the top of the apse wall and above the windows, and the pitch of the roof was altered to improve drainage. The roof of the apse was then tiled, followed by the rest of the church in 1966.<sup>61</sup>

### 3. Wall Paintings

The wall paintings of the church were described and dated by Megaw and Hawkins in the final section of the monograph.<sup>62</sup> Although they are not contemporary with the apse mosaic, they will be summarized here with comments on their present state. A few of the wall paintings have been damaged or stolen since 1974, but detailed information has not been published.<sup>63</sup>

Already in the 1950s, the paintings were very fragmentary and heavily faded with a few exceptions among the most recent. Nevertheless, Megaw and Hawkins were able to identify five phases of decoration. The earliest wall paintings include an inscription on the west face of the westernmost pier of the south arcade, which may have commemorated a repair or renovation of the church in the ninth or tenth century by John

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<sup>58</sup> Megaw, *ARDAC 1949* (1950), 12. Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 2 n. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 14, n. 63.

<sup>60</sup> Megaw, *ARDAC 1950* (1951), 12. On this curious decision, see Ćurčić, *Middle Byzantine Architecture on Cyprus*, 31-4.

<sup>61</sup> Megaw, *ARDAC 1954* (1955), 12; *ARDAC 1966* (1967), 9.

<sup>62</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 147-59, figs. 90-132.

<sup>63</sup> A brief statement appears in A. Papageorghiou, *Christian Art in the Turkish-Occupied Part of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 2010), 245.



the deacon (?), Theodore (?) the archbishop, Solomon the patriarch (?) of Jerusalem, and a certain Eustathios.<sup>64</sup> Only the name Solomon, if it refers to the patriarch of Jerusalem, may provide a more precise date of 860-5. The inscription is contemporary with a cross on the west face of the westernmost pier of the north arcade, painted some time between the second and third phases of construction. Classified among the late twelfth-century paintings after the second restoration are the Archangel Gabriel on the south face of the easternmost pier of the south arcade, visible on entry to the church from the south door, and the figure of St. Barbara on the west face of the second pier from the west in the north arcade. The photograph of St. Barbara published by Megaw and Hawkins shows her head and halo, her left shoulder covered by a patterned garment, and a partial inscription on the upper right (Fig. 1.15a). Unfortunately the saint's head has since been cut away, leaving only part of the halo and shoulder alongside the fragmentary inscription (Fig. 1.15b). To the same period belongs an almost indistinguishable zigzag border identified by Megaw and Hawkins on the fourth pier from the west of the north arcade, that is, on the narrow south face of the original eighth-century pier, which was almost completely obscured by the masonry added in c. 1500.<sup>65</sup> A short time later, the reconstruction of the south aisle in the thirteenth century prompted the repainting of the south wall. From this phase comes the earlier of two superimposed paintings of St. George, located to the west of the current entrance. The head of the white horse, the identifying inscription, and part of the red frame can still be seen, along with traces of

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<sup>64</sup> C. Mango provided the transcript, translation, and comments in Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 147-9, figs. O, 92. Elsewhere, however, Mango is reported to have said the inscription is funerary: V. Ruggieri, *Byzantine Religious Architecture (582-867): Its History and Structural Elements* (Rome, 1991), 268 n. 361.

<sup>65</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 151-2, figs. 94-5. I could not confirm whether this fragment still survives.

fish below and a chevron-patterned dado. In the fourteenth century, prior to the third restoration or fifth phase of construction, the Last Judgment was painted on the north wall of the nave above the third and fourth arches. Elements of paradise and the Resurrection from the Sea can still be identified, despite a considerable loss of paint. In paradise, the orant Virgin sits in a three-quarter pose on a simple throne flanked by Abraham with the souls of the blessed on the lower left and the Good Thief on the right. On the opposite side, a personification of the sea holds a ship and a rudder and sits on a long-necked monster, while surrounding fish give up the dead. The same plaster extends below into two soffits with imitation coffers and onto the east face of the second pier from the west with the much faded figure of an angel.

Surviving paintings from the last phase of decoration, associated with the final phase of construction around 1500, are concentrated in the bema and in the eastern part of the nave, but attest to an extensive redecoration at this time. The dome of the bema contains a bust of Christ Pantokrator at the apex; the *hetoimasia*, medallions of the Virgin, St. John the Baptist, three angels, four six-winged beings, and two three-winged powers in the drum; and four evangelists in the pendentives. On the south wall of the bema remains the upper part of the Ascension below a soffit painted in imitation marble. The corresponding scene on the north wall is lost below a soffit which bears a delicate vine scroll. As expected, the Annunciation is located on the west face of the transverse arch above the bema, marking the threshold between the nave and sanctuary (Figs. 1.13, 1.18). At the east end of the nave on the short barrel vault are fragments of two Passion scenes: the Betrayal of Christ on the north side and the Washing of the Feet on the south side. In the arches below are a number of standing saints, not reproduced by Megaw and

Hawkins. On the east wall to the south of the bema was the Nativity, which preserved the upper part of a sleeping Virgin, the Christ Child in the manger, and two Magi on horseback (Fig. 1.16a). All of these figures have since been removed, leaving only a small part of the cave (Fig. 1.16b). At the base of the wall, the dado with a wave and vegetal pattern remains untouched. Opposite this scene, on the east face of the easternmost pier of the south arcade, were the upper portions of two figures, a standing St. Helena and probably St. Mamas riding a lion (Fig. 1.17a). The figure of St. Helena has since been destroyed: only the right hand and parts of the white cross and garment remain (Fig. 1.17b). The removal of the painting and underlying plaster at a right angle below the painted frame suggests that the head of the empress was meant to be sold. To the right, the head of St. Mamas is still intact, but his neck and chin have been damaged, along with an area of the background on the left side. Continuing along the south arcade, the upper parts of a female martyr and St. Eleazar survive on the west face of the fourth pier from the west. To this phase also belong the Virgin and Child beside the tenth-century inscription on the west face of the first pier of the south arcade and the later St. George on the south wall, which contains a graffito dated 1598. Back in the nave, vestiges of three standing figures or prophets are visible on the soffits of the secondary arches that support the central dome, of which only one can be easily discerned. On the west wall are preserved a few small fragments depicting a number of haloed heads, which may have populated a scene of the Dormition. Traces of painted plaster on the east wall of the narthex may also date to this period, along with other traces not mentioned by Megaw and Hawkins: these are found on the lower south wall of the bema and on the east face of the fourth pier from the west on the north arcade. Oddly, the more prominent

rincaux on the latest pier additions are also not mentioned by Megaw and Hawkins. Finally, on the exterior lunette above the south door appears the half-length Virgin Hodegetria, inscribed “Mother of God, the Kanakaria,” in the presence of two kneeling donors, a man in prayer and a woman clad in white with her hands crossed over her breast, apparently deceased at the time of the commission (Fig. 1.2a). Today, the painting has been scratched and chipped all over, and a large lacuna over the Virgin’s right shoulder has obscured the first half of the unique epithet (Fig. 1.2b). Not surprisingly, the figural paintings on the piers and lower walls and on the exterior of the church have suffered most at the hands of vandals: St. Barbara, St. Helena, St. Mamas, the Nativity, and the eponymous Virgin *Kanakariá*.

To the destruction of these paintings may be added the partial destruction of the pottery embedded in the upper walls and vault of the narthex in the context of the 1779 renovation.<sup>66</sup> Many of the bowls have now been broken or cracked through attempts to pry them out. These attempts have not been successful: often the plaster surrounding the bowl has been chipped away, but all or part of the bowl remains lodged in the wall.

#### 4. *Description of the Mosaic*

The original apse conch has been estimated at 2.66 meters high, 4.78 meters wide, and 2.44 meters deep at the base, taking into account the warping of the apse due to subsidence.<sup>67</sup> The mosaic was therefore the largest of the three mosaics and positioned highest in the apse, with an apex about 7.0 meters from the floor, compared with about 5.1 meters at Kiti and 3.0 meters at Livadia (Figs. 1.13, 1.18). A thorough description of

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<sup>66</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 15.

<sup>67</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 37.

the mosaic was provided by Megaw and Hawkins when the mosaic was still in situ.<sup>68</sup>

The short description here depends on their observations and photographs, as well as on various archival photographs.<sup>69</sup>

Despite its fragmentary appearance already in the late nineteenth century, enough of the mosaic has survived to identify its subject: an enthroned Virgin and Child flanked by archangels in a paradisiacal landscape (Figs. 1.19-20). At the center of the composition, the Virgin and Child are seated frontally on a jeweled and cushioned lyre-backed throne. The white marble and pale green tesserae of the uprights were intended to imitate ivory with inset patterns in bright green tesserae. Although the back of the throne appears white, it was originally colored red, like the central part of the cushion and base of the throne behind the Virgin's legs. Much of the figure of the Virgin remains intact, except for the head, left forearm, left hand, and left leg. She is clothed in a deep blue mantle, worn on top of a purple chiton.<sup>70</sup> The costume covers her lost head and drops in heavy folds on top of her faded red shoes. A small portion of the gold halo survives on the lower right side, outlined in rows of silver, green, and red tesserae. The feet of the Virgin rest on a jeweled footstool turned at an angle in order to fit within the V-shaped curve of the mandorla. The surviving right hand is placed on the knee of the Christ Child, who is supported frontally on her lap. His cream-colored mantle with bold white highlights and olive shadows covers a light blue tunic with a gold clavus and descends to

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<sup>68</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 37-61. See also Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 10-14.

<sup>69</sup> I have studied photographs at Dumbarton Oaks, the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus, the British School at Athens, the Courtauld Institute of Art, and the Byzantine Museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Foundation in Nicosia. Many of these photographs, excluding those at the Byzantine Museum, were taken by Megaw and Hawkins. Only some of them were subsequently published.

<sup>70</sup> It can be very difficult to distinguish the purple chiton from the blue mantle in the few color photographs of this area, none of which are details. Made up of four values of purple glass, the chiton should be visible "over the lower parts of the legs and partly covering the feet:" Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 58-9.

his gold-sandaled feet. Between his bared right hand and covered left hand, he holds a white scroll sealed with an X. Unusually, the Christ Child is depicted not as an infant but as a young boy with his hair combed forward in Constantinian fashion (Fig. 1.21). The cross-halo contains a silver cross with red contours against a gold background, outlined in rows of silver, red, and green tesserae. The same red and green colors are repeated in the irisated border of the bright blue mandorla, which surrounds both the Virgin and Child. Although most of the mandorla is lost, it is easily reconstructed from fragments surviving on the north side between the angel's wing and the lyre-backed throne, at the peak above the Virgin's head, and on the south side in three places against the throne and near the angel's outstretched hand. The inclusion of the Virgin Mary in the mandorla, signifying the divine light of Christ, is unparalleled at this early date. Its significance will be discussed in chapter four.

Formally, the mandorla serves to separate the Virgin and Child from the archangels that appeared on both sides. The archangel on the south side has been obliterated, except for his bared right forearm, sleeve, and hand, which gestures towards the central figures. On the north side, the abbreviated torso and head of the archangel survive with portions of the two wings composed of brown and blue feathers. He looks directly at the Virgin and Child, though his body and head are angled only slightly towards them. Like the Christ Child, the angel wears a light blue tunic with a gold clavus. His light olive-brown mantle contains white highlights. Blue ribbons poke out of his purplish hair and his head is surrounded by a silver halo outlined in white, blue, and dark-colored tesserae. Visible in front of him is the upper part of a gold staff with a rounded end, which must have been held in his lost left hand. Above the heads of the

archangels tower two palm trees with only a few shoots and fan-shaped leaves remaining. Behind the outstretched hand of the south archangel is part of a trunk, and below it a large shoot projecting from the base of the tree. On the opposite side, a small tree or shrub grows next to the outer wing of the north archangel, where a few dense leaves are preserved. As the lower part of the mosaic is lost, there is no hint of the ground line on which the trees grow or the archangels stand. A gold background, set in predominantly horizontal rows, extends behind the figures.

A prominent figural border defines the intrados of the apse with a series of medallions containing busts of the twelve apostles, framed by a long stem of acanthus (Fig. 1.22-3). Ten of the original thirteen medallions survive in full or in part, representing Paul, Andrew, Matthew, Jude, Mark, and Thomas on the north side, and Philip, Luke, James, and Bartholomew on the south side. A large lacuna at the center of the soffit has consumed the central medallion, most likely representing a cross, but also perhaps a bust of Christ, a chi-rho, or a lamb, and the medallions of Peter and John to the south. The heads and faces of the apostles are individualized and encircled by gold haloes before a light blue background, on which the names of the apostles are inscribed vertically on either side of the head without the title *Hagios*. In lieu of the light blue background, a light purple background distinguishes the apostle Paul and presumably Peter opposite him. Visible only at the top, the tunics and mantles are portrayed in contrasting colors. In the four cases where the apostles double as evangelists, the top edge of a gospel book projects into the medallion at the lower right. Composed of light green and yellow tesserae, the acanthus leaves stand out against a background of dark

blue tesserae to the west and dark purple to the east, punctuated by small stars and rosettes.

The mosaic has four decorative borders, as well as a solid brown band or triple fillet surrounding the main field. The intermediate border separates the main field from the apostle border outside the narrow brown band and disguises the transition between the apse conch and the interior arch. It is preserved on the north side and at the apex of the conch and consists of a jeweled band of green poised squares and blue circles outlined in gold against a red background (Fig. 1.24). The jewels alternate with palmettes or pale blue irises with green falls and green stems with tendrils forming a meander pattern. A wide irised border surviving in fragments on the north and south sides once surrounded the entire mosaic, running along the outside of the apostle border and underneath the main field (Figs. 1.19-20, 1.22-3). The tesserae are set diagonally, twenty-two per row on the north side and twenty-six on the south side. Below the irised border, a red and green crowstep border on a white background extended along the base of the conch above the cornice. Only a small fragment is preserved on the south side of the interior arch below the Apostle Bartholomew (Fig. 1.26). The last border continued around the semidome on the east wall, defining the outermost edge of the apse mosaic. It survives in fragments on the lower north and south sides, while two loose fragments were discovered with the partial removal of the twelfth-century arch.<sup>71</sup> The border consists of imitation roof joists or cuboids in lateral perspective alternating in two tones of red and green and forming a zigzag pattern (Fig. 1.25). Olive-brown rosettes

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<sup>71</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 38.



mark the square ends of the joists, while cream-colored ivy leaves mark the dark blue triangular interstices.

The reconstruction of the mosaic by Megaw and Hawkins completes known elements and presumes symmetry in areas preserved on only one side (Fig. 1.27). Given the very large losses, it is extremely fortunate that these particular fragments survive, as they allow us to reconstruct the mosaic with reasonable certainty, except for details such as the angels' costumes from the waist down, and the appearance of the ground below the level of the shoot at the foot of the south palm. There is no evidence that the hands of the archangels holding the staffs were covered; at Kiti they are not. Although the apostles' names are inscribed, it is unlikely that the figures of the central composition were named, due to a lack of space. Small fragments from a vertical surface discovered under the floor of the sanctuary indicate that the mosaic continued onto the east wall.<sup>72</sup> The fragments contain evidence of repeat patterns, unspecified by Megaw and Hawkins, gold tesserae set at an angle, and gray Proconnesian marble tesserae not found in the conch. Other fallen fragments appear to come from the robes of the archangels.<sup>73</sup> Unfortunately, none of the fragments are large enough to reveal the program of the east wall. Megaw and Hawkins consider the Ascension type of Christ the most likely subject, based on comparison with the Cleveland Tapestry.<sup>74</sup>

Only a few small fragments were spared in the looting of the late 1970s. They have not been consolidated and are unlikely to survive in the apse for much longer. A

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<sup>72</sup> Papageorghiou, "Η παλαιοχριστιανική και Βυζαντινή Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνη εν Κύπρω," 15. Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 38.

<sup>73</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 49 n. 165.

<sup>74</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 84. I question the need for another theophanic vision conveyed by a mandorla, but concede that Christ may well have appeared in his mature form. See my chapter 4.2. On the Cleveland Tapestry, see section 8a.

smattering of individual tesserae around the perimeter of the stolen fragments may also be seen with the help of a zoom lens. After the looting, about thirty small fragments found on the floor of the sanctuary were taken to the Department of Antiquities in the south, where they are now displayed in the Byzantine Museum of the Archbishopric alongside seven figural fragments that have been repatriated to date.<sup>75</sup> The largest fragment remaining in the apse is easily seen at the top of the conch. It contains parts of the jeweled intermediate border, the solid brown band, the gold background, the south palm tree, and the apex of the mandorla with its irised border (Fig. 1.28). The jeweled border in particular is threatened by a bird's nest behind it. A fragment of the blue mandorla adjoining the upright and back of the lyre-backed throne appears to the south of the Virgin (Fig. 1.29). From here, a trail of tesserae leads to the Virgin's left cheek, formed of light blue glass and flesh-colored marble. Smaller clusters of tesserae belonging to the mandorla appear on the middle and lower south sides, while scattered tesserae are visible around the stolen fragments of the south archangel's hand and the Virgin's lower legs and footstool. Of the apostle border two tiny fragments survive towards the center of the intrados on the south side. They include the pointed lobe of an acanthus leaf with part of the dark blue background and the top of Philip's medallion (Fig. 1.30).

### *5. Early Photographs*

Early photographs by Jakov Smirnov and Georgios Soteriou provide evidence of the mosaic prior to its conservation by Megaw and Hawkins, whose published

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<sup>75</sup> Four additional fragments await repatriation in Germany during the trials and appeals of Aydin Dikmen.

photographs show the mosaic only after treatment.<sup>76</sup> Smirnov does not provide a complete view of the apse conch, but manages to incorporate the central figures and the northern half of the interior arch as they appeared in 1895 (Fig. 1.31). Despite the poor quality of the reproduction, several important observations can be made. First, substantial losses in the lower part of the conch and on the south side, to the extent that they can be seen in the oblique view, had occurred before the late nineteenth century. Large cracks visible on the north side below the torso of the archangel and in the center of the mosaic through the left side of the Virgin Mary down to the cornice account for some of this damage. According to George Jeffery, the central crack admitted outside light into the sanctuary at the feet of the Virgin.<sup>77</sup> The apse was replastered and the cracks were covered before 1935, when Soteriou published his photograph of the apse (Fig. 1.32).<sup>78</sup> Comparison of the early photographs with those published by Megaw and Hawkins shows that some lacunae appear to have grown slightly at the top of the apse between 1895 and 1950-70 (Fig. 1.19). Smirnov's photograph reveals more tesserae above and to the left of the head of the north archangel and in the irised border of the mandorla above the head of the Virgin. Soteriou's photograph represents an intermediate stage in the process of deterioration. Nevertheless, these early photographs demonstrate that the size, shape, and visibility of the fragments varied little from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century with the exception of the upper borders.

The mosaics of the intrados could not be seen from the nave after the erection of the dome over the bema and its supporting arches in the twelfth century. That the apostle

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<sup>76</sup> The recent occupation and inaccessibility of northern Cyprus at the time of publication may have been a factor in this decision, as it was in the decision to devote all of the illustrations to the monument and none to comparanda: Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, viii.

<sup>77</sup> Jeffery, *Description of the Historic Monuments of Cyprus*, 262.

<sup>78</sup> G. Soteriou, *Τα Βυζαντινά Μνημεία της Κύπρου*, pl. 61.

border remained partly concealed and the outer borders fully concealed by the transverse arch is evident in Smirnov's view from the apse, where less than half of each medallion on the north side is exposed. Some years later, both Jeffery and Gunnis took note of the heavily damaged "medallions of saints," suggesting that they too stood in the sanctuary underneath the mosaic.<sup>79</sup> The borders are entirely obstructed in the view from the bema published by Soteriou, as they would be today from the same vantage point, given that the arch was not dismantled in the course of restoration by the Department of Antiquities.

## 6. Conservation

The reduction in the mass of the transverse arch and complete exposure of the apostle and outer borders took place in 1950.<sup>80</sup> In the preceding decade, the Department of Antiquities had inserted reinforced concrete beams around the main body of the church, reducing the weight on the interior and exterior masonry supports. Although the corresponding eleventh- or twelfth-century arch at Kiti would be fully dismantled two years later, the transverse arch at Lythrankomi was hollowed just enough on the east side to reveal the mosaics of the north and south intrados (Fig. 1.22-3). The arch was not reduced at all in the central area, where no mosaics were found. Once the borders were uncovered, they were "cleaned and protected" along with the mosaics of the main field.<sup>81</sup> For the first time since the twelfth century, the apse mosaic could be viewed in its entirety.

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<sup>79</sup> Jeffery, *Description of the Historic Monuments of Cyprus*, 262. Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus*, 332.

<sup>80</sup> Megaw, *ARDAC 1950* (1951), 12; "The Mosaics in the Church of Panayia Kanakaria in Cyprus," in *Atti dell' VIII Congresso internazionale di studi bizantini, Palermo, 3-10 aprile 1951* (Rome, 1953), 199-200. Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 1-2.

<sup>81</sup> Megaw, *ARDAC 1950* (1951), 12.

Two years later in 1952, the Department of Antiquities, under the direction of Megaw and in collaboration with Hawkins of the Byzantine Institute of America, undertook the “provisional cleaning and consolidation of the mosaic.”<sup>82</sup> The Department turned to the structure of the apse in 1954. The apse was restored to its original appearance through the removal of masonry accumulations, the insertion of concrete collars at the top of the wall and above the three windows, the unblocking of two windows, the repointing of the original masonry, and the repair and tiling of the apse vault. Though Megaw left the Department of Antiquities in 1960, he returned with Hawkins on behalf of Dumbarton Oaks to resume the conservation of the mosaic in 1961, 1966, and 1970 with intervening delays imposed by political upheaval.<sup>83</sup> In the course of these investigations, Megaw and Hawkins found no evidence of prior interventions or restorations. The mosaic had survived in its original state, despite suffering serious damage over the long term. The absence of subsequent interventions was confirmed by David Winfield, Field Director of Dumbarton Oaks in Cyprus, who was invited to report on the condition of the mosaic in 1969.<sup>84</sup>

Megaw and Hawkins make few specific comments about the work they performed between 1950 and 1970.<sup>85</sup> They emphasize that the mosaic was not removed for conservation at any stage. Lime plaster would have been applied to areas of loss, while loose tesserae found in place would have been secured. The poor condition of the gold and silver tesserae also attracted their attention. In many cases, the tesserae had lost

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<sup>82</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 1-2.

<sup>83</sup> A. Carr, “Dumbarton Oaks and the Legacy of Byzantine Cyprus,” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 71: 1-2 (2008) 95-103, esp. 102.

<sup>84</sup> D. Winfield, *Byzantine Mosaic Work: Notes on History, Technique and Colour* (Nicosia, 2005), 4.

<sup>85</sup> Certain photographs in the archives of the Department of Antiquities show the mosaic at various times during the treatment period. However, it is not easy to determine the steps taken by Megaw and Hawkins through black and white photographs without sufficient notes or captions.

the top layer of glass and the gold or silver leaf, leaving only the bottom layer of darkened amber tesserae. Indeed, a half-century earlier, Dalton had remarked that the angel's halo was "of a colour not easy to determine, but certainly not golden."<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, these tesserae were not replaced. Nor were the faded marble tesserae, originally dipped in red pigment, repainted by Hawkins. To give a sense of the original effect of red paint in the jeweled intermediate border, they reproduce an altered photograph (in black and white) alongside a photograph of the existing border.<sup>87</sup> The decision not to retouch painted tesserae is contrary to the approach taken by the same restorers around the same time in the church at Kiti, where red, yellow, black, and brown tesserae that had lost pigment were retouched throughout the mosaic.<sup>88</sup> They do not explain the reasons for the different decisions, which may mean that church authorities at Kiti requested a more comprehensive restoration.

Some semblance of the original colors at Lythrankomi are preserved in photographs of Hawkins' second test for the final presentation of the mosaic. Between 1961 and 1970, Hawkins tested three formats.<sup>89</sup> In the first test, he painted solid lines between the surviving fragments on white ground (Figs. 1.33-4). In the second, he applied broad washes of color to the exposed plaster, indicating the principal tones of the lost mosaic (Figs. 1.18, 1.20, 1.91-2). He settled finally on a white ground with dotted lines linking the surviving fragments and a solid line in place of the lost brown band emphasizing the division between the main field and the intrados (Figs. 1.19, 1.22-3). The minimalist scheme gives a sense of the original composition, its layout and forms,

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<sup>86</sup> O. M. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (Oxford, 1911; repr., New York, 1961), 386-7.

<sup>87</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 49, figs. 46-7.

<sup>88</sup> See my chapter 2.5.

<sup>89</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 2 n. 10.

without the need for invention. It was at this time in 1970 that the majority of the photographs later selected for the monograph were taken. Today, the same dotted lines connect the large holes left in the apse after the removal of the fragments (Figs. 1.28-9, 1.35).

The mosaics were damaged severely in 1978-9 when they were detached from the wall with cloth and adhesive and without the use of a solvent.<sup>90</sup> The larger fragments were immediately cut down into smaller fragments capable of being smuggled and sold. The four fragments sold to art dealer Peg Goldberg in 1988 were further damaged in multiple stages of transit from Cyprus to Munich, to Geneva, and then to Indianapolis, where an airline damage report was filed.<sup>91</sup> After arriving in Indiana, the fragments were badly restored by an inexperienced restorer hired by Goldberg. The man kept no record of treatment, but was deposed by the prosecution in a damages suit that never materialized after the Republic of Cyprus and the Church of Cyprus won ownership of the fragments. His testimony was given to two archaeological conservators, Catherine Sease and Danaë Thimme, who were called as expert witnesses by the prosecution.<sup>92</sup> They examined the fragments in 1990 in order to determine the chronological sequence of damage, as well as any specific damage that could be attributed to Goldberg. According to Sease and Thimme, the restorer had mounted the fragments to Masonite board with nails or screws and set them in a thick layer of plaster of Paris without first consolidating the original plaster. He treated cracks with a variety of fillers including Elmer's glue and wax, which

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<sup>90</sup> Traces of the yellowed adhesive were identified by C. Sease and D. Thimme, "The Kanakaria Mosaics: The Conservators' View," in *Antiquities Trade or Betrayed: Legal, Ethical and Conservation Issues*, ed. K. Tubb (London, 1995), 122-30, esp. 125-6 and can still be seen on the smallest fragments displayed in the Byzantine Museum (see Fig. 1.84).

<sup>91</sup> The four fragments include the upper half of Christ, the north archangel, Matthew, and James.

<sup>92</sup> Sease and Thimme, "The Kanakaria Mosaics: The Conservators' View," 122-30 with plates 1-11.

split fragile tesserae. He also flattened the surface of the fragments by removing some of the original plaster, adding fill material, and resetting tesserae. The conservators noted extensive resetting in the robes of the Virgin and the Christ Child. Ultimately, the intervention of the restorer destroyed the original sinopie, compromised the original setting patterns, and ensured that the fragments could never be returned to the space of the apse. The same fragments were cleaned and consolidated by the Department of Antiquities on their return to Cyprus in 1992, as were three other fragments returned from Munich in 1985 and 1997 (Figs. 1.36-42). The busts of Luke and Bartholomew had also been manipulated and flattened; only the bust of Jude/Thaddeus remains somewhat curved and has not been remounted.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the seven figural fragments currently on display in the Byzantine Museum must be considered suspect in terms of technical and stylistic evidence. Only the thirty or so small fragments recovered from the floor of the church have been spared successive alterations since their removal and fall from the apse.

## 7. *Materials and Technique*

The detailed description of the mosaic, careful record of materials, and brief analysis of technique provided by Megaw and Hawkins are invaluable now that large sections of the mosaic have been damaged or destroyed and few fragments remain in situ.<sup>94</sup> In this section I will summarize and supplement their analysis of materials and

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<sup>93</sup> Luke and Bartholomew in 1985 and Jude/Thaddeus in 1997. The former were accompanied by two forgeries, one of the apostle Luke, formed in part by original tesserae. The bizarre circumstances under which the fragments were returned in 1984-5 are recounted by D. Hofstadter, "Annals of the Antiquities Trade: The Angel on Her Shoulder – I," *The New Yorker* (July 13, 1992) 36-65, esp. 52-3; "Annals of the Antiquities Trade: The Angel on Her Shoulder – II," *The New Yorker* (July 20, 1992) 38-65, esp. 64. A third forgery of the apostle Andrew was seized in Munich in 1998: D. Korol, "Die spätantik-christlichen Wand- und Gewölbemosaiken Zyperns (5.-7. Jh.) und ihre neuere Geschichte," in *Zypern: Insel im Brennpunkt der Kulturen*, ed. S. Rogge (Münster, 2000), 159-201, esp. 169, pl. 10:1.

<sup>94</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 132-6 (unless otherwise noted).



technique. My own observations are based on first-hand examination of the large and small fragments in the Byzantine Museum of Nicosia, photographs from the publication by Megaw and Hawkins and various archival collections, and personal photographs of the small fragments remaining in the apse.<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately not all views of the mosaic are available in color or in exceptional detail, which impedes new observations and the ability to evaluate old ones.

According to Megaw and Hawkins, the apse mosaic includes three layers of lime plaster: two layers of course plaster mixed with straw and one layer of fine plaster forming the setting bed. In a review of the publication, David Winfield criticizes the lack of photographs and diagrams of roughcast plaster and setting bed layers, but admits that the mosaic may be too fragmentary to locate plaster joins providing clues to possible divisions of labor and the duration of the project.<sup>96</sup> Megaw and Hawkins identify only one vertical suture on the north side of the mosaic between the apostle border and the intermediate border, marking the division between the conch and the intrados.<sup>97</sup> They interpret the suture as evidence that the mosaics of the conch were completed before the apostle and outer borders. Elsewhere, perhaps in response to Winfield's review, Megaw says explicitly that no divisions of plaster were found in the conch.<sup>98</sup> On the setting bed, visible where tesserae have been lost or between existing tesserae, Megaw and Hawkins identify sinopie or underdrawings in at least three colors: earth red, green, and black. The

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<sup>95</sup> My own photographs of the apse were taken in 2008 and 2011. Photographs of the small fragments at the Byzantine Museum were taken in 2011 by permission of the director, Ioannis Eliades.

<sup>96</sup> D. Winfield, Review of Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, in *The Antiquaries Journal* 59 (1979) 454-5. As Field Director for Dumbarton Oaks in Cyprus, Winfield surveyed the mosaics at Lythrankomi and Kiti in 1969. Some of the results were published in 1982 and 2005: J. Winfield and D. Winfield, *Proportion and Structure of the Human Figure in Byzantine Wall-Painting and Mosaic* (Oxford, 1982), 119-33; D. Winfield, *Byzantine Mosaic Work*.

<sup>97</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 134 n. 607.

<sup>98</sup> Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," *Corso di cultura sull'arte Ravennate e Bizantina* 32 (1985) 173-98, esp. 182.

sinopie do not always denote the colors or tones selected by the mosaicist, but no great changes to the design were made at this late stage. All three of the colors can still be detected on the various small fragments in the Byzantine Museum (Figs. 1.43-5). Sease and Thimme also noted traces of red sinopie during examination of the stolen fragments in Indiana.<sup>99</sup> They attribute the destruction of sinopie in many places to the methods of the incompetent restorer.

The materials of the mosaic include glass, marble, and stone in at least at forty-eight hues counted by Megaw and Hawkins.<sup>100</sup> There are no mother-of-pearl or terracotta tesserae, which have been found elsewhere in Cyprus.<sup>101</sup> Apart from one color, the glass tesserae at Lythrankomi are opaque rather than translucent. The translucent amber glass serves as a base for gold and silver sandwich glass, but also appears alone in two important contexts, outlining and shading areas of flesh and encircling the main composition in a solid band. Mixed with glass are several kinds of marble tesserae: white Proconnesian marble, yellow marble, and fine-grained pink, cream, and white marbles. Gray Proconnesian marble was apparently restricted to the upper east wall. A dull yellow stone, presumably local, completes the list of natural materials. Of these stones, white marble is the most prevalent because it doubles as a base for red painted tesserae. Red painted tesserae supplement very limited quantities of red opaque glass at Kiti and

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<sup>99</sup> Sease and Thimme, "The Kanakaria Mosaics: The Conservators' View," 126.

<sup>100</sup> See the list in Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 136.

<sup>101</sup> Mother-of-pearl has been found at Kourion: A. H. S. Megaw et al., *Kourion: Excavations in the Episcopal Precinct* (Washington, DC, 2007), 19, 108, 140-1, 163, 165, 557-8; and Katalymmata ton Plakoton, where excavations are ongoing under the direction of Eleni Prokopiou at the Department of Antiquities. Some information is currently available on the Department's website. Terracotta tesserae were used at Livadia: A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins, "A Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin in Cyprus," in *Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Études Byzantines, Bucarest, 6-12 septembre 1971*, vol. 3, ed. M. Berza and E. Stanesco (Bucharest, 1976), 363-6, esp. 364-5.

substitute entirely for red opaque glass at Livadia along with terracotta tesserae.<sup>102</sup> At Lythrankomi, a fair amount of dark or deep red glass was available to the mosaicist. According to Megaw and Hawkins, painted marble satisfied the need for lighter and brighter red tones, evidently not available in glass.<sup>103</sup> They identify traces of earth red pigment applied to white marble and presume the loss of bright red pigment due to the appearance of white marble in the faces of the north angel and the apostle Bartholomew where one would expect to find red or orange highlights.<sup>104</sup> However, comparing the use of dark red glass and red painted marble in the four decorative borders of the mosaic leads to slightly different conclusions. For example, the two tones of red found in the imitation joists of the outer border are actually made of purple-brown glass and red painted marble (Fig. 1.22, 1.25). Both sides of the joists are modulated with dark red glass, which produces a particular effect but also extends the supply of red glass.<sup>105</sup> In the crowstep border, one red triangle is composed solely of painted tesserae, but the preserved fragment is too small to determine any pattern or intent (Fig. 1.26). The better preserved irisated borders incorporate red glass and large amounts of red painted tesserae, probably in graded tones (Figs. 1.19-20, 1.22-3, 1.43-4). However, red glass appears in the outer irisated border only beside the two lowest apostle medallions on each side; above this level, red painted marble furnishes all red tones. Also notable is the

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<sup>102</sup> At Kiti painted marble tesserae are also found in yellow, brown, and black: Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 133. Megaw and Hawkins, "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," 364.

<sup>103</sup> On the problem of red glass: R. Brill and N. Cahill, "A Red Opaque Glass from Sardis and Some Thoughts on Red Opaques in General," *Journal of Glass Studies* 30 (1988) 16-27; A. N. Shugar, "Byzantine Opaque Red Glass Tesserae from Beit Shean, Israel," *Archaeometry* 42 (2000) 375-84.

<sup>104</sup> The earth red pigment is identified as red iron oxide with lime white, which is more stable than the orange tetroxide of lead believed to have produced the bright red hue: Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 134, 136.

<sup>105</sup> I have found no color photographs of this fragmentary border and am therefore dependent on the description of Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 38-9, 133.

distribution of red glass and red painted marble in the intermediate border. On the north side, the background of the jeweled band is comprised of red glass tesserae with one row of red painted tesserae defining the edges of the forms (Fig. 1.24). The border does not survive on the south side, but the opposite arrangement is found on the small fragment at the top of the conch (Fig. 1.28). Here, the background is comprised of red painted marble and the forms are edged in dark red or dark purple glass. The same pattern probably continued on the south side. Megaw and Hawkins offer two explanations for the disparity: either the mosaicist varied the tesserae to produce different effects, that of dark reflective tesserae on the north side of the apse versus light or bright non-reflective tesserae on the south side, or two mosaicists charged with setting the border had access to different materials. They do not consider the possibility that dark red tesserae may have been limited, having concluded that red painted tesserae fulfilled the need for lighter tones. Although dark red glass is more plentiful at Lythrankomi than at Kiti or Livadia, I would suggest that the supply was still closely managed, considering that red glass and red painted marble are found in the same parts of the intermediate and outer irised borders. In other words, red painted marble appears to substitute for red glass in some areas, while producing desired effects in other areas. It may even perform both functions simultaneously, given that the goals of economy and aesthetics were not mutually exclusive. The mosaicist also employed red painted tesserae in large quantities on the lyre-backed throne: on the back between the lyre-shaped posts, on the cushion, and on the drape (Fig. 1.20). In smaller quantities, painted marble appears in the Virgin's shoes, in the jewels of the footstool, in the stars of the apostle border, and in the apostles' clothing

and gospel books.<sup>106</sup> One area where the mosaicist clearly ran out of materials is in the dark background of the apostle border, where dark translucent tesserae are substituted for dark purple tesserae on the lowest part of the north soffit on the eastern side.<sup>107</sup>

The faces of Christ, the archangel, and the apostles conform to a common facial type defined by triangular or V-shaped cheeks (Figs. 1.46-9). The triangles curve under the eyes but very little on each side accentuating the narrowness of the face. Only the archangel bears a fuller left cheek as he turns toward the central figures. The same facial type distinguishes the Virgin and Child of the Kiti mosaic, but the triangles are convex on two sides, making the faces appear rounder (Figs. 2.31-2). Other commonalities in the faces at Lythrankomi include the almond-shaped eyes with the upper lids concealing part of the iris, the high arched brows with two rows of tesserae dividing the brows from the eyes, the shadow on the right side of the nose continuing through the brow line, and the long dark line of the mouth extending beyond the upper and lower lips. Various marbles create flesh tones, shaded by olive green, amber, and pale purple glass tesserae, and highlighted by select red and orange tesserae. For the most part, differences in the faces and the costumes of the figures seem not to imply the work of different artisans, but lend variety and visual interest to the composition. As Megaw and Hawkins observe, no two color combinations are repeated in the tunics and himations of the surviving apostles, although three tunics in a row on the south side are colored light blue. The archangel and the Christ Child also wear blue tunics with their respective olive green and white robes that are sharply shaded and highlighted (Figs. 1.21, 1.33). The necklines of the tunics and himations may be simple or folded, but all of the apostles' garments are boldly

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<sup>106</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 134 n. 606.

<sup>107</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 40.

outlined in dark purple glass, the same color used for the inscriptions.<sup>108</sup> However, some differences in the faces of the apostles are less easily explained. Megaw and Hawkins note that the faces and necks of the apostles on the south side are more heavily shaded than those on the north side. To my eyes the heads of James and Bartholomew on the lower south side also appear smaller than the others, although Megaw and Hawkins record no deviations in the size of the medallions, measured at 0.45 meters in diameter (Fig. 1.50).<sup>109</sup> Nor are the heads disproportional according to June and David Winfield, who affirm that each face is equal to a length of five noses, except for the apostle Andrew whose wild hair and beard complicate measurements.<sup>110</sup> Yet the two apostles, James and Bartholomew, stand out in other ways. They are the only ones to have no radiance or white glow above the right shoulder, an aesthetic effect to be examined shortly. Likewise, a shadow rendered in light blue or yellow glass appears above the bridge of the nose of every apostle except for Bartholomew. Despite these minor discrepancies, Megaw and Hawkins conclude that a single mosaicist set all of the figures in the mosaic, with an assistant or two responsible for areas of lesser importance.<sup>111</sup> One wonders whether an assistant had a greater role in setting the two lowest apostle medallions on the south side.

The mosaicist at Lythrankomi employs a variety of techniques to modulate color and model forms. For example, where the gold background of the mosaic approaches the

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<sup>108</sup> At Kiti, equally bold outlines define the hemlines of the garments.

<sup>109</sup> I was not permitted to examine or to measure the figural fragments in the Byzantine Museum outside of their display cases in order to determine whether the heads of James and Bartholomew are indeed smaller. However, given the flattening of the fragments and the realignment of tesserae, measurements may not have been accurate or conclusive. Within the medallions of James and Bartholomew, I count more rows of tesserae between the upper outline and the top of the head than any other figure except Mark.

<sup>110</sup> J. Winfield and D. Winfield, *Proportion and Structure of the Human Figure*, 130-3.

<sup>111</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 47. Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 182.

amber border on the north side of the conch there are several rows of yellow and white tesserae (Fig. 1.24). Gold glass alternates with yellow glass in a single row, followed by a solid row of yellow glass and two solid rows of yellow marble. Yellow marble then alternates with white marble in a single row, followed by a solid row of white marble.<sup>112</sup> Modulating gold in this way preserves expensive gold tesserae and throws the amber border into relief by framing it on both sides with white marble. The gold background may also have been modulated as it approached the green ground line, but nowhere does the transition or the ground itself survive. The blending of gold, yellow, and brown tones in the footstool is treated similarly, but here two or more rows of tesserae in single colors form dashes rather than dots (Fig. 1.20).<sup>113</sup> In the mosaics of the cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč, dots and dashes often work together to effect transitions, but at Lythrankomi they are applied separately.<sup>114</sup> More often the mosaicist juxtaposes different hues or tones in whole rows to effect gradation, as in the garments of the figures, in the leaves of the palm trees, and in the mandorla. The trunk of the south palm tree exhibits another setting technique, where the tesserae forming each horizontal row are individually graded to convey texture and three-dimensionality (Fig. 1.52). Where the forearm of the south archangel overlaps the tree, the tree itself becomes darker above the arm and lighter immediately below it. The objective was not to denote any light source or cast shadow, but to highlight the arm by means of contrasting colors.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> At the top of the conch the white marble is replaced by additional rows of yellow marble or stone.

<sup>113</sup> The dashes are referred to as “interlocking fingers” by Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 135.

<sup>114</sup> A. Terry and H. Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč* (University Park, PA, 2007), 86, 90-1.

<sup>115</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 134-5.

The modulation of color within the mandorla creates an impression of shimmering blue light. Megaw and Hawkins discern three concentric zones, which are visible in the fragment on the upper left side (Fig. 1.20). The zones are not sharply delineated as in the mandorla of Christ in the Transfiguration mosaic at Mount Sinai (Fig. 1.57),<sup>116</sup> but form subtle ripples of light as the tesserae evolve from light turquoise blue to dark blue within each zone. However, the proportion of dark blue and light blue tesserae is reversed to the right of the throne, so that the mandorla becomes progressively lighter from north to south. The mosaicist applies a similar technique on a smaller scale in the light blue and light purple backgrounds of the apostle medallions, where the apostles also radiate light. Above the right shoulder of each apostle, a group of white and light-colored tesserae slopes up and away from the shoulder in the shape of a loose triangle, sometimes continuing along the inner rim of the medallion (Fig. 1.51).<sup>117</sup> Darker tones of blue or purple tesserae placed above the left shoulder emphasize this radiance. The same graded background appears in the medallions of James and Bartholomew, who lack the distinct glow of white tesserae (Fig. 1.50). A similar glow emanates from the busts of female saints inscribed in medallions on the mosaics of the intrados at Poreč (Fig. 1.53). Here, the glow appears over one or both shoulders, created by means of dots and dashes, dots alone, or solid rows of white tesserae that become increasingly shorter.<sup>118</sup> In addition to the concentric waves of the blue mandorla and the white glow over the shoulders of the

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<sup>116</sup> G. Forsyth and K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Church and Fortress of Justinian* (Ann Arbor, 1973).

<sup>117</sup> Only the glow of Andrew appears to slope in the other direction, but lost tesserae between the halo and shoulder may create a false impression. The halo of the Virgin may also produce a light blue or grayish glow, formed in dashes against the dark blue background of the mandorla, in the only place where the halo survives on the lower right side (Fig. 1.20). However, the small fragment could be misleading and may actually represent the lighter tones of the mandorla behind the head of the Virgin.

<sup>118</sup> Interestingly, St. Iustina, who corresponds to Bartholomew on the lower south side, also has no glow: Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 85-6, 96-7.



apostles, the gold background of the mosaic may be understood as a schematic representation of divine light. In the main composition, the gold tesserae are set in horizontal rows, except where they curve concentrically at the top of the conch (Fig. 1.28). On the upper east wall, however, the mosaicist set gold tesserae at an angle in order to enhance the reflection of natural light and candlelight within the church. The technique was commonly used by mosaicists from the fifth to the tenth centuries and can be found in the same location above the main apses at Poreč and Mount Sinai.<sup>119</sup>

The interest in light effects at Lythrankomi is matched by an interest in conveying materials. In the splendid lyre-backed throne, the mosaicist combines imitation ivory uprights with an imitation silk cushion (Fig. 1.20).<sup>120</sup> The uprights are composed of white marble tesserae, modeled with pale olive green glass and shaded with translucent amber. A brighter green glass is used for the inlaid decoration in simple rectilinear and serpentine forms.<sup>121</sup> The appearance of ivory in the mosaic, together with the curve and taper of the uprights, has led some scholars to inquire whether the original form of the lyre-backed throne, if one existed in the Great Palace, derived from the use of elephant tusks.<sup>122</sup> On the silver reliquary in the Grado cathedral treasury, the uprights of the lyre-backed throne on which the Virgin and Child are seated contain distinctive striations

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<sup>119</sup> E. Borsook, F. Superbi, and G. Pagliarulo, eds., *Medieval Mosaics: light, color, materials* (Milan, 2000), 208.

<sup>120</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 56-7. It is not possible to tell whether the rest of the throne, apart from the uprights, imitates ivory. The legs of the throne are lost and the few tesserae on the front of the seat belong to a rectangular blue jewel.

<sup>121</sup> Some of these rectilinear and serpentine forms appear to represent imitation carving, made not out of bright green glass, but of the same white marble and pale olive glass used for the uprights. Megaw and Hawkins mention only inlaid decoration and do not indicate that some of these shapes match the uprights in tone. Unfortunately, I do not have a color photograph of this area in sufficient detail to make a definitive statement. The ivory throne of the bishop Maximian in Ravenna (c. 550) is not of the lyre-backed type, but is richly decorated with ivory relief panels showing scenes from the lives of Christ and Joseph: O. von Simson, *Sacred Fortress: Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna* (Chicago, 1948), 63-8.

<sup>122</sup> R. Cormack and E. J. W. Hawkins, "The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul: The Rooms Above the Southwest Vestibule and Ramp," *DOP* 31 (1977) 175-251, esp. 242 n. 126.

evoking animal horns (Fig. 1.54).<sup>123</sup> In other visual representations, the lyre-backed throne is overlaid with gold and jewels, making it difficult to press the argument further. The back of the throne at Lythrankomi is composed of white marble tesserae, once dipped in red pigment and set in vertical rows to evoke fabric. The red fabric continues under the cushion and falls to the base of the throne behind the Virgin's legs. The cushion itself, preserved only on the south side, is made of graded tones of red painted tesserae in the central section, resembling shot silk. The tesserae are set concentrically where they approach the seated figure of the Virgin. Three rows of dark blue glass form a seam dividing the central section from a second section of pure white marble. At the end of the cushion, an imitation embroidery medallion displays a variety of yellow, green, and dark purple glass, outlined in double rows of gold glass, modulated with yellow, light brown, and green glass, and double rows of silver glass, modulated with light blue glass. The interest in representing materials is also seen in the apse mosaic at Kiti, where the angels hold translucent glass orbs and the halo of Christ contains a wooden cross with truncated arms set in matte yellow and brown painted tesserae (Figs. 2.27-8, 2.33).<sup>124</sup>

Lastly, one must comment on the size of the tesserae in the mosaic. The tesserae cut or selected by the mosaicist vary in size, depending on the area or features to be delineated and modeled, but remain large compared to other early Byzantine mosaics. The tesserae of the gold background measure about ten by eight millimeters, whereas the tesserae of the scaled background at Livadia measure about seven by five millimeters

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<sup>123</sup> A. Cutler, *Transfigurations: Studies in the Dynamics of Byzantine Iconography* (University Park, PA, 1975), 11. For more on the Grado reliquary, see section 8d below.

<sup>124</sup> See my chapter 2.6, 7c.

with a surface area of less than half.<sup>125</sup> Likewise, the cubes employed in the haloes of the apostles and in clothing measure about nine millimeters square. The smallest tesserae in the mosaic are used to model the faces of Christ and the apostles at four millimeters square (Figs. 1.47-9). Slightly larger tesserae, measuring at least five millimeters square, characterize the face of the north archangel and the surviving arm of the south archangel (Figs. 1.46, 1.52). At Livadia, tesserae forming the hand of the Virgin measure three by two millimeters; they are more than sixty percent smaller than the smallest tesserae used at Lythrankomi (Fig. 3.23). Unfortunately, measurements are not available for the Kiti mosaic, but the faces and hands of the figures are also composed of very small tesserae (Figs. 2.29-32). Naturally, larger tesserae involve less labor and contribute to the impressionistic style of the mosaic. Although there are no precise measurements associated with the technique, the use of very small tesserae to model faces and other areas of flesh emerges in the region around the year 530, according to Piccirillo's analysis of the securely dated floor mosaics in Jordan.<sup>126</sup> The date should not be applied as a *terminus ante quem* at Lythrankomi, given that some mosaicists probably continued to work in the old style and there might have been a period of overlap in which both setting techniques were used. I would also emphasize that the tesserae used in the faces at Lythrankomi are proportionally smaller, even if they cannot be classified as "very small." Rather, the use of somewhat larger tesserae should be taken as one of many indications that the mosaic at Lythrankomi antedates the mosaics at Kiti and Livadia.

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<sup>125</sup> Measurements come from Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 132 and "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," 365.

<sup>126</sup> Compare the lower mosaic of the diakonikon in the Memorial of Moses (August, 530) and the Church of St. George at Khirbat al-Mukhayyat (535-6) in Mount Nebo: M. Piccirillo, *The Mosaics of Jordan* (Amman, 1993), 22, 134-47, 178-9.

### 8a. Evidence for Dating: Apostle Border

Having considered the evolution of the site, the production and decline of its mosaics and wall paintings, it is necessary to examine the motifs that provide the strongest evidence for dating the apse mosaic, bearing in mind the late fifth-century date of the original church. The apostle medallions of the upper border are central to discussions of date in both studies by Megaw and Hawkins and Sacopoulo.<sup>127</sup> While the *imagines clipeatae* of saints and emperors are known to have appeared in monumental programs of the fifth century, medallions containing busts of the twelve apostles become common in the sixth century, beginning with the Archepiscopal Chapel in Ravenna (494-519).<sup>128</sup> On the transverse arches of the central vault, the apostles are split into two groups of six flanking central medallions of Christ (Fig. 1.55). Important parallels in mosaics of the Justinianic period include San Vitale in Ravenna (540-7/8) and the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai (548-65). At San Vitale, medallions of the twelve apostles adorn the soffit of the bema arch, accompanied by the local saints Gervasius and Protasius, sons of the titular St. Vitalis (Fig. 1.56).<sup>129</sup> The medallions are supported by pairs of dolphins with entwined tails ascending towards a central bust of Christ. At Mount Sinai, the apostles appear in the intrados of the apse, in the same

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<sup>127</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 81-5, 100-13. Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 41-53, 55-60.

<sup>128</sup> On the lost fifth-century mosaics of Santa Sabina and San Giovanni Evangelista: G. Bovini, "Mosaici parietali scomparsi degli antichi edifici sacri di Ravenna," *Felix Ravenna* 68 (1955) 54-76; C. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1960), 151-3, 169-71. On the Archepiscopal Chapel: G. Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West: Decoration, Function and Patronage* (Toronto, 2003), 104-15.

<sup>129</sup> F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden, 1969), 226-56. Von Simson, *Sacred Fortress*, 23-39. Two phases of mosaic work in the 540s are identified by I. Andreescu-Treadgold and W. Treadgold, "Procopius and the Imperial Panels of S. Vitale," *Art Bulletin* 79:4 (1997) 708-23.

position as at Lythrankomi, flanking a central cross (Fig. 1.57).<sup>130</sup> The series of medallions continues along the base of the conch, where two donor figures, sixteen prophets, and King David are shown. The mosaic at Lythrankomi is also closely related to a sixth-century tapestry from Egypt in the Cleveland Museum, where twelve apostle medallions surround a representation of the Virgin and Child enthroned and flanked by the archangels Michael and Gabriel (Fig. 1.58).<sup>131</sup> The medallions are embedded in a floral and fruited garland, analogous to the acanthus leaves at Lythrankomi. The Christ Child of the Cleveland tapestry also holds his scroll in a similar fashion, supported at the base with a covered hand. Medallions of female saints, rather than apostles, are depicted in the soffit of the apse at the Basilica of Eufrasius at Poreč, while the twelve apostles process along the east wall above the apse (Fig. 1.59). These mosaics have been dated to the middle of the sixth century.<sup>132</sup>

The twelve apostles are inscribed and individualized in these sixth-century works, representing an important stage in the evolution of their portraits. The earliest representations of the apostles in Christian catacombs and sarcophagi depict a homogeneous group of twelve assembled around the figure of Christ. The apostles are first differentiated by inscriptions in the fourth century, as in the silver reliquary from Jabalkovo, dated c. 325-50. Now in Sofia, the reliquary retains eight of the original

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<sup>130</sup> Forsyth and Weitzmann, *Monastery of Saint Catherine*. On the date of the church and mosaic: I. Ševčenko, "The Early Period of the Sinai Monastery in the Light of Its Inscriptions," *DOP* 20 (1966) 255-64.

<sup>131</sup> D. Shepherd, "An Icon of the Virgin: A Sixth-Century Tapestry Panel from Egypt," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 56 (1969) 90-120. M.-H. Rutschowscaya, "The Mother of God in Coptic Textiles," in *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. M. Vassilaki (Milan, 2000), 219-25.

<sup>132</sup> Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 59-69.

twelve names.<sup>133</sup> By the end of the fourth century, Peter and Paul are portrayed with individualized facial features, especially in Roman monuments and objects. The bronze situla in the Vatican Museums, dated 370-440, preserves the earliest complete list of the apostles with Peter and Paul distinguished by beards.<sup>134</sup> In both the Sofia reliquary and the Vatican situla, the names of the apostles are inscribed in Greek. The Puebla Nova sarcophagus (c. 400), where the heads of the apostles have been destroyed, contains the earliest Latin list, although it is incomplete with only eight names preserved.<sup>135</sup> In general, the twelve apostles are identified by inscriptions before the appearance of discrete portrait types.

In the mosaic at Lythrankomi, the faces of the apostles are individualized and their names are inscribed in Greek (Fig. 1.22-3). The portraits of Paul and Andrew represent well-known early Christian types: Paul is portrayed with a long dark beard and a receding hairline and Andrew is portrayed with wild gray hair and a gray beard (Fig. 1.60). The medallions of Peter and John are lost, but presumably conformed to established types: Peter with white hair and a white beard and John young and beardless with short brown hair. Parallels for most of the other apostles at Lythrankomi can be found in sixth-century works, although their features are not yet fixed. Alongside Peter, Paul, Andrew, and John, the apostle James developed a consistent portrait type at a relatively early date.<sup>136</sup> Four mosaic programs of the sixth century show James as a

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<sup>133</sup> Cat. no. B3 in H. Buschhausen, *Die spätrömischen Metallscrinia und frühchristlichen Reliquiare* (Vienna, 1971), 181-90, pls. B7-12.

<sup>134</sup> W. L. M. Burke, "A Bronze Situla in the Museo Cristiano of the Vatican Library," *Art Bulletin* 12:2 (1930) 163-78.

<sup>135</sup> Six names are preserved in full; only one or two letters suggest the names of Andrew and Jude: H. Schlunk, "Der Sarkophag von Puebla Nueva (Prov. Teledo)," *Madridrer Mitteilungen* 7 (1966) 210-31, pls. 59-70.

<sup>136</sup> Andrew, John, and James follow about a century after Peter and Paul. See E. Endoltseva, "La genèse de l'iconographie des apôtres Jean et Jacques, fils de Zabédée," *Cahiers Archéologiques*, forthcoming.

young man with short dark hair and a dark beard, including the Archepiscopal Chapel and San Vitale in Ravenna (Fig. 1.61), the Basilica of Eufrasius at Poreč, and the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai. At Lythrankomi, however, James appears decidedly older with gray hair and a gray beard, a type also found in the Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna (451-73) (Figs. 1.62-3).<sup>137</sup> Because apostle medallions do not generally appear before the sixth century, the older portrait type at Lythrankomi is anomalous and may suggest a date for the mosaic in the early sixth century, even prior to the second quarter or third decade argued in the two monographs.

Despite the concordance of the apostolic college in the Synoptic Gospels and the clear substitution of Mathias for Judas in Acts, the apostolic college remains inconsistent in early Christian programs (Table I).<sup>138</sup> Paul, not Mathias, is uniformly adopted in place of Judas, except in the apse of room six at the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit, where his presence may be implied by a local abbot of the same name (Fig. 1.64).<sup>139</sup> Byzantine lists also regularly incorporate the evangelists Mark and Luke, usually in place of Simon, James Alphaeus, or Jude. According to Sacopoulo, the inclusion of the evangelists among the twelve apostles goes back to late fourth-century sarcophagi, such as the sarcophagus of Concordius at Arles (c. 390), where the evangelists are differentiated by gospel books.<sup>140</sup> As noted above, the earliest complete list of the apostles in early Christian art appears on the Vatican situla, which corresponds to the list of the Synoptics

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<sup>137</sup> Although the apostle James of the Orthodox Baptistery is also light-haired, he is not gray-haired like James at Lythrankomi, pace Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 112-13. On the Orthodox Baptistery: S. Kostof, *The Orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna* (New York, 1965); A. Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning: The Neonian Baptistery in Ravenna," *Art Bulletin* 69:3 (1987) 358-75.

<sup>138</sup> The apostles are named in Matt. 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, and Luke 6:14-16. Mathias replaces Judas in Acts 1:13 and 1:26.

<sup>139</sup> J. Maspero, *Fouilles exécutées à Baouit* (Cairo, 1931), 145-6, pls. 21-4.

<sup>140</sup> The names of the evangelists inscribed on the books may or may not be original: Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 43.

plus Paul. The same apostles appear in the lost apse mosaic of St. Agatha of the Goths near Rome (459-70);<sup>141</sup> in the mosaics of the Orthodox Baptistery, the Archepiscopal Chapel, and San Vitale in Ravenna; and on the triumphal arch of the Basilica of Eufrasius at Poreč, where the names of the apostles are original, even if the lower parts of the figures were remade in the late nineteenth century.<sup>142</sup> The Puebla Nova sarcophagus and the late seventh-century wooden coffin of St. Cuthbert in Durham preserve only eight and ten names respectively, but they appear consistent.<sup>143</sup> There is greater variety in the Eastern Mediterranean by the sixth century and perhaps earlier, if the resist-dyed linen from Akhmîm in the Victoria and Albert Museum can be dated to the fifth century (Fig. 1.91).<sup>144</sup> The textile retains only three names, those of Peter, Thomas, and Mark, whose presence probably signals the inclusion of all four evangelists. The Cleveland tapestry, also from Egypt, excludes Simon, Jude, and James Alphaeus for Mark, Luke, and Mathias (Fig. 1.58). A fragmentary limestone relief from the Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara, dated to the sixth century, displays seven names attached to figures who have suffered iconoclastic damage.<sup>145</sup> The seven names appear to the left of Christ, who is inscribed “Savior,” and point to a total of fourteen figures on the intact relief. It may have included Mathias among the twelve apostles, who is found in three other works from Egypt, plus the two evangelists. The mosaic of the Transfiguration at Mount Sinai, surrounded by twelve apostle medallions, avoids the difficult decision and includes all

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<sup>141</sup> On St. Agatha of the Goths: Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 153-4, pl. 4:1; G. Matthaie, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma* (Rome, 1967), 131-4.

<sup>142</sup> On the authenticity of the apostles at Poreč: Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 51-5, 176-8, figs. 240-6.

<sup>143</sup> Schlunk, “Der Sarkophag von Puebla Nueva,” 210-31, pls. 59-70. E. Kitzinger, “The Coffin-Reliquary,” in *The Relics of St. Cuthbert*, ed. C. F. Battiscombe (Oxford, 1956), 202-304, esp. 265-273, pls. 4-6.

<sup>144</sup> The linen dates to the fifth or sixth century: cat. no. 789 in A. F. Kendrick, *Catalogue of Textiles from the Burying-Grounds in Egypt*, vol. 3: *Coptic Period* (London, 1922), 67, pl. 20.

<sup>145</sup> J. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1907-1908)* (Cairo, 1909), 15-16, 28-9, pl. 31:6.



fifteen potential apostles: Peter, James and John play a role in the central narrative and are not repeated in the border (Fig. 1.57). In room six of the monastery at Bawit, fourteen total figures flank the enthroned Virgin and Child in the lower register of the painted apse (Fig. 1.64). However, two local abbots, Naberho and Paul of Psilikous, accompany the twelve apostles in a surprising list that excludes Paul, Mark, and Luke.<sup>146</sup> Thirteen medallions with inscribed busts of the virtues border the apse conch on the east wall. Consistent with the Eastern lists but still unmatched, the apostle border at Lythrankomi sacrifices Simon and James Alphaeus for Mark and Luke.

One final example including a complete list of the apostles remains exceptional among the surviving monuments of Ravenna. On the Mausoleum of Theodoric, the names of the apostles are incised on the exterior spurs of the monolithic dome, perhaps in imitation of the cenotaphs of the Mausoleum of Constantine at the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople (Fig. 1.65).<sup>147</sup> Although very late, the description of the Holy Apostles by Nicholas Mesarites (c. 1200) is the earliest surviving source to record the names of the apostles to whom the church is dedicated.<sup>148</sup> His list does not accord precisely with the list in Ravenna, citing Matthew in place of Mathias. Nevertheless, the Mausoleum of Theodoric is accepted by many scholars, including Sacopoulo, as the earliest surviving list to incorporate the evangelists Mark and Luke.<sup>149</sup> Consequently,

<sup>146</sup> Maspero, *Fouilles exécutées à Baouit*, 145-6, pls. 21-4.

<sup>147</sup> A. M. Schneider, "Die Symbolik des Theodorichgrabes in Ravenna," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 41 (1941) 404-5. M. Johnson, "Toward a History of Theodoric's Building Program," *DOP* 42 (1988) 73-96, esp. 95.

<sup>148</sup> G. Downey, "Nikolaos Mesarites: Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 47:6 (1957) 855-924, esp. 867-8. Also on the Holy Apostles, see Downey, "The Builder of the Original Church of the Apostles at Constantinople: A Contribution to the Criticism of the 'Vita Constantini' Attributed to Eusebius," *DOP* 6 (1951) 51-80.

<sup>149</sup> Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 46, follows the list given by A. Haupt, *Das Grabmal Theodorichs der Grosser zu Ravenna* (Leipzig, 1911), 11 and repeated by Schneider, "Die Symbolik des Theodorichgrabes in Ravenna," 405 and G. Bovini, *Il mausoleo di Teodorico* (Ravenna, 1959), 18, which mistakes Bartholomew – misspelled and abbreviated as "Martholoms" – for Matthew. See R. Heidenreich

Sacopoulo derives a *terminus post quem* of 526 for the mosaic at Lythrankomi.<sup>150</sup> Others have argued, however, that the cursory manner in which the names are inscribed, the errors in spelling, and the lack of parallels for the list of twelve suggest that the names could be medieval additions.<sup>151</sup> The last of these objections is the least problematic in my view, given that several of the Eastern lists are unparalleled, including that of Lythrankomi. However, even if one regards the inscriptions as authentic, there is no reason to give priority to the Mausoleum of Theodoric as the first list to include the evangelists Mark and Luke,<sup>152</sup> especially if the list had any relationship to the Church of the Holy Apostles. The Mausoleum of Theodoric may represent an important parallel, but cannot supply a *terminus post quem* of 526.

The inclusion of Mark and Luke seems to have disrupted the hierarchy of the apostles in early Byzantine works, although the order of calling was not fixed in the New Testament. A general hierarchy is apparent, however, in the Synoptic Gospels and in Acts: Peter is always named first, followed by Andrew, James, and John (Matt. 10:2-4; Luke 6:14-16) or James, John, and Andrew (Mark 3:16-18; Acts 1:13) and then Philip. The second tier consists of Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew in mixed order, followed by James Alphaeus, Jude/Thaddeus, and Simon in mixed order. In early Christian art, Peter and Paul take precedence, followed closely by Andrew, John, and James. In Western monuments where lists reflect the Synoptic Gospels, programs are

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and H. Johannes, *Das Grabmal Theoderichs zu Ravenna* (Wiesbaden, 1971), 81, 170 n. 102. Others who accept the inscriptions on the dome as original include G. Tabbaroni, "Il mausoleo di Teodorico: riflessioni e proposte," *CCARB* 29 (1982) 221-38, esp. 228 and Johnson, "Toward a History of Theodoric's Building Program," 95.

<sup>150</sup> Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 45-53.

<sup>151</sup> Heidenreich and Johannes, *Das Grabmal Theoderichs zu Ravenna*, 81, 170 n. 102. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 2.1 (Wiesbaden, 1974), 219-20; Review of Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 72 (1979) 361-2.

<sup>152</sup> H. Maguire, Review of Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, in *Art Bulletin* 59:3 (1977) 424-5.

more likely to follow the order of calling in one of the Synoptics. For example, the apostles at San Vitale conform to the gospel of Matthew, while the apostles of the Basilica of Eufrasius at Poreč conform to the gospel of Luke. At Lythrankomi, Megaw and Hawkins highlight the placement or displacement of three apostles in comparison to New Testament lists and contemporary works of art: Andrew is demoted to fourth place, James is demoted to ninth place, and Jude is promoted to eighth place.<sup>153</sup> The demotion of Andrew complies with the gospel of Mark and Acts, but represents a departure from his normally privileged position in third place in contemporary works, bearing in mind the introduction of Paul in second place. More striking and more difficult to explain are the relegation of James and the elevation of Jude. The latter is paralleled in two early works: the Vatican situla (370-440) and the lost mosaic of St. Agatha of the Goths (459-70). These inconsistencies suggested to Megaw and Hawkins and to Sacopoulo a date for the mosaic relatively early in the sixth century.<sup>154</sup>

Sacopoulo also compares the acanthus foliage of the apostle border to acanthus scrolls encompassing personifications and theatrical masks in floor mosaics.<sup>155</sup> The motif remains common throughout the early Christian period with prominent examples in the Constantinian Villa in Antioch (c. 325) and the Great Palace in Constantinople (after c. 530).<sup>156</sup> While there is no precise parallel for the wide and elongated stem of acanthus at

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<sup>153</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 108-10.

<sup>154</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 110. Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 45-53.

<sup>155</sup> Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 57-60.

<sup>156</sup> On the Constantinian Villa: D. Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* (Princeton, 1947), 226-56; cat. no. 45 in F. Baratte, *Mosaïques romaines et paléochrétiennes du Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1978), 99-118. The date of the Great Palace mosaic was widely contested until pottery fill provided a *terminus post quem* of c. 530: W. Jobst, B. Erdal, and C. Gurtner, *Istanbul, The Great Palace Mosaics: The Story of Its Exploration, Preservation, Exhibition 1983-1997* (Istanbul, 1997); W. Jobst, *Neue Forschungen und Restaurierungen im byzantinischen Kaiserpalast von Istanbul* (Vienna, 1999). Justinianic brick stamps had been discovered previously in the southwest cistern below the mosaic and in the adjacent hall, but the evidence was ignored

Lythrankomi, some features of the leaves can be found in floor mosaics. Stylistically, the leaves are flat and symmetrically disposed, connected by a prominent central rib, composed of four or five rows of yellow marble and green glass tesserae. The yellow marble is repeated in the edging of the leaves and pointed lobes, each of which possesses a single sharp spine (Figs. 1.22-3, 1.38-41, 1.60, 1.62). The closest parallel identified by Sacopoulo comes from the House of the Rams' Heads at Antioch (c. 500), where the acanthus leaves of the interior border have pointed lobes highlighted in yellow with sharp spines (Fig. 1.66).<sup>157</sup> Likewise, the inhabited scrolls of the nave mosaic of the Prokopios Church at Jerash (526) consist of flattened acanthus leaves with strong central ribs and pointed lobes.<sup>158</sup> The lobes may be edged in yellow against a dark background containing decorative fillers (Fig. 1.67).<sup>159</sup> Similar fillers in the form of stars and florets punctuate the border at Lythrankomi; they are simpler than the fillers used in the apostle borders at San Vitale and Mount Sinai, perhaps a consequence of the space and attention given the acanthus (Figs. 1.56-7, 1.61). The comparisons identified by Sacopoulo in floor mosaics recommend a date around the first quarter of the sixth century. They are wrongly excluded as evidence when she upholds the *terminus post quem* of 526.

The *imagines clipeatae* of the twelve apostles appear in monumental programs around the turn of the sixth century, as seen in the Archepiscopal Chapel in Ravenna

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by the excavator, who dated the mosaic to the second half of the fifth century on the basis of style: D. Talbot Rice, ed., *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors, Second Report* (Edinburgh, 1958), 121-67. On the reign of Tiberius I (578-82): C. Mango and I. Lavin, Review of D. Talbot Rice, *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors, Second Report*, in *Art Bulletin* 42 (1960) 67-73. In my opinion, the proposed seventh-century dates do not contend with the lack of parallels in floor mosaics: P. Nordhagen, "The Mosaics of the Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 56 (1963) 53-68; J. Trilling, "The Soul of the Empire: Style and Meaning in the Mosaic Pavement of the Byzantine Imperial Palace in Constantinople," *DOP* 43 (1989) 27-72.

<sup>157</sup> On the House of the Rams' Heads: Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 350; cat. no. 20 in C. Kondoleon, ed., *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* (Princeton, 2000), 133-4.

<sup>158</sup> On the Prokopios Church: Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 292-3.

<sup>159</sup> I have not found a color photograph or detailed description of the fragmentary border.

(494-519), and remain popular throughout the Justinianic period (527-65). The apostles at Lythrankomi are identified by inscriptions and have individualized facial features, consistent with other sixth-century portrait types. The exception is the apostle James, whose mature portrait type accords with the Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna (451-73) rather than the Archepiscopal Chapel, San Vitale (540-7/8), the Basilica of Eufrasius at Poreč (mid-sixth century), and the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai (548-65). The college of apostles at Lythrankomi is unique among surviving works, but related to other early Byzantine works in the incorporation of the evangelists Mark and Luke. Despite the adherence of most monumental Western programs to the list of the Synoptics, the inclusion of the two evangelists cannot be considered strictly Byzantine, as they appear first on early Christian sarcophagi and later on the Mausoleum of Theodoric. The apostle border at Lythrankomi is further characterized by idiosyncrasies in the apostolic hierarchy, where Andrew and James are downgraded in importance and Jude is upgraded. Along with the early portrait type of James, the lack of an established hierarchy suggests a date in the earlier part of the sixth century. If we dispense with the *terminus post quem* of 526, the parallels that Sacopoulo identifies for the acanthus foliage in the House of the Rams' Heads (c. 500) and the Prokopios Church (526) may be reinstated as evidence for a possible date in the first quarter of the sixth century. It is unfortunate, if not surprising, that the Cleveland tapestry cannot be dated more securely within the sixth century, given the many motifs it has in common with the Lythrankomi mosaic. Both works represent an enthroned Virgin and Child flanked by archangels, surrounded by inscribed apostle medallions set in rich foliage. Similarities also extend to details, such as the manner in

which the Christ Child holds his scroll. Taken as a whole, the motifs of the apostle border suggest a date, conservatively rounded, in the first half of the sixth century.

### *8b. Intermediate and Outer Borders*

The four geometric borders of the mosaic contain conventional motifs; however, two of the borders configure these motifs in original formats. Dividing the apostle border from the central composition, the intermediate border is comprised of green squares and blue circles forming imitation jewels, separated by “iris flowers” or palmettes of green and light blue tesserae, set against a red background (Fig. 1.24). The stems of the palmettes develop into tendrils forming a key or meander pattern. Megaw and Hawkins locate a close parallel for the border in the relief sculpture of the Church of St. Polyuktos in Constantinople (c. 524-7).<sup>160</sup> The fragmentary marble screen once contained a network of flowers with a border of lozenges joined to key motifs (Fig. 1.68). While the border lacks the palmettes and the impression of colored jewels, the basic design is very similar. Although not considered by Megaw and Hawkins or by Sacopoulo, the Lythrankomi border may also be related to a type of jeweled band found in the floor mosaics of Jordan from the mid-sixth century to the early eighth century. The polychrome border consists of circles and poised squares between opposed trifids on red ground.<sup>161</sup> The floral component is more modest in the Jordanian pavements, composed of solid white tesserae without meander tendrils or green falls. In place of gold glass, the imitation jewels are often outlined in bold yellow. The same basic design is found in the

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<sup>160</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 100, pl. I (linecut). R. M. Harrison, *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul*, vol. I (Princeton, 1986), 147, pl. 174.

<sup>161</sup> C. Balmelle et al., *Le décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine: répertoire graphique et descriptif des compositions linéaires et isotropes* (Paris, 1985), 64, pl. 25e.

nave mosaic of the Upper Chapel of the Priest John at Khirbat al-Mukkhayat (565); in the first phase of the Church of the Virgin at Madaba (late sixth century); and in the nave mosaic of the Church of the Acropolis at Ma'in (719-20).<sup>162</sup> Variants of the pattern, only slightly more elaborate, decorate two floor mosaics at Mount Nebo. Two small leaves sprout at the base of the trifids on either side of each jewel in the nave mosaic of the Church of Sts. Lot and Prokopios (557) (Fig. 1.69).<sup>163</sup> In the sanctuary mosaic of the Theotokos Chapel (603-8), two leaves point downwards from the trifids, evoking the falls at Lythrankomi (Fig. 1.70).<sup>164</sup> Here, four imitation pearls in white tesserae surround and embellish each jewel. While the parallels in Jordan are all later than the date indicated by the apostle border, they suggest ties to the region that will become more apparent in the discussion of the Kiti mosaic.

Like the intermediate border, the outer border of the apse mosaic employs conventional motifs in an unusual arrangement. Confined to the outer face of the east wall, the border consists of imitation roof joists or alternating cuboids in lateral perspective, each in two tones of red or green (Figs. 1.22, 1.25). Olive-brown rosettes outlined in gold tesserae may imitate carving on the square ends of the joists, composed of yellow marble. Altering the direction of the joists creates a zigzag pattern and disrupts the illusion of an arched cornice preceding the semidome. The triangular interstices are inscribed with cream-colored ivy leaves on a dark blue background. Given the absence of exact parallels, Megaw and Hawkins compare the border to the more common three-

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<sup>162</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 65, 174-5, 200-1.

<sup>163</sup> M. Piccirillo, *Madaba: le chiese e i mosaici* (Milan, 1989), 82-8; *Mosaics of Jordan*, 164-5.

<sup>164</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 151, 153.

dimensional dentils and tangent cuboids in lateral perspective.<sup>165</sup> The dentils originate in the illusionistic architecture of Greco-Roman pavements and define similar spaces in the early Christian period. The architectural facades on the vault mosaics of the Church of St. George in Thessalonike were devised with three-dimensional dentils, possibly in the late fifth or early sixth century.<sup>166</sup> Likewise, single joists marked with florets characterize the fictive entablature of the Cleveland Tapestry (Fig. 1.58). The perspective of the joists remains awkward with four sides revealed by the artist instead of three. At San Vitale in Ravenna, three-dimensional dentils line the coffered vault framing the emperor Justinian and his attendants. Translated into purely decorative patterns, the dentils also form medallions encircling the busts of the twelve apostles on the intrados of the bema arch (Figs. 1.56, 1.61). In the same way, lateral cuboids form a geometric border in the mosaics of the east barrel vault of the church of S. Maria della Croce at Casaranello, dated to the fifth or sixth century (Fig. 1.71).<sup>167</sup> The sides of each joist are depicted in

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<sup>165</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 114. Balmelle et al., *Le décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine*, 154-5.

<sup>166</sup> The three-dimensional dentils also appear as a continuous border pattern between the architectural zone and the Ascension zone of the vault. The date of the mosaics remains highly controversial. A Constantinian date for the mosaics of the dome was recently argued by Ch. Bakirtzis and P. Mastora, "Are the Mosaics in the Rotunda Linked to Its Conversion to a Christian Church?" in *Niš and Byzantium IX, Symposium, Niš 3-5 June 2010* (2011), 33-45. Others support a late fourth-century date: H. Torp, "The Date of the Conversion of the Rotunda at Thessaloniki into a Church," in *The Norwegian Institute at Athens: The First Five Lectures*, ed. Ø. Andersen and H. Whittaker (Athens, 1991), 13-28; S. Čurčić, *Some Observations and Questions Regarding Early Christian Architecture in Thessaloniki* (Thessaloniki, 2000). The evidence of brick stamps has been used to furnish a date in the third quarter of the fifth century: M. Vickers, "The Date of the Mosaics of the Rotunda at Thessaloniki," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 38 (1970) 183-7; W.E. Kleinbauer, "The Iconography and the Date of the Mosaics of the Rotunda of Hagios Georgios, Thessaloniki," *Viator* 3 (1972) 27-108. Gonosová supports this date with evidence from textiles: A. Gonosová, "The Formation and Sources of Early Byzantine Floral Semis and Floral Diaper Patterns Reexamined," *DOP* 41 (1987) 227-37. An early sixth-century date is proposed by J.-M. Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments du IVe au VIe siècle contribution à l'étude d'une ville paléochrétienne* (Athens, 1984), 125-64.

<sup>167</sup> On a fifth-century date: G. Bovini, "I mosaici di S. Maria della Croce di Casaranello," *Corsi di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina* 11 (1964) 35-42; M. Trinci Cecchelli, "I mosaici di Santa Maria della Croce a Casaranello," *Vetera Christianorum* 11 (1974) 167-86. On a sixth-century date: J. Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV. bis XIII. Jahrhundert*, vol. 1 (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1916), 18; Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 64 n. 186.



two tones of red, blue, and green, and the ends are marked with red stars or florets against a white background. Single white tesserae in sets of three punctuate the dark blue background. Megaw and Hawkins also observe the use of the three-dimensional dentils in the borders of floor mosaics, as for example in room two of the House of the Mysteries of Isis at Antioch.<sup>168</sup> Examples of the motif at Antioch are plentiful, but a better comparison for the alternating cuboids at Lythrankomi comes from room twenty of the Yakto Complex, better known for the Megalopsychia Hunt on its upper level. The lower level mosaic, dated by Doro Levi to the late fourth century, employs the motif as a repeat pattern in the main field (Fig. 1.72).<sup>169</sup> As a consequence of expansion, the cuboids with adjacent short sides form squares rather than triangles in the interstices and a prominent grid rather than a zigzag pattern. The mosaic confirms the early origins of the border at Lythrankomi, which is more complex in its details. Occasionally, the cuboids also appear as isolated motifs. In the floor mosaic of the nave of the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian at Jerash (533), two-toned cuboids marked with swastikas are framed by small squares, connected tangentially to larger squares and diamonds containing figural and geometric motifs in an all-over geometric pattern.<sup>170</sup>

The other geometric borders are ubiquitous in floor mosaics, but less common in wall mosaics. Irisated borders circumscribe the mosaic outside the apostle border and the blue mandorla surrounding the Virgin and Child (Figs. 1.19-20, 1.22-3, 1.26, 1.43-4). In both locations the mosaicist has chosen a diagonal setting pattern and the color proceeds from dark red to dark blue. Yet the borders are not identical: the outer border is wider

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<sup>168</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 114, n. 494. Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 165-6, pl. 33c.

<sup>169</sup> Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 281, pl. 111c. Balmelle et al., *Le décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine*, 331, pl. 212g.

<sup>170</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 278-9, 288-9.

than the border of the mandorla, composed of twenty-two to twenty-six rows of tesserae versus roughly fourteen rows of tesserae. Shades of yellow and green are also more prominent in the outer irisated border, whereas red and blue predominate in the border of the mandorla, divided by a line of gold tesserae through the center. In other programs, irisated borders encircle the figure of Christ, a reference to the rainbow around the throne of God in Ezekiel 1:28 and Revelation 4:3. In the Church of St. George in Thessalonike, the irisated border is one of three decorative borders surrounding the lost figure at the apex of the dome, usually assumed to be Christ in the context of the Ascension or Second Coming.<sup>171</sup> At San Vitale, a rainbow clipeus encloses the bust of Christ at the center of the apse border, while other irisated borders enclose crosses (Fig. 1.56). Yet another irisated border in shifting colors frames the apse conch (Fig. 1.73). Likewise, the vision of the cross against a starry sky in the domical vault of S. Maria della Croce at Casaranello is situated within a rainbow border (Fig. 1.71).<sup>172</sup>

Finally, the crowstep border at Lythrankomi is preserved on the south side of the intrados above the cornice (Fig. 1.26). Megaw and Hawkins provide only a black and white photograph, but note that it consisted of alternating red and green triangles on white ground.<sup>173</sup> They propose that the border extended the full length of the mosaic at the base of the conch. The best parallel for the crowstep border comes from the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai, where the pattern occupies the same position at the base of the mosaic and contains triangles in alternating colors: red and blue against

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<sup>171</sup> The possibility that the figure was Sol Invictus is raised by Bakirtzis and Mastora, "Are the Mosaics in the Rotunda Linked to Its Conversion to a Christian Church?" 33-45.

<sup>172</sup> These examples are cited by Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 95-6.

<sup>173</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 39-40, 113-4.

a white background (Fig. 1.57).<sup>174</sup> The pyramids of crowstep borders are usually monochromatic. Red pyramids on white ground circumscribe the apse mosaics of the church at Kiti and S. Apollinare in Classe (549) (Fig. 1.74).<sup>175</sup> The fragmentary mosaic on the west wall of the inner north aisle at St. Demetrios in Thessalonike, possibly produced in the late fifth or early sixth century, incorporates a red and white crowstep frame.<sup>176</sup> In the central medallion of the intrados at Poreč, triangles of white stone and red brick, at least partly original, encircle the restored nineteenth-century lamb.<sup>177</sup> Finally, a blue and white crowstep pattern surrounds the lunettes of the presbytery at San Vitale in Ravenna.

Discussion of the ornamental borders at Lythrankomi is less productive for determining the date of the mosaic than the apostle border, where consensus builds around the first half of the sixth century. The traditional elements of the geometric borders make it difficult to limit and to privilege potential parallels, even when these elements are reconfigured in new ways. Ultimately, the geometric borders cannot confine or dispute a date in the first half of the sixth century, but important parallels, like the relief sculpture of the Church of St. Polyuktos (c. 524-7) or the mosaics of San Vitale in Ravenna (540-7/8), can perhaps confirm such a date. While the former contains

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<sup>174</sup> Forsyth and Weitzmann, *Monastery of Saint Catherine*, pls. 103, 118, 120.

<sup>175</sup> Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 1, 257-77. Von Simson, *Sacred Fortress*, 40-62. Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 165-7.

<sup>176</sup> The date of the mosaics on the west wall and north aisle of St. Demetrios, made prior to the fire and restoration of c. 620, is disputed. For a mid fifth-century date: G. and M. Soteriou, *Η Βασιλική του Αγίου Δημητρίου* (Athens, 1952); R. Hodinott, *Early Byzantine Churches in Macedonia and Southern Serbia* (London, 1963), 142-3. Late fifth century: R. Cormack, "The Mosaic Decoration of S. Demetrios, Thessaloniki: A Re-Examination in the Light of the Drawings of W.S. George," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 64 (1969) 17-52. Cormack is noncommittal in *Writing in Gold*, 50-94. Sixth century: Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments*, 165-214; L. Brubaker, "Elites and Patronage in Early Byzantium: The Evidence from Hagios Demetrios at Thessalonike," in *Elites Old and New in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, ed. J. Haldon and L. Conrad (Princeton, 2004), 63-90.

<sup>177</sup> Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 91, 166, fig. 69.

a rare pattern matched in the intermediate border of the apse mosaic, the latter contains a plurality of the more common decorative motifs, in addition to the apostle medallions. The mosaics of St. George in Thessalonike and Santa Maria della Croce in Casaranello are of uncertain date, but may also belong to the early sixth century. Other parallels discovered in the floor mosaics of Antioch and Jordan demonstrate the persistence of these motifs throughout the early Christian period.

### *8c. Landscape*

Despite extensive losses to the main composition, small sections of the background confirm the setting of the scene in paradise. The landscape elements are fully articulated in a reconstruction of the mosaic by Megaw and Hawkins (Fig. 1.27).<sup>178</sup> Two palm trees with fan-shaped leaves rise over the heads of the archangels on either side of the mandorla. Large shoots at the base of the palms fill much of the space between the feet of the archangels and the mandorla, but small flowers or plants may also have occupied this area or the open space below. Two smaller trees are inserted between the lower bodies and outer wings of the angels, based on the traces of foliage that survive on the north side (Fig. 1.24). The ground on which the angels and trees stand has been completely destroyed. It might have been comprised of a solid green band, a graded band, or a series of low hills dotted with small plants or flowers. Above the lost ground, a flat gold background completes the composition.

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<sup>178</sup> For a complete description of the trees, see Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 53-4.

The authors of both monographs are careful to distinguish the fan palm at Lythrankomi from the more popular date palm.<sup>179</sup> Long essential to the economy of the Levant, dates and date palms feature frequently in the Bible.<sup>180</sup> As an ancient symbol of victory and immortality, the palm tree came to be associated with the Tree of Life and the earthly paradise in Judeo-Christian contexts.<sup>181</sup> The symbolism of the palm explains its presence in many early Christian works, including the apse mosaic of Sts. Cosmas and Damian in Rome (c. 526-30) and the mosaics of the triumphal arch of S. Apollinare in Classe (Figs. 1.74-5).<sup>182</sup> Palm trees are interspersed between apostles and martyrs in the respective processions of the Arian Baptistery (c. 493-526) and S. Apollinare Nuovo (c. 556-65) in Ravenna (Figs. 1.76-7).<sup>183</sup> In the Byzantine East, the magnificent floor mosaics of the Great Palace and the Madaba Map illustrate date palms (Fig. 1.78); the prevalence and economic importance of the date palm in the Jordan Valley certainly influenced its inclusion in the map, which is probably dated to the second half of the sixth

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<sup>179</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 79-81, 97-8. Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 22 n. 1.

<sup>180</sup> H. Moldenke, "The Economic Plants of the Bible," *Economic Botany* 8:2 (1954) 152-63.

<sup>181</sup> Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 22-8.

<sup>182</sup> On Sts. Cosmas and Damian in Rome: Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 137-8; Matthaie, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma*, 135-48; B. Brenk, "Zur Einführung des Kultes der heiligen Kosmas und Damian in Rom," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 62 (2006) 303-20. At S. Apollinare in Classe, the mosaics of the triumphal arch above the level of the archangels, including the palm trees, may date to the seventh century: Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 2.2 (Wiesbaden, 1976), 245-6.

<sup>183</sup> The mosaics of the Arian Baptistery were completed in two phases, presumably before the death of Theodoric in 526: Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 2:1, 255. At S. Apollinare Nuovo, parts of Theodoric's original program were altered by the bishop Agnellus after 556, including the processions of male and female saints, which probably replaced other holy or imperial figures associated with Theodoric: Von Simson, *Sacred Fortress*, 69-110; Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 1, 175-6, 199-200; G. Bovini, "Antichi rifacimenti nei mosaici di S. Apollinare Nuovo di Ravenna," *Corsi di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina* 13 (1966) 51-81; A. Urbano, "Donation, Dedication, and *Damnatio Memoriae*: The Catholic Reconciliation of Ravenna and the Church of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13:1 (2005) 71-110.

century or early seventh century.<sup>184</sup> Megaw and Hawkins cautiously propose a parallel for the fan palm at Lythrankomi in the *Traditio Legis* mosaic of S. Costanza in Rome, dated to the late fourth or fifth century, though it may be something of a hybrid with its mix of feathery and drooping leaves (Fig. 1.79).<sup>185</sup> Instead, the form of the fan palm may have been derived from local vegetation, even as its meaning drew on traditional symbolism.<sup>186</sup> Though no fruit has survived on the smaller tree beside the north archangel, Megaw and Hawkins interpret it as an orange or a citron tree, based on comparison with the more impressionistic orange trees of the painted apse of chapel seventeen at Bawit and the more detailed citron tree on the floor mosaic of the Great Palace in Constantinople (Fig. 1.78).<sup>187</sup>

The combination of landscape features with a gold background typifies several mosaic programs of the late fourth to sixth centuries, including S. Aquilino in Milan (late fourth century),<sup>188</sup> the Arian Baptistery and S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna (c. 500-26, 556-65), and S. Apollinare in Classe (Figs. 1.74, 1.76-7). Blue backgrounds evoking the sky accompany landscapes in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna (c. 425) and Sts. Cosmas and Damian in Rome (Fig. 1.75).<sup>189</sup> Only San Vitale in Ravenna (540-7/8) exhibits a verdant landscape with alternately gold and blue backgrounds. At S. Costanza in Rome, landscapes are paired with white backgrounds (Fig. 1.79). White or plain

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<sup>184</sup> M. Piccirillo and E. Alliata, eds., *The Madaba Map Centenary, 1897-1997: Travelling through the Byzantine Umayyad Period* (Jerusalem, 1999), esp. 22. See also F. Hepper and J. Taylor, "Date Palms and Opobalsam in the Madaba Mosaic Map," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 136:1 (2004) 35-44.

<sup>185</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 97-8. On S. Costanza: Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 127-30; Matthaie, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma*, 3-53.

<sup>186</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 97-8. Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 22 n. 1.

<sup>187</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 53-4, 98.

<sup>188</sup> A. Calderini, G. Chierici, and C. Cecchelli, *La Basilica di S. Lorenzo Maggiore in Milano* (Milan, 1951), 201-29. Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 158-9.

<sup>189</sup> On the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia: Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 1, 158-70; Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West*, 172-94.

backgrounds accentuate orange trees in some paintings of the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit, for example in the lower zone of the Ascension apse in chapel seventeen behind the orant Virgin with “our fathers the apostles” and in the painted lunette on the east wall of chapel twenty-eight behind the enthroned Virgin and Child with archangels (Figs. 2.72, 3.40).<sup>190</sup> Variegated or atmospheric backgrounds complement landscapes at S. Maria Maggiore in Rome (432-40) and in two mosaic programs in Thessalonike: the west wall and north aisle mosaics of St. Demetrios and the apse mosaic of Hosios David, which may be dated to the middle of the sixth century (Fig. 1.80).<sup>191</sup> As these examples show, landscapes distinguish works of the fifth century to the middle of the sixth century, regardless of the color of the background.

After the middle of the sixth century, landscapes are reduced to simple ground lines and trees and flowers are abandoned for a continuous expanse of gold ground.<sup>192</sup>

The apse mosaic of the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai (548-65) contains no

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<sup>190</sup> J. Clédat, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouit* (Cairo, 1906), 75-6, pls. 40-4, 154, pls. 96, 98.

<sup>191</sup> On S. Maria Maggiore: Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 132-5; Matthaie, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma*, 87-123. The date of the mosaic at Hosios David remains controversial, but the most persuasive argument for a sixth-century date is made by Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments*, 157-64; “Remarques complémentaires sur la mosaïque de Osios David,” in *Διεθνές Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινή Μακεδονία, 324-1453 μ.Χ. Θεσσαλονίκη 29-31 Οκτωβρίου 1992* (Thessalonike, 1995), 295-306. A fifth-century date is favored by A. Grabar, *Martyrium: Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l’art chrétien antique*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1946), 198-202; “A propos d’une icône byzantine du XIVe siècle,” *Cahiers Archéologiques* 10 (1959) 289-304; Hoddinott, *Early Byzantine Churches*, 173-9. The late fifth century is specified by A. Xyngopoulos, “Τὸ Καθολικὸν τῆς μονῆς Λατόμου ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ ψηφιδωτόν,” *Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον* 12 (1929) 142-80; C. Diehl, “A propos de la mosaïque d’Hosios David à Salonique,” *Byzantion* 7 (1932) 333-8. The seventh-century date proposed by C. R. Morey is based on a few ideas now discredited, namely that the beardless Christ and Hellenistic landscape are Alexandrian components, that the theme of Ezekiel’s vision does not appear in art prior to the end of the sixth century, and that the anonymous inscription on the scroll of Christ finds parallel only in the seventh-century mosaics of St. Demetrios: C. R. Morey, “A Note on the Date of the Mosaic of Hosios David, Salonica,” *Byzantion* 7 (1932) 339-46.

<sup>192</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 80-1. Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 60-1.

indication of the setting of the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor (Fig. 1.57).<sup>193</sup> In Rome, the mosaics of S. Lorenzo fuori le mura (578-90), S. Teodoro (590-604), and S. Agnese (625-38) employ no landscape elements except for simple ground lines (Fig. 1.81).<sup>194</sup> Red flowers of uniform height occupy only the lowest zone of the apse mosaic of S. Stefano Rotondo (c. 650).<sup>195</sup> At S. Venanzio in Laterano (642-50), clouds interrupt the gold background above the orant Virgin and a long line of saints, serving not as features of the landscape but as signs of theophany for the emerging bust of Christ (Fig. 3.37).<sup>196</sup> Along with the mosaic at Mount Sinai, the original apse mosaic at Nicaea, probably dated to the late seventh century, furnishes evidence for the Eastern Mediterranean. Beyond the outlines of the iconoclastic cross and post-iconoclastic Virgin and Child, the original gold background framed an earlier representation of the standing Virgin or Virgin and Child.<sup>197</sup> The apse mosaics of Kiti and Livadia also exemplify this trend: the former contains a solid green band and an expanse of gold ground, while the latter contains no ground line and a gold background of imbricated scales (Figs. 2.12, 3.14). On the east wall at Livadia, a thin ground line appears below the feet of the supplementary figure, who stands before a plain gold background.

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<sup>193</sup> The absence of landscape here has been interpreted as a means of including the viewer in the theophany by suggesting that he already stands on the peak of Mount Tabor, equated with the peak of Mount Sinai: J. Elsner, "The Viewer and the Vision: The Case of the Sinai Apse," *Art History* 17:1 (1994) 81-102, esp. 94.

<sup>194</sup> For all three of these mosaics, see Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 138-42; Matthaie, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma*, 143-79.

<sup>195</sup> Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 143-4. Matthaie, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma*, 181-90.

<sup>196</sup> Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 144-5. Matthaie, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma*, 191-8. Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West*, 212-30.

<sup>197</sup> The three phases in the apse are described by P. Underwood, "The Evidence of Restorations in the Sanctuary Mosaics of the Church of the Dormition at Nicaea," *DOP* 13 (1959) 235-43. A date for the original mosaic in the early eighth century is given in C. Barber, "The Koimesis Church, Nicaea: The Limits of Representation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *JÖB* 41 (1991) 43-60, but revised to the late seventh century in Barber, *Figure and Likeness: On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton, 2002), 61-80.



The disappearance of landscape has been discussed as part of the development of abstraction in Byzantine art of the post-Justinianic period.<sup>198</sup> It should also be considered the first phase in the progressive exclusion of natural imagery from monumental church decoration, preceding the elimination of animals, birds, and plants – or the imagery of abundance – from the borders of wall mosaics and wall paintings and from mosaic pavements. The phenomenon will be explored further in chapter five, as it does not pertain directly to the mosaic at Lythrankomi. Important here is the inclusion of a paradisiacal landscape, which suggests a date before the middle of the sixth century.

#### *8d. Lyre-Backed Throne*

Lyre-backed thrones are probably the most distinctive of all throne types used as common attributes of imperial and religious figures in early Byzantine art. Like thrones with straight or rectangular backs, arched or curved backs, and backless thrones, the lower part of the lyre-backed throne normally consists of a seat, cushion, and footstool. The throne at Lythrankomi is considered by both Megaw and Hawkins and Sacopoulo, but the motif is treated more extensively in studies by Cutler and Breckenridge.<sup>199</sup> The earliest datable appearance of the lyre-backed throne is on the solidi of Leo I and Leo II (473-4), where the two emperors are seated on a double throne with curved uprights and a clearly delineated crossbar.<sup>200</sup> A throne of this type continued to support pairs of emperors on coins intermittently through the eighth century. Gold solidi minted in

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<sup>198</sup> E. Kitzinger, "Byzantine Art in the Period between Justinian and Iconoclasm," in *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress* (Munich, 1958), 1-50; *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd-7th Century* (Cambridge, 1977), 99-112.

<sup>199</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 56-8, 92-4. Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 17-20. Cutler, *Transfigurations*, 5-52. J. Breckenridge, "Christ on the Lyre-Backed Throne," *DOP* 34 (1980-1) 247-60.

<sup>200</sup> Breckenridge, "Christ on the Lyre-Backed Throne," 250. The coin is identified in the text as fig. 11, but mislabeled as fig. 12.

Constantinople from April 4 to August 1, 527 portray Justin I and Justinian I seated on a lyre-backed throne (Fig. 1.82).<sup>201</sup> Later in the sixth century, copper coins of Justin II (565-78) show the emperor enthroned with the empress Sophia.<sup>202</sup> After a hiatus, the lyre-backed throne reappears during iconoclasm on copper coins of Constantine V and Leo IV (769-75), implying a conscious revival of the early type.<sup>203</sup> Leo IV would use the same formula on gold and copper coins with his son Constantine VI (778-80).<sup>204</sup> It was not until the late ninth century that Basil I (879-86) would become the first single emperor to appear on a lyre-backed throne.<sup>205</sup> Earlier in his reign, the image of Christ seated on a lyre-backed throne, identified as King of Kings, was introduced on gold solidi (868-79).<sup>206</sup> The iconographic type was repeated by his Macedonian successors.

Long before the ninth century, Christ was represented alone on a lyre-backed throne in monumental church decoration. On the mosaics of the south wall of S.

<sup>201</sup> A. Bellinger, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC, 1966), 59, pl. 12, no. 7a. Breckenridge, "Christ on the Lyre-Backed Throne," fig. 13.

<sup>202</sup> Bellinger, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 1, pls. 50-7. Breckenridge, "Christ on the Lyre-Backed Throne," fig. 14.

<sup>203</sup> P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, vol. 3 (Washington, DC, 1973), 295, 307-8, pl. 9, nos. 13-14. Breckenridge, "Christ on the Lyre-Backed Throne," fig. 15. On the notion of revival: Cutler, *Transfigurations*, 8 n. 18. By the ninth century, an awareness of the throne as an ancient type is manifested in the Paris B. N. cod. gr. 510, where Christ and a variety of fourth-century imperial figures sit on lyre-backed thrones, e.g. the vision of Isaiah, fol. 67v; Valens, fol. 104r; Julian the Apostate, fol. 374v; and Helena, mother of Constantine, fol. 440r. See L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999).

<sup>204</sup> Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 3, pl. 12, no. 2, pl. 13, nos. 6-8. Breckenridge, "Christ on the Lyre-Backed Throne," fig. 16.

<sup>205</sup> Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 3, 500-1, pl. 33, no. 12. Breckenridge, "Christ on the Lyre-Backed Throne," fig. 18.

<sup>206</sup> Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 3, pl. 30, nos. 1-2. Breckenridge, "Christ on the Lyre-Backed Throne," fig. 7. These coins have been adduced as evidence for 1) the appearance of Christ in the mosaic of the Chrysotriklinos restored by Michael III (842-67): J. Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II (685-695, 705-711 A. D.)* (New York, 1959), 46-62; and 2) the attribution to Basil I of the mosaic of the enthroned Christ above the imperial door of the narthex of Hagia Sophia: A. Vegler, "The Date of the Narthex Mosaic in St. Sophia in Istanbul," *Numismatic Circular* 79 (1971) 100-2. See also Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 3, 154-8. In the patriarchal palace of Hagia Sophia, another mosaic of Christ on a lyre-backed throne was set up in the 870s on the north tympanum of the room over the southwest vestibule: Cormack and Hawkins, "Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul," 241-4.

Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, two angels stand on either side of the enthroned Christ (Fig. 1.83). Although the male saints processing towards him replaced other figures associated with Theodoric in the late Justinianic period (c. 556-65), the image of Christ has been confirmed as part of the original composition, dated to the early years of the sixth century before 526.<sup>207</sup> Also in Ravenna, the lost apse mosaic of S. Agata Maggiore (538-45) showed Christ seated on a lyre-backed throne in the company of angels, according to a late seventeenth-century drawing by Ciampini.<sup>208</sup> Possibly in the late fifth or early sixth century, the Virgin and Child were seated on a lyre-backed throne flanked by angels in the north aisle mosaics of St. Demetrios in Thessalonike, now lost (Fig. 1.84). The group recalls the mosaic at Lythrankomi except for the mandorla, which imposes greater distance between the angels and the Virgin and Child. A final monumental example from the pre-iconoclastic period comes from the so-called palimpsest wall of the church of S. Maria Antiqua in Rome. Here, the Virgin and Child were portrayed on a lyre-backed throne, most likely in the first half of the sixth century, before the building was converted into a church in the late sixth century (Fig. 1.85).<sup>209</sup> The construction of the apse destroyed the left side of the painting, obliterating one of the angels.

Extant examples of the iconographic type are more numerous in the so-called minor arts. Dated between the late fifth and seventh centuries, the silver reliquary in the Grado cathedral treasury depicts the Virgin and Child enthroned on the lid, while the

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<sup>207</sup> Bovini, "Antichi rifacimenti nei mosaici di S. Apollinare Nuovo," 51-81.

<sup>208</sup> Bovini, "Mosaici parietali scomparsi degli antichi edifici sacri di Ravenna," *Felix Ravenna* 69 (1955) 5-20, fig. 4. Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 174-5, pl. 7:2.

<sup>209</sup> P. Nordhagen, "The Earliest Decorations in Santa Maria Antiqua and Their Date," *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 1 (1962) 53-72.

names of six saints and the Virgin are recorded on the cylindrical body (Fig. 1.54).<sup>210</sup> In addition to the lyre-backed throne, the artist has given the Virgin the cross-halo and cross-staff of Christ.<sup>211</sup> A seventh-century manuscript illumination inserted into the Etschmiadzin Gospels employs the lyre-backed throne in a scene of the Adoration. Seated frontally on the throne, the Virgin holds the Christ Child in a mandorla, surrounded by an angel and the three Magi (Fig. 1.86).<sup>212</sup> Likewise, a stone stamp of uncertain date from the pilgrimage complex of St. Symeon the Younger in Syria shows the Virgin and Child seated on the lyre-backed throne, opposite a bust of the saint atop his column.<sup>213</sup> Interestingly, the Virgin is inscribed “Hagia Maria,” the same title given to her in the mosaic at Kiti. Other examples in metalwork include the late sixth-century enkolpion of the enthroned Virgin and Child flanked by angels above scenes of the Nativity and the Adoration at Dumbarton Oaks (Fig. 6.2);<sup>214</sup> a sixth- or seventh-century gold ring in the Metropolitan Museum of Art with the enthroned Virgin and Child on the bezel and an inscription invoking the Lord on the hoop (Fig. 1.87);<sup>215</sup> and two objects in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. The first of the objects in Toronto, a sixth- or

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<sup>210</sup> A late fifth- or early sixth-century date is given in H. Árnason, “Early Christian Silver of North Italy and Gaul,” *Art Bulletin* 20:2 (1938) 193-226. A sixth- to seventh-century date is given in G. Noga-Banai, *The Trophies of the Martyrs: An Art Historical Study of Early Christian Silver Reliquaries* (Oxford, 2008), 127-8, 162, no. 14; S. Tavano and G. Bergamini, eds., *Patriarchi: quindici secoli di civiltà frà l’Adriatico e l’Europa centrale* (Milan, 2000), 105, no. 7.3. See also cat. no. B19 in Buschhausen, *Spätromischen Metallschreine*, 246-9, pls. B56-7.

<sup>211</sup> The cross has six arms, one hidden behind the head of the Virgin, but lacks the rounded rho of a Christogram.

<sup>212</sup> T. Mathews, “The Early Armenian Iconographic Program of the Ējmiacin Gospel (Erevan, Matendaran MS 2374, olim 229),” in *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, ed. N. Garsoïan, T. Mathews, and R. Thomson (Washington, DC, 1982), 199-215.

<sup>213</sup> G. Vikan, “Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium,” *DOP* 38 (1984) 65-86, fig. 5.

<sup>214</sup> M. Ross, “A Byzantine Gold Medallion at Dumbarton Oaks,” *DOP* 11 (1957) 247-61; *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC, 1965), 33-5, no. 36. P. Grierson, “The Date of the Dumbarton Oaks Epiphany Medallion,” *DOP* 15 (1961) 221-4.

<sup>215</sup> Metropolitan Museum, acc. no. 17.190.1654 with sixth- to seventh-century date. Cat. no. 333 in A. Yeroulanou, *Diatrita: Gold pierced-work jewellery from the 3rd to the 7th century* (Athens, 1999), 168, 260 with seventh-century date.

seventh-century bronze cross, represents the Virgin and Child seated on a lyre-backed throne flanked by angels below the standing figure of Christ (Fig. 1.88). The votive inscription on the lower arm of the cross may equate the Virgin Mary with the Holy Church.<sup>216</sup> Also in Toronto, a silver armband (c. 550-65) portrays the Virgin and Child on a lyre-backed throne accompanied by an invocation to the Virgin: “Theotokos, help Anna! Grace” (Fig. 1.89).<sup>217</sup> The iconic image and invocation are combined with other biblical scenes, quotations, and acclamations to ensure that the wearer of the amulet is well protected. Lastly, a fragmentary icon in the collection of the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai preserves a single upright belonging to a lyre-backed throne. Weitzmann dates the icon to the seventh century based on the encaustic technique and the manner in which the frame is nailed to an unpainted border. Although no traces of the figure remain, he identifies it as a portrait of Christ, but there is no reason it could not have been the Virgin and Child.<sup>218</sup>

Although surviving examples suggest that the iconographies of Christ and the Virgin and Child on the lyre-backed throne developed contemporaneously, the throne was probably an attribute of Christ later transferred to the Virgin and Child.<sup>219</sup> The pendant mosaics in the nave of S. Apollinare Nuovo (c. 500-26) would seem to support this argument. While the mosaics of the south wall represent Christ in his mature form seated on the lyre-backed throne, the mosaics of the north wall represent the Virgin and Child seated on a throne with a high rectangular back (Fig. 1.83). Other aspects of the

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<sup>216</sup> Cat. no. 10 in J. Cotsonis, *Byzantine Processional Figural Crosses* (Washington, DC, 1994), 96-9.

<sup>217</sup> G. Vikan, “Two Byzantine Amuletic Armbands and the Group to which They Belong,” *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 49-50 (1991-2) 33-51, fig. 5.

<sup>218</sup> Cat. no. B.46 in K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons* (Princeton, 1976), 76-7, pl. 102.

<sup>219</sup> Cutler, *Transfigurations*, 16. Pace Breckenridge, “Christ on the Lyre-Backed Throne,” 250.

mosaics are identical: both are flanked by four angels, two on either side; both are situated on a flowered ground before a plain gold background; and both are approached by later processions of saints: male saints on the south wall and female saints on the north wall. Furthermore, as Cutler points out, the Virgin is never seated alone on the lyre-backed throne.<sup>220</sup> I have found only one possible exception: a gold medallion of the sixth or seventh century, now in Munich, where the Virgin of the Annunciation is positioned on a lyre-backed throne (Fig. 1.90).<sup>221</sup> In this context, however, she is decidedly *with Child*, as emphasized by the accompanying inscription taken from Luke 1:28: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!” Scenes of the Visitation and the Nativity appear on the same side of the medallion, while Christ blesses a married couple on the obverse. A final comparison between the Lythrankomi mosaic and the Grado reliquary helps to contextualize the lyre-backed throne as one of several attributes of Christ transferred to the Virgin Mary with varying degrees of success in the early Christian period (Fig. 1.54).<sup>222</sup> Once again, a disproportionately large Virgin Mary sits enthroned with the Christ Child on the lid of the Grado reliquary. Atypically, she wears the cross-halo of Christ and holds a cross-staff with her right hand, while the Christ Child, appearing without a halo, holds a scroll.<sup>223</sup> The cross-halo and cross-staff would not succeed as attributes of the Virgin Mary, just as the mandorla at Lythrankomi would not succeed as an attribute of the Virgin and Child.<sup>224</sup> The lyre-backed throne, on the other hand, would

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<sup>220</sup> Cutler, *Transfigurations*, 16.

<sup>221</sup> Cat. no. 10 in Vassilaki, *Mother of God: Representations*, 290-1.

<sup>222</sup> See Árnason, “Early Christian Silver,” 215.

<sup>223</sup> The Virgin also holds a cross-staff in the icon of S. Maria in Trastevere, usually attributed to John VII (705-7): C. Bertelli, *La Madonna di Santa Maria in Trastevere: storia, iconografia, stile di un dipinto romano dell’ottavo secolo* (Rome, 1961). See my chapter 6.3.

<sup>224</sup> Other holy figures may carry cross-staffs, but the cross-halo was reserved for Christ after its early association with Christian emperors and martyrs: E. Weigand, “Zum Denkmalerkreis des Christogrammnimbus,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 32 (1932) 63-81. However, a date at the end of the fifth

succeed as an attribute of the Virgin and Child, as contemporary and later examples attest, but apparently not of the Virgin alone. Evidently, the issue of Christ's sovereignty, represented by the lyre-backed throne, was not nearly as sensitive as the issue of Christ's divinity, represented by the mandorla.

Additional questions on the source of the lyre-backed throne have been posed by Cutler and Breckenridge.<sup>225</sup> Based on the numismatic evidence, Breckenridge argues that the Great Palace possessed a double throne with a lyre-shaped back between the fifth and the ninth centuries, perhaps not always the original, and a single lyre-backed throne from the time of Basil I. To Breckenridge, the lyre-backed throne originally embodied the concept of *synthronos* (σύνθρονος) or shared imperium. When applied to Christ alone, it identified him as Creator and Savior or Father and Son, consonant with the use of the term in theological contexts.<sup>226</sup> As a means of honoring the Virgin Mary, the lyre-backed throne did not imply coequality in the theological sense but the joint sovereignty of the king and queen of heaven.<sup>227</sup> Alternatively, Cutler denies the existence of an actual throne on account of variation in representations of the lyre-backed throne, which he evaluates according to the curve and taper of the uprights, the placement of the crossbar, and decoration. He contends that the motif was invented as an attribute of Christ and

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century or later for the Grado reliquary would suggest that the artist borrowed the iconography of Christ for the Virgin Mary and not that the cross-halo had yet to be reserved for Christ, pace Weigand: cf. Árnason, "Early Christian Silver," 212-15, 225. For more on the mandorla, see my chapter 4.2.

<sup>225</sup> Cutler, *Transfigurations*, 5-52. Breckenridge, "Christ on the Lyre-Backed Throne," 247-60.

<sup>226</sup> Breckenridge, "Christ on the Lyre-Backed Throne," 259. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1331.

<sup>227</sup> Although the Virgin is rarely crowned in Byzantine art, some scholars believe that the "Maria Regina" type originated in Constantinople: M. Andaloro, "I mosaici parietali di Durazzo o dell'origine costantinopolitana del tema iconografico di Maria Regina," in *Studien zur spätantiken und byzantinischen Kunst: Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann gewidmet*, vol. 3, ed. O. Feld (Bonn, 1986), 103-12; B. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 2006), 21-6. Regardless, the Virgin was described as a queen in the writings of the church fathers: H. Barré, "La royauté de Maria pendant les neuf premiers siècles," *Recherches de science religieuse* 29 (1939) 129-62. See also my chapter 6.1. On the type in the West: M. Lawrence, "Maria Regina," *Art Bulletin* 7:4 (1925) 150-61; C. Wellen, *Theotokos: eine ikonographische Abhandlung über das Gottesmutterbild in frühchristlicher Zeit* (Utrecht, 1961), 158-63.

conceived as a symbol of harmony drawn from the familiar myth of Orpheus, who tames wild animals with his lyre. Negotiating between these positions, Parani accepts Cutler's argument on the origins of the lyre-backed throne, but believes that an actual throne was created in imitation of this type in the post-iconoclastic period, to be placed beneath the mosaic of the enthroned Christ in the Chrysotriklinos of the Great Palace.<sup>228</sup> The lost mosaic restored by Michael III (842-67) has been reconstructed as an image of Christ seated on a lyre-backed throne and may or may not have reproduced the original mosaic in the Chrysotriklinos set up by Justin II (565-78) or Tiberios I (578-82).<sup>229</sup> In this context, the concept of *synthronos* could be applied to the emperor or emperors together with Christ.

Although the ultimate source of the lyre-backed throne cannot be determined with certainty, the symbolism of *synthronos* explored by Breckenridge is consistent with the evidence up to the eighth century. It also explains why the motif was applied to images of the Virgin and Child, but not the Virgin alone. While consideration of the lyre-backed throne reveals two important parallels, neither of them can be used for evidence of date. In monumental art, the north aisle mosaics of St. Demetrios in Thessalonike represent a group very similar to the apse mosaic at Lythrankomi. The mosaics were possibly, but not certainly, set in the late fifth or early sixth century. Ties to the minor arts are also clear, with one object standing out above the others: the silver reliquary in the Grado cathedral treasury. Unfortunately, proposed dates for the reliquary range from the late fifth to the seventh centuries.

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<sup>228</sup> M. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th centuries)* (Leiden, 2003), 164-5.

<sup>229</sup> See n. 206 above.



### 8e. Vertical Inscriptions

A potential obstacle to dating the mosaic as early as the year 500 is the use of vertical writing or *kionedon* in the inscriptions of the apostles.<sup>230</sup> As a style of writing, *kionedon* is believed to have originated in the sixth century, although it would become standard only in the later empire. Two lintel inscriptions from Syria, dated 517 and 523, are identified by Megaw and Hawkins as the earliest dated Greek vertical inscriptions.<sup>231</sup> Since the authors provide no other explanation for eliminating the first two decades of the sixth century in the dating of the apse mosaic, they may have regarded the lintel inscriptions as a *terminus post quem*, especially in light of their contention that *kionedon* descended from Syriac sideways-vertical writing. It must be stated, however, that Megaw and Hawkins use the discussion of column writing to argue that the mosaic need not date to the latter part of the sixth century, despite the presence of vertical inscriptions. Indeed, their argument for dating in general is concerned with disputing the later Justinianic dates presented by Galassi and Ihm.<sup>232</sup> The authors devote much less effort to justifying the exclusion of the first two decades of the sixth century.

Nevertheless, as Megaw and Hawkins recognized, it is clear that space, or lack of space, dictated the form and format of the lintel inscriptions. The same is true at Lythrankomi, where the vertical inscriptions are squeezed between the haloes of the apostles and the outline of the medallions. In longer names like Andrew, Bartholomew, and probably Philip, letters were grouped in pairs as necessary. In my opinion, there is not much difference between these inscriptions and those in the vault of the Church of St.

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<sup>230</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 127-32, 138.

<sup>231</sup> Cat. nos. 1109 and 1202 in W. K. Prentice, *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria, in 1904-1905*, vol. III:B (Leiden, 1908), 140-2, 203-4.

<sup>232</sup> G. Galassi, "Musaici di Cipro e musaici di Ravenna," *Felix Ravenna* 66 (1954) 5-37. Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 188-9.

George in Thessalonike, which Megaw and Hawkins date to the later fifth century, and where the names and feasts of the saints are broken into multiple rows under narrow arches.<sup>233</sup> The fragmentary linen with apostles from Akhmîm, dated to the fifth or sixth century, represents another borderline example, where the names of Peter and Thomas are predominantly vertical as a consequence of limited space, but Mark's name is predominantly horizontal with the letters stacked in two rows of three (Fig. 1.91). Like the Syrian lintels, silver votive crosses dated generally to the sixth or seventh centuries have vertical inscriptions on the vertical arms, which continue as horizontal inscriptions on the horizontal arms.<sup>234</sup> Among the earliest may be the monumental processional cross from Antioch or Kaper Koraon, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which combines the *Trisagion* on the obverse with a votive inscription on the reverse (Fig. 1.92).<sup>235</sup> While space is always a factor in votive crosses, some join letters horizontally along the length of the vertical arms, including two small crosses in the Walters Art Museum dated to the middle of the sixth century.<sup>236</sup> But here and always, the form of the inscription depends on the size of the cross and the length of the inscription, both determined by the donor. Ultimately, I would agree with Megaw and Hawkins that the inscriptions at Lythrankomi should be distinguished from true column writing, employed where space is not a factor, as in the archangels' inscriptions of the apse mosaic at Kiti.<sup>237</sup> But in counting the inscriptions at Lythrankomi among the precursors of true column writing, we should not assume that the sculptor of an obscure lintel in Syria invented the

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<sup>233</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 66 n. 197, 131.

<sup>234</sup> See, for example, cat. nos. 7, 65, 67 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore, 1986), 87-9, 235, 238.

<sup>235</sup> A sixth-century date is maintained by the Metropolitan Museum and Kondoleon, *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City*, 216, no. 105. A sixth- to early seventh-century date is given in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 192-7, no. 42.

<sup>236</sup> Cat. nos. 9-10 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 92-5.

<sup>237</sup> See my chapter 2.7d.

practice, regardless of whether it derives from Syriac sideways-vertical writing.<sup>238</sup> There is simply not enough evidence in the category of vertical inscriptions to outweigh the many fine parallels attributed to the beginning of the sixth century.

#### *8f. Conclusion*

My analysis of the motifs at Lythrankomi draws heavily on earlier studies by Megaw and Hawkins and Sacopoulo. Many of the best parallels for the mosaic, as they found, range in date from the beginning of the sixth century to the middle of the sixth century. Consideration of the apostle medallions at Lythrankomi alongside those of the Archepiscopal Chapel (494-519), San Vitale (540-7/8), and the Monastery of St. Catherine (548-65), as well as other inscribed lists of the apostles, highlights certain features of the border at Lythrankomi: the inclusion of the evangelists Mark and Luke at the expense of two apostles named in the Synoptic Gospels, the promotion of Jude and the demotion of James in the apostolic hierarchy, and the elderly portrait type of James. The apostolic college at Lythrankomi is unique among surviving works, but remains closest to that of the Cleveland tapestry, dated generally to the sixth century, and the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, according to the late description by Mesarites (Table I).<sup>239</sup> The confluence of motifs in the mosaic and the Cleveland tapestry is especially noteworthy: both works represent the Virgin and Child enthroned, flanked by archangels and encircled by apostle medallions set in lush foliage, whether acanthus or a fruited garland. The best stylistic parallel for the acanthus leaves at Lythrankomi was identified by Sacopoulo in the floor mosaic of the House of the Rams' Heads at Antioch (c. 500).

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<sup>238</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 127-32.

<sup>239</sup> The lists are identical except for one apostle: Jude at Lythrankomi, Mathias in the Cleveland tapestry, and Simon at the Church of the Holy Apostles.

Evaluating the apostle border proves more instructive for determining the date of the mosaic than the four ornamental borders, which contain traditional motifs, sometimes reconfigured into unique patterns. Nevertheless, Megaw and Hawkins locate an important parallel for the intermediate border in a marble relief from the Church of St. Polyuktos in Constantinople (c. 524-7). In the central composition, certain attributes of Christ, namely the lyre-backed throne and the mandorla, are assumed by the Virgin Mary, reflecting a critical moment in the development of Marian iconography. The silver reliquary in Grado, where the Virgin appears seated on a lyre-backed throne with the cross-halo and cross-staff of Christ, would seem to be a product of the same moment, but is dated too broadly to be of use here. Although it was not discussed above, the type of sandals worn by the Christ Child in the mosaic suggested to Sacopoulo a sixth-century date.<sup>240</sup> That the mosaic could not have been made much later than the middle of the sixth century is indicated by the paradisiacal landscape, comprised of fan palms and perhaps citrus trees. Finally, the use of relatively large tesserae provides a small clue that the mosaic at Lythrankomi antedates the mosaics of Kiti and Livadia.

Above all, this chapter takes issue not with the parallels cited in the two previous studies, but with the termini they impose on the setting of the mosaic. These termini reflect either external events with no clear relationship to the church at Lythrankomi or the assumption that the earliest surviving example of a motif corresponds in date to the lost prototype. Once again, Megaw and Hawkins dated the mosaic to the years 520-30. The vertical inscriptions of the apostles apparently prompted them to eliminate the first two decades of the sixth century, while the end date of 530 allowed the mosaic to qualify

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<sup>240</sup> Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 20-2, fig. 28.

as early Justinianic, as they understood it, but no later. These dates were further restricted by the idea that the same earthquake that leveled Antioch in 526 might have occasioned a renovation of the church at Lythrankomi.<sup>241</sup> Although it is possible, their own investigation of the structure produced no evidence of damage from a sixth-century earthquake. Likewise, Sacopoulo dated the mosaic to the years 526-47 or more narrowly 536-47. The *terminus post quem* drawn from the Mausoleum of Theodoric (526) has already been disputed, for there is no reason to regard the mausoleum as the earliest monument or object to incorporate the evangelists Mark and Luke among the apostles, even if the names on the dome are accepted as contemporary. The later date of 536 coincides with the anti-Monophysite council in Constantinople that condemned the bishop Severus of Antioch. According to Sacopoulo, the council may have provided the impetus for the experimental and polemical iconography of the Virgin and Child enclosed in the mandorla.<sup>242</sup> However, the decision of the council of 536 is not required to support her interpretation of the mosaic as a statement of orthodoxy as defined at the council of Chalcedon in 451 and should not be applied to a mosaic in a remote Cypriot village. The end date of 547 is derived from the dedication of the mosaics of San Vitale, the style of which is presumed to be later than the mosaics at Lythrankomi.<sup>243</sup>

After a thorough investigation of the architecture of the church, Megaw and Hawkins dated the earliest church on the site to the late fifth century. They proposed that the apse was left undecorated for a generation before the mosaic was set, in their estimation, in the third decade of the sixth century. Megaw and Hawkins also detected early alterations in the area of the sanctuary, which complemented their analysis of the

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<sup>241</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 140.

<sup>242</sup> Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 106-7.

<sup>243</sup> Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 77.

mosaic and supported the idea that the mosaic was not exactly contemporary with the church as it was originally constructed. Expanding the date range for the setting of the apse mosaic to the first half of the sixth century does not change this picture substantially, but allows for the possibility that the mosaic was set very soon after construction.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE APSE MOSAIC AT KITI

The Church of the Panagia Angeloktistos is located in the village of Kiti, about twelve kilometers southwest of Larnaca on the southeastern coast of Cyprus (Fig. 2.1). The apse mosaic is the best preserved of the three mosaics and the only one that survives in situ, but much less has been written about it than the apse mosaic at Lythrankomi. Following the restoration of the church and mosaic in the 1950s, Megaw and Hawkins promised to publish a monograph that never materialized.<sup>1</sup> Only a few of their observations and insights appeared in articles and archaeological reports published by Megaw.<sup>2</sup> While they were undoubtedly preoccupied with other projects, the final report may also have been impeded by a disagreement over the date of the apse mosaic.<sup>3</sup> Sixty years later, the archaeological context of the mosaic remains poorly understood and the date of the mosaic remains a matter of debate.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the work they performed, especially the discovery and preservation of the upper border of the mosaic, has led to a general consensus around the sixth and seventh centuries for the setting of the mosaic.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The intention to publish a monograph was stated in A. H. S. Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," *Corso di cultura sull'arte Ravennate e Bizantina* 32 (1985) 173-98, esp. 184 n. 12. Contrary to J. Rosser, "A. H. S. 'Peter' Megaw, 1910-2006," *AJA* 111:1 (2007) 151-4, a manuscript was never in preparation at Dumbarton Oaks.

<sup>2</sup> See especially Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 184-92; "Byzantine Architecture and Decoration in Cyprus: Metropolitan or Provincial?" *DOP* 28 (1974) 57-88, esp. 74-6; "Early Byzantine Monuments in Cyprus in the Light of Recent Discoveries," in *Akten des XI Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses, Munich, 1958*, ed. H. Dölger and H. G. Beck (Munich, 1960), 345-51, esp. 350-1; *ARDAC 1952* (1953), 10, 15; *ARDAC 1953* (1954), 5, 9-10; *ARDAC 1955* (1956), 10; *ARDAC 1959* (1960), 14, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Suggested to me by Robin Cormack in personal correspondence, Oct. 5, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Another limited excavation of the church was conducted by the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus in 2009-10, but the results have not yet been published.

<sup>5</sup> For a list of those who favor sixth- and seventh-century dates, see D. Korol, "Die spätantik-christlichen Wand- und Gewölbemosaiken Zyperns (5.-7. Jh.) und ihre neuere Geschichte," in *Zypern: Insel im Brennpunkt der Kulturen*, ed. S. Rogge (Münster, 2000), 159-201, esp. 175 n. 82.

Previously, scholarly opinion ranged from the fifth to the eleventh centuries.<sup>6</sup> More recently, two articles in German and Greek derived from MA theses have attempted to date the mosaic more precisely. Ellinor Fischer argues for a date in the second half of the sixth century, while Andreas Foulías favors the last quarter of the sixth century, coinciding with the reign of the emperor Maurice (582-602).<sup>7</sup> This chapter assesses the apse mosaic independently in order to determine the most credible date for the apse mosaic.

### 1. History of the Site

The name “Angeloktistos” is tied to the foundation legend of the church and the village of Kiti, which asserts that residents of Kition, fleeing the Arabs in the seventh century, founded a new village close to the ancient city and set about to build a church. One morning, the people awoke to discover that the foundations of the church had been moved miraculously to another location. They continued to build the church on the new site and returned every morning to find that work had progressed overnight in their

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<sup>6</sup> The first to suggest a pre-iconoclastic date in the late fifth or early sixth century was J. Smirnov, “Hristianskija mozaiki Kipra,” *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 4 (1897) 1-93. Proponents of a ninth-century date include Th. Schmit, “Παναγία Αγγελοκτίστος,” *Izvestija Russkago Arheologičeskago Instituta v’ Konstantinopole* 15 (1911) 206-39; L. Bréhier, *L’art chrétien: son développement iconographique des origines à nos jours* (Paris, 1928), 127-8. M. Soteriou places the mosaic in the third quarter of the tenth century after the Byzantine reconquest, c. 960-975: M. Soteriou, “Το Πρόβλημα της Χρονολογίας του Μωσαϊκού της Παναγίας Ἀγγελοκτίστου,” *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* 14 (1938) 293-305. An eleventh-century date is cited in E. W. Anthony, *A History of Mosaics* (Boston, 1935), 160-1.

<sup>7</sup> E. Fischer, “Die Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern: Neue Aspekte zu Bau und Apsismosaik,” in *Begegnungen: Materielle Kulturen auf Zypern bis in die römische Zeit*, ed. S. Rogge (Münster, 2007), 151-95. A. Foulías, “Το ψηφιδωτό της Αψίδας στην Παναγία Αγγελόκτιστη Κιτίου,” *Επετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετών Ιεράς Μονής Κύκκου* 8 (2008) 269-334.



absence. Many claimed to have seen angels working at night, hence they proclaimed it “built by the angels.”<sup>8</sup>

Almost nothing is known for certain about the early settlement of the village and the founding of the church. The *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, written in the eighth century, proves that even in Constantinople the histories of churches were quickly forgotten.<sup>9</sup> The reference to the Arabs in the folk tradition contradicts the archaeological evidence for the earliest church on the site; if not contemporary with the legend, it may have been added as early as the eighth century, although the legend is probably much later. An element of truth, however, may be preserved in the proposed connection between Kiti and Kition. On the site of modern Larnaca, ancient Kition flourished in the Late Bronze Age through the Roman period and became an episcopal see with the spread of Christianity, although its population and influence were much diminished by that time.<sup>10</sup> Three bishops of Kition – Mnemios, Tychon, and Theodoros – are known to have attended the Second, Sixth, and Seventh Ecumenical Councils respectively.<sup>11</sup> It is not known whether these bishops remained in residence at Kition, or whether they lived outside the city, but retained the name of the ancient see.<sup>12</sup> While pottery finds attest to

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<sup>8</sup> The origins of the legend are not known: M. Paraskevopoulou, *Researches into the Traditions of the Popular Religious Feasts of Cyprus*, trans. P. Bosustow (Nicosia, 1982), 141; A. Foulías, *The Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti at Kiti, Larnaka* (Nicosia, 2004), 16.

<sup>9</sup> A. Cameron and J. Herrin, eds., *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai; introduction, translation, and commentary* (Leiden, 1984).

<sup>10</sup> K. Nikolaou, *The Historical Topography of Kition* (Gothenburg, 1976), 12-16.

<sup>11</sup> Constantinople I (381), Constantinople III (680), and Nicaea II (787): J. Hackett, *A History of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus* (London, 1901), 311-2.

<sup>12</sup> See C. Foss, “Archaeology and the ‘Twenty Cities’ of Byzantine Asia,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 81:4 (1977) 469-86, esp. 70; J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), 121-3. Foulías considers it “very likely” that the bishop of Kition moved to Kiti “at some point” in time: Foulías, *Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti*, 12. Note that when the Arabs sacked Kourion, the bishop fled to Episkopi, less than two miles away: A. H. S. Megaw, “The Episcopal Precinct at Kourion and the Evidence for Relocation,” in “*The Sweet Land of Cyprus*”: papers given at the twenty-fifth jubilee Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1991, ed. A. Bryer and G. Georghallides (Nicosia, 1993), 53-67.

continued and concentrated settlement in the southern part of Kition during the early Christian period, no church has been discovered there, as many of the ancient ruins lie beneath the modern city.<sup>13</sup> The displacement of residents to nearby Kiti has been attributed to the silting of the harbor, increasingly sterile land, or damage caused by massive earthquakes around the middle of the fourth century.<sup>14</sup> The earthquakes led to more dramatic changes throughout the island, including the reconstruction and renaming of Salamis-Constantia by Constantius II (337-61) and the transfer of the capital from Paphos, but any of these events may have prompted relocation from Kition to Kiti.<sup>15</sup> It is not clear how the Arab raids of the mid-seventh century affected either the old city or the new village.<sup>16</sup>

The earliest surviving written references to Kiti come from the time of the Latin occupation (1191-1571). In a letter of Pope Celestine III to the Archbishop Alan of Nicosia, dated December 13, 1196, “Le Quit” is listed second among the regions from which the archbishop was authorized to collect tithes.<sup>17</sup> Confusion between Kiti and Kition is a common feature of the accounts of early modern writers, who regarded Kiti and not Larnaca as the descendant of ancient Kition, which was often their primary

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<sup>13</sup> Nikolaou, *Historical Topography of Kition*, 16.

<sup>14</sup> Nikolaou, *Historical Topography of Kition*, 16. Foulías, *Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti*, 12.

<sup>15</sup> In northern Cyprus, Lapithos and Karpasia (Rizokarpaso) also moved inland: Nikolaou, *Historical Topography of Kition*, 47 n. 37. Archaeological evidence for the contraction and displacement of cities to secondary sites in late antique Asia Minor is explored by C. Foss, “The Persians in Asia Minor and the End of Antiquity,” *English Historical Review* 90 (1975) 721-47; “Archaeology and the ‘Twenty Cities’ of Byzantine Asia,” 469-86; *Ephesus After Antiquity: A Late Antique, Byzantine, and Turkish City* (Cambridge, 1979). Although Cyprus was not devastated by the Persian invasions, the decline of classical cities was not strictly a consequence of war. See Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 92-124.

<sup>16</sup> There is some disagreement in the literature with respect to Kition. Nikolaou presumes that the city was destroyed, Papageorghiou that the city was spared: Nikolaou, *Historical Topography of Kition*, 16; A. Papageorghiou, “Cities and Countryside at the End of Antiquity and the Beginning of the Middle Ages in Cyprus,” in *Sweet Land of Cyprus*, 27-51, esp. 38-9.

<sup>17</sup> N. Coureas and C. Schabel, eds., *The Cartulary of the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom of Nicosia* (Nicosia, 1997), 85-6. Also cited in Foulías, *Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti*, 11.

concern. These include the historian Étienne de Lusignan (1573),<sup>18</sup> and travelers Ioannes Cotovicus (1599),<sup>19</sup> Pietro della Valle (1625),<sup>20</sup> and Cornelis van Bruyn (1683).<sup>21</sup> Alexander Drummond, the English Consul at Aleppo, mistakes “Chitty” for “Citium” in 1745, but corrects himself during a second trip to Cyprus in 1750, condemning as “altogether absurd” the assumption of continuity based on “the affinity of sounds.”<sup>22</sup> The Italian abbot Giovanni Mariti strikes the same defensive tone in 1769, presenting arguments against the association of modern Kiti with ancient Kition.<sup>23</sup>

The church at Kiti and its mosaic are not mentioned explicitly until the eighteenth century. In the last section of Bars’kyj’s travelogue, where the Russian monk recounts his fourth visit to Cyprus between September 1734 and August 1736, Bars’kyj speaks of a “beautiful church in the village of Kiti which was once an Episcopal Seat.”<sup>24</sup> He continues: “There is also the miracle-working icon of the Mother of God, made out of mosaic tesserae. They say that when it was once struck by an Arab it shed tears of blood.” The miracle to which Bars’kyj refers was first recorded in the spurious *Letter of the Three Patriarchs to the Emperor Theophilos*, composed in the ninth century, and could not have referred to the mosaic at Kiti. All forms of the letter in which the Cyriot

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<sup>18</sup> O. Pelosi, ed. and trans., *Lusignan’s Chorography and Brief General History of the Island of Cyprus (A.D. 1573)*, vol. 10 of *Sources for the History of Cyprus*, ed. P. Wallace and A. Orphanides (Altamont, NY, 2001), 14.

<sup>19</sup> C. D. Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus* (Cambridge, 1908), 193.

<sup>20</sup> Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria*, 211.

<sup>21</sup> Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria*, 239-40.

<sup>22</sup> Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria*, 279, 287, 302; D. Martin, ed., *English Texts: Frankish and Turkish Periods*, vol. 5 of *Sources for the History of Cyprus* (Altamont, NY, 1998), 69, 79.

<sup>23</sup> Giovanni Mariti, *Travels in the Island of Cyprus*, ed. and trans. C. D. Cobham (Cambridge, 1909), 22-3, 79-80, 158-60.

<sup>24</sup> Vasyl Hryhorovyc-Bars’kyj was concerned with monastic life in Cyprus and describes the monasteries, their treasures, and surroundings in some detail. He also executed a series of drawings, but unfortunately none of the church at Kiti: A. Grishin, ed. and trans., *A Pilgrim’s Account of Cyprus: Bars’kyj’s Travels in Cyprus*, vol. 3 of *Sources for the History of Cyprus* (Altamont, NY, 1996), 100.

icon appears specify that the Child was seated on the Virgin's lap.<sup>25</sup> Four decades later, Carsten Niebuhr, a surveyor for the King of Denmark, took notice of the mosaic between 1774 and 1778:

Das Doft Schiti liegt, wie schon bemerkt worden, eine starke deutsche Meile von Larneca nach Südwest zum Westen. ... Die bischöfliche Kirche ist weder groß noch prächtig, und in derselben nichts, das Bemerkung verdiente, als hinter dem Altar ein Marienbild mit zwei Engeln von guter Mußiv-Arbeit; ein Beweis, daß das Gebäude schon alt sein müsse.<sup>26</sup>

Niebuhr is only a little more descriptive than Bars'kyj in his identification of the subject, but also remarks on the good quality of the mosaic and the antiquity of the building. In 1769, the mosaic was also noted by Giovanni Mariti: "[Kiti] was once a fief of one of the houses of Lusignan, and even now shows some signs of its old importance. The church is large, and dedicated to the Virgin, whose picture in mosaic is venerated by the Greeks."<sup>27</sup> No more specific information is provided until Jakov Smirnov's study of 1897.<sup>28</sup>

## 2. Architectural Context

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<sup>25</sup> The Russian tradition that led to Bars'kyj's confusion is represented by Smirnov, "Hristianskija mosaiki Kipra," 1-93 and analyzed in the appendix of A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins, *The Church of the Panagia Kanakariá at Lythrankomi in Cyprus: Its Mosaics and Frescoes* (Washington, DC, 1977), 161-70. See also my chapter 1.1.

<sup>26</sup> Carsten Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und den umliegenden Ländern: Reisen durch Syrien und Palästina*, vol. 3 (Hamburg, 1837; repr., Graz, 1968), 25. Also cited in Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 154.

<sup>27</sup> Mariti, *Travels in the Island of Cyprus*, 79.

<sup>28</sup> Smirnov, "Hristianskija mosaiki Kipra," 1-93.

In its current form, the church is an architectural composite with an elongated cross-in-square plan, a central dome resting on four piers, an eastern apse, north and south chapels, and a modern extension to the west. One enters the church through the south chapel, which now functions as a narthex. According to Fischer, the central church measures approximately thirteen by sixteen meters without the projecting apse.<sup>29</sup> Even before the excavations of the mid-twentieth century, a late nineteenth-century copper engraving and three early plans of the church published by Jakov Smirnov, Theodor Schmit, and Georgios Soteriou acknowledge several phases of construction. The anonymous engraving does not identify the apse as part of an older structure, but distinguishes the Byzantine church from later additions (Fig. 2.2).<sup>30</sup> Above the ground plan, an exterior view of the east end of the church preserves evidence of the bell tower on the southeast corner that was dismantled and replaced in 1955.<sup>31</sup> It also shows that early remains to the north of the main apse were concealed by a mound of earth, explaining their neglect by Smirnov in his contemporary plan (Fig. 2.3). Smirnov uses dense hatch marks to denote the apse alone and distinguishes the Byzantine church from the north and south chapels.<sup>32</sup> Believing the mosaic to be post-iconoclastic, Schmit attributes the apse, piers, and north and south walls of the church to the first phase of building, along with the ruins of the north lateral apse, evidently revealed by 1911 (Fig.

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<sup>29</sup> Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 156.

<sup>30</sup> Located in the church archive, the engraving was first published by Foulías, *Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti at Kiti*, 15 fig. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Megaw, *ARDAC 1955* (1956), 10, figs. 7-8. See S. Ćurčić, *Middle Byzantine Architecture on Cyprus: Provincial or Regional?* (Nicosia, 2000), 31-4.

<sup>32</sup> Smirnov, "Hristianskija mosaiki Kipra," 32.

2.4).<sup>33</sup> Soteriou sees the apse and square piers as remnants of an early cruciform church, preserved in a domed church of the Byzantine period (Fig. 2.5).<sup>34</sup>

In the absence of precise archaeological and epigraphic evidence, the Byzantine church is dated broadly to the eleventh or twelfth century.<sup>35</sup> The heavy masonry, comprised of local limestone, is distinctive of medieval Cypriot architecture, where layers have been added to existing walls over time in an effort to withstand earthquakes.<sup>36</sup> Multiple layers are now plainly visible in an exterior view of the apse (Fig. 2.6). To lighten the overall appearance and to disguise the raw materials, the exterior may once have been plastered and painted in accordance with Byzantine practice; remnants of original plaster and paint have been identified on a number of churches in Cyprus and throughout the empire.<sup>37</sup> Later additions to the church include the small north chapel, dated to the twelfth century and dedicated to Cosmas and Damian;<sup>38</sup> the groin-vaulted south chapel, constructed by the Franks in late thirteenth or early fourteenth century; and

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<sup>33</sup> Schmit, “Παναγία Αγγελοκτίστος,” pls. 1-3.

<sup>34</sup> No key or explanatory text is provided in G. Soteriou, *Τα Βυζαντινά Μνημεία της Κύπρου*, A (Athens, 1935), 24-5, fig. 16, but see M. Soteriou, “Το Πρόβλημα της Χρονολογίας,” 294.

<sup>35</sup> A. Papageorghiou, *Masterpieces of the Byzantine Art of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1965), 37. A. and J. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus: Treasures of Byzantine Art* (London, 1985), 49. Foulías, *Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti*, 14; “Το ψηφιδωτό της Αψίδας στην Παναγία Αγγελόκτιστη Κιτίου,” 280. Fischer, “Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern,” 156.

<sup>36</sup> S. Ćurčić, “Byzantine Architecture on Cyprus: An Introduction to the Problem of the Genesis of a Regional Style,” in *Medieval Cyprus: Studies in Art, Architecture, and History in Memory of Doula Mouriki*, ed. N. P. Ševčenko and C. Moss (Princeton, 1999), 71-91; *Middle Byzantine Architecture on Cyprus*, 10-11. On the medieval churches of Cyprus: G. Soteriou, *Τα Βυζαντινά Μνημεία της Κύπρου*; Papageorghiou, “L’architecture de la période byzantine à Chypre,” *Corso di cultura sull’arte ravennate e bizantina* 32 (1985) 325-35; T. Papacostas, *Byzantine Cyprus: The Testimony of Its Churches, 650-1200* (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1999); C. Stewart, “Domes of Heaven: The Domed Basilicas of Cyprus” (PhD diss., Indiana University-Bloomington, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> Painting may be figural or in imitation of finer building materials: Ćurčić, *Middle Byzantine Architecture on Cyprus*, 20-30.

<sup>38</sup> The north chapel is identified as a baptistery in the engraving, but is believed to have been built as a funerary chapel, based on the discovery of medieval graves outside and to the north: Foulías, *Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti*, 18-19. V. Karageorghis records the discovery of these graves, but does not specify the location: Karageorghis, “Chronique de fouilles à Chypre en 1959,” *BCH* 84:1 (1960) 242-99, esp. 297.

the western extension and interior women's gallery, built in the nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup> A modern store room, once attached to the north wall of the church and west wall of the north chapel, was demolished in 1967.<sup>40</sup>

Several fragmentary wall paintings have been uncovered in the main church and in the north chapel from the Lusignan (1191-1489) and Venetian (1489-1571) periods.<sup>41</sup> The earliest paintings now visible on the central piers have been assigned to the mid-thirteenth century: the Annunciation on the west face of the northeast pier, St. Solomone on the north face of the southeast pier, St. John the Baptist on the east face of the northwest pier,<sup>42</sup> and an enthroned Virgin and Child on the south face of the northwest pier.<sup>43</sup> A row of bishops, also dated to the thirteenth century, can be discerned on the apse wall below the mosaic, but only one bishop on the south side is in fair condition (Fig. 2.7). In the dome, paintings of the fifteenth century represent Christ Pantokrator surrounded by the Virgin Mary, prophets, and angels.<sup>44</sup> Additional saints survive in the north chapel, dating from the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth to sixteenth centuries,

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<sup>39</sup> Foulías, *Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti*, 16-17. Fischer records the measurements of these additions: north chapel = 4 x 6 m, plus apse; south chapel = 12.5 x 7 m, plus apse; west narthex = 5 x 13 m: Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 160. An inscription in the south chapel commemorates a renovation by the Metropolitan Sylvestros in 1714, but its scope is unknown: S. Michaelides, *Ιστορία της κατά Κίτιον εκκλησίας* (Larnaca, 1992), 124-6. Also cited in Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 172.

<sup>40</sup> Karageorghis, *ARDAC 1967* (1968), 12.

<sup>41</sup> In 1958-9, Megaw and Karageorghis reported three layers in the main church: Megaw, *ARDAC 1958* (1959), 13; Karageorghis, "Chronique de fouilles à Chypre en 1959," 297. More than a decade later, Karageorghis refers to six layers on the apse wall: Karageorghis, *ARDAC 1972* (1973), 14.

<sup>42</sup> Earlier fragments found beneath the figure of John the Baptist were apparently treated and removed in 1979. Nothing is said about their subject matter or present whereabouts: Karageorghis, *ARDAC 1979* (1980), 18.

<sup>43</sup> On the thirteenth-century date of these paintings: K. Gerasimou, K. Papaïoakeim, and C. Spanou, *Η κατά Κίτιον αγιογραφική τέχνη* (Larnaka, 2002), 34-8, figs. 20-2; Foulías, *Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti*, 28.

<sup>44</sup> Remarkably, two decades separate the discovery of the Pantokrator in the dome from the Virgin, prophets, and angels in the drum: Megaw, *ARDAC 1954* (1955), 11; Karageorghis, *ARDAC 1975* (1976), 18.

with overpainting ascribed to the eighteenth century.<sup>45</sup> They include Sts. Cosmas and Damian, St. John the Baptist, St. George on horseback, and an unidentified female saint.

In the course of repair work undertaken in the 1950s, the Department of Antiquities confirmed the remains of an early Christian basilica incorporated into the later structure. The apse, with its mosaic decoration and semi-circular synthronon, was the only part of the church still visible before other features were revealed in the course of excavations (Fig. 2.7).<sup>46</sup> Megaw's successor at the Department, Porphyrios Dikaïos refers vaguely to "foundations and architectural fragments" discovered by Andreas Dikigoropoulos in 1959.<sup>47</sup> In another archaeological report, Vassos Karageorghis says that the foundations of the early church were largely destroyed by medieval and early modern graves, before noting the discovery of fragments from a marble chancel barrier.<sup>48</sup> According to Karageorghis and Papageorghiou, the architectural fragments included two half-columns and carved stucco capitals adjoining the apse, but Megaw mentions only a single respond and capital on the south side (Figs. 2.8-9).<sup>49</sup> Elsewhere, he notes that the bases of the two easternmost piers were exposed in 1959.<sup>50</sup> Despite these inconsistencies, all agree that the church was built in the fifth century as a columnar basilica with three aisles, an eastern apse, lateral apsidioles, and a wooden roof. Remains of the northern

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<sup>45</sup> Foulías, *Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti*, 18-20.

<sup>46</sup> The gypsum used in the construction of the apse is said to be a clear indication of its early date: Megaw, *ARDAC 1952* (1953), 10, 15.

<sup>47</sup> P. Dikaïos, "Archaeology in Cyprus, 1959-61," *Archaeological Reports* 8 (1961-2) 45. The same vague terminology is used by Megaw, *ARDAC 1959* (1960), 18.

<sup>48</sup> Karageorghis, "Chronique de fouilles à Chypre en 1959," 297. An archival photograph of the north stylobate exposed in 1959 is published in Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 170 fig. 25.

<sup>49</sup> Karageorghis, "Chronique de fouilles à Chypre en 1959," 297. Papageorghiou, *Masterpieces*, 37. Megaw, "Byzantine Architecture and Decoration in Cyprus," 69 n. 46, 74 n. 72. In fact, Megaw does not identify the location of the column, but refers to the picture of the south column published by Karageorghis, the same as my Fig. 2.8.

<sup>50</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 31 n. 127.



apse are still visible from the exterior of the church.<sup>51</sup> According to Megaw, the original church was damaged by fire shortly after construction, prompting a restoration that included a new wooden roof.<sup>52</sup> The evidence for the fire, the extent of damage, and the scope of the restoration were scarcely published. In a footnote in the monograph on Lythrankomi, Megaw and Hawkins state that the apse at Kiti had been discolored by fire prior to the application of plaster associated with the stucco capital.<sup>53</sup> The restoration supplied a *terminus post quem* for the setting of the mosaic, which was never associated with any particular date. Megaw and Hawkins concluded that the original fifth-century apse was left undecorated, like the late fifth-century apse at Lythrankomi.

Recent observations made by Ellinor Fischer supplement, clarify, and occasionally contradict the information provided in early excavation reports.<sup>54</sup> Fischer maintains that the capital discovered to the south of the apse was not attached to an engaged column and confirms that it had no counterpart in the north (Figs. 2.8-9).<sup>55</sup> In her analysis, the capital could not have supported the apse from its current location and instead was incorporated into the wall as spolia. Engaged piers, not columns, rise to the level of the cornice, above which a non-figural stucco relief decorates the upper east wall.<sup>56</sup> Interestingly, the piers were plastered and painted several times before they were

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<sup>51</sup> No such remains survive in the south, but lateral apsidioles are common in Cyprus and would be expected in the original church. See Schmit's plan (Fig. 2.4) and the reconstruction in Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 165.

<sup>52</sup> Megaw, "Byzantine Architecture and Decoration in Cyprus," 74.

<sup>53</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá at Lythrankomi*, 31 n. 127. The fire is mentioned nowhere in the archaeological reports of *ARDAC*, *BCH*, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, or *Archaeological Reports*.

<sup>54</sup> Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 156-72.

<sup>55</sup> Only the latter was implied by Megaw.

<sup>56</sup> Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 168-9. The pilasters and stucco relief were mentioned previously by Korol, "Die spätantik-christlichen Wand- und Gewölbemosaiken Zyperns," 175 n. 82. On the stucco: Foulías, "Το ψηφιδωτό της Αψίδας στην Παναγία Αγγελόκτιστη Κιτίου," 280. Stucco decoration was inexpensive to produce and abundant in late antique Cyprus: Megaw, "Byzantine

immured in the later rectangular piers, pointing to an indeterminate length of time between the early restoration and the medieval reconstruction.<sup>57</sup> Fischer's proposed plan of the east end of the church shows the position of the engaged piers and the early colonnade in relation to the later Byzantine piers (Fig. 2.10). While the overall dimensions of the church remain relatively consistent, the early Christian nave and aisles appear to have been slightly wider than their medieval successors, which were constrained by thicker walls and piers. Her investigation of the lower apse wall also revealed striations on the lowermost layer of plaster, suggesting that it served as a base for marble revetments (Fig. 2.11). Marble fittings of the type identified to the right of the apse window would have held the panels in place.<sup>58</sup> The early Christian basilica therefore combined a variety of decorative elements, including an apse mosaic, marble revetments, and stucco relief. Notably, the exposed stucco on the east wall indicates that the mosaic was always confined to the space of the apse conch (Fig. 2.7).

In order to determine the date of the apse in light of the scanty archaeological data, I would draw attention to the tiered, semi-circular synthronon, which is regarded as an important feature of sixth-century churches and renovations in Cyprus, found at over a dozen sites.<sup>59</sup> These sites are urban and rural, large and small, indicating that the so-called "bishop's throne" was not limited to cathedrals. Megaw and Hawkins use the absence of a synthronon to argue for the late fifth-century date of the original church at

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Architecture and Decoration in Cyprus," 69. And in Italy: L. Pasquini, *La decorazione a stucco in Italia fra Tardo Antico e Alto Medioevo* (Ravenna, 2002).

<sup>57</sup> Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 171.

<sup>58</sup> Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 166.

<sup>59</sup> M. Rautman, *A Cypriot Village of Late Antiquity: Kalavastos-Kopetra in the Vasilikos Valley*, *Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series* 52 (Portsmouth, RI, 2003), 152. The Corinthian capital inserted upside down into the top step of the synthronon may have belonged to the original fifth-century church. Fischer claims that the capital corresponds to a column now located in the garden of the church: Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 171-2.

Lythrankomi and probably would have attributed the restoration at Kiti to the sixth century based on the same principle.<sup>60</sup>

More recently, new evidence for an intermediate phase of construction between the sixth-century renovation and the erection of the medieval church has been presented by Georgios Velenis.<sup>61</sup> The paper has not been published, but a study by Andreas Foulias alludes to its conclusions.<sup>62</sup> According to Foulias, Velenis believes that the church was rebuilt as a vaulted basilica, perhaps with three domes on the central axis, prior to the eleventh- or twelfth-century reconstruction. While a number of Cypriot churches were rebuilt in this manner, including the church at Lythrankomi, it is not clear why the church at Kiti would abandon these domes in subsequent renovations. Nevertheless, the assumption may be that the early church was destroyed, except for the apse, during the Arab raids or the period of neutrality (649-965). On the question of an intermediate phase and the chronology of the church in general, we await the results of a limited excavation performed by the Department of Antiquities in 2009-10. In the meantime, three phases of construction are relevant to the problem of dating the apse mosaic: the building of the original church, probably in the fifth century; the renovation of the apse, if not a major portion of the church after c. 500; and the proposed intermediate phase of uncertain date or the near complete reconstruction of the church in the eleventh or twelfth century, when the apse was absorbed into a newly vaulted structure. While the architectural context cannot contribute a fixed date, it provides a solid basis for further

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<sup>60</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 26-8.

<sup>61</sup> G. Velenis, "Αρχιτεκτονικές Παρατηρήσεις στην Αγγελόκτιστη Κιτίου," presented at the Fourth International Cypriological Congress, April 29 – May 3, 2008.

<sup>62</sup> Foulias, "Το ψηφιδωτό της Αψίδας στην Παναγία Αγγελόκτιστη Κιτίου," 280.

investigation, and permanently excludes a number of older theories favoring post-iconoclastic dates for the mosaic.<sup>63</sup>

### 3. *Description of the Mosaic*

The apse mosaic is approximately 2.0 meters high, 3.74 meters wide, and 1.9 meters deep at the base of the conch, with an apex that stands 4.5 to 4.7 meters above the floor of the present sanctuary and perhaps 5.0 to 5.2 meters from the original floor (Fig. 2.7).<sup>64</sup> The mosaic would have been easily visible from the nave at the time of its installation and a great deal more so than it is today. A tall wooden iconostasis, inset with painted panels and surmounted by a cross, blocks the view of the mosaic from almost every angle, unless one is peering upwards through one of three openings above the doorways, or standing in the sanctuary itself.<sup>65</sup> Instead, a low marble chancel barrier, the remains of which were discovered in the church, would have divided the early Christian sanctuary from the nave.<sup>66</sup>

The mosaic depicts a standing Virgin and Child flanked by the archangels Michael and Gabriel against a flat gold background (Fig. 2.12). All of the figures except for Christ are identified by inscriptions. At the center of the composition, the Virgin

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<sup>63</sup> See my introduction above.

<sup>64</sup> Measurements are recorded in Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 166. Photographs in the archives of the Department of Antiquities show the remains of a slab floor in the sanctuary, about one-half meter below the current level, but whether they are early Christian or medieval is nowhere indicated. Cf. Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 170. The remains of another slab floor in the nave are currently on view beneath a sheet of glass. A later marmara pavement in the church was replaced by concrete in 1959; Megaw, *ARDAC 1959* (1960), 14.

<sup>65</sup> The modern sanctuary screen was built in the eighteenth century, reusing sixteenth-century doors: Foulias, *Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti*, 17. A screen or templon would have also been used in the medieval church, but may not have been equally opaque: A. Epstein, "The Middle Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier: Templon or Iconostasis?" *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 134 (1981) 1-28. See also S. Gerstel, ed., *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West* (Washington, DC, 2007).

<sup>66</sup> Karageorghis, "Chronique de fouilles à Chypre en 1959," 297.

Mary holds the Christ Child in her left arm, and places her right hand on the Child's right knee. She faces frontally and stands on a jeweled podium, which overlaps the lower decorative borders of the mosaic. Her purple robe and red mantle provide a deep and sumptuous background for the gold garment of the Christ Child, who holds a scroll in his left hand and gestures with his right. The large gold halo of the Virgin is outlined in bands of silver and red tesserae, while the gold cross-halo of Christ is outlined in bands of silver and blue tesserae. Exceptionally, the arms of the cross within the cross-halo are truncated and rounded at the ends to give the impression of three dimensions.<sup>67</sup>

Approaching the pair on either side, the archangels wear long white tunics with gold clavi and white himations, with shadows modeled in shades of yellow, gray, and blue. Their wings are fashioned out of peacock feathers, made of green, yellow, red, blue, and gold tesserae. Unfortunately, much of the figure of the archangel Michael is lost. Only his head and halo remain, along with the upper portions of his wings, a fragment of his white robe and gold clavus, his sandaled right foot, right forearm, and hand. At the base of his robe, located nearest the Virgin and Child, is a classical drapery weight, also found, for example, on the robe of Artemis in a red-figure amphora signed by the potter Andokides in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (c. 530 BC).<sup>68</sup> The same classical detail does not appear on Gabriel's robe. Both of their costumes are marked with initials, but only

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<sup>67</sup> Megaw and Korol also note the appearance of the three-dimensional wooden cross: Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 185-6; Korol, "Die spätantik-christlichen Wand- und Gewölbemosaiken Zyperns," 174.

<sup>68</sup> I would like to thank Eunice Maguire for this observation and comparison. The obverse of the amphora (acc. no. 63.11.6) shows the contest of Herakles and Apollo for the Delphic tripod: D. von Bothmer, "Andokides the Potter and the Andokides Painter," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 24:6 (1966) 201-12.

Gabriel's "H" and "T" are legible.<sup>69</sup> The haloes of the archangels are set in silver and outlined in red, while white headbands restrain their blonde locks. Resembling imperial palace guards, especially the *ostiaroi*, the angelic guards carry gold staffs ending in tiny spheres, maybe precious stones, emphasizing their ceremonial role.<sup>70</sup> With their right hands, they present translucent orbs to the Christ Child, symbols of imperial dominion over the earth and sea.<sup>71</sup> Each orb is surmounted by a gold cross, reflected in the sphere's illusionistically polished surface. The effect of transparency is achieved by the delineation of the archangels' fingers behind the blue globes. The archangels stand on a solid green ground line, where they appear both behind and beside the Virgin and Child.

In the intrados of the apse, the conspicuous upper border of the mosaic illustrates a total of six fountains flanked by pairs of confronted or addorsed animals or birds (Fig. 2.13). The fountains are signified by slender white vessels and divided into groups of three by a radiating cross at the apex of the arch. Acanthus leaves, full of life and movement in contrast to the schematized leaves at Lythrankomi, envelop each vessel, while concealing the lower bodies of the animals. Duck protomes rise on either side of the first set of fountains; beribboned parrots perch on leaves alongside the second set of

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<sup>69</sup> Although such initials frequently mark the robes of angels, saints, and prophets in early Christian art, their meaning is elusive. One theory is proposed by A. Quacquarelli, "I monogrammi cristologici del Battistero degli Ortodossi di Ravenna," *CCARB* 26 (1979) 313-24.

<sup>70</sup> The *ostiaros* was a court eunuch, responsible for introducing dignitaries to the emperor: *ODB*, vol. 3, 1540. In the *De ceremoniis*, *ostiaroi* appear to the right and left of the emperor in processions, carrying gold staffs decorated with precious stones. The *Kletorologion* (899) also specifies that the insignia of the *silentarios*, awarded by the emperor, was a golden rod: A. Moffatt and M. Tall, trans., *Constantine Porphyrogenetos, The Book of Ceremonies; with the Greek edition of the Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn, 1829), 2 vols., *Byzantina Australiensia* 18 (Canberra, 2012), vol. 1, book 1: 10, 23-4; book 2: 708; A. Vogt, *Le livre des cérémonies*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1935), vol. 1, book 1: 7, 18-19; vol. 1, commentary: 43.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Prokopios' interpretation of the *globus cruciger* (πόλος) held in the left hand of Justinian I in the equestrian statue in the Augustaion: Prokopios, *Buildings*, ed. and trans. H. B. Dewing (LCL 343), book I.2.11, 35. On ancient glass spherical models of the earth and the heavens: G. di Pasquale, "Scientific and Technological Use of Glass in Graeco-Roman Antiquity," in *When Glass Matters: Studies in the History of Science and Art from Graeco-Roman Antiquity to Early Modern Era*, ed. M. Beretta (Florence, 2004), 31-76, esp. 67-70.

fountains; and stag protomes emerge from behind the third set of fountains closest to the central cross. They symbolize the living creatures of the water, air, and land, which God created on the fifth and sixth days in Genesis 1:20-5.<sup>72</sup> Between the antlers of the four stags, the gold cross is inscribed in three concentric circles of blue tesserae, ranging from dark blue at the center to light blue on the outside. Muted rays of light extending from its right angles create a second underlying cross. At the base of the arch, classical tripods decorated with animal heads and claw feet serve as platforms for the lowermost acanthus cups (Fig. 2.43). Small shoots and tendrils fill the remaining space against the dark blue background.

The mosaic has two decorative borders, as well as a white monochrome band surrounding the main field (Figs. 2.7, 2.14). A wide geometric and floral border appears only at the base of the mosaic, confined to the length of the main field by the lower limits of the acanthus border. It consists of green quatrefoils with radiating lilies and circles of four spindles inscribed with poised concave squares and leaves of ivy set on red ground. Preserved beneath the lower border above the cornice is a narrow outer border with a simple crowstep pattern in red and white. The crowstep border may once have extended around the entire apse mosaic, outside the acanthus border on the face of the east wall. Beyond the outer border, the apse mosaic was framed by stucco decoration.

#### 4. *Early Photographs*

The earliest published photographs of the mosaic differ from the present view in some major respects. Most notable is the concealment of the upper border by the later

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<sup>72</sup> As water birds, ducks are included among creatures of the waters in floor mosaics and textiles depicting the earth and ocean: H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park, PA, 1987), 22, 29, 35, 36, 62, 75.

supporting arch, visible in all photographs before 1952, including those published by Smirnov, Schmit, and Georgios Soteriou (Figs. 2.15-17). Another striking feature of these photographs is the darkness of the mosaic, caused by accumulations of dirt and soot and compounded by the shadow cast by the interior arch. Contrary to the overall darkness, certain areas of the mosaic also appear washed out or exceedingly pale, where tesserae originally dipped in pigment had faded over time. These late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographs, along with the watercolors of N. K. Kluge published by Schmit, represent important testimony of the mosaic prior to its restoration.

The first photograph taken by Smirnov in 1895 is ashen and grainy, but proves that the mosaic must have been very difficult to see (Fig. 2.15). Many details cannot be deciphered and the uppermost portion of the mosaic, including Mary's inscription and part of the archangels' haloes, are hidden from view by the overhanging arch, even as the camera is situated optimally below the mosaic. Some overpainting also covers the faces and upper bodies of the Virgin and Child. The reddish paint was presumably intended to highlight these figures, but had the adverse effect of shrouding them almost completely in the late nineteenth-century photographs.<sup>73</sup> The paint was apparently removed by 1907, when Kluge visited the church and took photographs on behalf of Schmit (Fig. 2.16).<sup>74</sup> The first details published by Maria Soteriou in 1938 show the relatively good condition of the faces with only small areas of loss and some damaged tesserae in each of the haloes.<sup>75</sup> In particular, several strands of Michael's hair appear to be lost.

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<sup>73</sup> The dull red paint is noted in O. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (Oxford, 1911; repr., New York, 1961), 385 n. 1.

<sup>74</sup> The date of Kluge's campaign is given in Schmit, "Παναγία Αγγελοκτίστος," 206. The observation is made by O. Wulff, *Die Byzantinische Kunst von der ersten Blüte bis zu ihrem Ausgang* (Berlin, 1914), 553.

<sup>75</sup> M. Soteriou, "Το Πρόβλημα της Χρονολογίας," figs. 2, 3, 5.



The areas of loss visible in the early photographs appear very much the same as they do today. The void that consumes the body of the archangel Michael was present in 1895 and does not appear to have spread; other smaller voids in the area of the footstool and lower border were also visible. Some loss on the wing of the archangel Gabriel cannot be seen in Smirnov's photograph, due to the position of the camera and the obstructing arch, but stands out in the photographs of Schmit and Soteriou (Figs. 2.16-17). A few smaller lacunae were clearly patched with plaster and painted sometime before 1895, like the oval-shaped gap spanning part of the green ground line and gold background to the right of the Virgin, under the tip of her maphorion. Other holes were not painted, suggesting that they post-date the repair of this area or more likely that patching was indiscriminate. In addition to the lacunae, three large cracks in the mosaic may be distinguished in early photographs. The largest is located to the left of the Virgin Mary and runs the length of the mosaic, closing in on her halo and right arm and cutting through her right leg; the second and widest rises from the footstool between her feet; and the third runs just left of the archangel Gabriel, cutting through his right leg and right forearm and skimming the front of his head.

Also apparent in the pre-restoration photographs are large areas of exposed, natural stone tesserae, particularly in the lower border and in the Virgin's robe and footstool, where the original paint had flaked off. Indeed, the loss of paint was one of the major issues confronted by the restorers.<sup>76</sup> In 1952, Megaw and Hawkins discovered the upper border in a similar state, suggesting that the paint had faded prior to the erection of the medieval arch. The technique of applying pigment to stone and the abundance of

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<sup>76</sup> Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 186-9.

marble tesserae in the mosaic will be explored a little later in the chapter. For now, the loss of paint explains the ghostly appearance of the borders and other areas of the mosaic in the early photographs.

The watercolors produced by Kluge, including a general view of the mosaic and details of each of the faces, do not show the same loss of paint (Fig. 2.18).<sup>77</sup> Except for the larger lacunae, the entire mosaic is brightly colored. There are white dots in the Virgin's clothes and white streaks in Michael's hair, but Kluge seems to have "corrected" the color in other places as he went along. The best example of this practice is the red background of the lower border, which is not pale as it appears in photographs of the same year. One might conclude that traces of paint remained visible in these areas. Otherwise, Kluge's drawings are fairly accurate and minor mistakes probably reflect the condition of the mosaic. At the top of the watercolor, Mary's inscription can be read in outline only, indicating that the black paint had faded beyond recognition.<sup>78</sup> The same may be said of the archangels' inscriptions, which appear lighter than the gold background. The lacuna that occupies the front and side of the footstool is too extensive in his drawing, as some tesserae are preserved here, but much of the area was probably covered with plaster. Finally, the orbs in the hands of the archangels lack the gold crosses on top, even as their reflections are present on the surface. Despite the corrective color, Kluge is generally faithful to the style of the mosaic and captures the faces, poses, and garments as they appeared in the early twentieth century.

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<sup>77</sup> For the details: Schmit, "Παναγία Αγγελοκτίστος," pls. 5-8.

<sup>78</sup> According to Fischer, black painted marble was used for the contours of the upper border, Christ's nimbus, Michael's sphere, and for the inscriptions: Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 178.

## 5. Restoration

Before the mosaic could be cleaned and restored, certain structural repairs had to be completed in the eastern part of the church (Figs. 2.19-20). The restoration of the exterior apse and the removal of the interior arch are recounted by Megaw in the *Annual Report* of 1952.<sup>79</sup> First, the mosaic was reattached to the masonry where the preparatory plaster had eroded and separated. Major cracks in the mosaic would have been sealed and treated at this time. The largest cracks encroaching on the Virgin and the archangel Gabriel may be very old indeed and likely coincide with damage to the original apse wall, either before or after it was encased in the new structure. A problem with water damage in the apse is also implied by Megaw, who says that additional layers of masonry had prevented rainwater from flowing properly off the roof. The removal of the interior arch required the insertion of a reinforced concrete beam into the exterior east wall in order to redistribute the weight of the masonry. At the same time, the exterior of the apse was restored, its outer walls were reduced in height, the small arched window in the lower apse was unblocked, and the pitch of the roof was altered to ensure proper drainage.<sup>80</sup> Once the arch was removed and the upper border exposed, the area was immediately consolidated (Fig. 2.21).<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Megaw, *ARDAC 1952* (1953), 10.

<sup>80</sup> The work was completed for a total of £204: Megaw, *ARDAC 1952* (1953), 10; "Archaeology in Cyprus, 1952," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 73 (1953) 133-7, esp. 137; "Early Byzantine Monuments in Cyprus," 350.

<sup>81</sup> Fischer suggests that the piers supporting the dome were also reduced at this time, explaining the discrepancy between her measurements and those recorded in the plans of Schmit and G. Soteriou. Both had measured the piers at 1.5 x 1.4 m, while Fischer measured 1.15 x 1.0 m: Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 156-9.

The only major cleaning and restoration of the mosaic on record was only minimally published by the restorers.<sup>82</sup> The thorough restoration of the apse mosaic at Kiti stands in contrast to the more limited methods employed at Lythrankomi and Livadia, probably because these churches no longer served congregations. Until more information can be gathered from a full technical analysis, their efforts must be pieced together from very brief archaeological reports, statements made in relevant publications and in relation to other mosaics, and a comparison of the pre- and post-restoration photographs.

Ernest Hawkins joined the restoration in March of 1953 and undertook the cleaning and preservation of the mosaic on site.<sup>83</sup> The relatively few comments made by Megaw on the work focus on the issue of lost paint and the treatment of areas of exposed marble tesserae. Hawkins repainted tesserae throughout the mosaic where at least four colors had been lost: red, yellow, brown, and black.<sup>84</sup> The original colors would have been visible on the lower surfaces of the tesserae, where they were embedded in plaster, or where wet paint had transferred to the plaster. When in doubt of a certain color, Hawkins may have removed the tesserae to check for pigment and reinserted them. He did the same at Lythrankomi, where red paint was applied to stone in more than one shade, although he never repainted tesserae in the fragmentary mosaic, lifting them only

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<sup>82</sup> Since 1955, a brief note records the general maintenance of the mosaic between 1971 and 1974: D. Christou, "Αρχαιότητες και Μνημεία Κύπρου," *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 29:3 (1973-4), 1011-26, esp. 1015.

<sup>83</sup> Megaw, *ARDAC 1953* (1954), 5, 10.

<sup>84</sup> Megaw, *ARDAC 1953* (1954), 10. Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 133 n. 604. Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 186-8. Megaw does not specify blue paint, pace E. Borsook, F. Superbi, and G. Pagliarulo, eds., *Medieval Mosaics: light, color, materials* (Milan, 2000), 210. Fischer discerns only one shade of red, yellow, and black paint, but says that brown may have been reapplied in more than one shade: Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 179.

for the sake of analysis.<sup>85</sup> At Kiti, the process of retouching must have been particularly challenging in the upper border of the mosaic, which contained a variety of painted marble and suffered the most damage.<sup>86</sup> The work was not completed in 1953, but required a second visit in 1955.<sup>87</sup> Comparing photographs before and after the restoration reveals one of the most striking effects of lost paint, namely the lack of contours (Figs. 2.22-3). The deer of the north arch are barely perceptible without them, but after the restoration of black paint they are thrown into relief. Megaw also remarks on the Virgin's clothing, which had come to resemble a checkerboard of white marble and blue glass.<sup>88</sup> Hawkins' application of red paint to white tesserae restored the tones of deep red and purple that resulted from the juxtaposition of red and blue tesserae. A large quantity of red paint was also used in the background of the lower geometric border and in the crowsteps of the outer border, which appeared so dull in pre-restoration photographs.

No further observations that the restorers made while examining the mosaic have been published. Nowhere have they confirmed or denied evidence of prior interventions, although David Winfield states unequivocally that there were none, based on the survey he undertook in 1969.<sup>89</sup> It is clear from the earliest photographs, however, that some small lacunae were filled with plaster and painted, as in the oval to the right of the Virgin between the ground line and the background and in the footstool. Hawkins would have removed all later accretions of plaster before applying his own lime plaster and painting

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<sup>85</sup> Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 182. Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 136.

<sup>86</sup> Megaw notes that the south side of the arch was in better condition and more easily restored than the north: Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 188-9.

<sup>87</sup> Megaw, *ARDAC 1955* (1956), 10.

<sup>88</sup> Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 186-9.

<sup>89</sup> J. and D. Winfield, *Proportion and Structure of the Human Figure in Byzantine Wall-Painting and Mosaic* (Oxford, 1982), 119. D. Winfield, *Byzantine Mosaic Work: Notes on History, Technique and Colour* (Nicosia, 2005), 4.

in complementary but conspicuous tones.<sup>90</sup> Loose tesserae must have been reset in the same manner as they were in the apse at Lythrankomi, with no new tesserae added.<sup>91</sup> In general, the restoration of the mosaic appears to have complied with principles current in the mid-twentieth century.

## 6. *Materials and Technique*

The techniques employed by Byzantine mosaicists are not easily studied through photographs. The reflective quality of glass, the irregular cut and setting of tesserae, and radical variations in hue mean that photographs taken from slightly different angles or in different lighting conditions can produce very different impressions. The discussion of materials and technique will therefore be limited to a few preliminary observations derived from detailed photographs and other primary investigations. Without the final report of the restoration by Megaw and Hawkins, we are fortunate to have a separate account of the mosaic by David Winfield, who served as Field Director for Dumbarton Oaks in Cyprus from 1965-73. Winfield conducted a survey of the church and mosaic in 1969 and published the results in 2005.<sup>92</sup> His remarks on the divisions of preparatory plaster and possible divisions of labor give us a better sense of how the mosaic was made.

A diagram published by Winfield indicates five divisions of roughcast plaster: three in the main field and two in the upper border (Fig. 2.24). The plaster joins are easily detected to the left and right of the Virgin and Child, where the uneven lines are

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<sup>90</sup> That Hawkins plastered and painted areas of loss is stated in Megaw, *ARDAC 1953* (1954), 10. Hawkins describes his own methods in relation to the mosaics at Cencelles: E. Hawkins, "Berichte über die Konservierung der Mosaiken und Malereien im Kuppelraum (1958-1962)," in *Die Mosaikkuppel von Cencelles*, ed. H. Schlunk (Mainz, 1988), 167-80.

<sup>91</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 2.

<sup>92</sup> D. Winfield, *Byzantine Mosaic Work*, 26-32, where the mosaic is dated to the fifth century, albeit without argument. See also J. and D. Winfield, *Proportion and Structure*, 119-30, where the work is identified simply as pre-iconoclastic.

accentuated by the reflective gold tesserae. In the upper border, Winfield proposes a division to the right of the central cross. Megaw had reported that the mosaic was executed in three parts, referring to the partitions of the main field, but said nothing about further divisions in the upper border.<sup>93</sup> He also noted that the coarse plaster was applied in a single layer, rather than the usual two or three.<sup>94</sup> Winfield estimates twenty-five subdivisions of the setting bed: five for each of the archangels, six for the Virgin and Child, five for the background and inscriptions, and four for the arch.<sup>95</sup> It is unclear how the lower and outer borders fit into this equation. The plaster joins of the setting bed are more difficult to distinguish, as the mosaicist would have strived to make his work seamless. Nevertheless, some divisions may be identified where mistakes have been made and the tesserae do not align. Errors on the part of the mosaicist are seen most clearly in the archangels' staffs. While Michael's staff is partially shielded by his body, the top and bottom portions do not continue along the same line. Winfield proposes a plaster join between the two sections at the level of Michael's shoulders. Also, outlining the lower portion of his staff on the right side are two rows of tesserae, one black and one buff-colored; the former terminates about halfway down, while the latter shifts one row to the left at the site of a second join (Fig. 2.25).<sup>96</sup> A third horizontal join is visible in Gabriel's staff at the level of his knee, where single rows of black and gold tesserae, comprising the entire width of the staff, shift one row to the left (Fig. 2.26). Certain lines in the folds of his garments are subtly discontinued along the same join. Winfield's total

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<sup>93</sup> Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 186.

<sup>94</sup> Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 182. Borsook, Superbi, and Pagliarulo, *Medieval Mosaics*, 200. Pace Liz James, who suggests that the plaster was layered to achieve certain light effects: L. James, *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art* (New York, 1996), 5, pl. 18.

<sup>95</sup> D. Winfield, *Byzantine Mosaic Work*, 27.

<sup>96</sup> This is the location of a subdivision on Winfield's diagram, though he does not explain it.

of twenty-five subdivisions, each corresponding to a single day's work, suggests that the mosaic was set relatively quickly in approximately three to four weeks. His estimate excludes all preparatory work, such as planning and laying out the design, mixing and applying the base plaster, cutting tesserae, and making preliminary drawings on the masonry, base plaster, or setting bed.<sup>97</sup> Of course, two or more artisans might have been at work at a given time, for which there is some evidence, and the background and geometric borders might have been entrusted to an assistant. On the other hand, as Megaw observes, the smaller tesserae used in the faces and other areas of flesh, including the hands, forearms, and feet, would only have prolonged the process.<sup>98</sup>

Almost nothing has been said about the execution of the design and the application of the figures to the apse. Once again, it is difficult to make judgments without access to precise measurements and on the basis of photographs that might be askew. Although the ideal of symmetry was clearly upheld, it appears to have been compromised in three areas of the mosaic. At the far right of the composition, Gabriel's outer wing extends all the way to the white monochrome band that overlaps it, while Michael's outer wing is overlapped by an additional four rows of blue and buff-colored tesserae that form the inner outlines of the border (Fig. 2.12). There are several possible reasons for the asymmetry, including simple miscalculation: the mosaicist may have

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<sup>97</sup> D. Winfield, *Byzantine Mosaic Work*, 27, 30. Winfield says that the mosaicist "would have made a fairly detailed colour sketch on the setting bed plaster as a guide for the setting of his cubes," but does not discuss evidence of underdrawings or *sinopie* at Kiti. Nor do Megaw and Hawkins make reference to drawings. However, traces of red paint can be seen below the crowstep border above the cornice (Fig. 2.14). Red paint is found in a similar location below the jeweled border of the Annunciation scene at Poreč: A. Terry and H. Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč* (University Park, PA, 2007), 77-8, fig. 156. One wonders whether *sinopie* supply the rough outline of the figure of Michael or whether the area was painted some time after the tesserae were lost. Note that drawings on the wet setting bed would immediately precede the setting of the tesserae and would not affect the pace of work.

<sup>98</sup> Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 186.



overestimated his space and drawn the figure of Gabriel too large. Indeed, the Winfields have commented on the great width of the figure when confronted directly, but suggest that it was meant to compensate for the curvature of the apse.<sup>99</sup> Unfortunately, the loss of Michael's body prevents our comparing the size of the figures. The differing treatment of the wings in relation to the border may also represent a lack of coordination between two mosaicists, or a consequence of the desired placement of the Christ Child to the right of center in the Virgin's left arm. In other words, the artist may have had less room to develop the figure of Gabriel and required the additional space. Elsewhere in the mosaic, symmetry appears to have been sacrificed intentionally. Looking straight ahead at the Virgin and Child, one can see that the lower body of the Virgin and her footstool drift slightly to the left (Fig. 2.7, 2.12). As a result, there are ten and a half units of the lower geometric border to the south of the footstool and only nine and a half to the north. The leftward shift is probably not an attempt to counterbalance the Child, but an indication of forward movement, designed to support the illusion of the projecting footstool.<sup>100</sup> One final point can be made regarding the application of the figural border to the intrados. In photographs, the cross appears slightly off-center and to the left, which may have forced the compression of the decoration on the north side. The result is seen most clearly in the pair of ducks, whose bills are more level than those on the south side and appear somewhat squashed by the second acanthus cup (Fig. 2.13). Because wall and vault mosaics are normally set from the top down, an uneven center point would undoubtedly affect the symmetry of the composition.

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<sup>99</sup> J. and D. Winfield, *Proportion and Structure*, 124.

<sup>100</sup> See my chapter 4.2.

The limited number of figures, decorative borders, and repeat patterns in the mosaic make it more difficult to distinguish different hands or to speculate on the division of labor.<sup>101</sup> The effort is further complicated by areas of loss, which might make it virtually impossible to compare Michael's robes and lower wings to Gabriel's, or the north side of the lower border to the south.<sup>102</sup> Despite these challenges, it is possible to recognize several inconsistencies, which may point to different artisans. First, the lower border contains two different types of radiating lilies (Fig. 2.14). The petals of the four southernmost groups are made of double rows of tesserae, which narrow at the tip of the central petal. The remaining five and a half groups of lilies, two of which are lost, are made of single rows of tesserae, but flare into double rows in the central petal only, a form that is much more delicate. If the lower border was not divided between artisans, then a single artisan must have altered his pattern in the course of work.<sup>103</sup> The orbs of the archangels may also represent the work of two different mosaicists (Figs. 2.27-8). Formed by graded bands of blue tesserae radiating from a central core, the globes depict a range of light and shadow. The shading of the orbs is cleverly reversed, so that Michael's orb is light blue at the center and grows darker at the edges, while Gabriel's orb is dark blue at the center and grows lighter towards the outside. Although the orbs were clearly conceived as a set, Michael's sphere is outlined in black with a full circle of dark blue glass on the inside, whereas Gabriel's sphere has no black outline and a dark blue curve

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<sup>101</sup> On the value of repeat patterns in this endeavor: I. Andreescu-Treadgold, "The Mosaic Workshop at San Vitale," in *Mosaici a S. Vitale e altri restauri: il restauro in situ di mosaici parietali*, ed. A. Iannucci, C. Fiori, and C. Muscolino (Ravenna, 1992), 31-41.

<sup>102</sup> There are also fewer high-quality color photographs of the north intrados, which is in worse condition than the south and rarely reproduced in publications. Even the color transparencies given by Megaw and Hawkins to Dumbarton Oaks include only one detail of the north side representing the deer, which survive in better condition than the deer on the south side.

<sup>103</sup> The change would not have preserved white tesserae, used for both the lilies and the red-painted background.

that surrounds only half the globe. The technique of the latter is very effective at evoking transparency and three-dimensionality, making the former look clumsy by contrast. Finally, the crosses reflected in the globes take different forms, as Gabriel's cross shows greater distortion on the surface.

Winfield's identification of different hands focuses on the faces of the archangels and the contrasting color palettes (Figs. 2.29-30).<sup>104</sup> The tesserae that make up Michael's face are considerably lighter and lend a softer appearance. In addition to the flesh-colored tones, there are several yellow, green, and pink cubes in his face, as opposed to black, gray, and blue cubes in the face of Gabriel. Green cubes break the dark line of Michael's right eyebrow and yellow and flesh-colored tesserae alternate in the line below the brow and above the crease. Lines and colors are generally sharper and more solid in Gabriel's face, but the same technique of alternating colors to create softer lines is found in his lower eyelids and in the shadow to the left of his nose. Brighter colors carry over to Gabriel's hair, which has stunning red streaks in addition to yellow and dark brown; in Michael's hair, the red is replaced by light brown.<sup>105</sup> Winfield notes some variation in the setting patterns of the cheeks, as Michael's open cheek is more rounded than Gabriel's. He also draws attention to the broken lines, or the dots and dashes, that form the shadows or beards at the jawline and transition to the flesh tones of the face. Here, Gabriel has double rows or dashes of gray stone, while Michael has yellow dots that alternate with lighter flesh tones. Whether or not Winfield is correct in his assessment, all of the faces exhibit marked similarities: the almond-shaped eye with the upper lid that touches the top of the iris; the four distinct rows of tesserae that form the eyelids, crease, and brows

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<sup>104</sup> D. Winfield, *Byzantine Mosaic Work*, 30-1.

<sup>105</sup> A good deal of plaster in Michael's hair makes it difficult to identify all of the colors, but there is no visible red.

(except in the smaller face of the Christ Child, which uses only two to three rows of tesserae); the shadow on one side of the nose that connects to the brow line; and the use of very small tesserae in natural stone and marble, with a few accents in glass, notably red or orange (Figs. 2.29-32).<sup>106</sup>

The materials of the apse mosaic were briefly introduced in the discussion of the restoration. Megaw and Hawkins had commented on the high proportion of natural stone, marble, and painted marble tesserae in the mosaic, inasmuch as restoring the lost paint seems to have occupied much of their time. The combination of glass and other materials, including various types of stone, brick, and terracotta, was common in the late antique period. The mid sixth-century mosaics of the basilica of Eufrasius at Poreč contain marble, slate, limestone, brick, and mother-of-pearl, in addition to glass tesserae in many colors.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, surviving wall and vault mosaics, to the extent that they have been examined, contain fewer tesserae dipped in pigment and often only in red, whereas the mosaicists at Kiti used painted tesserae in red, yellow, brown, and black.<sup>108</sup> The substitution of less expensive materials for glass is normally viewed as a means of cutting costs or an indication of the limited supply of glass, but secondary materials have

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<sup>106</sup> Winfield concedes that there may be other reasons for the distinctions between the two heads. Differences may be attributed to the different directions the figures face, the availability of cubes, or the whim of the mosaicist.

<sup>107</sup> These alternative materials, except for rare and costly mother-of-pearl, were used primarily in the decorative borders of the main apse and in the side apses, when glass was stretched or in short supply: Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 78-82.

<sup>108</sup> Red opaque glass was the most difficult to produce. Mosaicists are known to have substituted red painted stone at Lythrankomi, Livadia, Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, and elsewhere: Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 133; "A Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin in Cyprus," in *Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Études Byzantines, Bucarest, 6-12 septembre 1971*, vol. 3, ed. M. Berza and E. Stanescu (Bucharest, 1976), 363-6, esp. 364; Mango and Hawkins, "Apse Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul," 138. At Poreč, red brick was substituted for red glass: Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 78-82. On the problem of red glass: R. Brill and N. Cahill, "A Red Opaque Glass from Sardinia and Some Thoughts on Red Opaques in General," *Journal of Glass Studies* 30 (1988) 16-27; A. N. Shugar, "Byzantine Opaque Red Glass Tesserae from Beit Shean, Israel," *Archaeometry* 42 (2000) 375-84.

also been recognized as having aesthetic advantages.<sup>109</sup> For example, one or two rows of buff-colored stone outline each of the figures in the main composition beyond the individual contours of their haloes, clothing, hands, and feet (Fig. 2.33). Winfield describes the outline as a “secondary silhouette,” intended to distinguish and highlight the figures against the bright and reflective gold background.<sup>110</sup> Indeed, the matte stone creates a conspicuous glow or divine radiance around the figures, as it preserves expensive gold tesserae.<sup>111</sup> Likewise, yellow and brown painted tesserae serve to moderate gold in the footstool, where the jewels are comprised of large silver tesserae, imitating mother-of-pearl, as well as green glass and red painted tesserae (Fig. 2.34).<sup>112</sup> In addition to a fair amount of marble and stone, the mosaic contains a variety of blue and green glass tesserae.<sup>113</sup> Blue is applied predominantly to the Virgin’s robes, the orbs and lower wings of the archangels, the background of the arch, the acanthus leaves, and the concentric circles of the cross, while green glass defines the archangels’ upper wings, the geometric patterns of the lower border, the acanthus leaves, and the parrots. The rarest type of glass in the mosaic, as one would expect, is red opaque, used sparingly in the outlines of the haloes and in the faces. Other colors are represented by a mix of glass, painted marble, and stone, except for shades of brown, beige, gray, white, and various

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<sup>109</sup> H. P. L’Orange and P. J. Nordhagen, *Mosaics*, trans. A. Keep (London, 1966), 58-9. Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 78-82.

<sup>110</sup> D. Winfield, *Byzantine Mosaic Work*, 25.

<sup>111</sup> Glows are also applied to holy figures at Poreč, but not to heads and haloes or against gold backgrounds: Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 95-8. At Kiti, the glow doubles around haloes, as well as Michael’s upper wings, perhaps by mistake.

<sup>112</sup> Megaw found no mother-of-pearl in the apse mosaics of Lythrankomi, Kiti, or Livadia, in contrast to the lost mosaics of the basilica and baptistery at Kourion: A. H. S. Megaw, “Interior Decoration in Early Christian Cyprus,” in *XVe Congrès International d’Études Byzantines, Rapports et Co-rapports*, vol. 5, *Chypre dans le monde byzantin* (Athens, 1976), 3-29, esp. 23; A. H. S. Megaw et al., *Kourion: Excavations in the Episcopal Precinct* (Washington, DC, 2007), 108, 140-1, 163, 557-8.

<sup>113</sup> Fischer, “Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern,” 177-8. Blues and greens are also found in a variety of tones at Poreč: Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 78-9.

flesh tones, which appear overwhelmingly in marble, painted marble, or stone.<sup>114</sup>

Although marble is one of the more expensive stones, it is still a cheaper alternative to glass, especially if the marble was recycled. One can only speculate, but the abundance of marble in the mosaic might have had as much to do with the greater availability of the material in fifth- and sixth-century Cyprus as with economic considerations.

Nevertheless, the clever integration of stone and glass had become an essential component of early Byzantine aesthetics.

One final example demonstrates the skillful application of painted marble along with an interest in conveying materials. Composed of matte yellow and brown painted tesserae, the cross framing the head of the Christ Child effectively evokes wood (Fig. 2.33).<sup>115</sup> The cross-halo of Christ is therefore unique in Byzantine art for its rendering of wood in three dimensions, a possible allusion, I would suggest, to the relic of the True Cross, the major part of which remained in Jerusalem until the early seventh century.<sup>116</sup> The legend of Helena's discovery dates to the second half of the fourth century, when fragments of the True Cross began to circulate throughout the Roman world. A relic of the True Cross may have reached the island of Cyprus by the sixth or seventh century, though there is no reason to assume that the church at Kiti possessed one. While pictorial allusions to relics may be more common in the presence of relics, the presence of the

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<sup>114</sup> At least according to Fischer's analysis of detailed photographs: Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 178.

<sup>115</sup> Noted by Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 180.

<sup>116</sup> The relic was removed by the Persians with the capture of Jerusalem in 614 and restored by Herakleios in 631. It was taken to Constantinople in 635, three years before the Arab conquest of Jerusalem. See J. Drijvers, "Heraclius and the *Restitutio Crucis*: Notes on Symbolism and Ideology," in *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and Confrontation*, ed. G. Reinink and B. Stolte (Leuven, 2002), 175-90; F. C. Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account of the Sack of Jerusalem in A.D. 614," *English Historical Review* 25 (1910) 502-17; C. Mango, "Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide, II: Héraclius, Šahrvaraz et la Vraie Croix," *Travaux et mémoires* 9 (1985) 105-18; A. Frolow, "La vraie croix et les expéditions d'Héraclius en Perse," *Revue des études byzantines* 11 (1953) 88-93.

original in Jerusalem or Constantinople was surely enough to inspire the depiction of the relic at Kiti. In the mosaics of Poreč, the Virgin of the Annunciation wears a unique and conspicuous woolen veil, referring to the relic of the Virgin at the church of Blachernai in Constantinople (Fig. 2.35).<sup>117</sup> The representation of the True Cross at Kiti reflects an awareness of the relic and the desire of the provincial church to partake in its power. More importantly, as a theological symbol, the image of the True Cross calls attention to the sacrifice of Christ in the sanctuary of the church, the site of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

While the materials and techniques employed in the apse at Kiti shed light on issues of production in the early Byzantine period, one important technical detail may help to determine the date of the apse mosaic. The use of very small tesserae in the faces and exposed hands, forearms, and feet of the figures has been noted repeatedly and allows for finer detail in the creation and modeling of facial and bodily forms (Figs. 2.29-32). The appearance of the technique in wall and floor mosaics throughout the empire, from Rome to Thessalonike to Jordan, has led many scholars to presume that it was disseminated from Constantinople.<sup>118</sup> While the use of smaller tesserae is indeed a feature of the Great Palace mosaic, probably produced in the sixth century after c. 530, and the late sixth- or early seventh-century Kalenderhane mosaic of the Presentation,<sup>119</sup> there is no evidence that the technique was invented in Constantinople and spread from

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<sup>117</sup> Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 133-6.

<sup>118</sup> W. Oakeshott, *The Mosaics of Rome* (Greenwich, CT, 1967), 143-6. Megaw, "Byzantine Architecture and Decoration in Cyprus," 75; "Mosaici Parietali Paleobizantini di Cipro," 186. M. Piccirillo, *The Mosaics of Jordan* (Amman, 1993), 22. Foulis, "Το ψηφιδωτό της Αψίδας στην Παναγία Αγγελόκτιστη Κιτίου," 282.

<sup>119</sup> C. Striker and Y. Kuban, eds., *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Buildings, Their History, Architecture and Decoration: Final Reports 1966-1978* (Mainz, 1997), 121-4; "Work at Kalenderhane Camii in Istanbul: Third and Fourth Preliminary Reports," *DOP* 25 (1971) 251-8. Initially, Striker and Kuban suggest a date between the late sixth and early eighth century, but narrow the date in their final report to the period of Justin II (565-78) or slightly later, based on new architectural evidence. Megaw dated the mosaic to the second half of the sixth century: Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 191-2.

there to other regions. The idea of the centrality of Constantinople is well rehearsed in mid twentieth-century scholarship. Its proponents rejected the prevailing notion that Alexandria was the artistic capital of the late antique world and the last bastion of high style and classicism. Current scholarship, however, favors a network of regional artistic currents over a centralized model. With that in mind, the floor mosaics of Jordan probably provide the strongest evidence for the development of the technique in Cyprus given the preponderance of securely dated pavements and the geographical proximity of Jordan to Cyprus. The chronology of these pavements has been analyzed by Michele Piccirillo, who identifies the technique as a sixth-century development with the first examples dating around 530.<sup>120</sup> With far fewer comparanda in Cyprus, it is significant that the technique was not employed in the apse mosaic at Lythrankomi, dated to the first half of the sixth century, but appears well advanced in the apse mosaic at Kiti.

#### *7a. Evidence for Dating: Inhabited Acanthus Border*

While the use of the new modeling technique at Kiti may imply a chronological sequence for the mosaics of Lythrankomi and Kiti, the second half of the chapter examines the motifs that furnish the best evidence for dating the apse mosaic, including border patterns, light effects, and inscriptions. The first section surveys the individual components of the upper border, comprised of acanthus plants, fluted vessels, animals and birds; the theme of the fountain of paradise as a whole is the focus of chapter five. Because representations of nature held a prominent place in early Byzantine church

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<sup>120</sup> The lower mosaic of the diakonikon in the Memorial of Moses (August, 530) and the Church of St. George at Khirbat al-Mukhayyat (535-6) in Mount Nebo: Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 22, 134-47, 178-9.



decoration before the eighth century,<sup>121</sup> the discovery of the upper border in 1952 convinced many scholars of the pre-iconoclastic origins of the mosaic. For example, baskets of fruit, birds, and garlands decorate the lower vaults and dome of the Church of St. George in Thessalonike, dated between the fourth and the early sixth centuries. Nearby, the soffits of the fifth-century Acheiropoietos church depict radiating crosses amid grapevines, blooms, and birds.<sup>122</sup> Luxurious vines and acanthus scrolls encircle various creatures in the wall and vault mosaics of the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna (540-7/8), while the scene of the Transfiguration in the apse of S. Apollinare in Classe is set in a terrestrial paradise (549) (Figs. 1.56, 1.74). Despite its austere central composition, vines and ducks mark the outer face of the apse mosaic of the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai (548-65), where Nilotic scenes also line the ceiling beams of the nave (Figs. 1.57, 4.14).<sup>123</sup> Though few mosaics survive in Constantinople, vine scrolls appear in the vault mosaics of the room above the southwest ramp in the west gallery of Hagia Sophia, added in the time of Justin II (565-78) (Fig. 2.36).<sup>124</sup> These examples demonstrate the richness and pervasiveness of natural imagery in wall mosaics of the early Byzantine period and offer further parallels, as we shall see, for individual motifs. Other suitable parallels are found in floor mosaics of the Eastern Mediterranean, which survive in greater quantity and manifest similar stylistic trends. Architectural sculpture and Coptic textiles may also provide some clues to the dating of the Kiti apse.

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<sup>121</sup> See especially H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park, PA, 1987); *Nectar and Illusion: Nature in Byzantine Art and Literature* (New York, 2012).

<sup>122</sup> R. Hoddinott, *Early Byzantine Churches in Macedonia and Southern Serbia* (London, 1963), 155-8.

<sup>123</sup> On the carved wooden beams: H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 28-30, figs. 23-33.

<sup>124</sup> R. Cormack and E. J. W. Hawkins, "The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul: The Rooms Above the Southwest Vestibule and Ramp," *DOP* 31 (1977) 175-251.

The upper border at Kiti has much in common with the inhabited vine or acanthus scrolls so prevalent in early Byzantine mosaic pavements (Fig. 2.13). An enduring feature of Hellenistic and Roman art, the inhabited scroll was revived in floor mosaics of the Eastern Mediterranean in the sixth century, when organic forms began to take the place of geometric networks.<sup>125</sup> Although the acanthus leaves at Kiti do not form a scroll, the border resembles an abbreviated free scroll with multiple points of departure consisting of an acanthus cup and vase.<sup>126</sup> Claudine Dauphin describes the combination of the cup and vase as “peculiar,” citing only one example in the sixth-century floor mosaic found near the Damascus Gate, also known as the “Armenian mosaic,” while noting the presence of the form at Kiti (Fig. 2.37).<sup>127</sup> Two more examples of the motif come from areas not considered by Dauphin. The first and perhaps the earliest belongs to the narthex mosaic of the Large Basilica at Heraklea Lynkestis, dated to the late fifth or early sixth century, in which a heavily stylized and boldly outlined acanthus cup envelops a central vase flanked by a stag and a doe (Fig. 2.38).<sup>128</sup> Above the deer are two peacocks and two birds, fluttering amidst burgeoning grapevines. Multiple inhabited grapevines

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<sup>125</sup> A framework for the development of mosaic pavements in the Eastern Mediterranean was devised by Ernst Kitzinger in 1965, after the important study by Doro Levi in 1947: E. Kitzinger, “Stylistic Developments in Pavement Mosaics in the Greek East from the Age of Constantine to the Age of Justinian,” in *La mosaïque gréco-romaine*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1965), 341-52; D. Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1947). The presence of these forms in North African pavements of the second and third centuries and questions on the transmission of style are explored by I. Lavin, “The Hunting Mosaics of Antioch and Their Sources: A Study of Compositional Principles in the Development of Early Mediaeval Style,” *DOP* 17 (1963) 179-286.

<sup>126</sup> The study of inhabited scrolls by Claudine Dauphin does not include wall mosaics, but examines thirty-three examples of architectural sculpture and eighty-nine floor mosaics from Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Cyprus, and Israel: C. Dauphin, “The Development of the ‘Inhabited Scroll’ in Architectural Sculpture and Mosaic Art from Late Imperial Times to the Seventh-Century A.D.,” *Levant* 19 (1987) 183-213.

<sup>127</sup> Dauphin, “Development of the Inhabited Scroll,” 188, 199.

<sup>128</sup> Late fifth century: G. Tomašević, “Mosaïques paléochrétiennes récemment découvertes à Héracléa Lynkestis,” in *La mosaïque gréco-romaine*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1975), 385-99, esp. 389-90. Early sixth century: R. Kolarik, *The Floor Mosaics of Stobi and Their Balkan Context* (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1982), 444-6. See also H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 36-40.

also sprout from acanthus cups and vases in the borders of the ivory throne of Maximian in Ravenna (c. 550) (Fig. 2.39).<sup>129</sup> The scrolls contain large land animals, including lions, bulls, bears, and deer, in addition to various species of birds. Other examples of the motif are associated with vegetal scrolls not inhabited by animals or birds. In the pier reliefs from the Church of St. Polyeuktos in Constantinople (c. 524-7), now in Venice, the grapevine emerging from the vessel omits the animals in favor of large clusters of fruit and foliage.<sup>130</sup> The stylized, bejeweled, and uninhabited scrolls of the circular and octagonal arcades of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (692) also extend from acanthus cups and vessels (Fig. 2.40).<sup>131</sup> However, the closest comparison for the Kiti border appears as an isolated motif in the nave mosaic of the Church of the Apostles at Madaba, dated 578 by inscription (Fig. 2.41).<sup>132</sup> Below the west border of the main field, in line with the central figure of Thalassa, two birds balance on the uppermost leaves of an acanthus plant, each with the second foot gripping the handle of an amphora supported between them. The group resembles the second fountain group at Kiti, in which addorsed parrots flank the acanthus-wrapped vessel (Fig. 2.42). In Madaba, the birds are confronted rather than addorsed, but each turns its head away, so that all of the birds exhibit the same pose, including the raised second foot.

The motif in the Church of the Apostles combines three essential elements of the border at Kiti, but better parallels exist for the leaves of acanthus (Fig. 2.43). The

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<sup>129</sup> O. von Simson, *Sacred Fortress: Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna* (Chicago, 1948), 63-8.

<sup>130</sup> R. M. Harrison, ed., *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul*, vol. 1 (Princeton, 1986), fig. 143. See also R. Nelson, "The History of Legends and the Legends of History: The Pilastri Acritani in Venice," in *San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice*, ed. H. Maguire and R. Nelson (Washington, DC, 2010), 63-90.

<sup>131</sup> O. Grabar, "The Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem," *Ars Orientalis* 3 (1959) 33-62. S. Nuseibeh and O. Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock* (New York, 1996).

<sup>132</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 96-107, esp. figs. 81, 88; *Madaba: le chiese e i mosaici* (Milan, 1989), 96-107.

conspicuous three-leafed form of the acanthus cup appears in wall and floor mosaics, many of which can be dated to the Justinianic period (527-65). Two such cups are located in the vault of San Vitale in Ravenna (540-7/8), where myriad embellishments cannot conceal the basic structure (Fig. 2.44). Similar cups decorate the intrados of the mid sixth-century Basilica of Eufrasius at Poreč, displaying red tips and the prominent central curve that distinguishes all six cups at Kiti (Fig. 2.45). Likewise, the gradation of the outer leaves at Poreč, especially in the south acanthus cup, is analogous to the Kiti cups in its progression from blue to green to gold.<sup>133</sup> The floor mosaic of the Basilica of Justinian at Sabratha contains another bold design at the west end of the nave; it serves as the source of a rich and densely inhabited grapevine, replete with multiple species of birds.<sup>134</sup> In Jordan, a single acanthus cup with a sprouting grapevine is framed at the east end of the nave of the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian in Jerash (533).<sup>135</sup> The motif appears in this region as late as the eighth century in the nave mosaic of the Church of St. Stephen at Umm al-Rasas, where the figures of the inhabited scroll were later destroyed by iconoclasts (718).<sup>136</sup> Yet the acanthus cups at Kiti more closely resemble four plants in the nave mosaic of the Church of Sts. Lot and Prokopios at Mount Nebo (557), with which they share similar proportions (Fig. 2.46). In spite of the split central leaf, the lateral leaves lean inwards, forming a tighter cup.

The comparisons gathered so far are admittedly not in Cyprus, where floor mosaics remain largely geometric through the late antique period, with notable

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<sup>133</sup> This feature of the south acanthus cup is original. The same cannot be said of the north acanthus cup: Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, figs. 298-9.

<sup>134</sup> H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 61-6, figs. 70-1.

<sup>135</sup> H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, fig. 39.

<sup>136</sup> M. Piccirillo, *Madaba: le chiese e i mosaici* (Milan, 1989), 269-308, esp. 286. On the date of 718 vs. 785 for the nave mosaic of the Church of St. Stephen, see R. Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule: A Historical and Archaeological Study* (Princeton, 1995), 472-4.

exceptions in Paphos and Kourion.<sup>137</sup> The shortage could be due in part to the spread and popularity of *opus sectile* floors in the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>138</sup> While the island had no local supply of marble and no tradition of *opus sectile* prior to the fourth century, the costly technique was employed in many cathedrals and village churches, located in coastal areas as well as inland.<sup>139</sup> The saints on the walls of the transept basilica in Pegia represent the only figural *opus sectile* in Cyprus.<sup>140</sup> Thus, the continuity of inhabited acanthus is observed mainly in architectural sculpture. Champlevé carving produced from the late third to the early sixth century furnishes many examples from sites along the coast.<sup>141</sup> A pilaster fragment from the late fourth-century basilica of St. Epiphany at Salamis-Constantia depicts a bird wrapped in acanthus, while scrolls filled with birds and fruits survive in the early fifth-century plaques embedded in the *opus sectile* floor of the sixth- or seventh-century Acropolis basilica at Amathous.<sup>142</sup> Fragments from the episcopal basilica at Kourion, associated with the initial construction of the church in the first third of the fifth century, include quadrupeds, birds, and other vegetal elements.<sup>143</sup> A stucco relief with hunting scenes in acanthus from the so-called House of the Oil Press in

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<sup>137</sup> W. Daszewski, *Dionysos der Erlöser: Griechische Mythen im spätantiken Cypern* (Mainz, 1985). D. Michaelides and W. Daszewski, *Mosaic Floors in Cyprus* (Ravenna, 1988). The late second- or early third-century floor mosaic of the triclinium of the House of Dionysus in Paphos contains inhabited vines: C. Kondoleon, *Domestic and Divine: Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos* (Ithaca, NY, 1995).

<sup>138</sup> D. Michaelides, "Opus Sectile in Cyprus," in *Sweet Land of Cyprus*, 69-113.

<sup>139</sup> D. Michaelides, "Opus Sectile in Cyprus," 69-70, 75. The presence of *opus sectile* in smaller churches points to a healthy supply of imported marble, although stones were frequently reused. Like the presence of wall mosaics in village churches, it is an indicator of favorable economic conditions. By contrast, tessellated pavements in Cyprus were made of local stone and minimal glass; only the latest examples incorporate marble and other precious stones: Michaelides and Daszewski, *Mosaic Floors in Cyprus*, 91.

<sup>140</sup> Cat. no. 60 in D. Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics*, 2nd edn. (Nicosia, 1992), 107.

<sup>141</sup> On champlevé carving in Cyprus: S. Boyd, "A Little-Known Technique of Architectural Sculpture: Champlevé Reliefs from Cyprus," *JÖB* 32:5 (1982) 313-25; "Champlevé Production in Early Byzantine Cyprus," in *Medieval Cyprus*, 49-70; "The Champlevé Revetments," in *Kourion: Excavations*, 235-320.

<sup>142</sup> Boyd, "Champlevé Production in Early Byzantine Cyprus," 51-2, 56-7, 59, figs. 5, 13, 19-20.

<sup>143</sup> Boyd, "The Champlevé Revetments," 235-320.

Salamis-Constantia has also been dated to the fifth century (Fig. 2.47).<sup>144</sup> These examples provide little help with dating, but serve to demonstrate the tradition of inhabited scrolls on the island.

The stags, parrots, and ducks of the Kiti border are ubiquitous in early Byzantine art. In the floor mosaics of churches, deer often appear flanking vases, fountains, or streams, where their meaning may be interpreted in relation to Psalm 41/2, lines 1-2: “As the hart longs for the water fountains, so longs my soul for thee, O God.” Of the few figural mosaics surviving in Cyprus, a fragment of a deer drinking water from the fourth-century basilica of Chrysopolitissa in Paphos retains the inscription (Fig. 5.11).<sup>145</sup> Beribboned parrots populate the vault of San Vitale in Ravenna, while filling the fields and borders of mosaic pavements in Syria and Palestine, including a late fifth- or early sixth-century mosaic fragment from Daphne now in the Baltimore Museum of Art (Fig. 2.48).<sup>146</sup> The ribbon or *pativ* betrays the influence of Sassanian art beginning in the late fifth century.<sup>147</sup> The introduction of this motif into the Byzantine repertory follows the appearance of allover patterns in floor mosaics, which have been convincingly associated

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<sup>144</sup> Both early and late fifth-century dates have been proposed: G. Argoud, O. Callot, and B. Helly, *Une résidence byzantine, “l’Huilerie,”* vol. 11 of *Salamine de Chypre* (Paris, 1980), 31-3, 49-50; O. Callot, “Présentation des décors en stuc du bâtiment dit de ‘l’Huilerie’ à Salamine,” in *Salamine de Chypre, histoire et archéologie*, ed. M. Yon (Paris, 1980), 341-74.

<sup>145</sup> D. Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics*, 1st edn. (Nicosia, 1987), 34-5, pl. 16; “The Early Christian Mosaics of Cyprus,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 52:4 (1989) 192-202, esp. 193-4.

<sup>146</sup> A fragment from the same pavement is reproduced in C. Kondoleon, ed., *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* (Princeton, 2000), 136-7, no. 25. A mosaic in room six of the monastery at Beth Shean is also filled exclusively with beribboned birds: R. and A. Ovadiah, *Hellenistic, Roman, and Early Byzantine Mosaic Pavements in Israel* (Rome, 1987), 32, pl. 27.

<sup>147</sup> The earliest representation of beribboned parrots in a mosaic with an inscribed date may be the north basilica or “Michaelion” at Huarte in Syria, dated 483-486/7 or 483-501/2. The end date is only partially preserved, but the excavators prefer the former: P. and M.T. Canivet, *Huarte: Sanctuaire chrétien d’Apamène (IVe-VIe s.)*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1987), 47-62, 315-16. Interestingly, the earlier fifth-century mosaics of the narthex and baptistery of the old basilica at Huarte also contain animals and birds, but not beribboned parrots.

with Sassanian and Sassanian-inspired silks.<sup>148</sup> Ducks also abound in early Byzantine pavements, usually accompanied by other birds or featured in Nilotic scenes. Notably, stags, birds, and ducks are found together on the ambo of Agnellus in Ravenna (c. 556-70), where they occupy multiple frames in adjacent rows (Fig. 2.49).<sup>149</sup> Above them are two rows of sheep and peacocks and below them is one row of fish. Like the mosaic border at Kiti, the marble ambo displays living creatures of the land, air, and water.

The profusion of deer, parrots, and ducks in early Byzantine art compels us to look more closely at their specific forms if we hope to establish as firm a date as possible for the apse mosaic at Kiti. Luckily, animal protomes are more rare in Roman and early Byzantine mosaics. Two fourth-century floors from the eponymous House of the Protomai in Thuburbo Maius and the portico of the peristyle at Piazza Armerina in Sicily illustrate a variety of animal protomes in fields of laurel wreaths.<sup>150</sup> Pauline Donceel-Voûte describes a protome of a large dog attacking a hare in a fifth-century hunting mosaic in the church at Rayân in Syria.<sup>151</sup> In Antioch, protomes of rams are confronted on pairs of beribboned wings in the mosaic borders of the House of the Rams' Heads and the House of the Phoenix, both dated to the late fifth or early sixth century (Fig. 1.66, 2.50).<sup>152</sup> The former also contains an inhabited scroll with animal protomes, preserved only on the fragment in Baltimore. Like the beribboned parrot, the motif of the ram's

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<sup>148</sup> A. Gonosová, "The Formation and Sources of Early Byzantine Floral Semis and Floral Diaper Patterns Reexamined," *DOP* 41 (1987) 227-37; "Exotic Taste: The Lure of Sasanian Persia," in *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City*, 130-3, plus cat. nos. 20-6 on 133-40.

<sup>149</sup> F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden, 1969), 70-6. R. Farioli-Campanati, "Il 'pyrgus' dell'arcivescovo Agnello e la sua datazione," *CCARB* (1994) 207-17.

<sup>150</sup> K. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge, 1999), 108-9, 138, figs. 112, 141.

<sup>151</sup> The identification of the protome as a dog is questioned by the author, who does not reproduce the motif: P. Donceel-Voûte, *Les pavements des églises byzantines de Syrie et du Liban: décor, archéologie et liturgie* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1988), 261.

<sup>152</sup> On the House of the Phoenix: Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 313-15; cat. no. 44 in F. Baratte, *Mosaïques romaines et paléochrétiennes du Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1978), 92-8.

head mounted on beribboned wings was imported from Sassanian Persia.<sup>153</sup> Half-length animals, including stags, bulls, bears, and boars, also participate in hunting scenes surrounding the two great hunters in the transept of the Basilica of Dometios at Nikopolis, dated to the second quarter of the sixth century (Fig. 2.51).<sup>154</sup>

The protomes of the Kiti border are unique in surviving wall mosaics and stylistically remote from those identified in floor mosaics. Protomes are more numerous, however, in Roman and early Byzantine architectural sculpture, where they emerge from inhabited scrolls or from tufts of acanthus on Corinthian capitals. The late second- or early third-century frieze from the Roman theater at Beth Shean displays a large running acanthus scroll with half-length lions, leopards, bulls, horses, goats, sheep and *erotes* in medallions.<sup>155</sup> Vine scrolls with protomes also decorate the fifth-century marble portico that formed part of the original sanctuary screen at St. Demetrios in Thessalonike.<sup>156</sup> Yet in their particular arrangement, the motifs of the Kiti border resemble to a greater extent the two-zoned animal capitals of the early Byzantine period.<sup>157</sup> In general, animal capitals remained popular from about the middle of the fifth century to the end of the Justinianic period, to be revived in the Middle Ages.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> See the fifth-century stucco mold from Palace I at Kish: cat. no. 21 in Kondoleon, *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City*, 134-5.

<sup>154</sup> E. Kitzinger, "Studies on Late Antique and Early Byzantine Floor Mosaics: I. Mosaics at Nikopolis," *DOP* 6 (1951) 81-122. M. Spiro, *Critical Corpus of the Mosaic Pavements on the Greek Mainland* (New York, 1978), 454-61.

<sup>155</sup> A. Ovadia and Y. Turnheim, "Peopled" Scrolls in Roman Architectural Decoration in Israel: *The Roman Theatre at Beth Shean, Scythopolis* (Rome, 1994), passim, color pls. 1-4.

<sup>156</sup> Hoddinott, *Early Byzantine Churches*, 130, pl. 26a-c.

<sup>157</sup> R. Kautzsch, *Kapitellstudien: Beiträge zu einer Geschichte des spätantiken Kapitells im Osten vom vierten bis ins siebente Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1936), 152-65.

<sup>158</sup> To date, I have found only one published example of an animal capital in Cyprus. It is a Hellenistic marble capital with bull protomes, eastern in type, discovered near the Temple of Zeus at Salamis. Evidence of an earlier, failed restoration led the excavator to propose that the capital was intended for reuse in an early Byzantine church: G. Roux, "Le chapiteau a protomés de taureaux découvert à Salamine de Chypre," in *Salamine de Chypre, histoire et archéologie*, 257-74. Many more Byzantine animal capitals must have existed on the island, for they are found throughout the Mediterranean and in all areas to which



The relationship between these capitals and a tapestry at Dumbarton Oaks was explored by Ernst Kitzinger in 1946.<sup>159</sup> The tapestry must be considered together with the Kiti border, for it incorporates many of the same rare motifs. Here, protomes of horses and lions surmount semicircular cups or pedestals inscribed with addorsed birds, each balanced atop scrolls of acanthus in a repeat pattern of staggered, alternating rows (Fig. 2.52). Amending Kautzsch's classification, Kitzinger distinguishes between two types of animal capitals. Capitals of the first type are described as descendents of Hellenistic and Roman capitals, in which the animals take the place of volutes, springing from behind the leaves of acanthus, while capitals of the second type are based on Sassanian models, in which the animal is separated from its base by a conspicuous horizontal line (Figs. 2.53-4). Examples of type one are concentrated in the second half of the fifth century, followed by type two in the sixth century. Owing to the smooth line of the cup, Kitzinger associates the protomes of the Horse and Lion tapestry with type two capitals, but notes features of type one in the inclusion of the animals' forelegs and the close proximity of the animals, which are nearly or completely joined at the back. Conversely, the protomes at Kiti derive from the Roman tradition, but have characteristics of type two protomes, with shorter busts, no forelegs, and a clear separation between the animals, where space is filled by an additional element, in this case a vessel.<sup>160</sup> The formal comparison is best applied to the deer at Kiti, which project outwards from the lower zone of acanthus with their heads angled downwards (Fig. 2.23).

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Cyprus has been connected here. In general, the capitals of Cyprus are not well published. In addition, a great deal of marble was destroyed in late antiquity to make lime concrete. Kilns have been discovered in large numbers: D. Michaelides, "*Opus Sectile* in Cyprus," 70 n. 4.

<sup>159</sup> E. Kitzinger, "The Horse and Lion Tapestry at Dumbarton Oaks: A Study in Coptic and Sassanian Textile Design," *DOP* 3 (1946) 1-72.

<sup>160</sup> One might question the usefulness of the distinction if both the tapestry and the mosaic are hybrids. That most capitals conform to the first or second type is laid out in the appendix: Kitzinger, "Horse and Lion Tapestry," 61-72.

The three-quarter pose is suggestive of three-dimensionality and may imitate the profile of animal capitals. I would not suggest that the mosaicist copied specific capitals, for deer and ducks belong to the repertory of mosaic pavements and not of animal capitals, which tend to display rams, griffins, eagles, and other birds. Yet early Byzantine capitals employed protomes much more often than floor mosaics, giving them the potential to serve as models, even as the mosaicists substituted more familiar and more meaningful forms, such as deer and ducks, in the medium of mosaic.<sup>161</sup> If the comparison is admitted, the fusion of type one and type two protomes in the Kiti border would indicate a date in the sixth century, which is consistent with the archaeological evidence.

The sixth-century date of the Horse and Lion tapestry was also based in part on the motif of addorsed birds, which Kitzinger believed did not appear in Byzantine art prior to the sixth century. He cited examples in wall painting, jewelry, and textiles, including the painted border in chapel eighteen at Bawit in Egypt (Fig. 2.55), earrings discovered in Sicily and in Kerch, a Coptic tapestry in Mainz, and a silk from Antinoë that is probably Sassanian, now in Berlin.<sup>162</sup> To this list may be added a seventh-century earring in the Cyprus Archaeological Museum,<sup>163</sup> the floor mosaic in the south aisle of Basilica Gamma at Nea Anchialos in Thessaly (after 532) (Fig. 2.56),<sup>164</sup> the floor mosaic in the nave of the Church of the Apostles at Madaba (Fig. 2.41),<sup>165</sup> and several other

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<sup>161</sup> Cf. Gonosová, "Formation and Sources of Early Byzantine Floral Semis," 227-37.

<sup>162</sup> Kitzinger, "Horse and Lion Tapestry," 25-8, figs. 24-7. The earring from Kerch is now published as cat. no. 85 in J. Andrási, *The Berthier-Delagarde Collection of Crimean Jewellery in the British Museum and Related Material* (London, 2008), 62, pl. 45, col. pl. 1.

<sup>163</sup> The earring in the Cyprus Archaeological Museum in Nicosia (acc. no. J497) contains addorsed peacocks, but their heads are not turned back: A. Yeroulanou, *Diatrita: Gold pierced-work jewellery from the 3rd to the 7th century* (Athens, 1999), no. 556.

<sup>164</sup> An inscription mentions the Nika riots of 532: Spiro, *Critical Corpus*, 314-22, fig. 385.

<sup>165</sup> In the main field, the beribboned parrots form a network, where they appear both confrontational and back to back, with small fruited plants or single leaves between them. Their tails do not quite cross, but in some cases the tips are separated by a single tessera: Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 96-107.

mosaics in Palestine, where the birds appear most often. Despite iconoclastic damage in the church at Beth Guvrin, one can make out addorsed birds with pivoting heads alongside fountains or plants in the mosaic of the south aisle. The mosaic is not securely dated, but a sixth-century date has been proposed.<sup>166</sup> Other examples appear in the Monastery of the Lady Mary at Beth Shean (567) and in the vault of San Vitale in Ravenna, where the birds are placed on either side of a kantharos. A more problematic pair of addorsed birds flanking a central vase is found on a belt tab at the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris, which Yeroulanou dates to the fourth century.<sup>167</sup> One might disregard the early metalwork for its western provenance if Yeroulanou had not suggested that the belt tab, found at Coudray, was likely of Syrian origin. Her reasons for the date and attribution are not clear. Even so, it may be preferable to modify Kitzinger's concept of the motif and to focus strictly on addorsed birds with their heads turned and tails crossed. The birds at Kiti correspond therefore to the wall painting at Bawit, where they also wear ribbons, to the Horse and Lion tapestry, and to the floor mosaic at Nea Anchialos. The first two works underscore contacts with neighboring Egypt, although neither can be used for evidence of a precise date. The floor mosaic points us towards the middle of the sixth century.

To this point I have neglected another group of objects with addorsed birds assigned by Kitzinger to the Justinianic period, namely capitals of cubic form. The capitals are controversial in that surviving examples belong exclusively to the middle Byzantine period. Kitzinger presumed the existence of early Byzantine forerunners, a point disputed by Martin Dennert, who insists that the medieval capitals differ

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<sup>166</sup> R. and A. Ovadia, *Mosaic Pavements in Israel*, 18-20.

<sup>167</sup> Yeroulanou, *Diatrita*, no. 184.

structurally from early Byzantine animal capitals.<sup>168</sup> While birds were popular in both periods, he says that they are rarely if ever positioned on the sides of cubic capitals with tails crossed before the ninth century. Instead, birds are placed at the corners of two-zoned capitals, where they function architectonically. I would add that birds in this arrangement look straight ahead and do not generally turn around. Two notable exceptions come from the Basilica of Eufrasius at Poreč and the Antiquarium at Carthage, where the eagles, poised above a row of palmettes, turn back towards a central vase, reminiscent of the design at Kiti.<sup>169</sup> Their tails do not cross, but continue onto the adjacent sides of the capital, nearly joining the tails of the birds on the opposite face. The monogram of the bishop Eufrasius on the capital at Poreč provides a fairly secure date around the middle of the sixth century (Fig. 2.57).

There are two final motifs in the Kiti border, reserving the cross for discussion below: the tripods at the base of the arch and the handleless vessels (Figs. 2.13, 2.42-3). In their basic form and classicism, the tables resemble the tiered tripods forming the candelabra in the sole surviving exedra of the floor mosaic at the Church of St. John the Baptist in Jerash (531) (Fig. 2.58).<sup>170</sup> The legs of the lowest tier are replaced by dancing men, whose bodies mimic the curvature of the central legs and echo the legs of the tripods at Kiti. The main field of the mosaic depicts a Nilotic landscape with a wide acanthus border, which is comprised of stylized, delicate, and segmented scrolls; the animals are rendered in strict profile, lacking the subtle gradation and fullness of the

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<sup>168</sup> M. Dennert, *Mittelbyzantinische Kapitele: Studien zu Typologie und Chronologie* (Bonn, 1997), 153-66. Kitzinger was arguing against O. Wulff, who claimed that parrots and adorsed birds had no tradition in early Byzantine art: Kitzinger, "Horse and Lion Tapestry," 25-8.

<sup>169</sup> E. Russo, *Sculture del complesso eufrasiano di Parenzo* (Naples, 1991), 42-5, figs. 20-2, 218.

<sup>170</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 288-9, fig. 541. E. Kitzinger, "Mosaic Pavements in the Greek East and the Question of a 'Renaissance' under Justinian," in *Actes du VIe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines, Paris 27 Juillet-2 Aout 1948*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1950), 209-23.

forms at Kiti. Other parallels are provided by the lush vegetal and non-figural mosaics of the Dome of the Rock (692). The mosaics of the circular arcade and drum of the dome contain vessels supported by miniature tripods (Fig. 2.59). Other vessels depicted in these mosaics, especially in the circular and octagonal arcades, are long and slender in form and have no handles (Fig. 2.40). Likewise, the upward movement of these forms, with incremental blooms, scrolls, and other ornamentation, is reminiscent of the arch at Kiti. Two other monuments locate vessels in the intrados of an apse conch. The apse mosaic of S. Apollinare in Classe (549) combines plant motifs and candelabras with a series of vases flanked by birds, some of which are addorsed (Fig. 2.60). The style is much more delicate and the vases are shorter and handled, but the parallel is an important one for the convergence of motifs in this location. Much closer to Cyprus geographically is a fragmentary border in the painted apse of the two-aisled church at Kalabatia on the Lycian coast (Fig. 2.61).<sup>171</sup> The surface of the painting is heavily eroded and laden with calcium deposits, but handleless vases with three grooves below the neck can be deciphered on either side of the lost central motif at the apex, echoing the surface decoration and position of the vases flanked by deer at Kiti, but facing away from the center. The remainder of the border is filled with cornucopia, acanthus leaves, and possibly kraters. The central composition represents the enthroned Virgin and Child accompanied by standing saints. To the right of the Virgin's head is the monogram for

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<sup>171</sup> Also called "Church 1" in A. Zäh, "Ergebnisse einer kunsthistorischen Forschungsreise in Anatolien: Nachträge zu den Bänden 4, 7 und 8 der Tabula Imperii Byzantini (Akroterion, Leontopolis, Kalabatia, Apollonia)," *JÖB* 57 (2007) 225-87.

Maria. Stylistic analysis of the wall paintings points to a date in the sixth or seventh century.<sup>172</sup>

The vessels of the Kiti border may also be compared to early Byzantine vessels surviving in silver and glass from the fourth to the sixth centuries. Dated to the fourth century or later, a green bottle flask from Egypt at the University of Illinois has a wide mouth, narrow neck, and rounded body, but lacks the surface decoration that distinguishes all six vessels at Kiti, namely the fluting below the neck of the vessel and the central frieze with scrolled ornament.<sup>173</sup> A tall and slender silver flask of the fourth century, discovered as part of the Esquiline Treasure, shares a similar profile.<sup>174</sup> Scrolls inhabited by putti, animals, birds, and fruit issue from two acanthus cups at the foot of the vessel and cover the full length of the body up to the neck. Slender proportions also characterize a fifth-century octagonal silver ewer with gilding and niello inlay discovered in Trier (Fig. 2.62).<sup>175</sup> The body of the vessel is divided into three registers and decorated with engraved apostles, lambs, and plant forms. Because only three complete sides of the vessel can be seen in a single view, the faceted upper body of the ewer resembles the fluting of the Kiti vessels; however, preserved attachments, like the openwork cast handle and domed lid, might have altered the appearance of the vessel significantly. Multiple registers of decoration are also found on a fifth- or sixth-century domestic silver ewer in

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<sup>172</sup> Including comparison to Kiti, here dated to the sixth or seventh century: Zäh, "Ergebnisse einer kunsthistorischen Forschungsreise in Anatolien," 258-62.

<sup>173</sup> Cat. no. 50 in E. Maguire, H. Maguire, and M. Duncan-Flowers, *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House* (Urbana, IL, 1989), 119.

<sup>174</sup> D. Strong, *Greek and Roman Gold and Silver Plate* (Ithaca, NY, 1966), 191-2, pl. 55B. Cat. no. 16 in K. Shelton, *The Esquiline Treasure* (London, 1981), 82-3, fig. 21, pl. 30.

<sup>175</sup> Cat. no. 73 in J. Spier, ed., *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art* (New Haven, 2007), 250. In the same catalogue, cat. nos. 67 and 75 illustrate similar ewers from Rome (?) and Traprain Law, now in London and Edinburgh. Dated to the late fourth century, the ewers are decorated with biblical scenes. However, both examples are relatively squat in proportions and once had single handles for pouring.

Cleveland.<sup>176</sup> Located between a hunting scene and a marine scene, the central Dionysiac scene strongly suggests that the vessel was used for wine. Stylized acanthus leaves fill two narrow registers below the neck of the vessel and above the foot. The most striking comparison in terms of form and decoration is a sixth-century silver flask in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, possibly from Constantinople (Fig. 2.63).<sup>177</sup> The pear-shaped body of the vessel represents the Adoration of the Magi above a narrow frieze with a scrolling grapevine. On both the silver and mosaic flasks, the scrolled ornament defines the widest part of the body. Below the central frieze, in the area concealed by acanthus cups at Kiti, the lower body of the vessel is decorated with acanthus leaves, flowers, and eagle protomes. Another register of acanthus appears above the scene of the Adoration and below the raised ivy band on the neck of the vessel.

Given the plethora of parallels in early Byzantine church decoration for the motifs of the upper border, a *terminus ante quem* may be drawn from the decline of natural imagery in churches during the eighth century. Three important, but imprecise *termini post quem* also emerge from the discussion: the adoption of beribboned parrots from the art of Sassanian Persia beginning in the late fifth century; the revival of inhabited scrolls in the Eastern Mediterranean in the sixth century; and the fusion of type one and type two protomes in animal capitals of the sixth century. These *termini* complement the evidence of the synthronon, which also suggested a date for the mosaic after the beginning of the sixth century. Between the early sixth and eighth centuries, several of the most striking parallels for the motifs of the Kiti border come from the mid- to late sixth century. The

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<sup>176</sup> Cat. no. 131 in K. Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York, 1979), 153-4, with a fifth- or sixth-century date.

<sup>177</sup> Cat. no. 86 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore, 1986), 257-8.

nave mosaic of the Church of the Apostles in Madaba (578) includes a vessel flanked by birds and embedded in acanthus leaves. In structure, profile, and detail, the acanthus cups at Kiti correspond to acanthus cups in the nave of the Church of Sts. Lot and Prokopios at Mount Nebo (557). Dated to the middle of the sixth century, the Basilica of Eufrasius at Poreč provides two important parallels in mosaic and architectural sculpture: the acanthus cup of the south soffit, with its graded blue, green, and gold tones, and the marble capital with confronted and addorsed birds flanking vessels. Nearby, in the city and port of Ravenna, the ambo of Agnellus (556-70) combines stags, birds, and ducks in the same sequence as the Kiti border, while the Church of S. Apollinare in Classe (549) displays plant motifs, vessels, and addorsed birds in the intrados of the apse. Other close parallels in the Eastern Mediterranean are dated more broadly: the sixth-century Horse and Lion tapestry with its protomes, addorsed birds, and acanthus leaves; the wall paintings of chapel eighteen at Bawit with its addorsed and beribboned birds; the wall paintings of the sixth- or seventh-century church at Kalabatia, where fluted vessels border an enthroned Virgin and Child in the apse; and the sixth-century silver flask in the Metropolitan Museum, which corresponds in form to the Kiti vessels and possesses a central frieze with a vegetal scroll and a lower register of acanthus leaves and eagle protomes. Only one firmly dated seventh-century parallel incorporates some of the same rare motifs. The mosaics of the Umayyad Dome of the Rock (692) in Jerusalem include slender, handleless vessels emerging from acanthus leaves and vessels supported by miniature tripods.

*7b. Outer and Lower Borders*



The outer crowstep border of the apse mosaic survives at the base of the semidome above the cornice, but probably extended around the arch onto the edge of the east wall (Fig. 2.14).<sup>178</sup> The crowstep pattern is very common in Roman and early Byzantine floor mosaics and cannot easily be used for evidence of date. In wall mosaics, however, the pattern appears less often and is composed of red and white tesserae in only a few locations. A red and white crowstep border surrounds the soffit and semidome of the apse at S. Apollinare in Classe, where it stands out for its simplicity against a series of ornate vegetal and jeweled borders (Figs. 1.74, 2.60). Likewise, the fragmentary mosaic on the west wall of the inner north aisle at St. Demetrios in Thessalonike, possibly produced in the late fifth or early sixth century, possesses a red and white crowstep frame. In the central medallion of the intrados at Poreč, triangles of white stone and red brick, at least partly original, encircle the restored nineteenth-century lamb.<sup>179</sup> Colors vary slightly at Lythrankomi, where a small portion of the crowstep border was preserved on the south side of the arch above the cornice (Fig. 1.26). Megaw and Hawkins do not publish a color photograph, but note that it consisted of red and green triangles alternating on white ground.<sup>180</sup> They suggest that the border extended the full length of the mosaic at the base of the conch, like the crowstep border at Mount Sinai, which is composed of red and blue triangles on white ground (Fig. 1.57).<sup>181</sup> Finally, blue and white crowstep borders frame the lunettes of the presbytery at San Vitale in Ravenna.

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<sup>178</sup> The limits of the outer border on the east wall would have been defined by the original stucco relief: Fischer, "Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern," 169.

<sup>179</sup> Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 91, 166, fig. 69.

<sup>180</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 39-40, 113-4.

<sup>181</sup> G. Forsyth and K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Church and Fortress of Justinian* (Ann Arbor, 1973), pls. 103, 118, 120.

The quatrefoil and lily motif of the lower geometric border is less common with notable parallels in wall and floor mosaics (Fig. 2.14). A variation of the motif is found in the vault and tympana of the room above the southwest ramp at Hagia Sophia, completed under the Patriarch John III Scholastikos (565-77) in the reign of Justin II (565-78) (Fig. 2.36).<sup>182</sup> Against a dark blue background, four petals of gray Proconnesian marble outlined in white stone surround a small circle of white marble dotted with red glass or pink marble tesserae.<sup>183</sup> Another mosaic in Constantinople retains the quatrefoil and furnishes a better parallel. The mosaic of the Presentation of Christ discovered in the south wall of the prothesis at Kalenderhane Camii includes a wide border of red quatrefoils outlined in gold with radiating lilies alternating with green eight-pointed stars (Fig. 2.64). The mosaic is not firmly dated, but probably belongs to the late sixth or early seventh century.<sup>184</sup> These two sites preserve the only surviving pre-iconoclastic wall mosaics in Constantinople, indicating that the motif was relatively popular in the capital. Near Constantinople, the motif was also found in the mosaics of the Church of the Dormition at Nicaea, which was destroyed by fire in 1922. The inner border of the apse mosaic of the Virgin and Child was comprised of three geometric motifs, including the quatrefoil and lily motif (Fig. 2.65). The border belongs to the first of three phases in the apse and bema, probably dated to the late seventh century. In all four borders, the quatrefoil and lily design is combined with other geometric designs rendered for the most part in similar colors. At Kiti, green circles of four spindles are inscribed with poised

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<sup>182</sup> Cormack and Hawkins, "Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul," 175-251.

<sup>183</sup> Cormack and Hawkins, "Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul," 203, pls. 11-17.

<sup>184</sup> C. Striker and Y. Kuban, eds., *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Buildings, Their History, Architecture and Decoration: Final Reports 1966-1978* (Mainz, 1997), 121-4; "Work at Kalenderhane Camii in Istanbul: Third and Fourth Preliminary Reports," *DOP* 25 (1971) 251-8. Initially, Striker and Kuban suggest a date between the late sixth and the early eighth centuries, but the date is limited in their final report to the period of Justin II (565-78) or slightly later, based on new architectural evidence. Megaw dated this mosaic to the second half of the sixth century: Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 191-2.

concave squares and gold leaves of ivy on red ground; at Kalenderhane, green eight-pointed stars are outlined in white and inscribed with small red squares; and at Hagia Sophia, poised squares of green glass are defined by two rows of gold tesserae with dentils extending outwards at the center of each side.<sup>185</sup> The quatrefoil and lily motif is found a little earlier in floor mosaics, with two examples from Carthage dated to the middle of the sixth century. In the second phase of Dermech I, a field of imitation coffers containing rosettes and quatrefoils with radiating lilies fills the floor of the central nave (Fig. 2.66).<sup>186</sup> A more naturalistic variant is prominently placed at the center of the Enneagon mosaic, a circular pavement in the west building of the ecclesiastical complex at Bir Ftouha in Carthage, dated 541-50 on the basis of coins and pottery.<sup>187</sup> The motif is inscribed in a medallion framed by a laurel wreath and double wave pattern border within a shield of radiating peltas.

While crowstep borders appear in wall mosaics of the first and second thirds of the sixth century, the quatrefoil and lily motif appears in wall mosaics of the last third of the sixth century to the late seventh century. The geometric borders of the Kiti mosaic therefore contribute additional parallels within the period specified by the fountain and acanthus border, that is, from the mid- to late sixth century. Although the Kalenderhane mosaic may be dated to the early seventh century, its excavators preferred the reign of Justin II (565-78) or slightly later. Only one certain parallel in the late seventh century, the apse mosaic at Nicaea, leaves open the possibility of a seventh-century date, but such

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<sup>185</sup> The apse mosaic at Nicaea is preserved only in black and white photographs.

<sup>186</sup> A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., *Corpus des mosaïques de Tunisie*, vol. IV:I, *Carthage* (Tunis, 1999), 123-7.

<sup>187</sup> H. Maguire, "Mosaics," in *Bir Ftouha: A Pilgrimage Church Complex at Carthage*, ed. S. Stevens, A. Kalinowski, and H. vanderLeest (Portsmouth, RI, 2005), 303-42, esp. 331-2, color fig. 6.9, fig. 6.24.

a date becomes less likely as the weight of evidence favors the second half of the sixth century.

*7c. Light Effects: Radiating Cross and Translucent Orbs*

The interest in light effects signified by the radiating cross at the apex of the arch and the transparent orbs in the hands of the archangels is characteristic of a number of sixth-century monuments (Figs. 2.27-8, 2.67). Certain light effects were also observed in the apse mosaic at Lythrankomi, where the busts of apostles radiate light and ripples of blue light shape the mandorla. At Kiti, the radiating cross is inscribed in three concentric circles of blue tesserae, resembling the cross at the center of a mural painting described by the sixth-century grammarian John of Gaza. The wall painting decorated a bathhouse in Gaza, constructed during the reign of Justinian (527-65). Notably, John compares the three circles enclosing the cross to the Trinity: “The auspicious image of the spiritual Trinity surrounds [the cross] with dark blue whirls; it [the Trinity] is inscribed in circles which are like a representation of the celestial sphere. And inside, it is possible to observe the holy brightness of both arms [of the cross].”<sup>188</sup> The painting is now lost, but other crosses consistent with his description and the mosaic at Kiti are preserved in late antique churches. A few early examples of the motif with Latin crosses can be found in the spandrels of the fifth-century Church of the Acheiropoietos in Thessalonike.<sup>189</sup> The crosses occupy more prominent positions in two non-figural programs in northern Syria. A large jeweled cross with silver rays of light, blue concentric circles, and a lotus border

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<sup>188</sup> Eng. trans. in H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 12 and Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 128. Early Christian writers have also interpreted the consubstantiality of the Trinity in terms of light: F. de’ Maffei, “L’Unigenito consustanziale al Padre nel programma trinitario dei perduti mosaici del bema della Dormizione di Nicea e il Cristo trasfigurato del Sinai. I,” *Storia dell’arte* 45 (1982) 91-116, esp. 105-6.

<sup>189</sup> Hoddinott, *Early Byzantine Churches*, 155-8, color pl. 5, pl. 35 d-e.

marks the center of the sanctuary vault at the Monastery of Mar Samuel, Mar Simeon, and Mar Gabriel at Kartmin (Fig. 2.68). The mosaicists were reportedly sent by the emperor Anastasios I in 512.<sup>190</sup> Another radiating cross set in red concentric circles adorns the apse of the southeast chamber of Basilica A at Rusafa, dated generally to the sixth century.<sup>191</sup> In the Basilica of Eufrosius at Poreč, the angel of the central pier holds a sphere defined by three shades of blue and inscribed with a gold Latin cross.<sup>192</sup> Multiple rays of light are delineated not in gold or silver, but in single rows of white tesserae. More complementary in form, style, and placement to the cross at Kiti is the cross at the apex of the apse in the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai (548-65), where the circles also progress from dark blue at the center to light blue on the outside (Fig. 1.57). There are no rays of light, but larger and more brilliant rays extend from Christ himself at the center of the blue mandorla, comprised of concentric ovals. Remarkably, the garments of the prophets and apostles who witness the Transfiguration change color where they come into contact with the divine light.

Comparable light effects can be found in floor mosaics and illuminated manuscripts, especially in the form of reflective discs. The sixth-century floor mosaic in the outer north aisle of the Basilica of Chrysopolitissa in Paphos contains a border of overlapping reflective discs in shades of red, blue, and yellow, lined by two narrow crowstep borders in red and white (Fig. 2.69).<sup>193</sup> Similar reflective discs are enclosed in interlaced bands of garland and cable in the peristyle floor mosaic at Bir Ftouha in

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<sup>190</sup> E. Hawkins and M. Mundell, "The Mosaics of the Monastery of Mar Samuel, Mar Simeon, and Mar Gabriel near Kartmin," *DOP* 27 (1973) 279-96.

<sup>191</sup> Hawkins and Mundell, "Mosaics of the Monastery near Kartmin," 286, figs. 22-3. The red concentric circles may relate to the metaphor of the Trinity as fire: De' Maffei, "Unigenito consustanziale al Padre nel programma trinitario," 107.

<sup>192</sup> The motif is authentic, although the gold tesserae of the cross have been replaced: Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 107-8, 128, 171-2, figs. 116-7.

<sup>193</sup> Cat. no. 53 in Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics*, 1st edn., 46-7, pl. 33.

Carthage.<sup>194</sup> Here, a whirling motion is implied by the reflection of light, rendered in dark and light green tesserae on a black and white concentric disc. Multicolored reflective discs also overlap in long chains framing two text columns of the Letter of Eusebios on folio 3a of the Rabbula Gospels, while a few discs decorate the illustrated canopy framing the portraits of Mark and Luke on folio 10a (Fig. 2.70). Unfortunately, recent analysis of the manuscript has cast doubt on whether the canon tables are contemporary with the Gospel text, dated by a colophon to 586; instead, the illustrations may have been produced earlier in the sixth century.<sup>195</sup> Larger reflective discs form a circle joining the author portraits of the Rossano Gospels, the earliest surviving illustrated Greek Gospel book, dated to the second half of the sixth century.<sup>196</sup> The book was richly produced with gold and silver script on purple parchment.

In addition to the radiating cross, the translucent orbs held by the archangels appear to capture and transmit light. Various shades of blue tesserae create light and shadow, while transparency is conveyed by the articulation of the archangels' fingers behind the globes. A translucent sphere of divine light encircles the unbearded Christ in the apse mosaic of Hosios David in Thessalonike (Fig. 1.80). The mandorla has a central core of bright white light that converts into prismatic light at the periphery and produces a rainbow that serves as a throne. Like the fingers of the archangels at Kiti, the wings of the tetramorph are visible behind the mandorla. Unfortunately, the date of the mosaic is not certain and depends to some extent on the date of another mosaic program in

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<sup>194</sup> H. Maguire, "Mosaics," in *Bir Ftouha*, 318, color figs. 6.7-8.

<sup>195</sup> Whether the text and illustrations were joined together in 586 or only much later in the fifteenth century is also an outstanding question. See the collection of essays in M. Bernabò, ed., *Il Tetravangelo di Rabbula: Firenze, Biblioteca medicea laurenziana, Plut. 1.56: l'illustrazione del Nuovo Testamento nella Siria del VI secolo* (Rome, 2008). On the manuscript, see also J. Leroy, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient* (Paris, 1965), 139-97.

<sup>196</sup> G. Cavallo, J. Gribomont, W. Loerke, eds., *Codex Purpureus Rossanensis*, 2 vols. (Rome-Graz, 1985-7).

Thessalonike, the Church of St. George.<sup>197</sup> The mosaic at Hosios David has been attributed to the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, but the arguments for a mid-sixth century date by Jean-Michel Spieser are probably the most convincing.<sup>198</sup> Though not expressly correlated with light, transparency is also a feature of the Virgin's veil in the scene of the Annunciation at Poreč (Fig. 2.35).<sup>199</sup> Multiple rows of light blue tesserae form a thin, diaphanous veil that covers her head and upper body, but allows her hair, tunic, and belt to be seen underneath.

In sum, the radiating cross and transparent orbs, in conjunction with the projecting footstool to be discussed in chapter four, demonstrate an interest in light and optical effects far removed from the Roman classical tradition, in which illusionism was created by means of a consistent light source, perspectival space, and clear spatial relationships.<sup>200</sup> In the case of the glass orbs, the interest in representing light converges with an interest in representing materials. As we have seen, these essential qualities are found for the most part in works of the sixth century.

#### *7d. Archangels' Inscriptions*

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<sup>197</sup> The swans and fountains on the outer face of the mosaic at Hosios David are believed to have been copied from the facades in the dome of the Rotunda. On the date of the Rotunda, see the relevant footnote in chapter 1.8b.

<sup>198</sup> J.-M. Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments du IVe au VIe siècle contribution à l'étude d'une ville paléochrétienne* (Athens, 1984), 157-64; "Remarques complémentaires sur la mosaïque de Osios David," in *Διεθνές Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινή Μακεδονία, 324-1453 μ.Χ. Θεσσαλονίκη 29-31 Οκτωβρίου 1992* (Thessalonike, 1995), 295-306. For the other dates, see the full footnote in chapter 1.8c.

<sup>199</sup> Although this panel was the focus of numerous interventions, the Virgin's veil, belt, and the upper portion of her robe are original elements with mostly original tesserae: Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 168-70.

<sup>200</sup> On stylistic change in late antiquity, see especially E. Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd-7th century* (Cambridge, MA, 1977); J. Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity* (Cambridge, 1995).

The inscriptions used to identify the archangels Michael and Gabriel and the vertical format of those inscriptions may also be exploited for evidence of date (Fig. 2.33). As noted in chapter one, the first holy figures to be inscribed in early Christian art were the apostles in the fourth century, concurrent with the earliest differentiation of their portraits. This may have been necessary to avoid confusion or to clarify scenes with many figures, but also to establish priority among the apostles and to visualize papal succession, particularly in Rome.<sup>201</sup> The identification of other Christian figures followed, although more recognizable portraits, such as those of Christ and the Virgin Mary, were less likely to be labeled. The original mosaic in the apse of S. Michele in Africisco, dedicated in May of 545, is among the earliest dated programs to designate Michael and Gabriel alongside the standing Christ, if the early illustrations of the mosaic can be trusted; the present mosaic in the Staatliche Museum in Berlin has been determined a complete forgery.<sup>202</sup> At around the same time, Michael and Gabriel were inscribed again in Latin on the triumphal arch of S. Apollinare in Classe, where they are dressed not in philosopher's robes, but in the imperial chlamys, holding standards that proclaim the *Trisagion* (Fig. 2.71).<sup>203</sup> In the Eastern Mediterranean, a fragmentary wall painting of the archangel Michael holding an orb from the north room of the theater at Aphrodisias is inscribed ΜΙΧΑΗΛ. Robin Cormack has dated the painting to the first

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<sup>201</sup> Biblical lists of the apostles varied, causing problems for theologians. See my chapter 1.8a.

<sup>202</sup> Pre-restoration drawings have been deemed reliable: I. Andreescu-Treadgold, "The Wall Mosaics of San Michele in Africisco, Ravenna Rediscovered," *CCARB* 37 (1990) 13-57.

<sup>203</sup> Other mosaics of the triumphal arch are somewhat later: Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 2:2 (Weisbaden, 1976), 245-6. On angels in imperial garb mostly after iconoclasm: H. Maguire, "A Murderer Among the Angels: The Frontispiece Miniatures of Paris Gr. 510 and the Iconography of the Archangels in Byzantine Art," in *The Sacred Image East and West*, ed. R. Ousterhout and L. Brubaker (Urbana, 1995), 63-71; C. Jolivet-Lévy, "Note sur la représentation des archanges en costume impérial dans l'iconographie byzantine," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 46 (1998) 121-8. Further proof of angels in imperial garments before iconoclasm comes from John, the Bishop of Gabala, in the *Life of Severus of Antioch*: English trans. in C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972), 44.



half of the sixth century based on stylistic comparison with the icon of the Virgin and Child at Kiev, accepting the date proposed by Kurt Weitzmann, and a terminus derived from the collapse of the stage structure in the early seventh century.<sup>204</sup> In a more recent catalogue, however, Cormack attributed the Kiev icon to the broader sixth century, implying that the date of the Aphrodisias painting may be expanded accordingly.<sup>205</sup> Even more problematic are the wall paintings of Bawit in Egypt, where holy figures are frequently inscribed and chronology is altogether uncertain. Most paintings at the monastery are ascribed to the second half of the sixth, seventh, or eighth centuries. The archangels Michael and Gabriel are given their full titles on the east wall of room six, where they flank the divine Christ above the enthroned Virgin and Child accompanied by apostles and local abbots. In chapel twenty-eight, two angels guarding the enthroned Virgin and Child are designated “angel of God” and “angel of the Lord” (Figs. 1.64, 2.72).<sup>206</sup> The vertical format of the inscriptions should be noted.

Late antique sculpture furnishes other examples of inscribed portraits, such as the Proconnesian marble relief of the archangel Gabriel, now in the museum at Antalya, dated generally to the sixth or seventh century (Fig. 2.73).<sup>207</sup> Here, Gabriel holds an orb and his wings are carved to resemble peacock feathers, like the wings of the archangels at Kiti. Gabriel is also identified in the so-called Grado ivory of the Annunciation in Milan,

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<sup>204</sup> Fragments of a second archangel were identified, but not reconstructed at the time of publication: R. Cormack, “The Wall-Painting of St. Michael in the Theatre,” in *Aphrodisias Papers*, vol. 2: *The Theatre, a Sculptor’s Workshop, Philosophers, and Coin-Types*, Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 2, ed. R. Smith and K. Erim (Ann Arbor, 1991), 109-22, figs. 1-2. On the icon at Kiev: K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons* (Princeton, 1976), 15-18.

<sup>205</sup> Cat. no. 2 in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Milan, 2000), 264-5.

<sup>206</sup> See also room forty with the archangel Uriel: J. Maspero, *Fouilles exécutées à Baouit* (Cairo, 1931), pls. 21-3, 47-50; J. Clédat, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouit* (Cairo, 1904), pls. 96, 98.

<sup>207</sup> D. Talbot Rice, *Art of the Byzantine Era* (New York, 1963), 60-1.

dated to the late seventh or early eighth century (Fig. 2.74).<sup>208</sup> The initial cross and first three letters of the inscription are arranged vertically, while the last four letters are arranged in pairs. Notably, the Virgin is designated “Hagia Maria” in monogrammatic form.

Other works in the category of minor arts feature inscriptions for both the archangels and the Virgin Mary. Three bronze pectoral crosses, one in Berlin and two in Athens, depict the Virgin and Child surrounded by busts of four angels. In the Berlin cross, all of the figures except for Christ are identified: ΟΥΡΗΛ, ΜΗΧΑΗΛ, ΓΑΒΡΗΛ, ΡΑΦΑΗΛ, and the Virgin, who is called simply ΜΑΡΙΑ. The crosses in Athens omit two of the angels’ inscriptions, preserving only ΜΗΧΑΗΛ, ΓΑΒΡΗΛ, and ΜΑΡΙΑ or ΜΑΡΗΑΜ. Brigitte Pitarakis has dated these crosses between the end of the seventh and the ninth centuries.<sup>209</sup> Finally, the well-known Coptic tapestry in the Cleveland Museum, dated to the sixth century, reproduces almost the same inscriptions as the apse mosaic at Kiti, while declining to label the Christ Child (Fig. 1.58). The angels are labeled “Hagios Michael” and “Hagios Gabriel,” beside the Virgin as “Hagia Maria.”

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<sup>208</sup> On the Grado group to which the ivory belongs: K. Weitzmann, “The Ivories of the So-Called Grado Chair,” *DOP* 26 (1972) 43-91; R. Bergman, “A New Addition to the Grado Throne Ivories,” in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. D. Mouriki et al. (Princeton, 1995), 121-9; P. Williamson, “On the Date of the Symmachi Panel and the So-Called Grado Chair Ivories,” in *Through a Glass Brightly: Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Art and Archaeology Presented to David Buckton*, ed. C. Entwistle (Oxford, 2003), 47-50; H. Kessler, “‘Byzantine Art and the West:’ Forty Years After the Athens Exhibition and Dumbarton Oaks Symposium,” in *Medioevo mediterraneo: l’Occidente, Bisanzio e l’Islam: atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Parma, 21-25 settembre 2004*, ed. A. Quintavalle (Milan, 2007), 57-72. See also cat. no. 23 in R. Cormack and M. Vassilaki, eds., *Byzantium 330-1453* (London, 2008), 81, 383-4.

<sup>209</sup> A date at the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century is found in B. Pitarakis, “Un groupe de croix-reliquaires pectorales en bronze à décor en relief attribuable à Constantinople avec le Crucifié et la Vierge Kyriotissa,” *Cahiers Archéologiques* 46 (1998) 81-102, esp. 92-5, figs. 20-2. However, the cross in the Byzantine Museum, Athens is re-dated to the eighth or ninth century in B. Pitarakis, *Les croix-reliquaires pectorales byzantines en bronze* (Paris, 2006), 55-7, fig. 35. It is unclear whether the author means to ascribe the rest of the group to the same period.

Additional evidence is supplied by Byzantine lead seals, which survive in great quantity, demonstrate popular and elite patronage, and allow us to observe an evolution of identifying inscriptions.<sup>210</sup> It is important to note that far fewer seals made use of religious figural imagery in the sixth and seventh centuries than in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>211</sup> Thus, of the 7,284 seals analyzed by John Cotsonis, only thirteen depicting the archangel Michael come from the sixth to the eighth centuries. Michael is first identified by the invocative ΜΙΧΑΗΛ ΒΟΗΘΗ on two out of five sixth-century seals, where he wears the chiton and holds a labarum. On four seals attributed to the late sixth- or early seventh-century and on two seventh-century seals, Michael exchanges the labarum for a cross-staff and an orb, but is not accompanied by an inscription. On two eighth-century seals, the labarum returns and Michael is identified by the cruciform invocative monogram, ΑΡΧΙΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΕ ΒΟΗΘΕΙ or “Commander, help!” He is not represented in the imperial loros until the tenth century, when seals bearing his portrait begin to multiply, reaching an all-time high in the eleventh century.<sup>212</sup> In contrast, the archangel Gabriel appears rarely and never alone: he accompanies the archangel Michael in two seals of the eleventh and twelfth centuries and the Virgin Mary in fifty-eight

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<sup>210</sup> The key study by John Cotsonis considers 7,284 figural seals, depicting 129 different saints: J. Cotsonis, “The Contribution of Byzantine Lead Seals to the Study of the Cult of the Saints (Sixth-Twelfth Century),” *Byzantion* 75 (2005) 383-497.

<sup>211</sup> Cotsonis, “The Contribution of Byzantine Lead Seals,” 390-1, with charts. See also my discussion of seals in chapter 6.2.

<sup>212</sup> On seals depicting the archangel Michael: Cotsonis, “The Contribution of Byzantine Lead Seals,” 396 (chart), 437-47. Published too late for inclusion in Cotsonis’ first article, the catalogue of Cypriot seals by D. M. Metcalf publishes one sixth- or seventh-century seal of the archangel Michael from Amathous in Cyprus, in which he is not identified. Unfortunately, the author does not describe his costume or supply a photograph of the seal: D. M. Metcalf, *Byzantine Lead Seals from Cyprus* (Nicosia, 2004), 421.

scenes of the Annunciation.<sup>213</sup> Cotsonis interprets his absence as an indication of limited interest in the cult of the archangel and notes the few churches dedicated to him.

The vertical writing or *kionedon* of the archangels' inscriptions at Kiti is also regarded as a sixth-century invention, which would become increasingly popular in the inscriptions of the later empire and may have originated in Syriac sideways-vertical writing.<sup>214</sup> The earliest dated examples of Greek vertical or predominantly vertical writing are collected by Megaw and Hawkins and include two lintel inscriptions from Syria, dated 517 and 523, and the floor mosaic of the east church of Qasr-el-Lebia in North Africa, dated 539-40 by dedicatory inscription.<sup>215</sup> In many examples, as in the apostles' inscriptions at Lythrankomi, it is clear that space, or lack of space, dictated the format of the inscriptions. At Kiti, however, space and symmetry appear to have influenced the choice of true column writing; there is room, if not much, for certain letters to be paired, but vertical writing was clearly preferred in contrast to the Virgin's horizontal inscription. Other parallels come from the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit in Egypt, where examples are found alongside other horizontal and partially vertical inscriptions in chapels three, twenty-seven, and twenty-eight (Fig. 2.72).<sup>216</sup> The Grado ivory of the Annunciation, probably also from Egypt, includes a raised vertical inscription for the archangel Gabriel with the last letters paired where space is reduced (Fig. 2.74).<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Cotsonis, "The Contribution of Byzantine Lead Seals," 394 (chart), 447. However, the total number of Annunciation scenes is reduced to fifty-four in the author's latest article, which examines an additional 694 seals: J. Cotsonis, "Narrative Scenes on Byzantine Lead Seals (Sixth-Twelfth Centuries): Frequency, Iconography, and Clientele," *Gesta* 48:1 (2009) 55-86, esp. 58, Table I, 61-3.

<sup>214</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 127-32. See my chapter 1.8e.

<sup>215</sup> On the floor mosaic: E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum and J. Ward Perkins, *Justinianic Mosaic Pavements in Cyrenaican Churches* (Rome, 1980), 121-39.

<sup>216</sup> Clédat, *Monastère et nécropole de Baouit*, pls. 16, 19, 39, 45, 96, 98, 101, 104.

<sup>217</sup> Weitzmann attributes the ivories to Syria-Palestine and excludes Egypt on the basis of style: Weitzmann, "Ivories of the So-Called Grado Chair," 82-5. The more compelling iconographic argument for an

The Virgin is inscribed “Hagia Maria” in two monograms set side by side. Several icons dated to the seventh century in the collection of Mount Sinai also contain vertical inscriptions.<sup>218</sup> A badly damaged encaustic icon of the Virgin holding a medallion of Christ identifies her as “Hagia Maria” in vertical format (Fig. 2.76).<sup>219</sup> The Virgin and Child are flanked by unidentified angels in medallions, superimposed on ornamental stars. The same inscription, written vertically, identifies the enthroned Virgin holding the Christ Child on a basalt lintel at the church of Ruweyda near Hama in Syria (Fig. 2.75). Below the Virgin and Child is a large framed cross with the Alpha and Omega and two peacocks in the four quadrants. The rest of the lintel is carved with geometric ornament and an inscription giving the date of 554-5 and the name Sergios.<sup>220</sup> Megaw and Hawkins conclude that vertical writing becomes acceptable in the early sixth century and optional by the seventh century, selected for visual interest where space is not limited. However, the carved lintel in Ruweyda suggests that it may have taken less time for the acceptable to become optional or even preferable.

Megaw and Hawkins’ discussion of paleography at Lythrankomi yields two insights with respect to Kiti, which appear to be of limited value.<sup>221</sup> First, they draw attention to the tail under the loop of the rho in ΓΑΒΡΗΛ, which is not repeated in ΜΑΡΙΑ, but occurs in the apostles’ inscriptions at Lythrankomi and Sinai, in the fifth-century floor mosaics of the House of Eustolios at Kourion, and in the sixth-century wall paintings of the Hagiasma of Nikodemos at Salamis-Constantia. The Nilotic paintings of

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Egyptian provenance, first made by H. Graeven in 1899, is revived by Kessler, “Byzantine Art and the West,” 62-8.

<sup>218</sup> See for example cat. nos. B.14, B.17, B.28-31 in Weitzmann, *Monastery of Saint Catherine: The Icons*, 37-8, 42-3, 51-6, pls. 16, 19, 22, 76-80.

<sup>219</sup> Cat. no. B.28 in Weitzmann, *Monastery of Saint Catherine: The Icons*, 51, pl. 76.

<sup>220</sup> J. Lassus, *Inventaire archéologique de la région au nord-est de Hama*, 2 vols. (Damascus, 1935) I: 121-2, fig. 129; II: pl. 23:1-2.

<sup>221</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of Panagia Kanakariá*, 121-7.

the cistern represent the only pre-iconoclastic wall paintings to survive in Cyprus.<sup>222</sup> The observation permits, but does not ensure a date in the sixth or seventh century. Second, Megaw and Hawkins make much of the fact that single and double rows of tesserae are used to form the letters at Kiti, whereas only single rows are used at Lythrankomi. The double rows, they maintain, are characteristic of a more advanced style and suggestive of a later date, one not earlier than the late sixth century. Megaw and Hawkins do not justify this conclusion, which serves to support an earlier date for the mosaic at Lythrankomi. A look at other mosaic inscriptions, however, suggests that double rows, or even triple rows of tesserae were employed where space allowed and when the mosaicist wished to create a bolder letter, so that the inscription might be read from a distance. The mosaicist at Lythrankomi did not have the space of an apse conch, but had to label each apostle within a medallion on the narrow arch. It would seem that bolder letters arise first and foremost out of practical considerations, such as space and visibility, and are not the mark of an advanced style with a precise date or terminus.

The effort to establish a date for the apse mosaic at Kiti based on the presence of archangels' inscriptions is frustrated by the lack of precisely dated parallels in the Eastern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, the evidence shows that archangels were not inscribed in

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<sup>222</sup> The original painting was in poor condition on its discovery and may not now survive, but a watercolor copy portrays a typical Nilotic landscape full of lotuses, fish, ducks, a flamingo, and perhaps even a crocodile. In a medallion set above the scene, Christ presides over the Nile waters, as he serves to protect and sanctify the waters of the cistern. Two inscriptions framing the scene record prayers on behalf of the community and donors, including one Nicodemos, opposite two biblical inscriptions on the entrance wall. A citation from Psalm 29 invokes the voice of the Lord upon the waters, while another from 2 Kings refers to Elisha's conversion of the lifeless waters at Jericho: J. du Plat Taylor, "A Water Cistern with Byzantine Paintings, Salamis, Cyprus," *The Antiquaries Journal* 13 (1933) 97-108; M. Bardswell and G. Soteriou, "The Byzantine Paintings in the Water Cistern, Salamis, Cyprus," *The Antiquaries Journal* 19 (1939) 443-5 (with watercolor copy); M. Sacopoulo, "La fresque chrétienne la plus ancienne de Chypre," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 13 (1962) 61-83; H. Whitehouse, "The Nile Flows Underground to Cyprus: The Painted Water-Cistern at Salamis Reconsidered," in *Egypt and Cyprus in Antiquity*, ed. D. Michaelides, V. Kassianidou, and R. Merrillees (Oxford, 2009), 252-60.

the monumental or minor arts before the sixth century, and the earliest dated examples in Ravenna, at S. Michele in Africisco (545) and S. Apollinare in Classe (549), point to a date just before the middle of the sixth century for the beginning of this trend. The comparatively late development of identifying inscriptions for archangels, as opposed to apostles and saints, suggests an initial lack of necessity, for most angels were clearly identified by wings. The question of why Michael and Gabriel would be inscribed for the first time in the middle of the sixth century, and more frequently only later, will be considered in the next section as part of an inquiry into the nature and function of identifying inscriptions before iconoclasm. Like the archangels' inscriptions, vertical inscriptions first appear in the sixth century, often alongside other horizontal and partially vertical inscriptions. Influenced initially by lack of space, the practice quickly became an aesthetic choice, but one that was not routinely exploited before the post-iconoclastic period.

### *7e. Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ*

The identification of the Virgin as Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ, or Saint Mary, in the apse mosaic at Kiti is rare in Byzantine monumental art outside of Egypt and the only known example of the inscription in Cyprus.<sup>223</sup> The better known title, ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΥ, or Mother of God, does not accompany images of the Virgin until the late eighth and ninth centuries and becomes standard only in the tenth century.<sup>224</sup> Before this period, the Virgin is identified infrequently in Byzantine art as Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ or simply

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<sup>223</sup> Likewise in epigraphy, none of the inscriptions catalogued or noted by T. B. Mitford, "Some New Inscriptions from Early Christian Cyprus," *Byzantion* 20 (1950) 105-75 mentions the Virgin Mary.

<sup>224</sup> I. Kalavrezou, "Images of the Mother: When the Virgin Mary Became 'Meter Theou,'" *DOP* 44 (1990) 165-72.

MAPIA. A few examples of the former have been noted already in this chapter and the last, including the sixth-century tapestry of the Virgin and Child with archangels in the Cleveland Museum (Fig. 1.58); a stone stamp of uncertain date from the pilgrimage complex of St. Simeon the Younger in Syria showing the Virgin and Child on a lyre-backed throne;<sup>225</sup> the late seventh- or early eighth-century ivory of the Annunciation in Milan (Fig. 2.74); the stone lintel of the enthroned Virgin and Child from Ruweyda in Syria (554-5) (Fig. 2.75); and the seventh-century encaustic icon of the Virgin and Child flanked by unidentified angels in medallions (Fig. 2.76). Like the Cleveland tapestry, the Grado ivory, and the Sinai icon, most of the comparative material comes from Egypt. Several parallels can be found in the wall paintings of Bawit, for example in the apses of room six and chapel seventeen (Figs. 1.64, 3.40).<sup>226</sup> The Virgin Mary is never inscribed otherwise on icons of the seventh and eighth centuries in the collection of Mount Sinai; only in the ninth century are Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ and ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΥ found independently.<sup>227</sup> In addition to the encaustic icon of the Virgin and Child, where the inscription is written vertically, the double monogram is inscribed beside the head of the Virgin in a seventh-century icon of the *Chairete*, where she is substituted for Mary, the mother of James (Fig. 2.77).<sup>228</sup> Weitzmann attributes both of these icons to Palestine, whereas the Soterious attribute the former to Egypt.<sup>229</sup> Some of the latest examples can

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<sup>225</sup> G. Vikan, "Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium," *DOP* 38 (1984) 65-86, fig. 5.

<sup>226</sup> J. Maspero, *Fouilles exécutées à Baouït* (Cairo, 1931), 145-6, pls. 21-4. J. Clédât, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouït* (Cairo, 1906), 75-6, pls. 40-4.

<sup>227</sup> The Virgin is identified as Hagia Maria in cat. nos. B.27-8, B.32, B.36, B.40-1 in Weitzmann, *Monastery of Saint Catherine: The Icons*, 50-1, 57-8, 61-4, 67-9, pls. 21, 25, 27, 75-6, 89-90, 94-5. The earliest icon to identify her as Meter Theou is cat. no. B.50, 79-82, dated to the first half of the ninth century. The same inscription was added later to an eighth-century icon of the enthroned Virgin and Child, cat. no. B.48, 77-8.

<sup>228</sup> Cat. no. B.27 in Weitzmann, *Monastery of Saint Catherine: The Icons*, 50-1, pls. 21, 75.

<sup>229</sup> The same goes for two Crucifixion icons on which the name appears: G. and M. Soteriou, *Icones du Mont Sinai*, 2 vols. (Athens, 1956-8), I: figs. 24-5, 28; II: 38-43.



be found in the manuscripts of the lost monastery of St. Michael near Hamouli in the Fayyūm, including four works dated 892/3, 897/8, before 906, and 913/4 with three frontispieces of the Virgin *Galaktotrophousa* and one frontispiece of the Annunciation.<sup>230</sup> Finally, two examples of the inscription come from Italy. In S. Maria Antiqua in Rome, the monogram appears on a wall painting of the Virgin and Child in a small niche on the northwest pillar of the nave, associated with the renovation of John VII (705-7).<sup>231</sup> Likewise, a gold pectoral cross discovered at Trapani in Sicily identifies the orant Virgin as H AΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ (Fig. 2.78).<sup>232</sup> The cross was discovered with Byzantine jewelry and coins of the late seventh and eighth centuries, but its provenance is unknown. With a few exceptions, parallels come from the Eastern Mediterranean and range in date from the fifth to the tenth centuries, when the inscription was widely replaced by MHTHP ΘΕΟΥ.

Nevertheless, the inscription at Kiti has been regarded with suspicion by scholars because it fails to elevate the Virgin Mary to the level one might expect, following the theological debates of the early fifth century and her proclamation as Theotokos (God-bearer) at the Council of Ephesos in 431. In texts, the Virgin is commonly identified and praised as the Theotokos from the fifth century onwards, but never in images before Cappodocian wall paintings of the seventh to ninth centuries identify the Virgin as H

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<sup>230</sup> Cat. nos. 59, 96, 107, 160 in L. Depuydt, *Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library*, 2 vols. (Leuven, 1993), I: 113-21, 185-7, 205-7, 311-14; II: pls. 10-13. Cat. nos. 15, 29 in H. Hyvernat, *A Check List of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York, 1919), 7, 12, pls. 1, 4.

<sup>231</sup> P. Nordhagen, "The Earliest Decorations in Santa Maria Antiqua and Their Date," *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 1 (1962) 53-72, esp. 69, pl. 7:7-8.

<sup>232</sup> Pitarakis, *Les croix-reliquaires pectorales byzantines en bronze*, 32-3, 78, fig. 14. Cat. no. 229 in G. Cavallo, *I Bizantini in Italia* (Milan, 1982), 415, fig. 301.

ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ.<sup>233</sup> Outside of Cappadocia, bronze pectoral crosses of the ninth century identify the Virgin *Kyriotissa* as Η ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ, opposite the Crucifixion with Christ dressed in a colobium.<sup>234</sup> The title was gradually supplanted by ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΥ in Cappadocian churches and pectoral crosses of the tenth century. But while the Virgin is presented as Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ or ΜΑΡΙΑ in identifying inscriptions, it is interesting to note that she is addressed as Theotokos in the majority of invocatory inscriptions attached to works of art, whether or not they accompany images of the Virgin (Figs. 1.89, 6.3, 6.5, 6.8).<sup>235</sup> A few invocatory inscriptions call on the Virgin as Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ. A gold disk brooch discovered in a grave near Medellín, now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid, pairs the Adoration of the Magi with the inscription, “Hagia Maria, help the wearer! Amen.”<sup>236</sup> A rectangular bronze weight from the reign of Justin II (565-78), now in Geneva, contains the invocation: “Hagia Maria, help!”<sup>237</sup> The inscribed medallion encircles a representation of the Virgin holding palm leaves approached by two angels holding crowns. The four corners of the weight are occupied by birds and a second inscription, ΘΕΟΥΧΑΡΙC or “Grace of God.” Finally, an inscription on the south door of a castle or fortification at Tamak in

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<sup>233</sup> Examples include the apse and east wall of churches two and four at Güllü Dere respectively, the east wall of the church of the Stylite Niketas at Kizil Çukur, the east wall of the church of Sts. Peter and Paul at Meskendir, the apse of the church at Maziköy, the north apse at Balli Kilise in the Peristrema valley, and possibly the apses of Badem Kilisesi and Çömlekçi Kilise at Güzelyurt: C. Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce: le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords* (Paris, 1991), 29-31, 37-44, 53-6, 61-4, 177-8, 293-5, 311-13, pls. 12, 42, 46, 48, 106:2, 161, 172:1. Note that none of these churches is dated precisely.

<sup>234</sup> Pitarakis, “Un Groupe de Croix-Reliquaires Pectorales en Bronze,” 81-102; *Les croix-reliquaires pectorales byzantines en bronze*, 57-60, 189-93.

<sup>235</sup> See my chapter 6.2 for examples in jewelry, lead seals, and liturgical silver.

<sup>236</sup> H. Schlunk and T. Hauschild, *Die Denkmäler der frühchristlichen und westgotischen Zeit* (Mainz, 1978), 156, pl. 49a.

<sup>237</sup> Cat. no. 317 in N. Dürr, “Catalogue de la Collection Lucien Naville au Cabinet de Numismatique du Musée d’Art et d’Histoire de Genève,” *Genava* 12 (1964) 65-106, esp. 86-7, pl. 18.

Syria, dated 540, exclaims: “Hagia Maria, help Sergios!”<sup>238</sup> In other examples, as in Byzantine texts, the terms Hagia Maria and Theotokos are found together, suggesting that they were not viewed as contradictory.<sup>239</sup> A granite inscription discovered at Tell Pheiran on the Sinai peninsula and dated between the fifth and seventh centuries invokes the Virgin as “Hagia Maria the Theotokos” on behalf of Anastasios the subdeacon.<sup>240</sup> Likewise, a sixth- or seventh-century bronze cross from the Eastern Mediterranean, now in a private British collection, is inscribed on the upper arm: “Hagia Maria, Theotokos, remember your servant Konon!”<sup>241</sup> A representation of the enthroned Virgin and Child is incised at the crossing above an orant figure, either the donor or a saint.

The partial distinction between identifying and invocatory inscriptions in the early Byzantine period may help to explain the meaning of the inscription at Kiti. For the most part, invocatory inscriptions are simply prayers attached to images; in some cases they are derived from or adapted to the scene or person depicted, but often they have no clear relationship to the image.<sup>242</sup> In contrast identifying inscriptions were produced especially for images. Except in the case of Christ, where early inscriptions such as the Alpha and Omega, “Emmanuel,” and “Savior” have a typological, soteriological, or eschatological significance, most identifying inscriptions present only the name of the individual, at first

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<sup>238</sup> H. Lucas, “Griechische und lateinische Inschriften aus Syrien, Mesopotamien und Kleinasien,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 14:1 (1905) 1-72, esp. 29-30.

<sup>239</sup> For example, Gregory of Nazianzos, Epiphanius of Cyprus, and John Chrysostom all refer to the Virgin as Hagia Maria and Theotokos in combination, according to a search of the *TLG*.

<sup>240</sup> Y. Meimaris, “Two Unpublished Greek Inscriptions,” *Liber Annuus* 30 (1980), 225-32, esp. 228-32. The author prefers a fifth-century date because the Virgin is invoked as Theotokos, but other examples show that this is not necessary.

<sup>241</sup> Cat. no. 114 in D. Buckton, ed., *Byzantium: Treasures of Art and Culture from British Collections* (London, 1994), 105-6.

<sup>242</sup> See my chapter 6.2.

apostles and saints, followed by archangels and the Virgin Mary.<sup>243</sup> Contrary to recent support for a theological interpretation,<sup>244</sup> it may be that the inscription Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ, or Saint Mary, does not make a theological point, but was instead no more than a proper name, whereas the epithet Theotokos, though used as a title in texts, was largely limited in early Byzantine art to a form of address.<sup>245</sup> It must be emphasized, however, that the identifying inscription does not diminish the theological importance of the image of the Virgin and Child in early Christian apse decoration, but merely does not embrace or embody the theology of the image to the extent that it would in the post-iconoclastic period. From the tenth century onwards, the inscription ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΥ would emphasize the humanity of Mary in relation to her divine Son, just as IC XC would emphasize the two natures of Christ.<sup>246</sup>

But understanding Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ as a proper name does not explain the presence of the inscription at Kiti, when the Virgin Mary, like her Son, needed no introduction. It is important to remember that all identifying inscriptions were applied inconsistently before iconoclasm, even when a saint might require an inscription to be recognized. After iconoclasm, identifying inscriptions became an essential part of the sacred portrait, helping to ensure that the prayers of the faithful would reach the

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<sup>243</sup> K. Boston, "The Power of Inscriptions and the Trouble with Texts," in *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium* (Burlington, VT, 2003), 35-51. Exceptions survive in Egypt and in the tomb paintings of Thessalonike, where he is occasionally identified as "Jesus": E. Marke, *Η νεκρόπολη της Θεσσαλονίκης στους υστερορωμαϊκούς και παλαιοχριστιανικούς χρόνους: μέσα του 3ου έως μέσα του 8ου αι. μΧ.* (Athens, 2006), 132-7, 215 no. 15, figs. 67, 69, pl. 3. For examples in Egypt, see my figs. 2.72, 6.4. Note that in chapel twenty-eight at Bawit, he is identified as IC XC.

<sup>244</sup> Cormack suggests that the title is theological with minimal explanation, whereas Foulias sees the title as proof of a Monophysite patron: R. Cormack, "The Mother of God in Apse Mosaics," in *Mother of God: Representations*, 91-105, esp. 94; Foulias, "Το ψηφιδωτό της Αψίδας στην Παναγία Αγγελόκτιστη Κιτίου," 310-20.

<sup>245</sup> Much like the English say "Your Grace" or "My Lord" to address a Duke or a bishop, but would identify a portrait of the individual by his name and title.

<sup>246</sup> Kalavrezou, "Images of the Mother," 165-72. Boston, "Power of Inscriptions," 35-51.

prototype.<sup>247</sup> It may be that the inclination to invest the image with greater authenticity and to connect the image to its prototype existed already before iconoclasm, spurred by ever-present concerns over idolatry. Alternatively, the angels and the Virgin may have been identified for the purposes of didactic reinforcement, to make sure that the images were clearly and fully understood by the faithful and to encourage them to keep the names of the saints in mind.<sup>248</sup> Finally, the naming of the archangels and the Virgin Mary may have been intended to underscore the notion of divine or holy presence within the church, complementing the function of the images as well as the projecting footstool for the Virgin and Child.<sup>249</sup> Unfortunately, none of these possibilities explains the absence of an identifying inscription for the Christ Child.<sup>250</sup>

The inscription, Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ, is not very helpful in establishing a date for the apse mosaic, confirming only a date before the early tenth century. The interest of the name lies in what it reveals about identifying inscriptions before iconoclasm, namely that theology was not the primary motivation for inscribing a holy portrait. Sporadic inscriptions identify and clarify when necessary and otherwise authenticate, instruct, and establish presence. As a proper name, the inscription Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ need not imply a Monophysite patron as Foulis suggests, even if most of the parallels come from Egypt

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<sup>247</sup> H. Maguire, *The Icons of Their Bodies: Saints and Their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1996), 36-40, 100-45.

<sup>248</sup> Five functions of naming – identification, identity, authentication, intensification, and manipulation – are explored by B. Kiilerich, “What’s in a Name? The Meaning of Name Inscriptions in Byzantine Art,” in *Medioevo: immagine e racconto: atti del Convegno internazionale di studi: Parma, 27-30 settembre 2000*, ed. A. Quintavalle (Milan, 2003), 87-95.

<sup>249</sup> See my chapter 4.2.

<sup>250</sup> For other examples where all holy figures except for Christ are named, see Boston, “Power of Inscriptions,” 39. Although it is not relevant here, the absence of names can be an indication of the private function of the apse mosaic: H. Maguire, “Eufrasius and Friends: On Names and Their Absence in Byzantine Art,” in *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, ed. L. James (Cambridge, 2007), 139-60.

and Syria-Palestine, where Monophysite churches were well established.<sup>251</sup> Karen Boston observes that even after iconoclasm, the label IC XC appears in Cappadocia and Syria-Palestine before it appears in the capital, where it was still inscribed as an afterthought on the famous tenth-century mosaic above the imperial door of Hagia Sophia.<sup>252</sup> Her example proves that we should not expect all innovations to come from the center or view them as suspect when they come from the periphery.

### *7f. Conclusion*

The early Christian context of the mosaic at Kiti was confirmed by excavation in the 1950s, but still has not been fully clarified. Ellinor Fischer's study of 2007 brought together widely scattered information on the architecture of the early church, offered new empirical observations, and published a number of archival photographs for the first time. Her deductions are now essential to the scholarship on the church, but also raise questions about the original conclusions of the excavators, whose statements remain scarcely published and contradictory. With little evidence of the fire that Megaw claimed destroyed the fifth-century church, it is difficult to accept without reservations that the original apse was left undecorated and that the synthronon did not belong to the original structure. While recent work by Georgios Velenis and the results of recent excavations by the Department of Antiquities are still forthcoming, they cast further doubt, if only temporarily, on our present understanding of the phases of construction: these new studies may provide a *terminus ante quem* for the mosaic and critical information on the state of the church before the Byzantine reconquest. No intermediate phase had been

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<sup>251</sup> Foulias, "Το ψηφιδωτό της Αψίδας στην Παναγία Αγγελόκτιστη Κιτίου," 310-20.

<sup>252</sup> Boston, "Power of Inscriptions," 46-7. E. J. W. Hawkins, "Further Observations on the Narthex Mosaic at St. Sophia at Istanbul," *DOP* 22 (1968) 151-68.

posited previously. Given how unsatisfactory is our knowledge of the archaeology and the architecture of the church, we must rely heavily on the synthronon as an indication of work in progress in the sanctuary after the beginning of the sixth century. More importantly, the inhabited acanthus border discovered in 1952 proves that the mosaic should be counted among the church's early Christian remains. Three observations drawn from analysis of the border corroborate the evidence of the synthronon. First, beribboned parrots do not appear in Byzantine art before the late fifth century. Second, the acanthus border closely resembles inhabited scrolls revived in floor mosaics of the Eastern Mediterranean from the sixth to the early eighth centuries. Third, the protomes of the border, characterized by short busts, no forelegs, and a clear separation between the animals, represent a hybrid of type one and type two protomes unlikely to be found in animal capitals before the sixth century.

Consideration of the mosaic borders, light and optical effects, and the inscriptions has yielded a multitude of parallels from churches across the empire. Many comparable motifs were identified in the churches of Ravenna and Poreč, where early material survives in greater numbers and in more complete programs. The ambo of Agnellus in Ravenna (556-70) represents deer, birds, and ducks in the same sequence as the Kiti border, while the mosaics of S. Apollinare in Classe (549) include plants, vessels, and addorsed birds in the intrados of the apse, and a red and white crowstep border surrounding the semi-dome. More importantly perhaps, the earliest appearance of the archangels' inscriptions on the triumphal arch of S. Apollinare in Classe and in the apse of S. Michele in Africisco (545) goes some way towards eliminating a date in the first half of the sixth century. Dated to the middle of the sixth century, the Basilica of

Eufrasius at Poreč incorporates trilobed acanthus cups in similar hues, a marble capital with confronted and addorsed birds flanking vessels, a radiating cross inscribed in concentric circles, and a relic in the form of a transparent veil worn by the Virgin of the Annunciation.

However, the location of Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean demands that we privilege the strongest evidence from that region, even as it remains in short supply with few dated objects and monuments. Important parallels include the nave mosaic of the Church of the Apostles at Madaba (578), where two birds flank an amphora resting on acanthus; the room above the southwest ramp at Hagia Sophia (565-78) and the Presentation mosaic of Kalenderhane (565-78 or slightly later), which contain the quatrefoil and lily motif; and the basalt lintel from Ruweyda in Syria (554-5), where the inscription *H AGIA MAPIA* is written vertically. The apse mosaic of the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai (548-65) incorporates a cross inscribed in concentric circles at its apex and splendid light effects in the beams that radiate from the transfigured Christ. Light effects also distinguish the reflective discs of the Rabbula Gospels (586 or earlier), where an image of the standing Virgin and Child appears on folio 1b (Fig. 6.24). Other objects dated generally to the sixth century are equally important for their convergence of motifs: the Horse and Lion tapestry, with its animal protomes, addorsed birds, and acanthus leaves; the Cleveland tapestry, where the Virgin and the archangels are similarly inscribed; and the Metropolitan Museum flask, analogous in form and decoration to the Kiti vessels, with its scrolled central frieze and protomes emerging from acanthus leaves. The wall paintings of the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit, especially chapels eighteen, twenty-eight, and room six, emphasize ties to Egypt, but are too



problematic in terms of date to be of great use here. The wall paintings of Aphrodisias and Kalabatia also provide parallels for the archangels' inscriptions and the vessels of the upper border. These poorly preserved examples provide glimpses of the programs that once existed in the Eastern Mediterranean and doubtless would have furnished the most consistent parallels for the mosaics of Cyprus.

While some scholars prefer a seventh-century date for the apse mosaic at Kiti, there are too few works to facilitate comparison and to justify attribution to this period. Only two, late seventh-century mosaic programs must be noted. The mosaics of the Dome of the Rock (692) combine handleless vessels with acanthus cups and amphorae with tripod stands, while the apse mosaic at Nicaea includes the quatrefoil and lily motif in its geometric borders. But apart from this distinctive motif, found also in works of the late sixth century, the restrained, inorganic borders at Nicaea are fundamentally at variance with the lush and exuberant character of the inhabited acanthus border at Kiti. Many more parallels for the mosaic can be dated with certainty to the second half of the sixth century, while nothing in our analysis excludes such a date.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE APSE MOSAIC AT LIVADIA

The small church of the Panagia tes Kyras stands in a field outside the village of Livadia, the Turkish Sazlıköy, near Komi Kebir on the Karpas peninsula in northern Cyprus (Figs. 3.1-2). Although the mosaic is generally acknowledged to be the earliest known representation of the solitary orant Virgin in the main apse of a church, it is rarely considered by scholars because of its pitiful state at the time of discovery, recent destruction, incomplete archaeological context, and uncertain date. Critical analysis of the mosaic has been limited to a four-page article by Megaw and Hawkins, who dated it to the first half of the seventh century.<sup>1</sup> This date has been largely upheld by the few scholars who have taken note of the mosaic, most of whom have been concerned specifically with Byzantine art in Cyprus.<sup>2</sup> A more complete and more compelling analysis of the mosaic at Livadia is clearly required before it can be assimilated into more general scholarship on Byzantine art.

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<sup>1</sup> A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins, "A Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin in Cyprus," in *Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Études Byzantines, Bucarest, 6-12 septembre 1971*, vol. 3, ed. M. Berza and E. Stanesco (Bucharest, 1976), 363-6, figs. 1-2, photos A-E. See also A. H. S. Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," *Corso di cultura sull'arte Ravennate e Bizantina* 32 (1985) 173-98, esp. 195-8.

<sup>2</sup> D. Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics*, 1st edn. (Nicosia, 1987), 56-7, no. 71, pl. 41. D. Korol, "Die spätantik-christlichen Wand- und Gewölbemosaiken Zyperns (5.-7. Jh.) und ihre neuere Geschichte," in *Zypern: Insel im Brennpunkt der Kulturen*, ed. S. Rogge (Münster, 2000), 159-201, esp. 193-7. Cormack provides a collective date for the Cypriot mosaics in the sixth century or soon after, while noting that the individual dates are controversial: R. Cormack, "The Mother of God in Apse Mosaics," in *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. M. Vassilaki (Milan, 2000), 91-105, esp. 94. Before the article by Megaw and Hawkins appeared in 1976, Papageorghiou provided a sixth-century date based on summary comparison with the mosaics of Lythrankomi and Kiti: A. Papageorghiou, "Η παλαιοχριστιανική και Βυζαντινή τέχνη της Κύπρου," *Ἀπόστολος Βαρνάβας* 27 (1966) 151-73, esp. 167, fig. 10. A sixth-century date is also given in A. and J. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus: Treasures of Byzantine Art* (London, 1985), 52.

## 1. History of the Site

The epithet, τῆς Κυράς, has been associated with the poetic type of the Virgin as Κυρία τῶν ἀγγέλων or Κυρία τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, although the date of the dedication is unknown.<sup>3</sup> The church is listed among the monastic properties of the Archbishop of Cyprus, as recorded in the late eighteenth century by the Archimandrite Kyprianos.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from these lists, it has been difficult to find even a single historical reference to the village or church of Livadia in written accounts and travelogues.<sup>5</sup> In the toponymy of Cyprus by Jack Goodwin, there are approximately twenty-six such place names, classified as eight locales, three villages, two former villages, one settlement, three former settlements, one ancient site, one hill, one marsh, five streams, and the twin sectors of Kyrenia.<sup>6</sup> He does not appear to include the southwestern part of Gialousa on the Karpas, as identified in 1873 by Paul Schröder, who served as dragoman of the German Consulate and Embassy in Constantinople and consul in Beirut.<sup>7</sup> Because Livadia means simply “meadows,” the popularity of the name is not surprising.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, descriptions of these places often highlight pastoral or idyllic qualities. Many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century accounts concern the village of Livadia just north of Larnaca on the southeastern coast. On April 9, 1787, the English botanist John

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<sup>3</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, “Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin,” 363. The authors cite the following article, which I have been unable to locate: G. Soteriou, “Αἱ εἰκόνες τῆς Παναγίας καὶ αἱ ἐπωνυμῖαι τῶν,” *Ὁρίζοντες* 3 (1944), esp. 729.

<sup>4</sup> J. Hackett, *A History of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus* (London, 1901), 364-5.

<sup>5</sup> Except for G. Jeffery, *A Description of the Historic Monuments of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1918), 250, who attributed the church and mosaic to the sixteenth century and mistakenly identified the mosaic as a representation of the Virgin and Child.

<sup>6</sup> J. Goodwin, *An Historical Toponymy of Cyprus*, 4th edn. (Nicosia, 1984), 1020-3.

<sup>7</sup> Or at least it is not easily identified with the sites he lists. The southwestern part of Gialousa towards Agios Andronikos is very close to our village, and even closer to the church at Lythrankomi. As Schröder visited many ruined churches in the area, it is especially frustrating that he neglected both the churches at Lythrankomi and Livadia: H. Pohlsander, ed., *German Texts: Turkish Period (after 1800)*, vol. 12 of *Sources for the History of Cyprus* (Altamont, NY, 2006), 188.

<sup>8</sup> The Turkish Sazlıköy, attested from at least 1958, means “village of rushes”: Goodwin, *Historical Toponymy of Cyprus*, 519.

Sibthorp collected plants and birds from Livadia and the salt lake. Despite the effects of a harsh winter, Sibthorp remarks: “Our situation at the Salines was one of the most favourable in the island for the botanist and ornithologist.”<sup>9</sup> Only fifty years later, the American ambassador to France, General Lewis Cass, lamented the condition of the village, which had been “a prosperous place, surrounded by meadows and cultivated fields; but these are now converted into marshes, and a malaria has been generated, that has ruined and depopulated the town.”<sup>10</sup> The village of Livadia near Larnaca was also the location of a medieval castle. Latin sources document the transfer of the estate from Aimery, King of Cyprus and Jerusalem, to Josiah, archbishop of Tyre (1197), to his nephew and successor Simon, and finally to Eustorgue, archbishop of Nicosia (1222).<sup>11</sup> In 1834-6, Vasyl Hryhorovyc-Bars’kyj described the “Livadi tou Pasha” in the Troodos mountains as “a level field covered with grass which is surrounded by a dense forest with numerous natural springs which dribble with good drinking water which is so cold that barely can a person drink it.” The Pasha would bring “servants, horses, and other necessities” in order to “spend enjoyable days in peace and in the cool during the time of the hot season.”<sup>12</sup>

There is little trace of a once flourishing site in our village of Livadia, except for the church that survives in deplorable condition. This is a consequence of age and neglect as well as deliberate destruction beginning in the early 1980s, when the mosaic

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<sup>9</sup> Sibthorp’s notes were published by Robert Walpole in 1818 and 1820: C. D. Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus* (Cambridge, 1908), 325.

<sup>10</sup> D. Martin, ed., *English Texts: Frankish and Turkish Periods*, vol. 5 of *Sources for the History of Cyprus* (Altamont, NY, 1998), 219-20.

<sup>11</sup> N. Coureas and C. Schabel, *The Cartulary of the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom of Nicosia* (Nicosia, 1997), 140-4, nos. 44 (1222), 46 (1197), 47 (1222). The location of the castle of Livadia is not revealed, but the connection to Larnaca is made by Goodwin, *Historical Toponymy of Cyprus*, 520.

<sup>12</sup> A. Grishin, ed. and trans., *A Pilgrim’s Account of Cyprus: Bars’kyj’s Travels in Cyprus*, vol. 3 of *Sources for the History of Cyprus* (Altamont, NY, 1996), 73.

was detached from the wall and destroyed.<sup>13</sup> Illegal and disastrous excavations in the western part of the church could be observed as recently as 2010. In 1989, a report on the cultural heritage of Cyprus was delivered to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. As the consultant expert, Robin Cormack wrote: “This mosaic has been stolen. All the figure of the Virgin has been torn off the wall (and a small patch of fresco below the mosaic). Only a small part of the gold ground is now left in the church.”<sup>14</sup> All traces of gold ground have since disappeared, and it is clear from the exposed masonry that the mosaic was removed along with its plaster base (Figs. 3.3-4). A partial explanation for the fragmentary condition of the mosaic prior to its theft is preserved in a legend of uncertain date, which holds that gold tesserae from the mosaic had the power to cure hemorrhages and pimples.<sup>15</sup> The removal of tesserae by visitors and pilgrims most likely accounts for the patchy appearance of the lower third of the mosaic, if not for larger areas of loss.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Architectural Context

The church at Livadia has not been fully excavated, but a probe into the masonry of the south wall of the sanctuary by the Byzantine Institute of America and the

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<sup>13</sup> A. Papageorghiou, *Christian Art in the Turkish-Occupied Part of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 2010), 9, 223.

<sup>14</sup> Y. van der Werff and R. Cormack, “Information Report on the Cultural Heritage of Cyprus presented by the Committee on Culture and Education, 6 July 1989, Doc. 6079,” in *Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly (forty-first ordinary session), Documents, Working Papers 3* (Strasbourg, 1990), 1-34, esp. 28. The disappearance of the mosaic is also noted by D. Michaelides, “The Early Christian Mosaics of Cyprus,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 54:2 (1989), 192-202, esp. 199; *Cypriot Mosaics*, 2nd edn. (Nicosia, 1992), 122.

<sup>15</sup> R. Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus: A Guide to Its Towns and Villages, Monasteries and Castles* (London, 1936), 328. M. Paraskevopoulou, *Researches into the Traditions of the Popular Religious Feasts of Cyprus*, trans. P. Bosustow (Nicosia, 1982), 135. According to Paraskevopoulou, other Cypriot Virgins cure diseases of the eyes or blindness, produce water for villages or milk for nursing mothers, protect children, and exact revenge on enemies and disbelievers.

<sup>16</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, “Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin,” 364.

Department of Antiquities in 1961 revealed a portion of intact mosaic on the east wall, proving that both the apse and its mosaic belonged to an earlier phase of construction.<sup>17</sup> Like the churches at Lythrankomi and Kiti, the present structure is a product of the middle Byzantine period in Cyprus (965-1191). Only a single phase is recognized by George Jeffery and Georgios Soteriou in the earliest published plans of the church (Figs. 3.5-6).<sup>18</sup> Following the limited excavation, Megaw and Hawkins account for the earlier apse and the modern additions to the west and south (Fig. 3.7). Their elevation also records the extent to which the outer southern and eastern walls of the church, including the eastern apse, remain buried underground (Figs. 3.8-9). Investigation of these areas has been postponed indefinitely since 1974, but remains crucial for determining the date, form, and scale of the original building on the site.<sup>19</sup> Evidence for the early church has also been adduced in “the clumsy way in which a prothesis niche has been provided by encroaching on the apse itself,” and in the ruins of architectural members and furnishings.<sup>20</sup> Two marble posts, which probably belonged to a late antique chancel screen, were incorporated into the springings of the medieval vault (Fig. 3.10).<sup>21</sup> Stone

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<sup>17</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, “Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin,” 365. P. Dikaios, *ARDAC 1961* (1962), 5, 13.

<sup>18</sup> G. Jeffery, “Byzantine Churches of Cyprus,” *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries in London* 28 (1915) 111-34, esp. 122-3, fig. 13. G. Soteriou, *Τα Βυζαντινά Μνημεία της Κύπρου, Α* (Athens, 1935), 34-5.

<sup>19</sup> The intention of the Department of Antiquities to excavate the site was stated by A. H. S. Megaw, “Interior Decoration in Early Christian Cyprus,” in *XVe Congrès International d’Études Byzantines, Rapports et Co-rapports*, vol. 5, *Chypre dans le monde byzantin* (Athens, 1976), 3-29, esp. 27.

<sup>20</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, “Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin,” 364.

<sup>21</sup> Two posts were noted by Korol, “Die spätantik-christlichen Wand- und Gewölbemosaiken Zyperns,” 193. Only one was reported by Megaw and Hawkins, “Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin,” 364, although Megaw identifies two “π.χ. closure colonettes” in a schematic drawing of the church, which I discovered in one of his notebooks, now at the British School at Athens. The collection is not yet catalogued, but the drawing appears on page 56 of vol. 5 from suitcase 1, according to the current inventory. Megaw describes a similar post embedded in the south wall of the nave at the Asomatos Church at Aphendrika: A. H. S. Megaw, “Three Vaulted Basilicas in Cyprus,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 66 (1964) 48-56, esp. 50.

column shafts lying outside the church were noted by Megaw and Hawkins in 1961 and again by Dieter Korol in 1997, but these appear to have been hauled away.<sup>22</sup>

The cruciform plan of the medieval building is regarded as an elaboration of a simple rectangular plan with a central dome, a form that was much more common in Cyprus. Nevertheless, two Byzantine churches in the vicinity of Paphos make use of the cruciform plan: the Panagia Chryseleousa at Chlorakas and Hagios Theodosios at Achelia.<sup>23</sup> Megaw and Hawkins have proposed a date for the church at Livadia in the twelfth century, based on two distinctive features of the dome, the cusped silhouette and the roughly quadrangular drum, which they compare to the twelfth-century Church of the Holy Apostles at Perachorio.<sup>24</sup> Although Papageorghiou offers a date in the tenth or eleventh century, Charles Stewart maintains that there are no centrally-planned churches in Cyprus before the eleventh century, raising doubts about the possibility of a tenth-century date.<sup>25</sup> Accretions of plaster on the building's exterior suggest the rough cut stone was once concealed with paint.<sup>26</sup> On the interior, fragments of wall painting are still visible in the dome and pendentives, where the whitewashed plaster has eroded, but they have never been restored or studied in detail (Fig. 3.11). Andreas and Judith Stylianou identify the evangelist Luke in the northeast pendentive and two angels in the drum of the dome.<sup>27</sup> The head of St. Basil on the lower apse wall was probably destroyed

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<sup>22</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," 364. D. Korol, "Die spätantik-christlichen Wand- und Gewölbemosaiken Zyperns," 193 n.142.

<sup>23</sup> S. Ćurčić, *Middle Byzantine Architecture on Cyprus: Provincial or Regional?* (Nicosia, 2000), 14-15. G. Soteriou, *Τα Βυζαντινά Μνημεία της Κύπρου*, 34-5, pl. 35. The churches are not dated precisely.

<sup>24</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," 364 n. 5. On Perachorio: A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins, "The Church of the Holy Apostles at Perachorio, Cyprus, and Its Frescoes," *DOP* 16 (1962) 277-348, esp. 284.

<sup>25</sup> A. Papageorghiou, *Masterpieces of the Byzantine Art of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1965), 40. C. Stewart, "Domes of Heaven: The Domed Basilicas of Cyprus" (PhD diss., Indiana University-Bloomington, 2008), 10.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Ćurčić, *Middle Byzantine Architecture on Cyprus*, 20-30.

<sup>27</sup> A. and J. Stylianou, *Painted Churches of Cyprus*, 52.

along with the mosaic in the 1980s (Fig. 3.13).<sup>28</sup> The red background of this figure convinced Megaw and Hawkins of a thirteenth-century date for the wall paintings since an equally distinctive background characterizes the wall paintings of the Church of the Panagia at Moutoullas, dated 1280 by inscription.<sup>29</sup>

Almost a century before the earliest plans of the church were published, the church may have appeared in a drawing of 1827 by Antoine-Alphonse Montfort, now in the Louvre (Fig. 3.12).<sup>30</sup> His “construction ruinée à coupole” resembles the church in the dome and vaulted arms of the core structure and in the modern extensions. But the church has only two extensions, not three, and both are visible from the south or southwest only (Fig. 3.1), whereas Montfort also incorporates the small eastern apse. It is certainly possible that the artist used the church as a model and combined multiple facades in a single view.<sup>31</sup> Even as a partial fabrication, the drawing would suggest that the modern rooms were added before 1827.

Given the small size of the apse and the fact that early Christian churches in Cyprus were often much larger than their medieval successors, one must ask whether the present apse could have been part of a larger structure. In other words, could the main apse of the medieval church have been a lateral apse within the early Christian church or

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<sup>28</sup> Van der Werff and Cormack, “Information Report on the Cultural Heritage of Cyprus,” 28.

<sup>29</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, “Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin,” 364 n. 5. On the church at Moutoullas: D. Mouriki, “The Wall Paintings of the Church of the Panagia at Moutoullas, Cyprus,” in *Byzanz und der Westen: Studien zur Kunst des europäischen Mittelalters*, ed. I. Hutter (Vienna, 1984), 171-213; S. H. Young, “Byzantine Painting in Cyprus during the Early Lusignan Period” (PhD diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1983), 246-320.

<sup>30</sup> The drawing is reproduced in R. Severis, *Travelling Artists in Cyprus 1700-1960* (London, 2000), 94. Severis notes the resemblance of the drawing to the church at Livadia, but confuses its location on the Karpas with the village of Livadia near Larnaca. Since Montfort docked at Larnaca, she assumes that the church is by the sea or salt lake, but there is no body of water in the drawing and the descriptive title refers only to a mountain: “Chypre, sur une montagne, construction ruinée à coupole.”

<sup>31</sup> The facades are not strictly accurate. There are too many windows and the opening of the porch is not rectilinear but arched. I do wonder if the porch has since been restructured.



the niche of an adjacent chapel? At present, however, there is no evidence for a large early Christian basilica at Livadia. Only a few architectural fragments remain on site, including the posts of an early Christian chancel screen built into the interior north wall, and no extensive ruins surround the church, although the site has not been excavated.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, at Lythrankomi, the dimensions of the original church were roughly preserved in the medieval reconstructions, although the north, south, and west walls do not rest on earlier foundations. The same appears to be true at Kiti, where one awaits the results of the recent excavation by the Department of Antiquities.<sup>33</sup> In both cases, the preservation of the original apse seems to have dictated, albeit roughly, the proportions of the medieval buildings. While the original church at Livadia was probably not cruciform and its sanctuary was wide enough to accommodate at least a single mosaic figure on either side of the apse, the size of the main apse suggests that the church served a very small community in the early Christian and medieval periods.

Until the church has been excavated, it is impossible to draw any firm conclusions on the dates of the early church and subsequent phases of construction. Only the existence of three major phases is certain: the early church, including the apse and east wall mosaics, the medieval vaulted church, dated between the tenth and the twelfth centuries, and the modern additions, including the west room and south porch.

### 3. *Description of the Mosaic*

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<sup>32</sup> For the sake of comparison, the mosaics of the niche (c. 600) of the north chapel of the large episcopal basilica at Kourion are even smaller. The niche was only 0.74 meters wide (compared to 2.10 meters) and the surviving figures of the lower zone and adjacent wall less than one-third and two-fifths life size respectively: A. H. S. Megaw et al., *Kourion: Excavations in the Episcopal Precinct* (Washington, DC, 2007), 46-50, fig. 1.2, pl. 1.30a; Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 192-5.

<sup>33</sup> For now, see E. Fischer, "Die Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern: Neue Aspekte zu Bau und Apsismosaik," in *Begegnungen: Materielle Kulturen auf Zypern bis in die römische Zeit*, ed. S. Rogge (Münster, 2007), 151-95, esp. 156-72.

The apse conch of the church is very small, measuring only 2.1 meters in diameter, with an apex roughly three meters from the floor (Fig. 3.3).<sup>34</sup> As the mosaic is now lost, any description must depend on the few available photographs and published statements.<sup>35</sup> At the center of the conch, the Virgin stands alone without the Christ Child, her arms outstretched in a gesture of prayer (Figs. 3.13-15). Although most of the head and right side of the figure are lost, her identity is assured by the garments that she wears: the blue robe and purple mantle, the red shoes, and the belt or girdle, which hangs in two distinct strands at her waist. Accented by silver tesserae, the belt is nearly identical to that worn by the Virgin in the apse mosaic at Kiti (Fig. 2.12). The survival of a small part of the halo on the left side allowed Megaw and Hawkins to calculate the size of the figure at 1.2 meters, measured from the base of the garment to the top of the halo. The halo is rendered in gold, but distinguished from the background by concentric rows of tesserae outlined in turquoise glass.<sup>36</sup> Like the apse mosaic at Kiti, the Virgin stands on a jeweled footstool overlapping the narrow lower border of the mosaic. The effect is less dramatic at Livadia, but equally significant.<sup>37</sup> The figure stands in front of a gold background, set in a pattern of rising or imbricated scales. Extant fragments show no evidence of an inscription, but areas of loss above and to the right of the figure are too great to preclude the possibility that one existed.

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<sup>34</sup> The diameter is given in Megaw and Hawkins, "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," 363.

<sup>35</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," figs. B-E. Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 195-8, figs. 14-16. Cat. no. 71 in Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics*, 2nd edn., 122-3 (in color). Korol, "Die spätantik-christlichen Wand- und Gewölbemosaiken Zyperns," pl. 18:4. Color slides were given to Dumbarton Oaks by Megaw and Hawkins, acc. nos. BS.1979.2292-5. Hawkins' personal slides were given to the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, and Megaw's personal slides to the British School at Athens. Two black and white photographs at Dumbarton Oaks were supplied by Jacqueline Lafontaine, nos. 1961/A16.67 and 1961/A.16.69. Other unpublished photographs are located in the Photographic Archives of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus.

<sup>36</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," 364.

<sup>37</sup> See chapter 4.2.

The inner border of the mosaic is preserved at the base of the mosaic and in small fragments on the north side, but once extended around the entire inner rim of the apse conch. The simple design consists of two rows of blue tesserae edged by one row of white tesserae on either side. A second border was discovered to the south of the apse on the east wall above the cornice in the area investigated by the restorers (Fig. 3.16). Megaw and Hawkins describe the border as a stylized garland with leaves of light and dark green, highlighted in gold.<sup>38</sup> A small group of tesserae surviving to the north of the apse, where no probe was made, indicates that the garland border once continued around the mosaic on the face of the east wall. The progression of the border is detailed in a reconstructive drawing of the mosaic by Megaw and Hawkins (Fig. 3.17).

Included in the reconstruction are two additional figures, situated to the north and south of the apse on the east wall. Only the bare feet of the south figure were uncovered, but a pendant figure probably appeared in the north and may still exist behind the north wall of the medieval building. Megaw and Hawkins describe the feet as white in color and lacking sandals.<sup>39</sup> Their orientation indicates that the figure was standing and frontally disposed. Based on the apse mosaics at Lythrankomi and Kiti, the figures are presumed to be archangels, whose placement in relation to the apse recalls the angels of the triumphal arch at S. Apollinare in Classe (549).<sup>40</sup> The background of the east wall is composed of gold tesserae, set in horizontal rows. Although no tesserae were found on the east wall above the apse, the supplicatory pose of the Virgin Mary and the absence of the Christ Child led Megaw to propose that the figure of Christ Pantokrator was

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<sup>38</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," 365.

<sup>39</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," 365.

<sup>40</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," 365.

originally placed above her.<sup>41</sup> At present, however, there is very little room for such a figure, except perhaps in the form of a diminutive bust. If the figure of Christ did exist, it may not have survived when the apse was absorbed into the medieval church, or perhaps was eliminated with the addition of Christ Pantokrator in the dome. Alternatively, the original wooden roof may have been higher than the medieval bema vault, accommodating a slightly larger figure.

#### *4. Early Photographs and Conservation*

To my knowledge, there are no archival or published photographs of the church taken before the middle of the twentieth century. A few photographs in the Department of Antiquities document repairs to the external structure, including the north wall and vaults, in 1943.<sup>42</sup> As for the mosaic, a brief and partial restoration campaign was executed by the Byzantine Institute of America and the Department of Antiquities in 1961.<sup>43</sup> While no photographs of the mosaic prior to the restoration have been published, archival collections preserve several photographs from 1959 and 1961, which attest to its pitiful state (Fig. 3.18).<sup>44</sup> Only two small fragments of the mosaic can be seen on the north side of the apse, with a few patches of tesserae scattered elsewhere. Approximately one-half of the area of the surviving mosaic was obscured by modern plaster, including the lower part of the figure, large areas of the background, the footstool, and the lower border. During cleaning, Megaw and Hawkins removed the plaster, which was probably intended to preserve the remaining tesserae and to discourage pilgrims from taking them

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<sup>41</sup> Megaw, "Interior Decoration," 27.

<sup>42</sup> Negative nos. B2122-4.

<sup>43</sup> Dikaios, *ARDAC 1961* (1962), 5, 13.

<sup>44</sup> At the Department of Antiquities, these are negative nos. A5300, A5302, A5303, A5353.

as souvenirs (Fig. 3.19). The damage to this area of the mosaic, within easy reach from the ground, is best explained by this practice, for Megaw and Hawkins observed that the setting bed was still intact where many tesserae had been extracted.<sup>45</sup> After removing the plaster, they would have cleaned the mosaic, as the exposed fragments had darkened significantly from dirt and soot. Other details of the restoration are not disclosed, but they would have reset loose tesserae, especially in the heavily-disturbed lower portion of the mosaic. It is unlikely that they retouched white marble tesserae that had lost red pigment, as they did not at Lythrankomi. Today, not a single tessera remains in the apse, on the east wall, or within the south sondage (Figs. 3.4, 3.20). A thorough excavation could reveal extant fragments, particularly on the north side of the east wall, but cannot be undertaken in the present circumstances.

##### *5. Materials and Technique*

Because the mosaic has been destroyed and existing photographs in archival collections and publications are not sufficiently detailed, the short article by Megaw and Hawkins remains the only available source on the materials of the Livadia mosaic.<sup>46</sup> As one would expect, the mosaic is composed largely of glass tesserae, but also employs small quantities of marble and terracotta. Gold glass is prevalent in the background, the footstool, and the Virgin's halo, while silver glass is used to accent the top edge of the footstool and the ends of the Virgin's girdle, which is rendered in pale blue tesserae. Blue glass appears in abundance in the Virgin's robe, where Megaw and Hawkins identify four color values, and turquoise glass outlines the gold halo in a single row,

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<sup>45</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," 364.

<sup>46</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," 364-5.

separating it from the gold background. Likewise, the purple mantle contains “several colour values” and is outlined against the gold background with a row of blue tesserae (Fig. 3.15). White and pink marble denote flesh tones in the Virgin’s hand and face, as indicated by a few tesserae preserved around the left cheek and neck. As at Lythrankomi and Kiti, the artist substituted painted marble for red glass in the jewels of the footstool and in the Virgin’s shoes, where it is blended with terracotta. Terracotta tesserae also appear on the east wall above the stylized garland border, which is made up of light and dark green glass enhanced with gold. Terracotta is found in neither of the other two mosaics.

However, the range of colors at Livadia is limited in comparison to the mosaics of Lythrankomi and Kiti and to other larger pre-iconoclastic wall mosaics. Megaw and Hawkins count forty-eight hues at Lythrankomi, while Fischer estimates forty to fifty at Kiti, one-fifth of which are painted marble.<sup>47</sup> Megaw and Hawkins do not provide a count for the mosaic Livadia, but mention less than twenty hues in their short article. The limited palette is most likely a consequence of restricted iconography in a very small church, commissioned perhaps by a single patron. It is worth noting that the fragmentary mosaics of the northeast chapel at Kourion employ an even more restricted palette with no gold or silver tesserae, no painted marble, and large quantities of stone (Fig. 3.22). The angel and church fathers of the small niche have been dated to around 600.<sup>48</sup> The original palettes at Kourion and Livadia may also have been reduced by important losses. For example, the faces of the figures at Lythrankomi and Kiti contain highlights in red

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<sup>47</sup> A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins, *The Church of the Panagia Kanakariá at Lythrankomi: Its Mosaics and Frescoes* (Washington, DC, 1977), 136. Fischer, “Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern,” 179.

<sup>48</sup> Megaw, *Kourion: Excavations*, 46-50, fig. 1.2, pl. 1.30a; “Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro,” 192-5.

and orange glass, but none of the faces at Livadia survive for comparison. At Kourion, orange glass is found only in the partially preserved face of an angel. On the other hand, the halo of the Virgin at Livadia is outlined in a single row of turquoise glass, while the haloes of the Virgin and Child at Lythrankomi and the Virgin and archangels at Kiti are outlined in more desirable red glass (Figs. 1.21, 2.33, 3.15).<sup>49</sup> For the sake of contrast, one imagines, the halo of Christ at Kiti was outlined in blue glass. The possibility remains that fewer colors at Livadia may reflect a certain poverty of materials indicative of a later date during the period of neutrality (649-965). Additional arguments against this interpretation are presented in the next section.

Megaw and Hawkins do not discuss the possible divisions of roughcast plaster or plaster joints and subdivisions, which would have been difficult if not impossible to locate on such a fragmentary mosaic. With respect to different hands, it is conceivable that the small mosaic was created by one or perhaps two mosaicists, with one devoted to the figures of the apse and east wall and the other to the background. It is likewise difficult to evaluate the execution of the design, but the reconstruction by Megaw and Hawkins implies that the symmetry of the composition was compromised in order to establish the forward movement of the Virgin through the rightward shift of her lower body (Fig. 3.17). The same technique was observed in the apse mosaic at Kiti, where the effect of movement and separation from the background was amplified by a “secondary silhouette,” reduced at Livadia to a single row of gold tesserae, which may have been required to buffer the rising scale pattern of the background.

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<sup>49</sup> In fact, the apse mosaic at Lythrankomi contains a fair amount of dark red glass, supplemented by painted marble, but orange glass is limited to the faces. At Kiti, small quantities of red and orange glass are used in the faces and in the haloes, while large areas of red tesserae in the Virgin’s robe and mantle and in the lower geometric border are composed entirely of painted marble. See my chapters 1.7 and 2.6.

In addition to the rising scales, the fragmentary mosaic preserves evidence of other techniques common to early Byzantine mosaics. First, color is modulated by means of the dot and dash technique in the background of the east wall, where gold tesserae descend into yellow-green and then brown at the level of the ground, seen most clearly between the south figure's feet (Fig. 3.16). A similar transition is observed in the background of the apse mosaic at Poreč, dated to the mid-sixth century, but appears even earlier in Rome and Ravenna (Fig. 3.21).<sup>50</sup> A small indication of the date of the mosaic at Livadia may be derived from the use of very small tesserae in the right hand of the Virgin, a technique applied in the mosaic at Kiti but not at Lythrankomi (Fig. 3.23). Indeed, the tesserae of the right hand measure only three by two millimeters, while the tesserae of the background measure seven by five millimeters.<sup>51</sup> The technique for modeling flesh was shown in chapters one and two to have been introduced in the region around the year 530.

*6a. Evidence for Dating: The Mid Seventh-Century Invasions as Terminus Ante Quem*

The *terminus ante quem* generally accepted for all of the apse mosaics in Cyprus is most consequential for the apse mosaic at Livadia. Limited information on the architecture and archaeology of the church, in combination with the relatively few motifs that distinguish the mosaic, forces us to look outside the church to the conditions on the island in the middle of the seventh century. The island was invaded twice by the Arabs in 649 and 653/4, first by Mu'awiya and then by Abu'l-Awar. After the second invasion, Abu'l-Awar installed a garrison at Paphos, which was withdrawn almost thirty years later

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<sup>50</sup> A. Terry and H. Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrosius at Poreč* (University Park, PA, 2007), 88-91, 199 n. 22, fig. 57.

<sup>51</sup> Megaw and Hawkins, "Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin," 365.



by the caliph Yazid in c. 680/1. The treaty of 688 agreed by Justinian II (685-95) and Abd'al-Malik established the island as a neutral zone and divided revenues between the Byzantine and Islamic empires. Notwithstanding the occasional violation cited in Greek and Arabic sources, the treaty remained in force for almost three centuries, until the Byzantine reconquest of Cyprus by Nikephoros Phokas in 965.<sup>52</sup>

The extent of the devastation caused by the invasions and the areas affected are still much debated. While the archaeological record attests to the destruction of numerous early Christian sites after the middle of the seventh century, the means of destruction is not always clear. In archaeological reports and in much of the secondary literature, the Arab raids are frequently invoked to account for the collapse of a particular building or the decline of a settlement when the evidence itself is not conclusive.<sup>53</sup>

Slobodan Ćurčić has criticized certain scholars for relying too heavily on the invasions to explain the wide-ranging destruction of early Christian churches to the exclusion of other

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<sup>52</sup> The sources agree on little else, including the date of the second invasion, derived instead from the inscription at Soloi (see below). Aspects of the treaty and conditions on the island have been illuminated in recent decades by R. Browning, "Byzantium and Islam in Cyprus in the Early Middle Ages," *Επετηρίς του Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών Κύπρου* 9 (1977-9) 101-16; A. Cameron, *Cyprus at the Time of the Arab Conquests* (Nicosia, 1992); V. Christides, *The Image of Cyprus in the Arabic Sources* (Nicosia, 2006); A. Dikigoropoulos, "The Political Status of Cyprus A.D. 648-965," *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus, 1940-8* (1958) 94-114; "The Church of Cyprus During the Period of the Arab Wars, A.D. 649-965," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 11:2 (1965-6) 237-79; R. Jenkins, "Cyprus between Byzantium and Islam, A.D. 688-965," in *Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson*, vol. 2, ed. E. Mylonas and D. Raymond (St. Louis, 1953), 1006-14; C. Kyrris, "The Nature of the Arab-Byzantine Relations in Cyprus from the Middle of the 7th to the Middle of the 10th Century A. D.," *Graeco-Arabica* 3 (1984) 149-75; "Cyprus, Byzantium, and the Arabs from the Mid-7th to the Early 8th Century," in *Oriente e occidente tra medioevo ed età moderna*, vol. 2 (Genoa, 1997), 625-74; Th. Papadopoulos, "Frontier Status and Frontier Processes in Cyprus," in *"The Sweet Land of Cyprus": papers given at the twenty-fifth jubilee Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1991*, ed. A. Bryer and G. Georghallides (Nicosia, 1993), 15-24; A. Papageorgiou, "Les premières incursions arabes à Chypre et leurs conséquences," in *Αφιέρωμα εις τον Κωνσταντίνον Σπυριδάκη* (Nicosia, 1964), 152-8. Dual taxation is attested by Theophanes the Confessor, *Chronographia*, 363, ed. C. de Boor (1883), translated in C. Mango and R. Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813* (Oxford, 1997), 506.

<sup>53</sup> Compare, for example, Megaw, "Three Vaulted Basilicas," 48-56 and "Byzantine Architecture and Decoration in Cyprus: Metropolitan or Provincial?" *DOP* 28 (1974) 57-88, esp. 76 n. 80, where some of his earlier conclusions are reconsidered. See also A. Papageorgiou, "Cities and Countryside at the End of Antiquity and the Beginning of the Middle Ages in Cyprus," in *Sweet Land of Cyprus*, 27-51.

destructive forces, such as earthquakes.<sup>54</sup> His argument is based on the new building methods developed in Cyprus, when vaulting replaced the timber roof and masonry was accumulated on exterior walls to bolster them against excessive force. While the experience of earthquakes may well have influenced the design of medieval churches in Cyprus, Ćurčić denies much of the devastation that may be reasonably attributed to the Arab incursions in the context of a polemic argument. Qualifications and later revisions made by Megaw and others were ignored: “Nor should we forget,” as Megaw conceded in 1974, “that a wood-roofed church lit by oil lamps was a bad fire risk at the best of times.”<sup>55</sup> Correctives to both theories have emerged recently, as the archaeological, numismatic, and sigillographic evidence is revisited and its ambiguity in some cases is more readily acknowledged.<sup>56</sup>

Many instances of destruction can be placed with reasonable certainty in the mid- to late seventh century, whether caused by the Arabs, earthquakes, or neglect and abandonment. Theophanes’ account of the sack of Salamis-Constantia by Mu’awiya is corroborated by the charred earth and debris discovered among the remains of the first basilica of St. Epiphanius.<sup>57</sup> A smaller church with a wooden roof was soon erected on the ruins of the southeastern part of the church and its annex, absorbing the tomb of the

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<sup>54</sup> S. Ćurčić, “Byzantine Architecture on Cyprus: An Introduction to the Problem of the Genesis of a Regional Style,” in *Medieval Cyprus: Studies in Art, Architecture, and History in Memory of Doula Mouriki*, ed. N. P. Sevčenko and C. Moss (Princeton, 1999), 71-91.

<sup>55</sup> Megaw, “Byzantine Architecture and Decoration in Cyprus,” 74.

<sup>56</sup> D. M. Metcalf, *Byzantine Cyprus 491-1191* (Nicosia, 2009). Stewart does not so much offer a corrective as defend the older theory: Stewart, “Domes of Heaven,” esp. 34-8. I take issue with his citation of the Getty study, in which the vaults and domes of Byzantine churches were shown to be vulnerable to earthquakes, as proof that Cypriots did not intend the new measures to be more effective. Doubts about the influence of earthquakes on Byzantine architecture were raised previously by R. Ousterhout, Review of V. Ruggieri, *Byzantine Religious Architecture (582-867): Its Historical and Structural Elements*, in *Speculum* 68:2 (1993) 559-61.

<sup>57</sup> Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 478. J. Munro, H. A. Tubbs, and W. Wroth, “Excavations in Cyprus, 1980. Third Season’s Work. Salamis,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 12 (1891) 59-198, esp. 102-3.

saint in a new narthex.<sup>58</sup> A well-known pair of inscriptions records the destruction of the basilica at Soloi by the Arabs and commemorates its restoration by the bishop John in 655, while lamenting the capture of 120,000 and 50,000 Cypriots in successive attacks, interpreted as punishment for their collective sins.<sup>59</sup> The basilica of Limeniotissa in Paphos was partially destroyed by fire, but also occupied by the invaders and altered to serve the needs of the garrison that Abu'l-Awar stationed there. A tower was constructed in the narthex, the atrium was divided into houses and metal workshops, and one of the northern rooms was converted, perhaps into an entrance vestibule, using *opus sectile* that had come from the nave. A continuing Arab presence is clear from the inscriptions marking tombstones and columns.<sup>60</sup> According to Megaw, an earthquake caused the final destruction of Kourion in or shortly after 685, given the countermarked coins of Constans II (641-68) and the half follis of Justinian II (685-95) found beneath the debris in the basilica's southwest court. Lesser damage, associated with accumulations of lamp and

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<sup>58</sup> On the late seventh-century church: A. H. S. Megaw, "Archaeology in Cyprus, 1957," *Archaeological Reports* 4 (1957) 43-50, esp. 49-50. A new assessment of the church and its phases of construction is found in Stewart, "Domes of Heaven," 63-89. The restoration of the city of Salamis continued over thirty years, to gauge from the coins of Constans II, Constantine IV, and Justinian II fixed in the repairs of the public baths, houses, and churches: Stewart, "Domes of Heaven," 72-3, citing A. Dikigoropoulos, "Cyprus 'betwixt Greeks and Saracens,' A.D. 647-965" (PhD diss., Lincoln College, Oxford, 1961), 210-15. In contrast, the basilica of Campanopetra survived the raids, but work in progress in the mid-seventh century ceased abruptly and was not resumed. The church was occupied in some capacity until it was brought down by an earthquake and abandoned, perhaps in the later twelfth or thirteenth century, long after it had lost its roof: G. Roux, *Salamine de Chypre XV: La basilique de la Campanopétra* (Paris, 1998), 250-1.

<sup>59</sup> Two copies of the same inscription were discovered in the atrium and interior of the basilica; of the latter copy, only a small fragment survives: J. des Gagniers and T. Tinh, *Soloi: dix campagnes de fouilles, 1964-1974*, vol. 1 (Ste. Foy, Quebec, 1985), 115-25. Most scholars agree that the number of captives is inflated.

<sup>60</sup> Unexpectedly perhaps, the only dated inscriptions (719/20 and 780) provide evidence for later occupation which could not have been associated with the garrison: Christides, *Image of Cyprus in the Arabic Sources*, 53-8, 115-22. On Limeniotissa: V. Karageorghis, *ARDAC 1967* (1968), 18; *ARDAC 1968* (1969), 17-18; "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques à Chypre en 1967," *BCH* 92:1 (1968) 261-358, esp. 351; "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques à Chypre en 1968," *BCH* 93:2 (1969) 431-569, esp. 564-6; D. Michaelides, "Opus Sectile in Cyprus," in *Sweet Land of Cyprus*, 69-113, esp. 77, pl. 41. Arabic inscriptions were also found at the basilica of Chrysopolitissa in Paphos: V. Karageorghis, "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques à Chypre en 1975," *BCH* 100:2 (1976) 839-906, esp. 899. On both churches: A. H. S. Megaw, "Reflections on Byzantine Paphos," in *Καθηγήτρια: Essays presented to Joan Hussey*, ed. J. Chrysostomides (Camberley, 1988), 135-50, esp. 135-6, 145-6.

window glass, is thought to have been inflicted during the attack of 653/4.<sup>61</sup> The damage must still have been significant, for portable objects and spolia were removed from the church before the earthquake for incorporation into the late seventh-century basilica of Saragia at nearby Episkopi.<sup>62</sup> The churches and houses of rural Kalavastos-Kopetra are likewise believed to have been destroyed at the time of the Arab raids on account of the mass burial discovered in the cistern of the monastery of Sirmata below a layer of building debris.<sup>63</sup> Limited repairs to the north and south churches and the monastery were soon followed by abandonment.<sup>64</sup>

Even in areas that escaped invasion, archaeology confirms the continued decline and abandonment of sites in the later seventh and eighth centuries. The reasons for the abandonment of Hagia Trias at Gialousa at the end of the eighth century are not known.<sup>65</sup> No sudden event can be blamed for the collapse of Hagios Kononas, a modestly decorated church in rural Akamas built at the end of the sixth century. Seventy-five percent of the pottery and glass from the site, none of which can be dated after 700, was excavated from a single dump site outside one of the houses, suggesting that the village

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<sup>61</sup> Five dump sites have been associated with the second Arab raid, including a heap of glass discovered below the level of final destruction in the forecourt of the east diakonikon with a coin dating before 648: Megaw, *Kourion: Excavations*, xxiv-xxv, 174-6, 486, 560-2.

<sup>62</sup> A. H. S. Megaw, "The Episcopal Precinct at Kourion and the Evidence for Re-location," in *Sweet Land of Cyprus*, 53-67; *Kourion: Excavations*, xxiii-xxiv, 175, 561. S. Boyd, "The Champlévé Revetments," in *Kourion: Excavations*, 235-320. R. Lovrance, "Ecclesiastical Furniture and Equipment," in *Kourion: Excavations*, 321-42, esp. 332-3.

<sup>63</sup> M. Rautman, *A Cypriot Village of Late Antiquity: Kalavastos-Kopetra in the Vasilikos Valley*, *Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 52* (Portsmouth, RI, 2003), 90, 119-20, 130, 143. On the human remains, see S. Fox in the same volume, 274-7. The nine individuals recovered from the cistern show no evidence of traumatic bone injury, ruling out the possibility of death by earthquake, but not by violence or disease, such as plague.

<sup>64</sup> A follis of Constans II (659/60) was found in the upper debris of the repairs to the south church: Rautman, *Cypriot Village of Late Antiquity*, 120.

<sup>65</sup> Papageorghiou, "Cities and Countryside," 49.

was abandoned in the course of the seventh century.<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, economic and environmental decline has been identified at Akamas and in parts of southwestern Cyprus even before the arrival of the Arabs, which would have made them particularly vulnerable to any island-wide catastrophe. Indeed, John Haldon argues that the transformation of the classical city in Byzantium, which took place well before the foreign invasions of the seventh century, would hasten decline and complicate recovery through the dissolution of civic autonomy and increased dependency on the state.<sup>67</sup> Similar patterns for the destruction, contraction, dislocation, fortification, and abandonment of cities occur in Asia Minor, which had been devastated by the Persians in the early seventh century before it was subjected to repeated Arab raids.<sup>68</sup> In contrast, the cities of southern Syria, Palestine, and Jordan were less seriously affected by the Persian and Arab conquests, with few churches deliberately destroyed, perhaps because the invaders planned to settle in these territories. But decline materialized nonetheless in the later eighth and ninth centuries due to economic and demographic changes not easily explained by archaeology.<sup>69</sup>

The population of Cyprus in the eighth and ninth centuries has been estimated at 60,000 to 75,000, representing an enormous if unquantifiable reduction from the late

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<sup>66</sup> J. Fejfer and P. Hayes, "Ancient Akamas and the Abandonment of Sites in 7th-Century A.D. Cyprus," in *Visitors, Immigrants, and Invaders in Cyprus*, ed. P. Wallace (Albany, 1995), 62-9.

<sup>67</sup> J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), 92-124.

<sup>68</sup> C. Foss, "The Persians in Asia Minor and the End of Antiquity," *English Historical Review* 90 (1975) 721-47; "Archaeology and the 'Twenty Cities' of Byzantine Asia," *American Journal of Archaeology* 81:4 (1977) 469-86; "The Lycian Coast in the Byzantine Age," *DOP* 48 (1994) 1-52. Metcalf, *Byzantine Cyprus*, 371-5.

<sup>69</sup> C. Foss, "Syria in Transition, A.D. 550-750: An Archaeological Approach," *DOP* 51 (1997) 189-269. R. Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule: A Historical and Archaeological Study* (Princeton, 1995), esp. 112-38. According to Schick, the number of active churches in Palestine and Jordan was reduced to half by the early ninth century.

antique period, based on the 7,000 or 7,200 gold coins collected in taxes by the Arabs.<sup>70</sup> Despite the continued payment of taxes, the collapse of the monetary economy, measured in copper coins, is attested in Cyprus and throughout the Byzantine empire, as new coins from Constantinople cease to appear after the mid-660s.<sup>71</sup> While coins may have continued to circulate for decades, Metcalf estimates that the everyday use of coins declined by a factor of ten or more in Cyprus after c. 700, down from a peak under Herakleios (610-41) and Constans II (641-68).<sup>72</sup> Arabic coins must have been used in some transactions, but limited casual and site finds do not alter the impression of monetary collapse with recourse to other forms of exchange. Further evidence of insecurity is observed in contemporary coin hoards and in considerable losses of seals. Ten hoards of copper coins have been discovered throughout the island, dating to the middle of the seventh century. The contents of these hoards indicate burial over several years, at which time the so-called Cyprus Treasures, including the David Plates, may also have been concealed.<sup>73</sup> From the evidence of seals, administrative and ecclesiastical correspondence escalates in the second half of the seventh century and first third of the eighth century in response to instability and dislocation, but then subsides. The analysis

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<sup>70</sup> Recall that the Soloi inscription claims that 170,000 Cypriots were captured and “many” others killed: Metcalf, *Byzantine Cyprus*, 400-4. On the other figures, see C. Mango, “Chypre: carrefour du monde byzantin,” in *Actes du XVe Congrès International d’Études Byzantines, Rapports et co-rapports*, vol. 5 (Athens, 1976), 3-13, esp. 5-6, n. 6, repr. in *Byzantium and Its Image: History and Culture of the Byzantine Empire and Its Heritage* (London, 1984), ch. 17; G. Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1940), 257.

<sup>71</sup> Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 117-20. C. Morrisson, “Byzance au VII siècle: la témoignage de la numismatique,” in *Byzantion: Hommage à André Stratos*, vol. 1 (Athens, 1986), 149-63.

<sup>72</sup> Metcalf, *Byzantine Cyprus*, 36-41, 141-213.

<sup>73</sup> The hoards are analyzed by Metcalf, *Byzantine Cyprus*, 169-71. On the Cyprus Treasures: O. Dalton, “A Byzantine Silver Treasure from the District of Kyrenia, Cyprus, now preserved in the British Museum,” *Archaeologia* 57 (1900) 157-74; “A Second Silver Treasure from Cyprus,” *Archaeologia* 60 (1906) 1-24; A. and J. Stylianou, *The Treasures of Lambousa* (Nicosia, 1969). On the David Plates: R. Leader, “The David Plates Revisited: Transforming the Secular in Early Byzantium,” *Art Bulletin* 82:3 (2000) 407-27; R. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Aldershot, 2004), 173-216.

of 150 to 160 Cypriot seals dating from 700 to 965 indicates a sharp decline in correspondence after 730, approaching collapse in the mid-ninth century, while only nine Islamic seals from Cyprus have been attributed to the same period.<sup>74</sup>

Trade disruptions and severe economic recession put an end to the production of large-scale fine pottery, suspended the quarrying of marble in the Aegean, and likely also affected the distribution of glass, while compromising the type of regional artistic exchange to which the mosaics attest.<sup>75</sup> Two glass factories discovered at Paphos and Soloi demonstrate the continued or resumed production of colorless vessels for local use during the period of neutrality, but colored glass for mosaic tesserae was probably produced in specialized factories, given the many variables affecting color.<sup>76</sup> According to Liz James, colored glass required an intermediate stage in the process of production, whereby raw glass exported from factories in the Levant and elsewhere was colored and formed into glass sheets or cakes before being shipped to local sites, where it was cut into

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<sup>74</sup> D. M. Metcalf, *Byzantine Lead Seals from Cyprus* (Nicosia, 2004), 116-25, 363-72, 500-4; *Byzantine Cyprus*, 69-139.

<sup>75</sup> There is evidence of continued trade in other ceramic vessels at Salamis-Constantia, Paphos, and Soloi: J. Hayes, "Problèmes de la céramique des VIIème – IXème siècles à Salamine et à Chypre," in *Salamine de Chypre: histoire et archéologie*, ed. M. Yon (Paris, 1980), 375-88; "Late Roman Fine Wares and their Successors: A Mediterranean Byzantine Perspective (with Reference to the Syro-Jordanian Situation)," in *La céramique byzantine et proto-islamique en Syrie-Jordanie (IVe – VIIIe siècles apr. J.-C.)*, ed. E. Villeneuve and P. Watson (Beirut, 2001), 275-82; Fejfer and Hayes, "Ancient Akamas and the Abandonment of Sites," 62-9. On the marble trade: J.-P. Sodini, "Marble and Stoneworking in Byzantium, Seventh-Fifteenth Centuries," in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, vol. 1, ed. A. Laiou (Washington, DC, 2002), 129-46. In the ninth century, the Patriarch of Jerusalem requested cedar and pine from Cyprus for repairs to the Holy Sepulchre: A. H. S. Megaw, "Betwixt Greeks and Saracens," in *Acts of the International Archaeological Symposium "Cyprus between the Orient and the Occident," Nicosia, 1985* (Nicosia, 1986), 505-19, esp. 517, citing the Annals of Eutychius, PG 111, col. 1130. Arab sources speak of mastic, resin, and textiles exported from Cyprus: Browning, "Byzantium and Islam in Cyprus," 107.

<sup>76</sup> The glass factory at Paphos has been dated to the late eighth or early ninth century, while the factory at Soloi has been dated between the seventh and the ninth centuries: Metcalf, *Byzantine Cyprus*, 247-52; A. H. S. Megaw, "Supplementary Excavations on a Castle Site at Paphos, Cyprus, 1970-1971," *DOP* 26 (1972) 322-43, esp. 339-40; J. Hayes, *Roman and Pre-Roman Glass in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto, 1975), 124, n. 2.

tesserae.<sup>77</sup> Alternatively, some local workshops may have been capable of producing colored glass, for glass wasters with square edges consistent with the extraction of tesserae were discovered behind the baptistery of the church of Hagios Philon in Karpasia, a site which is believed to have been abandoned in the mid-seventh century.<sup>78</sup> Most sixth-century wall mosaics contained a minimum of forty hues and employed costly materials such as gold, silver, and mother of pearl.<sup>79</sup> The manufacture of certain colors known to be technically challenging, such as red opaque, might have been restricted to only a few specialized workshops.<sup>80</sup> Once again, the absence of red and orange glass at Livadia might argue for a later date, although we cannot be sure they did not appear in the lost faces. The mosaic industry would therefore have been susceptible to interruptions in supply lines if multiple stages and locations were involved in the production of tesserae and if different colors were procured from different workshops, even before one considers the acute fall in demand for such luxury items after the middle of the seventh century.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> L. James, "Byzantine Glass Mosaic Tesserae: Some Material Considerations," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 30:1 (2006) 29-47, esp. 38-40. On the relationship between primary glass suppliers and local workshops in the context of a Cypriot study, see I. Freestone, M. Ponting, and M. Hughes, "The Origins of Byzantine Glass from Maroni Petrera, Cyprus," *Archaeometry* 44:2 (2002) 257-72.

<sup>78</sup> J. du Plat Taylor and A. H. S. Megaw, "Excavations at Ayios Philon, the Ancient Karpasia, Part II: The Early Christian Buildings," *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (1981) 209-50, esp. 225-7.

<sup>79</sup> A. Cutler, "The Industries of Art," in *Economic History of Byzantium*, vol. 2, 555-87, esp. 559.

<sup>80</sup> R. Brill and N. Cahill, "A Red Opaque Glass from Sardis and Some Thoughts on Red Opaques in General," *Journal of Glass Studies* 30 (1988) 16-27. A. N. Shugar, "Byzantine Opaque Red Glass Tesserae from Beit Shean, Israel," *Archaeometry* 42 (2000) 375-84.

<sup>81</sup> While impediments to travel are also widely assumed for the period in question, travel appears to have continued within and by way of Cyprus. As early as 655, Theodore of Paphos delivered the Life of St. Spyridon at the church of Tremithos before an audience of Cypriot bishops and the archbishop Paul of Crete: P. van den Ven, *La légende de S. Spyridon, évêque de Trimithonte* (Louvain, 1953), 109\*-10\*, 89-90. Pilgrims visited Cyprus en route to the Holy Land, including the English St. Willibald in 723, who famously described Cyprus as "between the lands of the Greeks and Saracens": J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster, 2002), 236. Likewise, Cypriot bishops were not prevented from attending the sixth and seventh Ecumenical Councils at Constantinople (680) and Nicaea (787): J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Paris, 1900-27), vol. 11, 561; vol. 19, 48-51.



The lack of wall mosaics in Cyprus after the middle of the seventh century coincides with changes in building practices and church decoration, influenced by economic necessity, practicality, and an apparent desire for structural solidity. For the most part, medieval churches in Cyprus exploited the existing fabric of the early basilicas on top of which they were built. When a new church occupied a secondary site, materials may have been salvaged and transported from the ruined or neighboring church, as in the case of Kourion and Episkopi. In general, the restored churches were smaller than the basilicas they replaced and more modestly decorated. Instead of marble colonnades, square piers of local limestone supported traditional wooden roofs or new barrel vaults.<sup>82</sup> Six churches of the first type, with wooden roofs, have been identified in Cyprus, including the second or third phase of the Panagia Angeloktistos at Kiti, and six churches of the second type, with barrel vaults, including the second or third phase of the Panagia Kanakariá at Lythrankomi.<sup>83</sup> A more elaborate type of basilica, distinguished by multiple domes along the central axis, was the focus of a recent dissertation by Charles Stewart. Stewart offers a new chronology for the group of five churches, which he argues were rebuilt during the period of neutrality: St. Epiphanius (third basilica, eighth century) and St. Barnabas (ninth century) at Salamis-Constantia, St. Paraskevi at Geroskipou (eighth century), St. Lazarus at Larnaca (ninth century), and Sts. Barnabas and Hilarion at Peristerona (tenth century).<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Except at Soloi, where the restored basilica retained its early colonnade. Note that the churches at Marathovouno and Kalavassos-Kopetra made use of rounded piers already in the late sixth century: Stewart, "Domes of Heaven," 33, 38.

<sup>83</sup> To the first group belong St. Mamas at Morphou, St. Herakleidos at Tamassos-Politiko, St. Spyridon at Tremithos, the southwest basilica at Amathous, and the second basilica of St. Epiphanius at Salamis-Constantia. To the second group belong the Panagia Chrysotissa and the Asomatos Church at Aphendrika, St. Barbara at Koroveia, Panagia Aphendrika at Sykhada, and Panagia Limeniotissa at Paphos. See Stewart, "Domes of Heaven," 38-57.

<sup>84</sup> Stewart, "Domes of Heaven."

Common to all of the churches in this period is the reuse of older furnishings, interior decoration, and architectural elements. In the churches of St. Lazarus, St. Barnabas, and St. Paraskevi, early marble capitals were reused as springing corbels. At St. Epiphanius, the original *opus sectile* of the atrium probably served as the new floor of the nave, while a new masonry altar was fashioned out of large blocks of local limestone. The *opus sectile* floor from the original Asomatos church was also preserved in the late seventh-century barrel-vaulted reconstruction. The floor of St. Lazarus, which survives in small areas next to the piers of the church, combined rough-cut *opus sectile* with marble slabs; it has not yet been established whether the stones were reused or signify the resumption of the marble trade in the ninth or tenth century.<sup>85</sup> In addition, the *opus sectile* pavement of the late seventh-century basilica at Saragia was clearly recycled from the ruins of Kourion. When the walls and vaults of these churches were embellished, wall painting was the preferred medium. The eastern dome of St. Paraskevi contains a painted cross inscribed in a canopy, encircled by guilloche and wheel interlace borders, which may be compared to the painted ornament in the soffits of St. Barbara at Koroveia (Figs. 3.24-5).<sup>86</sup> Until recently, the chapel of St. Solomone at Koma tou Gialou contained frescoes of the eighth century, including scenes of the Holy Women at the Tomb and the

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<sup>85</sup> The church of St. Lazarus is traditionally dated to the early tenth century, based on the idea that the new church was financed by the emperor Leo VI (886-912) in exchange for the relics of the saint, which were transferred to Constantinople in 901: Megaw, "Byzantine Architecture and Decoration in Cyprus," 79. An eleventh-century date for the church was suggested by V. Karageorghis, "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques à Chypre en 1972," *BCH* 97:2 (1973) 601-89, esp. 624, on the basis of which Michaelides proposed an eleventh- or twelfth-century date for the marble floor: Michaelides, "*Opus Sectile* in Cyprus," 77-8.

<sup>86</sup> A. and J. Stylianou, *Painted Churches of Cyprus*, 384-5. Stewart, "Domes of Heaven," 46-7, 97-100, figs. 2:64-5, 4:10-11.

resurrected Christ on the north wall.<sup>87</sup> Traces of wall paintings from the late eighth-century have also been identified beneath the eleventh-century paintings on the piers of the cathedral of St. Herakleidos at Tamassos-Politiko.<sup>88</sup> In the ninth or early tenth century, the single-domed church of St. Anthony at Kellia received both narrative and iconic scenes (Fig. 3.26). Paintings preserved on the piers of the church include the Sacrifice of Isaac and the Crucifixion, as well as the enthroned Virgin and Child and a pair of standing saints.<sup>89</sup> Additional painted fragments of uncertain date have been identified in the cave chapel near Kyrenia and in the barrel-vaulted churches of the Panagia Chrysiotissa at Aphenrika and the Panagia Aphenrika at Sykhada.<sup>90</sup> While some medieval churches might have retained their early Christian apse mosaics, new mosaic decoration is found only in the central and western domes of St. Barnabas, where two small crosses were formed of recycled tesserae (Fig. 3.27).<sup>91</sup> A third cross presumably decorated the lost eastern dome. Comprised of orange-brown and blue-green tesserae, the radiating crosses were confined to the apexes of the domes by the original ribs.<sup>92</sup> They represent the only tessellated mosaics that can be placed with certainty in the period of neutrality or later, as the island preserves no middle Byzantine examples of the technique. Cyprus also lacks evidence of new floor mosaics, in contrast to Jordan and

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<sup>87</sup> J. Dresken-Weiland, "Die Kirche 'Agia Solomoni' bei Komi tou Gialou: Wandmalerei auf Zypern aus der Zeit des Bildersturms," in *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Zyperns von der Spätantike bis zur Neuzeit*, ed. J. Deckers, M.-E. Mitsou, and S. Rogge (Münster, 2005), 41-63.

<sup>88</sup> Stewart, "Domes of Heaven," 39.

<sup>89</sup> A. and J. Stylianou, *Painted Churches of Cyprus*, 433-7. A. Wharton, *Art of Empire: Painting and Architecture of the Byzantine Periphery* (University Park, PA, 1988), 57-67.

<sup>90</sup> Megaw, "Byzantine Architecture and Decoration in Cyprus," 80, figs. 35-6. A. and J. Stylianou, *Painted Churches of Cyprus*, 451-5. Stewart, "Domes of Heaven," 45, 48-9, figs. 2.74-5.

<sup>91</sup> Megaw, "Interior Decoration," 27.

<sup>92</sup> The cross in the central dome has been overlaid by a plaster cross, but preserves some tesserae in the interstices: Stewart, "Domes of Heaven," 138.

Syria, where floor mosaics continued to be laid into the middle of the eighth century.<sup>93</sup> It is possible that tessellated mosaics had fallen out of favor even before the mid-seventh century, when a prosperous economy and a healthy supply of marble influenced the production and popularity of *opus sectile* floors.<sup>94</sup> But while *opus sectile* continues to appear, albeit in predominantly recycled contexts, the industry for tessellated floor and wall mosaics in Cyprus declines and never recovers. This is perhaps less surprising with respect to floor mosaics, which disappear completely from Byzantine churches after the iconoclastic controversy.

Wall mosaics are distinguished from floor mosaics by their fragile and luxurious materials, higher quality of craftsmanship, complexity of execution, and overall expense. In contrast to the medieval churches of Cyprus, many of the early Christian basilicas were richly decorated and at least seventeen of them contained wall mosaics. In addition to the apse mosaics at Lythrankomi and Kiti, quantities of glass tesserae have been discovered in the first basilica of St. Epiphanius at Salamis-Constantia (late fourth to sixth century),<sup>95</sup> in the episcopal complex at Kourion, including the basilica, northeast chapel (Fig. 3.22), and baptistery (fifth to seventh century);<sup>96</sup> in the north and south churches of Kalavassos-Kopetra (early and mid-sixth century);<sup>97</sup> in two churches at Pegia

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<sup>93</sup> Consider the floor mosaics of the Church of St. Stephen at Umm al-Rasas (718 and 756), the Acropolis Church at Ma'in (719-20), the Church of St. George at Deir al-Adas (722), the Church of the Virgin at Madaba (767), and several Umayyad residences, such as the palace of Khirbet al-Mafjar (724-43): M. Piccirillo, *The Mosaics of Jordan* (Amman, 1993), 64-5, 196-201, 218-39, 343-53; P. Donceel-Voûte, *Les pavements des églises Byzantines de Syrie et du Liban: décor, archéologie et liturgie* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1988), 45-54. On the date of 718 vs. 785 for the nave mosaic at the Church of St. Stephen, see Schick, *Christian Communities of Palestine*, 472-4.

<sup>94</sup> Michaelides, "Opus Sectile in Cyprus," 69-113.

<sup>95</sup> Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus*, 422. Stewart, "Domes of Heaven," 66, 235-6 n. 19.

<sup>96</sup> Megaw, *Kourion: Excavations*, 47-9, 108, 557-8, pls. 1.7f, 1.30a; "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," 192-5.

<sup>97</sup> Rautman, *Cypriot Village of Late Antiquity*, 143-7, figs. 3.68-74.

(sixth century);<sup>98</sup> in four basilicas at Amathous (fifth to early seventh century);<sup>99</sup> in the basilica at Soloi (second half of the fourth to early sixth century);<sup>100</sup> in three apses at Polis Chrysochous (end of the fifth century);<sup>101</sup> in the episcopal basilica of Hagios Philon at Karpasia (early fifth century);<sup>102</sup> and in the basilica of Hagioi Pente at Geroskipou (fifth to sixth century).<sup>103</sup> The ongoing and as yet unpublished excavation of the basilica at Katalymmata ton Plakoton on the Akrotiri peninsula has yielded a number of mosaic fragments containing gold and mother-of-pearl tesserae.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, the ancient and miraculous mosaic of the enthroned Virgin and Child recorded in the spurious ninth-century *Letter of the Three Patriarchs to the Emperor Theophilos* may have decorated one of these churches or another church altogether.<sup>105</sup> Such examples demonstrate the prosperity of Cyprus from the fifth to the middle of the seventh century and highlight the level of discontinuity in the succeeding period where there is scant evidence for the production of new mosaics. Although noteworthy, the small crosses of St. Barnabas

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<sup>98</sup> Megaw, *ARDAC 1953* (1954), 17; “Archaeology in Cyprus, 1953,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 74 (1954) 172-6, esp. 175; “Archaeology in Cyprus, 1955,” *Archaeological Reports* 2 (1955) 41-6, esp. 45; “Early Byzantine Monuments in Cyprus in the Light of Recent Discoveries,” in *Akten des XI Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses, Munich, 1958*, ed. H. Dölger and H. G. Beck (Munich, 1960), 345-51, esp. 348. Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics*, 2nd edn., 107 (crustae).

<sup>99</sup> Acropolis Basilica and Basilica at the Foot of the Acropolis, Amathous: P. Aupert, *Guide d’Amathonte* (1996), 88, 132. Southeast basilica, Amathous: V. Karageorghis, “Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques à Chypre en 1961,” *BCH* 86:1 (1962) 327-414, esp. 412. Hagios Tychonas, Amathous: D. Christou, “Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques à Chypre en 1992,” *BCH* 117:2 (1993) 719-55, esp. 751.

<sup>100</sup> J. des Gagniers, “Excavations at Soloi,” in *The Archaeology of Cyprus: Recent Developments*, ed. N. Robertson (Park Ridge, NJ, 1975), 211-32, esp. 225.

<sup>101</sup> W. Childs, “First Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Polis Chrysochous by Princeton University,” *RDAC* (1988) 121-30, esp. 127.

<sup>102</sup> Du Plat Taylor and Megaw, “Excavations at Ayios Philon,” 212, 227.

<sup>103</sup> D. Michaelides, “‘Agioi Pente’ at Yeroskipou: A New Early Christian Site in Cyprus,” *Musiva and Sectilia* 1 (2004) 185-98, which focuses on floor mosaics. The presence of wall mosaics is noted on the website of the Department of Antiquities.

<sup>104</sup> I do not know if the fragments provide evidence of figural decoration, as in the northeast chapel at Kourion or in the churches at Kalavastos-Kopetra. Excavations at the site are ongoing under the direction of Eleni Prokopiou at the Department of Antiquities. Some information is currently available on the Department’s website.

<sup>105</sup> The mosaic cannot be associated with the churches of Lythrankomi, Kiti, or Livadia and is said to be in the south of the island. See my chapter 1.1.

hardly constitute a revival of the technique. While frescoes decorate the walls of many new and restored churches, they are far less splendid than the wall mosaics of their late antique predecessors. The evidence suggests that the art and industry of mosaic making declined after the initial Arab invasions as a consequence of changes they initiated or perhaps accelerated, according to the evidence at Akamas. Ultimately, the reduction of wealth on the island, the widespread decline of urban and rural sites, and the return of Cyprus to some degree of economic and cultural self-sufficiency make it very unlikely that the apse mosaic was set after the middle of the seventh century.

#### *6b. Rising Scale Pattern*

One of the few motifs that distinguishes the apse mosaic at Livadia is the pattern of rising or imbricated scales that makes up the gold background. The pattern is found frequently in tessellated floor mosaics of the Eastern Mediterranean, where it is comprised of white or buff-colored stone. The scales may be outlined in dark-colored tesserae or inscribed with florets from the fifth century onwards, when they become increasingly popular among new organic patterns.<sup>106</sup> Rising scales first appear in Cyprus in closed clusters forming scalloped squares in two early fifth-century pavements, identified as the products of the same workshop: the nave of the basilica of Hagia Trias at Gialousa (Fig. 3.28) and the House of Eustolius at Kourion.<sup>107</sup> At Gialousa, two-toned scales also appear among the geometric patterns framed by small and large squares in the north aisle. The all-over pattern of rising scales proliferates somewhat late and almost

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<sup>106</sup> A. Gonosová, "The Formation and Sources of Early Byzantine Floral Semis and Floral Diaper Patterns Reexamined," *DOP* 41 (1987) 227-37. See also E. Kitzinger, "Stylistic Developments in Pavement Mosaics in the Greek East from the Age of Constantine to the Age of Justinian," in *La Mosaique Gréco-Romaine*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1965), 341-52.

<sup>107</sup> Cat. nos. 43-7 in Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics*, 2nd edn., 78-87.

always in the context of a floral semis, as in the sixth-century mosaics of the baptistery of the Basilica of Skyrvallos at Ktima Paphos, the bema of Basilica A of Hagios Georgios at Pegia, and the atrium of the Basilica of Chrysopolitissa in Paphos (Fig. 3.29).<sup>108</sup> The presbytery and south aisle of the basilica at Soloi were decorated with the pattern slightly earlier in the late fifth or early sixth century.<sup>109</sup> At Kourion, the galleries of the narthex and the new episkopeion received the same design in the late sixth century, as reconstructed from fallen fragments.<sup>110</sup> The motif is found as late as the 630s in the well-preserved second mosaic floors of the southeast and southwest compartments of the baptistery at Kourion (Fig. 3.30).<sup>111</sup> The apse mosaic at Livadia is unique among the tessellated wall mosaics of Cyprus in its application of the motif, but there is a small area of polychrome marble incrustation set in a rising scale pattern on a half-column in the basilica of St. Epiphanius at Salamis-Constantia, which may belong to the original late fourth-century building or the sixth-century restoration (Fig. 3.31).<sup>112</sup> In Thessalonike, rising scales appear in the soffits of the fifth-century Acheiropoietos church and in lunette A of the Church of St. George, where each of the scales is inscribed not with a floret but with the eye of a peacock feather.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>108</sup> W. Daszewski and D. Michaelides, *Mosaic Floors in Cyprus* (Ravenna, 1988), 128-38, figs. 54-9.

<sup>109</sup> The excavator assigned these mosaics to two different phases and dated the presbytery mosaic to the second half of the fourth century, but I agree with Michaelides that the presence of florets strongly suggests a later date: Daszewski and Michaelides, *Mosaic Floors in Cyprus*, 133; Des Gagniers and Tinh, *Soloi: dix campagnes de fouilles*, 17, 28, figs. 27, 28, 75.

<sup>110</sup> Megaw, *Kourion: Excavations*, 45, 162, pl. 1.20d.

<sup>111</sup> The date of the last renovation of the baptistery is provided by a coin of Herakleios of the year 630/1, discovered under the steps of the platform before the apse: Megaw, *Kourion: Excavations*, 70, 558-9, fig. 1.U1, 115-6, pl. 123a, 123d.

<sup>112</sup> This fragmentary decoration is now lost: Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics*, 1st edn., 42-3 or 2nd edn., 88-9. Unfortunately, detailed information on the small wall mosaic fragments discovered in Cyprus is rarely published. One exception is Rautman, *Cypriot Village of Late Antiquity*, 143-7, figs. 3.68-74.

<sup>113</sup> Michaelides suggests that the pattern is also found at St. Demetrios, but I have been unable to locate it there: Daszewski and Michaelides, *Mosaic Floors in Cyprus*, 132. On the Church of St. George: J.-M. Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments du IVe au VIe siècle contribution à l'étude d'une ville paléochrétienne* (Athens, 1984), 134, pl. 22:1. The controversial dating of these mosaics is noted in my

The pattern occurs in the Western Mediterranean as well as in Greece and Asia Minor, but is far more common in Syria and Palestine. In these regions, rising scales appear somewhat earlier in geometric pavements of the fourth century, including the so-called Magdough mosaic in Antioch and the nave mosaic of the church at 'Agur in Palestine, which incorporate the scalloped squares.<sup>114</sup> The squares are not strictly early, however, as they adorn the nave of the church of St. Menas at Rihab in Jordan, dated by inscription to March 635.<sup>115</sup> As all-over patterns, rising scales are found in floor mosaics from the fifth to the early eighth centuries. Securely dated mosaics decorate the north aisle of the church at Rayân (472), the baptismal font of Qal'at Sem'an (476-90), the baptistery and nave of the church of el-Koursi (585), and the central nave of the basilica at Nebha (557 and 646).<sup>116</sup> In Jordan as in Cyprus, examples are generally late. A rising scale pattern with florets surrounds the baptismal font of the Old Diakonikon-Baptistery at the Memorial of Moses at Mount Nebo (Fig. 3.32), dated 530, and distinguishes the area behind the altar in the Church of St. Basil in Rihab, dated 594.<sup>117</sup> There are two panels in the north and south aisles of the Church of St. Peter at Khirbat al-Samra in Bostra, which probably date to the end of the 630s.<sup>118</sup> Finally, rising scales appear in

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chapter 1.8b. In addition to the all-over pattern in lunette A, imbricated scales appear in the parapets of the architectural facades. See my chapter 5.4.

<sup>114</sup> D. Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1947), 357, pls. 137a-b. R. and A. Ovadiah, *Hellenistic, Roman, and Early Byzantine Mosaic Pavements in Israel* (Rome, 1987), 11, pl. 1.

<sup>115</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 313.

<sup>116</sup> Donceel-Voûte, *Les pavements des églises Byzantines de Syrie et du Liban*, 261-7, pl. 12; 225-40, fig. 210; 167-74, fig. 142, pl. 9; 395-406, figs. 385, 395, pl. 16.

<sup>117</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 146-7, 311.

<sup>118</sup> The Church of St. Peter is adjacent to the Church of St. George and very close to the Church of St. John the Baptist on the site of Khirbat al-Samra. The floor mosaics of all three churches have dedicatory inscriptions attributing the work to the Archbishop Theodore. The churches of St. George and St. John are dated 637 and 639 respectively, while the Church of St. Peter gives only the month of June: Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 304-8.



various forms, including scalloped squares, floral semis, and shield patterns in the spectacular pavements of the Umayyad palace of Khirbat al-Mafjar, dated 724-43.<sup>119</sup>

The contemporary use of the rising scale pattern as a background for figural compositions is an important indicator of stylistic change in the late antique period. The spread of purely geometric pavements in the second half of the fourth century throughout the Eastern Mediterranean coincided with the abandonment of the *emblemata* or illusionistic panels that provided the focus of Roman pavements. The reinsertion of figures and other motifs (e.g. *xenia*) into geometric networks preceded the development of figure carpets in the second half of the fifth century, in which figures appear fixed in space against a flat white background. According to Ernst Kitzinger, the new approach to pavement design is characterized by the acceptance and exploitation of the surface of the floor, which superseded the Roman preference for surface-denying illusionistic space.<sup>120</sup> Alongside the development of figure carpets, geometric networks give way to organic networks, such as floral semis, floral diaper patterns, and inhabited scrolls. Central foci return in the form of so-called pseudo-*emblemata*, distinguished by a lack of depth or spatial recession. These developments are best observed at Antioch and the suburb of Daphne, where floor mosaics were laid continuously from the second to the sixth century. Here, the rising scale pattern is well represented in both organic networks and figure carpets. Examples of the former include the well-known mosaic from the House of the Phoenix (c. 500), where a rising scale pattern within a floral semis surrounds the pseudo-

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<sup>119</sup> R. W. Hamilton, *Khirbat al Mafjar: An Arabian Mansion in the Jordan Valley* (Oxford, 1959), 327-42, pls. 76, 82, 84-6, 90, 93, 99.

<sup>120</sup> Kitzinger, "Stylistic Developments in Pavement Mosaics," 341-52.

*emblema* of a phoenix with a radiating halo, perched on a rock (Fig. 2.50).<sup>121</sup> The rising scale pattern is first used as a background for figure carpets in the second half of the fifth century, when it appears in the famous hunting mosaics of Antioch and Daphne, including the Megalopsychia mosaic of the Yakto Complex, the Dumbarton Oaks Hunt, and the Worcester Hunt.<sup>122</sup> A procession of animals set against a background of rising scales decorates the quatrefoil church at Seleucia Pieria, the port of Antioch, dating to the late fifth or early sixth century (Fig. 3.33).<sup>123</sup> Other figure carpets of this type with dated inscriptions include the nave and sanctuary mosaics of the basilica of Houeidjit Halaoua in Syria (471);<sup>124</sup> the nave and aisles of the North Church or Michaelion at Huarte (483-6/7 or 483-501/2);<sup>125</sup> the narthex of the church at Zahrani in Lebanon (541);<sup>126</sup> and a panel in the north aisle of the Church of St. George at Houad (568).<sup>127</sup> Perhaps the closest parallel in floor mosaics for the treatment of rising scales at Livadia is the extensive mosaic of the peristyle of the Great Palace in Constantinople, where the scales are aligned in a single direction, contain no florets, and fill large areas between self-contained figural compositions (Fig. 3.34). The pavement probably dates to the sixth century, during the reign of Justinian I (527-65) or Tiberius II (578-82).<sup>128</sup> The lack of

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<sup>121</sup> Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 351-5, pls. 83, 134. F. Baratte, *Mosaïques romaines et paléochrétiennes du Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1978), 92-8.

<sup>122</sup> Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 323-45, pls. 76b-78; 358-9, pl. 86a; 363-5, pls. 86b, 170-3, 176b-177. See also I. Lavin, "The Hunting Mosaics of Antioch and Their Sources: A Study of Compositional Principles in the Development of the Early Mediaeval Style," *DOP* 17 (1963) 179-286.

<sup>123</sup> Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 359-63, pls. 87-9, 175-6a. C. Kondoleon, ed., *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* (Princeton, 2000), 217-22. Donceel-Voûte, *Les pavements des églises Byzantines de Syrie et du Liban*, 290-8.

<sup>124</sup> Donceel-Voûte, *Les pavements des églises Byzantines de Syrie et du Liban*, 145-50, fig. 119, 121.

<sup>125</sup> P. and M.T. Canivet, *Huarté: Sanctuaire chrétien d'Apamène (IVe-VIe s.)*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1987), 193-201, pls. 95-104.

<sup>126</sup> Donceel-Voûte, *Les pavements des églises Byzantines de Syrie et du Liban*, 424-39, fig. 422, pl. 18.

<sup>127</sup> Donceel-Voûte, *Les pavements des églises Byzantines de Syrie et du Liban*, 138-45, fig. 116.

<sup>128</sup> A date in the Justinianic period or later is suggested by pottery fill and brick stamps discovered beneath the mosaic. See the note in my chapter 1.8a.

comparable floor mosaics in Cyprus may be attributed once again to the predominance of *opus sectile* throughout the fifth, sixth, and early seventh centuries.

In spite of its appearance in the soffits of two churches in Thessalonike, the all-over pattern of rising scales remains scarce in early Byzantine wall mosaics. Comprised of gold tesserae, the motif is found only later in the Deesis panel of the south gallery at Hagia Sophia (1260s) (Fig. 3.35),<sup>129</sup> in the lunette mosaic of Theodore Metochites at the Chora (c. 1316-21) (Fig. 3.36),<sup>130</sup> and in the twelfth-century apse mosaic of Christ Pantokrator in the cathedral of Monreale in Sicily.<sup>131</sup> These mosaics are commonly believed to revive an earlier tradition, of which the sole surviving representative is the apse mosaic at Livadia. Although rare, the formation of rising scales in the background of religious figural imagery is particularly effective at creating a heavenly space, enhancing the play of light, and spotlighting the central figures. Having established a *terminus ante quem* of the mid-seventh century, the date of the mosaic remains dependent on early Byzantine floor mosaics that deploy the scales in all-over patterns. The rising scale pattern is first incorporated into figure carpets, associated with fundamental changes in pavement design, in the second half of the fifth century. Examples of the pattern in Cyprus, while restricted to organic networks, are comparatively late. They suggest a date not before the sixth century and up to the middle of the seventh century. The interpretation of the pattern at Livadia as an abstract screen or threshold dividing heaven

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<sup>129</sup> R. Cormack, "The Mother of God in the Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople," in *Mother of God: Representations*, 107-123, esp. 118-22. T. Whittemore, *The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul, Fourth Preliminary Report, Work Done in 1934-1938, The Deesis Panel of the South Gallery* (Oxford, 1952).

<sup>130</sup> P. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 4 vols. (New York, 1966-75), I: 42-3, II: pl. 26-9. See also R. Nelson, "Taxation with Representation: Visual Narrative and the Political Field of the Kariye Camii," *Art History* 22:1 (1999) 56-82; "The Chora and the Great Church: Intervisuality in Fourteenth-Century Constantinople," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999) 67-101.

<sup>131</sup> E. Kitzinger, *The Mosaics of Monreale* (Palermo, 1960), 108-10, figs. 51, 54.

and earth, based on its association with common gates and screens, will be explored in chapter five.

### 6c. *The Orant Virgin*

This section investigates the iconography of the orant Virgin for the sole purpose of dating the apse mosaic at Livadia. The significance of the iconographic type, isolated in the apse of the Byzantine church, will be discussed in chapter six. In the early Byzantine period, representations of the Virgin Mary are found largely in narrative contexts, such as the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, and the Adoration of the Magi. The predominant iconic image of the Virgin Mary is the Virgin enthroned with the Christ Child on her lap, as in the apse mosaic at Lythrankomi. Less often, the Virgin is shown standing with the Child, as in the apse mosaic at Kiti. The iconographic type of the orant Virgin, with her hands raised in a gesture of prayer, is also an early invention, but would proliferate only in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in the apses of Byzantine churches and in relief sculpture, owing in part to miraculous prototypes in Constantinople.<sup>132</sup> The portrait type would also become popular in the minor arts, especially pectoral cross reliquaries.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> At the Pharos chapel of the Great Palace (864), the church of Blachernai, and the Chrysotriklinos of the Great Palace. On the Pharos chapel: Photios, *Homiliai*, ed. V. Laourdas (Thessalonike, 1959), 102; C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: sources and documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972), 186; R. Jenkins and C. Mango, "The Date and Significance of the Tenth Homily of Photius," *DOP* 9/10 (1956) 123-40. On the church of Blachernai: Constantine VII Porphyrogennitos, *De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae*, ed. J. J. Reiske, vol. 1 (1829), book 2, ch. 12, 555.8-10; N. P. Ševčenko, "Virgin Blachernitissa," in *ODB*, vol. 3, 2170-1. On the Chrysotriklinos: B. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 2006), 28.

<sup>133</sup> B. Pitarakis, "À propos de la Vierge orante au Christ-Enfant (XIe-XIIe siècles): l'émergence d'un culte," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 48 (2000) 45-58; *Les croix-reliquaires pectorales byzantines en bronze* (Paris, 2006).

The apse mosaic at Livadia remains one of the few pre-iconoclastic mosaics of the orant Virgin, alongside two papal commissions in Rome. In the chapel of S. Venanzio in Laterano (642-50), the Virgin stands frontally with her arms outstretched at the center of the apse between sixteen saints and papal donors extending from the apse conch to the east wall (Fig. 3.37).<sup>134</sup> Busts of Christ and two angels emerge from the clouds above her. Another mosaic in the Oratory of Pope John VII (705-7) depicted the orant Virgin as Queen of Heaven on the main wall above the altar, surrounded by seven Christological scenes, with the kneeling pope before her (Fig. 3.38).<sup>135</sup> This panel is now incorporated into the decoration of the Monastery of San Marco in Florence. The place of the orant Virgin in pre-iconoclastic apse decoration is also established in the painted apses of Egypt, Georgia, and possibly Cappadocia. In chapels seventeen and room twenty of the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit, the orant Virgin appears in the lower zone of the apse in a scene of the Ascension/Second Coming, flanked by apostles below the representation of the divine Christ (Figs. 3.39-40).<sup>136</sup> In chapel forty-six, the Virgin keeps her body and arms frontal, but turns her head away from the vision, unable to bear its brightness like the three apostles at the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor.<sup>137</sup> The wall paintings at Bawit are not securely dated, but may be located between the second half of the sixth and the eighth centuries. Other double-zoned compositions are found at C'romi

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<sup>134</sup> C. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1960), 144-5. G. Matthaie, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma* (Rome, 1967), 191-8. G. Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West: Decoration, Function and Patronage* (Toronto, 2003), 212-30.

<sup>135</sup> P. Nordhagen, "The Mosaics of John VII (705-707 A.D.): The Mosaic Fragments and Their Technique," *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 2 (1965) 121-66. Matthaie, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma*, 215-24.

<sup>136</sup> J. Clédat, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouit*, vol. I:2 (Cairo, 1906), 73-85, pls. 40-2. J. Maspero, *Fouilles exécutées à Baouit* (Cairo, 1931), 31-2, pls. 31-3.

<sup>137</sup> A. Grabar, *Martyrium: recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1946), 220-1, pl. 56:2.

in Georgia, dated to the seventh century, and Maziköy in Cappadocia, dated roughly between the seventh and the ninth centuries. At C'romi, the Virgin stands orant in front of a curtain between two columns, outside of which stand Peter and Paul among other poorly-preserved apostles (Fig. 3.41). In the apse conch above, decorated in mosaic, a standing Christ gestures with his right hand and holds a scroll in his left, while angels approach on either side.<sup>138</sup> At Maziköy, the orant Virgin is inscribed “Hagia Theotokos” between John the Baptist and select apostles below a standing Christ.<sup>139</sup>

Soon after iconoclasm, representations of the orant Virgin would return to the space of the apse. The first documented example is the lost mosaic of the Pharos chapel in the Great Palace (864), described in the tenth homily of Photios, in which the Virgin is said to be “stretching out her stainless arms on our behalf and winning for the emperor [Michael III] safety and exploits against the foes.”<sup>140</sup> The orant Virgin is also depicted in the apse mosaics of four churches in Kiev, ranging in date from the late tenth to the early twelfth century, including the well-known church of St. Sophia (1037-46) (Fig. 3.42), along with the Katholikon at Nea Moni on Chios (1042-55), St. Sophia in Novgorod (1108), and the cathedral of Cefalù in Sicily, below the imposing bust of Christ Pantokrator (mid-twelfth century).<sup>141</sup> In painted apses of the middle and late Byzantine periods, the orant Virgin appears in the south chapel of the cave church of Eski Baca

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<sup>138</sup> Z. Sxirt'laze, “À propos du décor absidal de C'romi,” *Revue des études Géorgiennes et Caucasiennes* 6-7 (1990-1) 163-83.

<sup>139</sup> C. Jolivet-Lévy, “Peintures byzantines inédites de Cappadoce,” *Archéologia* 229 (1987) 36-46, repr. in *Études Cappadociennes* (London, 2002), 93-115, esp. 93-6, fig. 2; *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce: le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords* (Paris, 1991), 177-8, pls. 12, 106:2.

<sup>140</sup> Photios, *Homiliai*, ed. V. Laourdas (Thessalonike, 1959), 102. English trans. in C. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 186. R. Jenkins and C. Mango, “The Date and Significance of the Tenth Homily of Photius,” *DOP* 9/10 (1956) 123-40.

<sup>141</sup> V. Lazarev, *Old Russian Murals and Mosaics: from the 11th to the 16th Century* (London, 1966). D. Mouriki, *The Mosaics of Nea Moni on Chios*, 2 vols. (Athens, 1985), 107-9.

Kilisesi in Cappadocia (tenth century);<sup>142</sup> in the Panagia ton Chalkeon in Thessalonike (1028);<sup>143</sup> in the eleventh- and fourteenth-century phases of St. Nicholas tes Stegis in Cyprus;<sup>144</sup> and in several fourteenth-century churches in Greece and Serbia. In the eleventh century and later, the figure of the orant Virgin would become associated with the types of the Virgin *Blachernitissa*, *Episkepsis*, and *Platytera*, in which a medallion of Christ appears before her breast.<sup>145</sup> An icon of this type, without the epithet, comes from the Phaneromeni church in Nicosia and is now exhibited in the Byzantine Museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Cultural Centre (Fig. 3.43). Treasured as one of the earliest icons in Cyprus, it is often dated to the late eighth or early ninth century, but the type is otherwise unknown in Cyprus before the twelfth century.<sup>146</sup> The orant Virgin with a roundel of Christ appears for the first time in a lunette above the entrance to the naos in the narthex of the church of the Panagia Phorbiotissa at Asinou (1105/6).<sup>147</sup> Later, the portrait type is found in the twelfth-century apses of the church of the Holy Apostles at

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<sup>142</sup> J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, "L'église rupestre dite Eski Baca Kilisesi et la place de la Vierge dans les absides cappadociennes," *JÖB* 21 (1972) 163-78.

<sup>143</sup> K. Papadopoulos, *Die Wandmalereien des 11. Jahrhunderts in der Kirche Panagia ton Chalkeon in Thessaloniki* (Graz, 1966), 26-8, 81-3, pl. 5.

<sup>144</sup> A. and J. Stylianou, *Painted Churches of Cyprus*, 54-9, 71.

<sup>145</sup> The epithets may also be associated with different image types. Note that the Virgin first appears with the epithet *Blachernitissa* without the Christ Child on coins of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-55): P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and the Whittemore Collection*, vol. 3:2 (Washington, DC, 1973), 747, pl. 59, 8.a.1.

<sup>146</sup> A. Papageorghiou, *Icons of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1992), 6-8, fig. 1. Cat. no. 2 in S. Sophocleous, *Icons of Cyprus: 7th-20th century* (Nicosia, 1994), 76. The early date is challenged by A. Carr, Review of Sophocleous, *Icons of Cyprus*, in *Speculum* 71:4 (1996) 1024-7. A gold coin of the empresses Zoe and Theodora from 1042 represents the earliest dated appearance of the orant Virgin with a roundel of Christ at her breast: Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 3:1, 171-4; vol. 3:2, 731-2. According to the evidence of seals, the type spread quickly in the last quarter of the eleventh century: Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, 145-63. Moreover, if the inscription MP ΘΥ is original, the icon is unlikely to date before the tenth century: I. Kalavrezou, "Images of the Mother: When the Virgin Mary Became 'Meter Theou,'" *DOP* 44 (1990) 165-72.

<sup>147</sup> A. and J. Stylianou, *Painted Churches of Cyprus*, 134. The correct date for the panel is cited in A. Carr and A. Nicolaidis, eds., *Asinou Across Time: Studies in the Architecture and Murals of the Panagia Phorbiotissa, Cyprus* (Washington, DC, 2012), 93.

Perachorio and church of the Virgin at Trikomo, and in the thirteenth-century apse at Lysi.<sup>148</sup>

Although the monumental ecclesiastical works are better known, the iconographic type of the orant Virgin first appears in the early Christian catacombs of Rome and in gold glass. Here, the Virgin Mary is one of many figures, including saints and donors, to be shown in the orant pose, emblematic of piety. Identification remains difficult before the emergence of conventional portrait types and in the absence of inscriptions. An example in gold glass in the Vatican Museums represents a female orant identified as MARA, standing between two trees and two scrolls.<sup>149</sup> Another glass object from the Cemetery of S. Agnese in Rome portrays the orant Virgin between Peter and Paul with each of the names inscribed.<sup>150</sup> While a number of female orants adorn the catacombs of Rome, most cannot be positively identified as Mary and likely depict the deceased or another female saint. Nevertheless, the lunette of the arcosolium in chamber five of the Catacombs of the Cimitero Maggiore depicts a half-length orant Virgin with the Christ Child, flanked on either side by the chi-rho (Fig. 3.44). The paintings of the catacomb have been dated to the fourth century.<sup>151</sup>

While the earliest Christian art preserves relatively few portraits of the Virgin Mary, the decision of the Council of Ephesus in 431 elevated the status of the Virgin and stimulated the development of Marian imagery. As iconic representations of the Virgin became more frequent in the course of the sixth century, so too did the type of the orant

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<sup>148</sup> A. and J. Stylianou, *Painted Churches of Cyprus*, 422, 488, 492. Megaw and Hawkins, "Church of the Holy Apostles at Perachorio," 297-300, fig. 12. A. Carr and L. Morrocco, *A Byzantine Masterpiece Recovered: The Thirteenth-Century Murals of Lysi, Cyprus* (Austin, 1991), 43-7.

<sup>149</sup> Cat. no. 33 in C. R. Morey, *The Gold-Glass Collection of the Vatican Library: with additional catalogues of other gold-glass collections* (Vatican City, 1959), 9, pl. 5.

<sup>150</sup> R. Garrucci, *Storia della arte cristiana nei primi otto secoli della chiesa*, vol. 3 (Prato, 1876), 143, pl. 178.

<sup>151</sup> A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins* (Princeton, 1968), 76, fig. 13.



Virgin. In addition to the monumental examples cited above, the figure appears on a number of liturgical and domestic objects from the late sixth and early seventh centuries.<sup>152</sup> Among the best dated examples are two silver hexagonal censers from Constantinople with imperial stamps from the reign of the emperor Maurice (582-602).<sup>153</sup> In both the New York and Munich censers, the orant Virgin is one of six figures, each occupying a single side beneath a rounded arch (Figs. 3.45-6). She is flanked by archangels and located opposite Christ, who is flanked by Peter and Paul. Other silver objects with the orant Virgin include an oil flask with the Virgin, Christ, and military saints from the Hama Treasure, now in the Walters Art Museum (mid to late sixth century) (6.7);<sup>154</sup> a chalice with the Virgin between deacon and military saints, opposite Christ between archangels, from the Phela Treasure, now in the Abegg Stiftung Museum (sixth to seventh century) (6.8);<sup>155</sup> and a set of silver-gilt chalices and censers with the Virgin among various holy figures from the Attarouthi treasure, displayed in the Metropolitan Museum (late sixth to early seventh century) (Fig. 3.47).<sup>156</sup> Likewise, a bronze processional cross of the sixth or seventh century from Syria-Palestine represents the orant Virgin at the crossing flanked by flying angels on the horizontal arms (Fig. 3.48).<sup>157</sup> Above her, a standing Christ gestures with his right hand and holds a book with

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<sup>152</sup> For a more comprehensive treatment of these objects, see my chapter 6.2.

<sup>153</sup> Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, acc. no. 1985.123 and Bayerisches Museum, Munich, acc. no. 65.46. D. Piguet-Panayotova, "Three Hexagonal Decorated Silver Censers and Their Artistic Environment," *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 49 (1998) 7-34. On the New York censer: cat. no. 85 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore, 1986), 256-7.

<sup>154</sup> Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, acc. no. 57.639. Cat. no. 15 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 108-11.

<sup>155</sup> Abegg Stiftung, Bern, acc. no. 8.38.63. Cat. no. 62 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 232-3. Cat. no. 5 in E. Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Treasures* (Bern, 1974), 17-23, pls. 8-10.

<sup>156</sup> Metropolitan Museum, acc. nos. 1986.3.1-15. The Virgin appears on eight of ten chalices, whenever Christ appears, and on one of three censers: D. Piguet-Panayotova, "The Attarouthi Chalices," *Mitteilungen zur spätantiken Archäologie und Byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte* (2009) 9-47 with figs.

<sup>157</sup> Cat. no. 8 in J. Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses* (Washington, DC, 1994), 88-9.

his left. Similar groups of figures surround the orant Virgin on two gold pectoral crosses in London and Palermo; the former has been attributed to the late sixth or seventh century and the latter to the seventh or eighth century (Fig. 3.49, 2.78).<sup>158</sup> In the Palermo cross, the Virgin is identified as Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ. Without the other holy figures, the Virgin Mary appears in bust form with her hands raised on the medallion of a gold bracelet in the British Museum (c. 600), produced in the Eastern Mediterranean (Fig. 3.50).<sup>159</sup> She is accompanied only by peacocks and swans on the bracelet's openwork hoop.

At the same time, the iconographic type of the orant Virgin was incorporated into scenes of the Ascension of Christ. Despite her absence from biblical accounts, the Virgin is often placed at the center of the apostles to serve as a reminder of the Incarnation in the event that signifies the end of Christ's life on earth. The Ascension narrative is found in a wide variety of media, although it is perhaps best suited to the space of the apse, which is easily divided into registers and accommodates multiple figures.<sup>160</sup> The Coptic double-zoned apses, for example at Bawit (Figs. 3.39-40), give prominence to the Virgin Mary, as does the Ascension miniature (fol. 13b) of the Rabbula Gospels, dated to the sixth century, but no longer securely to 586 (Fig. 3.51).<sup>161</sup> Here, the figure of the orant Virgin occupies a large part of the lower register, as two angels separate her from the crowd of apostles and the hand of God emerges from the tetramorph above her. The Virgin is likewise the largest figure in a scene of the Ascension on the upper right panel of the

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<sup>158</sup> Cat. no. 287 in O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography of the British Museum* (London, 1901), 47, pl. IV. Pitarakis, *Les croix-reliquaires pectorales byzantines en bronze*, 32-3, 78, fig. 14. Cat. no. 229 in G. Cavallo, *I Bizantini in Italia* (Milan, 1982), 415, fig. 301.

<sup>159</sup> Cat. no. 99 in D. Buckton, ed., *Byzantium: Treasures of Art and Culture from British Collections* (London, 1994), 95-6. Cat. no. 11 in Vassilaki, *Mother of God: Representations*, 292.

<sup>160</sup> On the Ascension apses: Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 95-112; A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, vol. 2, 207-34.

<sup>161</sup> M. Bernabò, ed., *Il Tetravangelo di Rabbula: Firenze, Biblioteca medicea laurenziana, Plut. 1.56: l'illustrazione del Nuovo Testamento nella Siria del VI secolo* (Rome, 2008).

painted reliquary of the Sancta Sanctorum in Rome, which has been dated to the late sixth or early seventh century (Fig. 3.52).<sup>162</sup> Related objects, like the lead ampullae distributed from multiple sites in the Holy Land, also incorporate the Ascension narrative. Examples preserved in the cathedrals of Monza and Bobbio in Italy represent the Ascension on the reverse, either as a single scene or as one of seven scenes in miniature.<sup>163</sup> Of the twelve ampullae that illustrate the Ascension, six of them depict the Virgin Mary *en face* and orant (Fig. 3.53).<sup>164</sup> Five ampullae show her in profile with her arms upraised (Fig. 3.54), while only one excludes her from the scene entirely.<sup>165</sup>

The iconographic type of the orant Virgin without the Christ Child is known from the earliest Christian art, but remained rare until the sixth century and proliferated only after iconoclasm, when it was selected as an attractive model for the space of the apse, alongside the ever-popular enthroned Virgin and Child. In apse decoration, the closest dated parallel for the mosaic at Livadia prior to the mid-seventh century is the apse mosaic of the Chapel of S. Venanzio in Laterano (642-50). Though dated broadly, the apse paintings at C'romi in Georgia (seventh century), Maziköy in Cappadocia (seventh to ninth century), and Bawit in Egypt (second half of the sixth to eighth centuries) suggest a date no earlier than the second half of the sixth century. More precise dates are

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<sup>162</sup> K. Weitzmann, "'Loca Sancta' and the Representational Arts of Palestine," *DOP* 28 (1974) 31-55. C. R. Morey, "The Painted Panel from the Sancta Sanctorum," in *Festschrift zum sechzigsten Geburtstag von Paul Clemen, 31. Oktober 1926*, ed. W. Worringer, H. Reiners, and L. Seligmann (Bonn, 1926), 151-67.

<sup>163</sup> A. Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte (Monza-Bobbio)* (Paris, 1958). Ascension as a single scene: Monza 1, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16 and Bobbio 13, 14, 20. As one of seven scenes: Monza 2 and Bobbio 18, 19.

<sup>164</sup> Monza 1, 2, 10, 11 and Bobbio 14, 20.

<sup>165</sup> In profile: Monza 14, 15, 16 and Bobbio 13, 19. The figures of Bobbio 18 are poorly distinguished, but there are only twelve. The Ascension with the profile type of the Virgin Mary, in which her hands are sometimes covered by her garment, was originally depicted in a sixth-century icon at Mount Sinai: cat. no. B.10 in K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons* (Princeton, 1976), 31-2, pls. 13, 55-6. Other examples in jewelry include a sixth- or seventh-century gold and niello ring at the Walters Art Museum (acc. no. 45.15) and a gold pendant (c. 600) at the British Museum: C. Entwistle, "Some Notes on Two Late-Antique Gold Pendants at the British Museum," in *Image, Craft and the Classical World: Essays in Honour of Donald Bailey and Catherine Johns*, ed. N. Crummy (Montagnac, 2005), 267-75.

offered by the silver censers in New York and Munich (582-602). Many other objects in the categories of liturgical, domestic, and pilgrimage arts are believed to date to the years around 600, including the gold bracelet in the British Museum with the solitary orant Virgin, eight chalices and one censer from the Attarouthi treasure, the painted lid of the Sancta Sanctorum reliquary, and the Monza and Bobbio ampullae. The Ascension miniature of the Rabbula Gospels may also have been produced in or shortly before 586, but this is no longer certain. In short, few examples of the orant Virgin date before the middle of the sixth century, while firmly dated examples are concentrated in the last quarter of the sixth century and first half of the seventh century.

#### *6d. Conclusion*

In 1961, a very limited excavation in the sanctuary of the church at Livadia demonstrated that the apse and its mosaic belonged to an earlier church incorporated into the small medieval building. While the later cruciform church has been dated between the tenth and twelfth centuries, there are few indications of the date of the early church apart from the apse mosaic. Two posts from an early Christian chancel screen are immured in the springings of the medieval vault and stone column shafts or drums could once be observed on the site.

As for the mosaic, a conservative date range in the last quarter of the sixth century and first half of the seventh century is suggested by analysis of the rising scale pattern and the iconographic type of the orant Virgin, restricted by a *terminus ante quem* drawn from the initial and most severe of the Arab invasions in 649 and 653/4. After this period, the mosaic industry in Cyprus appears to have collapsed. At least seventeen sites

preserve evidence of a vibrant wall mosaic industry prior to the middle of the seventh century, whereas the tiny crosses in the domes of St. Barnabas, made of recycled tesserae, represent the only medieval example of the technique.

The results of art historical analysis on the fragmentary apse mosaic at Livadia are promising, but one hopes for a political resolution that will permit the excavation of the church at some time in the future. Only new evidence brought to light by excavation and a proper archaeological study of the monument could help to bridge the very large gaps in our understanding of the church and its decoration.

PART I:  
CONCLUSION

With a full appreciation of the difficulties of dating early Christian mosaics in the absence of epigraphic, textual, and even archaeological evidence, and of the wide disagreement among scholars in relation to many monumental programs of the Eastern Mediterranean, I have maintained a conservative approach to dating the apse mosaics of Cyprus. My examination of the individual motifs and architectural context of the mosaics has led to the following conclusions with respect to date: the apse mosaic at Lythrankomi is most likely dated to the first half of the sixth century, the apse mosaic at Kiti is most likely dated to the second half of the sixth century, and the apse mosaic at Livadia is most likely dated to the last quarter of the sixth century or first half of the seventh century. Given the nature of the evidence, none of the mosaics can be dated more precisely than within one-half century, and in the case of Livadia a limited number of motifs resulted in a date range of three-quarters of a century, capped only by the lack of evidence for wall mosaics in Cyprus after the middle of the seventh century. While none of these dates represents a great departure from the dates proposed by Megaw and Hawkins and others, I have advocated a broader date range than is usually cited for the mosaics of Lythrankomi and Livadia. Also, in the only article devoted to the group of apse mosaics, Megaw identified a sequence in their production.<sup>1</sup> Although he is probably correct, it remains a possibility that the apse mosaic at Livadia is roughly contemporary with the apse mosaic at Kiti, or was even created a few years earlier.

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<sup>1</sup> A. H. S. Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," *Corso di cultura sull'arte Ravennate e Bizantina* 32 (1985) 173-98.

In determining the dates of the apse mosaics, the first three chapters identified a range of iconographic parallels for the mosaics of Cyprus. That many of these parallels, especially for the mosaics of Lythrankomi and Kiti, come from Ravenna is a reflection of the quantity and condition of survivals in that city compared to the generally poor situation in the Eastern Mediterranean. The churches of Ravenna are also well dated, making them easier to use for the purposes of dating than the mosaics of Thessalonike or the paintings of Bawit, for example. Likewise, one of the most significant parallels for the apse mosaic at Livadia, the orant Virgin in the chapel of S. Venanzio, is located in Rome. If more material had survived in the Eastern Mediterranean, stronger parallels would surely be found closer to the island of Cyprus, especially in Syria-Palestine. So much is clear from similarities with the floor mosaics of Jordan, often dated by inscriptions, and liturgical objects discovered in Syria, occasionally dated by imperial stamps. While many important parallels survive in Egypt, almost none of its monuments or objects are securely dated. Nevertheless, the correspondences with Ravenna and Rome also reveal a great deal of consistency in works of art across a large region in the sixth and early seventh centuries. But despite arguments to the contrary, there is little evidence for attributing this consistency to the dominant influence of Constantinople.<sup>2</sup>

While a full account of the materials of the Kiti and Livadia mosaics is not available, a few observations can be made on the materials available to and selected by the mosaicists. First, there is ample use of gold tesserae in the backgrounds and in the haloes of all three apse mosaics, in contrast to the white and yellow stone background and

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<sup>2</sup> A. H. S. Megaw, "Byzantine Architecture and Decoration in Cyprus: Metropolitan or Provincial?" *DOP* 28 (1974) 57-88, esp. 73-6; A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins, *The Church of the Panagia Kanakariá at Lythrankomi: Its Mosaics and Frescoes* (Washington, DC, 1977), 140-5; A. Foulías, "Το ψηφιδωτό της Αψίδας στην Παναγία Αγγελόκτιστη Κιτίου," *Επετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετών Ιεράς Μονής Κύκκου* 8 (2008) 269-334, esp. 318-19.

single blue halo of the mosaics in the north chapel at Kourion. Silver also appears in the apse mosaics, but is limited to the haloes of the archangels at Lythrankomi and Kiti and to certain accents on the haloes, garments, and footstools of other figures. Remarkably, not one of the apse mosaics contains mother-of-pearl. In the fifth century, the nave and baptistery of the episcopal church at Kourion employed large quantities of mother-of-pearl in an aniconic program.<sup>3</sup> All of the apse mosaics include painted marble or stone, in red at Lythrankomi and Livadia, and in red, yellow, brown, and black at Kiti, where it supplements glass in all four colors. One major difference between the mosaics is the apparent absence of red and orange glass at Livadia. A fair amount of dark red glass and a small amount of orange glass were used at Lythrankomi, while small amounts of red and orange glass were used at Kiti. It is possible, however, that red or orange glass was limited to the lost faces at Livadia. In the chapel at Kourion, a few cubes of orange glass appear only in the partially preserved face of an angel. While the supply of red and orange glass was restricted across the Mediterranean, the Cypriot material suggests either that red and orange glass became increasingly rare over time or that modest patrons responsible for the church at Livadia or the chapel at Kourion did not have the means of securing these materials. Of course, these ideas are not mutually exclusive and both might describe the situation in Cyprus. The absence of gold and silver tesserae at Kourion may also suggest that subsidiary spaces were not embellished with the same quality of materials as the more important areas of the church. In the greater episcopal complex, mother-of-pearl adorned the fifth-century nave and baptistery, while gold

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<sup>3</sup> But apparently no gold tesserae: A. H. S. Megaw et al., *Kourion: Excavations in the Episcopal Precinct* (Washington, DC, 2007), 108, 163, 557-8.



tesserae adorned the later sixth-century apse.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, in the Basilica of Eufrasius at Poreč, the side apses are comprised of much poorer materials than the main apse.<sup>5</sup>

In terms of technique, all three of the apse mosaics demonstrate an interest in light and optical effects: from the rippling blue mandorla, white glow of the apostles, and tilted gold tesserae of the upper east wall at Lythrankomi; to the radiating cross, translucent orbs, secondary silhouettes, and projecting footstool at Kiti; to the scaled gold background and projecting footstool at Livadia. An interest in materials is also exhibited in the carved ivory throne and silk and embroidery cushion at Lythrankomi and in the wooden cross of the cross-halo and glass orbs at Kiti. Fewer opportunities for imitating or exploiting materials exist in the restricted iconography of the apse mosaic at Livadia. The attention to light, optical effects, and materials is not unique to Cyprus, but fundamental to Byzantine aesthetics. Other techniques of modeling faces, for example the V-shaped cheeks at Lythrankomi and Kiti, and of transitioning from one color to another, through dots and dashes, are common elsewhere. One obvious development in the production of the mosaics is the application of very small tesserae to the faces and areas of flesh at Kiti and Livadia, but not at Lythrankomi, the earliest of the three mosaics. Although the tesserae used in faces are still proportionally smaller, they do not create the same subtle modeling and contribute to a more impressionistic style, as Megaw and Hawkins observed. One technique that may be unique to Cyprus, at least in terms of its emphasis and consistency, is the appearance of sharp black outlines at the edges of the garments, especially in the hemlines at Lythrankomi and Kiti and in the necklines at

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<sup>4</sup> Megaw, *Kourion: Excavations*, 165, 557-8.

<sup>5</sup> However, the three apses at Poreč were part of a single campaign, where the mosaicists faced a shortage of materials: A. Terry and H. Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč* (University Park, PA, 2007), 78-82.

Lythrankomi. At Kiti, the black hemlines emphasize the movement of the drapery and the figures: the archangels, who move swiftly towards the Virgin and Child, and the Virgin, who moves towards the sanctuary itself. At Livadia, a black outline defines only the lower edge of the mantle. Although the different styles of the mosaics do not point to a single local workshop, the presence of wall and vault mosaics at at least seventeen surviving sites from the fifth to the early seventh centuries suggests that the island was capable of sustaining its own workshops, at least until the middle of the seventh century.<sup>6</sup>

The most obvious similarity between the apse mosaics of Cyprus is not technical but iconographic. The centrality of the Virgin Mary will be explored in part two of the dissertation in light of three themes: liturgy and sacred space, metaphor, and intercession.

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<sup>6</sup> A. H. S. Megaw, "Interior Decoration in Early Christian Cyprus," in *XVe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines, Rapports et Co-rapports*, vol. 5, *Chypre dans le monde byzantin* (Athens, 1976), 3-29.

PART II:  
THE APSE MOSAICS IN CONTEXT

CHAPTER 4  
SACRED SPACE AND LITURGY

A coherent sanctuary program influenced directly by the liturgy did not emerge in Byzantium until the eleventh or twelfth century. The shift from imperial to ecclesiastical ceremonial as a point of departure for Christian iconography was first explored by Christopher Walter.<sup>1</sup> A more recent and more focused study by Sharon Gerstel describes the development of apse decoration in Byzantine Macedonia between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, which coincides with the exclusion of the mysteries from the eyes of the laity and the increasing opacity of the sanctuary screen.<sup>2</sup> The clergy is identified as the primary audience for the new iconography, comprised of bishops as concelebrants in the lower zone, converging on the *hetoimasia* (prepared throne), the sacrificial altar, or the *melismos* (sacrificed Christ), the Communion of the Apostles in the middle zone, and the mandylion, which appears in a variety of locations. These themes are demonstrably inspired by liturgical rites and prayers, while certain iconographic details may derive from liturgical commentary and theological controversy. Only the uppermost zones of the sanctuary program, including the apse conch with an image of the Virgin or Virgin and Child, and in some cases an upper middle zone occupied by the Communion of the Apostles can still be seen above the sanctuary screen. The images of the Virgin in the apse, along with the icons of the screen, piers, and lower walls of the nave, and feast

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<sup>1</sup> C. Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church* (London, 1982). That imperial ceremonial had nothing to do with early Christian iconography is argued polemically by T. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton, 1993). Of course, the alternative sources explored by Mathews also contributed to the development of Christian art.

<sup>2</sup> S. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary* (Seattle, 1999).

scenes of the nave become the new focus of the congregation and are redesigned to serve new didactic and devotional functions.

In contrast, the decoration of the early Byzantine sanctuary was more allusive with respect to the liturgy. One finds reflections of the liturgy rather than explicit liturgical themes. The traditional subject of the Communion of the Apostles, for example, was restricted to liturgical objects, like the Riha and Stuma patens (Fig. 4.1),<sup>3</sup> and to manuscripts, like the Rossano (fols. 3v-4) and Rabbula Gospels (fol. 11v).<sup>4</sup> There are few programs where the influence of the liturgy is clear. The mosaics of Justinian and Theodora in the chancel of San Vitale in Ravenna (540-7/8) may illustrate their participation in the First Entrance, the entrance of the gifts and the Word (Fig. 4.2).<sup>5</sup> Likewise, the non-figural mosaics of the sanctuary of the Monastery of Mar Samuel, Mar Simeon, and Mar Gabriel at Kartmin in southeastern Turkey (c. 512) include two altars prepared with liturgical vessels and covered by domed ciboria (Fig. 4.3).<sup>6</sup> More often the liturgy is signaled by Old Testament types, like the Sacrifice of Isaac at San Vitale, or the visions of the prophets to be considered below. In many smaller churches, the apse conch was the only part of the sanctuary to receive figural decoration. Because the apse remained the visual focus of the church, unobstructed by a low barrier or transparent

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<sup>3</sup> Cat. nos. 34-5 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore, 1986), 159-70.

<sup>4</sup> G. Cavallo, J. Gribomont, W. Loerke, eds., *Codex Purpureus Rossanensis*, 2 vols. (Rome-Graz, 1985-7). J. Leroy, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient* (Paris, 1965), 149, 162, pl. 30.1.

<sup>5</sup> T. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park, PA, 1971), 146-7. G. Stričević, "Iconografia dei mosaici imperiale a San Vitale," *Felix Ravenna* 80 (1959) 5-27; "Sur le problème de l'iconographie des mosaïques impériales de Saint-Vital," *Felix Ravenna* 85 (1962) 80-100. A. Grabar, "Quel est le sens de l'offrande de Justinien et de Théodora sur les mosaïques de Saint-Vital?" *Felix Ravenna* 81 (1960) 63-77. Alternatively, Justinian and Theodora may not be shown in a church, but in the Great Palace as an attribute of imperial power: H. Maguire, "The Empress and the Virgin On Display in Sixth-Century Art," in *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, London 21-26 August 2006*, vol. I: *Plenary Papers* (Aldershot, 2006), 379-411, esp. 383-8.

<sup>6</sup> E. Hawkins and M. Mundell, "The Mosaics of the Monastery of Mar Samuel, Mar Simeon, and Mar Gabriel near Kartmin," *DOP* 27 (1973) 279-96.

screen, apse decoration in this period was more inclusive of the laity, while it delineated a sacred space that only the clergy could enter.<sup>7</sup> The need to demonstrate the Incarnation of Christ and to communicate Christian doctrine, particularly in response to theological disputes, is one of the primary functions of early Christian apse decoration, but the scholarly emphasis on theology has tended to obscure other important functions.<sup>8</sup> The liturgical significance of apse decoration has been recognized only in relation to certain themes, and not at all in relation to the mosaics of Lythrankomi, Kiti, and Livadia.

The present chapter is divided into three sections. The first section explores the apse as a site of representation and draws on a variety of texts – hymns on the dedication of churches, liturgical and hagiographic sources – to demonstrate the perception of the apse as a locus of divine presence. The second section considers the notion of presence in relation to the Virgin Mary, who features prominently in each of the Cypriot mosaics. Two pictorial devices, the projecting footstool and the mandorla, create alternative visions of the Virgin inspired in part by the liturgy. The final section focuses on the peculiar iconography of the archangels at Kiti, the wings of peacock feathers, shaped by the Roman symbolism of the peacock, the visions of the prophets, and liturgical invocations of angels. Because no Cypriot liturgy for the period survives, the mosaics

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<sup>7</sup> The visibility of the early Christian apse program is now well established. Only in the late Byzantine period was the view of the sanctuary blocked by the *iconostasis*, following a gradual process of exclusion from the eleventh century. See Mathews, *Early Churches of Constantinople*, 162-71; C. Walter, “The Origins of the Iconostasis,” *Eastern Churches Review* 3 (1971) 251-67; A. W. Epstein, “The Middle Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier: Templon or Iconostasis?” *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 134 (1981) 1-28; Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries*, 6-10.

<sup>8</sup> C. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1960). R. Cormack, “The Mother of God in Apse Mosaics,” in *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. M. Vassilaki (Milan, 2000), 91-105. B. Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon: An Historical Perspective of the Apse as a Space for Images* (Wiesbaden, 2010).

must be considered in light of Constantinopolitan and other Eastern texts, with the expectation of some regional variation.

### 1. *The Apse*

The apse as a site of representation is the subject of a new book by Beat Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon: An Historical Perspective of the Apse as a Space for Images*, which originated as a series of lectures at the Medieval Institute of the University of Notre Dame (U.S.A.) in 2006 and built on an article he published in German in 2007.<sup>9</sup> The development of apse decoration is seen in the context of early Christian image debates, and in particular the problem of the Second Commandment prohibition: “You shall not make for yourselves an idol (εἶδωλον) or any likeness (ὁμοίωμα) that is in heaven above or in the earth below or in the waters under the earth: You shall not bow down to them or worship them.” Brenk traces the evolution of the Christian apse from Roman temples and imperial cult rooms, which housed the cult statue of the pagan god or goddess, and Roman baths and nymphaea, which may have contained statuary or wall mosaics, or both. In temples and cult rooms, the apse wall was often decorated with marble facing or *opus sectile* (and presumably also painting in imitation marble) and the vault was enhanced with coffers, fluting, or stucco in order to concentrate focus on the cult statue. Evidence of figural wall painting is preserved in only two temples at Sabratha and Luxor from the late second and late third centuries respectively. Only one example of wall mosaic, its subject unknown, has been identified in the library of the Asklepeion at Pergamon, associated with a cult statue of the emperor Hadrian. By contrast the apses

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<sup>9</sup> Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon*; “Zur Apsis als Bildort,” in *The Material and the Ideal: Essays in Medieval Art and Archaeology in Honour of Jean-Michel Spieser*, ed. A. Cutler and A. Papaconstantinou (Leiden, 2007), 15-29.

of Roman baths and nymphaea were often decorated with wall mosaics portraying aquatic scenes associated with prosperity and well-being. The continuity of watery themes in the apses of Christian churches is associated with the adoption of the two-dimensional medium from Roman secular contexts, and with a preference for aniconic or symbolic imagery in response to the Second Commandment.<sup>10</sup> Brenk's thesis is complicated by a lack of evidence for early programs and proposed reconstructions of major monuments, including the Lateran church, Old St. Peter's, S. Maria Maggiore, Nola-Cimitile, and Fundi. Nevertheless, it remains plausible that religious figural imagery was avoided in the main apse of the church in some cases for its recent association with pagan cult statues, despite the existence of biblical cycles in the same churches.

Rooted in Roman religious and secular contexts, the early Christian apse continues to serve as a stage or a backdrop, now focused on the altar and the performance of the liturgy. However, the author denies any relationship between apse decoration and the liturgy, even with the introduction of iconic images of Christ and the Virgin Mary, which he considers in the last chapters of the book. Conceived in opposition to the pagan cult room, the early Christian sanctuary functioned not as the house of the divine, but as a place for priests. The association of divine presence with the space of the apse is believed to have been abolished along with the cult statue. Brenk cites as evidence the earliest figural apse mosaics in Italy, which show Christ seated among the apostles,

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<sup>10</sup> The imagery of nature is regarded as neutral and therefore easily adopted by Christians suspicious of figural imagery: Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon*, 13-29. However, an enduring ambivalence to nature is described by H. Maguire, "Christians, Pagans, and the Representation of Nature," in *Begegnung von Heidentum und Christentum im spätantiken Ägypten* (Riggisberg, 1993), 131-60; *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park, PA, 1987); "The Nile and the Rivers of Paradise," in *The Madaba Map Centenary, 1897-1997*, ed. M. Piccirillo and M. Alliata (Jerusalem, 1999), 179-84; *Nectar and Illusion: Nature in Byzantine Art and Literature* (New York, 2012), 11-34.



including the mosaics of S. Pudenziana in Rome and S. Aquilino in Milan, both dated c. 400 (Fig. 4.4).<sup>11</sup> These mosaics proposed an analogy between the apostles and the clergy, who were charged with communicating the Word of God.<sup>12</sup> An important transition is represented by the *fastigium* of the Church of St. John Lateran, a monumental bronze screen dividing the sanctuary from the nave, on top of which stood eighteen near life-sized silver statues given by the emperor Constantine.<sup>13</sup> In order to convey the authority of the clergy to the congregation, a scene of Christ flanked by twelve apostles faced the nave, while the priests gazed upon a scene of Christ enthroned in heaven flanked by four archangels. The arrangement of the *fastigium* emphasizes the division of the church and designates the apse as the seat of the clergy, although the use of three-dimensional sculpture remained controversial and was not repeated.<sup>14</sup> The Christian acceptance of two-dimensional painting and mosaic responded to the Second Commandment, interpreted narrowly as a proscription against making and worshiping idols, usually equated with three-dimensional sculpture.<sup>15</sup> In Brenk's analysis, the early Church

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<sup>11</sup> Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 130-2, 158-9. G. Matthaie, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma* (Rome, 1967), 55-76.

<sup>12</sup> Brenk notes that the semicircular apse would have had acoustic advantages that assisted them in this goal: Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon*, 53.

<sup>13</sup> According to the reconstruction by S. de Blaauw, "Das Fastigium der Lateranbasilika: Schöpferische Innovation, Unikat oder Paradigma?" in *Innovation in der Spätantike: Kolloquium Basel 6. und 7. Mai 1994*, ed. B. Brenk (Wiesbaden, 1996), 53-64; "Imperial Connotations in Roman Church Interiors: The Significance and Effect of the Lateran *Fastigium*," in *Imperial Art as Christian Art, Christian Art as Imperial Art: Expression and Meaning in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Justinian*, ed. J. Brandt and O. Steen (Rome, 2001), 137-46. The information on the *fastigium* comes from the *Liber Pontificalis*, as compiled in the sixth or seventh century: R. Davis, ed., *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis): The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715* (Liverpool, 1989), 16.

<sup>14</sup> There is some evidence that three-dimensional sculpture continued to be accepted in baptisteries. After Constantine set up silver statues of Christ, John the Baptist, seven stags, and a golden lamb in the Lateran baptistery, Innocent I (401/2-17) and Sixtus III (432-40) gave single silver stags to the baptisteries of Sts. Gervasius and Protasius and S. Maria Maggiore respectively: Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*, 18, 33, 37. See also P. Underwood, "The Fountain of Life in Manuscripts of the Gospels," *DOP* 5 (1950) 41-138, esp. 50-2.

<sup>15</sup> On the process by which the Second Commandment was superseded, see H. Kessler, "'Pictures Fertile with Truth': How Christians Managed to Make Images of God without Violating the Second Commandment," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 49/50 (1991-2) 53-65; "'Thou Shalt Paint the Likeness of Christ Himself': The Mosaic Prohibition as Provocation for Christian Images," *Jewish Art* 23 (1997)

dissolved the notion that divinity resided in the apse or sanctuary.<sup>16</sup> The iconic images of Christ, the Virgin Mary, saints, and angels that were produced in the fifth and sixth centuries are interpreted as strictly theological.<sup>17</sup>

Brenk is not alone in favoring a theological interpretation. Yet apse decoration responds to the liturgy and the perception of the sanctuary as a special location for the divine, even as it communicates a pointed theological message. In a study of the lost apse mosaic of the Church of the Dormition at Nicaea, Charles Barber makes it clear that theology and liturgy cannot be separated.<sup>18</sup> Patristic commentators interpret the Eucharist in theological terms and the space of the apse in Eucharistic *and* theological terms. The earliest churches of Rome and Italy, on which Brenk focuses, may well present a special case, particularly in the fourth and fifth centuries with predominantly aniconic and apostolic themes. However, the apse decoration that appears in the Eastern Mediterranean in the sixth and seventh centuries, as well as in Italy, paints a very different picture.<sup>19</sup> This picture is consistent with themes developed in literature beginning in the early fourth century, revealing some ambivalence on the part of early Christians. An absolute departure from pagan practice cannot be upheld when one

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124-39, repr. in H. Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia, 2000), 29-52.

<sup>16</sup> Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon*, 53.

<sup>17</sup> Additional functions are admitted when apse mosaics double as ex-votos: Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon*, 92-4. See also H. Maguire, "Eufrosius and Friends: On Names and Their Absence in Byzantine Art," in *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, ed. L. James (Cambridge, 2007), 139-60; A. M. Yasin, "Making Use of Paradise: Church Benefactors, Heavenly Visions, and the Late Antique Commemorative Imagination," in *Looking Beyond: Visions, Dreams, and Insights in Medieval Art and History*, ed. C. Hourihane (Princeton, 2010), 39-57.

<sup>18</sup> C. Barber, "The Koimesis Church, Nicaea: The Limits of Representation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *JÖB* 41 (1991) 43-60.

<sup>19</sup> A useful chart with a breakdown of themes in early Christian apse decoration is provided by J.-M. Spieser, "The Representation of Christ in the Apses of Early Christian Churches," *Gesta* 37:1 (1998) 63-73, esp. 64, fig. 1.

considers the textual evidence for the notion of divine presence in the church and especially in the area of the sanctuary.<sup>20</sup>

Of course, it was not only pagans but Jews who perceived the divine in earthly structures. Jews recognized the presence of God in the Ark of the Covenant, the tabernacle, and the Temple of Jerusalem with its inner sanctuary, the holy of holies, where the Ark and tabernacle were kept. While the earliest Christians worshiped in private houses or even synagogues, they applied these terms (κιβωτός, σκηνή, τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων) symbolically and typologically to the body of Christ and the Christian community. However, after the end of persecution in the early fourth century, when churches were built or rebuilt in greater numbers, Christian writers and rhetoricians began to describe the buildings themselves as holy, succeeding the Ark, tabernacle, and Temple as containers of the divine spirit.<sup>21</sup> The earliest known symbolic interpretation of a Christian church appears in the panegyric of Paulinus, bishop of Tyre, by Eusebios of Caesarea.<sup>22</sup> The oration was recited in 315 at the dedication of the restored cathedral. In the introduction, Eusebios refers to the church as God's house upon earth, constructed by Paulinus, a new Bezalel (*HE* 10.4.2-3). He rails against the persecutors for attacking the stones and lifeless materials (ἀψύχοις ὕλαις) of the old houses of prayer (*HE* 10.4.14), employing traditional arguments, but concludes with a passage relating the parts of the church to the congregation, classified according to spiritual rank (*HE* 10.4.63-8). His

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<sup>20</sup> Brenk excludes texts in much of his analysis in recognition of the capacity of visual imagery to communicate what texts cannot: Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon*, 61.

<sup>21</sup> On the development of symbolic interpretations of Christian buildings and their Jewish heritage, see K. McVey, "Spirit Embodied: The Emergence of Symbolic Interpretations of Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture," in *Architecture as Icon: Perception and Representation of Architecture in Byzantine Art*, ed. S. Ćurčić (Princeton, 2010), 39-71.

<sup>22</sup> Eusebios, *Ecclesiastical History*, 10.4.2-72 (LCL), 399-445.

description moves from outside to inside and from west to east in order of increasing sanctity. Of the sanctuary and its privileged inhabitants, Eusebios writes:

Also contained in this sanctuary (τῷ ἱερῷ) are thrones and a multitude of benches, and seats, namely those souls upon which rest the gifts of the Holy Ghost, such as were seen formerly by the companions of the holy apostles, unto whom appeared ‘cloven tongues as if of fire, and it sat upon each of them.’ And in the one of greatest authority, perchance Christ Himself dwells in His fullness, while in those of secondary rank He does so in the measure that each one of them has been apportioned the power of Christ and of the Holy Ghost. We may also compare the seats to the souls of those angels who have been assigned to instruct and guard each one of us. And as for the holy, great and single altar (μονογενὲς θυσιαστήριον), what else can it be than the Holy of Holies, the pure soul of the universal Priest?<sup>23</sup>

The traditional rhetoric of the community is here combined with a new emphasis on the physical structure of the church as a reflection of the church in heaven.<sup>24</sup> Christian writers, including Eusebios, were clearly ambivalent about projecting such qualities onto matter, but like the supporters of icons, they overcame this ambivalence by invoking the paradox of the Incarnation.<sup>25</sup> An anonymous Greek hymn composed in 562 for the

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<sup>23</sup> *HE* 10.4.66-8. The translation of this passage is taken from C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972), 6-7. In the next lines, Christ is called “ὁ μονογενὴς τοῦ θεοῦ.”

<sup>24</sup> McVey, “Spirit Embodied,” 45-50.

<sup>25</sup> The first attempt to justify the attribution of holiness to a building in this way is an early fifth-century Syriac hymn by Balai of Aleppo on the dedication of the church at Qenneshrin: McVey, “The Sogitha on

rededication of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople makes the comparison explicit, as it anchors God's presence in the church to the Eucharist, affirming every church as a locus of divine presence. The fourth strophe states:

Having once resided in flesh the Word consents, by the operation of the Spirit, to reside in temples built by hand, assuring his presence by mystical rites; and he who cannot be contained, nor even approached, by the whole universe lives by grace among mortals. And not only does the Heavenly One share a roof with those on earth, but he welcomes them as table[-fellows] and entertains them with the banquet of his Flesh, which is set before the faithful by Christ: the life and resurrection of all!<sup>26</sup>

Written for the same occasion, Paul the Silentiary's *ekphrasis* of Hagia Sophia offers a more detailed treatment of the building's architectural elements and explores their anagogical potential.<sup>27</sup> Both of these poems develop the idea of the church as microcosm and employ the dome of heaven motif introduced in an anonymous Syriac hymn delivered at the dedication of the cathedral of Edessa between c. 543 and 554.<sup>28</sup>

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the Church of Edessa in the Context of Other Early Greek and Syriac Hymns for the Consecration of Church Buildings," *ARAM* 5 (1993) 329-70, esp. 337-51, 359-67; "Spirit Embodied," 54-7.

<sup>26</sup> Greek edition: C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica* (Vienna, 1968), 139-47. A. Palmer and L. Rodley, "The Inauguration Anthem of Hagia Sophia in Edessa: A New Edition and Translation with Historical and Architectural Notes and a Comparison with a Contemporary Constantinopolitan Kontakion," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1988) 117-67, esp. 140-1.

<sup>27</sup> On the rededication and its date: R. Macrides and P. Magdalino, "The Architecture of Ekphrasis: Construction and Context of Paul the Silentiary's Poem on Hagia Sophia," *BMGS* 12 (1988) 47-82.

<sup>28</sup> A. Grabar, "Le témoignage d'une hymne syriaque sur l'architecture de la cathédrale d'Édesse au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle et sur la symbolique de l'édifice chrétien," *Cahiers archéologiques* 2 (1947) 41-67. K. McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm: Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol," *DOP* 37 (1983) 91-121; "Sogitha on the Church of Edessa," 329-70. Palmer and Rodley, "Inauguration Anthem of Hagia Sophia in Edessa," 117-67. C. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 57-60.

In addition to poems or hymns on the dedication of churches, cosmological interpretations of the church feature in liturgical commentaries. The *Mystagogia* of Maximos the Confessor (c. 630) describes the church as an image of the visible and invisible universe, both unified and partitioned, and as an image of man, made in the likeness of God, whose soul is the sanctuary, mind is the altar, and body is the nave. The author also compares the nave to the earth and the sanctuary to heaven.<sup>29</sup> This conception of the church corresponds to a map of the world in the sixth-century *Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes (Fig. 4.5).<sup>30</sup> Here, paradise is situated to the east of the earth, just as the sanctuary is situated to the east of the nave. Consistent with this vision of the church, Maximos briefly describes the liturgy in terms of the history of salvation. Acknowledging his debt to Pseudo-Dionysios, he describes the First Entrance:

He taught that the priest's (lit. high priest's) first entrance into the holy church at the sacred liturgy is a figure and image of the first time the Son of God, Christ our Savior, came into this world in the flesh. ... His ascension into heaven and restoration to His throne above the heavens, after His first coming, is symbolically represented by the priest's entrance into the sanctuary and his ascent to the sacerdotal chair.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Maximos the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, ch. 2, 4 in J. Stead, *The Church, the Liturgy and the Soul of Man: The Mystagogia of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Still River, MA, 1982), 68-70, 71-2.

<sup>30</sup> W. Wolska-Conus, *Cosmas Indicopleustes, Topographie chrétienne*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1968), 544-5 (book 4.7); "La 'Topographie Chrétienne' de Cosmas Indicopleustes: hypothèses sur quelques thèmes de son illustration," *Revue des études byzantines* 48 (1990) 155-91. M. Kominko, "New Perspectives on Paradise: The Levels of Reality in Byzantine and Latin Medieval Maps," in *Cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Fresh Perspectives, New Methods*, ed. R. Talbert and R. Unger (Leiden, 2008), 139-53.

<sup>31</sup> Maximos the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, ch. 8 in Stead, *Church, Liturgy and the Soul of Man*, 87.

After the reading of the Gospel, the priest descends from his throne and dismisses the catechumens from the church before the Great Entrance of the sacraments, signifying the Second Coming of the Lord from heaven and the separation that occurs at the Last Judgment.<sup>32</sup> However, the primary concern of the *Mystagogia* is the potential for transformation and communion with the divine offered by the Eucharist. Thus, the presence of God suffuses not only the church but all who partake in the mysteries.<sup>33</sup>

The historical or Christological approach to the liturgy is developed more fully by Germanos I of Constantinople, who synthesizes the disparate traditions of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Maximos the Confessor. In the *Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation* (c. 730), the Orthodox liturgy is understood as a symbolic reenactment of the Life of Christ with special attention to the Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. At the outset, the patriarch establishes the presence of God in the church: “The church is an earthly heaven in which the supercelestial God dwells and walks about.”<sup>34</sup> Within this framework, the parts of the church correspond to various holy sites in the topography of Christ’s life. The conch of the apse, concave in form, signifies the cave of Christ’s birth and the cave of his burial. The altar is at once the place where Christ was laid in the tomb and where God rests on his throne, borne by the cherubim. Placed over the altar, the ciborium represents the site of the Crucifixion, while its name, *κιβώριον*, is said to derive from the Ark of the Covenant in an invented etymology.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Maximos the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, ch. 14 in Stead, *Church, Liturgy and the Soul of Man*, 91-2.

<sup>33</sup> Maximos the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, ch. 21, 24 in Stead, *Church, Liturgy and the Soul of Man*, 95-6, 102.

<sup>34</sup> Germanos of Constantinople, *Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation*, ch. 1 in P. Meyendorff, *St. Germanus of Constantinople: On the Divine Liturgy* (Crestwood, NY, 1984), 56-7.

<sup>35</sup> Germanos of Constantinople, *Ecclesiastical History*, ch. 3-5 in Meyendorff, *On the Divine Liturgy*, 58-9.

Also important is the popular perception of the apse or sanctuary attested in saints' lives. Divine presence in the sanctuary is connected to the Eucharist and also to relics, especially at healing shrines. The idea that God resided with the altar from consecration is expressed in two stories collected in the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschos around 600. In chapter four, a monk Leontios from the Monastery of St. Theodosios near Bethlehem has a vision of an angel standing beside an altar at the church of the New Lavra. The monk takes communion and returns to his cell, where he hears the voice of the angel: "From the moment that altar was consecrated I was commanded to remain here."<sup>36</sup> A similar vision is recorded in chapter ten, where an anonymous anchorite visits the cave of the monk Barnabas, who had injured himself and moved to the Great Lavra. He sees an angel standing beside the altar and asks him what he is doing there. The angel replies: "I am the angel of the Lord; and from the moment that this altar was consecrated, it was entrusted to me by God."<sup>37</sup> Visions are also provoked by the relics of saints kept in the sanctuary or in a crypt under the main altar, imagined as the saint's home.<sup>38</sup> Of course, saints do not only appear in proximity to their relics, but move around the church and around the city. In the fifth-century *Life and Miracles of St. Thekla*, the saint emerges from and returns to her home under the bema at the shrine near Seleucia after performing various miracles.<sup>39</sup> The same is true of St. Artemios, who

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<sup>36</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. J.-P. Migne, PG 87.2856C. English trans. in J. Wortley, *The Spiritual Meadow* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1992), 6.

<sup>37</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. Migne, PG 87.2860C. Wortley, *Spiritual Meadow*, 9.

<sup>38</sup> In the *Miracles of St. Demetrios*, dated to the early seventh century, the church in Thessalonike is referred to repeatedly as the saint's home, despite some doubt about the location of his relics. The focus of the saint's cult, the silver ciborium, was located in the nave near the north aisle: P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de Saint Démétrius et la pénétration des Slaves dans les Balkans*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1979-81), 69, line 11 (mir. 2), 93, line 13 (mir. 6), 165, line 2 (mir. 15) and *passim*. See also R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (New York, 1985), 63-5. Relics also occupy and designate secondary sites of worship in the church, apart from the main altar.

<sup>39</sup> G. Dagron, *Vie et Miracles de Sainte Thècle* (Brussels, 1978), 72-3.



articulates the idea himself in the seventh-century *Miracles of St. Artemios*. In miracle forty, a certain George the deacon falls asleep in the sanctuary of the Church of St. John the Baptist in Oxeia in Constantinople, the location of Artemios' shrine. He sees himself descending into the crypt and opening the coffin, where he encounters the saint and asks him why he had come. Artemios explains: "I did this in order that you might believe that I am here and that I make my home here."<sup>40</sup> These episodes convey a broader Christian interest in the localization of the holy, which was shared by liturgical commentators and composers of dedicatory hymns. It is worth emphasizing that the presence of the divine was perceived not only at major cult and pilgrimage sites but wherever the liturgy was celebrated. Likewise, relics were required for the dedication of ordinary churches by the eighth century.<sup>41</sup> The next section will explore how the notion of presence was given expression in the apse mosaics of Cyprus.

## 2. *The Real Presence of the Virgin: The Projecting Footstool and the Mandorla* <sup>42</sup>

The projecting footstool is a very striking feature of the apse mosaic at Kiti (Fig. 2.7, 2.12). It has been pointed out by others, including A. H. S. Megaw and Demetrios Michaelides, that the position of the Virgin's footstool in front of the lower borders creates the impression that the figures are hovering in the space of the apse.<sup>43</sup> But never has the function and meaning of this illusion been explored. First, it is necessary to consider the form and placement of the footstool (Fig. 2.34). Fairly standard in design,

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<sup>40</sup> V. Crisafulli and J. Nesbitt, *The Miracles of St. Artemios: A Collection of Miracle Stories by an Anonymous Author of Seventh-Century Byzantium* (Leiden, 1997), 204-11.

<sup>41</sup> See "Altar," in *ODB*, vol. 1, 71.

<sup>42</sup> The title of this section is drawn from W. Loerke, "'Real Presence' in Early Christian Art," in *Monasticism and the Arts*, ed. T. Verdon (Syracuse, 1984), 29-51.

<sup>43</sup> A. H. S. Megaw, "Byzantine Architecture and Decoration in Cyprus: Metropolitan or Provincial?" *DOP* 28 (1974) 57-88, esp. 75. D. Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics*, 2nd edn. (Nicosia, 1992), 119, 122.

the rectangular platform is footed and encrusted with red and green gems, as well as imitation mother-of-pearl made up of large silver tesserae. All four feet of the footstool, only three of which are visible in perspective, overlap the lower geometric and crowstep borders of the mosaic, so that the Virgin and Child are not contained within the frame of the conch, but are situated in front of the apse wall. An additional row of red tesserae is placed under the crowstep border where the front feet of the footstool take the place of two individual triangles. The tesserae probably served to underline or emphasize the projecting feet. By contrast, the archangels on either side are stationed on the green ground line and their wings are overlapped by the white interior border of the mosaic (Fig. 2.12).<sup>44</sup> As a consequence, the archangels appear both beside and behind the Virgin and Child.

To accentuate the effect of the projecting footstool, the symmetry of the composition may have been sacrificed intentionally. Looking straight ahead at the Virgin and Child, one can see that the lower body of the Virgin and the footstool drift slightly to the left. As a result, there are ten and a half units of the geometric border to the south of the footstool and only nine and a half to the north, reconstructing the area of loss below the archangel Michael. The pronounced leftward shift is undeniable, but may or may not have been intentional. The asymmetry may have resulted from an attempt to counterbalance the figure of the Virgin, which is common in Byzantine art, and may have been exaggerated to compensate for the Christ Child who is held on the right.

Alternatively, it may also be a mistake by an artist who was working from right to left. In support of this, David Winfield, who examined the mosaic in 1969, noted the imposing

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<sup>44</sup> Or in the case of Michael, the white, blue, and buff-colored borders, suggesting a mistake by the mosaicist or the work of different hands.

figure of the archangel Gabriel when confronted directly.<sup>45</sup> Winfield did not propose, although it is possible, that the artist drew Gabriel too large and ran out of space as he approached the last figure of the composition moving from right to left. Michael's head appears more diminutive, but his body is lost, making it difficult to compare the size of the figures. There is a parallel for miscalculation in the apse mosaic at Poreč, where the artist was clearly working from left to right (Fig. 1.59).<sup>46</sup> If we regard the shift at Kiti as intentional, then it may be an indication of forward movement, designed to support the optical illusion. The same technique is employed on a more modest scale in the apse mosaic at Livadia, where the Virgin stands alone in a frontal position, her arms outstretched, without the Child (Fig. 3.14). Here, the footstool is rendered as a simple jeweled platform without feet. It interrupts the lower border of the composition, which is comprised of four rows of tesserae, two blue and two white. The rightward shift of the Virgin's lower body and footstool is best seen in a reconstructive drawing of the mosaic by Megaw and Hawkins (Fig. 3.17). Because the Virgin appears with no other figures, the shift is more likely to be intentional, whether it is linked to counterbalance or movement. The projecting footstool at Livadia may well have been copied from the mosaic at Kiti, if the former is indeed later, but its presence in two out of three mosaics in Cyprus suggests that the motif was more widespread.

Nevertheless, there is little evidence of this motif outside of Cyprus. In the lost mosaics of the north aisle of St. Demetrios in Thessalonike, dated to the late fifth or early sixth century, the front corner and right side of the footstool of the enthroned Virgin and

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<sup>45</sup> J. and D. Winfield, *Proportion and Structure of the Human Figure in Byzantine Wall-Painting and Mosaic* (Oxford, 1982), 124.

<sup>46</sup> A. Terry and H. Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrosius at Poreč* (University Park, PA, 2007), 75-6.

Child infringe on the solid white border, but stop short of the jeweled outer border (Fig. 1.84). Other footstools in the mosaics of the north aisle are fully contained within the borders or come into contact with the inner border on one side only. The motif occurs more often in the middle and late Byzantine periods, when the Virgin appears more frequently in the apse. In the eleventh-century mosaic of St. Sophia in Kiev, the footstool of the orant Virgin projects into the decorative border above the cornice (Fig. 3.42).<sup>47</sup> Again in Cyprus, the Virgin's footstool is brought to the edge of the conch in the twelfth-century Church of the Virgin at Trikomo, where it is placed in front of a red and gold border with an inscription (Fig. 4.6).<sup>48</sup> The projecting footstool also appears in the medieval West in an eleventh-century manuscript in the Madrid Biblioteca Nacional, Vitr. 20-6, fol. 52r (Fig. 4.7). In a scene of the Ascension, the orant Virgin stands on a footstool which overlaps the painted frame, while the feet of the angels supporting the medallion of Christ also protrude.<sup>49</sup> Without suggesting that every example should be interpreted in the same way, I would like to explore several explanations for the origins of this image in the mosaics of Cyprus: formal or stylistic, liturgical and hierotopical, and intercessory.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> V. Lazarev, *Old Russian Murals and Mosaics: from the 11th to the 16th Century* (London, 1966), 31-77, 226-7.

<sup>48</sup> A. and J. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus: Treasures of Byzantine Art* (London, 1985), 488. A. Carr and L. Morrocco, *A Byzantine Masterpiece Recovered: The Thirteenth-Century Murals of Lysi, Cyprus* (Austin, 1991), 47.

<sup>49</sup> Herbert Kessler has described the Virgin, symbolizing Ecclesia, as a "bridge between this world and the heavenly realm." It is significant that Christ appears in bust form, removed from the scene as it breaks through its frame: H. Kessler, "Real Absence: Early Medieval Art and the Metamorphosis of Vision," in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1998), 1157-1211, esp. 1196-7.

<sup>50</sup> The neologism "hierotopy" refers to the creation of sacred space: A. Lidov, "Hierotopy: The Creation of Sacred Spaces as a Form of Creativity and Subject of Cultural History," in *Hierotopy: The Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, ed. A. Lidov (Moscow, 2006), 32-58.

To an extent, the projecting footstool is a conventional means of establishing hierarchy in Byzantine art. The footstool itself (ὑποπόδιον or σουππῆδιον) is defined in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* as “a normal concomitant of the throne and a symbol of relative superiority within sacred or social hierarchies.”<sup>51</sup> The physical elevation provided by the footstool is often used in conjunction with central placement, increased scale, frontality, foregrounding, and differing modes of representation within a composition to emphasize the most powerful figure or figures. An excellent example is found in the missorium of Theodosios I in the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid, produced in 388 for the tenth anniversary of his reign (Fig. 4.8).<sup>52</sup> The emperor is enthroned at the center of the composition, framed by an architrave and flanked by his sons and co-emperors Valentinian II and Arkadios. The emperor is the largest figure in the scene, followed by Valentinian to his right in the place of preference, and Arkadios to his left, who appears larger than the attendants. All three members of the imperial family rest their feet on podia, which are also distinguished by size and placement. The emperor’s footstool remains the largest and projects into the foreground, approaching the ground line which delineates the lower zone, where the personification of Earth reclines and offers her bounty to the emperor. In another silver plate, one of the famous David Plates discovered in Lambousa and now in the Cyprus Museum, Saul marries David to his second daughter, Michal, in the company of flute players (Fig. 4.9).<sup>53</sup> In order to show the joining of the right hands, Saul is placed behind the married couple even as he

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<sup>51</sup> “Footstool,” in *ODB*, vol. 2, 795.

<sup>52</sup> Cat. no. 64 in K. Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York, 1979), 74-6. R. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Aldershot, 2004), 11-59.

<sup>53</sup> R. Leader, “The David Plates Revisited: Transforming the Secular in Early Byzantium,” *Art Bulletin* 82:3 (2000) 407-27, fig. 5. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society*, 173-216, fig. 4.11.

stands on a footstool that clearly occupies the foreground. Like Theodosios, Saul is also framed by an arch. A similar scene is shown in duplicate on a gold marriage belt of the late sixth or early seventh century in the Dumbarton Oaks collection, where Christ presides over the marriage ceremony (Fig. 4.10).<sup>54</sup> He does not stand on a footstool, but his feet overlap the ground line, placing him in front of the couple, whose hands nevertheless overlap him. A final example demonstrates the continuity of this convention as well as its perceived antiquity in a work of the so-called Macedonian Renaissance. The illustration on folio 7v of the Paris Psalter (Paris B. N. cod. gr. 139) represents King David between personifications of Wisdom and Prophecy (Fig. 4.11).<sup>55</sup> All three figures are elevated on footstools, but David is distinguished by a golden footstool which projects into the foreground while remaining within the confines of the picture frame.

It is the quality of extending beyond the frame, and at Kiti well beyond, that signals something more than convention. The appearance of levitation noted by Megaw and Michaelides finds parallel in saints' lives. In the seventh-century *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*, the monk Zosimas is living alone in the desert during Lent when he observes the shadowy figure of the saint. He pursues her further into the desert and eventually she concedes to pray on his behalf. Like the Virgin in the apse at Livadia, she stretches out her hands to pray (Fig. 3.14). Zosimas bows down his head, but fails to recognize the language of her prayers, and after some time, he looks up and sees her "elevated (ὑψωθεῖσαν) about one cubit above the earth, hanging in the air (τῷ ἀέρι κρεμαμένην)

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<sup>54</sup> The scenes are inscribed: "From God. Harmony. Grace. Health." E. Kantorowicz, "On the Golden Marriage Belt and the Marriage Rings of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection," *DOP* 14 (1960) 1-16.

<sup>55</sup> H. Buchthal, "The Exaltation of David," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 37 (1974) 330-3.

and praying in this way.”<sup>56</sup> At first the monk is terrified and fears she may be a demon, but when she makes the sign of the cross, he identifies her as a servant of God and throws himself on the ground before her. The formula is repeated more or less in later Lives, for example in the *Life of St. Ioannikios* by Peter the Monk (c. 847),<sup>57</sup> the *Life of St. Irene of Chrysobalanton* (tenth century),<sup>58</sup> the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (mid-tenth century),<sup>59</sup> and the *Life of St. Luke of Steiris* (after 961).<sup>60</sup> Typically, the saint ascends to a height of one or two cubits (up to one meter) after praying intensely for an extended period of time. Although not in the *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*, the levitation is often observed secretly by the author or an acquaintance of the author, who seeks out the saint after a long time has passed.<sup>61</sup> In other early saints’ lives, levitation results from very different circumstances. In the third-century *Passion of Sts. Perpetua and Felicity*, Perpetua’s levitation during a vision of combat in the arena in Carthage foreshadows her triumph over death: “And raised up (*sublata*) into the air, I began to strike him as though I trod not the earth.”<sup>62</sup> In the seventh-century *Life of St. Theodore of Sykeon*, the saint is the agent of levitation, as

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<sup>56</sup> Sophronios of Jerusalem, *Vita sanctae Mariae Aegyptiae*, ed. Migne, PG 87.3708D. English trans. in M. Kouli, “Life of St. Mary of Egypt,” in *Holy Women: Ten Saints’ Lives in English Translation*, ed. A.-M. Talbot (Washington, DC, 1996), 65-93, esp. 78-9 (ch. 15).

<sup>57</sup> D. Sullivan, “Life of St. Ioannikios,” in *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saints’ Lives in English Translation*, ed. A.-M. Talbot (Washington, DC, 1998), 243-352, esp. 280-1 (ch. 25). Greek text in *Acta Sanctorum*, Nov. 2.1, 398B.

<sup>58</sup> J. Rosenqvist, ed., *The Life of St. Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Notes and Indices* (Uppsala, 1986), 74-81 (ch. 16).

<sup>59</sup> L. Rydén, ed., *The Life of St Andrew the Fool* (Uppsala, 1995), 40-1, 98-103. A late seventh-century date for the *Life* has also been proposed by C. Mango, “The Life of St. Andrew the Fool Reconsidered,” *Rivista di studi bizantini e slavi* 2 (1982) 297-313.

<sup>60</sup> C. and R. Connor, eds., *The Life and Miracles of Saint Luke of Steiris* (Brookline, MA, 1994), 15 (ch. 7).

<sup>61</sup> In the Lives of Mary of Egypt, Ioannikios, Irene of Chrysobalanton, and Andrew the Fool, the same word, *ῥεμαμαί* (to be hung up or suspended) is used to describe levitation. The verb is used in conjunction with *ὑψόω* (to lift high or raise up) in the Life of Mary of Egypt and with *ἀείρω/αἴρω* (to lift up or raise) in the Life of Andrew the Fool, both in passive forms. Different words appear in the Life of Luke of Steiris: *ἀνάγω* (to lift up or take up) and *ἀφιστάνω* (to stand apart from, e.g. the ground).

<sup>62</sup> English trans. adapted from W. Shewring, ed., *The Passion of SS. Perpetua and Felicity, MM: a new edition and translation of the Latin text, together with the sermons of St. Augustine upon these saints, now first translated into English* (London, 1931), ch. 10, as reprinted in P. Halsall, *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*. See also J. Bremmer and M. Formisano, eds., *Perpetua’s Passions: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (Oxford, 2012), 19, 28.

he raises from the ground a boy Arsinus (ch. 46), a woman Irene (ch. 71), and an unnamed man (ch. 93) in separate miracles in order to expel the demons which possess them.<sup>63</sup> In general, levitation, or the ability to induce levitation in the case of Theodore, is a manifestation of supreme holiness and a means of demonstrating this holiness to others, including those who are prone to doubt. The saints participate in the divinity of Christ by exhibiting divine virtues and powers, like levitating or working miracles, and taking on aspects of the divine appearance, like a shining face. At Kiti and Livadia, the mystical image is also a means of establishing the sacred space of the sanctuary.

More importantly, the manifestation of the Virgin or Virgin and Child by means of an optical illusion evokes the visions of holy figures experienced in early Christian churches. There are two prominent episodes in the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, where visions of the divine are provoked by monumental paintings in the sanctuary. The compilation and translation of the text from Coptic sources into Arabic is normally ascribed to Severos (Sawīrus Ibn al’Muqaffa‘) of Al-Ashmunein (Hermopolis) in the tenth century, but more recently a larger role has been proposed for Mawhūb Ibn Manṣūr Ibn Mufarriḡ, working at the end of the eleventh century.<sup>64</sup> The episode in the *Life of the Patriarch Benjamin* (622-61) which concerns us here was taken from a

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<sup>63</sup> A. J. Festugière, *Vie de Théodore de Sykéôn*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1970), I: 41, 58-9, 76-7; II: 44, 61-2, 79-80. In all three cases the verb *κατέμαμαι* is used. In the first episode, it is combined with *κουφίζω* (to lift up or elevate) in the passive. English trans. in E. Dawes and N. Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies* (Crestwood, NY, 1977), 121-2, 135, 151-2.

<sup>64</sup> English trans. in B. Evetts, ed., *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1904-14). Continued from the year 849 by Y. ‘Abd al-Masih, O. Burmester, A. Atiya, and A. Khater, eds., *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church* (Cairo, 1943-74). The history of the text is analyzed by J. den Heijer, *Mawhūb Ibn Manṣūr Ibn Mufarriḡ et l’historiographie copto-arabe* (Louvain, 1989). According to Den Heijer, the earliest *Lives* 1-26 come from the Coptic *History of the Church*, made up of a Coptic translation of Eusebios’ *Ecclesiastical History* and the contribution of an original author. *Lives* 27-42, including the *Life of Benjamin*, are based on a lost original history rewritten in Coptic by a monk George the archdeacon, secretary of the forty-second patriarch Simon (d. 701), although the *Life of Benjamin* is supplemented by another source (below). *Lives* 56-65, including the *Life of Philotheos* (below), are attributed to Michael, bishop of Tinnīs, writing in Coptic in 1051. Den Heijer disputes the traditional attribution of the Arabic text to Severos, arguing that Mawhūb was the primary redactor.



hagiographic source, the *Book of the Consecration of the Sanctuary of Benjamin*, attributed to Agathon, Benjamin's successor and the thirty-ninth patriarch of Alexandria (661-77).<sup>65</sup> The patriarch receives a vision during the consecration of the Church of St. Makarios in the Wadi Natrun, which took place between December 28, 645 or 646 and January 3, 646 or 647:

And I went up to the sanctuary, and said the prayer over the chrism, and took it to anoint the holy sanctuary. And I heard a voice saying: Observe, O bishop! So when I marked the sanctuary with the chrism, I saw the hand of the Lord Christ, the Saviour, upon the walls anointing the sanctuary.

The patriarch is overtaken by fear and declares the sanctuary "a dreadful place," "the house of God in truth," "the gate of heaven, and the resting-place of the most High." Agathon, the future patriarch and author of the account, was present in the sanctuary during Benjamin's vision. Although he did not experience the vision himself, he describes the patriarch as having the appearance of fire, his face shining with light. Benjamin recites the eighty-third psalm and consecrates the rest of the church before returning to the sanctuary to describe his vision in detail to the brothers of St. Makarios:

I have been carried away today to the Paradise of the Lord of Sabaoth, and I have heard voices that cannot be uttered nor conceived in the heart of man, as the wise apostle Paul says. Believe me, my brethren, I have seen today the glory of Christ

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<sup>65</sup> R.-G. Coquin, ed., *Livre de la consécration du sanctuaire de Benjamin* (Cairo, 1975). Coquin argues that the original language of the text was Greek, while T. Orlandi argues for Sahidic Coptic in a review of Coquin, *Revista degli studi orientali* 51 (1977) 311-13.

filling this dome and I beheld with my own sinful eyes the holy palm, the sublime hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior, anointing the altar-board of this holy sanctuary. I have witnessed today the seraphim and the angels and the archangels, and all the holy hosts of the Most High, praising the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost in this dome. And I saw the father of the patriarchs [Makarios] and bishops and doctors of the orthodox Church, standing among us here in the midst of the brethren, his sons, with joy.<sup>66</sup>

An analogous episode in the *History* involves the sixty-third patriarch Philotheos (979-1003), who falls silent while performing the liturgy in the Church of St. Mark in Alexandria, unable to proceed. Later that night, after regaining the ability to speak, he confesses:

O my sons, when I lifted up the oblation and before I made the sign of the cross over it, I saw the niche split open and there came forth from it a hand from the top of the vault downwards, and the hand made the sign of the cross over the oblation. Then it was split in my hand, and I was immediately silenced.<sup>67</sup>

These episodes demonstrate the potential of monumental decoration to convey the presence of God in the sanctuary and to inspire visions during the most solemn Christian

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<sup>66</sup> Evetts, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church*, vol. 1:2, 510-11. Coquin, *Livre de la consécration*, 130-9. The dome mentioned is the sanctuary or square *haikal*, for “when [Benjamin] had completed the consecration of the dome, he went out into the body of the church, to consecrate its walls and columns; and at the end he returned and sat in the dome.” The decoration of the sanctuary of Benjamin now dates to the twelfth century.

<sup>67</sup> Atiya, ‘Abd al-Masih, and Burmester, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*, vol. 2:2 (Cairo, 1948), 172-4. The medieval church of St. Mark does not survive.

rites. Although the second miracle is dated to around 1000, it may well have been based on the first miracle, recorded in the middle of the seventh century.

Unfortunately, the original decoration of these sanctuaries does not survive for comparison, but visions of holy figures often resemble icons, even when icons are not presented as the source of the vision. For example, in chapter 199 of the *Spiritual Meadow*, an elderly priest who was guilty of some heresy but unaware of it nevertheless saw angels standing to his left and right as he celebrated the Eucharist.<sup>68</sup> The position of the angels on either side of the priest recalls the angels flanking the Virgin or Virgin and Child in all of the Cypriot mosaics. In the seventh-century *Miracles of St. Artemios*, a twelve-year old girl named Euphemia who is suffering from the plague has a vision in which the saint wrestles her from two angels and leads her to his tomb, where he locks her in the enclosure.<sup>69</sup> When recounting her vision and cure, the girl identifies the angels with those flanking Christ in an icon of the church, very possibly a monumental image,<sup>70</sup> and the saint with an icon on the left side of the templon, which has been reconstructed by Cyril Mango as a painting or mosaic in the roundel of a lunette at the top of the screen.<sup>71</sup> Already in this period, saints appearing in visions were commonly recognized by comparison with their portraits. Icons provided a means of authenticating visions, which could come from God or demons, just as visions provided a means of

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<sup>68</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. Migne, PG 87.3088A. Wortley, *Spiritual Meadow*, 177-8.

<sup>69</sup> Miracle 34 in Crisafulli and Nesbitt, *Miracles of St. Artemius*, 176-85, 279-81.

<sup>70</sup> Crisafulli and Nesbitt suggest the wall above the doors of the *skeuophylakion*, where there was a full-length portrait of Christ: Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 17. The iconography of Christ flanked by angels also suggests a monumental composition.

<sup>71</sup> C. Mango, "On the History of the *Templon* and the Martyrion of St. Artemios at Constantinople," *Zograf* 10 (1979) 40-3, esp. 43.

authenticating icons. In early hagiographic texts, both visions and icons are suspect and in need of verification, which helped to forge a reciprocal relationship.<sup>72</sup>

Moreover, the language of vision in liturgical texts is suggestive without making reference to visual imagery. The expectation of a vision on behalf of the celebrant is laid out in the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of Pseudo-Dionysios (c. 500): “Although the multitude has seen only the divine symbols, he himself is always hierarchically raised by the supremely divine Spirit to the holy archetypes of the mysteries by means of blessed and spiritual visions on account of the purity of his godlike condition.”<sup>73</sup> Here and in the *Mystagogia* of Maximos the Confessor, the laity retains the potential for spiritual elevation. They are prepared in part by the reading of the Gospel: “the Word of spiritual contemplation, visiting them like a High Priest from heaven...cuts off their thoughts from nature, and gets rid of thoughts which still incline towards the earth, turning the mind to a vision (τὴν ἐποψίαν) of spiritual things...”<sup>74</sup> Before the concealment of the mysteries behind the late medieval *iconostasis*, the participation of the laity was linked to viewing. According to Pseudo-Dionysios, the order of priests “shows forth the divine works under the most sacred symbols and brings it about that those who approach as viewers become participators in the holy mysteries.”<sup>75</sup> Likewise in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Germanos, the people become “eyewitnesses (αὐτόπται) of the mysteries of God, partakers (μέτοχοι) of eternal life, and sharers (κοινωνοὶ) in divine nature...”<sup>76</sup> The

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<sup>72</sup> G. Dagron, “Holy Images and Likeness,” *DOP* 45 (1991) 20-33, esp. 30-3. H. Maguire, *The Icons of Their Bodies: Saints and Their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1996), 12-15.

<sup>73</sup> Pseudo-Dionysios, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, ed. T. Campbell (Washington, DC, 1981), 35.

<sup>74</sup> Maximos the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, ch. 13 in Stead, *Church, Liturgy and the Soul of Man*, 90.

<sup>75</sup> Pseudo-Dionysios, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, ch. 6 in Campbell, 65.

<sup>76</sup> Germanos of Constantinople, *Ecclesiastical History*, ch. 41 in Meyendorff, *On the Divine Liturgy*, 98-9. Also in Germanos, “the Spirit is seen spiritually (νοερώς θεωρούμενον) in the fire, incense, smoke, and fragrant air” during the hymn of the Cheroubikon (ch. 37). And the paten is compared to the “sphere of

peroration of Germanos culminates with the celebrant's true vision of God in heaven, which supercedes the vision of Moses:

In the company of the angelic powers, the priest approaches, standing no longer as on earth but attending at the heavenly altar, before the altar of the throne of God, and he contemplates the great, ineffable, and unsearchable mystery of God. ... Then the priest goes with confidence to the throne of the grace of God and, with a true heart and in certainty of faith, speaks to God. He converses no longer with a cloud, as once did Moses in the Tabernacle, but with uncovered face seeing the glory of the Lord. ... 'one to one' he addresses God, announcing in mystery the mysteries ... which are now revealed to us through the manifestation of the Son of God....<sup>77</sup>

The importance of a liturgical vision during the *epiklesis*, or invocation of the Holy Spirit, is communicated in contemporary hagiographic texts. In chapter twenty-five of the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschos, a monk at Choziba, who was sent to bring the offerings to the sanctuary, accidentally recites the prayer over the Eucharist, which he had memorized. When the priest John, later bishop of Caesarea, performs the liturgy, "he [does] not behold (ἐθεάσατο) according to custom the coming (τὴν ἐπιφοίτησιν) of the Holy Spirit."<sup>78</sup> He learns subsequently through the vision of an angel in the sacristy that the offerings were already consecrated. A similar episode in chapter twenty-seven tells

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heaven, manifesting to us in miniature the spiritual sun, Christ, and containing him visibly in the bread" (ch. 38).

<sup>77</sup> Germanos of Constantinople, *Ecclesiastical History*, ch. 41 in Meyendorff, *On the Divine Liturgy*, 88-91.

<sup>78</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. Migne, PG 87.2872A. Wortley, *Spiritual Meadow*, 17.

of an elderly priest in Cilicia, whose estate had complained to the bishop about his manner of conducting the service. When the bishop questions the priest, he explains: “until I see (ἴδω) the Holy Spirit overshadowing the holy sanctuary, I do not begin the service. When I see (θεάσωμαι) the coming (τὴν ἐπιφοίτησιν) of the Holy Spirit, then I celebrate the liturgy.”<sup>79</sup> Yet again in chapter 150, an Italian bishop interrupts himself repeatedly while reciting the prayer of consecration. Only after the pope Agapetos (535-6), who is in attendance, expels a sinful deacon from the sanctuary do they perceive (εἶδον) the coming/presence (τὴν ἐπιφοίτησιν, τὴν παρουσία) of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, they witness a miracle when the curtain hanging above the altar lifts itself and overshadows the entire sanctuary for three hours.<sup>80</sup>

Theophanies and prophetic visions become common in apse decoration of the sixth century as illustrations of divine presence. Well known examples include the mosaic of Hosios David in Thessalonike, where Christ appears in a translucent mandorla surrounded by the four living beings and witnessed by two prophets (Fig. 1.80), and several paintings of the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit in Egypt (Figs. 1.64, 3.39-40). The Coptic apses are often divided into two zones, with the upper zone depicting Christ in Majesty and a combination of celestial beings, the sun and moon, and flaming wheels, and the lower zone depicting apostles, the Virgin Mary, and local saints. These representations do not conform to a single vision, but conflate elements from the visions of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation, and from the historical Ascension of Christ, in order to convey the unity of Scripture and to encapsulate sacred time. These visions are generally held to establish the presence of God in relation to the Eucharist without illustrating a

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<sup>79</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. Migne, PG 87.2873C. Wortley, *Spiritual Meadow*, 19.

<sup>80</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. Migne, PG 87.3016B-C. Wortley, *Spiritual Meadow*, 122-4.

specific liturgical prayer or rite.<sup>81</sup> A purely New Testament theophany appears in the Transfiguration mosaic of the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai, where the divinity of Christ is revealed to three apostles on Mount Tabor in the presence of Moses and Elijah (Fig. 1.57). Jaś Elsner has identified a hierarchy of visions, reflecting the path to union with God according to Pseudo-Dionysios.<sup>82</sup> It begins on the upper east wall with the partial and imperfect theophanies of Moses, and culminates in the apse with the true vision of Christ, in which all monks and pilgrims are included by virtue of the physical and spiritual ascent to Mount Sinai. In the later apses of Cappadocia, which are similar in subject matter and arrangement to the Coptic paintings, Catherine Jolivet-Lévy has drawn attention to the anagogical function of the figure of Christ in Majesty, which renders God present and eternal, assimilates the earthly and heavenly liturgies, and inspires the faithful to adoration through the attendant angels.<sup>83</sup> She underlines the synthetic character of the image, which layers the past, present, and future in association with liturgical time. Although witnesses are provided in most theophanies in the form of apostles, prophets, or the Virgin, the liturgical vision is shared through its placement in the apse with the priests and congregation.

Iconographically, the device of theophany and symbol of divine presence and power is the mandorla, a circle of light emanating from the figure of Christ.<sup>84</sup> The *doxa*

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<sup>81</sup> A. Grabar, *Martyrium: recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1946), 129-234. Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 42-51. J.-M. Spieser, "Remarques complémentaires sur la mosaïque de Osios David," in *Διεθνές Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινή Μακεδονία, 324-1430 μ.χ.* (Thessalonike, 1995), 295-306, translated as "Further Remarks on the Mosaic of Hosios David," in *Urban and Religious Spaces in Late Antiquity and Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2001), 1-12.

<sup>82</sup> J. Elsner, "The Viewer and the Vision: The Case of the Sinai Apse," *Art History* 17:1 (1994) 81-102.

<sup>83</sup> C. Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce: le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords* (Paris, 1991), 335-47.

<sup>84</sup> According to A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, vol. 2, 203, the mandorla is not required for scenes located in heaven or in paradise, only for theophanies, which entail the appearance of God to men on earth. This is echoed by Spieser, "Further Remarks," 10-11. Set in paradise, the mosaics of Lythrankomi and S.

of the Septuagint and New Testament, based on the Hebrew *kabod*, denotes the luminous cloud of divine encounters.<sup>85</sup> With the liturgy focused on divine confrontation, the realization of divine light was incorporated into liturgical commentaries. In the *Mystagogia* of Maximos the Confessor, just prior to receiving the sacrament, all participants are said to be “gazing upon the light of the invisible glory (τῆς δόξης).”<sup>86</sup> The line is repeated by Germanos, who incorporates several passages from the *Mystagogia* into the *Ecclesiastical History*. In his own words, he describes the experience of the priest: “So now the priest, standing between the two cherubim in the sanctuary and bowing on account of the dreadful and uncountable [sic] glory (τὴν δόξαν) and brightness (λαμπρότητα) of the Godhead, and contemplating the heavenly liturgy, is initiated even into the splendor (τὴν ἑλλάμψιν) of the life-giving Trinity...”<sup>87</sup> Later in the same chapter, the priest, bowing again, “sees the divine illumination (τὴν φωτοφάνειαν), he is made radiant (ἐκφαιδρύνεται) by the brightness of the glory (τῆ λαμπρότητι τῆς δόξης) of the face of God and he recoils in fear and shame like Moses, who, when he saw God in the form of fire...trembled, turned away, and covered his face, fearing to contemplate the glory (τῆς δόξης) of God’s face.”<sup>88</sup>

What then do we make of the mosaic at Lythrankomi, where the mandorla surrounds both the Virgin and Child (Figs. 1.19-20)? The mandorla is one of many attributes of Christ transferred to the Virgin Mary, but was rarely copied as an attribute of

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Apollinare in Classe must constitute exceptions. Also, an accumulation of clouds could signal a theophany, as in the Roman mosaics of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, where Christ hovers among the clouds, and S. Venanzio in Laterano, where Christ emerges in bust form from the clouds above the Virgin and saints: Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 137-8, 144-5.

<sup>85</sup> W. Loerke, “Observations on the Representation of Doxa in the Mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore, Rome, and St. Catherine’s, Sinai,” *Gesta* 20:1 (1981) 15-22.

<sup>86</sup> Maximos the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, ch. 21 in Stead, *Church, Liturgy and the Soul of Man*, 96.

<sup>87</sup> Germanos of Constantinople, *Ecclesiastical History*, ch. 41 in Meyendorff, *On the Divine Liturgy*, 90-3.

<sup>88</sup> Germanos of Constantinople, *Ecclesiastical History*, ch. 41 in Meyendorff, *On the Divine Liturgy*, 98-9.



the Virgin and ultimately reserved for Christ. In Byzantine painting, the Virgin and Child appear in a mandorla on the east tympanum of the Chapel of Joachim and Anna at Kizil Çukur in Cappadocia, dated between the seventh and ninth centuries.<sup>89</sup> Much later, the group reappears in several Romanesque paintings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, for example in the apse of Santa Maria in Tahull in Catalonia (1123).<sup>90</sup>

A theological explanation for the mandorla at Lythrankomi is proposed by Marina Sacopoulo, who sees the Virgin and mandorla as concentric symbols of the human and divine natures of Christ, constituting a statement of Chalcedonian orthodoxy in response to the threat of Monophysitism.<sup>91</sup> The impetus for the experimental iconography of the Virgin and Child enclosed in the mandorla is attributed either to the anti-Monophysite council convened in Constantinople in 536 or to the establishment of Monophysite churches from 542/3 by Jacob Baradaeus, bishop of Edessa. The impact of these external events in Cyprus is explained for the most part by later Syrian sources, which describe a Monophysite presence on the island in the sixth century. Accordingly, the iconography of the Virgin and Child in a mandorla is regarded as an established, if unpopular type in Constantinople, which inspired a few examples elsewhere. Despite the relatively weak evidence for the presence of Monophysites in Cyprus, Sacopoulo's interpretation of the mosaic as an expression of the two natures of Christ as defined at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 need not depend on it. Far from implying the divinity of Mary, as others had proposed before, Sacopoulo argues that the apse mosaic at Lythrankomi is

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<sup>89</sup> There are two other examples in sculpture on the stele of Berdatzor at the Museum of Tbilisi and the lintel of Zebed in Syria, cited by Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce*, 47-50.

<sup>90</sup> A. Grabar, "The Virgin in a Mandorla of Light," in *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.*, ed. K. Weitzmann (Princeton, 1955), 305-11.

<sup>91</sup> M. Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle de Lythrankomi* (Paris, 1975), 77-108.

Christological in focus.<sup>92</sup> The Virgin Mary is conceived as an attribute of Christ, as a living symbol of his humanity intended to complement the attribute of the mandorla, which could only convey his divinity.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the earliest surviving apse mosaic of the Virgin and Child attempts a solution, albeit an unsuccessful one, to the problem of representing the hypostatic union of the two natures, unconfused and undivided, in Christ.

In her explication of the orthodox theology of the image, Sacopoulo does not acknowledge the mandorla as a sign of theophany or address the liturgical significance of the mosaic. More than the standard image of the Incarnation, the Virgin and Child enclosed in a mandorla represents the first manifestation of Christ to man in a non-narrative epiphany, an idea first proposed by André Grabar.<sup>94</sup> As the first human to be sanctified by Christ and thus a model for the faithful, the Virgin is subsumed into the divine radiance, corresponding to the ideal of Germanos and the commentators of the Alexandrian school. In addition, Pelopidas Stephanou has offered an apocalyptic interpretation of the mosaic, in which the Virgin is assimilated to the woman of Revelation 12: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” The palm trees and plants locate the scene in paradise, and the twelve apostles of the upper border

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<sup>92</sup> These earlier interpretations are summarized in Sacopoulo, *La Theotokos à la Mandorle*, 89-91.

<sup>93</sup> Although the figure of the Virgin is not entirely symmetrical, it is interesting to note that the outline of her body evokes the later Carolingian globe or figure-eight mandorla, here contained within the larger almond-shaped mandorla: W. Cook, “The Earliest Painted Panels of Catalonia (II),” *Art Bulletin* 6:2 (1923) 31-60.

<sup>94</sup> A. Grabar, “The Virgin in a Mandorla of Light,” 310-11; *Martyrium*, vol. 2, 225-30. C. Wellen, *Theotokos: eine ikonographische Abhandlung über das Gottesmutterbild in frühchristlicher Zeit* (Utrecht, 1961), 153-4.

signify the twelve stars.<sup>95</sup> If these ideas may be recognized as complementary, the mosaic at Lythrankomi epitomizes the first and final visions of Christ brought together in the apse. The method of contracting sacred time recalls the Ascension/Second Coming imagery of the Coptic churches, although the Virgin assumes a much greater role at Lythrankomi. In the end, Megaw and Hawkins describe the composition as a failed experiment for its theological implications. Simply stated, the Virgin is not divine and cannot be contained in the divine light of the mandorla.<sup>96</sup> But perhaps the motif was not repeated for its liturgical implications as well. If the vision of the divine Christ or Christ in Majesty at the core of the prophets' visions, the Transfiguration, and the Ascension is akin to the spiritual vision of God in the Eucharist, then the Virgin Mary cannot be a part of the same vision. The relative success of the projecting footstool at Kiti and Livadia may depend in part on its creation of an alternative vision, one not intended to illustrate or to imitate the ultimate liturgical vision.

What is the nature and purpose of this vision of the Virgin Mary? Specific references to the Virgin Mary are infrequent in the context of the regular Eucharistic liturgies. To be sure, she is named in the Eucharistic Prayer of the liturgy of St. Basil as having enabled Christ's work of salvation.<sup>97</sup> In the liturgy of Hagia Sophia, the Virgin is mentioned in the *Monogenes*, the refrain of the introit psalm, introduced by Justinian I in 535/6: "O only-begotten Son and Word of God, though immortal you condescended for

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<sup>95</sup> P. Stephanou, "Panaghia Kanakaria: la Donna dell'Apocalisse," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica Roma* 45:2 (1979) 408-17.

<sup>96</sup> Megaw and Hawkins see the mandorla surrounding the Virgin as a consequence of her introduction into the traditional theme of Christ in Glory and explore the mandorla as a formal device, intended to isolate the Virgin and Child from the archangels: A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins, *The Church of the Panagia Kanakariá at Lythrankomi in Cyprus: Its Mosaics and Frescoes* (Washington, DC, 1977), 76-9. In a later article, Megaw also accepts Stephanou's argument: A. H. S. Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," *Corso di cultura sull'arte Ravennate e Bizantina* 32 (1985) 173-98, esp. 180-1.

<sup>97</sup> F. E. Brightman, ed., *Liturgies Eastern and Western* (Oxford, 1896), 324-6.

our salvation to take flesh from the holy Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary.”<sup>98</sup> A commemoration of the Virgin as Theotokos also preceded the diptychs of the dead, read aloud by the deacon during the Eucharist, beginning in the late fifth century.<sup>99</sup> She plays a more central role on the occasions of her feasts, when homilies and hymns were recited in her honor. By the sixth century, the feasts of the Annunciation on March 25th and the Dormition on August 15th had been established across the empire. The feasts of the Nativity of Mary on September 8th and the Presentation of Mary on November 21st were also celebrated at this time.<sup>100</sup> Yet the mosaics of Cyprus evoke the presence of the Virgin Mary in the sanctuary year round, which is best explained by her role in the Incarnation. The event was recalled in the prayers and stages of the liturgy, especially at the Entrance of the Word, but also forms a parallel to the Eucharist, in which the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ. After the entrance of the gifts and immediately prior to the offering, the priest asks for the prayers of his concelebrants. They reply with the text of Luke 1:35, reciting Gabriel’s words to Mary at the Annunciation: “May the Holy Spirit come down upon you, and the power of the Most

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<sup>98</sup> Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, 365, line 33 to 366, line 9. R. Taft, “The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm,” *DOP* 34/5 (1980-1) 45-75, esp. 51. M. Solovey, *The Byzantine Divine Liturgy: History and Commentary*, trans. D.

Wysochansky (Washington, DC, 1970), 173-5. See also “Monogenes, Ho” in *ODB*, vol. 2, 1397.

<sup>99</sup> R. Taft, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, vol. 4: *The Diptychs* (Rome, 1991), 100-2.

<sup>100</sup> The early Dormition narratives contained in the *Six Books* apocryphon provide evidence for Marian feasts as early as the late fourth century. Liturgical instructions concerning offerings of bread to the Virgin conclude with an invocatory prayer: “Because as soon as the priests pray and say the prayer of my master Mary, the Theotokos, ‘Come to us and help the people who call upon you,’ and with the priest’s word of blessing, my master Mary comes and blesses these offerings. And as soon as everyone takes his offering and goes to his house, great aid and the blessing of my master Mary will enter his dwelling and sustain it forever.” S. Shoemaker, “Marian Liturgies and Devotion in Early Christianity,” in *Mary: The Complete Resource*, ed. S. Boss (London, 2007), 130-45; “The Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century: A Fresh Look at Some Old and New Sources,” in *Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, ed. C. Maunder (London, 2008), 71-87.

High overshadow you.”<sup>101</sup> According to John of Damascus, the descent of the Holy Spirit that effected the conception of Christ is equally responsible for the transformation of the Eucharist.<sup>102</sup> The parallel is further developed by Germanos, who integrates Psalm 109:3 (110:3) into his commentary at the moment of transformation:

And the priest expounds on the unbegotten God, that is the God and Father, and on the womb which bore the Son before the morning star and before the ages, as it is written: ‘Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten you.’ And again the priest asks God to accomplish and bring about the mystery of His Son – that is, that the bread and wine be changed into the body and blood of Christ God – so that it might be fulfilled that ‘Today I have begotten you (Psalm 2:7).’<sup>103</sup>

Germanos interprets the text in relation to the Virgin, like the designers of the late seventh-century apse mosaic at Nicaea, where the psalm was inscribed above the central image of the Virgin and Child (Fig. 2.65).<sup>104</sup> In the early eighth century, a scene of the Nativity was placed directly above the orant Virgin on the east wall of the Oratory of John VII in Rome, aligned with the altar below (Fig. 3.38). Certain iconographic details of the narrative, including the altar-like manger and chalice-like basin, identified the

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<sup>101</sup> The text of Luke 1:35 is described as the “primitive kernel” of the dialogue after the entrance of the gifts, ascribed to the urtext: Taft, “The Liturgy of the Great Church,” 54; *The Great Entrance: A History of the Transfer of Gifts and Other Pre-Anaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (Rome, 1975), 285-310.

<sup>102</sup> John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa Lib. IV*, ed. Migne, PG 94.1141A, which includes the citation of Luke 1:35. An English translation of the passage appears in Taft, *The Great Entrance*, 288-9.

<sup>103</sup> Germanos of Constantinople, *Ecclesiastical History*, ch. 41 in Meyendorff, *On the Divine Liturgy*, 96-7. R. Bornert, *Les commentaires byzantins de la divine liturgie du VIIIe au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1966), 174-5.

<sup>104</sup> Barber, “Koimesis Church, Nicaea,” 43-60. The figures were restored after iconoclasm in the ninth century: P. Underwood, “The Evidence of Restorations in the Sanctuary Mosaics of the Church of the Dormition at Nicaea,” *DOP* 13 (1959) 235-43.

newly incarnate Christ with the bread and wine of the Eucharist.<sup>105</sup> Much later, the association between the Eucharist and the Incarnation inspired the representation of the Annunciation above the entrance to the sanctuary of Byzantine churches.<sup>106</sup> The separation of Mary and Gabriel on the spandrels of the transverse arch allowed the Holy Spirit to descend between them and into space of the sanctuary during the celebration of the liturgy. The interpretation of the Eucharist as another incarnation may therefore have inspired the visions of the Virgin in Cyprus, if not the appearance of the Virgin and Child more generally in the apse.

The projecting footstool may also be understood as an intercessory motif, establishing the real presence of the Virgin in relation to a divine and distant Christ, who no longer appears in his mature form in the apse at Kiti, and may or may not have appeared as a diminutive figure above the apse at Livadia.<sup>107</sup> At Livadia in particular, the motif is used in combination with other features identifying the Virgin as an intercessor. She appears alone, in an attitude of prayer, and stands before a gold background arranged in a rising scale pattern. Typically associated with church and garden screens, the pattern

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<sup>105</sup> A. van Dijk, “‘Domus Sanctae Dei Genetricis Mariae’: Art and Liturgy in the Oratory of Pope John VII,” in *Decorating the Lord’s Table: On the Dynamics Between Image and Altar in the Middle Ages*, ed. S. Kaspersen and E. Thunø (Copenhagen, 2006), 13-42, esp. 22-34.

<sup>106</sup> W. Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon: Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium* (Oxford, 2012), 98-101. The metaphorical significance of the placement of the Annunciation at the entrance to the sanctuary is emphasized by Y. Varalis, “Παρατηρήσεις για τη Θέση του Ευαγγελισμού στη Μνημειακή Ζωγραφική κατά τη Μεσοβυζαντινή Περίοδο,” *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* 19 (1996-7) 201-20; H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion*, 140. On other images of the Virgin in liturgical contexts, see G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Prefaces in Byzantine Gospels* (Vienna, 1979), 110-14; Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce*, 336-41.

<sup>107</sup> The mosaic at Kiti did not extend beyond the apse conch, and no tesserae were found above the apse at Livadia (see my chapter 3.3). Megaw assumes the presence of Christ in the latter because the Virgin is pictured alone: Megaw, “Interior Decoration in Early Christian Cyprus,” in *XVe Congrès International d’Études Byzantines, Rapports et Co-rapports*, vol. 5, *Chypre dans le monde byzantin* (Athens, 1976), 27. At Lythrankomi, mosaic fragments from a vertical surface were discovered below the floor of the sanctuary. Some of these fragments contained gold tesserae set at an angle, a technique also found on the east walls of Sinai and Poreč. The composition cannot be reconstructed, but Megaw and Hawkins consider the Ascension type of Christ the most likely subject, based on the Cleveland tapestry: Megaw and Hawkins, *Church of the Panagia Kanakariá*, 38, 84. I question the need for another theophanic vision conveyed by a mandorla, but concede that the adult Christ is a distinct possibility.

creates a boundary or liminal space between heaven and earth, which the Virgin occupies.<sup>108</sup> In the early twelfth-century apse at Trikomo, the footstool of the orant Virgin with a medallion of Christ at her breast intrudes entirely into a border containing an anonymous plea for intercession: “Pure Virgin, Mother of the Lord, behold the desire of my miserable soul and become my intercessor at the time of the Judgment, so that I may be spared...” (Fig. 4.6).<sup>109</sup> Although the Virgin’s role as intercessor would intensify from the early eighth century, it is nascent in early Byzantine literature and art.<sup>110</sup> The dramatic placement of the footstool at Kiti, which probably inspired the motif at Livadia, seems also to suggest an intercessory function. Located in the most exalted space of the church, prior to the addition of the medieval dome, the vision of the Virgin and Child serves as a substitute for the vision of the divine Christ, which remains accessible only in the minds of the purest participants. This mystical image inspired the mind to contemplation of the divine without reproducing a vision that demands essential spiritual preparation. The exhortation inscribed on the floor of the Church of the Virgin at Madaba (767) seems especially well-suited to the apse mosaic at Kiti and may have pointed to a similar mosaic in the apse: “Looking on Mary the Virgin Mother of God and on Christ whom she bore, king of all, only son of the only God, purify your mind and your flesh and your works” (Fig. 4.12).<sup>111</sup> With no evidence for an image of the divine Christ at Kiti and also perhaps at Livadia, I would suggest that the vision of the Virgin originated as an alternative vision in the apse, and later became a complementary vision

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<sup>108</sup> This idea is developed in my chapter 5.4.

<sup>109</sup> A. and J. Stylianou, *Painted Churches of Cyprus*, 488. The original Greek is transcribed in Carr and Morrocco, *A Byzantine Masterpiece Recovered*, 47.

<sup>110</sup> See my chapter six.

<sup>111</sup> English trans. in H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion*, 38-9. M. Piccirillo, *The Mosaics of Jordan* (Amman, 1993), 64-5.

as the figure of Christ Pantokrator was introduced into the dome of the middle Byzantine church.

An emphasis on the divinity of Christ in apse decoration led to the foregrounding of intermediaries.<sup>112</sup> This is clearly expressed in the double-zoned apses of Bawit, where the Virgin, apostles, and saints occupy the lower zone (Figs. 1.64, 3.39-40). A similar composition is found in Rome in the apse mosaic of the Chapel of S. Venanzio (642-50), which portrays the orant Virgin between saints and donors below a bust of Christ emerging from the clouds (Fig. 3.37). Clerical and non-clerical viewers were initially encouraged to make connections between the live performance of the sacrament and the eternal vision of God revealed on the apse wall. Those responsible for the mosaics at Kiti and Livadia took foregrounding to a new level and created the illusion of the real presence of the Virgin. Not only do these mosaics simulate visions, but they may well have provoked visions, like those recounted in the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*. Short of providing a direct link between monumental art and visions, hagiographic and liturgical texts suggest at least the susceptibility of early Christians to such visionary provocations and also the possibility that their visions inspired the decoration of these apses.<sup>113</sup> Although a seemingly minor feature, the projecting footstool

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<sup>112</sup> On distancing elements in the imagery of the divine Christ: Spieser, "The Representation of Christ in the Apses of Early Christian Churches," 63-73.

<sup>113</sup> The relationship between icons and visions, seen as a component of the rising cult of icons, is believed by some scholars to have intensified from the late sixth century onwards: E. Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm," *DOP* 8 (1954) 83-150; A. Cameron, "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium," *Past and Present* 84 (1979) 3-35; "The Language of Images: The Rise of Icons and Christian Representation," in *The Church and the Arts*, ed. D. Wood (Oxford, 1992), 1-42. More recently, Leslie Brubaker has argued that visions only become common in relation to icons in the late seventh century, regarding much of the early textual evidence as problematic for later revisions and interpolations: L. Brubaker, "Icons before Iconoclasm?" in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1998), 1215-54. However, the only study to consider monumental art in this connection is Elsner, "Viewer and the Vision," 81-102, which advocates a mid sixth-century date.



fulfills many functions: it establishes hierarchy within the composition; it contributes to the formation of a distinctly sacred space by invoking the presence of a holy figure; and it promotes the real presence of the Virgin or Virgin and Child as a parallel to the Eucharistic vision and a substitute for an increasingly remote, unapproachable, and divine Christ.

### 3. *Angels with Peacock-Feathered Wings*

Angels feature prominently in the liturgy as attendants of God, praising him eternally in heaven and therefore in the Eucharist. This section is not concerned with angels in general in the three Cypriot mosaics, but with a specific attribute of the angels in the apse mosaic at Kiti, the wings of peacock feathers, which can be connected to the liturgy (Fig. 4.13). In early Christian art, angels are typically represented as youthful, winged men, but occasionally they are wingless.<sup>114</sup> Their wings take the form of feathers, either layered or scaled in appearance, with long plumes in various colors. Despite multiple manifestations of angels in Scripture, including fire and wind, anthropomorphic angels, as they appeared in certain biblical encounters, were favored for ease of representation; the addition of wings was a means of visualizing supernatural qualities.<sup>115</sup> Over time, only the costumes of the archangels would change significantly from the tunic and *himation* to the imperial *loros*, and the objects held in hand might vary according to context. I would argue that the peculiar iconography of the archangels at Kiti, the wings of peacock feathers, suggests their conflation with other angelic beings, such as the

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<sup>114</sup> As in the wall mosaic fragment from the north chapel at Kourion (Fig. 3.22).

<sup>115</sup> G. Peers, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium* (Berkeley, 2001), 13-60.

seraphim and cherubim, despite the paradox of their explicit identification as Michael and Gabriel.

There are a few iconographic parallels for archangels with peacock-feathered wings. On the mosaics of the east wall above the apse at the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai (548-65), two angels fly towards the central lamb, carrying gold cross-staffs and offering blue globes (Fig. 4.14).<sup>116</sup> Four or five eyes are visible on each bared wing. Despite the iconographic similarities, the angels of Sinai are stylistically more abstract and less substantial than their counterparts at Kiti. Other examples are found in wall painting, for example on the east wall of cell 1723 at the Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara in Egypt.<sup>117</sup> The angels are inscribed “angel of God” and flank the Virgin and Child below a bust of Christ in Majesty. At the cathedral of Faras in modern Sudan, an angel with peacock-feathered wings is identified as Michael. The early ninth-century painting is now located in the National Museum in Warsaw, but once adorned the south wall of the stairwell.<sup>118</sup> In manuscript illumination, the archangel Gabriel appears with wings of peacock feathers in two of the four miniatures inserted into the Armenian Etchmiadzin Gospels: the Annunciation to Zachariah and the Annunciation to the Virgin (Fig. 4.15).<sup>119</sup> Along with the Adoration of the Magi and the Baptism of Christ, these leaves have been dated to the seventh century. Finally, a Proconnesian marble relief of

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<sup>116</sup> G. Forsyth and K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Church and Fortress of Justinian* (Ann Arbor, 1973), 13, pls. 122B, 123B.

<sup>117</sup> J. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1908-9, 1909-10): The Monastery of Apa Jeremias* (Cairo, 1912), 23, 98-9, 135, pl. 25. P. van Moorsel and M. Huijbers, “Repertory of the Preserved Wallpaintings from the Monastery of Apa Jeremiah as Saqqara,” in *Miscellanea Coptica* (Rome, 1981), 125-86, esp. 154, pls. 18-19.

<sup>118</sup> An eighth-century pair of archangels on the west wall of the narthex had wings covered with eyes: cat. nos. 7-8, 16-17 in K. Michalowski, *Faras: Die Wandbilder in den Sammlungen des Nationalmuseums zu Warschau* (Warsaw, 1974), 103-9, 130-4.

<sup>119</sup> T. Mathews, “The Early Armenian Iconographic Program of the Ējmiacin Gospel (Erevan, Matendaran MS 2374, olim 229),” in *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, ed. N. Garsoïan, T. Mathews, and R. Thomson (Washington, DC, 1982), 199-215.

the sixth or seventh century, now in the Antalya Museum, portrays a bust-length angel with peacock-feathered wings, inscribed “Archangel Gabriel” (Fig. 2.73).<sup>120</sup>

Byzantine writers such as Gregory of Nazianzos and George of Pisidia described the peacock as a wonder of Creation and emphasized its beauty.<sup>121</sup> For this reason, peacocks figure frequently in early Christian art as part of the common imagery of nature. Yet they are often distinguished from other birds and animals by their arrangement in pairs, symmetrically confronted or addorsed, flanking vessels or fountains. Occasionally they face frontally with their tails spread. Symbolic interpretations of the bird were inherited from the Roman world, where the peacock was associated with immortality, in part because of the annual renewal of its feathers. In the fourth century, Augustine confirmed that the flesh of the peacock would not perish.<sup>122</sup> As an attribute of Juno, the peacock appeared on coins commemorating the apotheosis of Roman empresses. In Christian funerary contexts, it was retained as a symbol of eternal life. For example, the fourth-century painted tomb in Nicaea represents two large peacocks grasping a kantharos in a paradisiacal landscape (Fig. 5.6).<sup>123</sup> Above the peacocks, a medallion with the chi-rho declares the Christian identity of the patron.

The traditional symbolism of the peacock, combined with biblical descriptions of the seraphim and cherubim in the visions of the prophets, led to the embellishment of angels with wings of peacock feathers. The seraphim of Isaiah (6:2-3) each had six wings, two covering the face, two covering the feet, and two for flying. The vision of Ezekiel refers to four living creatures (1:5) and cherubim (10:12), each with four faces

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<sup>120</sup> D. Talbot Rice, *Art of the Byzantine Era* (New York, 1963), 60-1.

<sup>121</sup> Cited in H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 39-40, from which much of this paragraph comes. See also J. M. C. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art* (Ithaca, NY, 1973), 250-3.

<sup>122</sup> Augustine, *The City of God*, Book 21.4 (LCL), 14-17.

<sup>123</sup> H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, fig. 51.

and four wings, all covered with eyes and accompanied by flaming wheels. Drawing on the Old Testament visions, the book of Revelation (4:6-9) describes four beasts full of eyes with four faces and six wings full of eyes. The angels of Isaiah and Revelation cry “Holy, Holy, Holy.” The seraphim and cherubim appear in apse decoration and on liturgical objects, which shed light on the meaning of the iconography at Kiti. The Riha flabellum or *rhipidion* is a silver-gilt liturgical fan dated by imperial stamps to the reign of Justin II (565-578) (Fig. 4.16). Now displayed at Dumbarton Oaks, the fan was produced in Constantinople and discovered in Syria as part of the Riha treasure, now known to belong to the larger Kaper Koraon treasure.<sup>124</sup> The fan illustrates the tetramorph of Ezekiel’s vision with the faces of a lion, man, ox, and eagle, four wings of peacock feathers, and flaming wheels, surrounded by sixteen stylized peacock feathers defining the scallops of the outer edge. A nearly identical fan, a product of the same workshop with stamps of Justin II, was discovered with the Stuma treasure, now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum (Fig. 4.17).<sup>125</sup> It shows the seraph of Isaiah’s vision with six wings, no eyes, and the face of a man, but also incorporates the flaming wheels of Ezekiel. In the context of the liturgy, the fans serve to protect the Eucharist from flies or insects. Symbolically, they recall the guardians of the Lord in heaven, the seraphim and cherubim with which they are decorated. In addition, the stylized feathers of the border denote the use of actual peacock feathers in the construction of liturgical fans

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<sup>124</sup> Cat. no. 11 in M. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC, 1962), 15-17. Cat. no. 32 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 150-4.

<sup>125</sup> Cat. no. 31 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 147-9.

made of parchment or cloth.<sup>126</sup> The tradition of decorating fans with peacock feathers to keep flies from food is pre-Christian in origin,<sup>127</sup> but enabled the development of a thoroughly Christian symbolism. The fashioning of the archangels' wings at Kiti underscores the protective function of the archangels in relation to the Virgin and Child, the sacred space of the apse, and the Eucharist.<sup>128</sup>

The inclusion of flaming wheels in the Stuma fan exemplifies the conflation of angelic beings in Christian art, which was influenced by liturgical texts, despite the meticulous classification of Pseudo-Dionysios.<sup>129</sup> His *Celestial Hierarchy* ranked angels into nine orders and three triads according to Scripture: seraphim, cherubim, and thrones; virtues, dominations, and powers; and principalities, archangels, and angels.<sup>130</sup> All participate in divine likeness and illumination, but those of the first hierarchy, including the seraphim and cherubim, are distinguished by their closeness to God and superior knowledge of the divine. Only the lowest orders, the archangels and angels, can communicate with men on earth. They act as divine messengers, guides, and guardians of the righteous. The hierarchy of Pseudo-Dionysios was extremely influential, but did not resolve or prevent confusion in the liturgy. In the liturgy of John Chrysostom and in

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<sup>126</sup> S. Boyd, "Art in the Service of the Liturgy: Byzantine Silver Plate," in *Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium*, ed. L. Safran (University Park, PA, 1998), 152-85, esp. 163. Boyd suggests that silver liturgical fans had ceased to be used by the sixth century and instead functioned ceremonially.

<sup>127</sup> Toynebee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art*, 251.

<sup>128</sup> The archangels' role as guardians and protectors is also implied by their staffs, which resemble those of imperial palace guards, in particular the *ostiaros*: A. Vogt, *Le livre des cérémonies*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1935), vol. 1, book 1: 7, 18-19; vol. 1, commentary: 43. An episode in the *Life of John the Almsgiver* by Leontios of Neapolis also proves the correspondence between angels and palace guards. When the saint arrives in Rhodes, he sees "a eunuch in gleaming apparel, a golden sceptre in his right hand, standing by him and saying: 'Come, I beg you, the King of Kings is asking for you!'" In tears, John sends for the patrician Nicetas: "'You, my master, called me to go to our earthly king but the heavenly King has anticipated you and has summoned to Himself my humbleness.'" He then related to him the vision which he had just seen of the eunuch, or rather of the angel." Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints*, 255 (ch. 44b). Greek text in A. J. Festugière, ed., *Vie de Syméon le Fou et vie de Jean de Chypre* (Paris, 1974), 402-3 (ch. 52).

<sup>129</sup> Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 46-9.

<sup>130</sup> Pseudo-Dionysios, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, ed. P. Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* (New York, 1987).

the Coptic liturgy, the seraphim and cherubim are both described as six-winged and many-eyed, although the seraphim of Isaiah had no eyes and the cherubim of Ezekiel had four wings.<sup>131</sup> Representations of prophetic visions in apses also did not distinguish them. Hence the difficulty in identifying the vision and prophets of the apse mosaic of Hosios David in Thessalonike, where Christ sits on a rainbow throne supported by four beasts with adjoined wings covered with eyes (Fig. 1.80).<sup>132</sup> The angels appear to correspond to the descriptions of Ezekiel and Revelation but lack the flaming wheels of the former and hold gospel books, signaling the four evangelists, while the scroll of Christ alludes to Isaiah 25:9. In particular, the *Trisagion*, or thrice-holy hymn chanted at the beginning of the anaphora, inspired the depiction of seraphim and cherubim in apse decoration. Although the *Trisagion* imitates the cries of the seraphim of Isaiah and the four beasts of Revelation, it was inscribed in relation to other types of angels. The *Trisagion* appears on the standards of the archangels Michael and Gabriel on the mosaics of the triumphal arch of S. Apollinare in Classe (Fig. 2.71), and on the standards of the four orders of angels – principalities, powers, dominations, and virtues – on the mosaics of the bema at Nicaea (Fig. 4.18).<sup>133</sup> These examples, along with the mosaic at Kiti, exploit confusion in the liturgy in order to conflate the various orders of angels. This

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<sup>131</sup> Brightman, ed., *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, 175, 385, cited in Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 48.

<sup>132</sup> On the visions of Ezekiel and Habakkuk, following the fourteenth-century monk Ignatius: A. Xyngopoulos, “Τὸ Καθολικὸν τῆς μονῆς Λατόμου ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ ψηφιδωτόν,” *Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον* 12 (1929) 142-80. On Ezekiel’s vision with Ezekiel and Zacharias, then Peter and Paul: A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, vol. 2, 198-202; “A propos d’une icône byzantine du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Cahiers archéologiques* 10 (1959) 289-304. On John’s vision with Isaiah or Ezekiel and John: J. Snyder, “The Meaning of the ‘Maiestas Domini’ in Hosios David,” *Byzantion* 37 (1967) 143-52. On the impossibility of making a precise identification: J.-M. Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments du IV<sup>e</sup> au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle: contribution à l’étude d’une ville paléochrétienne* (Athens, 1984), 157-60; “Further Remarks,” 9.

<sup>133</sup> F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, 2:2 (Weisbaden, 1976), 245-6. The standards and inscriptions of the angels at Nicaea are preserved from the first phase of decoration: Underwood, “Evidence of Restorations,” 235-43.

encouraged a typological reading of Scripture and proclaimed the unity of sacred time, which was an important feature of early Christian apse decoration. Likewise, the invocation of multiple angels would have been thought more effective perhaps than that of a single type, in the same way that saints' images were repeated in early churches.<sup>134</sup>

Not only are the orders of angels assimilated to each other, but the clergy and congregation are assimilated to angels in liturgical texts. In the early fifth century, Balai of Aleppo compares the priests to the many-eyed seraphim or cherubim in a Syriac hymn on the Church at Qenneshrin, after establishing the presence of God in the church: "For it is not an ordinary dwelling; It is heaven on earth since [heaven's] Lord [dwells] in it. Instead of Watchers [are] the pure priests Who serve therein the Deity."<sup>135</sup> The comparison was repeated by Pseudo-Dionysios, who likens the clergy surrounding the altar to the seraphim surrounding God in the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*.<sup>136</sup> The whole congregation is joined to the ranks of angels by means of the opening words of the *Cherubic Hymn* or *Cheroubikon*, sung at the entrance of the gifts from 573-4 under Justin II: "We who mystically represent the cherubim and sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity, let us lay aside all worldly care to receive the King of all escorted unseen by the angelic corps."<sup>137</sup> In a single passage, Germanos brings together the angels of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation, extends the analogy to the priests and congregation, and confirms the iconography of the *rhypidia*: "The fans and the deacons are in the likeness of the six-winged Seraphim and the many-eyed Cherubim, for in this way earthly things imitate the heavenly, transcendent, spiritual order of things." He enumerates the cries of

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<sup>134</sup> Cf. H. Maguire, *The Icons of Their Bodies*, 100-45.

<sup>135</sup> Madrasa 4, cited in McVey, "Spirit Embodied," 55.

<sup>136</sup> Pseudo-Dionysios, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, ch. 4.6 in Campbell, 57, 175.

<sup>137</sup> R. Taft, *The Great Entrance*, 54-5. Solovey, *Byzantine Divine Liturgy*, 226-9.

the “four-formed creatures:” the lion, calf, and man, who “antiphonally exclaim” the thrice “Holy,” while the eagle cries “Lord of Sabaoth.” Like the seraph of Isaiah 6:6, the priest distributes the bread, taking in his tongs (i.e. hands) Christ, the spiritual coal.<sup>138</sup>

Thus, the archangels of the Kiti mosaic are assimilated to the two highest orders of angels, the seraphim and cherubim, by means of the peacock-feathered wings, allowing them to fulfill multiple functions in relation to the liturgy and the Virgin and Child in the apse. Although Glenn Peers has shown that all representations of angels are in effect dissimulations because of the bodiless and ever-changing nature of the celestial beings, he concedes that modifications of the generic type of the winged youth carry meaning and introduce complex relationships.<sup>139</sup> In the context of the composition, the archangels at Kiti support a vision of the Virgin and Child, which I have described as a parallel to the Eucharistic vision and a substitute for the vision of the divine Christ. As the many-eyed creatures surround the throne of God in heaven, the wings of the archangels serve as an allusion to and a reminder of the divinity of the Christ Child held in the arms of the Virgin Mary. Likewise, in the absence of a vision of the divine Christ, the angels with peacock-feathered wings point towards heaven and inspire the mind to divine contemplation.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Germanos of Constantinople, *Ecclesiastical History*, ch. 41 in Meyendorff, *On the Divine Liturgy*, 94-7.

<sup>139</sup> Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 55-9.

<sup>140</sup> On spiritual ascent as a function of medieval art, see the collection of essays in H. Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia, 2000).



## CHAPTER 5

### METAPHOR

Byzantine rhetoric in the form of imperial and religious panegyric depended heavily on metaphor for expressing the virtues, qualities, and capabilities of the exemplary individual. Metaphors were often compiled and recited in quick succession to honor the individual in accordance with convention and to overwhelm the audience with feelings of admiration. Like encomium in general, metaphors could clarify or intensify the audience's existing sentiments towards the subject, while establishing that he or she is worthy of praise.<sup>1</sup> The accumulation of metaphors is an essential feature of many homilies and hymns in honor of the Virgin Mary. This chapter deals primarily with metaphors of nature and the created world in the context of these works, which were ultimately drawn from Scripture or from traditional *ekphraseis* of the season of spring.<sup>2</sup> Although many of the same metaphors were repeated time and again in Byzantine literature, they are less often reflected in the art of Byzantine churches.<sup>3</sup> Open to a variety of interpretations but always dependent on context, metaphors have the potential to encompass a wide range of references, sacred or profane.<sup>4</sup> For the same reason, they

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<sup>1</sup> R. Webb, "Praise and Persuasion: Argumentation and Audience Response in Epideictic Oratory," in *Rhetoric in Byzantium*, ed. E. Jeffreys (Aldershot, 2003), 127-35, esp. 133.

<sup>2</sup> H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1981), 42-52.

<sup>3</sup> H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion: Nature in Byzantine Art and Literature* (New York, 2012), 78-105; "Metaphors of the Virgin in Byzantine Literature and Art," in *Imitatio, Aemulatio, Variatio: Akten des internationalen wissenschaftlichen Symposions zur byzantinischen Sprache und Literatur* (Wien, 22.-25. Oktober 2008), ed. A. Rhoby and E. Schiffer (Vienna, 2010), 189-97; "Art and Text," in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, ed. E. Jeffreys, J. Haldon, and R. Cormack (Oxford, 2008), 721-30, esp. 725-6.

<sup>4</sup> H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion*, 78-9. M. Cunningham, "Divine Banquet: The Theotokos as a Source of Spiritual Nourishment," in *Eat, Drink, and Be Merry (Luke 12:19): Food and Wine in Byzantium*, ed. L. Brubaker and K. Linardou (Aldershot, 2007), 235-44, esp. 243-4. Both differ from L. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden, 2001), 121, which defines metaphor as "a process of transfer which gives rise to only one meaning."

have the potential to be misunderstood, which explains the relative infrequency of visual metaphors in a society preoccupied with the threat of idolatry.

The subject of metaphor will be discussed in relation to two of the three apse mosaics in Cyprus; both the apse mosaics at Kiti and Livadia use visual metaphor to construct meaning. The first section explores and contextualizes the border of the apse mosaic at Kiti with its iconography of the fountain of paradise.<sup>5</sup> While the mosaic conforms to a tradition of illustrating the waters of paradise in apse mosaics, it remains innovative in its portrayal of the fountain instead of the four rivers. The tendency in scholarship to view this imagery in isolation has obscured its function and significance as a visual commentary on the principal theme of the Virgin and Child.<sup>6</sup> The second section provides another important context for the border by exploring the metaphors of nature and fertility that served to praise the Virgin Mary in contemporary sermons and hymns. Like the corresponding literary metaphors, these visual metaphors allude to the renewal of the created world through the Virgin Mary and her Son. With an emphasis on Christian supersession and renewal, section three examines the contribution of nature personifications to the iconography of the Virgin and Child at Kiti. While plants and living creatures express the fertility of the Virgin, they also encourage analogies with depictions of Earth that enhance the metaphorical and Eucharistic significance of the mosaic. Finally, section four turns away from the apse mosaic at Kiti to consider the apse

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<sup>5</sup> On the non-marginal role of margins and borders in medieval art, see in general M. Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London, 1992); N. Kanaan-Kedar, *Marginal Sculpture in Medieval France: Towards the Deciphering of an Enigmatic Pictorial Language* (Aldershot, 1995); G. Peers, *Sacred Shock: Framing Visual Experience in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> A. H. S. Megaw, "Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro," *Corso di cultura sull'arte Ravennate e Bizantina* 32 (1985) 173-98. E. Fischer, "Die Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern: Neue Aspekte zu Bau und Apsismosaik," in *Begegnungen: Materielle Kulturen auf Zypern bis in die römische Zeit*, ed. S. Rogge (Münster, 2007), 151-95. A. Foulías, *The Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti at Kiti, Larnaka* (Nicosia, 2004); "Το ψηφιδωτό της Αψίδας στην Παναγία Αγγελόκτιστη Κιτίου," *Επετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετών Ιεράς Μονής Κύκκου* 8 (2008) 269-334.

mosaic at Livadia, which rejects the imagery of nature and also its symbolism. Here, it is not merely the absence of nature that implies its rejection, but the creation of a physical barrier to the garden of paradise within the mosaic. Through this barrier, the mosaic embraces other inorganic metaphors of the Virgin, which convey her liminality rather than her fertility, but emphasize equally her role in the Incarnation.

### *1. The Fountain of Paradise*

The conspicuous upper border of the mosaic at Kiti was described and partly analyzed in chapter two (Fig. 5.1). Located in the soffit of the apse, the symmetrical border illustrates a total of six fountains flanked by pairs of confronted or addorsed animals or birds. The fountains are signified by slender vessels and divided into groups of three by a radiating cross at the apex of the arch. Selected in part because of the narrow space of the arch, this type of vessel with a wide mouth, narrow neck, and ovoid body was traditionally used for water or wine.<sup>7</sup> Enveloped in acanthus leaves, half-length ducks drink from the first set of fountains; beribboned parrots drink from the second set of fountains; and stags emerge from behind the third set of fountains closest to the central cross. They symbolize the living creatures of the water, air, and land, which God created on the fifth and sixth days in Genesis 1:20-5.

Most scholars have characterized the subject of the border as the “fountain of life.”<sup>8</sup> Derived from several biblical passages that refer to fountains or living waters, the

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<sup>7</sup> Cat. no. 86 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore, 1986), 257-8. Cat. no. 73 in J. Spier, ed., *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art* (New Haven, 2007), 250. Cat. nos. 131, 389, 400 in K. Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York, 1979), 153-4, 431-3, 441-2.

<sup>8</sup> A. H. S. Megaw, “Byzantine Architecture and Decoration in Cyprus: Metropolitan or Provincial?” *DOP* 28 (1974) 75; “Mosaici parietali paleobizantini di Cipro,” 189. D. Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics*, 1st edn.

modern term has been used to explain a variety of Christian images representing living creatures gathered around a source of water.<sup>9</sup> When used in its literal sense, “living water” in the Bible denotes running water, characteristic of a spring or river, in contrast to the standing water of a cistern. However, the waters of these verses were often endowed with metaphorical significance. Water is synonymous with salvation in the story of the Samaritan woman at the well, recounted in the gospel of John. In John 4:10-14, Jesus compares the living water of God to the well of Samaria: “Whoever drinks from this water shall thirst again: But whoever drinks from the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well (πηγή) of water springing up into eternal life.”<sup>10</sup> Likewise in Revelation 21:6, God promises to give generously to those who thirst from the “fountain (τῆς πηγῆς) of the water of life,” reflecting other verses in the psalms and the books of the prophets where God himself is praised as the fountain or the waters of life.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the theme of the fountain of life in the New Testament expands upon and interprets several passages in the Old Testament in light of Christian salvation.<sup>12</sup> The final chapter in the book of Revelation begins with John’s vision of the “river of the water of life” (ποταμὸν ὕδατος ζωῆς), which flows clear as crystal from the throne of God and the lamb; on either side of the river stands the

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(Nicosia, 1987), 56 and 2nd edn. (Nicosia, 1992), 119-21; “The Early Christian Mosaics of Cyprus,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 52:4 (1989) 192-202, esp. 199. Foulías, *Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti*, 26. One scholar argues that the vessels do not contain water but plants, excluding any relationship to the fountain of life and Psalm 41/2 (see below): Fischer, “Die Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti auf Zypern,” 151-95, esp. 190 n. 114. While it is admittedly difficult to tell whether fine streams of water or plants issue from the vessels, sixth-century viewers would not have had the benefit of detailed photographs, would surely have recognized the type of vessel, and would not have been so literal-minded. In his description of the lateral apse mosaics of the church of St. Sergios in Gaza, Chorikios imagines that the vessels with burgeoning vines also contained “cool water.” C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: sources and documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972), 62.

<sup>9</sup> P. Underwood, “The Fountain of Life in Manuscripts of the Gospels,” *DOP* 5 (1950) 41-138, esp. 46-9.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. John 7:37-8; Is. 12:3.

<sup>11</sup> Ps. 36:9, 42:1; Jer. 2:13, 17:13.

<sup>12</sup> For example, Gen. 2:6, 2:10, Ps. 36:9, Is. 12:3, 44:3, 49:10, 55:1, 58:11; Ezek. 47:9; Joel 3:18; Jer. 2:13, 17:13; Zech. 14:8.

tree of life (ξύλον ζωῆς) bearing twelve fruits (Rev. 22:1-2).<sup>13</sup> These lines echo the description of the earthly paradise in the book of Genesis, recasting the role of the waters and the tree of life at the end of time. After planting the tree of life (ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς) and the tree of knowledge in the garden of Eden, God fashions a river (ποταμὸς) that went out of Eden and was parted into four heads (Gen. 2:10-14). A few lines earlier, in the context of a second and lesser known Creation account, the text of Genesis also mentions a fountain, a πηγὴ or *fons* in the Greek and Latin translations, that went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground (Gen. 2:6). Originally described as a mist (ἄνεμος) in the Hebrew text, this fountain cultivated the seeds that God had planted and prepared the ground for the creation of man (Gen. 2:7), already ascribed to the sixth day (Gen. 1:26-7, 31). In Christian exegesis, the fountain of God's primordial earth was often conflated with the waters of paradise and imagined as the source (πηγὴ) of the four rivers.<sup>14</sup>

While the title "fountain of life" remains valuable for its broader biblical allusions, the early Christian images to which it has been applied draw primarily on descriptions of paradise in the Bible and in the writings of the church fathers. Expounding on the text of Genesis, Christian writers described paradise as a garden or an orchard, located to the east of the earth or high above the earth, where trees and flowers bloomed perpetually in a temperate climate without seasons.<sup>15</sup> The trees released sweet perfumes and bore ripe fruits, animals and birds lived harmoniously together, and cool

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Rev. 7:17, 22:17.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, St. Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise*, ed. S. Brock (Crestwood, NY, 1990), II.9, 88, XI.12, 158 and *Commentary on Genesis*, I.23B cited in J. Daniélou, "Terre et Paradis chez les pères de l'église," *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 22 (1953) 433-72, esp. 451-2; St. Ambrose, *Hexameron, Paradise, and Cain and Abel*, trans. J. Savage (New York, 1961), 294-9; Avitus, *Poematum de mosaicae historiae gestis*, ed. J.-P. Migne, PL 59.329, cited and trans. in H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park, PA, 1987), 37. For others, see Underwood, "Fountain of Life," 46-9.

<sup>15</sup> Daniélou, "Terre et Paradis," 433-72.

water flowed continuously from its source. Thus, the iconography of the fountain of life, comprised of a source of water, a variety of animals and birds, and a garden of trees, plants, or flowers, may be better interpreted as the fountain or waters of paradise.

Although God ordered the cherubim and a flaming sword to guard the entrance to Eden and the path to the Tree of Life (Gen. 3:24), early Christian artists represented the closing of the earthly paradise, or paradise lost, by means of garden gates. When present, these gates provide one of the clearest indications that paradise, and not God's creation on earth, was meant to be represented in a given image. Likewise, the absence of Adam and Eve from many depictions of paradise supports the idea that the earthly paradise remained closed after the Fall and would be restored in heaven only after the Second Coming of Christ.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the most comprehensive and explicit representations of the fountain of paradise can be found in the floor mosaics of Byzantine Macedonia.<sup>17</sup> The trefoil mosaic of the baptistery at Ohrid, dated to the second half of the fifth century, depicts three two-tiered fountains surrounding the baptismal font (Fig. 5.2).<sup>18</sup> The hexagonal or cruciform basins imitate the forms of early Christian baptismal fonts, including the cruciform font

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<sup>16</sup> The appearance of Adam clothed and enthroned in three Syrian floor mosaics presents an allegorical interpretation of paradise, where Adam has been returned to a state of glory by Christ: H. Maguire, "Adam and the Animals: Allegory and the Literal Sense in Early Christian Art," *DOP* 41 (1987) 363-73. Literal representations of Adam and Eve in paradise, corresponding to the biblical text, are more prominent in the catacombs and other tombs, on sarcophagi, and in the so-called minor arts than in monumental ecclesiastical art.

<sup>17</sup> V. Bitrakova-Grozdanova, "Sur un thème se trouvant dans les mosaïques paléochrétiennes de la République Socialiste de Macédoine," *Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina* 33 (1986) 121-34. For examples of the theme outside Macedonia: T. Velmans, "Quelques versions rares du thème de la fontaine de vie dans l'art paléochrétien," *Cahiers archéologiques* 19 (1969) 29-43.

<sup>18</sup> V. Bitrakova-Grozdanova, *Monuments paléochrétiens de la région d'Ohrid* (Ohrid, 1975), 55-65. At the entrance to the baptistery, between the rivers Geon and Euphrates, the mosaic contains an obliterated inscription, which left no room for a fourth fountain, pace Velmans, "Quelques versions rares du thème de la fontaine de vie," 34. On the date of the mosaic: R. Kolarik, *The Floor Mosaics of Stobi and Their Balkan Context* (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1982), 426-8, 502 n. 221, 503 n. 229.

of the Ohrid baptistery.<sup>19</sup> Each of the fountains is surmounted by a pinecone finial and flanked by two birds and two deer or two sheep, which drink from the fountains. In the four corners of the mosaic, water flows through four masks, one of which is lost, inscribed with the names of the four rivers: Phison, Gehon, Tigris (lost) and Euphrates. While there is no indication of a garden, the incorporation of fountains and rivers, inscriptions, and a variety of living creatures enables a clear reading of the subject. Ultimately, the waters of the baptismal font are shown to be irrigated by and assimilated to the waters of paradise.<sup>20</sup>

Rarely in Byzantine art are the waters of paradise rendered so completely.<sup>21</sup> More often, they are signified by either fountains or rivers, reflecting ambiguity in the second Creation account of Genesis, the strict interpretation of the river (ποταμὸς) in Genesis 2:10, or the view that one or the other was sufficient to signify the waters.<sup>22</sup> In the contemporary mosaics of the nearby baptistery at Stobi, the tiered fountains and rivers of

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<sup>19</sup> Full-page illuminations in the Carolingian Godescalc Lectionary (Paris B. N. cod. lat. 1203, fol. 3v) and the Soissons Gospels (Paris B. N. cod. lat. 8850, fol. 6v) represent the fountain of paradise as a hexagonal basin with a domed canopy set on eight columns, modeled on the fifth-century baptismal font of the Lateran Baptistery in Rome, as renovated by Sixtus III in 432-40. The hexagonal fountains of the Ohrid Baptistery lack the columns and canopy of the Lateran font, suggesting they were meant to resemble baptismal fonts in general, rather than the Lateran font in particular. On the Carolingian manuscripts: Underwood, "Fountain of Life," 44-54. Note that the Godescalc fountain has eight columns, although its hexagonal shape is less clear due to a lack of perspective.

<sup>20</sup> Also, it is through the ritual of baptism that Christian initiates gain access to paradise.

<sup>21</sup> Compare the fragmentary wall mosaic from the Acheiropoietos Church, now in the Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessalonike, which represents four streams issuing from a fountain, two from the finial and two from the hillock below: cat. no. 450 in J. Frings and H. Willinghöfer, *Byzanz: Pracht und Alltag: Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, 26. Februar bis 13. Juni 2010* (Munich, 2010), 337-8. Another example may be found in the floor mosaic of the baptistery of Oued Ramel in Tunisia, where the four rivers flow from a shell extending from the baptismal font. On the opposite side of the font, two peacocks flank a kantharos, which could signal the fountain of paradise, although the font is clearly presented as the source of the four rivers. See P. Gauckler, *Basiliques chrétiennes de Tunisie* (Paris, 1913), 20-3, pl. 18; H. Stern, "Le décor des pavements et des cuves dans les baptistères paléochrétiens," in *Actes du Ve congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne, Aix-en-Provence 13-19 septembre 1954* (Paris, 1957), 381-90.

<sup>22</sup> Like Grabar's image-signs in the early Christian catacombs, minimal figures could signify an entire narrative: A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins* (Princeton, 1968), 7-30. But such shorthand representation can complicate identification, especially in the case of the fountain of paradise, the constituent parts of which are very common.

the Ohrid baptistery are replaced by four kantharoi with pinecone finials emerging from schematized acanthus leaves, similar to the fountains at Kiti (Fig. 5.3).<sup>23</sup> Each of the vessels is flanked by two deer and two black birds or two peacocks and two ducks.<sup>24</sup> Trees and flowering branches complete the garden setting. In addition, five threshold panels extend from the perimeter of the mosaic through the five doorways of the baptistery. All are characterized by a pattern of imbricated scales, common to garden gates, parapets, and chancel screens: in this context they symbolize the gates of paradise.<sup>25</sup> The same pattern defines the gates of paradise in a floor mosaic from the complex west of the Large Basilica at Heraklea Lynkestis, perhaps dated to the mid-sixth century (Fig. 5.4).<sup>26</sup> Again, the fountain takes the form of a kantharos, flanked by living creatures of the land, air, and water, including four deer, birds, and dolphins. The background contains a variety of flowers and fruit-bearing trees. In the foreground, the two central panels of the barrier make use of the rising scale pattern.

Also prevalent in early Christian tombs, the fountain of paradise appears in two fourth-century wall paintings in Thessalonike and Nicaea. The north wall of tomb eighty-nine from the eastern cemetery of Thessalonike shows two peacocks, symbolic of immortality, approaching a fountain raised on a column (Fig. 5.5).<sup>27</sup> A large wooden fence, representing the gates of paradise, emphasizes the division between the worlds of

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<sup>23</sup> Kolarik, *Floor Mosaics of Stobi*, 102-18.

<sup>24</sup> The northwest quadrant with two deer and two black birds also includes two ducks below the stylized leaves at the base of the vessel.

<sup>25</sup> See section four of this chapter for additional parallels and the significance of the pattern at Livadia.

<sup>26</sup> G. Tomašević, "Mosaïques paléochrétiennes récemment découvertes à Héracléa Lynkestis," in *La mosaïque gréco-romaine*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1975), 385-99, esp. 394-7. Kolarik, *Floor Mosaics of Stobi*, 458-60, 517 n. 331, 338.

<sup>27</sup> E. Marke, *Η νεκρόπολη της Θεσσαλονίκης στους βυζαντινούς και παλαιοχριστιανικούς χρόνους: μέσα του 3ου έως μέσα του 8ου αι. μΧ.* (Athens, 2006), 159, fig. 101, pl. 12c. See also E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum and J. Ward-Perkins, *Justinianic Mosaic Pavements in Cyrenaican Churches* (Rome, 1980), 52, pl. 90.3.



the living and the deceased. A well-known tomb painting in Nicaea also shows two peacocks flanking a kantharos filled with water, while other birds flit around the lush garden (Fig. 5.6).<sup>28</sup> The large chi-rho at the summit of the composition proclaims the way to Christian salvation. In funerary contexts, the imagery of paradise recalls the loss of the earthly paradise and expresses the hope for its future restoration. More importantly, however, it reflects the personal wishes of the deceased, who aspire to the blessings of paradise in the afterlife.

As in the floor mosaic of the baptistery at Ohrid, the waters of paradise were also frequently depicted in the form of the four rivers, represented as streams of water or personifications.<sup>29</sup> However, personifications tended to be used in compositions celebrating the earth and its abundance – not paradise – with its changing seasons, months of the year, and labors.<sup>30</sup> There are obvious exceptions, like the baptisteries at Ohrid and Mariana in Corsica, although a distinction might be made between the masks selected for these mosaics and the full-length, half-nude personifications found elsewhere, for example in the cosmographical floor mosaic of the Chapel of the Martyr Theodore in Madaba, later damaged by iconoclasts (Fig. 5.7).<sup>31</sup> Inscribed within a geometric interlace, the creatures and produce of the earth, including musicians,

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<sup>28</sup> H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, fig. 51.

<sup>29</sup> P.-A. Février, “Les quatre fleuves du paradis,” *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 32 (1956) 179-99. S. Djurić, “Ateni and the Rivers of Paradise in Byzantine Art,” *Zograf* 20 (1989) 22-9. H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 23-8, 44-8; “The Nile and the Rivers of Paradise,” in *The Madaba Map Centenary, 1897-1997*, ed. M. Piccirillo and M. Alliata (Jerusalem, 1999), 179-84; *Nectar and Illusion*, 22, 26-9, 42-4, 146-8.

<sup>30</sup> H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 23-8; “The Nile and the Rivers of Paradise,” 179-84.

<sup>31</sup> On the baptistery at Mariana: G. Moracchini, “Le pavement en mosaïque de la basilique paléo-chrétienne et du baptistère de Mariana (Corse),” *Cahiers archéologiques* 13 (1962) 137-60, esp. 150-8. The floor mosaic at Tegea, with its personifications of the months and rivers surrounded by the ocean, is discussed by H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 24-8 and “The Nile and the Rivers of Paradise,” 180. Although it also depicts the rivers as personifications, the nave mosaic of the east church of Qasr el-Lebia is more problematic: Alföldi-Rosenbaum and Ward-Perkins, *Justinianic Mosaic Pavements in Cyrenaican Churches*, 33-40; H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 41-55. For an exceptional example in the post-iconoclastic period, see Djurić, “Ateni and the Rivers of Paradise,” 22-9.

quadrupeds, birds, and baskets of fruit, are surrounded by the ocean, signified by fish and water birds at the perimeter of the main field.<sup>32</sup> The placement of the four rivers at the four corners of the mosaic reflects the widespread idea that the four rivers of paradise flowed out of Eden, under the ocean surrounding the earth, and into the four rivers of the inhabited world: the Nile (Gehon), the Ganges or the Danube (Phison), the Tigris, and the Euphrates. The process was visualized in a sixth-century map of the world by Cosmas Indicopleustes, which is preserved in a ninth-century copy of the *Christian Topography* (Fig. 4.5). An emphasis on the paradisaical origin of the rivers, rather than their earthly destination, was perhaps better represented not by pagan personifications, but by four streams of water.

In this form, the four rivers of paradise feature in monumental programs and minor works of art, occasionally without living creatures or any indication of a garden; in Western monuments and objects, the living creatures are often replaced by the Lamb of God and his flock. Several early Christian apse mosaics portray the four rivers of paradise beneath the throne or feet of Christ or the Lamb, including the *Traditio Legis* mosaic at S. Costanza in Rome (Fig. 1.79), and the main apse mosaics of Sts. Cosmas and Damian in Rome (Fig. 1.75), S. Vitale in Ravenna (1.73), and Hosios David in Thessalonike (Fig. 1.80). While each of the mosaics preserves elements of a paradisaical landscape, the relationship between the living creatures and the waters has changed. In the presence of Christ, the living creatures ignore the waters and serve the Creator, become peripheral, or bolster the relationship between Christ and the waters. At S. Costanza and Sts. Cosmas and Damian, sheep in groups of four or twelve, symbolizing

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<sup>32</sup> M. Piccirillo, *The Mosaics of Jordan* (Amman, 1993), 117; *Madaba: le chiese e i mosaici* (Milan, 1989), 26-30.

the Evangelists or the apostles, approach not the rivers of paradise, but Christ or the Lamb who stands on top of them. Birds are relegated to the lower corners of the apse mosaic at S. Vitale, steering clear of the four rivers, while fish swim in the waters of Hosios David to reveal the living waters that emanate from Christ.<sup>33</sup> The additional significance of the rivers in these contexts will be considered below.

In floor mosaics, depictions of the four rivers resemble depictions of the fountain of paradise with respect to the prominence of living creatures. The peristyle floor mosaic of the pilgrimage church of Bir Ftouha in Carthage originally contained eight panels of the four rivers, depicted as flowing streams (Fig. 5.8).<sup>34</sup> The rivers are flanked by two deer and situated in a garden of trees and flowers. Two of the four surviving panels include a vessel as the source of the four rivers. The vessel is not a fountain, however, but a chalice filled with the red wine of the Eucharist, suggesting that salvation proceeds from the sacrifice of Christ and its ritual commemoration in the liturgy. Indeed, the four rivers conveyed similar messages on reliquaries and liturgical objects, such as the sixth- or seventh-century silver paten from the Phela Treasure in Syria, now in the Abegg Stiftung in Bern (Fig. 5.9).<sup>35</sup> Here, the four rivers flow from a steep hill supporting a cross, symbolizing Golgotha, the site of the Crucifixion. The arms of the cross are inscribed “Φῶς, Ζωή” or “Light, Life,” evoking the words of Christ in John 8:12. The only living creature, a dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit, descends on the vertical axis above the cross. Another inscription composed in a circle around the scene prays for the

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<sup>33</sup> L. Drewer, “Fisherman and Fish Pond: From the Sea of Sin to the Living Waters,” *Art Bulletin* 63:4 (1981) 533-47.

<sup>34</sup> H. Maguire, “Mosaics,” in *Bir Ftouha: A Pilgrimage Church Complex at Carthage*, ed. S. Stevens, A. Kalinowski, and H. vanderLeest (Portsmouth, RI, 2005), 303-42.

<sup>35</sup> Cat. no. 64 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 234-5. Cat. no. 7 in E. Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Treasures* (Bern, 1974), 26-30.

salvation of three female donors and identifies the paten as a gift to the church of the Theotokos in the village of Phela. While the rivers of paradise communicate their desire for salvation, they also equate the cross with the Tree of Life in Genesis 2:9 and 3:24, a connection that was made by contemporary Christian writers.<sup>36</sup> Finally, the four rivers of paradise also had a practical application in the liturgy of the Great Church. The marble floor of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople was traversed by four green bands that served as stopping points for processions and may have been conceived as the four rivers in abstract form (Fig. 5.10).<sup>37</sup> Although Paul the Silentiary mentions only a sea of waves in his sixth-century ekphrasis, referring to the book-matched slabs of white Proconnesian marble, the ninth-century *Narratio de Sancta Sophia* describes the bands as the four rivers of paradise.<sup>38</sup>

In its incorporation of the waters of paradise, the apse mosaic at Kiti is consistent with other early Christian apse mosaics,<sup>39</sup> but its iconography has more in common with church floors, where deer, birds, and ducks frequently delight in the fountain of paradise. The presence of deer was also observed in the mosaics of Ohrid, Stobi, Heraklea, and Bir Ftouha (Fig. 2.23). Their popularity in early Christian art is explained by the opening verse of Psalm 41/2: “As the hart longs for the water fountains (τὰς πηγὰς τῶν

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<sup>36</sup> For example, Romanos the Melode in a *kontakion* on the Resurrection, hymn 43, strophe 22 in J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Hymnes*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1967), 526-7 and Anastasios of Sinai, *Hexaemeron*, book 7a, line 276 in C. Kuehn and J. Baggarly, ed. and trans., *Hexaemeron* (Rome, 2007), 218-19. Contemporary ampullae also illustrate the cross as the Tree of Life in scenes of the Crucifixion, occasionally in association with the four rivers: A. Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte (Monza-Bobbio)* (Paris, 1958), 26-7, pls. 16, 18.

<sup>37</sup> G. Majeska, “Notes on the Archaeology of St. Sophia at Constantinople: The Green Marble Bands on the Floor,” *DOP* 32 (1978) 299-308. Majeska does not believe that the bands were originally associated with the rivers.

<sup>38</sup> The relevant passages of the ekphrasis and the *Narratio* are translated in C. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 95, 101. See also F. Barry, “Walking on Water: Cosmic Floors in Antiquity and the Middle Ages,” *Art Bulletin* 89:4 (2007) 627-56.

<sup>39</sup> The historical association of apses with water is explored by B. Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon: An Historical Perspective of the Apse as a Space for Images* (Wiesbaden, 2010), 13-29.

ὕδατων), so longs my soul for thee, O God.” With the hart perceived as a symbol of the Christian soul and the waters compared to those of baptism, the psalm became part of the liturgy of baptism from an early date and was sung by catechumens as they approached the font.<sup>40</sup> The influence of the psalm on the decoration of Christian churches is attested already in the early fourth century by Constantine’s donation of seven silver stags, each weighing eighty pounds, to the Lateran baptistery in the time of Pope Silvester (314-35).<sup>41</sup> Pouring water into the font, the stags accompanied statues of Christ, John the Baptist, and a golden lamb. Less spectacular programs made more direct connections between the psalm and portrayals of deer drinking water. A fragmentary floor mosaic from the fourth-century basilica of Chrysopolitissa in Paphos shows a deer amid flowers approaching a lost stream or pool of water (Fig. 5.11).<sup>42</sup> Above the deer, a Greek inscription records the first verse of the psalm. A black and white floor mosaic with the psalm inscribed in Latin decorated the room adjacent to the baptistery at Salona in Croatia, where the catechumens gathered to prepare for baptism (Fig. 5.12).<sup>43</sup> In the small figural scene set among large geometric pavements, two deer flank a kantharos filled with water against a background of cypress trees and flowers. While the fountain, deer, and cypresses in particular evoke the imagery of paradise, the mosaic lacks some of the defining features observed in other examples, including diverse species of birds, the rivers of paradise, and garden gates. Nevertheless, the artist probably intended the illustration of the psalm to resemble the fountain of paradise. A related image, also

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<sup>40</sup> Underwood, “Fountain of Life,” 51-2, citing the *Liber Sacramentorum* or “Gelasian Sacramentary” and Augustine.

<sup>41</sup> R. Davis, ed., *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis): The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715* (Liverpool, 1989), 18.

<sup>42</sup> Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics*, 1st edn., 34-5, pl. 16; “Early Christian Mosaics of Cyprus,” 193-4.

<sup>43</sup> E. Dyggve, *History of Salonitan Christianity* (Oslo, 1951), 31-3.

depicted on church floors, replaces the water of the vessel with a sprouting plant or vine. Such a composition was recently discovered in front of the central western apse in the early seventh-century basilica of Katalymmata ton Plakoton on the Akrotiri Peninsula in Cyprus.<sup>44</sup> Surrounded by large geometric panels, the only figural floor mosaic in the church represents two deer flanking a kantharos with a burgeoning grapevine in an architectural setting. Although the function of the western apse is not yet clear, the mosaic appears to employ the imagery of the psalm in relation to the Eucharist.<sup>45</sup> The representation of deer in the mosaic at Kiti may be associated with the Eucharist as well as with baptism, even without the grapevine. Not only is the mosaic located in a sanctuary, but the vessels of the border may be compared to silver flasks used to hold water or wine in ecclesiastical and domestic contexts.<sup>46</sup> According to Marlia Mango, a silver flask with the Adoration of the Magi now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art probably held water to be mixed with the Eucharistic wine (Fig. 2.63).<sup>47</sup> The vessel was identified in chapter two as a parallel for the mosaic based on its form and attendant motifs, including eagle protomes and acanthus leaves in the lower register.

Birds are also a feature of paradise, often appearing in numbers and diverse species. Two types of birds, parrots and ducks, were selected for the Kiti border (Fig. 2.42). As noted in chapter two, the fluttering ribbon around the neck of the parrot derives from the royal Persian *pativ*, which entered Byzantine art in the late fifth century. As a sign of domestication, it recalls the peaceful nature of the animals in paradise, which God

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<sup>44</sup> Excavations at the site are ongoing under the direction of Eleni Prokopiou at the Department of Antiquities. Some information is currently available on the Department's website.

<sup>45</sup> H.-C. Puech, "Le cerf et le serpent: note sur le symbolisme de la mosaïque découverte au baptistère de l'Henchir Messaouda," *Cahiers archéologiques* 4 (1949) 17-60. H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 38-9.

<sup>46</sup> See my chapter 2.7a.

<sup>47</sup> Cat. no. 86 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 257-8.

placed under the dominion of Adam (Gen. 2:19-20).<sup>48</sup> As water birds, ducks are classed among creatures of the waters in floor mosaics and textiles depicting the earth and ocean as separate entities.<sup>49</sup> In the context of the mosaic, they allow for a balanced composition symbolic of Creation, both on earth and in paradise, with its living creatures of the land, air, and water.<sup>50</sup> Finally, the peacock was central to portrayals of the fountain of paradise in the floor mosaic at Stobi and in the painted tombs at Thessalonike and Nicaea. Although peacocks do not feature in the narrow border at Kiti, they are signaled below by the wings of the archangels (Fig. 5.1).

Christian artists tended to allegorize the waters of paradise in the same manner as Christian writers, following the lead of the Bible in relation to the fountain of life and living waters. Symbolic interpretations of the waters have been noted already for a few examples, including the baptisteries at Ohrid and Stobi, the tombs in Thessalonike and Nicaea, the floor mosaic at Bir Ftouha, and the silver paten in Bern. In apse mosaics too, the waters of paradise function as more than topographical indicators locating a scene in paradise: they serve as reminders of paradise lost and guarantees of paradise restored through the coming of Christ. In association with this general idea, depictions of the waters of paradise often reflect specific interpretations of the waters in Christian exegetical texts, where the fountain of paradise or the source of living waters is compared to Christ, the Church, or the Virgin Mary, and the four rivers are compared to the four

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<sup>48</sup> H. Maguire, "Adam and the Animals," 365-6.

<sup>49</sup> H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 22, 29, 35, 36, 62, 75.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. V. Elbern, "Die 'Tria Genera Animantium' am Lebensbrunnen," *Oriens Christianus* 71 (1987) 182-200.

Gospels or the four Evangelists.<sup>51</sup> In some cases, the allegory is revealed in an inscription, while in others the meaning of the waters is determined by context alone. Such an inscription was written by Paulinus of Nola for the lost apse mosaic of the basilica of St. Felix at Nola.<sup>52</sup> Preserved in a letter of 403, the fourteen-line Latin poem identifies the theme of the mosaic as the Trinity, showing Christ as a lamb, the Holy Ghost as a dove, and the thundering voice of the Father, doubtless pictured as a hand emerging from the clouds (Fig. 5.13). The last lines of the poem instruct the viewer to recognize Christ as the source of the four rivers, and the four rivers as the four Evangelists: “He Himself, the Rock of the Church, is standing on a rock from which four seething springs issue, the Evangelists, the living streams of Christ.”<sup>53</sup> Similar metaphors were illustrated in the *Traditio Legis* mosaic at S. Costanza in Rome and in the apse mosaic of S. Vitale in Ravenna. At S. Costanza, an anthropomorphic Christ stands on a hill with the four rivers of paradise (Fig. 1.79). He is flanked not only by Peter and Paul, but by four sheep in the lower zone, which have been associated with the four Gospels.<sup>54</sup> Their proximity to the four rivers suggests that the rivers too should be interpreted as the Gospels, proceeding from Christ the source. At S. Vitale, the rivers of paradise flow outward in four streams from beneath the globe that serves as Christ’s throne (Fig. 1.73). On the north and south walls of the presbytery, the four Evangelists are seated with their

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<sup>51</sup> Other allegorical interpretations were also possible. St. Ambrose, for example, associated paradise with the soul, the fountain with Christ, and the four rivers with the virtues of prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice: Savage, *Hexameron, Paradise, and Cain and Abel*, 294-9.

<sup>52</sup> J. Engemann, “Zu den Apsis-Tituli des Paulinus von Nola,” *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 17 (1974) 21-46. English trans. in C. Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art, 300-1150: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1971), 20-3.

<sup>53</sup> English trans. in Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art*, 20.

<sup>54</sup> C. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1960), 35.



gospel books, each on the bank of a stream, presumably one of the four rivers.<sup>55</sup> Once again, the four Gospels stem from a common source, Christ.

The apse mosaic at Hosios David in Thessalonike combines visual and textual metaphors (Fig. 1.80). The mosaic depicts the theophany of Christ, with elements drawn from the visions of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation among others, witnessed by two unnamed prophets or apostles.<sup>56</sup> Below the feet of Christ, the four rivers of paradise flow from a mound of earth into a larger river full of fish, recalling Ezek. 47:9. On the left side, the waters overwhelm a river god, who imitates the gesture of the prophet standing above him, raising his hands in awe of the power of Christ.<sup>57</sup> As in the mosaics of St. Felix, S. Costanza, Sts. Cosmas and Damian, and S. Vitale, Christ is visualized as the source of the four rivers, which surge under his feet. The presence of the four Evangelists in the form of the four living beings, which support the mandorla of Christ, associates the four rivers with the Evangelists or the Gospels, which the beings hold in hand. And yet two inscriptions, derived from the same unknown verse, identify the sanctuary of Hosios David, and by extension the Church, with the waters of paradise.<sup>58</sup> Inscribed beneath the mosaic and in the book of the seated prophet, the verse compares the honorable sanctuary to the living source (πηγή ζωτικῆ) that receives and nourishes

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<sup>55</sup> B. Brenk, "Welchen Text illustrieren die Evangelisten in den Mosaiken von S. Vitale in Ravenna?" *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 16 (1982) 19-24, esp. 23. H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 77.

<sup>56</sup> The scroll of Christ refers to Isa. 25:9, while the four living beings come from Ezek. 1:5-14 and Rev. 4:6-8. The fish-filled waters also come from Ezek. 47:9. On the identification of the vision and prophets, see the relevant footnote in my chapter 4.3.

<sup>57</sup> J.-M. Spieser, "Further Remarks on the Mosaic of Hosios David," in *Urban and Religious Spaces in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2001), 1-12, esp. 8-9.

<sup>58</sup> Another apparent contradiction is observed at Kiti with respect to the angels. While inscriptions identify them as archangels, specifically Michael and Gabriel, the peacock-feathered wings liken them instead to seraphim and cherubim. See my chapter 4.3.

pious souls.<sup>59</sup> Its language associates the waters of paradise with the fountain of life and the living waters of the Bible. The inscriptions do not supersede or invalidate the visual evidence, but the two allegories coalesce, just as the theophany of Christ alludes simultaneously to the visions of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation, without corresponding precisely to any of them.<sup>60</sup> The designer of the mosaic probably wished to maximize the number of biblical allusions and related metaphors in order to encourage a spiritual reading of Scripture and to proclaim the unity of Christ and the Church as the living source. The importance of the waters in the mosaic is reinforced by the upper border, which recalls the fountain of paradise in its depiction of swans flanking covered vessels and plants.<sup>61</sup>

## 2. *Metaphors of the Virgin Mary*

Although the mosaic border at Kiti incorporates fountains, three types of living creatures, and a garden of plants and shoots, it neglects the most explicit imagery of paradise: the four rivers and the garden gates. As a result, the artist preserves the ambiguity of the Genesis text (2:4-7) and succeeds in representing both God's Creation on earth and the earthly paradise. In the context of the apse mosaic, the border acts as a visual commentary on the central theme of the Virgin and Child. Unlike the mosaics at St. Felix or Hosios David, there is no inscription to guide the viewer to a specific interpretation. Nevertheless, one need not consider the visual evidence alone, for the

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<sup>59</sup> The Greek text is transcribed in J. Snyder, "The Meaning of the 'Maiestas Domini' in Hosios David," *Byzantion* 37 (1967) 143-52, esp. 148 n. 2: πηγὴ ζωτικὴ δεκτικὴ θεραπευτικὴ ψυχῶν πιστῶν ὁ πανέντιμος οἶκος οὗτος.

<sup>60</sup> Spieser, "Further Remarks," 6-7.

<sup>61</sup> Velmans, "Quelques versions rares du thème de la fontaine de vie," 42.

border has many parallels in written commentary. This section explores the exegetical potential of the fountain of paradise at Kiti.

In general, the iconography of paradise recalls the metaphors of nature, springtime, and fertility that served to praise the Virgin Mary in early homilies and hymns.<sup>62</sup> Many of these metaphors were derived from Scripture, so that the Virgin was often compared to the garden of paradise and its source, the flowering rod of Aaron (Num. 17:8) or Jesse (Isa. 11:1), the bush that burned but was not consumed (Ex. 3:2), the rock from which Moses drew water (Num. 20:11), the uncut mountain of Daniel (Dan. 2:45), and the enclosed garden and the sealed fountain of the Song of Songs (Song of Sol. 4:12). Such comparisons were determined by a typological reading of the Old Testament, but Byzantine rhetoric also went beyond Scripture.<sup>63</sup> In the well-known Akathistos Hymn, the Virgin is hailed as “the flower of incorruption” and “the tree of glorious fruit”; her womb is a “sweet field for all who are willing to harvest salvation.”<sup>64</sup> For the fifth-century bishop Proklos of Constantinople, the Virgin was at once the “seedless earth, which blossomed with the fruit of salvation,” and “more glorious than paradise, for paradise was merely the planting of God, but she cultivated God himself in the flesh.”<sup>65</sup> According to the sixth-century Syriac poet Jacob of Serug, Mary was chosen

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<sup>62</sup> Metaphors of nature are found especially in sermons on the Annunciation, based on the springtime celebration of the feast: H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence*, 44-52. Arguments for the date of the feast on March 25 first appear in the sixth-century homilies of Anastasios of Antioch and Abramios of Ephesus: P. Allen, “The Sixth-Century Greek Homily: A Re-assessment,” in *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics*, ed. M. Cunningham and P. Allen (Leiden, 1998), 201-25, esp. 207.

<sup>63</sup> M. Cunningham, “The Meeting of the Old and the New: The Typology of Mary the Theotokos in Byzantine Homilies and Hymns,” in *The Church and Mary: Papers Read at the 2001 Summer Meeting and the 2002 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical Historical Society*, ed. R. Swanson (Woodbridge, 2004), 52-62.

<sup>64</sup> Unless otherwise noted, I have used the translation of the Akathistos Hymn in Peltomaa, *Akathistos Hymn*, 3-19.

<sup>65</sup> Hom. 4:I.9-12 in N. Constatas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Homilies 1-5, Texts and Translations* (Leiden, 2003), 226-7.

to be the bearer of all Creation.<sup>66</sup> Although such metaphors are common in early Byzantine texts dedicated to the Virgin, contemporary images of the Virgin or Virgin and Child are embellished only occasionally with luxuriant plant, animal, and aquatic life.<sup>67</sup> A parallel for the mosaic at Kiti is found in a gold bracelet at the British Museum, which was made around 600 and was once part of a pair (Fig. 3.50).<sup>68</sup> The medallion contains a bust of the orant Virgin, while the openwork hoop displays a vine scroll, inhabited by peacocks and swans, issuing from a central vase. The wall mosaics of the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč, dated to the mid-sixth century, incorporate aquatic imagery without animals or birds (Figs. 1.59, 5.14). On the apse wall, adjoining three depictions of the Virgin Mary, a wide horizontal border portrays a series of shells alongside discs of mother-of-pearl. The border extends below the apse mosaic of the enthroned Virgin and Child and above scenes of the Annunciation and the Visitation on the north and south walls of the apse.

At Kiti, the rendering of the fountain as a vessel has special significance for the Virgin Mary. The motif of the vessel occurs repeatedly in homilies and hymns as a metaphor for her womb. In the Akathistos Hymn, Mary is the “container of the uncontainable God” (15.6: *χώρα ἀχωρήτου*), the “receptacle of the wisdom of God” (17.6: *δοχείον*), the “basin that washes clean the conscience” (21.14: *λουτήρ*), and the “bowl wherein is mixed the wine of mighty joy” (21.15: *κρατήρ*).<sup>69</sup> In Proklos’ first

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<sup>66</sup> Hom. 1 in M. Hansbury, *Jacob of Serug: On the Mother of God* (Crestwood, NY, 1998), 20.

<sup>67</sup> On the disparity between the visual and textual material: H. Maguire, “Metaphors of the Virgin,” 189-97; *Nectar and Illusion*, 78-98. Only textiles, which often employ floral motifs as repeat patterns, apply such motifs with any regularity to narrative and iconic images of the Virgin Mary. Examples can be found in M.-H. Rutschowskaya, “The Mother of God in Coptic Textiles,” in *The Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. M. Vassilaki (Milan, 2000), 219-25. See also cat. nos. 8-9 on 273-5.

<sup>68</sup> Cat. no. 99 in D. Buckton, ed., *Byzantium: Treasures of Art and Culture from British Collections* (London, 1994), 95-6. Cat. no. 11 in Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God*, 292.

<sup>69</sup> I have translated *δοχείον* as “receptacle” instead of “vessel” in Peltomaa, *Akathistos Hymn*, 14-15.

homily, she is “the untarnished vessel (κειμήλιον) of virginity.”<sup>70</sup> The same term, κειμήλιον, appears in a homily of Pseudo-Epiphanius, who praises her repeatedly as the vessel of divine dispensation, the vessel of the church, and the vessel of paradise.<sup>71</sup> A different term, σκεῦος, is used in a lengthy sermon on the Annunciation falsely attributed to Basil of Seleucia, in which the author praises the Virgin as a vessel “who contained the Heavenly Bread in her womb.”<sup>72</sup> As such, she is superior to the golden jar (στάμνος), which contained the manna from heaven. In the *Panarion*, Epiphanius of Cyprus directs the Christian faithful to worship the Holy Trinity but to honor appropriately the Virgin Mary: “He who honors the Lord honors also the holy vessel (σκεῦος); but he who dishonors the holy vessel also dishonors his master. Let Mary be by herself the holy virgin, the holy vessel.”<sup>73</sup> The metaphor may also be evoked in the British Museum bracelet, with its blooming vase, and in a bronze cross at Dumbarton Oaks, dated to the sixth or seventh century (Fig. 5.15).<sup>74</sup> Produced in Syria-Palestine, the cross depicts an amphora with three blooming stalks or flowering rods beside the figure of the Virgin in the central scene of the Annunciation. Portraits of Christ, John the Baptist, a priest with a censer, and a stylite saint appear on the arms of the cross. The inclusion of the flowering rod as another metaphor for the Virgin strongly suggests the identification of the priest as Aaron, despite his portrayal on the opposite side.<sup>75</sup> A symbolic vessel may also appear in

<sup>70</sup> Hom. 1:I.14 in Constan, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 136-7.

<sup>71</sup> Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Homilia V. In Laudes Sanctae Mariae Deiparae*, ed. J.-P. Migne, PG 43.489A, 497A, 501A.

<sup>72</sup> Basil of Seleucia, *Oratio XXXIX*, ed. Migne, PG 85.449B. More recently, the sermon has been attributed to Proklos: B. Marx, *Procliana: Untersuchung über den homiletischen Nachlass des Patriarchen Proklos von Konstantinopel* (Münster, 1940), 84-9, cited in Constan, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 292 n. 60. See also Peltomaa, *Akathistos Hymn*, 77-85 on the relationship between the homily and the Akathistos Hymn.

<sup>73</sup> *Panarion* 78.21 in K. Holl, ed., *Epiphanius*, vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1933), 471.

<sup>74</sup> Cat. no. 9 in J. Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses* (Washington, DC, 1994), 90-5.

<sup>75</sup> See, however, B. Pitarakis, “Female Piety in Context: Understanding Developments in Private Devotional Practices,” in *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. M.

a late seventh- or eighth-century ivory of the Nativity at Dumbarton Oaks, where an oversized Virgin reclines at the center of the composition beside an amphora that is poised on a stand (Fig. 5.16).<sup>76</sup> The vessel recalls the first bath of the Christ Child, pictured in more elaborate versions of the Nativity, but its unusual placement in proximity to the Virgin may betray a metaphorical function.<sup>77</sup> In later Byzantine art, the vessel could take the form of a yarn bowl, replacing or accompanying the traditional woven basket in scenes of the Annunciation, as for example in the twelfth-century wall painting in the Church of the Virgin at Trikomo in Cyprus (Fig. 5.17).<sup>78</sup> This element was inspired by the popular *Protoevangelion of James*, in which Gabriel first approaches Mary at a well where she is collecting water. Fearing him as a stranger, she returns home and begins spinning, when he approaches her again and she concedes to the will of God. Thus, the vessel alludes simultaneously to the apocryphal narrative and to the favored metaphors of Byzantine writers.

Another vessel equated with the womb of the Virgin in sermons is the *κολυμβήθρα* or baptismal font. In his fourth sermon on the Nativity, Pope Leo the Great (440-61) explains: “And for every man coming to a rebirth, the water of baptism is

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Vassilaki (Aldershot, 2005), 153-66, esp. 158-9, which identifies the priest as Zacharias and the stylite saint as Symeon the Younger.

<sup>76</sup> The composition is highly referential, incorporating multiple elements of the *locus sanctus*, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem: K. Weitzmann, “The Ivories of the So-Called Grado Chair,” *DOP* 26 (1972) 43-91; “‘Loca Sancta’ and the Representational Arts of Palestine,” *DOP* 28 (1974) 31-55, esp. 36-9. On the Grado group to which the ivory belongs, see the relevant footnote in my chapter 2.7d.

<sup>77</sup> Compare the eighth- or ninth-century icon of the Nativity at Mount Sinai, where a large amphora is placed next to the Virgin immediately above that used by the midwife in the scene of the bath. The representation of two vessels may have resulted from the artist’s copying a model similar to the Dumbarton Oaks ivory before appending the secondary scene; alternatively, the artist may have been concerned not to lose the metaphorical content of the vessel. See cat. no. B.41 in K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons* (Princeton, 1976), 68-9.

<sup>78</sup> M. Evangelatou, “The Purple Thread of the Flesh: The Theological Connotations of a Narrative Iconographic Element in Byzantine Images of the Annunciation,” in *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium: Studies Presented to Robin Cormack*, ed. A. Eastmond and L. James (Aldershot, 2003), 261-79, esp. 266-70. See also N. Constatas, “Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos, and the Loom of the Flesh,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3:2 (1995) 169-94.

an image of the virginal womb whereby the same Holy Spirit who also impregnated the Virgin impregnates the font; just as the sacred conception casts out sin in that place, so here mystic ablution takes it away.”<sup>79</sup> Even before the Council of Ephesus, Didymos of Alexandria (d. 398) described the Virgin as both the font and the Second Eve: “For she is the baptismal font of the Trinity, the workshop of salvation of all believers; and those who bathe therein she frees from the bite of the serpent and she becomes mother of all, a virgin dwelling in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>80</sup> Mentioned in three homilies, Proklos’ inexhaustible “womb of baptism” may be connected implicitly with the Virgin Mary.<sup>81</sup> In the Akathistos Hymn, Mary is seen as the type or prefiguration of the baptismal font.<sup>82</sup> The interpretation is reinforced by the deer at Kiti, whose connection with Psalm 41/2 has already been established (Fig. 2.23).

A related formulation presents the Virgin as the oyster or the sea containing Christ, the pearl.<sup>83</sup> The ancient tradition that lightning struck the sea and produced the pearl within the oyster was seen as a parallel for Christ’s conception. In a sermon on the Nativity of Mary, John of Damascus declares: “Let heaven above rejoice, let the earth below be glad, and let the sea of the world be shaken, for within it a shell (κόχλος) is born, which shall conceive in its womb by the lightning bolt of divinity, and shall give

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<sup>79</sup> *Sermo XXIV*, ed. Migne, PL 54.206A, cited and trans. in Underwood, “Fountain of Life,” 63.

Underwood takes the same Leo to be the author of the poem inscribed on the epistyle of the baptismal font at the Lateran. The inscription refers to the font as the “fountain of life, which purges the whole world” (verse f), as well as the “virginal womb” of “Mother Church” (verse d); its waters are also said to be “impregnated” (verse a): Underwood, “Fountain of Life, 55-61.

<sup>80</sup> Didymos of Alexandria, *De Trinitate Liber Secundus*, ed. Migne, PG 39.692A, cited and trans. in Peltomaa, *Akathistos Hymn*, 132-4.

<sup>81</sup> Hom. 3:IV.28, Hom. 5:III.128, Hom. 12.I in Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 198-9, 207, 262-3.

<sup>82</sup> Peltomaa, *Akathistos Hymn*, 16-17.

<sup>83</sup> Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 290-4.

birth to Christ, the precious pearl.”<sup>84</sup> Hesychios of Jerusalem, writing in the fifth century, described the Virgin as “the case (πήρα) for the pearl brighter than the sun.”<sup>85</sup> In a spurious homily of Epiphanius of Cyprus, the author devises an etymology for Mary, meaning “‘myrrh of the sea,’ myrrh denoting immortality, for in the sea of the world she gave birth to the immortal Pearl.”<sup>86</sup> Later in the same homily, the Virgin is described as “the spiritual sea, which contains Christ the heavenly pearl.”<sup>87</sup> This metaphor is signaled not at Kiti but in the mosaics of the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč, with its conspicuous border of shells and pearls adjoining the enthroned Virgin and Child in the apse, the Annunciation, and the Visitation (Figs. 1.59, 5.14).<sup>88</sup>

An emphasis on the waters of paradise or the living waters contained in the womb of the Virgin is eloquently expressed in other works. The eighth-century homilist Andrew of Crete draws directly on Genesis 2:10 as he addresses the Virgin in a homily on the Annunciation: “He, like a river, flowing out of your life-bearing womb with ineffable power, irrigates the face of the inhabited world with four sources.”<sup>89</sup> In a sixth-century poem on the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, Jacob of Serug writes: “An ocean is enclosed in you, for the earth is too small to contain it; by it, sin is drowned which had overwhelmed all mankind. ... The rock which brought forth streams cannot be compared to you, because living waters go forth from you to the whole world.”<sup>90</sup> In the fifth

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<sup>84</sup> Cited and trans. in Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 291. See also M. Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven: Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood, NY, 2008), 58.

<sup>85</sup> Hom. 5:1.11-12 (πήρα) and Hom. 5:3.20 (λιβωτός) in M. Aubineau, *Les homélies festales d’Hésychius de Jérusalem*, vol. 1 (Brussels, 1978), 158-9, 164-5.

<sup>86</sup> Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Homilia V. In Laudes Sanctae Mariae Deiparae*, ed. Migne, PG 43.489A, cited and trans. in Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 292 n. 61.

<sup>87</sup> Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Homilia V. In Laudes Sanctae Mariae Deiparae*, ed. Migne, PG 43.489D.

<sup>88</sup> A. Terry and H. Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč* (University Park, PA, 2007), 139-40.

<sup>89</sup> Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, 209.

<sup>90</sup> Hom. 3 in Hansbury, *Jacob of Serug*, 80.



century, Hesychios of Jerusalem described the Virgin as the “sealed fountain” (πηγήν ἐσφραγισμένην) foretold in the Song of Songs: “A ‘sealed fountain,’ because a river of life came forth from you and filled up the world, but a bridal branch did not drain dry your fountain.”<sup>91</sup> In this verse, Hesychios combines the epithet of the Song of Songs with the fountain and river of Genesis. At times, the Virgin is regarded as both the source and the waters of life, a paradox embedded in, if not fully explained by the Greek word πηγή, which embraces fountain, spring, and source, denoting origin. For as her role in Christian doctrine was elaborated, much of the symbolism applied to Christ was also applied to Mary.<sup>92</sup> Thus, in the Akathistos Hymn, she is said to have “quenched the worship of fire” (9:14) and “[made] the many-streamed river gush forth” (21:11); she is both the “sea that drowned the spiritual Pharaoh” (11:10) and the “rock, giving water to those who thirst for life” (11:11). An extended metaphor from a homily on the Annunciation by Pseudo-Basil of Seleucia is worth quoting in full, as it combines the imagery of the fountain, the river, the sea, and the pearl:

How will I praise the paradox with grace: how will I glorify the fountain of loving kindness: how will I proclaim the river of loving kindness: how will I venture upon the virginal sea and investigate the depth of the great mystery, if you do not teach me, O Theotokos, as an inexperienced diver? ... Only then, filling the mouth of the mind with mercy, to plunge to the depth of your pregnancy: as I shine with the light of your mercy, shall I find within you the pearl of truth?<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Hom. 5:2.29-37 in Aubineau, *Les homélies festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem*, 162-3. Compare also Hom. 5:2.14-16 on 160-1.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Cunningham, “Divine Banquet,” 235-44.

<sup>93</sup> Basil of Seleucia, *Oratio XXXIX*, ed. Migne, PG 85.436A.

In addition to serving as elaborate forms of praise, these metaphors convey the Christian idea that Creation was renewed and sanctified through the coming of Christ.<sup>94</sup> The concept of renewal was also expressed openly by early Christian writers, who endeavored to praise God's Creation even as they condemned the pagan worship of nature gods. Composed in the fourth century, Ephrem the Syrian's seventeenth hymn on the Nativity says of Christ: "He is the Son of the Creator Who came to restore the whole creation. He renewed the sky since fools worshipped all the luminaries. He renewed the earth that had grown old because of Adam. A new creation came to be by His spittle [i.e. miracles], and the All-sufficient set straight bodies and minds."<sup>95</sup> The renewal of Creation was attributed first and foremost to Christ, the Creator, but in the fifth and sixth centuries increasingly involved the Virgin Mary. After praising the Virgin as the "food of life and fountain of immortality," the sixth-century patriarch Anastasios of Antioch describes the Annunciation to the Virgin as "the birthday of the whole world: because all things have been returned to order: and the old disorder received order, because the one who formed us has become like us on account of us, renewing his old and corrupted image, and transforming it into an abundance of beauty."<sup>96</sup> According to Anastasios, the feast of the Annunciation on the twenty-fifth of March coincided with the anniversary of the creation of man on the sixth day, for light was separated from darkness on the twentieth of March, the spring equinox.<sup>97</sup> Thus, man was restored as the Word became flesh on the same day that he was created. For the anonymous author of the Akathistos

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<sup>94</sup> H. Maguire, "Metaphors of the Virgin," 189-90; *Nectar and Illusion*, 62-7.

<sup>95</sup> Hymn 17, strophe 11-12 in K. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns* (New York, 1989), 156.

<sup>96</sup> Anastasios of Antioch, *Sermo II. In Annuntiationem S. Mariae*, ed. Migne, PG 89.1377B, 1384D-1385A.

<sup>97</sup> Anastasios of Antioch, *Sermo II. In Annuntiationem S. Mariae*, ed. Migne, PG 89.1381C-1384B.

Hymn, the Virgin is the one “through whom Creation is made new.”<sup>98</sup> By the eighth century, Andrew of Crete has the Virgin contemplating the implications of the archangel’s greeting as she asks, “shall I, alone of all women, renew nature?”<sup>99</sup> The concept was eventually extended to Anna’s conception of the Virgin, which took place in a garden according to the apocryphal *Protoevangelion*. An eighth-century homily by John of Euboea proclaims the restoration of the garden of paradise on this occasion: “Behold, the good news of happiness in a garden, that the garden of old might be returned to humanity!”<sup>100</sup>

When elements of Creation are not employed as metaphors in Byzantine homilies, they are typically personified and rejoice in gratitude for their collective rebirth. While the shepherds adore the Virgin and Child in stanza seven of the Akathistos Hymn, “heavenly things rejoice with the earth” and “earthly things chant with the faithful.”<sup>101</sup> In Proklos’ fourth homily on the Nativity, not only the Magi but the whole created world offers its gifts to the Child: the earth, the rocks, the mountains, the cities, the winds, the seas, the waves, the fish, the waters, the wells, the wilderness, the beasts, the birds, men and women of all professions and persuasions, the trees, the wood, the air, and the heavens.<sup>102</sup> Even on the occasion of Mary’s Dormition, Jacob of Serug describes the elements of Creation, animate and inanimate, that were roused as she was laid to rest:

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<sup>98</sup> Peltomaa, *Akathistos Hymn*, 4-5. Likewise, strophe 13 begins: “A new creation has the Creator revealed, manifesting himself to us, his creatures. From the seedless womb he came, preserving it chaste as it was before, so that, beholding the miracle, we might sing her praises.” Peltomaa, *Akathistos Hymn*, 10-13.

<sup>99</sup> Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, 212.

<sup>100</sup> Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, 176.

<sup>101</sup> Peltomaa, *Akathistos Hymn*, 8-9.

<sup>102</sup> Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 234-5.

New sounds were heard from all the birds; which were chanting in ranks according to their natures. All living creatures made a joyful sound of praise in their places; all the earth was stirred by their shouts of joy. The heavens and the mountains and all the plains which were adorned, broke forth in praise when the virginal body was being laid in the grave. All trees with their fruits and produce were sprinkled with dew, the sweet fragrance of their gladness. All the flowers which were beautiful in their variety, sent forth perfume like sweet spices sending forth fragrance. The waters and the fish and all creeping things within the sea, were aware of this day and were moved to praise. All creatures silent or eloquent, according to their natures rendered the praise which was due.<sup>103</sup>

Many of these homilies were inspired by and read aloud on feast days in honor of the Virgin Mary. These feasts represent the official recognition and expansion of her role in Christian worship and reflect the growth of popular devotion in the fifth and sixth centuries. It should be clear, however, that homilies in this period do not focus on Mary's personal attributes and only begin to suggest her capacity to intercede on behalf of the faithful, which would receive greater emphasis from the early eighth century onwards.<sup>104</sup> Rather, they emphasize her virginity, her relationship to Christ, her guarantee of his humanity, her participation in the Incarnation and consequently in the divine plan of salvation. Repeatedly, the Virgin Mary is likened to the physical world, including the earthly paradise and its fountain, just as Creation, newly sanctified, joins to celebrate the coming of the Lord through her. Like the literary metaphors, the visual metaphor of the

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<sup>103</sup> Hom. 5 in Hansbury, *Jacob of Serug*, 96.

<sup>104</sup> See my chapter 6.1.

fountain is polyvalent and cannot be interpreted too specifically, but was surely intended to complement the new theme of the Virgin and Child, which became more common in apse decoration of the sixth century.

### 3. *Nature Personifications and the Virgin*

The Christian concept of renewal, expressed by visual metaphor and captured in the lively spirit of the border, may also have been implied by appropriation and formal assimilation. Earlier in the chapter it was established that the designer of the apse mosaic drew on the repertory of church floors when he elected to illustrate the fountain of paradise instead of the four rivers, which were traditionally represented in apse mosaics. Likewise, it was observed that contemporary images of the Virgin were accompanied only occasionally by plant, animal, and aquatic life. Far more often in the ecclesiastical and domestic art of the period, female personifications of nature, including the Earth, the Sea, and the Seasons were surrounded by living creatures of the land, air, and water. This section assesses the classical inheritance of the Virgin by comparing her representation at Kiti to that of certain nature personifications on floor mosaics and textiles, especially the personification of Earth.<sup>105</sup> In scholarship, the Virgin Mary has been compared to pagan goddesses such as Isis, Tyche, and Athena, but her relationship to nature personifications has received much less attention, at least in the realm of the visual arts.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> A similar approach is taken with respect to the image of the empress in L. James, "Good Luck and Good Fortune to the Queen of Cities: Empresses and Tyches in Byzantium," in *Personification in the Greek World: From Antiquity to Byzantium*, ed. E. Stafford and J. Herrin (Aldershot, 2005), 293-307.

<sup>106</sup> S. Benko, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology* (Leiden, 2004), esp. 206-16. Isis: T. Mathews and N. Muller, "Isis and Mary in Early Icons," in *Images of the Mother of God*, 3-11; R. E. Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (Baltimore, 1997), 269-81. Tyche and Rhea: V. Limberis, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Making of Christian Constantinople* (London, 1994), 121-42. Tyche and Victoria: B. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 2006), 11-35. Athena: A. Kaldellis, "'A Union of Opposites': The Moral Logic and Corporeal

The sixth-century floor mosaic in the Upper Chapel of the Priest John at Khirbat al-Mukkhayat in Jordan shows a woman identified as Earth (ΓΗ) in the context of an inhabited acanthus scroll (Fig. 5.18).<sup>107</sup> Represented in bust form, she holds an assortment of fruit in her crescent-shaped mantle, while a pair of fruit-bearers (*karpophoroi*) approach her with offerings. Creatures of the land populate the scroll around her, including a lion, a bear, a sheep, a boar, a dog, and a few people working the land or fending off wild animals.<sup>108</sup> In the interstices of the scroll immediately below her, two fish signify the ocean or the waters.<sup>109</sup> Elsewhere, baskets of bread, fruit, and flowers display the Earth's produce. The meander border of the pavement contains various species of birds and busts of donors. To the east of the main field, still within the meander border, a dedicatory inscription is framed by an architectural façade, flanked by two peacocks, two chickens, and two trees. Formal similarities between the central groups at Kiti and Khirbat al-Mukkhayat are clear (Figs. 5.1, 5.18). Both the Virgin and the Earth are depicted frontally, holding out their respective gifts to the world. On either side, young men advance in three-quarter poses to present offerings. Most importantly, the figures are surrounded by living creatures enveloped in acanthus leaves. In light of these basic similarities, significant differences between the two mosaics are particularly revealing. Whereas the Earth presents her fruits, consisting of watermelon, grapes, and squash, the Virgin presents the Christ Child, who is described metaphorically in Luke 1:42 as the fruit of her womb and in countless homilies as the fruit of the seedless earth.

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Presence of the Theotokos on the Field of Battle,” in *Pour l'amour de Byzance: homage à Paolo Odorico*, ed. C. Gastgeber et al. (Frankfurt am Main, 2013), 131-44.

<sup>107</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 38, 166-75, esp. 174-5; *Madaba: le chiese e i mosaici*, 189-92.

<sup>108</sup> On the relationship of the people to the land and animals in the mosaic: H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 69-72.

<sup>109</sup> When the Earth and Ocean appear together, the personification of Earth is typically surrounded by the Ocean or placed immediately above the Ocean: H. Maguire, “The Mantle of Earth,” *Illinois Classical Studies* 12:2 (1987) 221-8; *Earth and Ocean*, 17-30.

Secondly, while the *karpophoroi* offer baskets of fruit to the Earth, the archangels Michael and Gabriel offer glass orbs, symbols of earthly *and* heavenly dominion, to the Christ Child. Finally, the Earth is richly adorned with pearls and a fruited crown, signs of her abundance, while the Virgin, ever humble, needs no such adornments, for she is rich in spiritual blessings. Thus, the Virgin at Kiti appears to have inherited and superseded the bounty and fertility of Mother Earth.

Similar personifications of Earth and the subservient *karpophoroi* appear in the nave mosaic of the church of St. George (535/6), also in Khirbat al-Mukkhayat, and in the chancel mosaic of the church of the Bishop Isaiah in Jerash.<sup>110</sup> The latter mosaic is divided into four quadrants by four fruit-bearing trees and grapevines, which sprout from acanthus cups in the four corners of the mosaic (Fig. 5.19). All of the figures have been destroyed by iconoclasts, but one can still decipher the mantle of Earth and one of the two fruit-bearers in the western quadrant. Two gazelles and two deer occupy the north and south quadrants, while a single vessel flanked by two peacocks hovers above the head of Earth in the eastern quadrant. Three of these motifs, the deer, the vessel, and the acanthus cups, feature in the Kiti border. The placement of the mosaic in front of the apse would have enabled a direct comparison with an image of the Virgin and Child flanked by archangels, if such an image existed there. Unfortunately, the upper walls of the church of the Bishop Isaiah do not survive. Nevertheless, the early Byzantine observer was probably familiar enough with the figure of Earth and other prolific female

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<sup>110</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 178-9, 294-5; *Madaba: le chiese e i mosaici*, 177-81. Two smaller *karpophoroi* stood on the same side of the personification of Earth in the nave mosaic of the church of the Bishop Sergios at Umm al-Rasas (587/8), where they were destroyed by iconoclasts: Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 38, 234-5; *Madaba: le chiese e i mosaici*, 273-82, esp. 278-9.

personifications in ecclesiastical and domestic contexts that the analogy would have been readily apparent.

A final example on church floors represents not the Earth but the Sea. At the center of the nave mosaic of the Church of the Apostles in Madaba, a large medallion encloses a partially nude female bust emerging from the waves (Fig. 5.22).<sup>111</sup> Identified as Thalassa, the figure holds a rudder with her left hand and gestures with her right, as various sea creatures, including fish, sharks, and an octopus, swim around her. In combination with the raised right hand, the raising of the rudder as a standard may constitute a gesture of submission or obedience to God, who is invoked as Creator of heaven and earth in the inscription that encircles her.<sup>112</sup> The flora and fauna of the earth occupy the main field of the mosaic in the form of confronted and addorsed parrots and fruit trees. The mosaic is framed by a lush acanthus scroll containing young men, quadrupeds, birds, and fruit. Beyond the western border of the mosaic, on the same axis as the Sea, a pair of birds flanks an amphora poised on top of an acanthus tuft, resembling the central group of the Kiti border (Fig. 2.41). Once again, the upper walls of the church do not survive, but an image of the Virgin and Child in the apse, viewed in relation to Thalassa, may well have recalled the “spiritual sea” and “heavenly pearl” of Pseudo-Epiphanius or the “virginal sea” and “pearl of truth” of Pseudo-Basil.

Likewise, secular and domestic textiles in silk, wool, and linen represent female personifications accompanied by the same motifs that distinguish the Kiti border. A fragmentary silk of the sixth or seventh century preserved in the coffin of St. Cuthbert at the Cathedral of Durham contains repeated medallions formed of fruits, including grapes

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<sup>111</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 96-107, esp. 106-7; *Madaba: le chiese e i mosaici*, 96-107, esp. 105.

<sup>112</sup> Piccirillo compares the rudder to a standard: Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 38.



and pomegranates.<sup>113</sup> Each medallion encircles an image of the Earth and Ocean, represented by a half-length female figure set on top of fish-filled waters. Approached by pairs of swimming ducks, the bejeweled woman holds a scarf full of fruits, like her counterparts in the mosaics of Khirbat al-Mukkhayat and Jerash. In the interstices between the medallions, larger ducks flank vessels topped with clusters of grapes. A square tapestry of wool and linen in the Louvre shows only the bust of a richly-dressed female figure, inscribed within a circle, a larger square, and a cross (Fig. 5.20).<sup>114</sup> Four birds occupy the spandrels of the square, while winged putti occupy the arms of the cross. Like the archangels and *karpophoroi*, the putti present offerings to the woman consisting of vessels, fruit, and birds. The background of the textile is filled with flowering rinceaux. In conjunction with these motifs, a wave-patterned outer border indicates that the woman should be identified as the Earth in the midst of the Ocean. Another personification of Earth appears on a tapestry-weave roundel in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.<sup>115</sup> Holding a garment full of fruits, the haloed bust is encircled by scrolling plants and four blooming vessels. The outer border of the roundel, representing the Ocean, is comprised of fish. A nearly identical female bust wearing earrings, a floral headpiece, and a halo is portrayed on a seventh-century roundel of polychrome wool and undyed linen in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 5.21).<sup>116</sup> Although the details of the tapestry are less clear, the figure also carries a fruit-filled garment, the ends of which form flowery tendrils. Four lions and large palmettes replace the blooming vessels and

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<sup>113</sup> J. Flanagan, "The Figured Silks," in *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert*, ed. C. F. Battiscombe (Oxford, 1956), 484-525, esp. 505-13. H. Maguire, "Mantle of Earth," 223, fig. 2; *Earth and Ocean*, 75, fig. 85.

<sup>114</sup> Cat. no. E28 in P. Du Bourguet, *Musée National du Louvre catalogue des étoffes coptes* (Paris, 1964), 196.

<sup>115</sup> H. Maguire, "Mantle of Earth," 224, fig. 5.

<sup>116</sup> Cat. no. 27 in A. Stauffer, *Textiles of Late Antiquity* (New York, 1995), 33, 45.

plant scrolls of the Boston textile. Instead of fish, flowers define the outer border. A vertical band or clavus belonging to the same garment represents another well-dressed female figure standing between lions and handleless vessels flanked by palmettes. Except for the Durham silk, all of the textiles were found in Egypt, where the dry climate favored their preservation. Such female personifications were believed to bring luck and prosperity to the owner or household, regardless of whether the women can all be identified as Earth.<sup>117</sup>

The contemporary audience at Kiti would also have been familiar with homilies and hymns in which the Virgin was praised as the seedless earth, the unsown field, and the untilled valley. As cited above, Proklos' fourth homily on the Nativity refers to the Virgin as the "seedless earth (γῆς ἀσπόρου), which blossomed with the fruit of salvation (καρπὸν σωτήριον)."<sup>118</sup> This fruit is defined as a cluster of grapes in homilies on the Annunciation and Visitation by Jacob of Serug, where the Virgin becomes the unpruned or uncultivated vine.<sup>119</sup> In another homily, Proklos celebrates the Virgin as a "field (ἄρουρα), in which Christ, nature's farmer, sprouted forth unsown (ἀσπόρως ἐβλάστησεν) as an ear of corn (στάχυς)!"<sup>120</sup> Similar language appears in a spurious homily of John Chrysostom on the Nativity, where the Virgin is compared to an "unreaped field (ἀθέριστος ἄρουρα)" which yields "heavenly corn (στάχυος)."<sup>121</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that the personification of Earth in the floor mosaic of the church of the Bishop Sergios at Umm al-Rasas (587/8) is accompanied by *karpophoroi*, who offer

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<sup>117</sup> E. Maguire, H. Maguire, and M. Duncan-Flowers, *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House* (Urbana, IL, 1989), 13-14.

<sup>118</sup> Hom. 4.I.9-10 in Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 226-7.

<sup>119</sup> Hom. 2 and 3 in Hansbury, *Jacob of Serug*, 45, 70.

<sup>120</sup> Hom. 1.III.59-60 in Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 138-9.

<sup>121</sup> Pseudo-John Chrysostom, *In Christi Natalem Diem*, ed. Migne, PG 61.737.

her apples and ears of corn.<sup>122</sup> Yet another metaphor in a sermon by Pseudo-Epiphanius calls the Virgin the “untilled land (ἡ ἀγεώργητος χώρα), which received the Word as a grain of wheat (κόκκον σίτου).”<sup>123</sup> Proklos also describes Christ as a grain of wheat, risen from the untilled valley or plain: “Today the seedless grain of wheat (ἀσπόρος κόκκος) has sprouted forth from the untilled valley (ἀγεωργήτου πεδιάδος), and the starving world rejoices.”<sup>124</sup> The starving world of Proklos will be fed not by the physical food of the Earth but by the spiritual food of Christ, derived in part from John 6:35, where Christ declares himself the bread of life.<sup>125</sup> Food metaphors in general were associated with the Eucharist, but especially those involving grapes and grain. In the apse mosaic at Kiti, where the Virgin and Child are likened to the Earth and her fruits through the presence of living creatures, shared between earth and the earthly paradise, the Eucharistic significance of the central group becomes even more pronounced. One should also recall in this connection that the fountains of the border are comprised of vessels commonly used for wine as well as water. Thus, the virgin earth, vine, or field offers her fruit, grapes, or grain to the Christian faithful in the sanctuary of the church, the site of the Eucharist.

#### 4. *The Rejection of Nature at Livadia*

As metaphors of the Virgin Mary, the fountain and the earth were combined in a much later epigram by Manuel Philes, inscribed on a small stone paten or *panagiarion* given to the Monastery of the Source, the *Pege*, in Constantinople:

<sup>122</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 38, 234-5; *Madaba: le chiese e i mosaici*, 273-82, esp. 278-9.

<sup>123</sup> Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Homilia V. In Laudes Sanctae Mariae Deiparae*, ed. Migne, PG 43.492D.

<sup>124</sup> Hom. 4.III.97-9 in Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 234-5.

<sup>125</sup> Cunningham, “Divine Banquet,” 235-44.

The stone bears the earth, the earth (ἡ γῆ) bears grain,  
The grain (ὁ στάχυς), is the nourisher of souls, the earth is the Virgin;  
Or, rather, seeing the spring of life-giving waters (πηγὴν ζωτικῶν ὕδατων),  
O faithful one, suckle grace from the stone.<sup>126</sup>

The liturgical paten on which the monks offered bread to the Virgin was decorated with an image of the Virgin *Zoodochos Pege*, the life-bearing source.<sup>127</sup> The iconographic type was created in the early fourteenth century when the monastery was rebuilt on the site of the healing spring.<sup>128</sup> The paten probably showed a half-length Virgin and Child emerging from a vessel, possibly accompanied by small angels, but by no living creatures of any kind.<sup>129</sup> The earliest copy of the type is preserved in a wall painting in the narthex of the Apheniko church in Mistra (1312/3-22), where the Virgin and Child are also flanked by her parents, Joachim and Anna (Fig. 5.23). A few centuries earlier, the sacred spring of the Virgin at the church of Blachernai led to the production of another iconographic type of the Virgin Mary.<sup>130</sup> Described in the tenth-century Book of

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<sup>126</sup> A.-M. Talbot, "Epigrams of Manuel Philes on the Theotokos tes Peges and Its Art," *DOP* 48 (1994) 135-65, esp. 145-6.

<sup>127</sup> On the iconographic type: N. Teteriatnikov, "The Image of the Virgin Zoodochos Pege: Two Questions Concerning its Origin," in *Images of the Mother of God*, 225-38; R. Etzeoglou, "The Cult of the Virgin Zoodochos Pege at Mistra," in *Images of the Mother of God*, 239-49.

<sup>128</sup> The emperor Justinian I is credited with building the first church on the site in the sixth century: R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin*, vol. 3: *Les églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1969), 223-8; S. Bénay, "Le monastère de la Source à Constantinople," *Echos d'Orient* 3 (1899-1900) 223-8, 295-300.

<sup>129</sup> The vessel might have been omitted if the actual paten were understood to take its place. In that case, it may well have resembled an earlier *panagiarion* from the Hilandar Monastery at Mount Athos: Teteriatnikov, "Image of the Virgin Zoodochos Pege," fig. 19.6.

<sup>130</sup> According to Prokopios, the first basilica on the site was built by Justin I (518-27); the relic of the Virgin's veil was kept in the earlier Soros chapel: C. Mango, "The Origins of the Blachernae Shrine at Constantinople," in *Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae, Split-Poreč, September 9 – October 1, 1994*, ed. N. Cambi and E. Marin (Vatican City, 1998), 61-76. An epigram by

Ceremonies, the marble icon depicted the orant Virgin with pierced hands, through which water flowed.<sup>131</sup> While the original does not survive, numerous relief icons reproduce the type, including an eleventh-century relief from the Mangana Palace now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum (Fig. 5.24). As inventions of the middle and late Byzantine periods, these icons redefine the relationship of the Virgin Mary to the fountain of life: the animals are nowhere to be found and Mary herself has become the fountain.<sup>132</sup>

Dated to the end of the sixth or first half of the seventh century, the apse mosaic of the Virgin at Livadia may be characterized as progressive, as well as indicative of a pre-iconoclastic ambivalence to nature (Figs. 3.14, 3.16, 3.23). Compared to the mosaic at Kiti, it appears to avoid natural motifs, reducing the flora and fauna of the border to a simple “stylised garland” which bears no fruit.<sup>133</sup> The landscape features common to many early Christian mosaics and wall paintings, like the mosaic at Lythrankomi, were replaced at Livadia by a gold background arranged in a rising scale pattern. As discussed in chapter one, the reduction or absence of landscape is typical of Byzantine apse decoration produced after the middle of the sixth century. The apse mosaics of the church at Kiti and the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai (548-65) represent a continuous expanse of gold ground above solid green bands, while the still bountiful imagery of nature – ducks and ivy leaves at Sinai – is relegated to the borders (Figs. 1.57,

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George of Pisidia inscribed on the basin at Blachernai credited the Virgin with miraculous healing and with the protection of the city at least from the seventh century, as recorded in the tenth-century *Greek Anthology*, ed. and trans. W. R. Paton (LCL 67), book I.121, 54-5.

<sup>131</sup> Constantine VII Porphyrogennitos, *De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae*, ed. J. J. Reiske, vol. 1 (1829), book 2, ch. 12, 555.8-10.

<sup>132</sup> The famous icon of the Annunciation at Mount Sinai, with its bustling river in the foreground, and the illustrated Homilies of James of Kokkinobaphos (Cod. Vat. Gr. 1162) remain exceptional and provide evidence of a revived interest in nature peculiar to twelfth-century Constantinople: H. Maguire, “Metaphors of the Virgin,” 191; *Nectar and Illusion*, 62-74.

<sup>133</sup> A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins, “A Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin in Cyprus,” in *Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Études Byzantines, Bucarest, 6-12 septembre 1971*, vol. 3, ed. M. Berza and E. Stanesco (Bucharest, 1976), 363-6, esp. 365.

4.14). In the late seventh or early eighth century, the apse mosaic of the Church of the Dormition at Nicaea depicted a standing Virgin or Virgin and Child against a plain gold background, interrupted only by the hand of God and rays of light descending from the firmament (Fig. 2.65).<sup>134</sup> Here, geometricized leaves and flowers adorn the borders of the apse and bema vault. A similar transformation can be seen in the mosaics of Rome in the late sixth and seventh centuries, but would not continue beyond the eighth century. The mosaics of S. Lorenzo fuori le mura (578-90), S. Teodoro (590-604), and S. Agnese (625-38) employ no landscape elements except for ground lines.<sup>135</sup> The main field of the apse mosaic of S. Agnese is especially austere, as the gold background occupies a larger area between fewer figures, including the saint and two donors (Fig. 1.81). A garland laden with flowers and fruits nevertheless distinguishes the upper border. In the apse mosaic of S. Venanzio in Laterano (642-50), where the Virgin stands orant among saints, only clouds permeate the gold background, revealing the vision of Christ and two angels in bust form (Fig. 3.37).<sup>136</sup> Jeweled and geometric borders frame the apse mosaic. After the eighth century, however, animals and plants would return to apse decoration in Rome and Italy in stark contrast to the Byzantine East.<sup>137</sup> The early twelfth-century apse mosaic of S. Clemente in Rome is packed with animals, birds, and flowers, dwelling within an extensive plant scroll (Fig. 5.25).<sup>138</sup> Although the plant issues from the foot of the cross, the central Crucifixion group is almost obscured by the superabundant imagery of nature. No such imagery detracts from the solitary orant Virgin in the Byzantine apse mosaic of

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<sup>134</sup> The vast gold background of the apse is original: P. Underwood, "The Evidence of Restorations in the Sanctuary Mosaics of the Church of the Dormition at Nicaea," *DOP* 13 (1959) 235-43.

<sup>135</sup> Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 138-42.

<sup>136</sup> Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 144-5.

<sup>137</sup> H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion*, 98-105.

<sup>138</sup> S. Riccioni, *Il mosaico absidale di S. Clemente a Roma: exemplum della chiesa riformata* (Spoleto, 2006). G. Matthaie, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma* (Rome, 1967), 279-304, pl. 48-53, figs. 228, 230-59.

St. Sophia in Kiev, produced in 1037-46 (Fig. 3.42).<sup>139</sup> A flat gold background fills the apse conch, while stylized leaves and flowers are restrained within the upper and lower borders.

The same orant Virgin stands at the center of the apse mosaic at Livadia, on a footstool which overlaps a thin border, comprised of four rows of blue and white tesserae. There is no green band within the apse conch to indicate the ground, but some green tesserae can be discerned on the east wall below the feet of the south figure. While the rising scale pattern succeeds aesthetically by enhancing the play of light and giving prominence to the Virgin, I would argue that it creates a spatial plane between heaven and earth, derived from its association with common gates and screens.<sup>140</sup> Such gates were used for centuries in public and domestic spaces, gardens, and churches. The marble base of the obelisk of Theodosios in Constantinople, erected in 390, displays scenes from the hippodrome, with parapets rendered as a series of panels joined by herms (Fig. 5.26).<sup>141</sup> On the southeast face, where the emperor dispenses a laurel wreath from the *kathisma* above rows of spectators, musicians, and dancers, some of the panels in the upper balustrade employ the rising scale pattern, while the remaining panels employ a basic lattice pattern. Given the careful carving and individualized features of the southeast side, it is likely that these motifs distinguished actual parapets in the stands of the hippodrome, if not those of the *kathisma*.<sup>142</sup> Imbricated scales appear in a similar

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<sup>139</sup> V. Lazarev, *Old Russian Murals and Mosaics: from the 11th to the 16th Century* (London, 1966), 31-77, 226-7.

<sup>140</sup> I would also agree that the pattern creates “an aethereal space in which the Virgin levitates:” Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics*, 1st edn., 57. See my chapter 4.2.

<sup>141</sup> L. Safran, “Points of View: The Theodosian Obelisk Base in Context,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 34:4 (1993) 409-35, with earlier bibliography.

<sup>142</sup> On the higher quality of the southeast and northwest sides: Safran, “Points of View,” 422. See the reconstruction of the *kathisma* in J. Bardill, “The Architecture and Archaeology of the Hippodrome in

context in an ivory diptych from the Museo Civico in Brescia, probably dated to the early fifth century.<sup>143</sup> Identified by an inscription, a consul of the Lampadius family and two officials observe the chariot races from a private box at the arena (Fig. 5.27). The central panel of the barrier in front of them is defined by rising scales. In imitation of such ivory diptychs, a contemporary terracotta plaque from North Africa shows three men in a tribunal, one of whom holds a *mappa* and wears a crown.<sup>144</sup> Once again, the parapet of the tribunal is decorated with latticework and imbricated scales.

The scale pattern also embellished garden gates, influencing its appearance in illustrations of the garden of paradise. In the vault mosaics of the Orthodox Baptistry at Ravenna (451-73), an openwork screen of this type delimits the garden of paradise (Fig. 5.28). The rising scale pattern is one of three detailed patterns selected to distance the flowering trees on either side of the prepared throne, which is depicted four times in the vault's lower register. However, the scales are located on the principal axis below the baptism of Christ at the center of the vault and the apostles Peter and Paul in the middle register. Another screen with the pattern, now opaque, performs the same function in the floor mosaic west of the Large Basilica at Heraklea Lynkestis, where the fountain, living creatures, and flowering branches are all contained behind the barrier (Fig. 5.4). When considered alongside the mosaics of Ravenna and Heraklea, the five threshold panels of the baptistry at Stobi, defined exclusively by imbricated scales, can be identified as garden gates encircling the fountain of paradise (Figs. 5.3). Such gates were also

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Constantinople,” in *Hippodrome / Atmeydanı: A Stage for Istanbul's History*, vol. 1, ed. B. Pitarakis (Istanbul, 2010), 91-148, fig. 8.48.

<sup>143</sup> Cat. no. 54 in W. Volbach, *Die Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters*, 3rd edn. (Mainz, 1976), 50-1, pl. 28. Cat. no. 130 in Frings and Willinghöfer, *Byzanz: Pracht und Alltag* (Bonn, 2010), 203-5.

<sup>144</sup> Cat. no. 83 in Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 92-3.



portrayed on the walls of painted tombs, including a fifth-century tomb from the eastern cemetery of Thessalonike.<sup>145</sup> The main figural scene on the west wall of tomb sixty-one depicts the story of Susanna and the Elders from the Book of Daniel (Fig. 5.29). Susanna was falsely accused of adultery by the elders and cried out to God, who sent Daniel to deliver her from the punishment of death. The scene takes place in a garden, signified by trees, behind a large enclosure of imbricated scales in imitation stone. The fictive enclosure continues around the four walls of the tomb with alternating slabs of lattice and rising scales, joined by posts at the four corners. Like the orant Virgin at Livadia, the orant Susanna projects into the space of the viewer, not with a footstool but with one foot, presenting herself as a model of divine salvation for the deceased. In a funerary context, the garden of Susanna is likened to the garden of paradise, with the gates serving as a boundary between this world and the next.<sup>146</sup>

Low in height, the garden screens pictured in Ravenna, Heraklea, and Thessalonike resemble chancel screens and other partitions used in early Byzantine churches. Before the development of the Byzantine *iconostasis* from the eleventh century onwards, chancel screens made of wood, stone, or metalwork marked the boundary between the nave and the sanctuary, which the *Mystagogia* (c. 630) effectively compares to the boundary between earth and heaven.<sup>147</sup> Several stone panels with the

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<sup>145</sup> E. Marke, *Η νεκρόπολη της Θεσσαλονίκης στους υστερορωμαϊκούς και παλαιοχριστιανικούς χρόνους: μέσα του 3ου έως μέσα του 8ου αι. μ.Χ* (Athens, 2006), 185-7, 224, figs. 22, 141-2, pls. 24a, 67a. In plate 24a, the tomb is mistakenly identified as coming from the western cemetery. See also cat. no. 41 in E. Kourkoutidou-Nicolaidou, "From the Elysian Fields to the Christian Paradise," in *The Transformation of the Roman World AD 400-900*, ed. L. Webster and M. Brown (Berkeley, 1997), 128-42.

<sup>146</sup> The garden may also be compared to Gethsemane, with Susanna understood as a type for Christ: C. Tkacz, "Susanna as a Type of Christ," *Studies in Iconography* 20 (1999) 101-53. A panel of rising scales also appears on the tomb of Lazarus on the Brescia casket, symbolizing his passage from life to death and back to life. See Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 77-8, pl. 57.

<sup>147</sup> The comparison is implied. See my chapter 4.1. J. Stead, *The Church, the Liturgy and the Soul of Man: The Mystagogia of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Still River, MA, 1982), 71.

pattern in relief and openwork have been discovered in Cyprus, for example at Kourion, Hagios Philon, and Amathous.<sup>148</sup> Marble incrustation in the form of rising scales also decorated engaged columns at the entrance to the sanctuary in the basilica of St. Epiphanius at Salamis-Constantia (Fig. 3.31). Although the columns were not part of a physical barrier, they marked one of the most important boundaries in the church. Of course, such screens were not limited to the churches of Cyprus: examples survive at Hosios David in Thessalonike and at S. Alessandro in Rome.<sup>149</sup> Sometimes the scales were inscribed with decorative or figural elements. A sixth-century marble slab from a parapet in Ankara, now on display in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, contains scales inscribed with plant and aquatic life, including a vessel and a shell on the central axis (Fig. 5.30).<sup>150</sup> The hole and mortise above the vessel may have accommodated a water pipe for a fountain or baptismal font. Pairs of confronted water birds, fish, and dolphins may signify living waters, but the relief remains ambiguous without a secure religious context. Two mosaics in Thessalonike and Syria represent these screens as part of the fabric of Christian buildings. Parapets with imbricated scales surround the central ciboria or bemas in the architectural facades of the vault mosaics of the church of St. George in Thessalonike. The clearest example can be seen on the west side of the vault

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<sup>148</sup> A. H. S. Megaw et al., *Kourion: Excavations in the Episcopal Precinct* (Washington, DC, 2007), 215, nos. K41-2, fig. 5.3f, pl. 5.11q. J. du Plat Taylor and A. H. S. Megaw, "Excavations at Ayios Philon, the Ancient Carpasia, Part II: The Early Christian Buildings," *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (1981) 209-50, esp. 231, no. 24, fig. 52d. P. Aupert, "Rapport sur les travaux de la mission de l'École Française à Amathonte en 1977," *BCH* 102:2 (1978) 939-75, esp. 941-2, fig. 3.

<sup>149</sup> On the fragmentary stone panel at Hosios David: A. Xyngopoulos, "Τὸ Καθολικὸν τῆς μονῆς Λατόμου ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ ψηφιδωτόν," *Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον* 12 (1929) 142-80, esp. 153. On the church of S. Alessandro: A. Grabar, *Martyrium: recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1946), 17 n. 3, pl. 13:2.

<sup>150</sup> Cat. no. 714 in G. Mendel, ed., *Catalogue des sculptures grecques, romaines et byzantines*, 3 vols. (Istanbul, 1912-14), 513-14. Cat. no. 309 in N. Firatlı et al., *La sculpture byzantine figurée au Musée Archéologique d'Istanbul* (Paris, 1990), 156-7. G. Noga-Banai and L. Safran, "A Late Antique Silver Reliquary in Toronto," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 4:1 (2011) 3-30, esp. 20-1.

below the outstretched hand of a lost orant figure, identified as the priest Romanos (Fig. 5.31).<sup>151</sup> More telling perhaps, the designer of a sixth-century floor mosaic in Syria, now in the National Museum in Copenhagen, imagined the grille of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem to have such a pattern (Fig. 5.32).<sup>152</sup> Indeed, the openwork screen is one of the most prominent features of the shrine as depicted in the mosaic, along with the conical dome of the aedicula.

Applied as an all-over pattern, the imbricated scales at Livadia create a blanket or abstract screen, a concept which probably originated in Byzantine floor mosaics. A common all-over pattern between the fourth and seventh centuries represents a floral network set in imbricated scales with and without outlines. Several examples from churches in Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean were cited in chapter three, including the sixth-century mosaics in the atrium of the Basilica of Chrysopolitissa in Paphos (Fig. 3.29), the early seventh-century mosaics of the baptistery at Kourion (Fig. 3.30), and the early sixth-century mosaics of the baptistery of the Memorial of Moses at Mount Nebo (Fig. 3.32).<sup>153</sup> These pavements probably represent schematic views of enclosed gardens, like that glimpsed through the openwork screen of the Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna (Fig. 5.28).<sup>154</sup> Some support for this interpretation is provided by the floor mosaic of the Holy Sepulchre in Copenhagen. Although the columns of the aedicula are visible behind the screen, the scales are also inscribed with rosettes. Regardless of whether the mosaicist intended the rosettes to be read as part of the openwork design, he appears to have modeled the screen on floor mosaics of the type found in Paphos and Mount Nebo.

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<sup>151</sup> Another example appears by the feet of Onesiphoros and Porphyrios on the south side of the vault at the base of the central platform.

<sup>152</sup> L. Bouras and M. Parani, *Lighting in Early Byzantium* (Washington, DC, 2008), 28, fig. 27.

<sup>153</sup> See my chapter 3.6b.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion*, 46, 97-8.

The artist therefore understood the scale pattern to function as a gate or screen, even in the context of an all-over floral network.

A final parallel for the apse mosaic at Livadia comes from the church of S. Agnese in Rome. Dated by Grabar to the fourth century, the relief sculpture served as an altar frontal and a marker for the saint's tomb, which was located under the altar (Fig. 5.33).<sup>155</sup> At the center of the relief, the figure of St. Agnes assumes a gesture of prayer between four square panels stacked in two registers, two of imbricated scales and two of vertically and horizontally opposed scales. Her hands overlap the panels on both sides, like the footstool of the Virgin at Livadia in relation to the lower border. While the orant pose identifies the saint as an intercessor, the scaled panels visualize the liminal space that she occupies between the human and divine, and more locally between her tomb and her church. In the same way, the rising scale pattern at Livadia underscores the Virgin's status as an intercessor between earth and heaven (Fig. 3.14).<sup>156</sup> Like an openwork screen, the scaled background at Livadia admits the golden light of heaven but erects a barrier, impeding access to God and affirming the need for intercession, newly personified in the figure of the orant Virgin Mary.<sup>157</sup> The apse mosaic at Livadia thus reveals the Virgin at a threshold, even as the projecting footstool places her before this threshold, establishing the sanctuary as a point of entry for the divine in the church.

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<sup>155</sup> A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, vol. 2, 27, pl. 32.2.

<sup>156</sup> See my chapter six.

<sup>157</sup> On the distancing and dwindling of paradise in Byzantine art, see H. Maguire, "Paradise Withdrawn," in *Byzantine Garden Culture*, ed. A. Littlewood, H. Maguire, and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington, DC, 2002), 23-35; *Nectar and Illusion*, 92-8, esp. 97-8 on the abstraction of paradise before and during iconoclasm using latticework.

The placement of the Virgin at the threshold finds parallel in contemporary miracle stories written in nearby Palestine.<sup>158</sup> An episode in the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschos (c. 600) tells the story of a female heretic, Kosmiane, who was denied entrance to the sanctuary of the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem by a vision of the Virgin backed by other female saints.<sup>159</sup> She was permitted access to the shrine only after partaking in the Eucharist in accordance with orthodox practice. Such tales stress the Virgin's role as a protector of sacred space, corresponding at Livadia to the sanctuary and the Eucharist, as well as to heaven or paradise, which lies temporarily or eternally beyond reach. At the same time, they confess her ability to help others negotiate sacred boundaries. These roles were inspired by and perhaps perpetuated certain metaphors of the Virgin Mary, which may also be evoked by the threshold depicted in the apse mosaic. Once again, the Akathistos Hymn praises her as the "celestial ladder by which God descended" (3.10: κλίμαξ), the "bridge leading those from earth to heaven" (3.11: γέφυρα), the "opener of the gates of paradise" (7.9: ἀνοικτήριον), the "door of hallowed mystery" (15.7: θύρα), the "key to the kingdom of Christ" (15.16: κλείς), and the "gate of salvation" (19.7: πύλη).<sup>160</sup> All six of these metaphors emphasize the liminality of the Virgin; five of them support the interpretation of the gate at Livadia as the gate of paradise, heaven, or salvation, while one of them hails the Virgin as the guardian of the Eucharist, the hallowed mystery. An important passage in the fifth homily of Hesychios of Jerusalem presents the Virgin as the closed doors (θυρῶν

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<sup>158</sup> D. Krueger, "Mary at the Threshold: The Mother of God as Guardian in Seventh-Century Palestinian Miracle Accounts," in *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images*, ed. L. Brubaker and M. Cunningham (Aldershot, 2011), 31-8.

<sup>159</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. J.-P. Migne, PG 87.2904A-B. English trans. in J. Wortley, *The Spiritual Meadow* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1992), 39.

<sup>160</sup> Peltomaa, *Akathistos Hymn*, 4-5, 8-9, 12-13, 16-17. I have translated ἀνοικτήριον as "opener" instead of "key" and θύρα as "door" instead of "gate." The Virgin is also called the one "through whom paradise is opened" (15.15).

κεκλεισμένων) and the closed gate (πύλην κεκλεισμένην) in the East, the location of paradise and the rising sun, which enabled the entry of the King, the only-begotten, and the true light.<sup>161</sup> These metaphors call attention to Mary's virginity and above all to her role in the Incarnation. Hesychios' contemporary, Proklos of Constantinople, alluded to the same biblical passages on the closed gate of the sanctuary, described in Ezek. 44:1-2, and the closed doors through which Christ passed, described in John 20:19, to devise a metaphor on the Eve/Mary typology: "what was once the door of sin was made the gate of salvation."<sup>162</sup>

The metaphors signaled at Livadia are no longer metaphors of nature, but architectural metaphors, foreshadowing a decisive change in the symbolic language of Byzantine monumental art in the post-iconoclastic period. In some cases, it seems that architectural structures assumed the metaphorical significance once portrayed by living creatures and vegetation.<sup>163</sup> Although these metaphors appear together in homilies and hymns from the early to the late Byzantine period, artists generally declined to illustrate natural themes on the walls, vaults, and floors of churches following the iconoclastic disputes of the eighth and ninth centuries. Recently, the rejection of nature has been attributed to the arguments made by both iconoclasts and iconophiles: each accused the other of worshipping Creation above the Creator, leading to the banishment of animals, birds, and even plants from churches.<sup>164</sup> The iconophile *Life of St. Stephen the Younger* claims that Constantine V destroyed images of Christ at the church of Blachernai and

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<sup>161</sup> Hom. 5:2.19-29 in Aubineau, *Les homélies festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem*, 160-3. John of Damascus also calls her the "gateway of light" in a homily on the Nativity of Mary: Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, 65.

<sup>162</sup> Hom. 1:II.28-9 in Constat, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 138-9.

<sup>163</sup> H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion*, 135-65.

<sup>164</sup> On these dual charges: H. Maguire, "Moslems, Christians, and Iconoclasm: Erasures from Church Floor Mosaics during the Early Islamic Period," in *Byzantine Art: Recent Studies: Essays in Honor of Lois Drewer*, ed. C. Hourihane (Tempe, 2009), 111-19; *Nectar and Illusion*, 35-47.

replaced them with animals, birds, and ivy leaves; elsewhere, it says that iconoclasts burnt and defaced sacred images of Christ and the saints while preserving and honoring profane images, including scenes of the hunt and the hippodrome.<sup>165</sup> Yet iconoclastic programs surviving at Hagia Eirene in Constantinople and Hagia Sophia in Thessalonike suggest that iconoclasts too may have avoided such imagery, being sensitive to the charges of idolatry leveled against them.<sup>166</sup> In post-iconoclastic churches, scenes of animal combat continue to appear on templon screens and above doors and windows for their apotropaic value, while plant imagery, also much reduced, becomes more stylized and less well-defined.<sup>167</sup> Even prior to the iconoclastic controversy, the eighty-second canon of the Quinisext Council of 692 prohibited the representation of Christ as a lamb and insisted on his depiction in human form.<sup>168</sup> The decision seems to have had important implications for the fate of natural themes and their symbolic interpretation in the Christian East, even as the lamb continued to be depicted in the medieval West. Although the apse mosaic at Livadia almost certainly predates the canon and the controversy, its golden gate and fruitless, stylized garland manifest an ambivalence to nature that was born in the rejection of paganism and sustained by the fear of idolatry. This ambivalence endured through the fifth and sixth centuries, even when the imagery of

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<sup>165</sup> English trans. in C. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 152-3.

<sup>166</sup> H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion*, 46-7. Of course, iconoclastic programs highlighting the imagery of nature may also have been destroyed by iconophiles after iconoclasm.

<sup>167</sup> On scenes of animal combat: H. Maguire, "Profane Icons: The Significance of Animal Violence in Byzantine Art," *Res* 38 (2000) 19-33; E. Maguire and H. Maguire, *Other Icons: Art and Power in Byzantine Secular Culture* (Princeton, 2007), 58-96. On the abstraction of plants: H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion*, 106-34.

<sup>168</sup> Doubts about the interpretation of the canon as a formal prohibition have been raised by Jolivet-Lévy, based on the presence of the lamb in the wall paintings of three Cappadocian churches: C. Jolivet-Lévy, "Le canon 82 du Concile Quinisexte et l'image de l'Agneau: à propos d'une église inédite de Cappadoce," *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας* 17 (1993-4) 45-52, repr. in *Études Cappadociennes* (London, 2002), 399-412. In my opinion, the complete absence of the lamb in other Eastern Orthodox contexts, in stark contrast to the West, demonstrates the authority of the canon and the isolation of Cappadocia and its iconography, to which the author draws attention in many of her studies.

nature was widely accepted in church decoration.<sup>169</sup> The opposition to natural imagery would eventually facilitate the demise of tessellated pavements in churches and the rise of purely geometric *opus sectile*.<sup>170</sup> But while the scarcity of imported marble in the wake of the seventh-century Arab invasions may also have contributed to the fashion for *opus sectile*, it cannot account for the shift in Cyprus, which was already underway by the sixth century.<sup>171</sup> The first examples of *opus sectile* floors in Cypriot churches were laid in the fifth century in the basilica of Acheiropoietos at Lambousa, in the episcopal basilica at Kourion, and in the basilica and baptistry of Hagios Philon at Karpasia.<sup>172</sup> In the sixth century, several churches were renovated or built anew with *opus sectile* floors, including the cathedral of St. Epiphanius and the basilica of Campanopetra at Salamis-Constantia, the basilica of Chrysopolitissa in Paphos, the basilica at Soloi, and two churches in Nicosia.<sup>173</sup> The imitation of geometric patterns particular to *opus sectile* in tessellated pavements of the period also illustrates the popularity of the technique.<sup>174</sup> In the early seventh century, the church at Lysi, the basilica of St. Herakleidos at Tamassos-Politiko, and a building adjacent to the church of St. Spyridon at Tremithos were paved with *opus*

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<sup>169</sup> H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion*, 11-34; *Earth and Ocean*, passim; "Christians, Pagans, and the Representation of Nature," in *Begegnung von Heidentum und Christentum im spätantiken Ägypten* (Riggisberg, 1993), 131-60, repr. in *Rhetoric, Nature and Magic in Byzantine Art* (Aldershot, 1998); "The Nile and the Rivers of Paradise," 179-84. For an opposing point of view, which regards the imagery of nature as essentially neutral, see Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon*, 13-29.

<sup>170</sup> H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion*, 106-34.

<sup>171</sup> For surveys of *opus sectile* floors in Cyprus: D. Michaelides, "Opus Sectile in Cyprus," in "The Sweet Land of Cyprus": *Papers Given at the Twenty-Fifth Jubilee Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1991*, ed. A. Bryer and G. Georghallides (Nicosia, 1993), 69-113; A. H. S. Megaw, "Interior Decoration in Early Christian Cyprus," in *XVe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines, Rapports et Co-rapports*, vol. 5, *Chypre dans le monde byzantin* (Athens, 1976), 3-29, esp. 4-9.

<sup>172</sup> Michaelides, "Opus Sectile in Cyprus," 72, figs. 9-11. At Kourion, the *opus sectile* of the fifth-century church is preserved only in the north aisle: Megaw, *Kourion: Excavations*, 11, 19. Du Plat Taylor and Megaw, "Excavations at Ayios Philon," 212-16, 235, 237, 249-50.

<sup>173</sup> Michaelides, "Opus Sectile in Cyprus," 74-7, figs. 20, 22-4, 36.

<sup>174</sup> Often, these appeared in less important areas of the same churches that received *opus sectile* floors: Michaelides, "Opus Sectile in Cyprus," 73-4, figs. 12, 13, 21, 37.



*sectile*.<sup>175</sup> The profusion of *opus sectile* floors in Cyprus, long before the transition would occur elsewhere, may attest not only to the wealth of the island, but to the disfavor with which many viewed nature-derived subjects on tessellated floors, even while the mosaic border at Kiti exploited their full symbolic potential. In general, the early appearance of *opus sectile* floors in Cyprus may help to explain the progressive character of the apse mosaic at Livadia.

While rhetorical expressions of the sanctification of nature would continue to flourish, lavish depictions of nature were ultimately cleansed from the space of the church. By equating figural icons with the written word of God, by declaring them embodiments of divine truth, and by sanctioning their veneration, the Second Council of Nicaea inspired church programs focused almost entirely on portrait icons and sacred narratives of the lives of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints. After the so-called Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843, holy figures would adorn the walls with minimal embellishment and little competition from the world of nature. The fountain of paradise as we know it disappears from the walls and floors of Byzantine churches, except in scenes of the Annunciation to Anna, who conceived the Virgin Mary in a garden according to the *Protoevangelion*.<sup>176</sup> The theme also continued to appear in manuscripts, where it remained relatively inconspicuous and adorned the Canon Tables and gospel headpieces as an index of harmony and eternal life. Only at the end of the medieval period would the theme return to the walls of the church transformed as the Virgin *Zoodochos Pege* or

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<sup>175</sup> Michaelides, “*Opus Sectile* in Cyprus,” 75, figs. 16, 40.

<sup>176</sup> Representations of the scene in the mosaics of Daphni and Kariye Camii and in the Kokkinobaphos manuscript also express her relative inferiority to the Virgin, whose Annunciation appeared against a plain gold background or elaborate architectural structures: H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion*, 70-4.

as the Church Fathers representing the Source of Life or Wisdom.<sup>177</sup> These images are a long way from the fountain of paradise at Kiti, but depend equally on early Byzantine texts and their persistent rhetoric.

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<sup>177</sup> T. Velmans, “L’iconographie de la ‘Fontaine de Vie’ dans la tradition byzantine à la fin du Moyen Âge” in *Synthronon: art et archéologie à la fin de l’Antiquité et du Moyen Âge*, ed. A. Grabar (Paris, 1968), 119-34.

## CHAPTER 6

### INTERCESSION

As scholars continue to debate the definition, character, and chronology of the cult of the Virgin Mary in Byzantium, the apse mosaics of Cyprus have been virtually absent from the discussion.<sup>1</sup> Of the three mosaics, the fragmentary mosaic of the Virgin at Livadia has been the most neglected, but may arguably have the most to contribute (Fig. 3.14). Essential to any notion of the cult of the Virgin is the concept of Marian intercession, which was never stated or elaborated as doctrine by the early Church, but was nonetheless accepted and promoted by many of the church fathers and other Christian writers.<sup>2</sup> From an analysis of texts, it becomes clear that the Virgin's ability to intercede proceeded from her role in the Incarnation, which granted her freedom of speech (παρρησία) before God or special access to Him. However, direct appeals to the Virgin for aid and protection and other indications of her intercessory power become common only in the later sixth century. This chapter explores visual and textual attestations of the Virgin's intercession in order to contextualize the apse mosaic at

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<sup>1</sup> Many studies and edited volumes have been published in the last fifteen years: L. Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought* (San Francisco, 1999); M. Vassilaki, ed., *The Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Milan, 2000); L. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden, 2001); N. Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: homilies 1-5, texts and translations* (Leiden, 2003); R. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary: Papers Read at the 2001 Summer Meeting and the 2002 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical Historical Society* (Woodbridge, 2004); M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005); B. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 2006); M. Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven: Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood, NY, 2008); C. Maunder, ed., *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 2008); L. Brubaker and M. Cunningham, eds., *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images* (Aldershot, 2011). Another study by Brubaker and Cunningham is forthcoming in 2013. Two earlier articles should also be mentioned: A. Cameron, "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople: A City Finds Its Symbol," *Journal of Theological Studies* 29:1 (1978) 79-108; "The Virgin's Robe: An Episode in the History of Early Seventh-Century Constantinople," *Byzantion* 49 (1979) 42-56.

<sup>2</sup> G. Bardy, "Le doctrine de l'intercession de Marie chez les Pères grecs," *La Vie spirituelle* 56 (1938) 1-37.

Livadia and to elucidate its portrayal of the Virgin alone and in prayer. In light of significant losses in the Eastern Mediterranean, the apse mosaic of the small provincial church emerges somewhat unexpectedly as a watershed in the history of Byzantine art with implications for her developing cult.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section surveys textual evidence for the intercession of the Virgin, most often in the form of invocations and prayers, which stand alone or are incorporated into other contexts, including imperial panegyric, hymns, and sermons. Various anecdotes and miraculous visions recorded in saints' lives also demonstrate her power to intercede. The second section explores visual and inscriptional invocations of the Virgin in the so-called minor arts, including domestic jewelry, textiles, and seals, and liturgical vessels and crosses. Iconographic correspondences with the apse mosaic at Livadia merit closer investigation at the end of the chapter. Section three examines the portrayal of the Virgin as an intercessor in panel painting and monumental ecclesiastical art. In addition to votive and invocatory inscriptions, the intercession of the Virgin becomes explicit in the appearance of donor portraits and in the visual elaboration of an intercessory hierarchy. In churches, the Virgin emerges as a bridge between more popular saints and Christ, even as she begins to attract devotion of her own. The transformation of her monumental image is the focus of the last section, which interprets the apse mosaic at Livadia in light of earlier analysis and local context. Here, the promotion of the non-theological image of the solitary orant Virgin to the space of the apse compels us to look beyond traditional interpretations of early Christian apse decoration.

## 1. Textual Evidence for Marian Intercession

The capacity of the Virgin to intercede on behalf of mankind is present in a variety of texts by the late sixth and seventh centuries, albeit without the emphasis it would receive in the post-iconoclastic period. While a Christological interest was taken in the Virgin Mary already in the second century, when the *Protoevangelion of James* sought to elaborate the story of her life, the earliest evidence of her ability to intercede comes from the late fourth century.<sup>3</sup> A rare appeal to the Virgin for aid and protection is found on a papyrus fragment from Egypt, dated conservatively to this period.<sup>4</sup> The short text alludes to her purity and capacity for mercy: “We take refuge in your mercy, Theotokos. Do not disregard our prayers in troubling times, but deliver us from danger, O only pure one, only blessed one.”<sup>5</sup> Likewise, an oration of the church father Gregory of Nazianzos, delivered in 379, addresses a prayer to the Virgin on behalf of the virgin Justina, who was in danger of being seduced, in more than one way, by a magician.<sup>6</sup> In despair, the woman seeks refuge in Christ, but asks the Virgin for assistance on the basis of their shared virginity. Only a year later in 380, the *Life of Gregory Thaumaturgos* by Gregory of Nyssa records the earliest known vision of the Virgin.<sup>7</sup> One night the saint is

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<sup>3</sup> On the controversial topic of Marian devotion in the fourth century, see S. Shoemaker, “Marian Liturgies and Devotion in Early Christianity,” in *Mary: The Complete Resource*, ed. S. Boss (London, 2007), 130-45; “Epiphanius of Salamis, the Kollyridians, and the Early Dormition Narratives: The Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16:3 (2008) 371-401; “The Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century: A Fresh Look at Some Old and New Sources,” in *Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, 71-87. For the opposing view, see the preface to Brubaker and Cunningham, *Cult of the Mother of God*, xix-xxii, esp. xxi.

<sup>4</sup> O. Stegmüller, “Sub tuum praesidium: Bemerkungen zur ältesten Überlieferung,” *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 74 (1952) 76-82. Shoemaker, “Marian Liturgies and Devotion,” 130-1.

<sup>5</sup> English trans. in Shoemaker, “Marian Liturgies and Devotion,” 130.

<sup>6</sup> Gregory of Nazianzos, *Oratio XXIV. In Laudem S. Cypriani*, ed. J.-P. Migne, PG 35.1181A. English trans. in Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, 166-7. Shoemaker, “Marian Liturgies and Devotion,” 131. Bardy, “Le doctrine de l’intercession de Marie,” 9-10. This unusual sermon frequently confuses the one-time magician, Cyprian of Antioch, with another bishop, Cyprian of Carthage.

<sup>7</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De Vita S. Gregorii Thaumaturgi*, ed. Migne, PG 46.909D-912C. English trans. in M. Slusser, *St. Gregory Thaumaturgos: Life and Works* (Washington, DC, 1998), 53-4.

struggling with the doctrine of the Trinity when a mysterious figure appears to him and introduces him to a woman. As holy figures, they shine too brightly to be recognized by Gregory, but he hears them discussing “the true knowledge of the faith” for his benefit. Revealed by their conversation to be John the Evangelist and the Mother of the Lord (μήτηρ τοῦ Κυρίου), the pair intervenes to provide much-needed clarification on the topic at hand, which Gregory comprehends, repeats aloud, and records, allowing him to save his congregation and his diocese from heresy. That visions of the Virgin also occurred at the church of Anastasia in Constantinople in the time of Gregory of Nazianzos is reported by the fifth-century historian Sozomenos in book seven of his *Ecclesiastical History*.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, the passage links her appearances to the healing of various afflictions. The decision of the Council of Ephesus in 431, which officially recognized Mary as the Theotokos, and the establishment of feasts in her honor throughout the empire in the sixth century may have provided further impetus for such visions and invocations.

The Virgin’s role as intercessor becomes more conspicuous in imperial contexts in the second half of the sixth century. There are notable passages in the panegyric of Justin II, written by the Latin poet Corippus in 566-7, in which the poet and the empress Sophia appeal directly to the Virgin.<sup>9</sup> In a literary *topos* at the beginning of book one, the author claims he is not worthy of his subject and prays for the strength to proceed. Corippus invokes Vigilantia and Wisdom before calling on the Virgin: “And you, Mother of God (*dei genetrix*), stretch out your divine hand to me and give me aid, I beseech you.

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<sup>8</sup> Sozomenos, *Ecclesiastical History*, book VII.5.1-3, ed. R. Hussey, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1860), 687-8. English trans. in P. Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 2 (New York, 1886), 378-9. The passage is cited in Shoemaker, “Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century: A Fresh Look,” 73.

<sup>9</sup> Flavius Cresconius Corippus, *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris, libri IV*, ed. A. Cameron (London, 1976).

There rises before me the need for great toil, and when I stretch out my arms they are too weak for the weight.”<sup>10</sup> A more protracted prayer to the Virgin is found in book two, when Sophia prays in a church of the Virgin before her husband’s inauguration in the hippodrome.<sup>11</sup> Significantly, Sophia stands before an icon, her arms outstretched. After calling on the Virgin as the mother of the Creator, the queen of heaven, and the “wondrous piety of God (*pietas miranda dei*),” she prays for the preservation of the emperor, the safety of the empire, and also for personal protection, before offering candles and returning to the palace. The invocation of the Virgin as the wondrous piety of God recalls the description of the Virgin in the dream of Justin II recounted in book one.<sup>12</sup> Descended from heaven, the Virgin appears as “the image of holy Piety (*sacrae Pietatis imago*)” with a merciful expression (*aspectu clemens*) and kindly eyes (*oculisque benigna*). Acting as a messenger (*felix praenuntia*), she places the crown upon his head and clothes him in the imperial robe, before revealing the death of his uncle, Justinian I, and his imminent accession. Only a few years earlier, towards the end of the reign of Justinian, the Virgin was invoked as intercessor in another type of panegyric, an anonymous Greek hymn composed for the rededication of Hagia Sophia in 562. The *kontakion* begins:

O Lord, thou hast demonstrated at once both the splendour of the firmament  
above and the beauty of thy dwelling here below, this holy tabernacle of thy

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<sup>10</sup> Corippus, I: 1.7-14 in Cameron, 36-7, 87, 127.

<sup>11</sup> Corippus, II: 1.47-71 in Cameron, 49, 95, 151-4. Cameron identifies the church as the Chalkoprateia because of its proximity to the palace. At the same time, Justin prays to Christ in a church of the archangel Michael: Corippus, II: 1.4-46 in Cameron, 47-9, 94-5, 149-51. See also Cameron, “The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople,” 79-108.

<sup>12</sup> Corippus, I: 1.28-68 in Cameron, 37-8, 87-8, 129-31.

glory; make firm the latter for ever and ever and accept the prayers which we offer in it unceasingly, by the intercession of the Mother of God (δεήσεις προσβείαις τῆς θεοτόκου), to thee: the life and resurrection of all!<sup>13</sup>

A similar prayer is found at the end of a Syriac hymn delivered between 543 and 554 at the dedication of the newly rebuilt cathedral of Edessa.<sup>14</sup> The hymn concludes by summarizing the symbolism of the apostles, prophets, and martyrs in the architecture of the church, followed by invocations to the Mother of God and the Trinity: “By the prayer of the Blessed Mother may their memory abide above in heaven. May the most exalted Trinity that strengthened those who built [the church] keep us from all evils and preserve us from injuries.”<sup>15</sup>

The visions of the Virgin recorded by Gregory of Nyssa in the late fourth century and Sozomenos in the fifth century become more frequent in hagiographic texts of the late sixth and early seventh centuries. In the seventh-century *Life of John the Almsgiver* by Leontios, bishop of Neapolis in Cyprus, the Virgin mediates on behalf of the saint at

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<sup>13</sup> Greek edition: C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica* (Vienna, 1968), 139-47. English trans. in A. Palmer and L. Rodley, “The Inauguration Anthem of Hagia Sophia in Edessa: A New Edition and Translation with Historical and Architectural Notes and a Comparison with a Contemporary Constantinopolitan Kontakion,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1988) 117-67, esp. 140.

<sup>14</sup> K. McVey, “The Domed Church as Microcosm: Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol,” *DOP* 37 (1983) 91-121; “The Sogitha on the Church of Edessa in the Context of Other Early Greek and Syriac Hymns for the Consecration of Church Buildings,” *ARAM* 5 (1993) 329-70. Palmer and Rodley, “Inauguration Anthem of Hagia Sophia in Edessa,” 117-67. A. Grabar, “Le témoignage d’une hymne syriaque sur l’architecture de la cathédrale d’Édesse au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle et sur la symbolique de l’édifice chrétien,” *Cahiers archéologiques* 2 (1947) 41-67.

<sup>15</sup> English trans. in McVey, “The Domed Church as Microcosm,” 95. Alternative translations can be found in C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972), 57-60 and Palmer and Rodley, “Inauguration Anthem of Hagia Sophia in Edessa,” 130-3, 150, which identifies the “Blessed Mother” as the Virgin.



his death in Amathous.<sup>16</sup> The ancient city was located on the south coast of Cyprus approximately thirty miles from the village of Kiti. The news of John's death comes in a vision to the monk Sabinos in Alexandria, who sees him bearing candles as he exits the gateway of his palace, where the Virgin, wearing a crown of olives, takes him by the hand. The episode represents the fulfillment of a promise the Virgin had made to the saint at the beginning of the *Life*, when she comes to him in a dream, wearing a crown of olives, and promises to lead him into the presence of God: "For no one has as free access (παρορησία) to Him as I have. For I caused Him to put on man's nature on earth and bring salvation to men."<sup>17</sup> Her active participation in the Incarnation is cited here as the basis for her intercessory power. A more formidable Virgin is manifested in the seventh-century *Life of Mary of Egypt*, where a divine force prevents Mary, who is still a prostitute, from entering the church at Golgotha.<sup>18</sup> Exhausted and in tears from repeated attempts to enter, she sees an icon of the Virgin placed above her in the courtyard which inspires her to pray. Pleading with the Virgin, the woman promises to renounce the world and repent for her sins, at which point she is admitted into the church to venerate the life-giving cross. Mary then returns to the icon to give thanks to the Virgin for her compassion and to ask for guidance. A voice responds, telling her to cross the Jordan and find repose. Throughout the story, the Virgin is called a guarantor of salvation (ἐγγυητῆς σωτηρίας), a teacher (διδάσκαλος), and a guide (ὁδηγός), while she

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<sup>16</sup> Greek text in A. J. Festugière, ed., *Vie de Syméon le Fou et vie de Jean de Chypre* (Paris, 1974), 408-9 (ch. 60). English trans. in E. Dawes and N. Baynes, eds., *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies* (Crestwood, NY, 1977), 260-1 (ch. 46).

<sup>17</sup> Festugière, *Vie de Jean de Chypre*, 351-2 (ch. 6). Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints*, 215 (ch. 8).

<sup>18</sup> M. Kouli, "Life of St. Mary of Egypt," in *Holy Women: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. A.-M. Talbot (Washington, DC, 1996), 65-93, esp. 82-4. On this episode, see also D. Krueger, "Mary at the Threshold: The Mother of God as Guardian in Seventh-Century Palestinian Miracle Accounts," in *Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium*, 31-8, esp. 34-6.

functions as a guardian of sacred space.<sup>19</sup> Once again, her influence is linked repeatedly to the distinction of having given birth to God; it is mentioned no less than four times in Mary's initial appeal in chapter twenty-three. A similar episode is found in the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschos, where the Virgin prevents a female heretic named Kosmiane from entering the sanctuary of the Holy Sepulchre until she is in communion with the Orthodox Church.<sup>20</sup> Here she appears as a defender of orthodoxy as well as a protector of sacred space. The stories collected by Moschos around the year 600 present the Virgin as variously sympathetic, vengeful, adept, and ineffectual in her intercessions. In one chapter, a certain John the Anchorite, who lives in a cave near Jerusalem, lights a lamp and prays before an icon of the Virgin and Child whenever he prepares to depart on a pilgrimage.<sup>21</sup> He prays first to God, but then asks the Virgin to watch over his lamp, which symbolizes her ability to protect him on his journey. Whenever the monk returns safely, he finds the lamp still lit. The Virgin again serves as a protector in one of the supplementary tales attributed to Moschos, where a Jewish father in Constantinople seals his son in a furnace after learning that he took communion at Hagia Sophia.<sup>22</sup> Moved by God, the boy's mother becomes aware that her son is in danger, rushes to her husband's workshop, and discovers him unharmed. When she asks how he did not burn, the child reveals that a woman in purple gave him water and protected him. The incident leads to the conversion of the boy and his mother and the death of his father in the same furnace on the command of the emperor Justinian. Although the reference to Justinian absolves

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<sup>19</sup> Sophronios of Jerusalem, *Vita sanctae Mariae Aegyptiae*, ed. Migne, PG 87.3713C-3716A.

<sup>20</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. Migne, PG 87.2904A-B. English trans. in J. Wortley, *The Spiritual Meadow* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1992), 39 (ch. 48).

<sup>21</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. Migne, PG 87.3052A-C. Wortley, *Spiritual Meadow*, 149-50 (ch. 180).

<sup>22</sup> Wortley, *Spiritual Meadow*, 227-9 (ch. 243).

the Virgin from any responsibility for the man's death, another story in the *Spiritual Meadow* describes her violent response to an actor named Gaianos who blasphemed her in the theater of Heliopolis. While the man takes a nap at midday, she severs his hands and feet, leaving him to lie there "like a tree trunk."<sup>23</sup> The Virgin's status as an intercessor is also demonstrated on two occasions when she fails to mediate successfully, reinforcing the power of Christ in the divine hierarchy. In one case, she cannot secure vengeance on behalf of a woman who was wronged by the emperor Zeno because he was a good almsgiver;<sup>24</sup> in another, she cannot save the cities of the Phoenician coast from an earthquake when she appears as a supplicant before God in a vision witnessed by Abba George the Recluse.<sup>25</sup>

The intercessory power of the Virgin also features in hymnography, perhaps as early as the fifth century. The well-known Akathistos Hymn calls the Virgin the "freedom of approach (παρρησία) for mortals before God" and the "robe of free intercession (στολή παρρησίας) given to the naked."<sup>26</sup> Denoting direct access to God, the word παρρησία was also used in the seventh-century *Life of John the Almsgiver*, where we are told the Virgin's παρρησία exceeded all others. The hymn concludes in stanza twenty-four with a prayer to the Virgin as the one who gave birth to God, requesting deliverance "from every evil and from the punishment to come."<sup>27</sup> Added later in the seventh or eighth century, the second *prooimion* of the Akathistos celebrates

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<sup>23</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. Migne, PG 87.2901C-D. Wortley, *Spiritual Meadow*, 38 (ch. 47).

<sup>24</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. Migne, PG 87.3044B. Wortley, *Spiritual Meadow*, 144 (ch. 175).

<sup>25</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. Migne, PG 87.2905A-C. Wortley, *Spiritual Meadow*, 41 (ch. 50).

<sup>26</sup> Stanzas 5:17 and 13:16 in Peltomaa, *Image of the Virgin Mary*, 6-7, 12-13 (text), 153-4, 177-8 (commentary).

<sup>27</sup> Peltomaa, *Image of the Virgin Mary*, 18-19.

the miraculous intervention of the Virgin at the Avar siege of Constantinople in 626.<sup>28</sup> The *prooimion* thus transforms the hymn into a hymn of victory offered to the Theotokos as defender of the city. The appearance of the Virgin at the siege of Constantinople, walking on the city walls and engaging in combat, was also recounted in contemporary sources: a poem by George of Pisidia, a sermon by Theodore Synkellos, and the *Chronikon Paschale*.<sup>29</sup> Another sermon attributed to Synkellos, composed shortly after the Avar attack of 619, commemorates the return of the Virgin's robe to the church of Blachernai after it had been removed to Hagia Sophia for safekeeping.<sup>30</sup> The text associates the relic with the protection of the city and closes with a long prayer of intercession to the Virgin.<sup>31</sup> Her power to protect the city and its citizens from barbarians, civil strife, hunger, disease, fire, and earthquakes depends once again on her παρθησία, her special access to God.<sup>32</sup> Yet the Virgin's role as protector is found even earlier in the hymns of Romanos the Melode, who was active in mid-sixth-century Constantinople and was once regarded as the author of the Akathistos.<sup>33</sup> In his first *kontakion* on the Nativity, Mary prays to her Son for the seasons, the fruits of the earth,

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<sup>28</sup> On the *prooimion*: E. Wellesz, "The 'Akathistos': A Study in Byzantine Hymnography," *DOP* 9 (1956) 141-74. On the siege: J. D. Howard-Johnston, "The Siege of Constantinople in 626," in *Constantinople and Its Hinterland: Papers from the Twenty-Seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993*, ed. C. Mango and G. Dagron (Aldershot, 1995), 131-42.

<sup>29</sup> B. Pentcheva, "The Supernatural Protector of Constantinople: The Virgin and Her Icons in the Tradition of the Avar Siege," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 26 (2002) 2-41; *Icons and Power*, 37-59.

<sup>30</sup> Cameron, "The Virgin's Robe," 42-56, including an English translation of the sermon. On the clothing relics of the Virgin, see also A. Carr, "Threads of Authority: The Virgin Mary's Veil in the Middle Ages," in *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. S. Gordon (New York, 2001), 59-93; S. Shoemaker, "The Cult of Fashion: The Earliest *Life of the Virgin* and Constantinople's Marian Relics," *DOP* 62 (2008) 53-74.

<sup>31</sup> Icons of the Virgin would share credit for the victory of 626 only in post-iconoclastic sources: Pentcheva, "Supernatural Protector of Constantinople," 22-7; *Icons and Power*, 50-2.

<sup>32</sup> Cameron, "The Virgin's Robe," 55-6, n. 58.

<sup>33</sup> C. Mango, "Constantinople as Theotokoupolis," in *Mother of God: Representations*, 17-25, dates the emergence of the Virgin as defender of the city to the reign of Justinian (527-65). On Romanos as the author of the Akathistos: Wellesz, "Akathistos," 141-74; M. Carpenter, *Kontakia of Romanos: Byzantine Melodist*, 2 vols. (Columbia, MO, 1970-2), 297-309.

and those who dwell on earth, before explaining: “You have made me the mouth and the boast of all my race, and your world (οἰκουμένη) has me as a mighty protection (σκέπη), a wall (τείχος) and a buttress (στήριγμα). They look to me, those who were cast out of the Paradise of pleasure, for I bring them back.”<sup>34</sup> The hymn refers to Adam and Eve, who play a greater role in his second *kontakion* on the Nativity, where they engage the Virgin as a mediator for all mankind. Heeding their prayers, she goes as a supplicant before Christ: “My son, since you have exalted me through your condescension, My poor race, through me, now beseeches you (δέεται).”<sup>35</sup> Once more, she is presented as a suitable intercessor because of her role in the Incarnation. In these dialogues, Mary identifies herself as a mediator before God, but invocations of the Virgin from the perspective of the supplicant also appear in the *prooimia* or closing prayers of another twelve *kontakia* by the same author.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the hymns of Romanos develop an emotional component in the dialogues of the Virgin that would become central to the concept of Marian intercession in the eighth century and beyond.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> P. Maas and C. A. Trypanis, eds., *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica: Cantica Genuina* (Oxford, 1963), 1-9, esp. 8. English trans. in E. Lash, *On the Life of Christ: Kontakia* (San Francisco, 1995), 1-12, esp. 11, cited also in L. Peltomaa, “Romanos the Melodist and the Intercessory Role of Mary,” in *Byzantina Mediterranea: Festschrift für Johannes Koder zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. K. Belke et al. (Vienna, 2007), 495-502, esp. 497-8. An alternative translation of the hymn can be found in Carpenter, *Kontakia of Romanos*, vol. 1, 4-11.

<sup>35</sup> Maas and Trypanis, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica*, 9-16, esp. 14. English trans. in Carpenter, *Kontakia of Romanos*, vol. 1, 15-21, esp. 19 (with minor changes). Later in the same hymn, Christ uses another phrase to refer to his mother’s intercession: “...οὔτοι πάντες, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἰκετεύεις με...”: Maas and Trypanis, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica*, 16.

<sup>36</sup> According to the formula, “through/by the intercessions/prayers (προσβείαις/ἰκεσίαις/εὐχαίς) of the Theotokos/Virgin/your Mother”: Peltomaa, “Romanos the Melodist,” 499-501. On the use of dialogue in Byzantine homilies: M. Cunningham, “Dramatic Device or Didactic Tool? The Function of Dialogue in Byzantine Preaching,” in *Rhetoric in Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-Fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001*, ed. E. Jeffreys (Aldershot, 2003), 101-13.

<sup>37</sup> I. Kalavrezou, “Images of the Mother: When the Virgin Mary Became ‘Meter Theou’,” *DOP* 44 (1990) 165-72; “The Maternal Side of the Virgin,” in *Mother of God: Representations*, 41-6. N. Tsironis, “From Poetry to Liturgy: The Cult of the Virgin in the Middle Byzantine Era,” in *Images of the Mother of God*, 91-102; “Emotion and the Senses in Marian Homilies of the Middle Byzantine Period,” in *Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium*, 179-96.

Contemporary festal sermons confirm the Virgin's power to intercede and incorporate similar invocations in their closing prayers. A homily on the Annunciation attributed to Basil of Seleucia praises the Virgin as a mediator in one of the salutations delivered by the archangel Gabriel, which elaborates on the text of Luke 1:28: "Hail, favored one, mediating (μεσιτεύουσα) on behalf of God and men, so that the dividing wall of the enemy may be destroyed and those on earth may be united with those in heaven."<sup>38</sup> The sermon also invokes the Virgin in its closing prayer, after advocating unity and orthodoxy in a divided Church: "O all-holy Virgin...watching over us graciously from above, may you now lead us peacefully: bringing us without shame before the throne of judgment, may you show us shares in a position to his right, as we are carried off to heaven..."<sup>39</sup> A more succinct prayer concludes a seventh-century homily on the Annunciation by Pseudo-Athanasios: "Intercede (πρόσβευε) for us, Lady and Mistress, Queen and Mother of God (Μήτηρ Θεοῦ), because you are one of us and the one born of you is our incarnate God."<sup>40</sup> Such homilies emphasize above all the purity, virginity, and humanity of the Virgin as the source of Christ's human nature. But while Monophysites believed in a single divine nature of Christ, they too described Mary in sermons as an intercessor before God. Well known for his iconoclastic tendencies, the bishop Severos of Antioch (512-18) promoted affective devotion to the Virgin, who

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<sup>38</sup> Basil of Seleucia, *Oratio XXXIX*, ed. Migne, PG 85.444A-B. The sermon has also been attributed to Proklos of Constantinople: B. Marx, *Procliana: Untersuchung über den homiletischen Nachlass des Patriarchen Proklos von Konstantinopel* (Münster, 1940), 84-9, cited in N. Constatas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Homilies 1-5, Texts and Translations* (Leiden, 2003), 292 n. 60. On the relationship between the homily and the Akathistos Hymn, see Peltomaa, *Akathistos Hymn*, 77-85.

<sup>39</sup> Basil of Seleucia, *Oratio XXXIX*, ed. Migne, PG 85.452A.

<sup>40</sup> Pseudo-Athanasios, *Sermo in Annuntiationem Deiparae*, ed. Migne, PG 28.940C. Cited also in A. van Dijk, "The Angelic Salutation in Early Byzantine and Medieval Annunciation Imagery," *Art Bulletin* 81:3 (1999) 420-36, esp. 429.

warmed his heart, aroused his soul, and whose intercessions would bring peace and divine harmony to men.<sup>41</sup>

To summarize, the intercession of the Virgin (προσβεία, δέησις, ικεσία, μεσιτεία) was communicated in early Byzantine texts by direct and indirect expressions of her special access to God (παρορησία);<sup>42</sup> by invocations or prayers addressed to her and from her to Christ; and by miraculous visions in which she intervenes to help or heal the faithful, defend orthodoxy, and protect civic or sacred space. Episodes in which the Virgin fails to intercede are equally important, emphasizing that she does not have the last word, which belongs only to her divine Son. These sporadic references to Marian intercession would become more familiar in the course of the eighth century.<sup>43</sup> As sermons grew longer and more formalized and writers adopted a high literary style, the frequency, length, and intensity of prayers to the Virgin and other saints changed. According to Cunningham, the emphasis in preaching was no longer placed on didacticism and moral instruction but on prayers and invocations.<sup>44</sup> The multiplication of feasts in honor of the Virgin, including her Conception, Nativity, and Presentation, meant that she was more often the focus of homilies, as her early life and the lives of her parents, Joachim and Anna, were expounded. In this way the Virgin was further elevated

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<sup>41</sup> P. Allen, "Severus of Antioch and the Homily: The End of the Beginning?" in *The Sixth Century, End or Beginning?*, ed. P. Allen and E. Jeffreys (Brisbane, 1996), 163-75, esp. 168-70; "The Sixth-Century Greek Homily: A Re-assessment," in *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics*, ed. M. Cunningham and P. Allen (Leiden, 1998), 201-25, esp. 207; "Portrayals of Mary in Greek Homiletic Literature (6th-7th centuries)," in *Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium*, 69-88, esp. 73. On the bishop's opposition to religious imagery: C. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 44.

<sup>42</sup> The intercession of the Virgin could also be conveyed by metaphor, discussed in my chapter five.

<sup>43</sup> On eighth-century homilies: Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*; "The Meeting of the Old and the New: The Typology of Mary the Theotokos in Byzantine Homilies and Hymns," in *The Church and Mary*, 52-62; "The Use of the *Protevangelion of James* in Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God," in *Cult of the Mother of God*, 163-78.

<sup>44</sup> M. Cunningham, "The Sixth Century: A Turning Point for Byzantine Homiletics?" in *Sixth Century, End or Beginning*, 176-86, esp. 183.

above the saints and presented as the ideal intercessor before God. Likewise, in the new festal sermons, the Virgin acquired a relative, but not absolute, independence from Christ, as writers expressed an interest in her personal qualities and emotions, following in the tradition of Romanos the Melode. A more common emphasis on the maternal and affective aspects of her relationship to Christ developed in the context of the iconoclastic debates, when iconophile arguments depended on the humanity of Christ, and therefore of his mother, to justify the use of religious figural imagery.<sup>45</sup> With a few exceptions, the Virgin would be portrayed in icons as an affectionate mother only later, for example pressing her cheek against the Child in the type of the Eleousa, beginning in the tenth century.<sup>46</sup> Prior to iconoclasm, Byzantine artists highlighted above all the physical manifestations of the Virgin's pregnancy, especially her rounded breasts and belly, as proof of the Incarnation.<sup>47</sup> But while the compassion of the Virgin was essential to the medieval concept of Marian intercession, it would rarely be reflected in early Byzantine art, or indeed in the apse decoration of any period.<sup>48</sup> In these areas, the intercession of the Virgin would be communicated in other ways.

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<sup>45</sup> N. Tsironis, "The Mother of God in the Iconoclastic Controversy," in *Mother of God: Representations*, 27-39; "From Poetry to Liturgy," 91-102; "Emotion and the Senses," 179-96. In short, the Incarnation of Christ allowed iconophiles to claim that the Second Commandment prohibition had been superseded: H. Kessler, "'Pictures Fertile with Truth': How Christians Managed to Make Images of God without Violating the Second Commandment," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 49/50 (1991-2) 53-65; "'Thou Shalt Paint the Likeness of Christ Himself': The Mosaic Prohibition as Provocation for Christian Images," *Jewish Art* 23 (1997) 124-39, repr. in H. Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia, 2000), 29-52.

<sup>46</sup> I. Kalavrezou, "Images of the Mother," 165-72; "The Maternal Side of the Virgin" 41-6. See also H. Maguire, "The Depiction of Sorrow in Middle Byzantine Art," *DOP* 31 (1977) 123-74, esp. 144, noting that the Virgin expresses sorrow through gesture in early Crucifixion scenes. The idea that Marian emotion was first explored in homilies and hymns, then in Byzantine art, and finally in the liturgy is set out by Tsironis, "From Poetry to Liturgy," 91-102.

<sup>47</sup> H. Maguire, "Body, Clothing, Metaphor: The Virgin in Early Byzantine Art," in *Cult of the Mother of God*, 39-51.

<sup>48</sup> So much is clear from a comparison of the apse mosaic of St. Sophia with the homily of Photios delivered at its unveiling in 867. Photios claims that the Virgin "fondly turns her eyes on her begotten Child in the affection of her heart, yet assumes the expression of a detached and imperturbable mood at the



## 2. *Invocations and Ex-votos in the Minor Arts*

In early Byzantine art, the intercession of the Virgin was expressed in a variety of ways, corresponding to some extent with the textual evidence. Inscribed invocations are typically shorter and more formulaic than textual invocations; occasionally they take the form of biblical quotations. Votive gifts offered to the Virgin, both actual and illustrated, may be compared to the candles lit by the empress Sophia or carried by St. John the Almsgiver.<sup>49</sup> The iconographic type of the Virgin in prayer recalls the emphasis on her piety in Corippus and her portrayal as a supplicant before Christ in the dialogues of Romanos. Likewise, the depiction of the Virgin alone, without the Christ Child, expresses a measure of independence also conveyed in the hymns of Romanos. Compositional details, like the projecting footstool described in chapter four and the visualized threshold described in chapter five, may highlight the intercessory role of the Virgin independent of iconographic types. Finally, the function or context of a work may configure the Virgin as an intercessor. The last three – compositional details, function,

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passionless and wondrous nature of her offspring, and composes her gaze accordingly.” English trans. in C. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 187-90, esp. 187. The affection here is clearly in the eyes of the beholder, a point made by Kalavrezou, “Images of the Mother,” 170-1. Because of a number of perceived inaccuracies in the patriarch’s speech, the mosaic that survives today was once thought to be different from the one described by Photios: C. Mango, “Documentary Evidence on the Apse Mosaics of St. Sophia,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 47 (1954) 395-402; *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, 1958), 284; A. Grabar, *L’iconoclasme byzantin: dossier archéologique* (Paris, 1957), 184-5; N. Oikonomides, “Some Remarks on the Apse Mosaic of St. Sophia,” *DOP* 39 (1985) 111-15. However, see R. J. H. Jenkins, Review of C. Mango, *Homilies of Photius*, in *BZ* 52:1 (1959) 106-8, esp. 107; C. Mango and E. Hawkins, “The Apse Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul: Report on Work Carried Out in 1964,” *DOP* 19 (1965) 113-51; H. Maguire, “Truth and Convention in Byzantine Descriptions of Works of Art,” *DOP* 28 (1974) 111-40, esp. 134; R. Nelson, “To Say and To See: Ekphrasis and Vision in Byzantium,” in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. R. Nelson (Cambridge, 2000), 143-68, esp. 146-50. One exception is the twelfth-century apse at Kurbinovo, where the Child reclines in his mother’s arms and looks up at her: L. Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo: les fresques de Saint-Georges et la peinture byzantine du XIIe siècle* (Brussels, 1975), 53-67, pls. 8-9.

<sup>49</sup> Note that the presence of donors, with or without gifts, identifies the work itself as a gift: N. P. Ševčenko, “Close Encounters: Contact between Holy Figures and the Faithful as Represented in Byzantine Works of Art,” in *Byzance et les images: cycle de conférences organisé au musée du Louvre par le Service culturel du 5 octobre au 7 décembre 1992*, ed. A. Guillou and J. Durand (Paris, 1994), 255-85.

and context – are especially important when the iconographic types themselves are ambivalent, like the enthroned or standing Virgin and Child, which can also be interpreted in light of theology or magic. All of these means would carry over into the middle Byzantine period, where they were supplemented by the portrayal of the Virgin as a more compassionate and maternal figure and by new themes, such as the Deesis with Christ flanked by the Virgin and St. John the Baptist.<sup>50</sup> This section considers the evidence of Marian intercession in the so-called minor arts, including the domestic and liturgical arts. These works provide a context for understanding the apse mosaics of Cyprus, especially the mosaic at Livadia.

In the domestic arts, images of the Virgin are less plentiful than images of Christ and the saints, images of nature, and traditional pagan themes. Nevertheless, images and invocations of the Virgin contribute to the apotropaic or amuletic functions of many items of jewelry and clothing.<sup>51</sup> The vast majority of these works represent Christological narratives rather than portraits of the Virgin. Scenes of the Annunciation in particular combine representations of the Virgin with invocatory inscriptions drawn from the text of Luke 1:28.<sup>52</sup> For example, a gold medallion of the sixth or seventh century in the Christian Schmidt Collection in Munich shows Christ blessing a married couple on the obverse and narrative scenes from the early life of Christ on the reverse

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<sup>50</sup> The composition known as the Deesis originally promoted Mary and John as the earliest witnesses to the divinity of Christ, but later became an iconography of intercession: C. Walter, “Two Notes on the Deësis,” *Revue des études byzantines* 26 (1968) 311-36; “Further Notes on the Deësis,” *Revue des études byzantines* 28 (1970) 161-87. See also A. Cutler, “Under the Sign of the Deesis: On the Question of Representativeness in Medieval Art and Literature,” *DOP* 41 (1987) 145-54, emphasizing the flexibility of the theme with respect to the inclusion of other holy figures.

<sup>51</sup> H. Maguire, “The Cult of the Mother of God in Private,” in *Mother of God: Representations*, 279-89; “Byzantine Domestic Art as Evidence for the Early Cult of the Virgin,” in *Images of the Mother of God*, 183-93.

<sup>52</sup> Van Dijk, “The Angelic Salutation,” 420-36.

(Fig. 1.90).<sup>53</sup> The Virgin features prominently in all three narrative scenes, including a large-scale Annunciation and more diminutive Visitation and Nativity. Surrounding the archangel and the Virgin is the Lucan verse: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!”<sup>54</sup> Intended to be worn around the neck, the medallion transforms the biblical quotation into a personal plea for protection and intercession, most likely in relation to the marriage depicted on the obverse and its desired outcome, successful procreation.<sup>55</sup> The inscription on the obverse, taken from John 14:27, “My peace I give unto you,” conveys a blessing for the marriage, while the narrative scenes draw attention to the Virgin’s pregnancy. In textiles, a seventh-century linen tunic from Egypt in the British Museum preserves most of its original tapestry medallions and clavi (Fig. 6.1). The six roundels on the front and back illustrate the same theme, the Adoration of the Magi, while the clavi contain several figures, animals, and central panels of the enthroned Virgin and Child, which could also be considered abridged versions of the Adoration.<sup>56</sup> As a feature of magical spells and amulets, repetition was a means of intensifying the power of the biblical scene to protect the wearer and secure God’s favor.<sup>57</sup> Of course, not all church officials approved of this use of Christian imagery, which was rooted in pagan practice and divorced from the cause of didacticism.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Cat. no. 10 in Vassilaki, *Mother of God: Representations*, 290-1.

<sup>54</sup> For another example not discussed here, see B. Pitarakis, “Female Piety in Context: Understanding Developments in Private Devotional Practices,” in *Images of the Mother of God*, 153-66, fig. 13.7, illustrating a seventh-century cameo with the Annunciation from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

<sup>55</sup> Related objects are discussed in G. Vikan, “Art and Marriage in Early Byzantium,” *DOP* 44 (1990) 145-63.

<sup>56</sup> H. Maguire, “Garments Pleasing to God: The Significance of Domestic Textile Designs in the Early Byzantine Period,” *DOP* 44 (1990) 215-24, esp. 221; “Cult of the Mother of God in Private,” 284.

<sup>57</sup> E. Maguire, H. Maguire, and M. Duncan-Flowers, *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House* (Urbana, IL, 1989), 16-33. H. Maguire, “Garments Pleasing to God,” 215-24; “Magic and the Christian Image,” in *Byzantine Magic*, ed. H. Maguire (Washington, DC, 1995), 51-71; “Cult of the Mother of God in Private,” 282-4.

<sup>58</sup> On the problem of magic: H. Maguire, “Magic and the Christian Image,” 51-71.

Although less prevalent, portraits of the Virgin also appear in early Byzantine jewelry and textiles, corresponding to the iconographic types portrayed in the mosaics of Lythrankomi, Kiti, and Livadia. One of the few datable objects is a gold medallion struck in Constantinople around 583-4 and discovered near Kyrenia in northern Cyprus (Fig. 6.2).<sup>59</sup> Now at Dumbarton Oaks, the medallion represents the Virgin and Child seated on a lyre-backed throne and flanked by angels, similar to the apse mosaic at Lythrankomi. However, the figures on the medallion are framed by an invocatory inscription, "Christ our God, help us!" Smaller scenes of the Nativity and the Adoration unfold beneath them, while the Baptism of Christ occupies the reverse. Another portrait of the Virgin and Child on a lyre-backed throne is engraved on one of four medallions that make up a silver armband (c. 550-65) in the Royal Ontario Museum (Fig. 1.89).<sup>60</sup> The inscription, "Theotokos, help Anna! Grace," surrounds the figures on three sides. The word *charis* recalls the greeting of the archangel in Luke 1:28 and asserts the source of the Virgin's power to intercede.<sup>61</sup> Two other medallions on the armband depict the Holy Women at the Tomb and the Entry into Jerusalem in short form, while the trisagion and the first verse of psalm ninety are inscribed on the last medallion and the band

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<sup>59</sup> M. Ross, "A Byzantine Gold Medallion at Dumbarton Oaks," *DOP* 11 (1957) 247-61. P. Grierson, "The Date of the Dumbarton Oaks Epiphany Medallion," *DOP* 15 (1961) 221-4. Cat. no. 36 in M. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC, 1965), 33-5.

<sup>60</sup> G. Vikan, "Two Byzantine Amuletic Armbands and the Group to which They Belong," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 49-50 (1991-2) 33-51, fig. 5. Out of twenty-two armbands explored by Vikan, several others represent the Virgin in the context of narrative scenes, including the Annunciation (6), the Nativity (4), the Adoration of the Magi (3), and the Ascension (2), but none of them contain invocations to her, nor is she invoked on the armbands where she is not depicted. For the armband in Toronto, see also cat. no. 94 in M. Mango, *Silver in Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore, 1986), 266-7, where the Entry into Jerusalem is identified as the almost identical Holy Rider, who usually impales a demon with his spear.

<sup>61</sup> H. Maguire, "Cult of the Mother of God in Private," 284.

respectively, where they assume the character of protective chants.<sup>62</sup> Below the Entry into Jerusalem is a simple prayer for *hygeia* or health. Other armbands of the same type combine biblical narratives with magical signs and pagan beasts in a more thorough, if less Christian attempt to effect a cure or defend the wearer. A final example of the enthroned Virgin and Child appears on the circular bezel of a gold ring in the Metropolitan Museum, dating from the sixth to seventh century (Fig. 1.87).<sup>63</sup> The openwork hoop incorporates the inscription: “Lord, help the wearer!” The iconographic type of the standing Virgin and Child, pictured in the apse mosaic at Kiti, is reproduced on several rings of the same period. A gold ring of the seventh century in the Christian Schmidt Collection in Munich features the Virgin and Child on the oval bezel flanked by two crosses (Fig. 6.3).<sup>64</sup> Here, the Virgin is invoked by an inscription on the openwork hoop: “Theotokos, help Eustathias!” Two silver bezels with the same composition in Berlin and in Oxford implore the Virgin and Christ respectively: “Theotokos, help Kosmas!” and “Christ, help Nikephoros!”<sup>65</sup> A gold and niello ring from a sixth-century treasure, now at Dumbarton Oaks, also shows the standing Virgin and Child flanked by crosses, but has no inscription.<sup>66</sup> In at least two of these examples, in Munich and Washington, the Virgin and Child do not face frontally as they do at Kiti, but the Child looks up at his mother, seen most clearly in the angle of the cross-halo. By expressing some communication between the Virgin and Child, these rings illustrate the concept of intercession, reinforced by the invocatory inscription in Munich and regardless of its

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<sup>62</sup> Psalm ninety is by far the most common inscription on the group of armbands, appearing on eighteen of twenty-two examples: Vikan, “Two Byzantine Amuletic Armbands,” 35.

<sup>63</sup> Metropolitan Museum, acc. no. 17.190.1654 with a sixth- to seventh-century date. Cat. no. 333 in A. Yeroulanou, *Diatrita: Gold pierced-work jewellery from the 3rd to the 7th century* (Athens, 1999), 168, 260 with a seventh-century date.

<sup>64</sup> Cat. no. 13 in Vassilaki, *Mother of God: Representations*, 294-5.

<sup>65</sup> Vassilaki, *Mother of God: Representations*, 294.

<sup>66</sup> Cat. no. 1790 in Ross, *Catalogue of Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities*, vol. 2, 138, pl. 98.

absence at Dumbarton Oaks. This simple communication would evolve into the later Hodegetria type, where the Virgin and Child gesture to each other.<sup>67</sup> The third type of the orant Virgin, comparable to the apse mosaic at Livadia, is found on a variety of items. A gold bracelet in the British Museum produced around 600 contains a medallion with a bust of the orant Virgin and an openwork hoop with an inhabited vine scroll (Fig. 3.50).<sup>68</sup> The scroll envelops peacocks and swans as it blooms from a central amphora, recalling the mosaic border at Kiti. There is no inscription on the medallion or hoop. In the same collection, a small oval pendant in gold, said to come from Alexandria, represents the standing orant Virgin framed by a pearled border.<sup>69</sup> Once again, the object has no inscription. Also displayed in the British Museum, a gold pectoral cross of the late sixth or seventh century represents the orant Virgin between Christ and a military saint on the vertical arm and between two adoring angels on the horizontal arm (Fig. 3.49).<sup>70</sup> An inscription on the reverse names the owner of the cross, George of Skopelos. Another gold cross dated to the seventh or eighth century, now in the Campobello di Mazara in Palermo, identifies the orant Virgin as “Hagia Maria,” combining the type of the Virgin at Livadia with her inscription at Kiti (Fig. 2.78).<sup>71</sup> Here, the Virgin stands at the center of the cross with busts of three saints on the horizontal and lower extremities. Finally, a seventh- or eighth-century tapestry-woven stole in the Worcester Art Museum depicts Christ, the orant Virgin labeled “Maria,” and the apostles interspersed with crosses (Fig.

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<sup>67</sup> On the iconographic type of the Hodegetria, focusing on the position of the hands, not the heads, see Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, 110-17.

<sup>68</sup> Cat. no. 99 in D. Buckton, ed., *Byzantium: Treasures of Art and Culture from British Collections* (London, 1994), 95-6. Cat. no. 11 in Vassilaki, *Mother of God: Representations*, 292.

<sup>69</sup> Cat. no. 283 in O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography of the British Museum* (London, 1901), 46, pl. 5.

<sup>70</sup> Cat. no. 287 in Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities*, 47, pl. 4.

<sup>71</sup> B. Pitarakis, *Les croix-reliquaires pectorales byzantines en bronze* (Paris, 2006), 32-3, 78, fig. 14. Cat. no. 229 in G. Cavallo, *I Bizantini in Italia* (Milan, 1982), 415, fig. 301.

6.4).<sup>72</sup> It remains possible that the stole is ecclesiastical, but could equally have been worn by a layperson.<sup>73</sup> Although domestic works featuring the orant Virgin may be as likely as other iconographic types to incorporate the names of owners or holy figures, these objects more often lack invocatory inscriptions, perhaps because the orant as a visual formula made the invocation redundant. In other words, the image of the orant, whether the Virgin or a saint, was probably sufficient in many cases to convey the prayer for divine aid, despite the fact that repetition was believed to contribute to the potency of early Byzantine amulets. The significance of the orant will be discussed further below, but it is worth noting here that bronze pectoral crosses, mass-produced from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, rarely have personalized or invocatory inscriptions.<sup>74</sup> Rather the intercessor, typically the Virgin or a male saint, is shown in prayer.<sup>75</sup> In general, as we shall see, donors would not forego such inscriptions on liturgical objects, which have much in common with amuletic jewelry and textiles, but function as votive gifts with both a public and private significance.

In very few examples, the Virgin is invoked inscriptionally where she is not represented. A seventh-century gold marriage ring in the British Museum shows Christ on the bezel blessing a married couple, standing above the word “concord.” Engraved on the hoop, a longer inscription reads: “Theotokos, help! Amen.”<sup>76</sup> In the same way, a gold

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<sup>72</sup> H. Maguire, “Garments Pleasing to God,” 219, fig. 21. Cat. no. 264 in *Pagan and Christian Egypt: Egyptian Art from the First to the Tenth Century A.D.* (Brooklyn, 1941), 84.

<sup>73</sup> H. Maguire, “Garments Pleasing to God,” 219 n. 44.

<sup>74</sup> Pitarakis, “Female Piety in Context,” 155; *Les croix-reliquaires pectorales byzantines en bronze*, 183.

<sup>75</sup> In this context, the orant approximates the figure of Christ at the Crucifixion, which is typically illustrated on the obverse and often reflects the contents of the cross-reliquary, a fragment of the True Cross. Through this gesture, the Virgin or saint is implicated in the salvation brought by Christ’s sacrifice: Pitarakis, *Les croix-reliquaires pectorales byzantines en bronze*, 84.

<sup>76</sup> Vikan, “Art and Marriage,” 160, fig. 25. Other marriage rings of the seventh century introduce the Virgin into the conventional image of Christ blessing the married couple. On these relatively rare bezels, the Virgin blesses the bride while Christ blesses the groom.

openwork plaque of the sixth or seventh century, now in the Walters Art Museum, appeals to the Virgin without depicting her or any other holy figure (Fig. 6.5). Instead, the object incorporates two peacocks and an eagle among plant forms, poised squares, and a wave pattern border.<sup>77</sup> Arched around the pair of confronted birds are the words: “Theotokos, help the wearer!” The use of the feminine form indicates that the plaque was originally sewn to a woman’s garment. Independent inscriptions invoking the aid or protection of the Virgin also marked lintels or doorways in Syria, which bore no figural imagery, but functioned apotropaically to defend the household.<sup>78</sup>

The above survey of early Byzantine jewelry and clothing has revealed in some cases a clear correspondence between the iconography of the Virgin and her inscriptions, including those derived from Luke 1:28. In other cases, however, inscriptions accompanying images of the Virgin appeal to Christ or God in general, do not specify the recipient of the prayer, or modify other biblical quotations to serve as personal petitions, like the trisagion or psalm ninety. Likewise, examples invoking the aid or protection of the Virgin by means of images or inscriptions, while not particularly plentiful in the larger body of material, represent various iconographic types and more rarely combine invocations with non-figural or non-religious decoration. Nevertheless, the orant stands out as an explicit visual symbol that does not require the support of an invocatory inscription. In terms of dating, the vast majority of domestic objects featuring the Virgin,

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<sup>77</sup> A. Yeroulanou, “The Byzantine Openwork Gold Plaque in the Walters Art Gallery,” *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 46 (1988) 2-10, identifies the birds as guinea fowl and argues for a mid seventh-century date, while the present museum label identifies them as peacocks and supplies a more conservative sixth- to seventh-century date. Compare the aniconic cross reliquary of the ninth or tenth century at Dumbarton Oaks with the inscription, “Theotokos, help Helen! Amen.” in Pitarakis, “Female Piety in Context,” 155, fig. 13.3, which contests the sixth- to seventh-century date given in Ross, *Catalogue of Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities*, vol. 2, 23, pl. 23, no. 17.

<sup>78</sup> H. Lucas, “Griechische und lateinische Inschriften aus Syrien, Mesopotamien und Kleinasien,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 14:1 (1905) 1-72, esp. 29-30, 34-8, figs. 8, 20.



including the iconographic type of the orant, cannot be placed before the second half of the sixth century.<sup>79</sup>

The invocation, “Theotokos, help!” also appears on lead seals beginning in the late sixth and early seventh century, although invocatory inscriptions are extremely rare in pre-iconoclastic seals.<sup>80</sup> Most early seals state name of the owner in the genitive case, often in the form of a cruciform monogram. More important for our purposes is the percentage of seals bearing images of the Virgin or Virgin and Child, typically in bust form where only the head of the Child can be seen (Fig. 6.6). Other notable early examples include the standing Virgin, holding the Child in front of her or to one side, and the Virgin alone in bust form.<sup>81</sup> The study published by John Cotsonis in 2005 revealed limited numbers of Byzantine lead seals with religious figural iconography in the pre-iconoclastic period: 15.7% of total seals in the sixth century, 28.6% in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, and 24.1% in the seventh century.<sup>82</sup> The figure drops to around

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<sup>79</sup> I have excluded the very early and rare images of the orant Virgin in gold glass, discussed in chapter 3.6c. Cf. H. Maguire, “Byzantine Domestic Art,” 183-6.

<sup>80</sup> J. Cotsonis, “Onomastics, Gender, Office and Images on Byzantine Lead Seals: A Means of Investigating Personal Piety,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 32:1 (2008) 1-37, esp. 13, revising the seventh-century date given in J. Cotsonis, “The Contribution of Byzantine Lead Seals to the Study of the Cult of the Saints (Sixth-Twelfth Century),” *Byzantion* 75 (2005) 383-497, esp. 489.

<sup>81</sup> Very few seals depict the Virgin and Child enthroned, while those of the orant Virgin, standing or in bust form, typically with a medallion of Christ suspended in front of her, belong to the eleventh century or later. For seals of the Virgin in Cyprus, see cat. nos. 2-3, 78, 90, 93, 210-11, 218, 235, 253, 430, 447, 463, 469, 481, 486, 510-82, 849, 854-9, 877 in D. M. Metcalf, *Byzantine Lead Seals from Cyprus* (Nicosia, 2004), 158-9, 191-2, 195-6, 255-6, 260, 268-9, 277-8, 351-2, 362, 372, 375, 382-3, 385, 395-419, 546-50, 555. See also cat. nos. 887, 925 in D. M. Metcalf, *Byzantine Cyprus 491-1191* (Nicosia, 2009), 119, 130.

<sup>82</sup> Cotsonis, “Contribution of Byzantine Lead Seals,” 383-497, esp. charts II and VI. The author’s most recent article, “Narrative Scenes on Byzantine Lead Seals (Sixth-Twelfth Centuries): Frequency, Iconography, and Clientele,” *Gesta* 48:1 (2009) 55-86, considers an additional 694 seals from four catalogues, including Metcalf, *Byzantine Lead Seals from Cyprus*, for a total of 7,978 seals vs. 7,284. 339 of the additional seals (48.8%) date from the sixth, sixth/seventh, and seventh centuries. For our purposes, the most significant change as a result of the new evidence is the percentage of seals with religious figural imagery dated to the late sixth and early seventh centuries, which rises to 35.9% of total seals vs. 28.6%. Moreover, examination of the other three catalogues [A.-K. Wassiliou and W. Seibt, *Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel in Österreich*, vol. 2: *Zentral- und Provinzialverwaltung* (Vienna, 2004); E. McGeer, J. Nesbitt, and N. Oikonomides, eds., *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, vol. 5: *The East (continued), Constantinople and Environs, Unknown Locations, Addenda, Uncertain*

4% in the iconoclastic period, before climbing dramatically to more than 80% of total seals in the eleventh century. Nevertheless, seals bearing images of the Virgin account for 51.7% of specimens with religious figural iconography in the sixth century, 59.5% in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, and 69.4% in the seventh century, reaching a peak of 77.1% of seals during the iconophile interlude when there were far fewer figural seals.<sup>83</sup> The percentage falls as representations of saints become more plentiful and diverse, particularly in the eleventh century. These figures would appear to contradict the evidence of Byzantine domestic art, especially the silver and bronze armbands, where images of the Virgin are comparatively rare. Although the number of seals with Christian figural images never amounts to more than 28.6% of total seals in the pre-iconoclastic period (actually 35.9% according to the latest figures), representations of the Virgin account for a significant portion of those seals, between 51.7% and 69.4%, very few of which are narrative scenes.<sup>84</sup> Portraits of the Virgin therefore account for 8.1%,

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*Readings* (Washington, DC, 2005); V. Šandrovskaya and W. Seibt, *Byzantinische Bleisiegel der Staatlichen Eremitage mit Familiennamen*, vol. 1: *Sammlung Lichačev – Namen von A bis I* (Vienna, 2005)] suggests that the Cypriot seals are primarily responsible for the increase, as c. 1000 of 1250 seals (80%) published by Metcalf date before c. 725, owing to a sharp decline in correspondence on the island thereafter. Of the seals dated before c. 725, Metcalf identifies “two very plentiful categories,” those depicting eagles and busts of the Virgin and Child, often with the name of the owner inscribed on the reverse: Metcalf, *Byzantine Lead Seals from Cyprus*, 78-9. Unfortunately, new figures on the Virgin in the sixth and seventh centuries were not generated by Cotsonis in 2009. All figures noted are therefore derived from the first article published in 2005.

<sup>83</sup> It would be interesting to know if and how the Cypriot seals affect these numbers. Metcalf does not produce charts or figures that can easily be checked against Cotsonis’ results. It remains a possibility that the Cypriot seals could affect the percentages on the Virgin, just as they affected the overall percentages of Christian figural seals, especially in the sixth/seventh and seventh centuries, when they are most plentiful. Metcalf notes that the earlier sixth-century seals have few representatives in Cyprus: Metcalf, *Byzantine Lead Seals from Cyprus*, xiv. But he also notes, despite the conservative dating employed throughout the catalogue (i.e. sixth/seventh century), that “most of the material seems to be from the period after c. 620,” leaving a window of 620-725 for the vast majority of Cypriot seals. If one follows the editors of the *Dumbarton Oaks* catalogue, who observe that seals with busts of the Virgin and Child held in a medallion should not be dated after c. 650, then one is left with a very small window indeed for this large category of Cypriot seals, c. 620-50, perhaps too small given the nature of the evidence: McGeer, Nesbitt, and Oikonomides, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks*, vol. 5, 11.

<sup>84</sup> Seals with narrative scenes make up only 1-2% of seals with religious figural imagery in the pre-iconoclastic period: Cotsonis, “Narrative Scenes on Byzantine Lead Seals,” 55-68.

17.0%, and 16.7% of all seals produced in the sixth, sixth to seventh, and seventh centuries respectively, including those with crosses, animals, personifications, secular portraits, and lone inscriptions.<sup>85</sup> In contrast, fifteen of twenty-two contemporary armbands (68.2%) with a total of eighty-five medallions contain Christian figural imagery, a much higher percentage than the seals.<sup>86</sup> Thirteen of twenty-two armbands (59.1%) and thirty-eight of eighty-five medallions (44.7%) represent Christological narratives, also a much higher percentage than the seals, while only four armbands (18.2%) contain portraits of holy figures, not including the semi-Christian Holy Rider, who appears on sixteen of twenty-two armbands (72.7%), more than any other subject. While the Virgin Mary features on ten of twenty-two armbands (45.5%), nine of these are narrative scenes, all from the life of Christ; only once does she appear enthroned with the Child in an iconic portrait (4.6%) (Fig. 1.89). The seals paint a very different picture, where portraits dominate the category of Christian figural images and the Virgin dominates the category of portraits.<sup>87</sup>

These discrepancies can be explained in part by the different functions of these objects. Seals secure and authenticate documents: as a consequence, they represent the owner and his office to other individuals. Despite belonging to private citizens, they may illustrate public personas. The images on seals may also be apotropaic, serving to protect the document and its contents from interference. Like the seals, the armbands belong to private citizens, but while they may be seen by others, they do not represent the owner to

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<sup>85</sup> The other categories are listed, but not analyzed by Cotsonis, "Contribution of Byzantine Lead Seals," 386-7.

<sup>86</sup> Vikan, "Two Byzantine Amuletic Armbands," 33-51.

<sup>87</sup> Note that seals of the Virgin also demonstrate an unusually high correspondence of homonymity, i.e. 89.7% of women named Maria placed an image of the Virgin on their seals, and 80.1% of women in general. Although seals belonging to women account for only 2.4% of total seals and date overwhelmingly to the middle Byzantine period, 42.1% of men also selected the Virgin for their seals, making her the most popular subject: Cotsonis, "Onomastics, Gender, Office and Images," 6-7, 10-12.

others in any formal capacity. They are amuletic as well as apotropaic: inscriptions such as *hygeia*, *charis*, and psalm ninety, combined with various Christian, semi-Christian, and magical signs may work to effect a cure on behalf of the wearer, bring prosperity, or protect the wearer from demonic forces. Despite these differences, both the seals and the armbands, along with other types of jewelry and textiles, can provide evidence of popular devotion. It must be emphasized, however, that lead seals were used by relatively high-status individuals in administrative posts, whether imperial, provincial, or ecclesiastical. In contrast, more than half of the armbands (59%) were made of bronze and represent a wider segment of society.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, when evaluating the early cult of the Virgin, the seals must be considered alongside other Byzantine art forms. They suggest a stronger, more dedicated following in the private sphere, especially among the more prosperous, during the sixth and seventh centuries, even if it would not reach the peak of the iconophile interlude or the sheer numbers of the late tenth to twelfth centuries, owing to higher percentages of seals with religious figural imagery. Although the textual evidence confirms that the intercessory powers of the Virgin were not yet fully developed, a small yet stable portion of the population had already invested in the Mother of God, and wanted others to recognize this investment.

Given the variety of portrait types and narratives of the Virgin in early Byzantine jewelry, textiles, and to a lesser extent seals, the prominence of the orant Virgin in the liturgical arts, among those works which feature the Virgin, is all the more striking.<sup>89</sup> The relative infrequency of her appearance overall is due in part to the fact that many

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<sup>88</sup> The percentage of bronze armbands includes one example in iron for a total of thirteen of twenty-two armbands. Nine of twenty-two armbands are made of silver (41%). See Vikan, "Two Byzantine Amuletic Armbands," 40-1 n. 11.

<sup>89</sup> Some of these works were cited in chapter 3.6c as evidence for dating the apse mosaic at Livadia.

liturgical objects lack figural decoration.<sup>90</sup> Instead, the majority of works bear simple crosses or christograms, floral or decorative ornament, or inscriptions only. Those with figures, including some chalices, censers, ewers, and processional crosses, portray overwhelmingly iconic portraits – standing figures, orants, and busts – and few narratives. The votive inscriptions that often accompany these objects attest that they were commissioned privately, albeit sometimes by a priest or a deacon, and donated to a church. Such inscriptions may include the name of the donor, the recipient of the gift, an entreaty or invocation, and the reward desired or already received. Typically, the recipient of the gift is identified as the patron saint of the church; that is, the gift is presented to the saint rather than the sanctuary, thereby establishing a personal relationship between the donor and the saint, while emphasizing the presence of the saint at his or her church.<sup>91</sup> The Virgin Mary appears on a variety of liturgical objects in the company of Christ and other saints. A silver flask of the mid- to late sixth century from the Hama Treasure in Syria, now in the Walters Art Museum, combines portraits of Christ, the Virgin, and two military saints with a long inscription that asks for the salvation of Megale, her children and nephews, and the repose of Heliodoros and Akakios, without specifying the recipient of the gift (Fig. 6.7).<sup>92</sup> One of the more peculiar features of the flask is the depiction of three figures in prayer, the Virgin and two

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<sup>90</sup> And secular or domestic silver tends not to represent religious themes: M. Mango, “The Mother of God in Metalwork: Silver Plate and Revetments,” in *Mother of God: Representations*, 195-207, esp. 195-7. Compare the collection of objects in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*. For an overview of liturgical silver, see also S. Boyd, “Art in the Service of the Liturgy: Byzantine Silver Plate,” in *Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium*, ed. L. Safran (University Park, PA, 1998), 152-85. References to liturgical silver in Byzantine texts, preceding a discussion of patens and caskets in particular, are analyzed by R. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Aldershot, 2004), 61-122 (ch. 2).

<sup>91</sup> M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 5. On the issue of divine and saintly presence in churches, see my chapter four.

<sup>92</sup> Cat. no. 15 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 108-11.

military saints. Evidently Megale and her large family needed three intercessors to solicit salvation and repose from Christ. The Virgin Mary is one of six figures portrayed on the Phela chalice, yet she is the only one portrayed in the orant pose (Fig. 6.8).<sup>93</sup> She stands between a deacon and a military saint holding their respective attributes, while Christ, positioned opposite her, stands between archangels. Dated to the sixth or seventh century, the silver chalice also invokes the Virgin Mary in an inscription engraved below the rim of the chalice: “Elpidios, giving thanks to the Theotokos, presented [this chalice] for his salvation and that of his household.” A paten and a cross from the same treasure also mention the Theotokos, but more obviously in connection with her church in the village of Phela (Fig. 5.9).<sup>94</sup> On neither object does the Virgin or any other holy figure appear. Two silver objects from the mid sixth-century Sion Treasure, a cylindrical lamp and a circular censer, preserve more ambiguity in their dedications: “Eutychedios, most humble bishop, [offers this] to [our] Lady, the Theotokos.”<sup>95</sup> From the inscriptions, it is not clear whether these objects belonged to a church that was dedicated to her. Now at Dumbarton Oaks, the openwork lamp is decorated with a simple arcade, while the censer in Antalya displays four narrative scenes with the Virgin in the early life of Christ: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Journey to Bethlehem, and the Nativity. Another silver

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<sup>93</sup> Cat. no. 62 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 232-3. Cat. no. 5 in E. Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Treasures* (Bern, 1974), 17-23, pls. 8-10.

<sup>94</sup> Cat. nos. 64-5 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 234-5. The inscription on the paten reads: “For the salvation and repose of Sabiniane and Martha and Maria. [Property] of the Theotokos of the village of Phela.” And on the cross: “In the time of John, the priest of the Theotokos of the village of Phela.”

<sup>95</sup> I. Ševčenko, “The Sion Treasure: The Evidence of the Inscriptions,” in *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate in Sixth-Century Byzantium*, ed. S. Boyd and M. Mango (Washington, DC, 1992), 39-56, esp. 43, 54. In the same volume, see Appendix I, checklist nos. 19, 46 in S. Boyd, “A ‘Metropolitan’ Treasure from a Church in the Provinces: An Introduction to the Study of the Sion Treasure,” 5-38, esp. 22-3, 29-30. On the censer: N. Firatli, “Un trésor du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle trouvé à Kumluca en Lycie,” in *Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Trier, 5-11 September 1965* (Rome, 1969), 523-5, esp. 525, figs. 9-11, pls. 254-5.

vessel in the Metropolitan Museum, dated to the sixth century, represents the Adoration of the Magi, who are led by an angel to the Virgin and Child accompanied by Joseph (Fig. 2.63).<sup>96</sup> Decorative friezes above and below the central narrative display ivy leaves, a grapevine, and acanthus leaves with eagle protomes, reminiscent of the Kiti border. Although the Adoration is the biblical prototype for gift giving, the donor or buyer of the flask declined to commemorate the act in an inscription. More typical in their decoration, eight of ten silver chalices and one of three silver censers in the Attarouthi Treasure, found in northeastern Syria and dated from the late sixth to the early seventh century, show Christ and the orant Virgin between saints or saints and angels (Fig. 3.47).<sup>97</sup> Of the thirteen inscribed objects, none of the inscriptions mentions the Virgin, but only two mention God by name, once along with saints Stephen and George. Six of the inscriptions ask for salvation or repose, two give thanks for a prayer answered or indicate the fulfillment of a vow, and six name the donor or donors. Only one retains the anonymous formula, indicating the fulfillment of a vow and asking for the salvation of one whose name is known to God. Many more, eight or nine of the inscriptions, identify the saint whose church received the donation, either St. Stephen or St. John, both in the village of Attarouthi, and six of them mention only the recipient.<sup>98</sup> On all but one of the nine objects depicting the Virgin, she is the only figure shown in the orant pose and thus appears to be doing the work of the inscription, relaying the prayer to God, or serving as a type for the donor. Similar iconography and inscriptions appear on two hexagonal

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<sup>96</sup> Cat. no. 86 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 257-8.

<sup>97</sup> D. Piguet-Panayotova, "The Attarouthi Chalices," *Mitteilungen zur spätantiken Archäologie und Byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte* (2009) 9-47. Only on chalice no. 3 and censer no. 13 is another saint shown in the orant pose. The Virgin is also pictured in the former, but not the latter.

<sup>98</sup> The numbers add up to more than thirteen because certain inscriptions possess more than one of these characteristics.

silver censers from Constantinople with imperial stamps dated to the reign of Maurice (582-602).<sup>99</sup> The censers in New York and Munich represent the orant Virgin between archangels and Christ between saints Peter and Paul (Figs. 3.45-6). The inscription on the New York censer names the donor and his preferred intercessor: “God of St. George, help your servant Leontios,” while the Munich censer records an anonymous plea: “In fulfillment of a vow for those whose names are known to God.” Although Leontios identifies St. George as his intercessor, the military saint is not pictured; once again, the Virgin Mary is the only figure shown in prayer. As with early Byzantine jewelry, the invocations on liturgical objects do not always coincide with iconography, although in this case it is clear that the inscription was incised after the vessel was stamped, decorated, and likely exported, supposedly to Mesembria.<sup>100</sup>

A second iconographic type of the Virgin commonly found on liturgical vessels is the clipeate bust. The large silver ewer known as the Homs vase is dated to the sixth or seventh century.<sup>101</sup> The figural frieze placed at the widest part of the body contains eight medallions with busts of Christ, Peter and Paul, two saints who may be John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, two archangels, and the Virgin Mary. Cornucopias and acanthus leaves separate the medallions. Despite the high quality of the vessel, it lacks an inscription and imperial stamps. Six of the same figures appear on a circular silver censer once exhibited at the Ariadne Galleries in New York and dated by imperial stamps to the

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<sup>99</sup> D. Piguet-Panayotova, “Three Hexagonal Decorated Silver Censers and Their Artistic Environment,” *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 49 (1998) 7-34. On the New York censer: cat. no. 85 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 256-7.

<sup>100</sup> The observation that the inscription was added later is made by M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 256 and Piguet-Panayotova, “Three Hexagonal Decorated Silver Censers,” 18. That imperial stamps were applied before an object was decorated and inscribed is discussed by E. Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Stamps* (Washington, DC, 1961), 33-5.

<sup>101</sup> Cat. no. 84 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 255-6.



latter part of the reign of Justinian I (540-65).<sup>102</sup> A rope pattern encloses busts of Christ, Peter and Paul, two archangels, and the Virgin. Another hexagonal silver censer, dated by imperial stamps to the reign of Phokas (602-10), was discovered at Lambousa in northern Cyprus as part of the First Cyprus Treasure (Fig. 6.9).<sup>103</sup> Now displayed in the British Museum, it depicts Christ flanked by Peter and Paul and the Virgin flanked by two saints, one bearded and one beardless, all in bust form encircled by medallions. The medallions are joined by striated leaves in a format resembling the acanthus and apostle border of the mosaic at Lythrankomi. Like the Homs ewer and circular censer, the hexagonal censer has no inscription. Clipeate busts also appear on three silver chalices from the Beth Misona treasure, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 6.10). Each of the sixth- or seventh-century chalices has four medallions, representing Christ, the Virgin, Peter, and Paul. One of the chalices records the act of donation from the priest Kyriakos, son of Domnos, to the church of St. Sergios in the time of Zeno the priest.<sup>104</sup> A related object, the oblong silver reliquary from Cherson in the Hermitage, also contains medallions of Christ flanked by Peter and Paul and the Virgin flanked by angels on the long sides, with two additional saints on the short sides. Imperial stamps provide a fixed date of 550-65.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Cat. no. 3 in J. Nesbitt, *Byzantium: The Light in the Age of Darkness* (New York, 1988), 10-11, 53.

<sup>103</sup> O. Dalton, "A Byzantine Silver Treasure from the District of Kyrenia, Cyprus, now preserved in the British Museum," *Archaeologia* 57 (1900) 157-74. Cat. no. 35 in Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Stamps*, 130-1. Cat. no. 562 in K. Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York, 1979), 625-6. Piguët-Panayotova, "Three Hexagonal Decorated Silver Censers," 7-34.

<sup>104</sup> A paten from the same treasure records the donation of Domnos, son of Zacheos, to the same church: cat. nos. 57-60 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 228-31.

<sup>105</sup> Cat. no. 17 in Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Stamps*, 86-7. Cat. no. B21 in H. Buschhausen, *Die spätromischen Metallschriften und frühchristlichen Reliquiare* (Vienna, 1971), 252-4, pls. B59-60. Cat. no. 572 in Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 633.

At this point a few preliminary observations can be made on representations of the Virgin in liturgical silver vessels. First, in every example that includes a portrait of the Virgin, whether orant or in bust form, she is depicted alone and without the Christ Child, as she appears in the apse at Livadia.<sup>106</sup> In every example too, she is given a privileged position opposite Christ, where she is flanked by saints or angels in the same manner as her Son.<sup>107</sup> As a rule, the medium of liturgical silver is remarkably consistent with respect to iconography. However, in many cases the decoration corresponds literally or symbolically to the liturgical function of the object. For example, liturgical patens designed to hold the Eucharistic bread are most often adorned with large crosses, recalling the sacrifice of Christ commemorated in the Eucharist. Two more elaborate silver patens discovered in Riha and Stuma represent the Communion of the Apostles, a liturgical interpretation of the Last Supper (Fig. 4.1).<sup>108</sup> Appearing twice, Christ acts as the priest, serving bread and wine to two groups of six apostles on either side of an altar table set with a cloth and one or more liturgical vessels. Likewise, two liturgical fans discussed in chapter four, also from Riha and Stuma, represent a single cherub and seraph respectively (Figs. 4.16-17).<sup>109</sup> The celestial beings protect the throne of God in heaven, as the fans protect the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ, in the church. According to Marlia Mango, the figural repertory of the silver chalices, censers, and ewers relates

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<sup>106</sup> This is noted as exceptional by M. Mango, "Mother of God in Metalwork," 197.

<sup>107</sup> In fact, the Virgin appears whenever Christ appears on all of the objects cited except for one of the Attarouthi censers (no. 11), where he is accompanied only by angels.

<sup>108</sup> Cat. nos. 34-5 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 159-70. Cat. nos. 20, 27 in Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Stamps*, 94-5, 108-9. Cat. no. 10 in M. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC, 1962), 12-15.

<sup>109</sup> Cat. nos. 31-2 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 147-54. Cat. nos. 21-2 in Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Stamps*, 96-9. Cat. no. 11 in Ross, *Catalogue of Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities*, vol. 1, 15-17.

not to the liturgy, but to the parallel function of the objects as *ex-votos*.<sup>110</sup> Instead of reflecting liturgical practice, these objects convey an iconography of intercession, exemplified by the figure of the Virgin, often orant and always alone, before (or opposite) Christ, supported by a cast of other saints, especially Peter and Paul, and angels. Most importantly, the figural vessels give visual expression to the votive inscriptions that communicate the prayers of the priestly, lay, and anonymous donors. Although silver workshops must be at least partly responsible for the limited iconography, the significance of the iconography is not diminished, but enhanced by its selection and standardization. In addition, churches must have approved of the imagery for the gifts to be accepted for use in the liturgy.

The restricted repertory is also a feature of surviving silver, but not bronze processional crosses. The vast majority of early Byzantine silver crosses are marked by inscriptions only, while a few are plain, defined by flared arms, serifs, or engraved borders. However, the large silver cross from the Čaginkom Treasure, now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, represents a bust of the Virgin at the intersection of the cross between busts of Christ and a female saint on the vertical bar and busts of two angels on the horizontal bar (Fig. 6.11).<sup>111</sup> Encircled by medallions, the five figures occupy the reverse of the cross. On the obverse are imperial stamps dated 527-47 and an Armenian inscription, which may not be original: “In gratitude... [X] ...offers to his/her intercessor, St. George (of) Čaginkom.”<sup>112</sup> However, it is equally possible that the cross

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<sup>110</sup> M. Mango, “Mother of God in Metalwork,” 204-7.

<sup>111</sup> Cat. no. 76 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 249-50. E. Dodd, “Three Early Byzantine Silver Crosses,” *DOP* 41 (1987) 165-79.

<sup>112</sup> The orientation of the cross is determined by the surviving omega, one of two pendelia that hung from the horizontal arms. The alpha is lost, but part of its chain survives. Dodd explains the surprising orientation by suggesting that the cross was carried in procession but never deposited on the altar. Thus,

was inscribed on location in the provinces only a short time after it was stamped and decorated in Constantinople.<sup>113</sup> Like the New York censer, the Čaginkom cross names St. George as an intercessor, but does not include an image of him. Contemporary bronze crosses preserve more variety in their decoration, although the Virgin tends to be the central figure, regardless of iconographic type.<sup>114</sup> A bronze cross of the sixth or seventh century, originally from Syria-Palestine but now in a private collection in Toronto, depicts the orant Virgin at the crossing flanked by flying angels on the horizontal axis (Fig. 3.48).<sup>115</sup> On the vertical axis, Christ stands above the Virgin, gesturing with his right hand and holding a gospel book with his left. Below her is the votive inscription: “In fulfillment of a vow of Leontios.” The small size of the cross led John Cotsonis to suggest that it might have belonged to a small church or private chapel. Although he may be correct, the size, weight, and therefore the expense of votive gifts was determined by the donor and would not necessarily reflect the size of the church.<sup>116</sup> A contemporary cross from Syria-Palestine at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto also places the Virgin Mary at the center of the composition below Christ and above the votive inscription (Fig. 1.88).<sup>117</sup> Here, she is seated with the Christ Child on a lyre-backed throne and flanked by advancing angels in a composition resembling the apse mosaic at

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the alpha and omega could be read by the participants behind the cross-bearer, leaving the figural medallions to face forward. The display of the cross on the altar with the inscription facing the congregation is thought to be inappropriate: Dodd, “Three Early Byzantine Silver Crosses,” 169.

<sup>113</sup> Dodd, “Three Early Byzantine Silver Crosses,” 166 n. 7, 179.

<sup>114</sup> Dodd regards the central placement of the Virgin on the Čaginkom cross as unusual, but does not consider examples in bronze: Dodd, “Three Early Byzantine Silver Crosses,” 177. On the centrality of the Virgin and her association with the cross, see J. Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses* (Washington, DC, 1994), 46-9.

<sup>115</sup> Cat. no. 8 in Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses*, 88-9.

<sup>116</sup> One might expect a large church to possess a large processional cross for large processions, but a small cross cannot be ascribed automatically to a small church, given the role of the donor in the commission. On the donors of such objects: M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 8-13; “The Uses of Liturgical Silver, 4th-7th centuries,” in *Church and People in Byzantium*, ed. R. Morris (Birmingham, 1990), 245-61; Boyd, “Art in the Service of the Liturgy,” 178-80.

<sup>117</sup> Cat. no. 10 in Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses*, 96-9.

Lythrankomi. Concentric circles are engraved at the center of the cross and at the extremities on both the obverse and reverse. On the obverse, the circles effectively create a mandorla for the enthroned Virgin and Child, evoking the most idiosyncratic feature of the Lythrankomi mosaic.<sup>118</sup> The curious invocation, “Holy Church, receive Joulianos!” may associate the Virgin Mary with Mother Church.<sup>119</sup> Two bronze crosses from the same period at Dumbarton Oaks show the Virgin in the context of narrative scenes. The more complete Pierce cross illustrates the Annunciation at the crossing with the Virgin standing on the left and Gabriel on the right (Fig. 5.15).<sup>120</sup> Above them, Christ adopts the same pose and gesture as on the two Toronto crosses. To the left of the Virgin are St. John the Baptist and a blooming vase, and to the right of Gabriel is a priest with a censer. The votive inscription, “For the forgiveness of the sins of Leontia,” is engraved at the base of the cross, below the Annunciation and a stylite saint. The second example at Dumbarton Oaks preserves only the central portion of the cross.<sup>121</sup> Crudely incised and closely surrounded by other fragmentary Christological narratives, the Virgin and Child are enthroned in profile in a scene of the Adoration. The three Magi, appearing as hardly more than stick figures, approach from the right. While the early silver and bronze crosses represent five different iconographies of the Virgin, she continues to appear at the center of the composition, in two examples alone – the familiar orant and clipeate bust – and in three examples accompanied by other figures. As with early Byzantine jewelry, textiles, and seals, the processional crosses invoke the Virgin Mary as an intercessor through a variety of iconographic types. In these examples, the placement of the Virgin

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<sup>118</sup> The concentric circles may also denote reflective jewels or apotropaic mirror signs: Maguire, Maguire, and Duncan-Flowers, *Art and Holy Powers*, 5-7.

<sup>119</sup> Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses*, 96-8.

<sup>120</sup> Cat. no. 9 in Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses*, 90-5.

<sup>121</sup> Cat. no. 11 in Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses*, 100-1.

at the crossing, immediately between Christ and the prayer directed to him, visualizes and ensures her effective mediation. To some extent, these images were succeeded, if never entirely replaced on later Byzantine processional crosses by the subject of the Deesis, which also portrayed the Virgin as an intercessor.<sup>122</sup>

In evaluating the so-called minor arts, one must distinguish between the domestic and liturgical arts. In early Byzantine jewelry, textiles, and seals, the depiction of the Virgin as an intercessor was not restricted to any particular iconographic type. Inscribed invocations, especially in jewelry, may complement the iconography or merely supplement it. As the most explicit iconography of intercession, images of the orant Virgin tend to lack invocatory inscriptions. The same does not apply to images of the Virgin standing and holding the Child to one side, although a few examples incorporate the idea of intercession by showing some interaction between the Virgin and Child. In contrast, liturgical silver vessels, especially chalices, censers, and ewers, and silver crosses possess a standard iconography. The Virgin appears in only two iconographic types, the orant and clipeate bust, both without the Christ Child. As an orant, she is often the only such figure, embodying the prayer or invocation, serving as a type for the donor, or appearing as a supplicant before God, even in the few cases where another intercessor is named, for example St. George in the New York censer and Čaginkom cross. In bust form, the Virgin is one in a series of busts, but is normally privileged by her placement opposite Christ, flanked by subsidiary saints or angels. While bronze processional crosses illustrate a variety of iconographic types, the Virgin remains the central figure in many of them. Votive inscriptions on liturgical objects often identify the recipient of the

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<sup>122</sup> Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses*, 46-7.

gift, whether the Virgin or other patron saint, typically in connection with their churches. Prayers requesting salvation, repose, or the forgiveness of sins, giving thanks, or acknowledging the fulfillment of a vow are addressed ultimately to God, though he is named only occasionally. Personalized inscriptions record the name of the donor and the act of donation, ensuring perpetual prayers for the individual, enabling special contact with consecrated matter, and elevating his or her status in the Christian community. Nevertheless, some individuals rejected this last public function of votive gifts. Anonymous donors understood that their salvation was determined by God alone. Another distinction to be made between the domestic and liturgical material concerns orthodox content. Although liturgical votive gifts often originate in the private sphere, they are generally cleansed of the magical and pagan elements found in some early Byzantine jewelry and textiles, and certainly in domestic silver plate.<sup>123</sup> Instead, they promote a concept of intercession that was accepted by the Church, even if it did not represent official doctrine. Finally, one must consider the dates at which portraits of the Virgin first appear, as it relates to the development of the visual cult of the Virgin to be explored later in the chapter. Given the practice of hallmarking silver and the problems with dating jewelry and textiles, it is not surprising that the earliest objects with established dates are the Čaginkom cross (527-47) and the circular censer displayed in New York (540-65), followed closely by or perhaps contemporary with the Cherson reliquary (550-65). Dated by adjacent finds, the silver armband in Toronto (550-65) may be among the earliest domestic objects, excepting the rare early examples in gold glass. The Čaginkom cross, circular censer, and Cherson reliquary represent busts of the Virgin

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<sup>123</sup> However, see the problematic Antioch “chalice” or lamp: cat. no. 40 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 183-7. On domestic silver: Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity*.

alone, while the Toronto armband represents the enthroned Virgin and Child. The earliest dated objects to incorporate the orant Virgin in particular are also liturgical, including the Hama flask (mid- to late sixth century), and the New York and Munich censers (582-602).<sup>124</sup> These objects are either slightly earlier or roughly contemporary with the first domestic objects to depict the orant Virgin, the gold cross owned by George of Skopelos (late sixth or seventh century) and the gold bracelet in the British Museum (c. 600). Many more domestic and liturgical objects, representing all of the iconographic types considered above, are dated generally from the sixth to seventh century, but it is unlikely that any of them antedates the Čaginkom cross, the only object that can be placed with certainty before the second half of the sixth century.

### 3. *Invocations and Ex-votos in Painting and Mosaic*

Before exploring the connection between the minor arts and the apse mosaic at Livadia, I would like to look at ex-votos in panel painting and wall decoration with respect to the intercession of the Virgin. In these media, donors are made physically present in the form of donor portraits, which may or may not be accompanied by votive inscriptions. In the church of St. Demetrios in Thessalonike, the patron saint appears several times in the mosaics of the west wall, north aisle, and sanctuary piers in the presence of donors, who offer candles, seek favor, salvation, or introduction to God, give thanks for a prayer answered, or fulfill a vow.<sup>125</sup> Although St. Demetrios is the primary

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<sup>124</sup> The Hama flask lacks imperial stamps but the dedicatory inscription contains names that can be associated with other stamped objects: M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 8-11, 110, fig. I.1.

<sup>125</sup> G. and M. Soteriou, *Η Βασιλική του Αγίου Δημητρίου* (Athens, 1952). R. Cormack, "The Mosaic Decoration of S. Demetrios, Thessaloniki: A Re-Examination in the Light of the Drawings of W. S. George," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 64 (1969) 17-52; *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (New York, 1985), 50-94. J.-M. Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments du IVe au VIe siècle:*



intercessor of the church and city, owing to his frequent miracles and the location of his tomb in the north aisle, the Virgin Mary and other saints are also portrayed as intercessors (Fig. 6.12). In spandrel C of the north aisle, St. Demetrios introduces a donor with covered hands to the enthroned Virgin and Child, flanked by angels, while a second donor appears on the far right of the composition, some distance from the orant St. Theodore, who stands opposite St. Demetrios.<sup>126</sup> Five medallions of saints are also included in the panel, but are separated from the central group by rectangular frames. In spandrel E, two women, one of whom holds a child, approach the Virgin alone with the help of an angel and a female saint.<sup>127</sup> The Virgin raises both hands towards a lost medallion, which probably contained a bust of Christ replaced after the fire of c. 620.<sup>128</sup> It is likely, but not certain, that the child is the same Maria mentioned in the inscription on spandrel G: “And you, my Lord St. Demetrios, aid us your servants and your servant Maria, whom you gave to us.”<sup>129</sup> A partial inscription on spandrel F preserves only its reference to the Virgin: “And the Lady, the holy Theotokos...” Between the seventh and ninth centuries, another mosaic panel was added on the south face of the north sanctuary pier, which represents the Virgin Paraklesis (Intercessor) beside the orant St. Theodore

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*contribution à l'étude d'une ville paléochrétienne* (Athens, 1984), 165-214. J. Anderson, “A Note on the Sanctuary Mosaics of St. Demetrios, Thessalonike,” *Cahiers Archéologiques* 47 (1999) 55-65. L. Brubaker, “Elites and Patronage in Early Byzantium: The Evidence from Hagios Demetrios at Thessalonike,” in *Elites Old and New in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, ed. J. Haldon and L. Conrad (Princeton, 2004), 63-90.

<sup>126</sup> The identification of the saints as Demetrios and Theodore is not certain: Cormack, “Mosaic Decoration of S. Demetrios,” 26-31.

<sup>127</sup> Cormack, “Mosaic Decoration of S. Demetrios,” 31-7.

<sup>128</sup> The date of the fire is determined by P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de Saint Démétrius et la pénétration des Slaves dans les Balkans* (Paris, 1979-81), I: 190-7, II: 107-10. After the fire, three medallions and an inscription were inserted into this section of the mosaic, commemorating the restoration of the church.

<sup>129</sup> Spandrels D-G are contained in a single frame and may represent the growing child Maria with her mother: Cormack, “Mosaic Decoration of S. Demetrios,” 31-7; *Writing in Gold*, 88-9. Alternatively, the panel could represent four different children, who had benefited from the saint’s miracles: Brubaker, “Elites and Patronage in Early Byzantium,” 74-5.

(Fig. 6.13).<sup>130</sup> Depicted frontally, St. Theodore makes eye contact with the viewer or donor, whose existence is indicated by the votive inscription below the panel:

“...despairing of men, made alive by your strength, in thanks I dedicate [this].” St.

Theodore conveys the prayer to the Virgin, who presents a petition in the form of a scroll to the small figure of Christ at the top of the panel, who extends his hand to receive it.

The scroll reads: “Supplication (Δέησις). Lord God, hear the voice of my prayer, for I pray for the world.”<sup>131</sup>

Even if the mosaic of the Virgin Paraklesis belongs to the post-iconoclastic period, the hierarchy of intercession that it describes so clearly also distinguishes the earlier mosaics in the church. Throughout the distinct frames of the west wall, north aisle, and sanctuary piers, donors approach St. Demetrios and other saints freely and reverentially, but require introduction to the Virgin Mary when she appears, either holding the Christ Child or communicating the prayer to a more distant Christ. However, a distinction must be made between the composition of spandrel C at St. Demetrios,

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<sup>130</sup> A seventh-century date for this panel is argued by R. Hoddinott, *Early Byzantine Churches in Macedonia and Southern Serbia* (London, 1963), 154-5; Anderson, “Note on the Sanctuary Mosaics of St. Demetrius,” 55-65; Brubaker, “Elites and Patronage in Early Byzantium,” 78. In favor of a later, ninth-century date: G. Soteriou and M. Soteriou, *H Βασιλική του Αγίου Δημητρίου*, 195-6, pl. 66; Ch. Bakirtzis, *The Basilica of St. Demetrius*, trans. D. Whitehouse (Thessalonike, 1988), 57-8; H. Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion: Nature in Byzantine Art and Literature* (New York, 2012), 140-1. The iconography of the Virgin Paraklesis is not otherwise attested before the eleventh century, unless the fragmentary icon at Mount Sinai can be dated to the sixth or seventh century with thirteenth-century overpainting: cat. no. B.4 in K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons* (Princeton, 1976), 21-3, pls. 7, 47. However, a related iconographic type, where the Virgin lacks a scroll and raises both hands to one side, appears not only in spandrel E of St. Demetrios, but in the icon of S. Sisto in Rome (Fig. 6.20), dated between the sixth and the eighth centuries: C. Bertelli, “L’immagine del ‘Monasterium tempuli’ dopo il restauro,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 31 (1961) 82-111; H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. E. Jephcott (Chicago, 1996), 311-29; G. Wolf, “Icons and Sites: Cult Images of the Virgin in Mediaeval Rome,” in *Images of the Mother of God*, 23-49, esp. 39-41. The figure of the Virgin Paraklesis was aptly placed at thresholds, on narthex doors and at the entrance to the sanctuary: S. Der Nersessian, “Two Images of the Virgin in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection,” *DOP* 14 (1960) 69-86, esp. 85. On the Virgin at the threshold, see my chapter 5.4. In manuscripts, close relatives of the Virgin Paraklesis are accompanied by donors: N. P. Ševčenko, “Close Encounters,” 255-85.

<sup>131</sup> Bakirtzis, *Basilica of St. Demetrius*, 57. Hoddinott, *Early Byzantine Churches in Macedonia*, 155. Brubaker, “Elites and Patronage in Early Byzantium,” 68.

where the Virgin and Child appear together as the focus of the scene, and spandrel E, where Virgin alone conveys the prayer to Christ. The former finds parallel in a wall painting from the catacomb of Comodilla in Rome, dated to around 530 (Fig. 6.14).<sup>132</sup> Here, the widow Turtura offers candles to the enthroned Virgin and Child, flanked by saints Felix and Adactus, who are also buried in the catacomb. On the left, St. Felix places his hand on the widow's shoulder to signify that an introduction that has taken place. Composed by the son of Turtura, the lengthy inscription below the painting praises the woman for her chastity following the death of her husband. The two candles offered by the widow are paralleled in another scene at St. Demetrios, in spandrel F of the north aisle, where a mother and child present candles to the patron saint. Both works recall the episodes in the panegyric of Corippus, where the empress Sophia offers candles before an icon of the Virgin, and in the *Life of John the Almsgiver*, where the saint meets the Virgin with candles at his death in Amathous. Drawing on the evidence of St. Demetrios and the catacomb of Comodilla, Charles Barber describes a similar hierarchy of intercession in the famous icon of the Virgin and Child at Mount Sinai, dated to the sixth or seventh century (Fig. 6.15).<sup>133</sup> While there is no donor or votive inscription, the two saints in the foreground, probably Theodore and Demetrios or George, represent the point of entry for the viewer through their frontality and direct gaze. Only with their assistance can one hope to engage the Virgin, who looks off to the right while seated at

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<sup>132</sup> J. Osborne, "The Roman Catacombs in the Middle Ages," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 53 (1985) 278-328, esp. 299-305. E. Russo, "L'affresco di Turtura nel cimitero di Commodilla, l'icona di S. Maria in Trastevere e le più antiche feste della Madonna a Roma," *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 88 (1979) 35-85, esp. 35-49.

<sup>133</sup> C. Barber, "Early Representations of the Mother of God," in *Mother of God: Representations*, 253-61. Also on the icon, see cat. no. B.3 in Weitzmann, *Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons*, 18-21; E. Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd-7th Century* (Cambridge, 1977), 117-18; cat. no. 1 in Vassilaki, *Mother of God: Representations*, 262-3.

the center of the composition. However, the two angels rendered impressionistically in the background look upwards, directing our attention to the heavenly realm and the emerging hand of God. This element, in addition to the presence of the Christ Child, makes clear that the Virgin Mary is not the final recipient of the prayer. Rather, her joint enthronement underscores her privileged relationship with Christ and her special access to God (παρορησία), which enables her status as a prime intercessor. In contrast, the depiction of an independent Virgin in spandrel E and on the north sanctuary pier of St. Demetrios establishes a more straightforward hierarchy of intercession, which may be expressed in some liturgical vessels and crosses. In the Phela chalice, for example, a deacon and a military saint may serve as primary intercessors, who channel the prayer or content of the votive inscription to the orant Virgin, who appears as a supplicant before Christ, flanked by angelic guards (Fig. 6.8). Likewise, the unidentified female saint at the base of the Čaginkom cross may represent the starting point for the prayer, which ascends the vertical arm of the cross to the Virgin, flanked by angels, and then to Christ (Fig. 6.11). The intercessory ladder is maintained even as the donor appeals in his local language, Armenian, to his local intercessor, St. George of Čaginkom. As we saw in section one, the appearance of the Virgin as a supplicant before Christ receives special treatment in the dialogues of Romanos the Melode, developed in his two *kontakia* on the Nativity. In only a few examples, the Virgin does not seem to require introduction and may be approached directly. A wall mosaic in the small chapel of the amphitheater at Dyrrachion in Albania represents two diminutive donors with covered hands bowing before the Virgin, who wears a crown and holds an orb in the company of angels (Fig.

6.16).<sup>134</sup> The donors may or may not have bypassed St. Stephen, who stands to the left of the group in a gesture of prayer, separated by a frame.<sup>135</sup> Above the left angel is the inscription, “Lord, help your servant Alexandros!” It may be significant that Christ does not appear anywhere in the fragmentary program. In Rome, a papal donor receives decidedly privileged access to the Virgin and Child, enthroned in the large icon of S. Maria in Trastevere (Fig. 6.17).<sup>136</sup> The icon has been dated variously between the late sixth and the ninth centuries with some consensus in the reign of John VII (705-7).<sup>137</sup> Applied to living persons, the square halo reinforces the elite status of the pope as he kneels before them on the right and touches the Virgin’s shoes.<sup>138</sup> Located on the frame, the fragmentary inscription does not commemorate the act of donation, but calls attention to the angels as witnesses of the Incarnation and identifies either Christ or the icon as being made by itself. Though uncommon, the dual status of the icon as *acheiropoietos* and *ex-voto* may not have posed a problem for the medieval viewer, who believed that

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<sup>134</sup> Cormack, *Writing in Gold*, 84-5, fig. 24. M. Andaloro, “I mosaici parietali di Durazzo o dell’origine costantinopolitana del tema iconografico di Maria Regina,” in *Studien zur spätantiken und byzantinischen Kunst: Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann gewidmet*, vol. 3, ed. O. Feld (Bonn, 1986), 103-12. The Virgin is erroneously identified as Christ in N. Thierry, “Une mosaïque à Dyrrachium,” *Cahiers Archéologiques* 18 (1968) 227-9.

<sup>135</sup> Additional donors may appear before the Virgin, flanked by angels and saints Irene and Sophia, on the highly damaged adjacent wall. This scene is also enclosed within a frame.

<sup>136</sup> Archangels can act as guards, saintly intercessors, or indeed both, regulating access to the Virgin and Christ. For example, an unidentified angel serves as an intercessor in spandrel E of the north aisle of St. Demetrios, where his hand rests on the shoulder of a female donor. Likewise, in the apse mosaic of S. Vitale (540-7/8), the angels on either side of Christ place their hands on the shoulders of the local St. Vitalis and the bishop Ecclesius. In the icon of S. Maria in Trastevere, however, the angels stand firmly in the background, leaning out from behind the throne, and provide no introduction for the pope.

<sup>137</sup> The attribution to John VII is made by C. Bertelli, *La Madonna di Santa Maria in Trastevere: storia, iconografia, stile di un dipinto romano dell’ottavo secolo* (Rome, 1961). Late sixth-century dates are argued by M. Andaloro, “La datazione della tavola di S. Maria in Trastevere,” *Rivista dell’Istituto nazionale d’archeologia e storia dell’arte* 19/20 (1972-3) 135-215; Russo, “L’affresco di Turtura,” 49-85; Barber, “Early Representations,” 256-60. On the icon as a ninth-century copy of a late sixth-century original: D. Kinney, *S. Maria in Trastevere from Its Founding to 1215* (PhD Diss., New York University, 1975), 66-70, 148-59. See also Wolf, “Icons and Sites,” 37-9.

<sup>138</sup> G. Ladner, “The So-Called Square Nimbus,” *Mediaeval Studies* 3 (1941) 17-45. J. Osborne, “The Portrait of Pope Leo IV in San Clemente, Rome: A Re-Examination of the So-Called ‘Square’ Nimbus, in Medieval Art,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 47 (1979) 58-65.

copies of miraculous icons provided equal access to God.<sup>139</sup> In her right hand, the Virgin holds a cross staff painted in tempera on top of the original encaustic background. The tempera overpainting probably replaced a metal cross, which was attached to the icon as a votive gift.<sup>140</sup>

Additional evidence for the presentation of votive gifts to images of the Virgin has been discovered in the church of S. Maria Antiqua in Rome. Here, several wall paintings of the mid-seventh to early eighth centuries contain holes left by lamps or accretions in metalwork.<sup>141</sup> A seventh-century painting in the chancel of St. Anne holding the infant Mary includes a hole in the neck of the saint, where a lamp was probably mounted to illuminate the child. Also dated to the seventh century, a painting on the left chancel pier shows the Virgin standing and supporting the Christ Child with crossed hands (Fig. 6.18). The peculiar position of the hands and the nail hole immediately below the left hand suggests that the Virgin once held some kind of votive gift, presented by a donor who may have appeared at the lower left.<sup>142</sup> Preserved above the panel, the word (ἄ)μαρτίω(v) may indicate that the gift and the painting were offered for the remission of sins.<sup>143</sup> Repainted in the early eighth century, another image of the

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<sup>139</sup> Barber, "Early Representations," 259-60. G. Vikan, "Ruminations on Edible Icons: Originals and Copies in the Art of Byzantium," in *Retaining the Original: Multiple Originals, Copies, and Reproductions* (Washington, DC, 1989), 47-59.

<sup>140</sup> P. Nordhagen, "Icons Designed for the Display of Sumptuous Votive Gifts," *DOP* 41 (1987) 453-60.

<sup>141</sup> Nordhagen, "Icons Designed for the Display of Sumptuous Votive Gifts," 453-60; "In Praise of Archaeology: Icons before Iconoclasm," *JÖB* 60 (2010) 101-13. On the many layers of paintings in S. Maria Antiqua: P. Nordhagen, "The Earliest Decorations in Santa Maria Antiqua and Their Date," *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 1 (1962) 53-72.

<sup>142</sup> On the hypothetical donor figure: Nordhagen, "Icons Designed for the Display of Sumptuous Votive Gifts," 459, figs. 3-4.

<sup>143</sup> On the inscription: B. Brenk, "Papal Patronage in a Greek Church in Rome," in *Santa Maria Antiqua al Foro Romano: cento anni dopo: atti del colloquio internazionale, Roma, 5-6 maggio 2000: the British School at Rome, Istituto di Norvegia in Roma, Soprintendenza archeologica di Roma*, ed. J. Osborne, J. R. Brandt, and G. Morganti (Rome, 2004), 67-81, esp. 77, 81 n. 34, citing J. Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV. bis XIII. Jahrhundert*, vol. 2 (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1916),

Virgin in a small niche in the nave is delineated by a painted frame that curves inwards at the upper right corner to accommodate a lamp or other object that hung above the original painting. Other paintings preserve marks left by flames and wax left by candles, including the seventh-century painting of the Deesis in the nave, where a small area between the figures of the Virgin and Christ was discolored by a flame.<sup>144</sup> Of course, such accretions and markings were not limited to portraits of the Virgin. A brooch was applied to the figure of Solomone in the seventh-century painting of the Maccabees, and golden mouths were applied to saints Barbara and Demetrios, also dated to the seventh century. As Nordhagen makes clear, all of the gifts or markings were left before the burial of the site in c. 850 and likely attest to mid-seventh-century devotional practice.

In a related tradition, the hands of saintly figures were painted gold or made of gold tesserae, demonstrating their power to intercede. Two early icons in Rome depict the Virgin with gold hands. The Virgin of the Pantheon was present at and perhaps instrumental to the conversion of the Roman temple into the church of S. Maria ad Martyres in 609 (Fig. 6.19).<sup>145</sup> With her resplendent hands, she holds the Christ Child to one side, supporting him at the level of his knees. Dated between the sixth and the eighth centuries, the smaller Virgin of S. Sisto, painted in encaustic, represents the Virgin alone and in bust form, raising her golden hands to one side in a gesture of prayer (Fig. 6.20).<sup>146</sup> Outside of Rome, the mosaic on the west wall of the south aisle of the church of St. Demetrios in Thessalonike shows the patron saint standing orant with gold hands in the

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681. However, both Brenk and Wilpert identify the heavily-damaged painting as an Annunciation scene, which cannot be the case if the Virgin is holding the Christ Child.

<sup>144</sup> Nordhagen, "In Praise of Archaeology," 108-9.

<sup>145</sup> C. Bertelli, "La Madonna del Pantheon," *Bollettino d'arte* 46 (1961) 24-32. Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 38-40, 121-4. Wolf, "Icons and Sites," 28-31.

<sup>146</sup> Bertelli, "L'immagine del Monasterium tempuli," 82-111. Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 311-29. Wolf, "Icons and Sites," 39-41.

presence of two donors (Fig. 6.21). Likewise, the hands of St. Stephen in the chapel at Dyrrachion are made of gold tesserae and raised before his body in prayer (Fig. 6.16).

Although the capacity of the Virgin to intercede through prayer is signaled by her golden hands in the icon of the Pantheon, the Virgin and Child do not communicate through gaze or gesture, but look straight ahead at the viewer. Two other early icons in Rome show greater interaction between the Virgin and Child, recalling the gold rings in Munich and Washington. In the icon of S. Maria Maggiore, possibly dated to the late sixth or early seventh century, the Virgin holds the Child to her left and looks out of the panel, while the Christ Child tilts his head to look up at her (Fig. 6.22).<sup>147</sup> The Virgin does not gesture to the Child, but crosses her hands in the same manner as the Virgin on the painted pier of S. Maria Antiqua. Believed to have come from the church of S. Maria Antiqua, fragments of a second early icon at S. Maria Nova were incorporated into a new painted panel in the thirteenth century (Fig. 6.23).<sup>148</sup> Of the original late sixth- or seventh-century icon, only the heads of the Virgin and Child survive. In the new setting, the Virgin holds the Child to her right and inclines her head slightly towards him, as if to convey the prayers of the faithful at whom her gaze is directed. In turn, the Child looks up at his mother, acknowledging receipt of the prayer. According to Maria Andaloro, these reciprocal gestures were more conspicuous in the original icon, where the head of the Virgin was inclined further to the left and the head of the Child was tilted further

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<sup>147</sup> G. Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani: die Geschichte römischer Kultbilder im Mittelalter* (Weinheim, 1990); "Icons and Sites," 31-7. Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 63-73.

<sup>148</sup> P. Cellini, "Una Madonna molto antica," *Proporzioni* 3 (1950) 1-6. Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 124-6. Wolf, "Icons and Sites," 27-8.



back.<sup>149</sup> The intimate and affective portrayal of the Virgin and Child is unusual at such an early date and appears at odds with the large size of the panel. The Virgin also inclines her head slightly on folio 1b of the Rabbula Gospels, where she holds the Child to her left and stands on a footstool beneath a canopy topped with confronted peacocks (Fig. 6.24).<sup>150</sup> Despite the faint gesture, both the Virgin and Child peer straight ahead. The composition has much in common with the apse mosaic at Kiti, where angels with peacock-feathered wings flank the standing Virgin and Child. In the apse mosaic, however, the central figures appear even more impassive: their bodies are almost completely frontal, their heads face forward, and there is no visual or gestural communication between them (Fig. 2.33). Independently, therefore, the particular iconography of the Virgin and Child at Kiti does not seem to embody the concept of intercession. Rather, the dispassionate and hieratic style of the mosaic remains typical of Byzantine apse decoration, where the intercession of the Virgin was expressed by the presence of donors, votive inscriptions, and the explicit iconography of the orant Virgin.

In apse decoration, donors present gifts and receive introduction to the Virgin and Child beginning in the late fifth century. Three written accounts derived from the same sixth-century source preserve a description of two lost mosaics in the Soros chapel at Blachernai in Constantinople, which preceded the construction of the basilica on the site by Justin I (518-27).<sup>151</sup> Located above the bema, probably in the apse conch, one of the

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<sup>149</sup> M. Andaloro, "Le icone a Roma in età preiconoclasta," in *Roma fra Oriente e Occidente: 19-24 aprile 2001* (Spoleto, 2001), 719-53, esp. 747-50, pl. 17. Note that the reciprocal hand gestures are probably not original: Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, 110-17.

<sup>150</sup> J. Leroy, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient* (Paris, 1965), 140, 174-5.

<sup>151</sup> C. Mango, "The Origins of the Blachernae Shrine at Constantinople," in *Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae, Split-Poreč, September 9 – October 1, 1994*, ed. N. Cambi and E. Marin (Vatican City, 1998), 61-76, esp. 70-3. English trans. in C. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 34-5.

mosaics was set up by the emperor Leo I (457-74) and his wife Verina in c. 468. It represented the enthroned Virgin and Child surrounded by the imperial family, including Leo I and Verina, their daughter Ariadne, and her son Leo II. No angels or saints are mentioned in the description. As God's chosen representative on earth, the Byzantine emperor and his family may not have required introduction to the Virgin and Child, much like the pope in the icon of S. Maria in Trastevere.<sup>152</sup> The other mosaic, located in the diakonikon, portrayed the Virgin and Child flanked by two angels, St. John the Baptist and St. Conon, and the patricians Galbuis and Candidus, shown "in an attitude of prayer and thanksgiving." The two men were credited with the translation of the Virgin's veil from Palestine to Constantinople, which was housed in the Soros chapel and later commemorated in the sermon by Theodore Synkellos. Once again, Synkellos acclaims the Virgin for deploying her *παρρησία* for the safety and security of Constantinople. In the same spirit, the earlier source records an inscription placed on the reliquary by Leo and Verina: "By offering this honour to the Theotokos, they have secured the might of the empire."<sup>153</sup> The early sixth-century church of St. Sergios in Gaza also contained an apse mosaic of the Virgin and Child in the presence of St. Sergios and Stephen, the governor of Palestine, who stood at the far right of the composition and offered them a

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<sup>152</sup> On the other hand, if the original mosaic on the north wall of the nave of S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna was closely modeled on the mosaic at Blachernai, then the latter may have included interceding angels (Fig. 1.83). The leftmost angel who extends his hand to the later female martyrs would originally have introduced members of Theodoric's court to the Virgin and Child, who also acknowledge them. The future king of the Ostrogoths was held hostage and educated in Constantinople between 461 and 471 under Leo I. It seems more likely, however, that the mosaic of S. Apollinare Nuovo was merely inspired by the mosaic at Blachernai, where the empress was described as kneeling before the Virgin and Child: C. Mango, "The Origins of the Blachernae Shrine," 70-1. On the patronage of Theodoric: M. Johnson, "Toward a History of Theodoric's Building Program," *DOP* 42 (1988) 73-96. See also the relevant comments and notes on S. Apollinare Nuovo in my chapter 1.8c-d.

<sup>153</sup> Mango expresses some doubt about the authenticity of the inscription, which may have been revised by the sixth-century author: C. Mango, "Origins of the Blachernae Shrine," 73.

model of the church.<sup>154</sup> In his description of the lost mosaic, Chorikios specifies that the patron saint placed “his right hand on the man’s shoulder, being evidently about to present him to the Virgin and her Son, the Saviour.” The constituents of the “pious band” on the left side of the Virgin and Child are not named. The lost mosaics of Constantinople and Gaza are paralleled in the surviving apse mosaic of the basilica of Eufrasius at Poreč, dated to the mid-sixth century (Fig. 1.59). At the center of the mosaic, the Virgin and Child are seated on a backless throne and flanked by two angels. Three contemporary individuals appear on the left side of the apse, separated from the central group by the primary intercessor and former local bishop, St. Maurus. On the far left is the Archdeacon Claudius, who holds a book, preceded by his son Eufrasius, who holds two candles, and the bishop Eufrasius, who presents a model of the church. All of these figures, including St. Maurus, are identified by inscriptions. At the base of the apse conch, a long inscription reveals that the much-needed renovation and embellishment of the church by the bishop Eufrasius served to fulfill a vow.<sup>155</sup> Opposite the donors on the right side of the apse are three anonymous saints, who lack inscriptions and identifiable portrait features. Their identities are known only by the patrons, who petition them for unspecified benefits, and by God, who knows all and judges all petitions.<sup>156</sup> Thus, the apse mosaics of Constantinople, Gaza, and Poreč are endowed with private functions in addition to their many public functions.

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<sup>154</sup> English trans. in C. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 60-8, esp. 62.

<sup>155</sup> On the inscription and possible meaning of the vow: A. Terry and H. Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč* (University Park, PA, 2007), 4-5, 144, 130-3, 164-6.

<sup>156</sup> Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, 113-16, 140-6. H. Maguire, “Eufrasius and Friends: On Names and Their Absence in Byzantine Art,” in *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, ed. L. James (Cambridge, 2007), 139-60, esp. 146-57.

Two further examples in Rome incorporate votive elements and represent the orant Virgin as a central figure.<sup>157</sup> In the apse mosaic of the chapel of S. Venanzio, popes John IV (640-2) and Theodore I (642-9) insert themselves into a long line of saints, some of whom require introductions of their own to the people of Rome (Fig. 3.37).<sup>158</sup> At the center of the apse's lower zone, the Virgin, accompanied by saints Peter and Paul, John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, endorses the new Dalmatian saints along with the resident popes, just as the popes endorse the new saints by collecting their relics and displaying their images in the new chapel of St. John Lateran. On behalf of all, the Virgin appears as a supplicant before Christ, who emerges from the clouds above her. The dedicatory inscription tells us that John offered pious vows (*pia vota*) to the martyrs of Christ along with the mosaic.<sup>159</sup> The private function of the apse mosaic is further elaborated in the second part of the inscription, which declares that "whosoever approaching it and pronely adoring Christ offers his effusive prayers to heaven (*quisquis gradiens et Christem pronus adorans effusasque preces mittet ad aetheria suas*)." A half-century later, Pope John VII (705-7) adorned his burial chapel in Old St. Peter's with

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<sup>157</sup> For other votive apses in Rome, centered on the figure of Christ: A. M. Yasin, "Making Use of Paradise: Church Benefactors, Heavenly Visions, and the Late Antique Commemorative Imagination," in *Looking Beyond: Visions, Dreams, and Insights in Medieval Art and History*, ed. C. Hourihane (Princeton, 2010), 39-57.

<sup>158</sup> G. Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West: Decoration, Function and Patronage* (Toronto, 2003), 212-30. Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 144-5. G. Matthaie, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma* (Rome, 1967), 191-8. The Eastern saints Cosmas, Damian, and Theodore are legitimized in a similar way in the church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian in Rome, dated 526-30: B. Brenk, "Zur Einführung des Kultes der heiligen Kosmas und Damian in Rom," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 62 (2006) 303-20. On the incorporation of ex-votos in apse decoration and their tacit acceptance by the Church, see B. Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon: An Historical Perspective of the Apse as a Space for Images* (Wiesbaden, 2010), 92-4.

<sup>159</sup> The Latin inscription is transcribed in Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 145: *martyribus christi domini pia vota Johannes reddidit antistes sanctificante deo ac sacri fontis simili fulgente metallo providus instanter hoc copulavit opus quo quisquis gradiens et christem pronus adorans effusasque preces mittet ad aetheria suas.*

a Christological cycle located on the east wall above the altar.<sup>160</sup> The central mosaic panel, now divided between S. Marco in Florence and the Vatican grottoes, represents the pope with a model of the chapel standing before the Virgin (Fig. 3.38). Below and to the right of the mosaic, inscriptions identify the “unworthy bishop” as the patron of the program and the “servant of the Mother of God.”<sup>161</sup> Once again, there is no mediating saint or angel. The portrait of the Virgin was surrounded by narrative scenes from the life of Christ, especially those of his infancy, which accounted for one-third of the events depicted but occupied half of the allotted space, according to the drawings made by Giacomo Grimaldi in the early seventeenth century.<sup>162</sup> Scenes of the Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, Adoration, and Presentation emphasize the participation of the Virgin in the Incarnation, for which she was honored as queen of heaven and intercessor. In the central portrait, the Virgin wears a crown and prays eternally on behalf of the pope.

Notwithstanding the public and political roles of the popes, as well as the Byzantine emperors, governors, bishops, and deacons which could not be elaborated here, these programs demonstrate that private concerns had a place in the monumental art of the church. In most cases, we cannot identify these concerns beyond the universal desire for salvation. The inscriptions of private individuals remain short and formulaic,

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<sup>160</sup> P. Nordhagen, “The Mosaics of John VII (705-707 A.D.): The Mosaic Fragments and Their Technique,” *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 2 (1965) 121-66. A. van Dijk, “‘Domus Sanctae Dei Genetricis Mariae’: Art and Liturgy in the Oratory of Pope John VII,” in *Decorating the Lord’s Table: On the Dynamics Between Image and Altar in the Middle Ages*, ed. S. Kaspersen and E. Thunø (Copenhagen, 2006), 13-42. On the private aspects of the program and the pope’s preoccupation with salvation and memory, see chapter four in A. van Dijk, *The Oratory of Pope John VII in Old St. Peter’s* (PhD Diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1995), 193-287.

<sup>161</sup> Although Byzantine donors often refer to themselves as servants of God (δοῦλοι), a distinctly Western medieval emphasis on service is conveyed by multiple inscriptions in the papal chapel and by the prominence of midwives in the Nativity scene, placed on the central axis above the orant Virgin: R. Deshman, “Servants of the Mother of God in Byzantine and Medieval Art,” *Word and Image* 5:1 (1989) 33-70.

<sup>162</sup> Deshman, “Servants of the Mother of God,” 37-8.

those of prominent officials may be long and poetic, but none disclose the particular contents of their prayers. Likewise, the iconography of intercession remains relatively consistent in panel painting and wall decoration. The donors recalled by name and by proxy in liturgical objects are here visualized, standing or kneeling before their primary intercessors, who provide introduction to the Virgin and Christ. Interestingly, when the Virgin appears alone, she also requires introduction, indicating her superior status among the saints, which is also reflected in Byzantine texts. Yet Byzantine texts furnish evidence of direct appeals to the Virgin as early as the late fourth century, while the domestic and liturgical arts furnish similar evidence from the second half of the sixth century. In monumental painting and mosaic, the freedom to approach the Virgin without mediation seems initially to have been the prerogative of divinely appointed emperors and popes, who also appeal to other saints, and a few daring and self-aggrandizing individuals. The first major exceptions are the large-scale panel paintings of the Virgin and Child in Rome, where the Virgin looks out at the viewer and the Child looks up at his mother, and the wall paintings of the church of S. Maria Antiqua. Although several popes, including Martin I (649-55) and John VII (705-7), commissioned wall paintings in the church, lay donors also commissioned votive panels.<sup>163</sup> Unfortunately, the icons of the Virgin and Child in Rome are not securely dated and all may belong to the seventh century or later. One could conclude that more direct appeals to the Virgin were not manifested in monumental church decoration until the seventh century or that they were manifested more broadly from the seventh century, following their widespread appearance in the domestic and liturgical arts in the second

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<sup>163</sup> Brenk, "Papal Patronage in a Greek Church in Rome," 67-81. S. Lucey, "Art and Socio-Cultural Identity in Early Medieval Rome: The Patrons of Santa Maria Antiqua," in *Roma Felix: Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome*, ed. E. Carragain and C. Neuman de Vegvar (Aldershot, 2007), 139-58.

half of the sixth century.<sup>164</sup> Likewise, the lost mosaic of Leo I and Verina at Blachernai may prove the exceptional status of emperors and popes before the seventh century, but only if we can equate the silence of the source with the absence of saints or mediating angels. Once again, poor and incomplete survivals in Constantinople and the eastern Mediterranean present serious challenges for interpretation.

#### *4. The Solitary Orant Virgin in the Apse*

The examples cited in the last section prove that early Christian apse decoration was not strictly theological, political, or liturgical in function, despite its very public and prominent location, but could also have a private function. In scholarship, the private function of the apse mosaic is typically identified and discussed in relation to its status as an ex-voto. The fragmentary apse mosaic at Livadia was not apparently an ex-voto, or at least there is no clear evidence of it in the form of a donor portrait or votive inscription (Fig. 3.14). Long-standing and recent damage to the site and the lack of archaeological excavation have severely compromised our knowledge of the original church and the original context of the mosaic, but the significance of the mosaic as it survived into the early 1980s cannot be overlooked. Likely dated to the last quarter of the sixth or first half of the seventh century, the apse mosaic at Livadia is the earliest known representation of the solitary orant Virgin in the apse of a church, confirming the existence of pre-iconoclastic prototypes for well-known middle Byzantine programs. Drawing on the evidence presented in this chapter, I will argue that the mosaic aimed to focus private and communal prayer by depicting the Virgin Mary as a primary intercessor, who prays with

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<sup>164</sup> On direct appeals to the Virgin in later Byzantine art: N. P. Ševčenko, "Close Encounters," 264-81.

and on behalf of the church and its congregants. I will also examine the relationship between the apse mosaic and the minor arts, where the Virgin was similarly invoked as a primary intercessor.

The analysis of works in sections two and three of this chapter showed that the depiction of the Virgin as an intercessor was not limited to a particular iconographic type. However, the figure of the orant is most clearly associated with the concept of intercession, not only for the Virgin but for all saints. Depicted frontally with the arms extended and the palms open in prayer, the orant figure originated as a personification of piety in the Roman world. Endowed with individual portrait features, it came to emphasize the piety of the pagan and Christian deceased in the catacombs and on sarcophagi. In funerary contexts, the type was also used for Old Testament figures, who served as exemplars of divine deliverance, their prayers having been answered. Later assumed by martyrs, saints, and the Virgin as models and mediators for the Christian faithful, the pose was eventually reserved for holy figures.<sup>165</sup> The decline of orant donors in Byzantine art by the eighth century probably reflects the ascendancy of *proskynesis* and the ensuing archaism of the orant pose.<sup>166</sup> Given the link between archaism and sanctity in Byzantine art, the gesture may also have been regarded as increasingly sacred and therefore inappropriate for ordinary donors.<sup>167</sup> In medieval churches, manuscripts, and icons, donors turn towards holy figures in an attitude of *proskynesis*; they appear inclined or prostrate, in profile or three-quarter poses, with their hands raised in

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<sup>165</sup> A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins* (Princeton, 1968), 74-6.

<sup>166</sup> See the entries on "Orans" and "Proskynesis" in *ODB*, vol. 3, 1531, 1738-9. On proskynesis, see also I. Spatharakis, "The Proskynesis in Byzantine Art," *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving* 49 (1974) 190-205.

<sup>167</sup> Moreover, reserving the form of the frontal orant for saints probably served to eliminate confusion for the worshiper, who might be tempted to pray to the wrong person.



supplication.<sup>168</sup> With the exception of the Virgin and monastic saints, orant saints also became less common on the walls of middle Byzantine churches, even as they became more common in the minor arts, especially on pectoral cross reliquaries.<sup>169</sup> In this way, the orant figure became once again an expression of popular piety, not because individuals assumed the gesture in works of art, but because works of art featuring orant saints belonged mostly to private individuals. In churches, the decline of orant saints may also reflect the desire to promote the Virgin Mary as the ideal intercessor before God. One might say that her piety, compassion, and readiness to intercede became her primary attributes, whereas saints were increasingly distinguished by class, costume, and other formal characteristics.<sup>170</sup> Like the Virgin, monastic saints continued to be represented as orants because it remained their primary responsibility to pray for society.

The assimilation of the Virgin Mary to the traditional personification of piety is a striking feature of the panegyric of Justin II, written by Corippus in 566-7. Once again, the poet describes the Virgin as the “wondrous piety of God (*pietas miranda dei*)” and “the image of holy Piety (*sacrae Pietatis imago*).” The former is an invocation placed in the mouth of the empress Sophia as she prays for the new emperor and the empire, while the latter is a description of the Virgin as she appears to the emperor in a dream at the moment of his accession. Moreover, in the opening prayer of book one, Corippus appeals to two female personifications before he appeals to the Virgin:

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<sup>168</sup> N. P. Ševčenko, “Close Encounters,” 255-85; “The Representation of Donors and Holy Figures on Four Byzantine Icons,” *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας* 17 (1993-4) 157-64. A. Carr, “Donors in the Frames of Icons: Living in the Borders of Byzantine Art,” *Gesta* 45:2 (2006) 189-98.

<sup>169</sup> The observation is made by Pitarakis, *Les croix-reliquaires pectorales byzantines en bronze*, 84-90, who regards the orant figure as a conservative element in the decoration of pectoral crosses.

<sup>170</sup> Of course, it is difficult to maintain an orant pose while holding a book or a scroll, a shield and spear, or a doctor’s kit. On the transformation of saints’ images, see H. Maguire, *The Icons of Their Bodies: Saints and Their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1996).

You, goddesses, give me the words, both Vigilantia the mother and Wisdom, queen of all, you who protect the world. You are enough for me in place of all the Muses in composing my song, you tell me all the hidden secrets. And you, Mother of God, stretch out your divine hand to me and give me aid, I beseech you. There rises before me the need for great toil, and when I stretch out my arms they are too weak for the weight.<sup>171</sup>

In the first part of the prayer to the Virgin, the poet chooses the singular “divine hand (*sanctam dextram*)” to describe a gesture of condescension. However, the second part of the prayer, the justification and the *topos*, may have a double meaning in this context. Corippus extends weak arms (*invalidos...tendo lacertos*) to bear the metaphorical weight of the “great toil,” but the choice of words may also evoke the gesture of prayer. Corippus has already asked for the Virgin’s aid, which implies that she must stretch out her arms on his behalf.<sup>172</sup> An emphasis on prayer also characterizes the dedication inscribed beneath the apse mosaic of S. Venanzio (642-50) with its central image of the orant Virgin before Christ (Fig. 3.37). The inscription refers to the pious vows (*pia vota*) of John IV and to the prostrate worshiper (*quisquis...Christem pronus adorans*), who offers his effusive prayers (*effusasque preces*) to heaven by approaching the apse mosaic. The last point speaks to the function of the apse mosaic not only as an *ex-voto*, but as a site where the faithful may be united with Christ. In this context, the orant Virgin

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<sup>171</sup> Corippus, I: 1.8-14 in Cameron, 36-7, 87, 127.

<sup>172</sup> Although it is three centuries later and in Greek, the tenth homily of Photios contains a description of the lost apse mosaic of the Pharos chapel (864) in the Great Palace, where the Virgin is “stretching out her stainless arms (*χειρας...εξαπλούσης*) on our behalf and winning for the emperor [Michael III] safety and exploits against the foes.” Photios, *Homiliai*, ed. V. Laourdas (Thessalonike, 1959), 102. English trans. in C. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 186. R. Jenkins and C. Mango, “The Date and Significance of the Tenth Homily of Photius,” *DOP* 9/10 (1956) 123-40.

provides the link between the supplicant and Christ, even as she serves as a model for the supplicant, who must prostrate himself for his prayers to be heard. With an emphasis on piety and prayer, the text of Corippus and the mosaic of S. Venanzio provide keys to interpreting the apse mosaic at Livadia, where the Virgin is presented as the image of holy Piety, ready to intercede for the faithful before God. The major difference between the literary and visual portrayals of Corippus and S. Venanzio and the mosaic at Livadia is that the Virgin at Livadia prays alone; her role is not moderated by the presence of personifications or other saints, at least not in the focal space of the apse. Likewise, the notion of the apse as a site of personal encounter with the divine, advocated by John IV, is underscored at Livadia by the placement of the Virgin at the boundary between heaven and earth, which she breaches to serve the local community.<sup>173</sup> Her physical presence in the church, rendered by means of the projecting footstool,<sup>174</sup> the implied reciprocity of the orant gesture, and the small size of the figure and the apse make the Virgin uniquely accessible compared to other early Christian apse mosaics. As if in response to Corippus' prayer, the Virgin at Livadia condescends for the benefit of mankind.

According to Grabar, the representation of the solitary orant Virgin in the apse was derived from the representation of orant saints and martyrs in the apses of early Christian martyria.<sup>175</sup> Grabar also acknowledges the relationship between the orant Virgin and the iconography of Christ's Ascension, which decorated the apses of many Coptic churches and may have inspired the double-zoned, multi-figured composition of

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<sup>173</sup> The boundary is created by the scaled background. See my chapter 5.4.

<sup>174</sup> See my chapter 4.2.

<sup>175</sup> A. Grabar, *Martyrium: recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1946), 292-6.

S. Venanzio.<sup>176</sup> In the central niches of chapels seventeen and room twenty at Bawit in Egypt, the orant Virgin is placed at the center of the lower register in the company of apostles (Figs. 3.39-40).<sup>177</sup> Although she was not present at the biblical episode, she joins the apostles and some local monks to witness a theophany with characteristics of the Ascension of Christ, the Second Coming, and various prophetic visions.<sup>178</sup> As Grabar concedes, however, the Ascension apses do not always portray the Virgin in prayer. In other compositions, the Virgin and Child are enthroned among the apostles. The Christ Child may be seated on his mother's lap or held in a mandorla. In these variations, the Virgin symbolizes the Incarnation of Christ at the moment of his departure from earth and his return at the Second Coming. The Virgin of the Ascension has also been interpreted as a symbol of the Church, related to her presence at Pentecost (Acts 1:14; 2:1), which was celebrated together with the Ascension in the early Church.<sup>179</sup> Her central placement in both narratives is linked to the foundation of the Church, which is reinforced by the presence of Peter and Paul, recalling that Paul was also absent from the biblical Ascension.

Other scholars have proposed an alternative source for the image of the solitary orant Virgin in the apse: a lost prototype in Constantinople, most likely in the church of Blachernai, where a marble icon of the orant Virgin existed in the tenth century and the type of the Virgin *Blachernitissa*, orant with a roundel of Christ at her breast, developed

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<sup>176</sup> A relationship between the iconography of the Ascension and S. Venanzio is accepted by Grabar, *Martyrium*, vol. 2, 115-7 and Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 99-100, 144-5, but denied by Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon*, 93-4.

<sup>177</sup> J. Clédat, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouit*, vol. I:2 (Cairo, 1904), 73-85, pls. 40-2. J. Maspero, *Fouilles exécutées à Baouit* (Cairo, 1931), 31-2, pls. 31-3.

<sup>178</sup> Grabar, *Martyrium*, vol. 2, 209-34. The Ascension is described in Luke 24:50-3 and Acts 1:9-12.

<sup>179</sup> Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 95-112.

in the eleventh century.<sup>180</sup> The depiction of the orant Virgin in the apse has therefore been linked to other apses, including images of orant saints and martyrs, double-zoned compositions of the Ascension, and lost Constantinopolitan prototypes. The relationship of the image to the so-called minor arts has not been explored previously, despite the regular appearance of the Virgin alone and in prayer on liturgical vessels donated to churches as *ex-votos*.<sup>181</sup>

The iconographic correspondences between the apse mosaic at Livadia and the domestic and liturgical arts raise some important questions. First, should we assume that the figure of the solitary orant Virgin in the apse was descended from other apses, whether she was modeled on other saints, extracted from the scene of the Ascension, or copied from an influential prototype? Alternatively, could the minor arts have inspired the subject in the apses of Christian churches? And how does the context of the motif, public or private, affect its interpretation? The problem of priority is not limited to a single iconographic type, but relates more broadly to the visual cult of the Virgin in the early Byzantine period. Averil Cameron has suggested that the veneration of images of the Virgin Mary pervaded all levels of society, gradually yet simultaneously, by the later sixth century.<sup>182</sup> Others have regarded the visual cult of the Virgin as a popular

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<sup>180</sup> N. Kondakov, *Ikongrafija Bogomateri*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1915), 55-64, cited in Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 63 n. 40 and D. Mouriki *The Mosaics of Nea Moni on Chios*, vol. 1 (Athens, 1985), 107 n. 5.

<sup>181</sup> However, the relationship between official ecclesiastical art and the domestic arts with respect to images of the Virgin in general has been discussed by H. Maguire, "Byzantine Domestic Art," 183-93. Other scholars have considered the relationship between the Ascension apses, which include the orant Virgin, and lead ampullae, which incorporate the Ascension narrative: A. Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte (Monza/Bobbio)* (Paris, 1958); Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 95-112; K. Weitzmann, "'Loca Sancta' and the Representational Arts of Palestine," *DOP* 28 (1974) 31-55. All agree that monumental compositions inspired the representations on lead ampullae.

<sup>182</sup> A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley, 1991), 201-3; "The Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: religious development and myth-making," in *The Church and Mary*, ed. R. Swanson (Woodbridge, UK, 2004), 1-21, esp. 20.

movement that was later accepted and promoted by the Church. Proponents of this view include Thomas Mathews, who traces early icons of the Virgin to pagan icons of the goddess Isis,<sup>183</sup> and Beat Brenk, who exploits rare early evidence in relief sculpture, gold glass, and inscribed roof tiles.<sup>184</sup> In the same volume as Mathews' article, Henry Maguire argues that images of the Virgin were first depicted in official ecclesiastical art, including apse decoration, before they appear with any frequency in the domestic arts, beginning in the second half of the sixth century.<sup>185</sup> Even within the domestic arts, images of the Virgin materialize in more expensive media before they materialize in cheaper media, indicating another level of diffusion from the upper classes to the general populace. These three different perspectives reflect the scarcity of the surviving evidence and the fact that many examples in the monumental and minor arts cannot be firmly dated. The specific iconography of the orant Virgin is no exception, and in chapter three the minor arts proved pivotal for dating the apse mosaic at Livadia. But even if one accepts that churches first promoted the visual cult of the Virgin, given the weight of the evidence presented by Maguire, there is a slight possibility that the iconographic type of the solitary orant Virgin became popular in the private sphere and was only subsequently adopted for use in official ecclesiastical art. Setting aside for a moment the apse mosaic at Livadia, all known non-narrative portraits of the Virgin in churches prior to the seventh century show her seated or standing with the Christ Child or alone in a hierarchy of intercession, but never in prayer as a frontal orant. The Virgin does not emerge in apse

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<sup>183</sup> The major challenge for Mathews is the gap of three centuries between the surviving icons of Isis and those of Mary: T. Mathews and N. Muller, "Isis and Mary in Early Icons," in *Images of the Mother of God*, 3-11. See also T. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*, 2nd edn. (Princeton, 1999), 177-90.

<sup>184</sup> Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon*, 57-81.

<sup>185</sup> H. Maguire, "Byzantine Domestic Art," 183-93.

decoration or on the walls of Christian churches as an accessible figure: ordinary donors require introduction to the Virgin, just as they require introduction to her Son. Emperors and popes may have had free access, but the votive panels at S. Maria Antiqua and the early icons in Rome suggest that the Virgin became more accessible to the laity in church decoration around the seventh century. Because the strongest evidence for the emergence of the iconographic type comes from liturgical votive gifts beginning in the second half to last quarter of the sixth century, liturgical silver could be seen as a channel through which the portrait of the solitary orant Virgin was introduced to the church and quickly translated into monumental painting and mosaic. Admittedly, there are problems with this argument that cannot be resolved. First, we do not know what type of image existed in the apse at Blachernai. The sixth-century basilica might have contained a mosaic or other prominent image of the orant Virgin, although no evidence survives. Second, in most of the Ascension apses in Egypt, dated uncertainly between the second half of the sixth and the eighth centuries, the depiction of the Virgin resembles a portrait inserted into a narrative, whether she appears in prayer or enthroned with the Christ Child.<sup>186</sup> It is not difficult to imagine a process by which the image of the orant Virgin was separated from the Ascension narrative and accorded the apse alone.<sup>187</sup> It is also possible that the Virgin was modeled on other saints who preceded her in popularity and had already

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<sup>186</sup> The same applies to half of the Ascension scenes on the Monzo and Bobbio ampullae, which are thought to have derived from monumental compositions in the Holy Land: Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte*. Six out of twelve ampullae represent the Virgin as a frontal orant, while five show her in profile with her arms raised. The former may be considered a portrait, the latter a narrative portrayal, albeit an ahistorical one. The last ampulla with the Ascension does not include the Virgin. Likewise, in chapel forty-six at Bawit, the body and arms of the Virgin are depicted frontally, but the neck of the figure is twisted, the head is tipped back, and the eyes look up towards Christ. Although the figure type is a hybrid, it should be considered a narrative portrayal. See Grabar, *Martyrium*, vol. 2, 220-1, pl. 56:2. On the insertion of portraits in narrative contexts: H. Kessler, "The Icon in the Narrative," in *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia, 2000), 1-28.

<sup>187</sup> Ihm, *Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei*, 108-12.

occupied the apse as orants. Finally, the apse mosaic at Livadia could be cited as proof that the figure of the orant Virgin appeared in apses before she appeared in domestic and liturgical objects, if one takes the logical view that a small provincial church in Cyprus was not at the forefront of this trend, but was instead the product of a tradition. In that case, the decoration of liturgical silver could have derived from earlier monumental programs and inspired the iconographic type on domestic jewelry and textiles.<sup>188</sup> And yet this much cannot be assumed when one contemplates who the apse mosaic at Livadia might have served.

In her study of the eleventh-century mosaics of Nea Moni on Chios, Doula Mouriki observes that many post-iconoclastic apses depicting the orant Virgin without the Christ Child were imperial or princely foundations, including the Katholikon at Nea Moni, St. Sophia and three other churches in Kiev, and St. Sophia in Novgorod, all modeled perhaps on the Pharos chapel of the Great Palace with its mosaic described by Photios in 864.<sup>189</sup> But the only surviving pre-iconoclastic example of the type comes from a small and little-known church in Cyprus, demonstrating either the widespread diffusion of the type before iconoclasm or its more humble origins. Unfortunately, we know nothing about the patrons of the church or the community at Livadia that cannot be gleaned from the church as it survives today. Most revealing is the small size of the apse, which is preserved in the small medieval cruciform church (Figs. 3.1-3, 3.8-9). The apse conch measures 2.1 meters in diameter, the figure of the Virgin 1.2 meters in height, and

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<sup>188</sup> It depends, of course, what role we imagine churches played in the decoration of liturgical silver. While the standardized iconography probably stems from workshop practice, churches may have specified the types of objects they would not only accept, but let come into contact with the body and blood of Christ.

<sup>189</sup> Mouriki, *Mosaics of Nea Moni*, 107-9. On the homily of Photios: Jenkins and Mango, "Date and Significance of the Tenth Homily of Photius," 123-40.



the apse approximately 3.0 meters in height.<sup>190</sup> By contrast, the apse conchs at Lythrankomi and Kiti measure 4.78 and 3.74 meters in diameter, and their apices stood approximately 7.0 and 5.1 meters from the floor.<sup>191</sup> Two other village churches in Cyprus, the north and south churches at Kalavastos-Kopetra, also contained apse mosaics with dimensions comparable to Lythrankomi and Kiti, measuring approximately 5.0 and 3.6 meters in diameter.<sup>192</sup> In chapter three, the possibility that the main apse of the medieval church at Livadia served as a lateral apse or chapel niche within a much larger early Christian basilica was raised and rejected. Moreover, the original apses at Lythrankomi and Kiti seem to have dictated the proportions of the medieval buildings. While the original church at Livadia was likely not cruciform and its east wall was wide enough to accommodate at least a single mosaic figure on either side of the Virgin, the size of the main apse suggests that the church served a very small community in both the early Christian and medieval periods. The provincial churches at Lythrankomi and Kiti clearly served much larger communities, and in the latter case may even have hosted the bishop of Kition for a short time.<sup>193</sup>

With its modest dimensions, the church at Livadia may have been built as a private chapel for a family or an estate, which could afford in late sixth- or early seventh-century Cyprus to decorate an apse with mosaics, combining gold tesserae with a limited palette of colored glass, flesh-colored marble, and terracotta.<sup>194</sup> Although most of the

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<sup>190</sup> See my chapter three.

<sup>191</sup> See my chapters 1.4 and 2.3.

<sup>192</sup> M. Rautman, *A Cypriot Village of Late Antiquity: Kalavastos-Kopetra in the Vasilikos Valley* (Portsmouth, RI, 2003), 143-7.

<sup>193</sup> A. Foulías, *The Church of Our Lady Angeloktisti at Kiti, Larnaka* (Nicosia, 2004), 12.

<sup>194</sup> To my knowledge, there is no evidence that the church at Livadia served as a funerary chapel. On the materials, see my chapter 3.5 and A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins, "A Fragmentary Mosaic of the Orant Virgin in Cyprus," in *Actes du XIVe Congrès Internationales d'Études Byzantines, Bucharest, 1971*, vol. 3, ed. M. Berza and E. Stanescu (1976), 363-6. A recent study confirms that early Byzantine wall

architectural evidence for private chapels in the early Byzantine period comes from large monastic complexes, textual evidence for the private celebration of the liturgy is known from the fourth century.<sup>195</sup> Early Church councils banned the celebration of Mass outside regular churches, but soon relented, allowing greater episcopal discretion and control from the late fourth century onwards.<sup>196</sup> In 537, in an effort to combat heresy, Justinian I prohibited private liturgical celebrations that were not performed by regular clergy; in 545, he extended the law to include rural areas, whether houses, estates (προόστεια), or villages (χωριά).<sup>197</sup> Later in the seventh century, canon thirty-one of the Quinisext Council reinforced that liturgical and baptismal celebrations in domestic oratories (εὐκτήριοι οἴκοι) were subject to the jurisdiction of local bishops.<sup>198</sup> These laws confirm the existence of full-service domestic churches and express the fear that privatization could conceal non-orthodox practices. An interesting story in the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschos (c. 600) projects the same anxiety onto the inhabitants of an estate (κτῆμά) with a church of St. John the Baptist.<sup>199</sup> The residents of the Mardardos estate report their priest to the bishop of Aigaion for failing to perform the liturgy in a timely and orderly manner. In the story, however, the priest is vindicated when he explains that he cannot celebrate the liturgy before experiencing a vision of the Holy

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mosaics were more widespread than previously thought: L. James, "Byzantine Glass Mosaic Tesserae: Some Material Considerations," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 30:1 (2006) 29-47. See also the database of sites compiled by the author and maintained by the University of Sussex.

<sup>195</sup> T. Mathews, "Private Liturgy in Byzantine Architecture: Towards a Re-appraisal," *Cahiers archéologiques* 30 (1982) 125-37. J. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire* (Washington, DC, 1987). Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West*, 61-8. Mackie also examines papal chapels, episcopal chapels, and funerary chapels in Italy.

<sup>196</sup> Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West*, 61-8.

<sup>197</sup> Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 41-3.

<sup>198</sup> Mathews, "Private Liturgy in Byzantine Architecture," 136. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 115. Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West*, 66.

<sup>199</sup> John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, ed. Migne, PG 87.2873C. Wortley, *Spiritual Meadow*, 19.

Spirit.<sup>200</sup> Other material evidence for private churches is furnished by dedicatory inscriptions on liturgical silver vessels. An inscription on a silver paten in the Cleveland Museum of Art identifies the paten and three silver chalices as having come from the church of St. Sergios of the *chorion* of Beth Misona, most likely referring to an estate (Figs. 6.10, 6.25).<sup>201</sup> Not only does the paten testify to the existence of an estate church in contemporary Syria, but it proves that the church was equipped in the same manner as larger village and urban churches.<sup>202</sup> It cannot be ruled out, therefore, that the tiny church at Livadia was constructed and decorated as a private chapel. If so, then all of the evidence for the figure of the solitary orant Virgin before iconoclasm would belong to the private sphere. Moreover, a private chapel would seem to be the ideal context for the adaptation of the theme from liturgical votive gifts to monumental ecclesiastical art.

In churches, the elevation of the non-theological image of the solitary orant Virgin to the space of the apse may have responded to and served to channel devotion that had been growing in the private sphere, albeit at the initial instigation of the Church, but more firmly in connection with Christ.<sup>203</sup> Indeed, the Virgin Mary is not represented here as the Theotokos, but as an independent figure and intercessor who maintained a privileged relationship with Christ.<sup>204</sup> While the need for Christological clarification

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<sup>200</sup> On the importance of the vision, see my chapter 4.2.

<sup>201</sup> As determined by the combination of *chorion* and *beth* meaning “house” in Semitic languages: cat. nos. 57-60 in M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, 228-31.

<sup>202</sup> In fact, almost all of the great silver treasures of the early Byzantine period come from village churches rather than urban churches, reflecting poor survival rates in the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean: M. Mango, “Uses of Liturgical Silver,” 246.

<sup>203</sup> On episcopal integration and control of the cult of saints in Christian worship: P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981). A parallel can be identified in the mosaics of St. Demetrios of Thessalonike, which were first donated by private citizens in the late fifth or sixth centuries. By the early seventh century, church officials had appropriated the saint and the sacred space of the church: Brubaker, “Elites and Patronage in Early Byzantium,” 63-90.

<sup>204</sup> It is a matter of emphasis. The mosaic emphasizes her role as an intercessor, not her role as Mother of God, although the former depends on the latter.

generated and sustained an interest in the figure of the Virgin throughout the early Byzantine period, direct appeals to the Mother of God for aid and personal protection appear only sporadically in texts and images beginning in the fourth century.<sup>205</sup> In the second half to last quarter of the sixth century, these appeals become more common in the domestic and liturgical arts in a variety of iconographic types, but not yet in monumental ecclesiastical art, where they seem to have developed or spread slightly later, at least according to the surviving evidence. Although no donors or invocatory inscriptions were displayed in the apse at Livadia, I would argue that the depiction of the solitary orant Virgin constitutes a direct appeal to the Virgin Mary as a primary intercessor, rather than a remote or high-ranking intercessor to whom one requires introduction. As we saw in jewelry and textiles, the iconographic type of the orant Virgin functioned as an explicit visual invocation unlikely to carry a corroborating inscription. Combined with her isolation, small scale, and physical proximity to the small Christian community at Livadia, the new iconographic type made her accessible to them in a way that is not attested in earlier monumental programs.

Ultimately, there may not be enough evidence to reach a conclusion on chronology and therefore on the precise relationship between the liturgical arts and Byzantine apse decoration. The iconography of the orant Virgin in the domestic and liturgical arts could have been inspired by lost monumental compositions, although the depiction of the Virgin as a solitary and approachable figure comes across as a new phenomenon in Byzantine art of the late sixth and early seventh centuries. In the private sphere, images of the Virgin with and without the Child acquired a personal significance,

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<sup>205</sup> Two early examples in gold glass are cited in chapter 3.6c. See also Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon*, 66-71; H. Maguire, "Byzantine Domestic Art," 185.

as men and women sought the assistance of the Virgin in their daily lives. But as the new domestic images became increasingly popular, they must have influenced the common interpretation of official ecclesiastical art. Those who wore pectoral crosses or donated chalices with the figure of the Virgin probably understood her monumental likeness in a different way, whatever the intended theological, liturgical, and political meanings of these works. Whether the iconographic type of the solitary orant Virgin was co-opted by the church or simply employed by the church as it continued to be used in private contexts, I would suggest that its private significance was recognized and cultivated by church officials and transformed into a collective experience. By exhibiting a gesture of prayer that the faithful were encouraged to emulate, the figure of the orant was ideally suited to inspire the kind of personal encounter articulated in the dedicatory inscription of S. Venanzio and surely desired elsewhere.

PART II:  
CONCLUSION

The three chapters that comprise the second part of the dissertation investigated the prominence of the Virgin Mary in the apse mosaics of Cyprus and the various functions of apse decoration in the early Christian period. Chapter four on sacred space and liturgy began by contrasting the explicit liturgical character and exclusivity of middle and late Byzantine sanctuary programs with the allusive liturgical character and inclusivity of early Byzantine programs. After reviewing textual evidence for the notion of divine presence in the church and sanctuary, the chapter revealed how the notion of presence was expressed in the apse mosaics of Cyprus. For example, the levitation of the Virgin in the apses of Kiti and Livadia demonstrates her supreme holiness, delineates the sacred space of the sanctuary, and evokes the miraculous visions experienced in Christian churches. More importantly, the illusion of the projecting footstool and the theophanic symbol of the mandorla create two visions of the Virgin conceived in relation to the Eucharist. The chapter concluded by examining the archangels at Kiti, whose wings of peacock feathers serve to conflate them with the seraphim and cherubim that feature in prophetic visions and liturgical hymns.

Chapter five on metaphor explored the theme of the fountain of paradise in the mosaic border at Kiti. Derived from floor mosaics, the portrayal of the fountain instead of the conventional four rivers was designed to complement the new theme of the Virgin and Child, which became common in apse decoration of the sixth century. At Kiti, the border was shown to function as a visual metaphor, evoking the metaphors of nature,

springtime, and fertility that praised the Virgin Mary in early Byzantine sermons and hymns. The Christian concept of the renewal of nature, expressed by these visual and textual metaphors, may also have been implied by the assimilation of the Virgin to female personifications of nature. Comparison to the Earth in particular was found to enhance the Eucharistic significance of the mosaic. The final section of the chapter considered the absence of nature in the apse mosaic at Livadia, where the rising scale pattern constructs an openwork screen, impeding access to the golden light of heaven and affirming the need for intercession.

The intercession of the Virgin was the focus of the last chapter. Chapter six began by collecting early textual evidence for Marian intercession in the form of invocations, prayers, and miraculous interventions, incorporated into imperial panegyric, hymns, sermons, and saints' lives. The analysis of texts confirmed that the Virgin's ability to intercede proceeded from her role in the Incarnation, which granted her freedom of speech (παρρησία) before God. The next part of the chapter examined the intercession of the Virgin in the domestic and liturgical arts. Although in the domestic arts the depiction of the Virgin as an intercessor was not limited to a specific iconographic type, the orant stood out as an explicit visual symbol with no need of an invocatory inscription. In contrast, only two portrait types of the Virgin were represented in liturgical silver, the orant and the clipeate bust, both without the Child. Often the only orant, despite the presence of other saints and angels, the Virgin embodied the inscribed prayer or invocation, served as a type for the donor, and appeared as a supplicant before Christ. In panel painting, like domestic jewelry, the intercession of the Virgin could be implied in rare displays of communication between the Virgin and Child, while in

monumental ecclesiastical art, it became explicit in the inclusion of donor portraits and the visual elaboration of an intercessory hierarchy. Finally, the chapter turned to the apse mosaic at Livadia with its pre-iconoclastic image of the Virgin alone and in prayer. It examined the relationship between the mosaic and the minor arts, considered the possibility that the church was built as a private chapel, and emphasized the private function of the apse mosaic, which focused personal and communal prayer by depicting the Virgin Mary as a newly accessible figure and primary intercessor.

One question remains to be answered with respect to the apse mosaics, the phenomenon of their common subject matter. Do the mosaics of Lythrankomi, Kiti, and Livadia provide evidence of special devotion to the Virgin in early Byzantine Cyprus? I would suggest that the existence of three apse mosaics of the Virgin Mary has more to do with the unique circumstances of preservation on the island than with any exceptional devotion to the Virgin. Some of the strongest evidence for Marian devotion in the sixth and seventh centuries comes from liturgical votive gifts discovered in Syria-Palestine. As noted in chapter six, these objects were produced in Constantinople and other Eastern centers. Except for the vault and lunette mosaics in the sanctuary of the monastery at Kartmin, no early apse decoration survives from these areas. However, contemporary programs centered on the Virgin and Child survive in the main apses of the cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč and in the church at Kalabatia on the Lycian coast. There is also textual evidence for similar compositions in the Soros chapel of the church at Blachernai in Constantinople, the church of St. Sergios in Gaza, the churches of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome and Ravenna, and the church of S. Maria in Capua Vetere, and physical



evidence in the form of successive interventions in the post-iconoclastic apse mosaic of the church of the Dormition at Nicaea.

The preservation of the apse mosaics of Lythrankomi, Kiti, Livadia, and perhaps others now lost in the medieval churches of Cyprus may be attributed to several factors. First, although the geographical extent and severity of Byzantine iconoclasm has been downplayed in recent scholarship,<sup>1</sup> the survival of the apse mosaics is traditionally ascribed to the neutral status of Cyprus between the Byzantine and Islamic empires from the middle of the seventh century to the middle of the tenth century. Second, and more important perhaps, must have been the desire of local communities to preserve precious ancient and potentially miraculous mosaics when the island no longer had a mosaic industry of any kind. The reference to a miracle-working mosaic of the enthroned Virgin and Child in southern Cyprus in the spurious ninth-century *Letter of the Three Patriarchs to the Emperor Theophilos*, discussed in chapters one and two, provides some support for this argument, as does the complete lack of evidence for wall mosaics in Cyprus after the middle of the seventh century, discussed in chapter three. These ideas, however, do not explain the absence of images of Christ, the most popular subject in early Christian apses, among the preserved monuments of Cyprus. This can only be explained by the continued relevance of and medieval preference for the image of the Virgin Mary in the apse. While the image of Christ Pantokrator occupied the dome of the Byzantine church, symbolizing the highest heaven, the Mother of God dwelled in the next highest sphere, demonstrating the truth of the Incarnation, signaling the ritual incarnation of Christ in the Eucharist, and interceding to secure salvation for all below.

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<sup>1</sup> See especially L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, ca. 680-850: A History* (Cambridge, 2011).

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ARDAC	<i>Annual Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus (1980-); Annual Report of the Director of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus (1961-79).</i>
BAH	<i>Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, Paris.</i>
BCH	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique, Athens and Paris.</i>
CSHB	<i>Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae, Bonn.</i>
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers, Washington, DC.</i>
JÖB	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik, Vienna.</i>
LCL	<i>Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA.</i>
LTTH	<i>Liverpool Translated Texts for Historians, Liverpool and Chicago.</i>
OCA	<i>Orientalia Christiana analecta, Rome.</i>
ODB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, ed. A. Kazhdan, 3 vols., Oxford, 1991.</i>
PG	Migne, J.-P. ed., <i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca</i> , 161 vols., Paris, 1857-66.
PL	Migne, J.-P., ed., <i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina</i> , 221 vols., Paris, 1844-80.
PO	<i>Patrologia orientalis, Paris, 1904-69; Turnhout 1969-.</i>
SC	<i>Sources chrétiennes, Paris.</i>
SH	<i>Subsidia hagiographica, Brussels.</i>
TLG	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, Irvine, CA.</i>

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Chapter 1 – Table 1: Correspondence of Apostles in Early Christian Art

Sofia silver reliquary from Jabalkovo c. 325-50 [8]	Vatican bronze situla 370-440	Puebla Nova Sarcophagus c. 400 [8]	St. Agatha of the Goths, Rome 459-70 (Ciacconio drawing)	Orthodox Baptistery, Ravenna 451-73	Resist-dyed linen from Akhmîm 5th-6th c. [3]	Archepiscopal Chapel, Ravenna 494-519	Panagia Kanakaria, Lythrankomi c. 500-50 [10]	Tomb of Theodoric, Ravenna 526-40 (or later)
Peter	Peter		Peter	Peter	Peter	Peter		Peter
Paul	Paul		Paul	Paul		Paul	Paul	Paul
Andrew	Andrew	Andrew (?)	Andrew	Andrew		Andrew	Andrew	Andrew
James	James		James	James		James	James	James
John	John		John	John		John		John
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip		Philip	Philip	Philip
Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew		Matthew	Matthew	
Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas
	Bart	Bart	Bart	Bart		Bart	Bart	Bart
	Simon	Simon	Simon	Simon		Simon		Simon
	Jude of James	Jude (?)	Jude of James	Jude the Zealot		Jude	Jude	
	James Alph.	James Alph.	James Alph.	James Alph.		James Alph.	Thaddeus	
							Luke	Luke
					Mark		Mark	Mark
								Mathias

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Holy Apostles, Constantinople, 4th/6th/9th/12th c. (Mesarites c. 1200)	S. Vitale, Ravenna 540-7/8	Basilica of Eufrasius, Poreč c. 550	Monastery of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai 548-65	Cleveland Tapestry 6th c.	Limestone relief from Saqqara 6th c. [7]	Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit, Room 6	Wood coffin of St. Cuthbert, Durham 7th c. [10]
Peter	Peter	Peter	Peter (T)	Peter	Peter	Peter	Peter
Paul	Paul	Paul	Paul	Paul			Paul
Andrew	Andrew	Andrew	Andrew	Andrew	Andrew	Andrew	Andrew
James	James	James	James (T)	James	James	James	James
John	John	John	John (T)	John		John	John
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip		Philip	Philip
Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew
Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas
Bart	Bart	Bart	Bart	Bart		Bart	Bart
Simon	Simon	Simon	Simon		Simon	Simon	Simon (?)
	Jude	Jude of James	Jude		Jude	Jude	
	Thaddeus	James	Thaddeus			Thaddeus	
	James	James	James			James	
	Alph.	Alph.	Alph.			Alph.	
Luke			Luke	Luke			
Mark			Mark	Mark			
			Mathias	Mathias		Mathias	