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# BYZANTINE AND MODERN GREEK STUDIES



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CENTRE FOR BYZANTINE, OTTOMAN AND MODERN GREEK STUDIES  
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## List of Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
AB	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
ABSA	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
B	<i>Byzantion</i>
BF	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i>
BHG	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca</i>
BMGS	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
BNJ	<i>Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher</i>
BS	<i>Byzantinoslavica</i>
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
CFHB	<i>Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae</i>
CSCO	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i>
CSHB	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Bonn)</i>
DHGE	<i>Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique</i>
DIEE	<i>Δελτίον τῆς ἱστορικῆς καὶ ἐθνολογικῆς ἐταιρείας τῆς Ἑλλάδος</i>
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
DTC	<i>Dictionnaire de théologie catholique</i>
EEBS	<i>Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν</i>
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
EO	<i>Échos d'Orient</i>
GRBS	<i>Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
IRAIK	<i>Izvestija Russkago Arkheologičeskago Instituta v Konstantinopole</i>
JA	<i>Journal Asiatique</i>
JGR	<i>J. &amp; P. Zepos, Jus Graecoromanum</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JÖB	<i>Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
JÖBG	<i>Jahrbuch der österreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft</i>
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>

## Koraes, Toynbee and the modern Greek heritage

RODERICK BEATON

MPG	J.P. Migne, <i>Patrologia series Graeco-Latina</i>
MPL	J.P. Migne, <i>Patrologia series Latina</i>
OCP	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>
PO	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
RE	<i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (Pauly-Wissowa)
REB	<i>Revue des Études Byzantines</i>
REG	<i>Revue des Études Grecques</i>
ROC	<i>Revue de l'Orient Chrétien</i>
VV	<i>Vizantijskij Vremennik</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
ZRVI	<i>Zbornik Rádova Vizantološkog Instituta</i>

At first sight it is nothing more than an accident of history that brings the names of the Greek philologist and patriot Adamandios Koraes and of the English historian Arnold J. Toynbee together: in 1919, Toynbee was appointed to be the first holder of the Koraes Chair of Modern Greek and Byzantine History, Language and Literature at King's College in the University of London. The third component of my title introduces some rather more substantial common ground. The 'heritage' of the Modern Greek people from the ancient past plays a large part in the work of both — explicitly and at length in the writings of Koraes, less conspicuously but scarcely less fundamentally, as this paper will argue, in Toynbee's mammoth investigation of the forces at work in shaping world history.

On the face of it, however, the differences between the two scholars are much greater than the similarities; so great, indeed, that the very idea of discussing them together may seem far-fetched. On the one hand we have an expatriate Greek nationalist and classical scholar; on the other an English pioneer of comparative world history whose brief encounter with Greek nationalism in action drove him, in Greek eyes at least, straight into the opposing Turkish camp. Koraes was a philologist, linguistic reformer and political pamphleteer, almost all of whose work is devoted to Greece; Toynbee was a historian whose magnum opus, *A Study of History*, apparently touches on the Greek world only in passing. Yet both were classical scholars by training, and Toynbee, for all his spectacular defection from the philhellenic cause, is throughout his prolific writings scarcely less obsessed than Koraes by the phenomenon of what he called in his last book, *The Greeks and their Heritages*. For Koraes, the geographical, cultural and linguistic link between the modern Greeks and their

## A woman's prayer to St Sergios in Latin Syria: interpreting a thirteenth-century icon at Mount Sinai

LUCY-ANNE HUNT

For Hugo Buchthal at 80

Amongst the collection of icons at St Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai, is a small panel depicting a woman wearing a black veil kneeling before the equestrian saint Sergios (fig. 1). The icon is one of a group of thirteenth-century Sinai icons, many of equestrian saints, whose date and provenance has been a matter of debate. But lacking from this debate has been interpretation of the icon as an indicator of a particular social, religious and political field. The intrusion of the material world of the viewer in this icon, through the gesture of the kneeling woman, enables it to be interpreted as a personal prayer, an act of supplication for protection at the critical period before the final loss of Latin Syria to the Mamluks. It was arguably commissioned from one of the Syrian Orthodox artists whose work can be seen displayed in the churches to the east and south of Tripoli. This identifies an intense period of activity in wallpainting and icon production in Syria during the middle to second quarter of the thirteenth century of which work at the end of the century in Cyprus was the continuation. Looked at from the perspective of the woman herself, the icon raises issues of the role of women in the patronage and veneration of icons in the Latin East.<sup>1</sup>

1. Kind permission was given me to study icons at St Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai. I am also grateful to the Department of Antiquities in Damascus for permission to visit monuments in Syria in September 1985. My visit was facilitated by a grant from the Field and Expeditions Fund of the University of Birmingham. This paper was read and discussed at a colloquium to mark Professor Hugo Buchthal's 80th birthday (Warburg Institute, London University, 30 June/1 July, 1989) and subsequently at seminars at Birmingham and Warwick Universities.

The panel, measuring 28.7 x 23.2 cm, shows the woman kneeling and clasping the foot of the equestrian St Sergios. A long black veil is attached to her headdress and she has a string of beads attached to her waist. St Sergios is named by a Greek inscription on the upper part of the panel. The saint wears a short mail tunic, or hauberk, leaving the lower arms bare except for wristbands. Over it is pinned a red cloak which flutters behind him. He holds a banner bearing a red cross, a motif that is repeated on his round shield and raised saddle cantle and pommel. He is crowned with a beaded coronet. His halo, also beaded, extends upwards beyond the ground of the panel, drawing the viewer's eye out to the raised frame which is painted with delicate scrolls in imitation of *pastiglio* raised and carved gesso work (see fig. 11).

The panel has been inconclusively associated with each of Cyprus, Sinai and Syria in the thirteenth century. In their preliminary analysis of the icon, the Soterious attributed it to Cyprus in the late thirteenth century, proposing the woman's black veil as a sign of mourning for the fall of Acre to the Muslims in 1291, according to a custom reported on Cyprus in the fourteenth century.<sup>2</sup> They also associated it with a large (95 x 62 cm) bilateral Sinai icon showing St Sergios with Bacchos (fig. 2) on the reverse of the Virgin Hodegetria (fig. 3).<sup>3</sup> As a pair, these icons were grouped by K. Weitzmann with others he ascribed first to the 'Master of the Knights Templar' and later to artists from Apulia or southern Italy working at Sinai.<sup>4</sup> The female donor was suggested to be mourning the final loss of Jerusalem of 1244.

2. G. and M. Soteriou, *Icones du Mont Sinai* (in Greek with French summary) 2 Vols (Athens 1956, 1958), I fig. 187, II, 171.

3. G. and M. Soteriou, *Icones du Mont Sinai*, I, figs. 185-87, II, 170-71.

4. K. Weitzmann, 'Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom', *DOP* 20 (1966) 71-72 with fig. 49, rpt. in K. Weitzmann, *Studies in the Art of Sinai* (Princeton, 1982), 345-6 with annotation, 435. The icon is reproduced in colour in K. Weitzmann et al., *The Icon* (London 1987) 232. V. Pace, 'Italy and the Holy Land: Import-Export, 2. The Case of Apulia', in J. Folda (ed.) *Crusader Art in the Twelfth Century* (British Archaeological Reports, International Series 152) (Oxford 1982) 245-47 accepts that the 'Master of the Knights Templar' icons form a group, if not all by the same artist and not from Apulia.

A Syrian dimension was introduced by l'Abbé J. Leroy in drawing the Sinai icons into his publication of the wallpaintings of the Syrian Orthodox (Melkite) church at Qara, situated between Homs and Damascus and not far south of the Crusader stronghold of Crac des Chevaliers.<sup>5</sup> On the north wall at Qara two military saints 'protect' the Virgin and Child. St Theodore rides eastward towards the Galaktotrophousa (fig. 4), with a fragmentary female saint, probably St Marina (St Margaret of Antioch), behind him.<sup>6</sup> Further to the east is a panel of St Sergios between a lost panel (of the Hodegetria?) and John the Baptist (fig. 5). Each painting is framed as a panel with a red border. The linking of this cycle with icon painting is reinforced by the detail of fine brushstrokes of red foliage scrolls against the ochre paint of St Sergios' halo in imitation of *pastiglio* work.

With Qara in mind, D. Mouriki aimed to reconcile the views of the Soterious and Weitzmann in suggesting that the icon of the woman with St Sergios together with the bilateral panel be attributed to a Syrian artist trained in Cyprus working at Sinai.<sup>7</sup> Seven other panels from Weitzmann's group, including one with the female saints Catherine and Marina (fig. 6) and another of St Symeon with St Barbara (fig. 7), she assigned to a Cypriot painter at Sinai.<sup>8</sup>

The Cypriot connection stems from the affiliation of the icon group as a whole both to wallpaintings at the church of

5. J. Leroy, 'Decouvertes de peintures chrétiennes en Syrie', *Les Annales archéologiques Arabes Syriennes* 25/1-2 (1975) 97-99, 104, figs. 1-3. The areas under consideration in this article straddle Maps 17 and 18 in R.L. Wolff and H.W. Hazard (eds.), *The Later Crusades, 1189-1311*, Vol. II of K.M. Setton (gen. ed.), *A History of the Crusades* (Madison 1969) 520, 521.

6. The partial inscription is illegible. The orange-red of her cloak, signalling her virginal status, corresponds to other representations of this saint, as in another of the Sinai icons (here fig. 6).

7. D. Mouriki, 'Thirteenth-Century Icon Painting in Cyprus', *The Griffon* (Gennadius Library, American School of Classical Studies, Athens), N.S. 1-2 (Athens 1985-86) 66-71 and conclusion, 76-77.

8. For these two panels of paired saints: G. and M. Soteriou, *Icones du Mont Sinai* I figs. 183-4, II, 169-70; Weitzmann, 'Icon Painting in the Latin Kingdom', 70-71, figs. 46, 50 (*Studies*, 344-45); Weitzmann et. al., *The Icon*, 235 (in colour).

Moutoullas, dated to 1280, and further icons on Cyprus itself.<sup>9</sup> But Mouriki played down the importance of the icon group by unfavourable comparison with other 'Crusader' work. In her estimation their attention to detail was a redeeming, but not an indicative, feature:

'This retrograde character, in addition to the low standards of craftsmanship, compensated only by a taste for ornamental details, sets this group of Sinai icons apart from that which displays a bold virtuoso style and which has been related to the illuminated manuscripts of the 'Acre school'.<sup>10</sup>

The inconclusive debate about this icon and its relatives has, then, been centred on subjective qualitative style, provenance and dating, in which the 'lamenting' female figure has been adduced in support of a date either in the wake of the fall of Jerusalem in 1244 or Acre in 1291. Replacing a formal with a contextual approach here asserts that the icon has a range of meanings within a particular social framework. This was arguably within the society of Frankish Syria in the mid-thirteenth century, when the future of Latin settlement on the mainland of Syria lay in the balance. Placing the woman herself at the centre of debate, in her relation to the cult figure of the saint, initiates this line of argument.

There is no inscription to identify the female figure. The icon is surely her own: in the Frankish east such a lady would be in a position to commission an icon on her own account, being able

9. G. and M. Soteriou, *Icones de Mont Sinai*, II, 169-70. D. Mouriki, 'The Wall Paintings of the Church of the Panagia at Moutoullas, Cyprus', in I. Hutter (ed.), *Byzanz und der Westen: Studien zur Kunst des Europäischen Mittelalters* (Osterreichische Akad. d. Wissenschaften, Phil. Hist. Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, 432 Band) (Vienna 1984) esp. 205-8; Mouriki, *Icon Painting in Cyprus*, 36-37.

10. D. Mouriki, *Moutoullas*, 208.

to hold her own fief, unlike her counterpart in the west.<sup>11</sup> This advantageous position assumes that she was a member of the settled Frankish community rather than a visiting pilgrim. Weitzmann noted the woman's stiff cap, fashionable amongst noblewomen in the west in the thirteenth century.<sup>12</sup> This lends weight to the supposition that she was a Frankish laywoman. But the most striking feature of her dress is the long black veil. Similar veils are worn by female donors in wallpaintings in Cyprus, including that at the Church of the Virgin Phorbiotissa at Asinou.<sup>13</sup> The fact that it is black is more likely to indicate her personal status as a widow than a generalised mourning for the loss of a city. In this case, the death of her husband need not have been a recent event.<sup>14</sup> She is only half in mourning accord-

11. H. Mayer, *The Crusades*, (trans. J. Gillingham), (Oxford 1985) 161; P.M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the eleventh century to 1517* (London and New York 1986) 34. The thesis of J. Richard, 'Le statut de femme dans l'orient latin', *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin* 12 (1962) 377-88, that the status of women was purely a western transplant, needs revising. The status of widows in both East and West is a complex issue. The findings of H. Dillard, *Daughters of the Reconquest: Women in Castilian Town Society, 1100-1300*, (Cambridge 1984) 96-126, describe great variation in the economic and social status of widows in Spanish towns during the twelfth to thirteenth centuries; P. Schine Gold, *The Lady and the Virgin: Image, Attitude, and Experience in Twelfth-Century France* (Chicago 1985) 130-33 also points up the contradictory nature of the evidence.

12. Weitzmann, *Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom*, 72 (*Studies*, 346). Western dress, including a stiff headdress under the wimple, was worn by Frankish women: see U.T. Holmes, 'Life among the Europeans in Palestine and Syria in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', in H.W. Hazard (ed.), *The Art and Architecture of the Crusader States*, Vol. IV of K.M. Setton (ed.), *A History of the Crusades* (Madison 1977) 23.

13. A. and J. Stylianou, 'Donors and Dedicatory Inscriptions: Suppliants and Supplications in the Painted Churches of Cyprus', *JÖBG* 9 (1960) 104 with fig. 6 (Ayios Demetrianos, Dali, of 1317) and later examples. I am grateful to B. Zeitler for pointing out to me the thirteenth-century painting at Asinou of a veiled woman with her family before the Virgin and Child and St. George. Perhaps the woman here is in mourning for a son. The veil differs from the black woollen shawl worn over the head by twelfth-century nuns as Hildegard of Bingen in her portrait in the manuscript of her work the *Scivias*: W. Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society* (London 1990) 52-53, fig. 18.

14. Given the large number of widows in Outremer, a widow had the right ('le ten de plor') to remain unmarried for a year according to William of Tyre, *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*: see *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Historiens Occidentaux*, I(2) (Paris 1844) 1029 quoted by Holmes, *Life among the Europeans*, 24.

ing to the cultural code still operating in present-day rural Greece, for example. While her cloak is black her robe is blue.<sup>15</sup> She kneels, embracing the foot of the saint. But this is not a gesture of lament: rather it is one of homage, support and supplication.<sup>16</sup> The woman is actually calling on the saint's higher authority in seeking his protection.

The wearing of the veil by the woman reinforces her bid for protection from the saint. The explanation for this lies in the present day survival of a code of conduct governing the behaviour of women in another traditional society. In her study of Awlad 'Ali Bedouin women in the Western Desert (between Egypt and Libya), L Abu-Lughod refers to veiling as 'a vocabulary item in a symbolic language for communicating about morality'.<sup>17</sup> She shows that a woman veils as a sign of modesty, a denial of sexuality, out of respect for the moral code of the society to which she belongs. Within that society she will only veil for men who command respect within the hierarchy, and not for those of lower social status or who have foregone respect or honour. Veiling is therefore a voluntary act within the kinship system. A woman is honouring her side of the social bargain, and expects protection in return. The act — and extent — of veiling is on an in-

15. L.M. Danforth (photography by A. Tsiaras), *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece*, (Princeton 1982) 54 records that in rural Greece women exchange their black mourning clothes for dark blue and brown ones as the period of mourning comes to an end. Mourning garb comprises dressing completely in black, including a black kerchief covering the head, forehead and neck. A widow, however, wears black for the rest of her life unless she remarries (which she should not do before the exhumation of her husband's body). It may be supposed that medieval ritual did not vary significantly, especially as strict social pressures are brought to bear to enforce mourning practices, as Danforth points out. In the early Christian period, despite the admonitions of the church fathers, mourning lasted for at least one year, during which time black clothes were worn: M. Alexiou, *The ritual lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge 1974) 32-33. Alexiou here (32 with note 40) refers to the ancient *triakōstia* (offerings on the 30th day, replaced in Christian practice with a memorial on the 40th) which comprised psalms, hymns and prayers rather than dirges, and was most widely practised amongst early oriental Christian communities, including the Syrian.

16. The gesture is anticipated in a different context by that of *Terra* supporting the emperor's foot in the sixth century Barberini Diptych ivory panel: E. Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making* (Cambridge, Mass. 1977) 97-97, fig. 176.

17. L. Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley 1986) 159-167, esp. 165.

dividual basis, out of respect for a particular man and an acknowledgement of the protection he extends to her. In the icon, the supplicating woman adopts the veil as an expression of her submission to St Sergios in the expectation of his reciprocation through protection.

The plea for protection by similar veiled donors is a theme of wallpainting in thirteenth-century Syria, proposing a context for the icon. This can be traced in two places. A fragment showing a woman wearing a dark veil kneeling before a standing saint was removed from the south wall of the 'Baptismal Chapel' outside the entrance to the Hospitaller fortress of Crac des Chevaliers and photographed in 1935.<sup>18</sup> This fragment is loosely dateable, with other wallpainting from the chapel, before the loss of the fortress to the Mamluks in 1271.<sup>19</sup> It should probably be dated considerably earlier in the century alongside other donor figures in the area including a (male) donor standing before the titular saint at the church of Mar Phocas at Amioun in present day Lebanon (fig. 8).<sup>20</sup> Secondly, a section of wallpainting with two kneeling veiled female donors supplicating icons from the north wall of a chapel in Beirut was removed to the National Museum of Beirut after the excavation of the church in 1941 (fig. 9).<sup>21</sup> Each donor appeared in a small panel, subsidiary to a main icon. The pairing of suppliant and icon was originally repeated along the length of the wall. In the preserved fragment, the left suppliant directs her prayer to the Virgin Hodegetria and the right

18. From the south wall: J. Lauffray, 'Forums et monuments de Béryte: le niveau médiéval', *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth* (1946-48), 14. I am grateful to Professor E. Cruikshank Dodd for this reference. J. Folda, 'Crusader Frescoes at Crac des Chevaliers and Marqab Castle', *DOP* 36 (1982) 190, 195 with figs. 12 and 14.

19. Folda, *Crusader Frescoes*, 196 dated it with other fragments, to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. He does point out, however, that there are two or even three phases and that his dating is tentative.

20. J. Lauffray, *Forums et monuments de Béryte*, 14, with fig. 4. E. Cruikshank Dodd, 'The Influence of Cyprus in Lebanon in the 13th Century', *Fourteenth Annual Byzantine Studies Conference: Abstracts of Papers* (Houston, Texas Nov. 10-13 1988) 46 names him as Phillippe.

21. Lauffray, *Forums et monuments de Béryte*, 7-16, with fig. 2, suggested an identification with the church of St. Saviour. For the plan of the chapel: J. Lauffray, 'Forums et monuments de Béryte', *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth* 7 (1942-44), pl. III opposite 18.

to a largely destroyed image, also of the Virgin and Child to judge from the throne, cushion, and decorative motif on the feet. A graffito in Latin confirms Latin use of the chapel and the find of an ossuary at the east end of the nave during the excavation proposes a funerary function.<sup>22</sup> The row of suppliants praying to individual icons suggests the chapel belonged to a sorority devoted to commemorative prayer dedicated to the Virgin. This may have been one of several foundations associated with the Cistercians. Cistercian nunneries were founded in Syria from the second quarter of the thirteenth century and there was one in the town of Tripoli, north of Beirut.<sup>23</sup> The donor of the Sinai St Sergios icon could have been attached to one of these institutions, as a noble lay member.

Suspended from the woman's waist in the Sinai icon is a string of beads, an attribute of personal prayer adapted from Marian devotion (fig. 1).<sup>24</sup> Prayer beads as an aid to private prayer are included in illustrations in later medieval Books of Hours.<sup>25</sup> But an earlier, written, account of the practice of counting off prayers to the Virgin with separate beads is that of the twelfth century English historian William of Malmesbury in his *Gesta pontificum*. Describing an eleventh century event, he recounts how Godiva, wife of Count Leofric, hung a string of jewels which she used for this purpose around the neck of a statue of the Virgin as a votive offering.<sup>26</sup> Within the contemporary context of the thir-

22. Lauffray, *Forums et monuments de Béryte*, 11-12 (graffiti); 8 (ossuary: whether the bones were female or male is not stated).

23. A daughter house of St Mary Magdalen at Acre: Hamilton, *Cistercians in the Crusader States*, 410-12.

24. Weitzmann, *Painting in the Latin Kingdom*, 72 (*Studies*, 346) first suggested it was a rosary. For prayer beads and piety, see H. Thurston, 'Chapelet', in F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq (eds.), *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, III (1) (Paris 1913) cols. 390-406.

25. J. Harthan, *Books of Hours and their Owners* (London 1977) 35 with note 18.

26. '... circulum gemmarum, quem filo insuerat ut singularum contactu singulas orationes incipiens numerum non praetermitteret; hunc ergo gemmarum circulum collo imaginis sanctae Mariae appendi iussit.'

'... a circle of gems which she had threaded on a string so that beginning individual prayers by contact with individual gems she would not miss any out. She ordered this circlet of gems to be hung about the neck of an image of St Mary'. This text is quoted by Thurston, *Chapelet*, col. 401. The translation here is that of K. Down, who kindly answered my queries concerning the text.



teenth century Near East, the frontispiece to the Gospel of the Cilician Queen Keran, made in Sis in 1271 (fig. 10) shows Keran and her family praying to the Deisis with each member's supplication registered as a bead.<sup>27</sup> In the icon, the woman's prayer probably incorporates a personal memorial aspect: she appears alone, without family. Prayer beads associated with memorial prayers for the dead are carried by weepers in later tomb sculpture in the west, but this could adapt earlier, more directly personal, practice.<sup>28</sup> Taken in conjunction with the black veil, the prayer beads here represent the widow's prayer as commemorative and concomitant to her plea to the military saint to protect her.

### Cult of St Sergios as a military saint

The woman's personal prayer is an espousal of a Syrian Orthodox saint by a Frankish Settler. Her adoption of St Sergios is indicative of a more generalised belief in the efficacy of eastern saints among members of the Frankish nobility. This was institutional as well as personal and included the handing over of monasteries from Orthodox to Cistercian jurisdiction. The monastery of St Sergios at Gibelet in the southern part of the County of Tripoli (Jubail, in modern Lebanon) retained the dedication to St Sergios on being transferred from Syrian Orthodox to Cistercian use in 1231.<sup>29</sup>

The icon expresses a shared local and western contemporary mythology of military values. St Sergios' archery equipment has been described by D.C. Nicolle as 'an accurately shown mixture of Saldjuk, Mamluk and possibly Mongol styles' while the high saddle is western.<sup>30</sup> But the saint is also romanticised, his authority ritually enhanced by his coronet. The horse arches its neck from the pressure of the curb bit, there for ritual showman-

27. Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate MS 2563, fol. 380r: S. Der Nersessian, *Armenian Art* (London 1978) 144-50, fig. 107; B. Narkiss (ed.), *Armenian Art Treasures of Jerusalem* (Oxford 1980) 63-64, fig. 77.

28. An example is a weeper from the tomb of Phillippe Le Hardi, Duke of Burgundy (school of Claus Sluyter) of c. 1385-1410 reproduced in T.S.R. Boase, *Death in the Middle Ages* (London 1972) 84, fig. 69.

29. Hamilton, *Cistercians in the Crusader States*, 414-5.

30. D.C. Nicolle, *Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era 1050-1350*, 2 Vols. (New York 1988) I, 333, II, fig. 843.

ship. St Sergios was one of several military saints who found favour with the Latins. Crusader chronicles refer to the miraculous appearance of Sts George, Mercurius and Demetrios before the battle for Antioch in 1098, leading armies of cavaliers in white. This is a vision which repeats itself in accounts of other military encounters involving Crusaders and to which appeal could be made through prayer.<sup>31</sup> Icon painting was an embodiment of that vision. A different icon at Sinai shows the three equestrian saints Victor, Menas and Vincent with the Deisis pictured above.<sup>32</sup> Another, in the British Museum (fig. 11), illustrates the miraculous rescue by St George of the boy from Mytelene (on Lesbos). This has been attributed to St George's cult centre at Lydda, to the south.<sup>33</sup> St George was revered throughout Syria, with monasteries dedicated to him in the hands of western orders as well as indigenous Christians. The major Cistercian monastery of Jubin in the Black Mountain near Antioch was also dedicated to this saint. Founded by 1214 and taken by Sultan Baybars in 1268, it was probably itself originally an eastern foundation.<sup>34</sup> A Syrian Orthodox monastery of St George still exists near Crac des Chevaliers, which was a medieval centre of pilgrimage, and icons of this type could well have also been made in this vicinity.<sup>35</sup>

The woman's choice of St Sergios in the icon shows that women

31. P. Deschamps, 'La légende de saint Georges et les combats des croisées dans les peintures murales du Moyen Age', *Fondation Eugène Piot: Monuments et Mémoires* 44 (1950) 113-15, 126.

32. Weitzmann, *Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom*, 79, (*Studies*, 353), fig. 63, describes it as 'of good quality and pure Byzantine style'; R. Cormack and S. Mihalarios, 'A Crusader Painting of St George: "maniera greca", or "lingua franca"?'', *Burlington Magazine* 126 no. 972 (1984) 134, fig. 5.

33. Cormack and Mihalarios, *A Crusader Painting of St George*, 132-41. This article disregards the evidence of local wallpainting in proposing that the artist was an itinerant Frenchman.

34. B. Hamilton, *The Cistercians in the Crusader States*, in M.B. Pennington (ed.), *One Yet Two. Monastic Tradition East and West* (Cistercian Studies 29) (Kalamazoo 1976) rpt. in B. Hamilton, *Monastic Reform, Catharism and the Crusades (900-1300)* (London 1979) 408-10.

35. R. Boulanger (trans. J.S. Hardman), *The Middle East*, Hachette World Guide (Paris 1966) 354. Today the monastery has several post-medieval icons of St George. I owe the suggestion of the medieval importance of this monastery of St George to Professor R. Huygens.

as well as men adopted military saints for protection.<sup>36</sup> Another small Sinai icon of a named male donor, George of Paris, supplicating Sts George and Theodore (32.5 x 22.2 cm) (fig. 12) offers a point of comparison. The donor was probably a pilgrim on a visit from France who recorded his name in the inscription with the purpose of donating it to a church, monastery or cult centre dedicated to one of these saints. The formulaic inscription in Greek, a liturgical language of the Syrian Orthodox Church, records his invocation: Δε[ησις] τοῦ δουλου του θ[εο]ῦ γεωργιου του παρισι[ου].<sup>37</sup> *Deisis* has been shown by C. Walter to imply an entreaty or supplication in a legal sense as well as a prayer.<sup>38</sup> This written prayer finds its counter part in the woman's silent gesture and string of beads and it is this aspect of petitionary prayer which links both icons as apotropaic images. The difference in function — public display and private use — explains a nuance between them. George raises his hands, with the palms upward, abdicating his contact with the saint to the medium of the words of the prayer. The woman, on the other hand, makes direct physical contact with St Sergios by cradling his foot. She has recourse to touch as well as voice as the vehicle for her appeal. Registering her plea through direct physical contact points to her more intimate approach in adopting the equestrian saint as protector. Her icon lacks an inscription as none would be necessary on an icon for immediate personal use. These variations indicate the stipulations made by different commissioners in negotiating the composition of their panels with the artist according to purpose.

### The Artist

Turning from the commissioner to the painter of the icon, it does not follow, of course, that the artist was a woman. Or, to

36. I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, *Byzantine Icons in Steatite* (Vienna 1985) suggests steatites of military saints to have been as popular with civilians as with the military.

37. Weitzmann, *Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom*, 79-80, fig. 64; Cormack and Mihalarios, *A Crusader Painting of St George*, 134, fig. 5.

38. Ch. Walter, 'Two Notes on the Deësis', *REB* 26 (1968) 317.

to put it another way, if the icon were painted by a woman, her work would probably be indistinguishable from that of a male artist. The essence of the praying woman's icon is its close attention to detail. Observation of the woman's expression and gesture, the horse and trappings, the elaborate military gear offset by the strident red of the saint's cloak and hose, all enclosed with an intricately patterned frame, give texture to the panel. But there is no extraneous detail: all contributes to an overall effect. The common argument that an aesthetic of the detail be used to indentify — and in a derogatory sense to trivialise and undervalue the work of a woman artist — has recently been deconstructed by N. Schor.<sup>39</sup> There is nothing in the appearance, with its focus on the minute, or the technique of the icon that can be construed as specific to a female painter. Women working as painters in the Middle Ages can most readily be identified as manuscript illuminators, who worked in enclosed convents, or domestic surroundings.<sup>40</sup> In the present case, however, the icon's technique and style leads instead to monumental painting for the Syrian Orthodox church in the area of Tripoli.

### The Icon and Wallpainting in the County of Tripoli and in Qalamoun

The icon's only inscription is that of the saint's name in Greek, which — as in the case of George of Paris' prayer — was a language of the artist, a Syrian Orthodox. This Syrian Orthodox dimension, introduced with Leroy's publication of the Qara wallpaintings, deserves to be further explored. Consideration of the icon in the light of the wallpainting at Qara and related monuments, supports its attribution to the Tripoli during the middle to third quarter of the thirteenth century. The plateau area

39. N. Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York and London 1987) *passim*.

40. A. Weyl Carr, 'Women Artists in the Middle Ages', *Feminist Art Journal* 5 (1976) 5-9, 26, esp. 8. A. Weyl Carr, 'Women and Monasticism in Byzantium', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 9 (1985) 14-15, attributes the anonymity of women as scribes and painters both to the probable 'cottage-industrial' nature of the book trade and the practice of daughters working for their painter fathers.

of Qalamoun, east of the Anti-Lebanon mountains, in which Qara is located, remained Muslim-held territory. But it was a much-visited area, not least by westerners, and can be regarded as having been within the cultural orbit of the County of Tripoli.<sup>41</sup>

Despite being damaged, the equestrian saints at Qara, Sergios and Theodore (figs. 4-5), compare closely with the woman's icon and the bilateral Sinai icon (figs. 1-2). They wear similar mail tunics, armbands and cloaks and St Sergios carries the cross banner. St Theodore's horse, part of which is preserved, has the thick neck, sharp eye and pear-shaped ears. Both saints wear a diadem with a raised centrepiece as do Sts Sergios and Bacchos in the associated bilateral panel.<sup>42</sup> At Qara too the role of the equestrian saints is to protect the Virgin, with St Theodore placed next to the Galaktotrophousa. By analogy with the front of the bilateral icon (fig. 3), the Hodegetria occupied the lost panel next to St Sergios. Perhaps the bilateral icon was made for this, or another church dedicated to Sts Sergios and Bacchos. It could have been taken, with the more portable smaller icons from the same area, to Sinai for safe-keeping when the situation deteriorated. In any case these shared elements between the wallpainting and the icon are sufficiently close to indicate common craftsmanship.

To the south of Qara, the monastery church of Mar Musa al-Habashi (St Moses of Ethiopia), near Nebek retains at least six warrior saints on its north and south nave walls amongst the last,

41. J. Nasrallah, 'Voyageurs et Pèlerins au Qalamoun', *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales* (Institut Français de Damas) 10 (1943-44) 5-78, especially 13-17.

42. St Procopius in another thirteenth century Sinai icon is being invested with a similar diadem as a Christian martyr according to C. Walter, 'The Iconographic Sources for the Coronation of Milutin and Simonida at Gracanica', *L'Art Byzantin au Début du XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Belgrade 1978) 190, but the diadem seems to have no additional significance.

arguably thirteenth century, phase of painting in the church.<sup>43</sup> In common with Qara, these have blue backgrounds and are framed in red. St Theodore (?) on the north wall, is the best preserved of these (fig. 13). This saint displays the flying red cloak, cross banner and decorated shield. Additional distinguishing features include patterning of the fetlocks with short horizontal and vertical stripes, and the hoof drawn with semicircular parallel lines. This is an accentuation of the fine wispy lines, and carefully drawn hooves of the bilateral icon's horses (fig. 2). Only the lower half is preserved of the St George on the south wall opposite, with the horse and rider leaping over a stretch of water with fish (fig. 14).<sup>44</sup> But this strip of water is enough to identify the scene as the miraculous rescue by St George of the boy from Mytilene. A fragment of the same scene is preserved amongst the wallpaintings of the extramural 'baptismal chapel' at the Hospitaller fortress of Crac des Chevaliers.<sup>45</sup> The Crac wallpainting has been heavily repainted, and care must be taken with stylistic comparison (fig. 16). But certain indicative details have been retained, especially the horse's characteristically patterned fetlocks and the ringed hooves in common with Nebek. Local Syrian Orthodox painters, then, were responsible for the Nebek and Crac des Chevaliers paintings, as well as those at Qara.

Returning to the area of Tripoli itself, the equestrian saints reappear amongst the wallpaintings at the church of Mar Tadros

43. E. Cruikshank Dodd, 'Notes on the Monastery of Mar Musa al-Habashi, near Nebek, Syria', in J. Folda (ed.), *Crusader Art in the Twelfth Century* (British Archaeological Reports, International Series 152) (Oxford 1982) 172, with pl. 7.7. Cruikshank Dodd here (171, 173-74 applies the dated inscriptions of 1058 and 1100 (corrected verbally to 1192) to the first and second phases of wallpainting, inscribed respectively in Greek, and Syriac with Arabic; E. Cruikshank Dodd, 'The Last Judgement in Mar Musa al-Habashi', paper read at the London meeting cited above, note 1. There is, however, considerable discrepancy within the plaster layers and it is feasible to assume thirteenth-century work amongst the painting here. Cruikshank Dodd's further study is awaited to resolve these problems. In September 1985 Italian-Syrian restoration work was commencing on the church.

44. Cruikshank Dodd, *Mar Musa al-Habashi*, 172, pl. 7.7.

45. J. Folda, 'Crusader Frescoes 192, 194-95 fig. 22 (north wall).

at Bahdeidat at Gibelet (Jubail), between Tripoli and Beirut.<sup>46</sup> St Theodore on the north wall is particularly close to his counterpart at Qara.<sup>47</sup> In particular, he faces front towards the viewer with his halo extending upwards over the frame. Apart from the same military gear, he also carries a similar decorated shield with a jewelled edge.

Well before the rediscovery of Qara and the other Qalamoun churches J. Lauffray had grouped together the wallpaintings near Tripoli: Amioun, Bahdeidat, Crac des Chevaliers, with others at the Grotto of St Marina (Marinos) and Mar Charbel et Ma'ad.<sup>48</sup> More recent work by E. Cruikshank Dodd has established a date of 1243 for the paintings at Mar Charbel et Ma'ad by identifying its painted programme as a commemoration by the father of the Frankish Anne Boulanger, for his daughter, buried in the church in that year.<sup>49</sup> This gives a date at the earlier end of the time-span of this phase of painting in Syria. The icon, then, must have been painted between the early 1240s-1270s by a Syrian orthodox artist.

To summarize: the icon's equestrian St Sergios — like the kneeling woman herself — is paralleled at churches in the County of Tripoli and in Qalamoun which were painted by Orthodox Syrian artists between the early 1240s and 1270s. The woman must have commissioned her icon from an indigenous Syrian artist after the mid-century and before the loss of Tripoli and its surrounding area to Sultan Qalawun in 1289, and probably also well before the loss of Crac des Chevaliers in 1271.

46. Mention is made of the Bahdeidat paintings by M. Tallon, 'Peintures byzantines au Liban: Inventaire', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph* 38 (1962) fasc. 13, 291; J. Sader, *Peintures murales dans les églises maronites médiévales* (Beirut 1987), a reference kindly communicated by Professor J. Folda, has been unavailable to me.

47. A photograph of St Theodore at Bahdeidat is deposited in the photographic collection of the Courtauld Institute of Art, London University.

48. Lauffray, *Forums et monuments de Béryte*, 14 with notes 1-3. Other features link the Qalamoun and Tripoli groups of wallpaintings, including the elaborate canopies as a framing device. The same twisted ribbon motif on the arch frames the panels at Qara (fig. 4), Amioun and Beirut (figs. 8, 9).

49. E. Cruikshank Dodd, seminar at Oxford University, March 1977.

### The Mediterranean perspective: Syria, the West and Cyprus

This attribution of the icon to mainland Syria in the mid-thirteenth century has further implications. It shows the interplay between Latin and indigenous cultures stimulating artistic endeavour throughout the thirteenth century, and not just towards the end at Acre, as has been assumed.<sup>50</sup> This enables a revision of the chronology of painting in Syria and Cyprus in the thirteenth century. The prominence of women, in the icon and related wallpaintings, also raises questions about the role of women as commissioners and users of icons in Latin Syria.

This production was predominantly for local indigenous or Frankish clients with limited account reaching the West itself.<sup>51</sup> The process of copying the iconography of eastern saints from icons and wallpaintings and its transmission to the west in the thirteenth century is apparent in the drawings on a parchment leaf from a model book in the Augustinermuseum in Freiburg (fig. 17).<sup>52</sup> In the upper part, Christ accompanied by Peter is shown conversing with Zacchaeus, who sits in the branches of a tree (Luke, 19, 1-10). Below are two equestrian saints labelled as Theodore and Constantine, the latter mistakenly for

50. J. Folda, *Crusader Manuscript Illumination at Saint-Jean d'Acre, 1275-1291* (Princeton 1976) 169, assumes that 'A distinctive culture and its artistic manifestation were cut down in the vigour of youth at Acre in 1291'.

51. The effect of eastern imagery on westerners visiting shrines in the east must have been profound. For example, it has been suggested that Conrad, Bishop of Halberstadt's decision to enter the Cistercian order might well have been associated with his cure at the shrine of the Virgin at Tortosa in 1204-5: A.J. Andrea, 'Conrad of Krosigk, Bishop of Halberstadt, Crusader and Monk of Sittenbach: His Ecclesiastical Career, 1184-1225', *Analecta Cisterciensia* 43/1 (1987) 48-49. This shrine had an image of the Virgin, although of which type is not known.

52. R. Hauser, *Die Zeit der Staufer: Geschichte-Kunst-Kultur*, Katalog der Ausstellung, Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart (Stuttgart 1977) I, 542-43, no. 722 with summary bibliography. A. Legner, *Ornamenta Ecclesiae: Kunst und Künstler der Romanik*, Katalog zur Ausstellung des Schnütgen-Museums in der Josef-Haubrich Kunsthalle (Köln 1985) I, 316-18, no. B89. H. Schadek and K. Schmid, *Die Zähringer: Anstoss und Wirkung*, (Freiburg 1986) 67-69, no. 41. I am grateful to Dr D. Zinke for these references and for supplying the photograph reproduced here.

George.<sup>53</sup> The drawings have been attributed to either Sicily or, more usually, the Upper Rhine, between the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, with the equestrian saints added in a different style. The draughtsman of the equestrian saints had before him an icon like that of Sts Theodore and George, made for George of Paris (fig. 12), as Weitzmann observed.<sup>54</sup> It is assumed that there is no connection between the upper and lower drawings. These can, however, be reconciled through the programme of wall-painting at the Grotto of St Marina (Marinos) near Tripoli. Although these are now in poor condition, Ch.-L. Brossé identified both Zachaeus and the equestrian Saint Demetrios amongst five panels preserved from the earlier phase of wallpainting here.<sup>55</sup> The format of vividly coloured panels with blue backgrounds and framed with dark red is the same as that employed at Qara and Mar Musa al-Habashi and all but two are inscribed in Greek. The apparently disparate drawings of the Freiburg leaf, then, can be reunited as a record of wall and icon painting made by a western artist on a visit to the Qalamoun area in the thirteenth century.

With the painter of the woman's icon established as a Syrian Orthodox and not a Cypriot, the accepted chronology relative to icon and wallpainting on Cyprus proposed by Mouriki can be reversed. Mouriki wrote that 'the Cypriot origin of the painter of the decoration at Moutoullas can hardly be disputed'.<sup>56</sup> Direct comparison between the Syrian wallpaintings and Moutoullas (1280) throws this into question. The placing of the Hodegetria under a decorative arch ornamented with a twisted ribbon motif and foliage spandrels at Moutoullas replicates the

53. This is in parallel with the commonly held misapprehension that the bronze statue of Marcus Aurelius in Rome represented Constantine: L. Seidel, *Songs of Glory: The Romanesque Facades of Aquitaine* (Chicago 1981) 6-7, with note 7.

54. Weitzmann, *Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom*, 78-81, (*Studies*, 352-55), fig. 62.

55. Ch.-L. Brossé, 'Les peintures de la Grotte de Marina près Tripoli', *Syria* 7 (1926) 34-35, 37-38, pl. X. The other three panels represent St Marina/Marinos attacking a devil, the Annunciation and Deisis.

56. Mouriki, *Moutoullas*, 208.

Hodegetria at Beirut (fig. 9). The same ornamental framing appears at Qara (fig. 4) and Amioun (fig. 8).<sup>57</sup> Equestrian saints also appear at Moutoullas, including St George, whose horse has the same complicated bridle with the forelock tucked in, low placed eye and patterned girth as St Theodore's at Qara (fig. 4).<sup>58</sup> The so-called 'maniera cypria' emerges as much, if not more, as a phenomenon of Syria. Certainly contact between Syria and Cyprus long preceded the mid-thirteenth-century, with cross currents of artistic influence forming part of that process.<sup>59</sup> Alongside the preparations made by Latins for a safe haven in Cyprus, immigration by local Syrians also preceded the loss of mainland Syria to Mamluks, with both Orthodox and Jacobite communities settled on the island.<sup>60</sup>

### Women and Icons

Interpreted as a personal prayer in response to the encroaching Mamluk threat to Latin Syria, the icon of the woman praying to St Sergios itself raises a further issue, that of contemporary female spirituality as a factor in the production and veneration of icons. One aspect is the commissioning of icons by women. Related to this is the reception and veneration of existing icons in which female spirituality can be shown to have acted as a catalyst. The final question is whether iconographic change can be attributed to discernable pressure by women as commissioners and viewers.

57. The Hodegetria at Moutoullas is at the east end of the south wall of the nave: Mouriki, *Moutoullas*, 174, 191, fig. 10.

58. Mouriki, *Moutoullas*, 193-94, fig. 20.

59. This is consistent with the evidence of ceramic finds in Cyprus of imitation Port St Symeon ware, copying oriental-style ceramics, which were made near Antioch for both Syrians and Latins in the thirteenth century prior to 1268: N. Patterson Ševčenko, 'Some Thirteenth Century Pottery at Dumbarton Oaks', *DOP* 28 (1974) 360 with fig. 27.

60. G. Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, III Vols. (Cambridge 1940) I, 305; J. Richard, 'Le peuplement latin et syrien en Chypre au XIIIe siècle', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 7 (1979) 157-73 (rpt. in J. Richard, *Croisés, missionnaires et voyageurs*, [London 1983] no. VII).

**Women as commissioners**

The icon's supplicating woman was one of several laywomen as well as nuns in Palestine and Syria in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries who, as elsewhere, were active as commissioners and donors. Commissions were undertaken by women in a variety of contexts: public, private, or monastic, either alongside men or on their own account. Some specific cases elucidate this. Two women and a man kneel at the base of the Glykophilousa column painting at the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem (inscribed with the date of 1130). Their pleas for solace and mercy were inscribed at top and bottom of the panel: the latter is still legible.<sup>61</sup> This represents either a family or a group donation. Nuns also contributed as donors, recorded in inscriptions or by their portraits. An Armenian nun named Ashkenouri is named alongside the ecclesiastics and monks who, at the turn of the thirteenth century, contributed to the cost of sending a Syriac lectionary (now Paris, B.N. Syr. 355) to be lavishly illustrated by a painter in Melitene.<sup>62</sup> A good example of a portrait of a nun is that painted as a tiny figure kneeling at the foot of the Virgin Episkepsis carved on a thirteenth century marble relief at the church of the Virgin at Makrynitsa (Thessaly) in Greece.<sup>63</sup>

The pictures of saints accompanying private devotional prayers were a matter of personal choice in the Psalter of Queen Melisende (London, B.L. Egerton 1139), produced in Jerusalem in, or only shortly before, 1149.<sup>64</sup> The prayers are phrased for a woman,

61. G. Kühnel, *Wall Painting in the Latin Kingdom* (Berlin 1988) 15-19, Pls. III-VI, figs. 3 (general plan), 4-6.

62. J. Leroy, *Manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient* (Paris 1964) 273.

63. G. Soteriou, 'Byzantine Relief Icons', in *Recueil d'études dédiées à la mémoire de N.P. Kondakov* (Prague 1926) I, 133-36, figs. 6-8 (in Greek); G.A. Soteriou, 'La sculpture sur bois dans l'art byzantin', *Mélanges Charles Diehl*, III, *Art*, (Paris 1930) 179.

64. H. Buchthal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford 1957) 9-11, with Appendix I, 132-34 (F. Wormald). Recently on the psalter's date: A. Borg, 'The Lost Apse Mosaic of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem', in A. Borg and A. Martindale (eds.), *The Vanishing Past: Studies of Medieval Art, Liturgy and Metrology presented to Christopher Hohler* (British Archaeological Reports, International Series III) (Oxford 1981) 10-11.

making it certain that the manuscript was used in private devotion by Melisende herself or her sister Yvette, abbess of the convent of Lazarus at Bethany. The miniature of the enthroned Virgin Nikopoia heading the text of the oration to Mary (fig. 18) functions as an icon, to which separate prayers were offered.<sup>65</sup> Melisende's influence on the cultural, religious and political life of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was profound.<sup>66</sup> But her prominence was not unique. Relatively favourable economic circumstances also encouraged patronage amongst aristocratic women in Syria and Palestine during the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. The better status of women within a society at war, when additional responsibilities including the maintenance of goods and property fell to women, was reflected in patterns of production of works of art.<sup>67</sup>

Finally works of art were commissioned to commemorate women. The names of Syrian Orthodox nuns were recorded alongside monks in the colophon of a Syriac lectionary made at a monastery near Edessa in 1222, now in Damascus.<sup>68</sup> The painted decoration of the church of Mar Charbel at Ma'ad has been mentioned as commemorating the Frankish Anne Boulanger. At Mar Tadros at Bahdeidat a fragmentary epitaph of a woman carved in Greek was found set into the wall of the church and probably dates to a similar time.<sup>69</sup>

65. Buchthal, *Miniature Painting*, 9-10, 133-34, pl. 17.

66. Two studies emphasise Melisende's influence: H.E. Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende', *DOP* 26 (1972) 93-183 and B. Hamilton, 'Women in the crusader states: the queens of Jerusalem 1100-90', in D. Baker (ed.), *Medieval Women: Dedicated and presented to Rosalind M.T. Hill on her Seventieth Birthday* (Oxford 1978) esp. 148-57. Interaction in religious matters at this period between east and west included the correspondence of Queen Melisende with St Bernard of Clairvaux.

B. Hamilton has suggested her as the initiator of the foundation of Cistercian monasticism in the Latin east: Hamilton, *Cistercians in the Crusader States*, 406.

67. On this general point see Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader states', 143.

68. Syrian Patriarchate 12/3, formerly Jerusalem, St Mark's Syr. 6: Leroy, *Peintures syriaques*, 319.

69. E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie* (Paris 1864) 237.

### Reception of existing icons by women

It is not only in the realm of the commissioning of icons and other works of art that the influence of women made itself felt. Another aspect is the reception or special use made by women of existing icons.<sup>70</sup> Particularly revealing in this regard, and worth summarising, is an account in the Chronicle of Michael the Syrian Jacobite Patriarch. It is concerned with the veneration of an icon of a Syrian Jacobite saint by a Frankish aristocratic woman, Isabel and her husband Henry, in Antioch in 1156.<sup>71</sup>

It records how Isabel's only son broke his heel by falling from a fig tree. Despite the medical help sought by his parents, the boy still limped. Hearing of the reputation of Mar Barsauma's healing powers, Isabel prayed to the saint, with tears and vows, to heal her son. Seliba, a monk from the monastery of Mar Barasuma brought his portable icon of Mar Barsauma to the family's house to assist in the process. The next day both Isabel and the monk had visions, in which the saint requested that a church be built in the garden. (The monk was visited with a second, more persistent, vision in which the saint specified a triapsed church). After consultation with the Bishop of Edessa, also in Antioch at the time, the icon was again brought to the house. After the celebration of the liturgy by the sick child's bedside, the parents remained to pray for their child's health. Their supplication was effective. The boy was cured by St Barsauma appearing to him, holding a brilliant, glistening gold cross which filled the house with light. The saint explained that he had come because of the faith of his parents and in answer to their supplications. The boy's parents then took him first to the cathedral and then to Princess Constance of Antioch who visited the site

70. The understanding of a picture itself could differ in the eyes of the female viewer. That the female auditor construed different meanings from the text of a courtly romance to her male counterpart has been argued by R.L. Krueger, 'Love, honor, and the exchange of women in *Yvain*: some remarks on the female reader', *Romance Notes* 25/1 (1984) 302-17, where textual ambiguity is attributed to the presence of a female as well as a male audience.

71. J.-B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien: Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioch (1166-1199)*, III (1905) 300-4 (French translation); C. Cahen, *La Syrie du nord à l'époque des croisades et la principauté franque d'Antioche* (Paris 1940) 568.

of the miracle, prostrated herself and wept. Handfuls of earth from the spot in turn worked miracles and further miracles occurred during the construction of the church. At its consecration in December 1156, Isabel and Henry were joined by representatives of the Syrian and Armenian, as well as the Frankish, communities. Only the Greeks, out of jealousy, kept their distance.

The account demonstrates matriarchal and monastic authority together in action. Written to enhance the prestige of Michael the Syrian's own monastery of Mar Barsauma and the Syrian Jacobite community in Syria, the text serves to show the alliance, political and religious, between indigenous communities and Franks. Women played a leading role in this. It was the Frankish noblewoman Isabel who chose the Syrian saint as the object of her prayers and her petitioning that triggered the visions and eventual miracle with the help of the monk's icon. Princess Constance, ruling as the widow of Raymond of Poitiers and mother of the future Bohemond III, took up the miracle and gave it official credence. Each was a woman acting on behalf of her young son, a common situation in the politics of Outremer.

Women in Latin Syria were in a position to take the initiative in making icons 'work' for them in this way. Isabel's resort to an icon of Mar Barsauma, like the woman supplicating St Sergios over a century later, shows the efficacy of a Syrian Orthodox saint. The miracle-working powers of the icon, evoked through prayer, could be transferred from the monk to a laywoman. No icons are preserved of Mar Barsauma but he was probably depicted standing like St Symeon, shown with St Barbara (fig. 7), in one of the small panels from Sinai. Here a cross such as that described by the boy as glowing with light is attached to the saint's garment.

Another aspect of reception by women lay in the adoption, care, and public veneration of existing icons. The custody by a community of nuns of the icon of the Virgin Galaktotrophousa at the Syrian Orthodox cult centre of the Virgin at Saidnaya, between Qara and Damascus, is an important example.

The icon at Saidnaya had originally been brought from Jerusalem by a monk and had become the object of devotion by a female hermit. Its distinguishing feature was that miracle-

working oil issued from the Virgin's breasts. This idea, of an image exuding oil, was already associated with a legendary icon at Constantinople profaned by Jews.<sup>72</sup> While the icon of the Galaktotrophousa with its nurturing connotations may have been especially precious to women, it evidently elicited a similar response from men. Under the nuns' administration the Saidnaya icon became popular amongst pilgrims from the west as well as soldiers. The earliest surviving Latin account is that of 1175 by Burchard of Strasbourg, which relies on Arabic accounts which are known from later versions.<sup>73</sup> The Templars had a particular interest in the site and several miracles performed there are associated with Frankish soldiers. One of these, in 1204 involved a Frankish prisoner languishing in nearby Damascus.<sup>74</sup> Actually within Muslim territory, Saidnaya was respected by Muslims as well as Christians. It is no coincidence that next to the description of it of 1236 in Gautier de Coincy's French *Miracles of the Virgin* is an account of a Muslim converted by an image of the Virgin, as A. Weyl Carr has stressed.<sup>75</sup>

The growth in popularity of the cult of the Saidnaya Virgin shows that the nuns paid attention to its reputation, the spiritual responses it enlisted and its wider circulation in reproduction. The transfer of the Galaktotrophousa from panel to wallpainting at

72. P. Peeters, 'La légende de Saidnaia', *AB* 25 (1906) 155 with note 6; A Weyl Carr, 'East, West, and Icons in Twelfth-Century Outremer', in V.P. Goss and C. Verzár Bornstein (eds.), *The meeting of Two Worlds: Cultural Exchange between East and West during the Period of the Crusades* (Kalamazoo 1986) 349-50. The grotto at Saidnaya, its walls lined with icons, is still administered by nuns.

73. P. Peeters, *La légende de Saidnaia*, 137-57; P. Peeter's review of H. Zayat, *Histoire de Saidnaya* (Harissa, Lebanon), 1932 (in Arabic; unavailable to me), *AB* 51 (1933) 434-38.

74. According to Thietmar's account of 1217: J.C.M. Laurent, *Magister Thietmari peregrinatio ad fidem codicis Hamburgensis* (Hamburg 1857) 17-18. See also Matthew Paris: H.R. Luard (ed.), *Chronica maiora*, *Rerum Britannicarum Scriptores* no. 57, II (London 1874) 484-87.

75. For the Saracen converted by the image of the Virgin see S. Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative: The Rise of the Dramatic Close-Up in Fifteenth Century Devotional Painting* (Åbo 1965) 14 with fig. 1; Weyl Carr, 'East, West, and Icons', 249-50, both with references. For Gautier de Coincy's French verse and a related mid-thirteenth century French verse from Tours, with commentary: G. Raynaud, 'Le Miracle de Sardenai', *Romania* 2 (1882) 519-37.

Qara (fig. 4) can be interpreted as an extension of the cult of the Saidnaya Virgin. Here female spirituality is contributory, achieving effect through influence or example.

The evolution of a particular icon type of the Virgin and Child can be discerned in a monastic centre near Edessa, evidencing a new sensibility comparable to that stimulated by the Saidnaya icon. A miniature of the Glykophilousa, framed in red in imitation of an icon frame (fig. 20), is among folios added to the front of a Syriac Psalter (British Library Add. 7154) of 1204-5, the text of which was written at the Monastery of the Mother of God near Edessa.<sup>76</sup> The Virgin and Child are outlined in dark pinkish red, to which the colours are applied in wash: purple and green for the Virgin's upper and lower garments, yellow and red respectively for Christ's, with the haloes painted yellow. The Virgin and Child stand out against bare parchment, in imitation of the contrasting effect of the plain gold of an icon. Inscriptions are in Syriac, added in black.

This Syriac Virgin and Child (fig. 20) is a complex version of the Glykophilousa which only evolved in the early thirteenth century. It shows the Virgin holding and restraining the kicking Child, who wears a short tunic which leaves the legs bare, as in the icon given by Isaac Comnenos to the Kykko monastery on Cyprus. The Kykko icon itself is now covered with silver cladding but its iconography can be deduced from its nearest copy, a twelfth century icon on Mount Sinai, which shows the kicking Child in his mother's arms.<sup>77</sup> As in the Sinai icon, the Child takes the scroll from the Virgin's hand. The shortness of the tunic is also the same. But the Syrian miniature also makes changes, adapting the Kykko image, as do other copies, direct and indirect, in Cyprus, Palestine

76. Leroy, *Manuscrits syriaques*, 259-61, pl. 58 (2).

77. Soteriou, *Icones du Mont Sinai*, I, pls. 54-55, 11, 73-75.



and Southern Italy.<sup>78</sup> The Child now wears a harness consisting of straps over each shoulder and a sash around the waist. This has evolved from the parallel markings down either side of the tunic as depicted in the Sinai icon.<sup>79</sup> There are other changes. The Virgin does not wear the red veil over her maphorion, an ingredient of the Kykko icon.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, the relationship between Mother and Child is more intimate. Their faces touch, eyes meet, and the Child reaches out to caress the Virgin's chin, one finger touching her lips. These signs of intimacy can be attributed to direct knowledge of late twelfth century Byzantine icons of the Eleousa, or Virgin of Tenderness such as a templon icon from Thessalonica in the Byzantine Museum in Athens (fig. 19).<sup>81</sup> The exaggeratedly heavy eyebrows of the Virgin in both of these reveal her sorrow at the anticipation of Christ's sacrifice. This foretelling of Christ's passion is shared with the Virgin 'Arakiotissa' who is flanked with angels bearing symbols of the Passion at Lagoudera, painted in 1192, where the sacrifice theme is further emphasised by the holding of the Child by the priest Symeon in the presentation opposite.<sup>82</sup> The Virgin restrains the

78. On the Kykko icon and its copies, see K. Weitzmann, 'Crusader Icons and Maniera Greca', in Hutter (ed.), *Byzanz und der Westen*, 149-52; L. Hadermann-Misguich, 'La peinture monumentale du XIIe siècle à Chypre', *Corsi di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina* 32 (1985) 256-57; V. Pace, 'Presenze e influenze cipriote nella pittura duecentesca italiana', *Corsi di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina* 32 (1985) 272; Mouriki, *Icon Painting in Cyprus*, 26-32; Carr, *East, West and Icons*, 351-53; H. Belting, *Bild und Kult: Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich 1990) 324-30.

79. Mouriki, *Icon Painting in Cyprus*, 30-31 argues this to be a Cypriot development.

80. The veil is pronounced in a later thirteenth century copy at Sinai (Kykko-tissa) reproduced in colour in Weitzmann, *The Icon*, 227.

81. Icon no. B.M. 1136, T. 137, measuring 114 x 70 x 2.7 cm. M. Chatzidakis, 'L'évolution de l'icone aux 11e-13e siècles et la transformation du templon', *XVe Congrès International d'Etudes Byzantines: Rapports et Co-Rapports*, III, *Art et Archéologie* (Athens 1976) 185-86, pl. XXXVIII. I am grateful to Dr M. Acheimastou-Potamianou for information and for the photograph reproduced here.

82. Maguire, 'The Iconography of Symeon with the Christ Child in Byzantine Art', *DOP* 34 and 35 (1980-1981) 296 with fig. 11. R.W. Corrie, 'Byzantine Iconography of a Madonna by Coppo di Marcovaldo', *Tenth Byzantine Studies Conference: Abstracts of Papers* (University of Cincinnati, Nov. 1984) 46; R.W. Corrie, 'The Meaning of the Virgin Kykko-tissa in Cyprus and Italy in the Thirteenth Century', Paper read at the Conference *Latins and Greeks in the Aegean World after 1204* (Nottingham University, March 1988).

Child by the foot, a motif of Byzantine painting at both Kurbinovo and Kastoria in the 1190s.<sup>83</sup>

The Syriac Psalter Glykophilousa is consonant, then, with the emanation of the Kykko Virgin icon in the early thirteenth century. It incorporates elements from other Byzantine icon types which would have been available in Syria. This 'framed' miniature probably reproduces an icon which was at the Monastery of the Virgin near Edessa itself, created in the knowledge of other famous icons in Syria, including the Saidnaya Virgin and Child. This Glykophilousa is a personal, affectionate interpretation of the Virgin and Child theme. As at Saidnaya, it is the aspects of nurturing and endearment that are highlighted.

#### Women's spirituality as a catalyst in iconographic change

The concomitant of the prominent participation of women as commissioners and users of icons is a shift in attitude towards the representation of female spirituality itself. One aspect is the increased depiction of women saints. Sts Catherine with Marina (fig. 6) and Barbara accompanying St Symeon (fig. 7) are amongst the small icons of the 'Knights Templar' group. In wallpainting, female saints, in the same vivid colouring and richly ornamented costume, occupy the arch soffits of the monastery church of Mar Mousa al-Habashi (fig. 15).<sup>84</sup> This frequency of women saints, both on icons and in wallpainting, is accompanied by an iconographic change in the portrayal of female sanctity from bland stereotype to demonstrative portrayal. Representations of the local transvestite saint Marina/Marinos through the period document this. She appears, somewhat routinely, as a standing martyr, in one of the twelfth century column paintings at Bethlehem, where she can hardly be distinguished from her namesake Marina of Antioch.<sup>85</sup> But the scenes painted at the saint's Grotto near Tripoli give a quite different picture. A fifth century local saint from Qalamoun, Marina entered a monastery dressed as a boy,

83. Mouriki, *Icon Painting in Cyprus*, 72 with note 192.

84. Dodd, 'Notes on the Monastery of Mar Musa al-Habashi', 172-73 with pl. 7.10 (as Sts Helena (?) and Julia).

85. Kühnel, *Wall Painting*, 106-112, no. 7 (*sic*) on general plan (fig. 3), fig. 74.

with her father, after the death of her mother. Years later she was expelled, with the accusation, ironically, of having fathered an illegitimate child. The rare scene of Marina wielding a hammer at a demon, included in the lower layer of painted panels, is exclusively local.<sup>86</sup> The cycle of her life is then represented by four scenes of the upper layer. These are inscribed, and inscriptions added to the lower layer, already alluded to, in Latin. One of these scenes shows the nursing of the child by Marina, a maternal theme related to the Saindaya Galaktotrophousa icon. Here is a celebration of the life of a local female ascetic saint painted by local artists but venerated, and its redecoration even sponsored, by Latins.

E. Patlagean has suggested that the reason why saints' lives such as this had dropped out of circulation during the middle Byzantine period is that they subverted the very norm of womanhood that contemporary society was trying to impose.<sup>87</sup> The depiction of this cycle in thirteenth century Latin Syria indicates a more positive attitude to the representation of women. That such a cycle of a local female saint's life was available at all is attributable to the revival of a tenacious earlier tradition of female Christian spirituality in Syria.<sup>88</sup> The demand for imagery of female saints reappears at a time when heightened responsibility and authority fell to women at a time of war in Frankish Syria. A reason why Latins settled in Syria adopted local eastern equestrian saints was their respected prophylactic reputation as the existing and long-established form of spiritual protection against Islam. But the representation of female local

86. Brossé, *Les peintures de la Grotte de Marina*, 32-33, fig. 1; the blue backgrounds and red frames of the lower layer are referred to (32), as at Qara and Nebek. J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'Un thème iconographique peu connu: Marina assommant Belzébuth', *B* 32 (1962) 251-59.

87. E. Patlagean, 'L'histoire de la femme déguisée en moine et l'évolution de la sainteté féminine à Byzance', *Studi Medievali*, 3e sér., 17 (Spoleto 1976) (rpt. in E. Patlagean, *Structure sociale, famille, chrétienté à Byzance* [London 1981] no. XI), 615.

88. S. Ashbrook Harvey, 'Women in Early Syrian Christianity', in A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (eds.), *Images of Women in Antiquity* (London and Canberra 1983) 297 and *eadem*, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis: John of Ephesus and The Lives of the Eastern Saints* (Berkeley 1990) 115-16, refers to female saints, transvestite to pursue their ascetic vocation.

eastern saints reflects something more: the role of women in effecting iconographic change. The contemporary development of Virgin and Child imagery in which the emphasis was placed on nurturing, owed as much to the attitudes and relatively high status of women in Latin Syria as to the more general feeling of vulnerability in contemporary society.<sup>89</sup> Alongside this the representation of female sanctity becomes less circumscribed, owing to a change in attitude towards female spirituality. This could not have been brought about by women alone. Other factors applied, especially the phenomenon familiar in the twentieth century, of the improved status of women during times of war.

### Conclusion

When the icon of the woman praying to St Sergios is contextualised within the cultural environment of Latin Syria in the mid-thirteenth century it can be interpreted as a direct personal plea, or supplication, to an eastern military saint for protection during the critical prelude to the final Mamluk takeover of mainland Syria. While her identity is unknown, it can be suggested that she was a Frankish widow, arguably a lay member of a Cistercian community, of which one existed at Tripoli. Her invocation to St Sergios is indicative of a widespread adoption of eastern saints by Frankish women and men. This extended to the taking over of Syrian Orthodox monasteries while retaining their dedications, the refurbishing of sites and the employment of indigenous artists. The woman's veil is a symbol of the personal contract made by the woman with the saint for her wellbeing. Painted by a Syrian Orthodox painter, its craftsmanship is affiliated both to other icons and wallpainting in Syrian Orthodox churches painted between the 1240s and early 1270s. This phase of painting represents a burst of artistic activity on the Syrian mainland

89. This is not to ignore the observation of P. Schine Gold in respect of twelfth century France that what is needed is 'a recognition that images express not one attitude but many, that the experience of women, even of the women of the noble elite, was diverse and sometimes contradictory, and that the relationship between image, attitude and experience is not always direct or causal': Schine Gold, *The Lady and the Virgin*, Preface, xvii.

of which icon and wallpainting in Cyprus later in the century, notably the wallpaintings at Moutoullas of 1280 and icons associated with it, can be seen as the continuation.

The kneeling donor epitomises women influencing patterns of patronage and politics in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and Latin Syria. Women were in a position of relative strength, given the responsibilities that fell to them during war, as holders of property and as widows holding office on behalf of husbands and sons. This gave them, however temporarily, access to the mechanisms of power and to mainstream discourse. It has been argued, following L. Irigaray, that mysticism was the one vehicle for women's subjectivity within the patriarchal society of the Middle Ages, 'the one area of high spiritual endeavour in which women have excelled'.<sup>90</sup> But here, as commissioners, venerators and guardians of icons, women were evidently in a position to contribute to the production of icons and the cult of saints. The increased representation of female saints in both icon and wallpainting reflects this higher profile in spiritual life, a factor which extended to the more favourable representation of the sanctity of women. Women's spirituality can be established as a factor in icon worship in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and Syria during the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, but as a pragmatic, not mystical, force.

The kneeling woman's appeal through prayer contributed to a common cause, the preservation of Latin society in Syria. But just as the mother in a modern Greek folk lament from Mani reproaches St Demetrios for failing to save her son from death, despite the family's upkeep of a chapel and an icon to the saint, so this woman would have had cause for lament, in place of supplication, after the final débacle of the loss of Acre in 1291.<sup>85</sup>

*School of Continuing Studies,  
University of Birmingham*

90. Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society* 55.

91. Alexiou, *Ritual lament*, 170-71.



Fig. 1

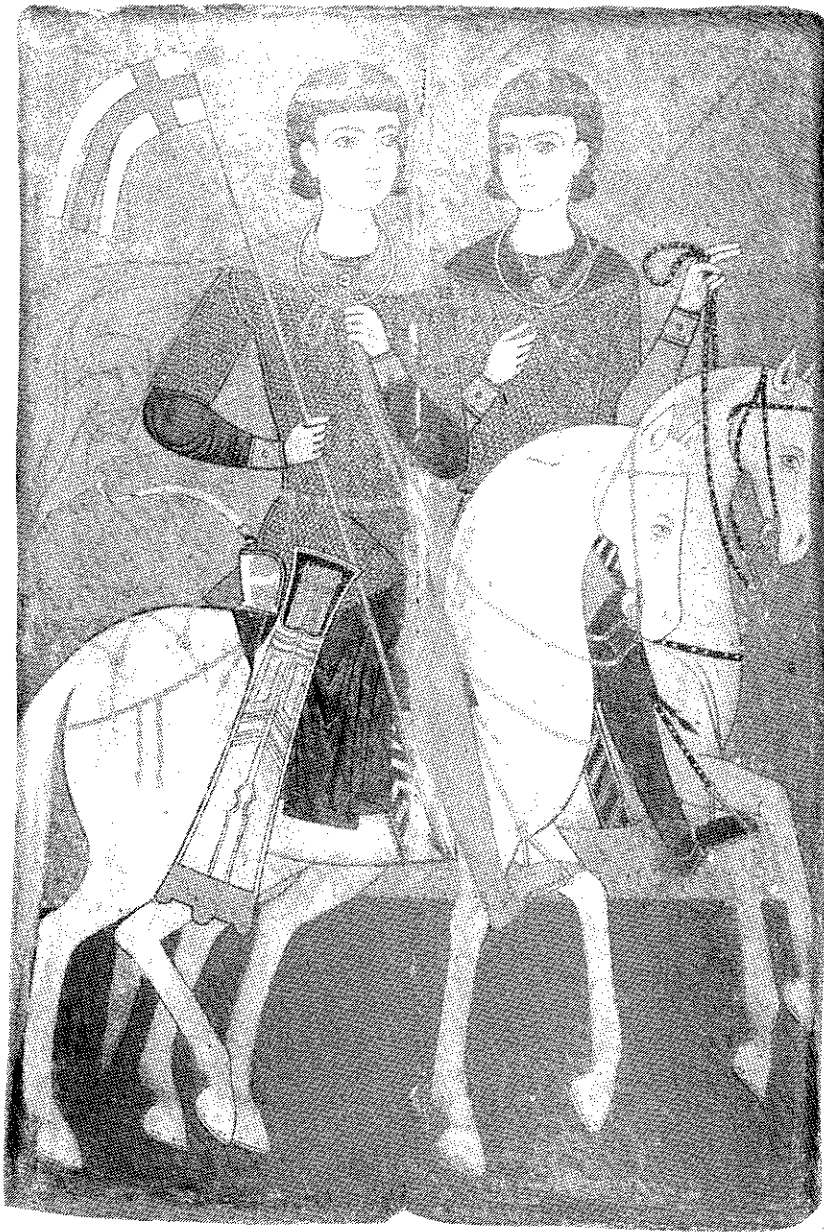


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

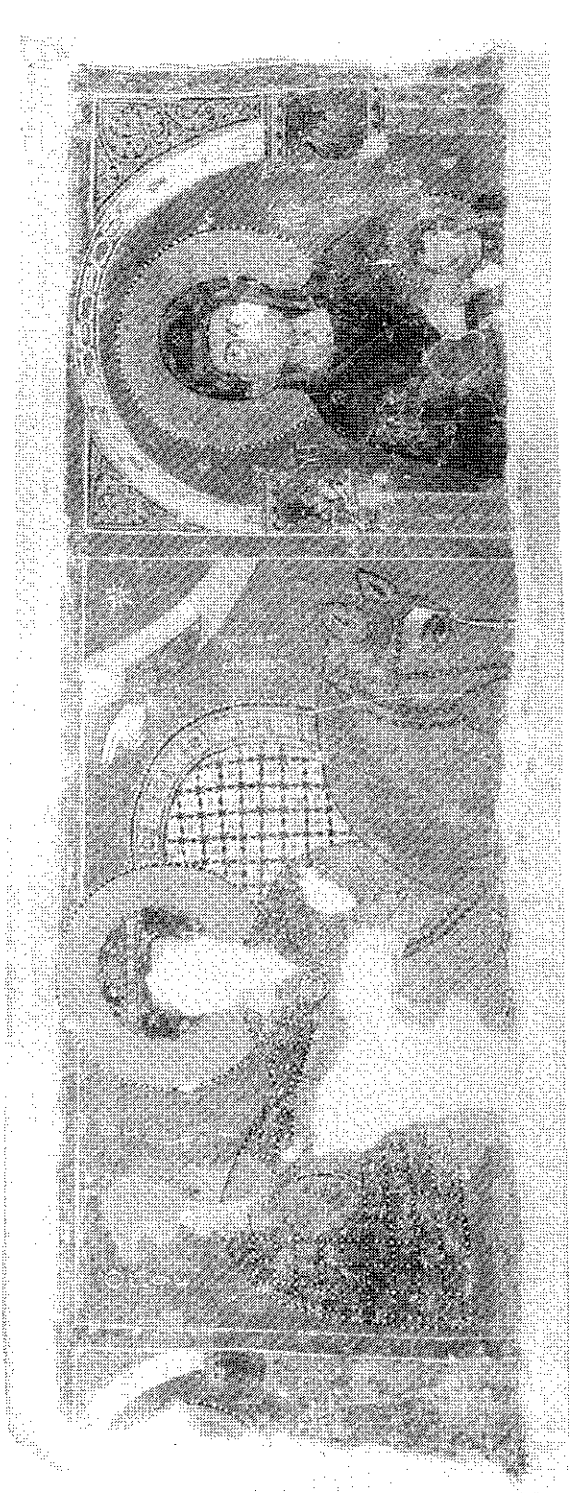


Fig. 4

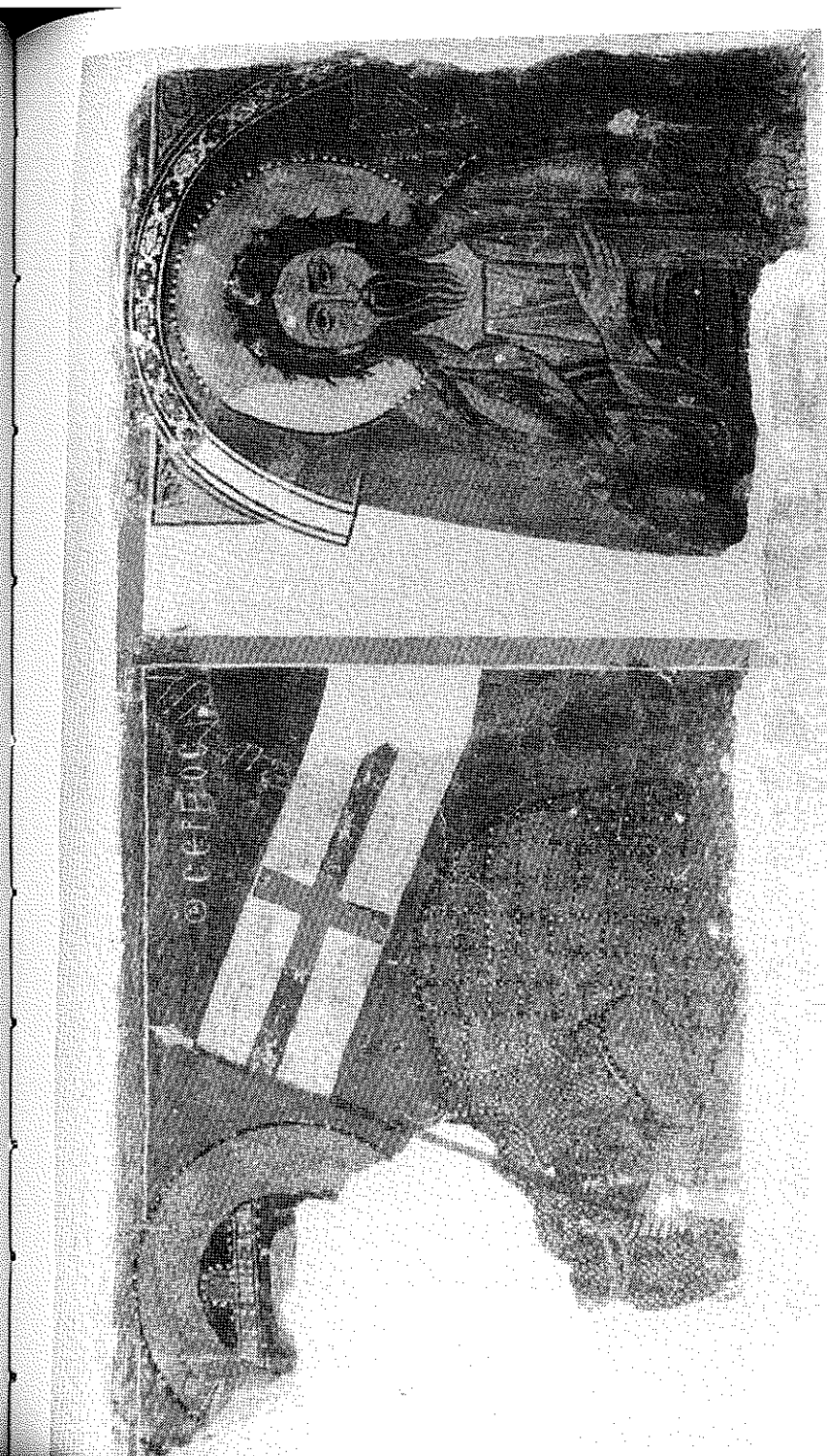


Fig. 5



Fig. 6

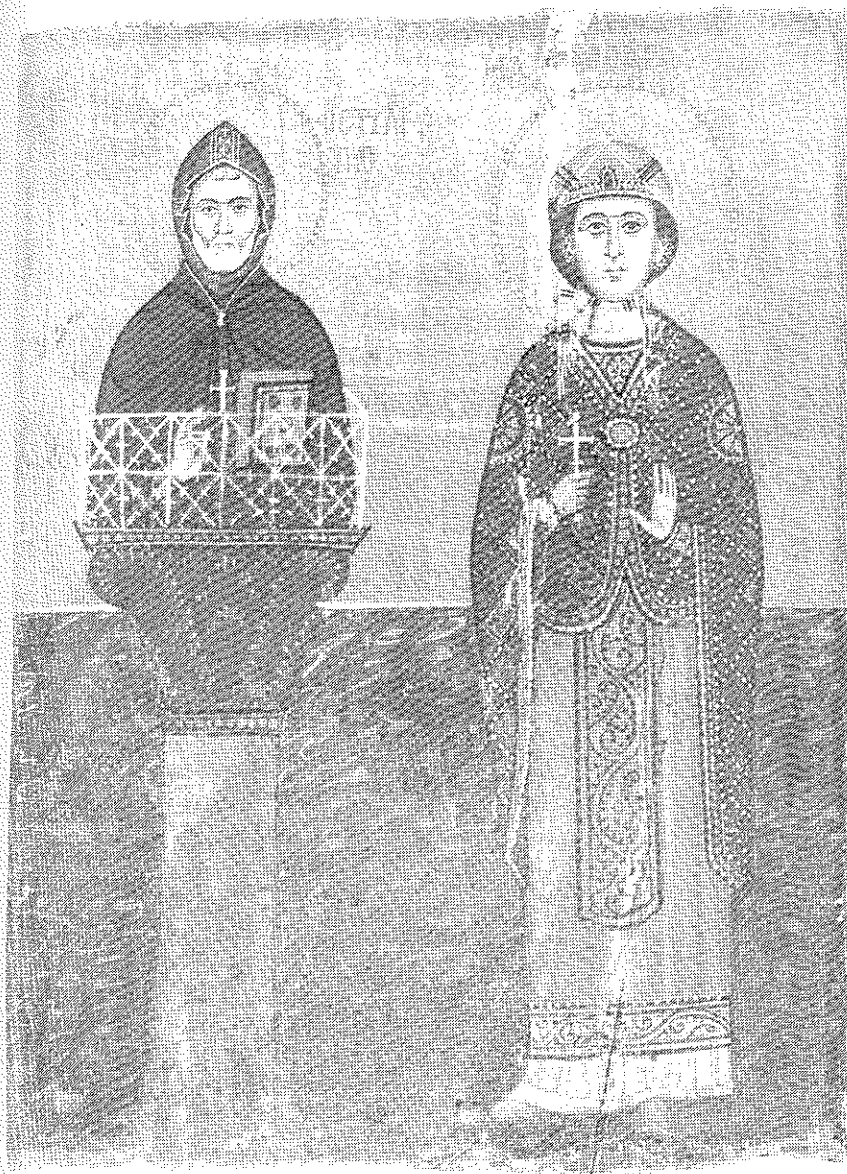


Fig. 7



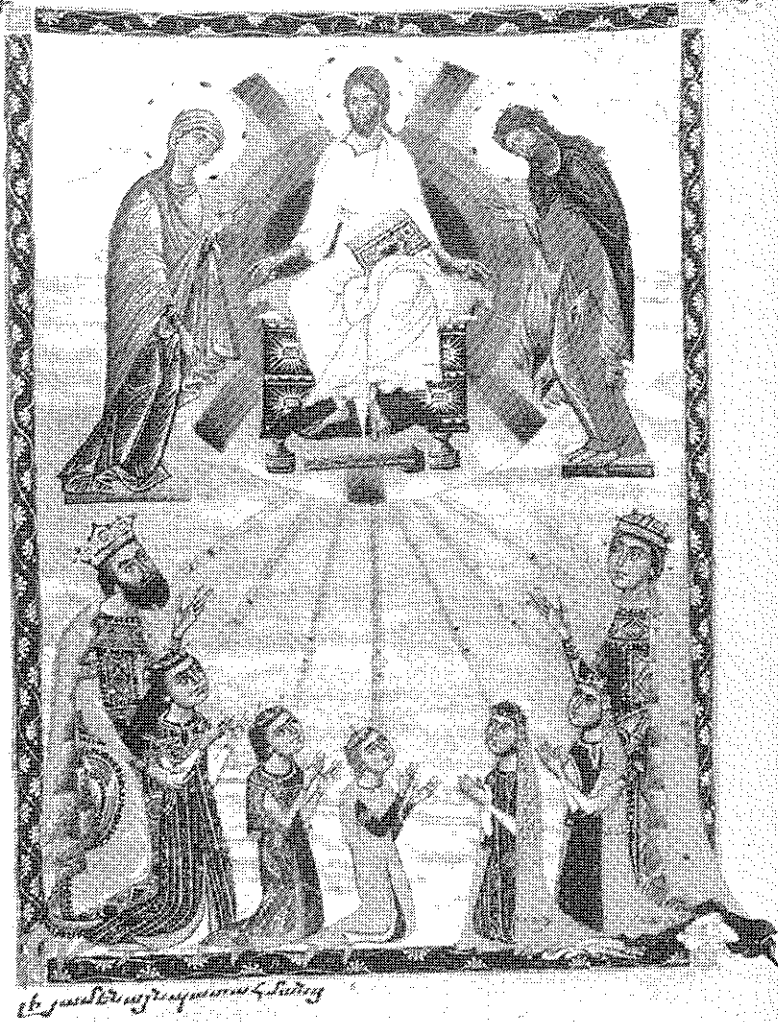


Fig. 10



Fig. 11





Fig. 12



Fig. 13

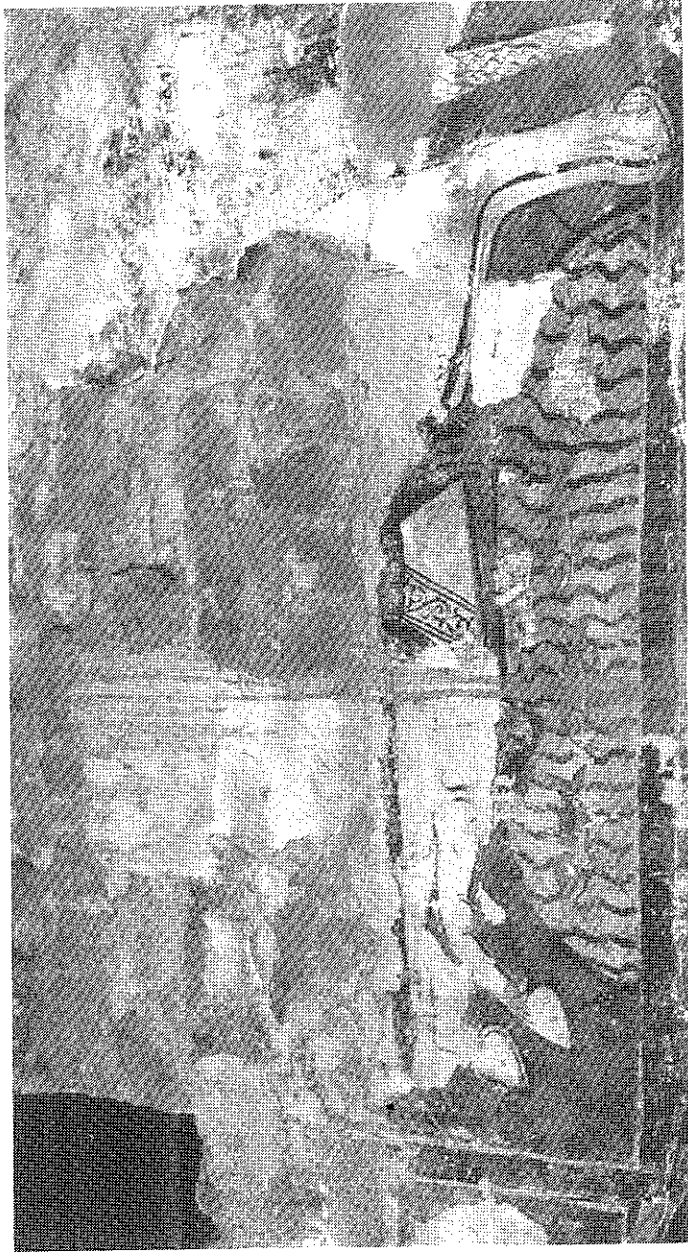


Fig. 14

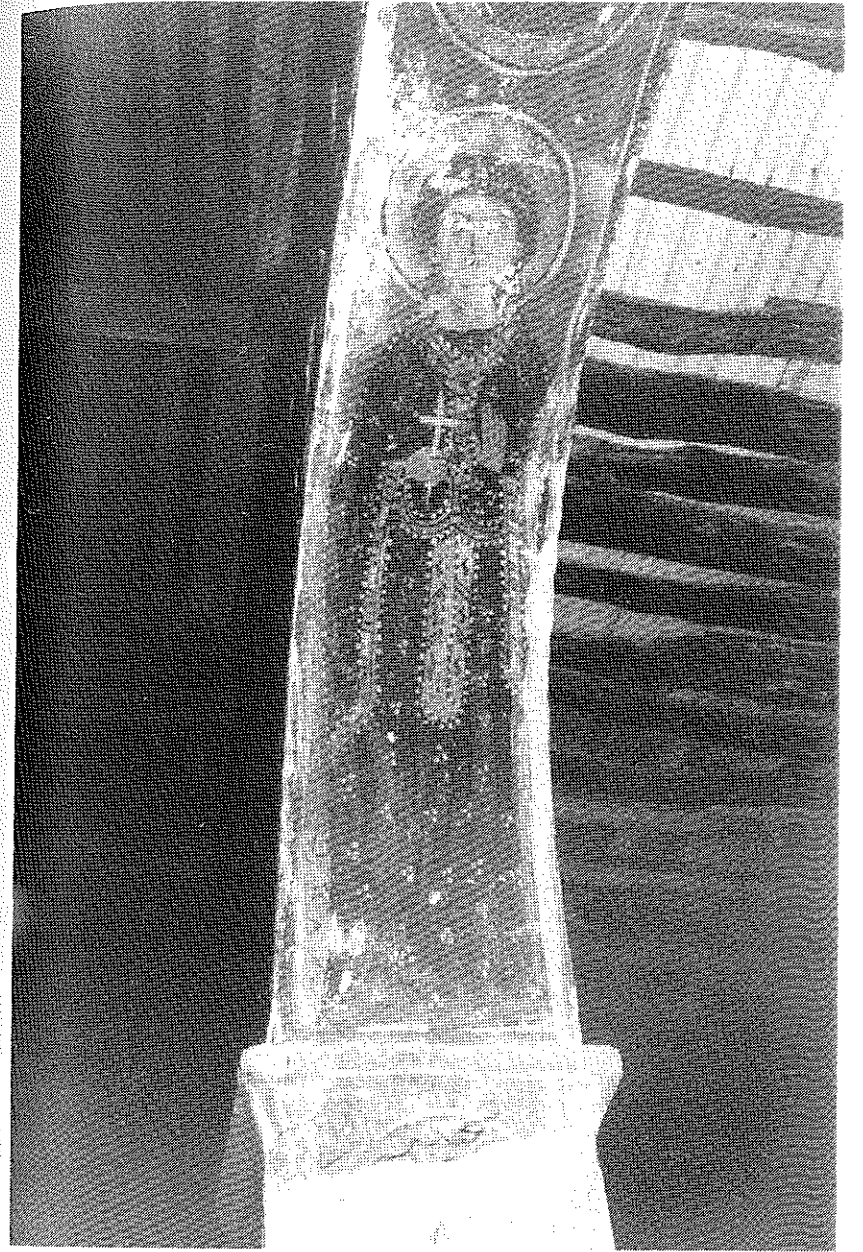


Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17



ORATIO AD SCAM MARIAM.

**S**CA MARIA succurre miseris.  
 uua pusillanimes. refoue flo-  
 biles. ora pro pplo. interueni  
 pro clero. intercede pro deuoto femi-  
 neo sexu. sentiant om̄s tui leuamen  
 quicūq; celebrant tuum nom̄. SCA  
 MARIA uirgo regis semp̄ m̄rcti ma-  
 ter castissima. ora ⁊ intercede ꝑ̄cunctis  
 fidentib; tuis ꝑ̄rocinis. ut nob̄ dñs

Fig. 18



Fig. 19



Fig. 20

Figures

- fig. 1. *Woman supplicating St Sergios*. Icon, Mt Sinai. (Photo: Reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)
- fig. 2. *Sis Sergios and Bacchos*. Icon (reverse), Mt Sinai. (Photo: Reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)
- fig. 3. *Virgin Hodegetria*. Icon (obverse), Mt Sinai. (Photo: Reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)
- fig. 4. *Virgin Galaktotrophousa with St Theodore and St Marina (?)*. North wall, Qara Church. (Photo: L.-A. Hunt)
- fig. 5. *Sis Sergios and John the Baptist*. North wall, Qara Church. (Photo: L.-A. Hunt)
- fig. 6. *Sis Catherine and Marina*. Icon, Mt Sinai. (Photo: Reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)
- fig. 7. *Sis Simeon Stylites and Barbara*. Icon, Mt Sinai. (Photo: Reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)
- fig. 8. *Male suppliant before St Phocas*. Church of Mar Phocas, Amioun. (Drawing: after Lauffray)
- fig. 9. *Female Suppliants before the Virgin Hodegetria and Virgin and Child (?)*. Chapel, Beirut (Drawing: after Lauffray)
- fig. 10. *Queen Keran and Family at Prayer*. Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, MS 2563, fol. 380r. (Photo: after Der Nersessian)
- fig. 11. *St George rescuing the boy from Mytelene*. Icon, British Museum, London. (Photo: British Museum)
- fig. 12. *George of Paris supplicating Sis George and Theodore*. Icon, Mt Sinai. (Photo: Reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)
- fig. 13. *St Theodore (?)*. North Wall, Mar Mousa Habashi, Nebek. (Photo: L.-A. Hunt)
- fig. 14. *St George*. South Wall, Mar Mousa Habashi, Nebek. (Photo: L.-A. Hunt)
- fig. 15. *Female Saint*. Nave arch soffit, Mar Mousa Habashi, Nebek. (Photo: L.-A. Hunt)
- fig. 16. *St George*. Fragment of Wallpainting from extramural Chapel, Crac des Chevaliers. (Photo: L.-A. Hunt)
- fig. 17. *Sis Theodore and George*. Parchment folium, Augustinermuseum, Freiburg. (Photo: Augustinermuseum, Freiburg)
- fig. 18. *Oration to the Virgin*. Queen Melisende's Psalter, London, B.L. Egerton 1139, fol. 202v. (Photo: Courtesy of the Trustees, British Library)
- fig. 19. *Virgin Eleousa*. Icon, Byzantine Museum, Athens. (Photo: Byzantine Museum, Athens)
- fig. 20. *Virgin Glykophilousa*. Syriac Psalter, London, B.L. Add. 7154 fol. 1v. (Photo: Courtesy of the Trustees, British Library).