

Byzantine Religious Culture

Studies in Honor of Alice-Mary Talbot

Edited by

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Cover illustration: Detail from a miniature in the mid-12th c. manuscript known as the *Madrid Skylitzes* (*Madrid Biblioteca Nacional vitr. 26-2, fol. 84r*). It bears the caption “the mother of Basil narrates her vision to the woman.” With kind permission of the Biblioteca Nacional de España.

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THE POSTHUMOUS MIRACLES OF ST. EUSTRATIOS ON A SINAI TEMPLON BEAM

Nancy Patterson Ševčenko

Alice-Mary Talbot's wide-ranging work on Byzantine saints and their miracles has dealt with texts from almost every century of the middle and late Byzantine periods.¹ It is therefore a pleasure on this occasion to be able to add a further miracle cycle to the corpus, even if this particular one, the posthumous miracles of St. Eustratios, is narrated entirely in images and their captions.

St. Eustratios and his four companions, known collectively as the Five Martyrs of Sebasteia, hail from an area of Asia Minor that produced a number of illustrious martyrs in the time of Diocletian: the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia (modern Sivas) (*BHG* 1201–1208n); St. Eustratios and his companions, of "Armenia" (actually Nikopolis and Sebasteia) (*BHG* 646–646e), and St. Eugenios and his three companions, of Trebizond (*BHG* 608y–613d). The story of the Forty Martyrs and of their relics is a well-known one, recounted in a large number of texts in a variety of genres; the image of the half-nude saints huddled together in the frozen lake was also a popular theme in church decoration throughout the Byzantine Empire. Even the story of the reclamation of their relics was illustrated in both wall painting and manuscripts.² For St. Eugenios of Trebizond, there are both *Passio* texts and miracle collections and strong evidence of local veneration, if sparser evidence that the saint was venerated much outside of Trebizond until the thirteenth century.³ For Eustratios and the Holy Five, the situation is quite different: their textual tradition is limited to a single *Passio* and a couple of encomia, and the precise location of their original cult site has not been determined. Nevertheless they

¹ I cite only her comprehensive recent study: Talbot (2002).

² On the Forty Martyrs, see *ODB* 2: 799–800, with references.

³ On St. Eugenios, see Rosenqvist (1996); Rosenqvist (2002); Bryer and Winfield (1985) 166–69.

were venerated throughout the Empire, and their images can be found in dozens of churches of the middle Byzantine period.⁴

In this context, then, the survival of a twelfth-century templon beam on Mount Sinai that depicts ten posthumous miracles of St. Eustratios, plus one involving the combined forces of the Holy Five, is of particular interest (plates 1–2).⁵ It adds to the “hagiographic dossier” of the saints (no Greek text recounting any miracles performed by the Holy Five has survived), it potentially sheds light on the cult site, provides insight into the types of maladies treated at that site, and raises the question of where the beam was painted.⁶ The beam has been included in various recent exhibitions of Byzantine art,⁷ but the issues it raises warrant further exploration—even if the scholar best equipped to solve the riddles it poses, namely Alice-Mary Talbot, is the very person who could not in this case be consulted.

THE CONTENT OF THE SCENES

The technical description of the Eustratios beam is provided in two exhibition catalogues, and will not be repeated here.⁸ Located roughly

⁴ On images of the Holy Five, see Weitzmann (1979); Chatzidakis-Bacharas (1982) 74–81; Mouriki (1985) 1: 67–69, 143–47. See also the section on Orestes and the Five in Walter (2003) 219–21.

⁵ On this templon beam, see Soteriou (1956, 1958) 1: figs. 103–11; 2: 109–10 (dated to the late 11th–early 12th century); Weitzmann (1975) esp. 52–53 and pl. 20; (in repr. 1982: IX, esp. 250–51) (first half 12th century); Weitzmann (1979) 108–110, figs. 28–29; Weitzmann (1984) esp. 67–68; Manafis (1990) 106, 385 note 29 (D. Mouriki) figs. 20–22 (second half 12th century); Vokotopoulos (1995) nos. 38–40 (second to third quarter 12th century). For recent exhibition catalogues, see note 7 below. My warm thanks to Father Justin Sinaites for taking detailed photographs for me of the beam’s inscriptions.

⁶ There is an Arabic manuscript on Mount Sinai (ar. 411, a. 1287) that contains the “miracles of St. Eustratios” on fols. 203f (Atiya [1955], 11). I had hoped this text might prove to be an Arabic version of a lost Greek miracle collection for the Holy Five, but these miracles were performed by a Syrian hermit during his lifetime. I thank Kevin Reinhart for very kindly helping me with the Arabic text, and for sharing my disappointment that this was not the text I had hoped to find. There is still the possibility that references to the cult and even to the miracles may be contained in two unpublished encomia (*BHG* 646b–646c): I have not been able to consult the manuscripts. There are three epigrams by John Geometres, and more by Christopher of Mitylene, devoted to the Holy Five in Paris, B. N. suppl. gr. 690, fols. 118r and 185r–185v. On the manuscript itself, which dates from the 12th century, see Lauxtermann (2003), 297–301, 329–33.

⁷ Piatnitsky et al. (2000) no. S 61 (12th century); Nelson and Collins (2006) no. 21 (second to third quarter 12th century). See also Chatterjee (2009) 45.

⁸ See the previous note. The beam consists of two boards, both painted on the back with red and black wavy lines. Together the boards make a beam just under

in the center of the beam, between scene 5 and scene 7, is a representation of the Deesis. The identification of the other scenes is derived from their fragmentary captions. The content of scene 8 is unclear, given that the caption is no longer legible: it could possibly be a sequel to the previous episode, scene 7. The miracles, from left to right, are then the following:

1. St. Eustratios curing the (woman) suffering from a persistent (“hectic”) fever. Ὁ ἄ(γιοῦ)ς Εὐ(σ)τρατίους ἠομενος τὴν ὑπο ἐκτικου πυρετου κατεχωμενι(ν) (*color plate 3*)

The scene shows in fact *two* women asleep on beds. Eustratios gestures toward the woman on the left. In the center stands a man pointing to the second woman; he is perhaps the person who has brought the women in. He wears a rounded white cap, a red tunic with a high neck, and an overgarment with an open, V-shaped, embroidered collar.⁹ The women wear white turbans decorated with pairs of short black stripes, and they both wear hoop earrings with one large and one small hanging pearl.

2. St. Eustratios awakening the (...) in this church for the morning hymns. Ὁ ἄ(γιοῦ)ς Εὐ(σ)τρατίους ἐξιπνιζων τον [...] εν το ναω τουτο προς τους εοθινους υμνους¹⁰ (*color plates 3 and 4*)

A man lying on a bed has presumably just been awoken by the saint. A young man in a long tunic stands behind the bed, and another youth wearing a shorter pink tunic, leggings and boots stands at the left, hand extended and pointing at the miracle. Eustratios addresses the man on the bed.

3. St. Eustratios healing the (man who was) mad and devouring his own flesh, through his relic here. Ὁ ἄ(γιοῦ)ς Εὐ(σ)τρατίους θεραπεβων των μενομε[νον] κε τας σαρκας αυτου κατεσθιοντων δια των αυτου λιψανον τον ενταυθα (*color plate 4*)

A man with unkempt hair, clad only in a loincloth, lurches toward the saint. The man’s hands are bound before him by a red rope which is grasped by a youth in a pink tunic; another young man looks on.

2.75m long. The scenes are framed individually by painted arches, and in the spandrels between the arches are gold disks, compass-drawn and polished.

⁹ This may be the lining of the coat folded back.

¹⁰ The Soterious reconstructed the missing word as ἀργυροπρατη(ν) (“money-changer”); Soteriou (1956, 1958) 2: 109.

An elderly man, clad in a white tunic with brown clavi and a dark brown mantle, holds an oblong gold box, apparently the container for the relic of Eustratios, and points to the madman. His robes suggest he is a monk or priest.

4. St. Eustratios curing the (woman) suffering from metritis (uterine infection), by his appearance. Ὁ ἄ(γιοῦ)ς Εὐ(σ)τρατίου ἠομένου τὴν ὑπομυτρίτου κατεχόμενον διὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ ἐμφανίας (*color plate 4*)

A young woman lies on a bed, awake, pressing her hand to her head. At the head of her bed stand five people, foremost among them a woman in a white hat (perhaps a turban, but the paint here is rubbed), pearl earrings and perhaps a dark mantle, of which only traces survive. Her tunic, however, is stunningly beautiful: it is white, streaked with wave-like patches of pink and blue, and belted with a wide pink belt from which hang pink ribbons (?). The other figures are young men, clothed in plain long tunics. Eustratios gestures toward the bed-ridden woman from the left.

5. St. Eustratios curing the (man with) phrenitis (brain fever) through his relic. Ὁ ἄ(γιοῦ)ς Εὐ(σ)τρατίου ἠομένου τὸν φρενι(ιζ)όντ(α) διὰ τοῦ αὐτοῦ λιψάνου (*color plate 5*)

A young man lies sleeping on a bed. An elderly man clad like the elder in scene 3 holds a book in one hand, and with the other the reliquary, on which the sleeping man's arm is resting. Behind him stand four young men. Eustratios gestures toward the sleeping man from the left.

6. Deesis: (The Virgin), Christ, St. John [IC] ΧC Ὁ ἄ(γιοῦ)ς Ἰω(άννης) ὁ [πρόδρομος] (*color plate 5*)

The Virgin's robe is a purplish-brown color, with a thin gold border; her tunic is blue. Christ's robes are the opposite combination: a blue himation over a purplish-brown tunic. His himation is drawn up over his left knee in jagged pleats. John the Baptist at the right has long hair falling onto his far shoulder.

7. The youths (beating the) simandron.... at the holy feast. Ἡ πεδες σιμενωντ(εῖ)ς ἐνδο τοῦτο τῆς ἁγίας εορτῆς (*color plate 6*)

A group of men at the left address a figure appearing on a high balcony at the right. The group is led by a youth holding a simandron and the mallet with which to strike it; he wears a short belted tunic, and a rounded white hat. In the group behind him are two men in white

hats, each hat having a pair of white ribbons hanging from it, marked with horizontal black stripes; they are either officials of some kind, or a specific ethnic group. One of them wears a blue overgarment like a kaftan, slit up to the knees, with an embroidered open collar, over a high-necked red tunic, plus a red belt; the other a plain tunic, belted, with a high gold neck. The man on the balcony is dressed like this man in the center of the group, in a white hat with ribbons, and a tan tunic with a high red neck. The edifice itself is puzzling: it consists of a tall wooden base of eight panels divided by crosses, and a pink marble balcony. It could possibly represent a tower over the massive entrance doors of a church, which are shut tight, or even a belltower: certainly some conflict has arisen here, perhaps between the use of bells and the use of the simandron to announce the services. The man on the balcony, however, does not seem to be an ecclesiastic of any kind.

8. Unidentified scene. ἄ(γιοσ) Ευ(σ)τρ[άτιος...]ηνιοντες [...] οι [...] τουτου ερη (*color plates 6 and 7*)

Eustratios rides in from the left on a white horse, his foot in a stirrup; his horse has been shod, with each shoe attached to the hoof by a pair of nails. The saint addresses a man who stands at the right, hands open before his chest, clad in a red high-necked tunic and a tan kaftan with an embroidered open collar, and a red belt. This figure also wears a white hat, apparently with pearls hanging from it but no ribbons. In the background are three more men in long tunics.

9. St. Eustratios curing the daughter of Synkletike. Ὁ ἄ(γιοσ) Ευ(σ)τράτιος ἠόμενος την θιγάτερα της Σηνκλιτικης (*color plate 7*)

The young woman lies asleep on a bed at the left; she is wearing a turban, earrings and a high necked tunic. Behind her is another woman, presumably Synkletike, who also wears a turban, and has a gold collar on her tunic. Behind her is a young man in a plain tunic, who points at the action, and further back are two more figures, one staring out at the viewer. Eustratios now appears from the right, as this scene is on the right-hand beam: on this one, he is always shown gesturing toward the center of the templon.

10. St. Eustratios curing the [...] nun. [Ὁ ἄ(γιοσ) Εὐσ]τράτιος ηόμενος [...]ιαν μονάχη(ν) (*color plates 7 and 8*)

A nun lies on a bed, but is awake and apparently already cured, as she holds her hands out wide. She wears a maphorion fastened in the

front with two round buttons, and a dark turban which covers her chin as well. Behind her are five more nuns, similarly dressed; one points toward the saint. Eustratios addresses her from the right.

11. The Holy Five healing the mute and paralytic (woman). Η ἅγι(οι) πεντε θεράπευόντες τὴν ἀφρονὸν κε ακῖνιτῶν (*color plates 7 and 8*)

A woman dressed in a plain red tunic with a gold collar, a white turban and earrings, is floating in the air at the left of the composition. Her belt has hanging tassels or pleats, as does the belt of the woman in scene 4. She is surrounded by four figures who raise her up with both hands. The figures to the left are apparently Eugenios and Mardarios, the latter in a short tunic and a red hat. To the right, then, are Auxentios and Orestes, both attired in regular tunic and chlamys. Eustratios gestures toward them all from the right.

12. St. Eustratios curing the (man) suffering from tetanus Ὁ ἄ(γιος) Ευ(σ)τρατιος ἠόμενος τον υπο τετάνου εχομενὸν (*color plate 8*)

A young man sits on a stool at the left, looking toward Eustratios, while an elderly man (apparently the same figure as in scenes 3 and 5) reaches up to press the gold reliquary against the youth's head. Another elderly man behind the youth points to the miracle. Behind is still another male figure. All but the old man with the reliquary wear plain tunics without mantles or kaftans.

The healings are performed by St. Eustratios, a dark-bearded saint consistently clad in a bright red tunic and a deep blue, gold-hemmed cloak on which a tablion can sometimes be seen. In scene 1, his cloak is fastened on his chest by the triple clasp that is a sort of hallmark for this saint in Byzantine painting.¹¹ In some episodes his efficacy is reinforced by the application of a reliquary box, although it should be noted that the reliquary is brought out only for the male patients. The patients lie on beds, often asleep, attended by family or neighbors. The men here suffer from madness, brain fever and tetanus (scenes 3, 5, 12), the women from fever, uterine infection and paralysis (scenes 1,

¹¹ On the characteristic features of the five saints, and their individual modes of martyrdom, see the works cited in note 4 above. There are other Byzantine saints with the name Eustratios, but his physiognomy, and the presence of the Holy Five as a group in scene 11, proves beyond doubt that the St. Eustratios on the beam is the Eustratios of the Holy Five. On the Bithynian St. Eustratios of Augauros, see *BHG* 645; on a Syrian St. Eustratios, see note 6 above.

4, 11), and from two unidentified maladies (scenes 9, 10). The ailments are fairly routine, with perhaps a special emphasis on female maladies (there are five healings involving women, as opposed to three involving men). Most can be paralleled in the miraculous healings of other saints.¹² One, however, is rare: assuming my reading of the inscription for scene 4 is correct, the woman in this scene is suffering from metritis, an uterine disorder, not attested elsewhere.¹³ There are in addition two or possibly three miracles that seem to be connected more with the veneration of the saint (possibly involving a conflict with local officials?) than with healings (scenes 2, 7–8).

THE CULT OF THE HOLY FIVE

According to the *Passio* of the Holy Five, a text that is attested as early as the ninth century, three of the saints were martyred in Nikopolis, while Eustratios and Orestes were martyred in Sebasteia.¹⁴ Before his death Eustratios, a “skrinarios” or official record-keeper, of the town of Satala, made a will in which he stipulated that his remains, and those of his companions, be taken from Sebasteia to the town of his birth, Arauraka, specifically to the village of Analibozora; at the end of the *Passio* we learn that his wish was indeed carried out by the bishop of Sebasteia, at least with respect to Eustratios’ remains and those of Orestes (those of Auxentios may have already been collected and taken there).¹⁵ One would assume then that the cult place of Eustratios was in the region of Arauraka. But where exactly was that? The town has not been securely identified, and we have in fact little evidence for the existence of a thriving cult site for the Holy Five in this desolate part of Asia Minor; the devastation of the area by the Seljuks in the late eleventh century, and the rising cult of St. Eugenios in Trebizond are

¹² Delehay (1925) esp. 5–73. For a comprehensive list of editions of *Miracula*, see Déroche (1993) esp. 95 n. 1; Talbot (2002) *passim*.

¹³ For an easily accessible ancient text (2nd century AD) on female uterine disorders, see O. Temkin et al., *Soranus’ Gynecology* (Baltimore 1956) esp. 128–48, 155–74.

¹⁴ PG 116: 468–505. The Greek *Passio* text was being translated into Latin in Naples already by the last quarter of the ninth century: Devos (1958) esp. 151–57.

¹⁵ PG 116: 501B–C, 505D; for Auxentios, PG 116: 488D–489A. See also Halkin (1970) (= BHG 646a).

thought to have ended what cult there may have been, and destroyed all evidence for its location.¹⁶

There was no major Constantinopolitan sanctuary of the Holy Five, just a chapel of a St. Eustratios (of Sebasteia?) in the court of the monastery of the Virgin Pege.¹⁷ A relic of Eustratios is thought to have been brought to Rome in the eighth century under Pope Hadrian I (772–95) and housed in the now destroyed church of San Apollinare, and his head thought to have been given to the Lavra monastery on Mount Athos by emperor Basil II in 978.¹⁸ In neither of these places does the relic seem to have enjoyed particular prominence.

Yet the group of five martyrs was well-known by the mid-tenth century: Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus speaks of Eustratios as a famous megalomartyr from Arauraka.¹⁹ Later in this same century, the text of their *Passio* was introduced virtually unaltered by Symeon Metaphrastes into his Menologion (for December 13), and its inclusion in this influential corpus of saints' lives assured the *Passio*

¹⁶ Bryer and Winfield (1985) 169–70, 175–77, disagree among themselves: Bryer proposes that Arauraka be identified with Avarak, while Winfield argues for Asağı Akçali. Both sites are west of Satala on the Lycus River, off the road from Satala to Nikopolis. See also Honigmann (1961), 70, 73, 76. The town is presumably τὴν Ἀραβρακηνῶν πόλιν τὴν τοῦ περιφανεστάτου καὶ μεγαλομάρτυρος Εὐστρατίου πατρίδα mentioned in Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Thematis*, ed. Pertusi (1952) 74 (10:7). Given the scarcity of written and of archaeological evidence, it is puzzling to read the statement of Bryer and Winfield (1985) 166, echoed by Rosenqvist (2002) 194, that Arauraka was “one of the great (or ‘most frequented’) pilgrim centers of Anatolia.” But on the cultural activity in Sebasteia earlier, in the mid 11th century, see Dedeyan (1975) 93–95. On Cappadocia in this period, see Hild and Restle (1981) esp. 84–111.

¹⁷ Janin (1969), 119. The synaxis of the saints was celebrated in the church of St. John the Evangelist of the Diippeion near St. Sophia: *SynaxCP*, 305–6. Sergei Ivanov has found in an Old Slavonic Menaion a text involving the miraculous appearance of the Holy Five at the Olympiou monastery in Constantinople. I wish to thank Dr. Ivanov for sending me this precious information. The only other miracle I know involves the appearance of the Holy Five to a priest celebrating their feastday in a remote chapel dedicated to Eustratios on the island of Chios; the author, Nicholas Malaxos, wrote in the 16th century: Photeinos (1865) 72–75, 113. Neither miracle corresponds to any scene on the templon beam.

¹⁸ The entry on Eustratios in the *Bibliotheca sanctorum* (1961–1970), 5: 313, refers loosely to the *Liber Pontificalis*, but I have been unable to find the reference there. The cult of Eustratios and the Holy Five in the West is otherwise little known. On the Athonite head, see Guillou, Lemerle et al. (1970) 46, 114. A monastery of St. Eustratios is attested on Athos in 1045, when its abbot signed Constantine Monomachos' typikon for Athos: Thomas and Hero (2000) 1: 291. A reliquary of the 11th century in the monastery contains the relics of various saints, among them Eustratios: Frolow (1961) no. 233.

¹⁹ See note 16 above.

wide circulation and constant liturgical use from then on. That the Holy Five were popular in monastic circles is further indicated by the fact that the monastic Hours include a prayer of St. Eustratios (drawn from his final prayer in the *Passio*), prescribed for mesonyktikon on Saturdays, as well as a prayer of St. Mardarios, also from the *Passio*, for mesonyktikon, for the Third Hour during Lent, and for Great Apodeipnon.²⁰ How and why these prayers entered the office of the Hours has not yet been explored; suffice it to say that that of Eustratios is attested as early as the tenth century.²¹

Portraits of the saints begin to appear in the tenth century, and are especially common in monumental painting of the eleventh and twelfth centuries everywhere from Palermo to Cappadocia.²² Always readily recognizable due to the consistency of their iconographic types, their five portraits, in bust or standing, often formed a sort of protective ring around the church or one particular area of it.²³ Some eleventh-century manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion illustrate their individual martyrdoms, as well as their portraits.²⁴ There is also a curious twelfth-century codex in Turin that contains nothing beyond the text of their *Passio* accompanied by an extensive series of miniatures; this Weitzmann, in his study of the Holy Five, calls a “libellum” on the Western model.²⁵

²⁰ The prayers of St. Eustratios (*BHG* 646e = *PG* 116: 505B–C) and Mardarios (*PG* 116: 481A) appear in the printed *Horologia*. The prayer of St. Eustratios is found in Harvard University’s *Psalter/Horologion* Houghton 3, dated 1101 (fol. 257v), though not attached to a particular Hour; that of St. Auxentios in this manuscript (fol. 110v), derives not from the *Passio* of the Holy Five but from the *vita* of the 5th-century Bithynian saint Auxentios.

²¹ Symeon Eulabes, the spiritual father of Symeon the New Theologian, refers to the prayer of Eustratios: “In the hours of vigil it is useful for you to recite some two hours, and to pray two hours in compunction with tears; and then [read] a canon, whichever you want, and twelve psalms, if you want, and ‘the undefiled’ (the Amomos), and the prayer of St. Eustratios. This is when nights are long.” Alfeyev and Neyrand (2001) 102, §24; Alfeyev (2000) 105.

²² The earliest images are the famous ivory triptychs of the 10th–11th century: e.g. Evans and Wixom (1997) nos. 79–80; of the Five Martyrs, only Eustratios is depicted. For a wide selection of images of the Holy Five, see Weitzmann (1979) and the other works cited in note 4 above.

²³ See the works cited in note 4 above.

²⁴ Ševčenko (1990) 109, 131–32. So too does the collection of Metaphrastic texts contained in the *Panegyrikon* Athos Esphigmenou 14 (fols. 343r–343v): Pelekanides et al., (1974–1991) 2: figs. 340–41.

²⁵ Weitzmann (1979) esp. 103–7; figs. 12–27. The codex is Turin, University Library B II 4 (gr. 89).

Though these martyrs were evidently viewed as effective protectors, their miraculous healing powers are nowhere mentioned, with one exception: an Epilogue by a certain Eusebios of Sebasteia, which is attached to the *Passio* of the Holy Five in a number of manuscripts.²⁶ Eusebios says that he learned by chance of the presence of the martyrion of the saints in Arauraka (there were no relics of Eustratios in Sebasteia), and this prompted him to dig into his files and draw out an account of their *Passio* for the benefit of the residents of Arauraka who, he was told, had no information (ὑπομνήματα) about the saints. The young man who informed Eusebios about the existence of the martyrion at Arauraka claimed that the place had healing powers (δυνάμεις ἰαμάτων γίνονται).²⁷ This Epilogue, though attached to the Greek *Passio* by the ninth century, is somewhat suspicious, in that it appears almost exclusively in South Italian manuscripts, and uses the word *martyrologion* which is rare in Greek.²⁸ Eusebios' ignorance of the martyrion at Arauraka even though he was living in Sebasteia increases the possibility that this Epilogue does not represent a strictly Byzantine tradition.

In short we have a popular group of saints, whose *Passio* was frequently copied and even illustrated, whose portraits were familiar and readily identifiable but whose cult site remains elusive. The Sinai templon beam, on which are depicted miracles at what is clearly a sanctuary devoted to the saint, could conceivably help us round out a picture of the cult of Eustratios and the Holy Five.

EVIDENCE FOR THE SANCTUARY OF ST. EUSTRATIOS OFFERED
BY THE TEMPLON BEAM

That there was a sanctuary somewhere housing relics of St. Eustratios is made very clear by the beam. The architectural setting remains roughly the same for all the healings; an attendant always holds the same gold reliquary, and the captions speak of "the relic here" and

²⁶ Halkin (1970).

²⁷ Halkin (1970) 282–83. The epilogue is already appended to the Latin translation done in the ninth century.

²⁸ Halkin cautions against making any generalizations about a South Italian origin for the Epilogue text on the basis of its manuscript tradition, but it is something that should be noted, and he does call attention to the word *martyrologion*, noting its rarity in Greek, but not its more common use in the West: Halkin (1970) 280.

“in this church” and “this holy feast”. The fact that for the most part Eustratios is working alone, and that the relics are his alone, suggests that perhaps this sanctuary is devoted exclusively to him, not to the Five as a group.

The healings evidently took place through a form of incubation: at least the startlingly large figure of Eustratios is appearing, probably in dreams, to patients asleep on beds.²⁹ Family members or the equivalent bring in the patient, and are there to witness the cure. The cures are effected through Eustratios’ commanding gesture, which echoes that of Christ, plus, in some cases, the administration of his relic in its reliquary. The application of the relic is somewhat unusual: in Byzantine written miracle collections, the patient is more likely to camp out near a tomb, to rub against it or embrace it, to apply or drink the oil or water that had been in contact with the saints’ relics, or the oil from lamps hanging above the tomb.³⁰ Here there is no tomb, just the relics: as in the case of St. Photeine, for example, the healings are achieved by a combination of the saint’s appearance, his authoritative gesture *and* the box of relics applied to the patient’s body.³¹

The sanctuary seems to have its own personnel: an old man who administers the relics, and a young assistant or two. It is unclear whether it is a monastery: the old man seems to be dressed as a monk, but his white tunic is unusual, and he is the only figure of his type. In scene 3 he carries a book, so he may be a priest as well. The fact that the relics are presented only to the men and not to the women may be sheer coincidence, or may suggest that perhaps it was a male monastery that possessed the relic, and that the women were visited at home by the appearance of the saint at their bedside. The clientele is evidently very well off. The women, both the patients and their families, wear long, belted robes and buttoned cloaks, large pearl earrings, and a headdress that is clearly a turban rather than a hat or maphorion. All this finery suggests a sanctuary operating in or near a settled urban center. The men wear long tunics with a high tight neck, and several of them an outer kaftan that has a slit on the front reaching to the knees, and a white hat that may have a pair of white ribbons hanging down from it on one side of the head.

²⁹ The patients are not always asleep: those in scenes 4 and 10 are awake.

³⁰ Delehayé (1925); Talbot (2002) sp. 159–61. See also *ODB*, s.v. Healing.

³¹ Talbot (1994). Talbot dates these *Miracula* to the 11th–12th century.

THE ORIGIN OF THE TEMPLON BEAM

According to Weitzmann, the beam was painted by a Cypriot artist working on Sinai in the first half of the twelfth century; he says that it was painted on site for a chapel of the Five Martyrs in the monastery, and the cycle was based on that in a lost illuminated manuscript from the saints' sanctuary in Sebasteia.³² Yuri Piatnitsky agrees with Weitzmann that the artist was Cypriot, but stresses the influence of Constantinople on his art.³³ In theory a case could also be made for other locations as well: for Mount Athos (which had the head of the saint), for Rome (which had another head), and for Sebasteia/Arauraka.

Here it is crucial to consider whether miracles and beam are roughly contemporary, or whether the beam is reproducing events that took place elsewhere, perhaps centuries earlier. There is unfortunately nothing about their content that would point to an early date, or disqualify a later one. The use of the portable reliquary instead of a fixed tomb, and the captions' stress on the role of the relic in the healing process, does, however, suggest that the miracles are taking place at a distance from the saint's original place of burial. The carefully observed details of contemporary costume and architecture are not all likely to be embellishments on the part of the artist, ancient stories retold in modern dress: some, especially those involving the white-capped officials, would seem intrinsic to the events themselves. So, though none of this is actual proof that the beam is not based on some distant cycle, as Weitzmann proposed, I will nevertheless proceed on the assumption that the area where this beam was painted was roughly the area where the miracles took place.

Of the several possibilities, Mount Athos is unlikely, given the nature of the ailments and the female patients; Rome is also unlikely given the Byzantine painting style of the beam and its Greek captions. As for Mount Sinai, Weitzmann cites a chapel dedicated to the Holy Five within the monastery as the place for which the beam was

³² Weitzmann (1975), 52–53, 60; (1979) 110. Weitzmann connects it to Cyprus on the basis of its stylistic similarity to another templon beam on Sinai, the so-called Twelve Feasts beam, which he associates with the frescoes of the church of Asinou on Cyprus, dated 1106. For the Twelve Feasts beam, attributed to Cyprus, see Nelson and Collins (2006) no. 20.

³³ Piatnitsky (2000) S 61.

painted, although the date of the chapel (or the date of its dedication) is uncertain.³⁴ Relics of the Holy Five are not attested in the monastery (though other relics are), and the urban society reflected here would anyway not be characteristic of Sinai itself. As for Cyprus, there is no compelling evidence, other than the stylistic comparisons to Asinou, to attach the Eustratios beam to an artist from the island.

The most logical place of origin would be the area of Sebasteia or Arauraka. But, as was noted above, by the time the beam was painted, this area of Anatolia had been devastated and was under the control of the Seljuks, whereas the beam conveys the impression of an efficient sanctuary visited by the elite of a flourishing urban center replete with local officials. Trebizond did remain secure, for the most part, defended by members of the Gabras family.³⁵ It could be the center we seek, but we know too little about the art of Trebizond in the twelfth century, to be able to make any valid comparisons with the beam.³⁶

Given these difficulties, it is worth taking a closer look at the details of the costumes of the participants in these miracle scenes, and at the architectural and decorative vocabulary. The kaftan of the male figures, though found in various forms elsewhere, including Constantinople itself, was particularly associated with the "borderland" areas of Cappadocia, Armenia and Georgia.³⁷ The exact attire, kaftan with embroidered lapels, the high-necked tunic, and ribboned white cap, is sometimes worn by the tax collector of Nazianzus, Julian, and always by his record keepers, in illustrations to the seventh liturgical Homily of Gregory of Nazianzus.³⁸ The fact that this particular costume is

³⁴ Rabino (1938) 34 mentions only a chapel of the "Holy Martyrs" in his list of chapels within the monastery. Nor, apparently, do any pilgrims refer to such a chapel: Braun (1975).

³⁵ On the Gabras family, see Bryer (1979).

³⁶ A chapel of St. Eustratios just South of Trebizond is attested in 1223: Janin (1975), 270; Bryer and Winfield (1985) 225.

³⁷ Ball (2005), 62–69. It is also the costume worn by the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste in Yilanli kilise (11th century): Thierry (1963) 98–100; pls. 45–48 and color pl. III. According to Ball, the kaftan was worn by men and women both, which is not the case on the beam. See also Bernardini (1993).

³⁸ Galavaris (1969), esp. 42–46 and the relevant plates. For color, see Galavaris (1995) pl. 148 (Sinai gr. 339, fol. 341), and Pelekanides et al. (1974–91) 2: fig. 304 (Athos, Panteleimon 6, fol. 77v). The hat of the woman in scene 4 on the beam can be compared to that worn by Eirene Gabras in the frontispiece miniature to a Gospel book dated 1067, commissioned by her husband Theodore Gabras; the Gospel is now on Mount Sinai: Theodore's kaftan too is comparable to that worn by some male figures on the beam. Sinai gr. 172: Weitzmann and Galavaris (1990), no. 29.

not found in other contexts makes it hard to determine whether the costume has geographical/ethnic meaning (Nazianzus, where Julian served, is in Cappadocia), or whether it constitutes a specific official costume.³⁹

Many of these elements of costume are perhaps too widespread to provide reliable clues to their origin. But there are differences that should be noted. The women's robes on the beam lack the geometric or figural designs, and the jewelled collars and hems, that are so characteristic of Constantinopolitan dress; none of the male garments depicted on the beam has the embroidered patterns or gold armbands usual for such dress. And there are unusual details to be found in the attire of some of the women: the soft turbans worn by the female patients in scenes 1, 9 and 11, the deep black turbans worn by the nuns in scene 10, the buttons that close their maphoria, the high necklines of their under-tunics, and above all the exquisite long dress worn by the woman standing watch over the bed in scene 4 (*color plate 9*). This garment is made of white cotton or linen woven with rippling streaks of pink and blue. It is belted with a wide red belt from which fall tassels or pleats. It has no counterpart, that I know, in Constantinopolitan dress, or, for that matter, "borderland" dress.

A very similar garment appears, however, in a twelfth-century Sinai manuscript of the *Heavenly Ladder* (Sinai gr. 418): the miniature on fol. 279r illustrates John Klimakos' 29th Logos on Tranquillity (apatheia) with, at the right, four lay figures, two women and two men (*color plate 10*).⁴⁰ Both women wear white hats (probably too stiff to be turbans), and cloaks closed over their chest with a pair of buttons, like the nuns on the beam. Most importantly, one of the women wears a long white tunic streaked with pink, a fabric almost exactly the same as that worn by the woman in scene 4 on the beam. In addition, the architecture that divides the scenes on the beam, consisting of columns

For a fine color plate of the pair of miniatures (which are now in St. Petersburg: National Public Library gr. 291, fols. 2v–3r), see Cutler and Spieser (1996) 328–29 figs. 258–59. On Theodore Gabras, see Bryer (1979) 175. For headdresses, see also Emmanuel (1993–94).

³⁹ Parani (2003) 97 prefers to see it as an official costume, and I would agree. At Elmali kilise in Cappadocia, for example, Eustratios himself wears the ribboned hat, presumably in his related capacity as *skrinarios*.

⁴⁰ Weitzmann and Galavaris (1990) 153–62, esp. 160 and fig. 629. For a color plate of this miniature, see Galey (1980) fig. 155. On the lay presence in this manuscript, see Ševčenko (2009), 58–60.

decorated with roundels containing small crosses, is paralleled in the frontispiece to the Sinai Klimakos manuscript (fol. 2r), as well as on the Twelve Feasts icon.⁴¹

The Sinai Klimakos manuscript and its relative, the Homilies of Gregory manuscript in Paris (B.N. gr. 550), have recently been attributed by Alexander Saminsky to the region of Antioch, on the basis of similarities with Georgian manuscripts known for sure to have been produced there.⁴² While there is little stylistic connection between our beam and these manuscripts, some details that they share make the Antioch possibility one worth pursuing.

Antioch was a sophisticated urban center with a population of Greeks, Armenians and Syrians in addition to the Norman overlords or returning Byzantines, and surrounding the city were a number of Greek, Syrian, Georgian, Armenian and Latin monasteries.⁴³ The orientaling elements of the costumes—kaftans, turbans, the buttons and the special hats of the men—make sense in that milieu.⁴⁴ The row of gold circles adorning the hem of Eustratios' tunic looks very much like that used in a Greek Lectionary of Antiochene origin: Athos Kutlumis 61.⁴⁵ The uppermost course of the background wall in scene 3, with its

⁴¹ Weitzmann and Galavaris (1990) 153 and fig. 587. On the beam: Nelson and Collins (2006), no. 20.

⁴² Saminsky (2006); Saminsky (2007). The scribe of the Sinai and Paris manuscripts has been discussed by D'Aiuto (1997) esp. 7–25. D'Aiuto adds a manuscript of the Homilies of Basil in Venice (Bibl. Marciana gr. Z 57) to the oeuvre of this scribe, whom he dates to the second half of the 12th century, provenance unknown. For other manuscripts surely from the Antioch area, see also Brock (1990). It is perhaps worth noting that the unusual illustrated manuscript of the *Passio* of the Holy Five now in Turin (see p. 275 above) was purchased in 1437 in Alexandretta near Antioch.

⁴³ Cahen (1940) 333–35, 527–60; Todt (2004) 171–90; Ciggaar and Metcalf (2006); Dagon (1976) esp. 205–8; Runciman (1956). According to Todt (182 and 186), the Arabic-speaking Greek-Orthodox Melkites were the dominant group in Antioch at this time. Norman influence has been postulated for the frontispiece page of the Sinai Klimakos manuscript (fol. 2r), with its heraldic lions (see note 40 above); Weitzmann and Galavaris (1990) 27–28.

⁴⁴ There was a silk workshop near the cathedral church of St. Peter in Antioch, and Antioch was apparently known for its moiré silk: Cahen (1940) 475, with sources. The white tunic depicted on the beam and in the manuscript is not, however, moiré, at least as the term is understood today. From Mme. Sophie Desrosiers I learned, thanks to the kind intercession of David Jacoby, that “lampas brochés d'or” were woven in Antioch in the 12th century (email), but our fabric is intriguing for its very lack of gold, and for its watery design (see the discussion below).

⁴⁵ Pelekanides et al. (1974–91) 1: figs. 300–304; Saminsky (2006) 23 and figs. 19–22. Saminsky argues for the miniatures in the Kutlumis Lectionary being integral to the manuscript and thus of the same date (1065–70).

dramatic black/white design, is reminiscent of some decorative tiles from Syria, contemporary in date to the beam.⁴⁶

Yet there is no record of a sanctuary dedicated to Eustratios or to the Holy Five in this region, and at present an attribution to Antioch can be no more than one hypothesis among several. Perhaps the striking female dress with its streaks of color, which is found both on the beam and in the Sinai manuscript, could serve to guide us further. The material, not depicted in other Byzantine works of art, could conceivably be “ikat”, a way of dyeing yarn before it is woven—rather like tie-dyeing—that produces a fabric characterized by watery, arrow-like streaks. Ikat textiles were produced in cotton in Yemen in the tenth century (*color plate 11*), and the technique seems to have spread within the Islamic world and to have been imitated in Egypt in linen.⁴⁷ But the surviving Egyptian textiles of the later Fatimid period tend to be strongly striped and/or adorned with figured tapestry roundels in the Coptic manner: no Egyptian specimen seems to resemble the fabric depicted on the iconostasis beam and the manuscript as closely as do the early Yemenite examples.⁴⁸ It is impossible, therefore, to narrow down the origin of the beam any further on the basis of this detail alone: the most we can say at present is that the fabric suggests a milieu familiar with an Islamic weaving technique that is quite unlike that of regular Byzantine or Byzantinizing textiles.⁴⁹ Perhaps the publication of more eleventh–twelfth-century Islamic textiles of lesser rank, not just those adorned with tiraz bands and roundels, will lead to further clarification as to the origin of these lovely garments.⁵⁰

The Sinai templon beam is unusual, perhaps unique, on several counts. First, it is our only known painted hagiographic cycle devoted exclusively to posthumous miracles. Second, the form of the cycle is unique, painted as it is on a templon beam: only one other surviving

⁴⁶ Evans and Wixom (1997) no. 256 (tile in the Metropolitan Museum, New York).

⁴⁷ Lamm (1937), esp. 144–56; Golombek and Gervers (1977). I wish to thank Annemarie Weyl Carr for steering me toward the technique of ikat.

⁴⁸ Golombek and Gervers (1977) 83–84, and 121 note 23 where there is a list of Egyptian ikat textiles from Fustat. See also Contadini (1998) 39–58; pl. 15.

⁴⁹ The second woman in the miniature in Sinai 418 wears a more conventional silk dress with large circular brocade designs in the Byzantine style.

⁵⁰ For literary sources regarding the places of production of Islamic textiles in the medieval period, and for a discussion of terms, see Serjeant (1972).

templon has hagiographic scenes, and none of these are miracles.⁵¹ Relatively rarely in Byzantine literature (and the same is true for Byzantine art) are a saint's posthumous miracles transmitted independent of the saint's vita: they are customarily bound to the vita text, or, when painted on icons or in fresco, are simply woven into the general narrative of his or her life.⁵² Here the focus is strictly on the miracles themselves.

It remains to consider for a moment how this illustrated miracle cycle differs from a written *miracula* text. The events are of course similar in content, as is the recounting of the miracles one after the other, almost without break (on the beam the Deesis briefly interrupts the sequence like an inserted prayer), with a positive value given to repetitiveness, sign of repeated success. But while the miracle accounts were read aloud at a sanctuary over a period of time, and were dependent on someone being there to read them to the public, the beam is able to present the miracles directly to the observer, without intermediary. Furthermore, in its proper location, crowning the columns of the templon screen, the templon beam acts in space instead of time: in conjunction with the sanctuary walls, it becomes part of a protective container for the relic itself, closing it off from the rest of the church but revealing, through its painted program, the power of the relic that lies inside.⁵³ With the miracles on this beam separated by arches painted to look like enamel or metalwork, and the golden disks adorning the spandrels and frame like gems, the beam can be seen to act as one face of a large and precious reliquary.

Many of the questions raised by this work of art remain unresolved: much as we would like to think that we can rely entirely on internal

⁵¹ A templon beam on Mount Sinai contains 3 scenes from the life of St. Nicholas (no posthumous miracles) in addition to feast scenes and saints: Ševčenko (1983) 31–32 no. 5; Weitzmann (1984) 68–69, fig. 3; Weitzmann (1992) 704–12, esp. 710–11, pl. 390. Others, such as that of John the Baptist, are known from only from texts: see Ševčenko (1992) esp. 57–61.

⁵² There are some fresco cycles that separate the miracles from the rest of the saint's life, e.g. those of George, and of Kosmas and Damian, in the Anargyroi church in Kastoria (late 12th century): see the plan in Pelekanides and Chatzidakis (1985) 24–25 (nos. 102–5, 121–24). For an illustrated set of miracles of Kosmas and Damian in a manuscript contemporary with these frescoes, see Athos Panteleimon 2, fol. 197r: Pelekanides et al. (1974–91) 2: fig. 278. For a useful list of hagiographic cycles, though without discussion of miracles cycles per se, see Gouma-Peterson (1985).

⁵³ On many interesting aspects of the templon, see Gerstel (1999), and Gerstel (2006).

evidence, the fact is that to understand this painted cycle properly we still need a text. We can only hope that one day a written account of the *Miracula* of St. Eustratios will emerge, perhaps in Armenian, Georgian, Syriac or Arabic, to explain the unidentified scenes on the beam, and to give us a clearer idea where these miracles took place and who was their audience, and where the beam itself may have been painted. Until then, this miracle cycle, however compelling, floats without a historical context.

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