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Icons and the Object of Pilgrimage in Middle Byzantine Constantinople

ANNEMARIE WEYL CARR

The *Diegesis* of the famous icon of the Virgin of Kykkos includes a story of a painter-monk named Iakovos.¹ In his arduous pilgrimage to the icon of Kykkos, Iakovos is tormented by a demon of doubt that compares his own paintings with the famed icon of Kykkos. We quickly recognize in Iakovos's self-consciousness of his art the fact that he is a modern figure, an interpolation into the old *Narrative*. We are far slower to query his act of pilgrimage. Pilgrimage to a great icon of the Mother of God seems thoroughly Byzantine. But is it? My purpose is to probe what we know about icons as the object of pilgrimage in Byzantium, in the interest of asking what we can learn about pilgrimage from the objects to which it was directed. The fulcrum of my inquiry will be the big cults of the Mother of God in Constantinople. They are not unproblematic, for they may prove to have been exceptional, not exemplary, of Byzantium's cults. I have chosen them nonetheless because the Marian cults have been central to my preconceptions of pilgrimage in Byzantium. They were equally central, I suspect, to the preconceptions of the scholars upon whom I have drawn, and the conceptions of these scholars, in turn, rested upon the reports of yet earlier western Europeans who actually made pilgrimages to Byzantium in medieval times. Central as these cults seem to have been, they offer us remarkably little to look at. We do not know what icons were displayed at their sites, or how those icons looked. What does this absence tell us about icons as pilgrimage objects?

Characteristically, as in the case of the Panagia of Kykkos, I have taken as the sign of an icon's pilgrimage status the existence of icons that replicate it. If an icon is replicated in

This article is based on a paper of the same name that I read at the Dumbarton Oaks Symposium on 5 May 2000. I am indebted to Alice-Mary Talbot for the opportunity to participate in the symposium, and I owe thanks as always to the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies for the help of the library and facilities in pursuing my research.

¹ Ephraim the Athenian, *A Narrative of the Founding of the Holy Monastery of Kykkos and the History of the Miraculous Icon of the Mother of God*, trans. A. Jacovljević, ed. N. Christodoulou (Nicosia, 1996), 53–54, 93–94. The translation is based on the edition of 1918; the episode with Iakovos had not yet been added to the story in the first printed version of 1751 by Ephraim the Athenian, *Ἡ Περιγραφή τῆς σεβασμίας καὶ βασιλικῆς Μονῆς τοῦ Κύκκου, ἥτοι Διήγησις περὶ τῆς θαυματουργοῦ ἁγίας Εἰκόνης τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου τῆς λεγομένης Κυκκιωτίσσης* (Venice, 1751), and it does not occur in the earlier, manuscript versions of the *Diegesis*: see C. Chatzepsaltis, “Τὸ ἀνέκδοτο Κείμενο τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρίνου Κώδικος 176 (366). Παραδόσεις καὶ Ἱστορία τῆς Μονῆς Κύκκου,” *Κυπρ.Σπ.* 14 (1950): 39–69; K. Spyridakes, “Ἡ Περιγραφή τῆς Μονῆς Κύκκου ἐπὶ τῆ Βάσει ἀνεκδότου Χειρογράφου,” *Κυπρ.Σπ.* 13 (1949): 1–28.

other icons, then its special sacred identity is visible. The greater the degree of the replicas' identity to one another, the stronger the identity of the replicated icon that stands behind them. Replication as such is as old as the cult of icons itself: already the earliest images not made by human hands, the *acheiropoieta*, had replicated themselves,² and the inclusion of what seems to be a donor on one of the Symeon tokens suggests to Gary Vikan that the token's image replicates a votive icon displayed in the shrine of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger.³ Replication served in each case to authenticate the image. Crucial for us is the nature of the authenticity that was being confirmed. The replication of the *acheiropoieta* authenticated their sacred authorship; that of the Symeon icon authenticated the clay of the token. In the replicas that interest us, the replication confirms the visual identity of a venerated painting. When did such icons of icons appear?

First, however, we should pause to consider the kind of pilgrimage envisaged here. Victor Turner forged the current terminology of pilgrimage.⁴ It is rooted in the metaphor of the journey, of "being on the way" toward a transformative (in)sight. Capacious as his paradigm is, it is inevitably both late and Western, and I should like to suggest instead a paradigm derived from a ninth-century Byzantine narrative about a major pilgrimage site. This is the story of the miracle at Chonai.⁵ The story is clearly intended to give pilgrimage status to a great site, but I think it also offers us a paradigm of the pilgrim, in the figure of its protagonist, Archippos. Archippos is not in any literal sense on a journey. Instead, he is in a state of veneration: for sixty years he has tended the shrine of the Archangel Michael. This is his pilgrimage. It culminates when he is invited to avail himself of the access that his loyalty has earned him, and to come into the very presence of the archangel: "Rise, just soul," the Archangel bids him, ". . . take the access offered you, and come towards me."⁶ Now, with synaesthetic intensity, he adores the mighty presence of holy power. More than one who traveled, the Byzantine pilgrim was a *proskynetes*, one who venerated; the critical movement was over the threshold of access to the one venerated. The space claimed was one less of distance than of presence. Though possible as a metaphor, the journey as such seems to have played a fairly small role in the imaginative terminology of Byzantine pilgrimage, while access and the craving for it played a large one.⁷ Already in middle Byzan-

² See E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende*, TU 118 (Leipzig, 1899), 40–60, 123*–134*, 3**–28** on the Kamouliana icon of Christ, and 102–96, 158*–249*, 29**–156** on the Mandylion. On the Mandylion most recently see H. Kessler, ed., *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, Villa Spelman Colloquia 6 (Bologna, 1998). On the role of icons in early Byzantium, see the effective survey of H. G. Thümmel, *Die Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bilderlehre. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Zeit vor dem Bilderstreit*, TU 139 (Berlin, 1992), 174–203.

³ G. Vikan, "Icons and Icon Piety in Early Byzantium," in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. C. Moss and K. Kiefer (Princeton, 1995), 574 and fig. 3, citing a token in the Menil collection in Houston, Texas, that includes the figure of a certain Konstantinos.

⁴ V. W. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York, 1978).

⁵ M. Bonnet, *Narratio de miraculo a Michaele Archangelo Chonis patrato, adiecto Symeonis Metaphrastae de eadem libello* (Paris, 1890); G. Peers, *Subtle Bodies. Representing Angels in Byzantium* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2001), 157–76, 179–86.

⁶ Bonnet, *Narratio*, 15:4 and 11: ἀνάστα δικαία ψυχή . . . λάβε παρρησίαν τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με. I am indebted to Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 159, for the interpretation of the word *parresia*, so basic to my understanding of the story.

⁷ The contrast between Western and Byzantine paradigms of pilgrimage will no doubt acquire sharper definition in the body of papers assembled in this volume. Defining the character of Byzantine pilgrimage has already engaged scholars fruitfully. See E. Patlagean, "Byzantium's Dual Holy Land," in *Sacred Space. Shrine, City, Land*, ed. B. Z. Kedar and R. J. Zwi Werbowski (New York, 1998), 112–26, esp. 114; E. Malamut, *Sur la*

tine times, *proskynetai* were people at shrines or mindful of them, quite regardless of the length of the literal journey that might have brought them there. Eventually, in post-Byzantine times, “pilgrimage” would denominate even so circumscribed an act as the purchase of a paper icon, for the “countless *proskynetai*” described in *Diegeseis* like that of the Kykkotissa must have been not so much actual travelers to the holy icon as people who became its venerators by buying one of the engraved replicas sold for alms by its mendicant monks. In the ensuing discussion, then, “pilgrims” will be people appealing to sites of sacred intervention, and their journeys will assume varied, even metaphorical, forms that are defined less by the act of travel than by the state of being at the place in which access is sought.

THE CONSTANTINOPOLITAN ICONS

A *locus classicus* of the Constantinopolitan pilgrimage icons is a panel of the twelfth century at Mount Sinai that shows, above thirty-six scenes of the miracles and Passion of Jesus, a sequence of five images of the Mother of God (Fig. 1).⁸ The central one, the Virgin of the Burning Bush, most probably refers to the monastery on Sinai itself,⁹ and the panel was probably commissioned for Sinai by the priest who crouches at this figure’s feet. The remaining images are all labeled with names that we associate with miracle-working images in Constantinople: Blachernitissa, Hodegetria, Hagiosoritissa, Chemevti. These images line up above an exceptionally long cycle of Jesus’ miracles: eighteen of the thirty-six vignettes show miracles. With its long sequence of miracle scenes, the icon seems to be a kind of mandala of the miraculous, a pilgrimage in paint, and it is hard not to read its four named Virgins as pilgrimage sites themselves, replicas of miracle workers marking the major Marian pilgrimage sites in the City.

The icon is not, however, so simple a piece of evidence. This is indicated already by the

route des saints byzantins (Paris, 1993), 147 and passim; P. Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient. Histoire et géographie. Des origines à la conquête arabe* (Paris, 1985); idem, “Fonction pédagogique de la littérature hagiographique d’un lieu de pèlerinage. L'exemple des Miracles de Cyr et Jean,” in *Hagiographie. Cultures et sociétés. Actes du colloque organisé à Nanterre et à Paris (2–5 mai 1979)* (Paris, 1981), 383–97; B. Menthon, *Une terre de légendes. L'Olympe de Bithynie. Ses saints, ses couvents, ses sites* (Paris, 1935). I believe it would be useful to watch more attentively the kinds of metaphors that gather around pilgrimage in Byzantium: metaphors of pilgrimage and pilgrimage itself as a metaphor. What are the Byzantine counterparts, for instance, to Marcabru’s image of the *lavador* in his great Cantiga *Pax in nomine Domini*? See E. Lommatzsch, *Provenzalisches Liederbuch. Lieder der Troubadours mit einer Auswahl biograph. Zeugnisse, Nachdichtung und Singweisen zusammengestellt* (Berlin, 1917), 15–17. The force of such metaphors was driven home to me when I discovered that the strong, visual image of pilgrimage with which Michael Psellos concludes his description of St. George Mangana in E. R. A. Sewter’s translation of the *Chronographia*—“It was as if a pilgrimage had ended, and here was the vision perfect and unparalleled”—is in fact not really Psellos’s, at all, which reads: καὶ ὡς περ ἐπὶ πεπερασμένης κινήσεως μηδὲν εἶναι τὸ ἐπέκεινα τῶν ὁραμένων ἕκαστος φέτο. See Michael Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1966), 191; Michel Psellos, *Chronographie ou histoire d'un siècle de Byzance (976–1077)*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. E. Renauld (Paris, 1928), 2:63, ¶187, lines 17–18.

⁸ G. A. Soteriou and M. Soteriou, *Eikones tes Mones Sina*, 2 vols., Collection de l’Institut français d’Athènes 100, 102 (Athens, 1956, 1958), 1: fig. 125, 2:146–47, and in color in A. Cutler and J. M. Spieser, *Byzance médiévale, 700–1204* (Paris, 1996), pl. 310. See also the fine details in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, catalogue of exhibition at the Benaki Museum, Athens, 20 October 2000–20 January 2001 (Milan, 2000), pls. 85, 87, 88.

⁹ K. Weitzmann, “*Loca Sancta* and the Representational Arts of Palestine,” *DOP* 28 (1974): 53 on the types of the Virgin associated especially with Sinai.

image of the Blachernitissa (Fig. 2). The name Blachernitissa, of course, refers to Blachernai, for centuries the most potent site of Mary's presence in Constantinople.¹⁰ It is a name that appears on icons of Mary, suggesting that they portray the icon of the Virgin that summed up the site.¹¹ But the name turns out to accompany not one but a range of iconic types, as illustrated here in Figures 2, 3, and 4. Among them this particular type, with Mary caressing a standing Child, is extremely unusual.¹² Without the name, we would not identify it with Blachernai. The name, in short, seems to invoke not an icon as such, but a site: a site whose power and charisma had not been crystallized in any one image, but could be attached by way of the name to any number of images. Certainly imperial visits to the church at Blachernai took the emperors past several venerated icons.¹³ With this, the identity of some one great pilgrimage icon at Blachernai becomes elusive.

No less complicated is the figure of the Hagiosoritissa (Fig. 6). The Hagiosoritissa is supposed by many scholars to have been the icon of Mary resident in the reliquary shrine or "Soros" at the Chalkoprateia church, the second greatest Marian church in Constantinople.¹⁴ An icon in Cyprus roughly contemporary with the Sinai one and labeled originally with the same name exhibits the same posture as is shown on the icon at Sinai,¹⁵ offering some support to the idea that the name may in fact identify a specific image in this case. Informed speculation can readily confect an icon at Chalkoprateia of much the form exhibited here, as Sirarpie Der Nersessian did on the basis of the marble relief at Dumbarton Oaks.¹⁶ This figure can readily be paired as a petitioner or intercessor with a figure of Christ, as in fact one often finds on the piers of Byzantine churches from the end of the eleventh century onward.¹⁷ The Christ in these cases is sometimes labeled "Antiphonetes," or Responder. Antiphonetes is the name linked with a famous and ancient icon housed in

¹⁰ On Blachernai see most recently C. Mango, "The Origins of the Blachernai Shrine at Constantinople," in *Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae, Split-Poreč (25 September–1 October 1994)*, 3 vols. (Vatican City–Split, 1998), 2:61–76 with earlier bibliography.

¹¹ The Virgin in a frontal orante position is labeled "Blachernitissa" on several mid-11th-century coins: see A. W. Carr, "Court Culture and Cult Icons in Middle Byzantine Constantinople," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. H. Maguire (Washington, D.C., 1997), 87 note 36. The profile orante Virgin on the Maastricht enkolpion may have been labeled "Blachernitissa": see H. C. Evans and W. D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843–1204*, catalogue of exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 11 March–6 July 1997 (New York, 1997), 166, no. 113; and an 11th-century seal published by G. Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals, 2: Numbers 1–1089*, ed. J. Nesbitt (Bern, 1984), 272, no. 522, uses the name "Blachernitissa" to label an orante Virgin with Christ *en buste* in a medallion on her breast.

¹² On this iconographic type see Nano Chatzidakis, "A Fourteenth-Century Icon of the Virgin Eleousa in the Byzantine Museum of Athens," in *Byzantine East, Latin West* (as above, note 3), 495–500, esp. 496 with discussion of an icon of this iconographic type from Bačkovovo dated 1310/11 that again bears the label "Blachernitissa."

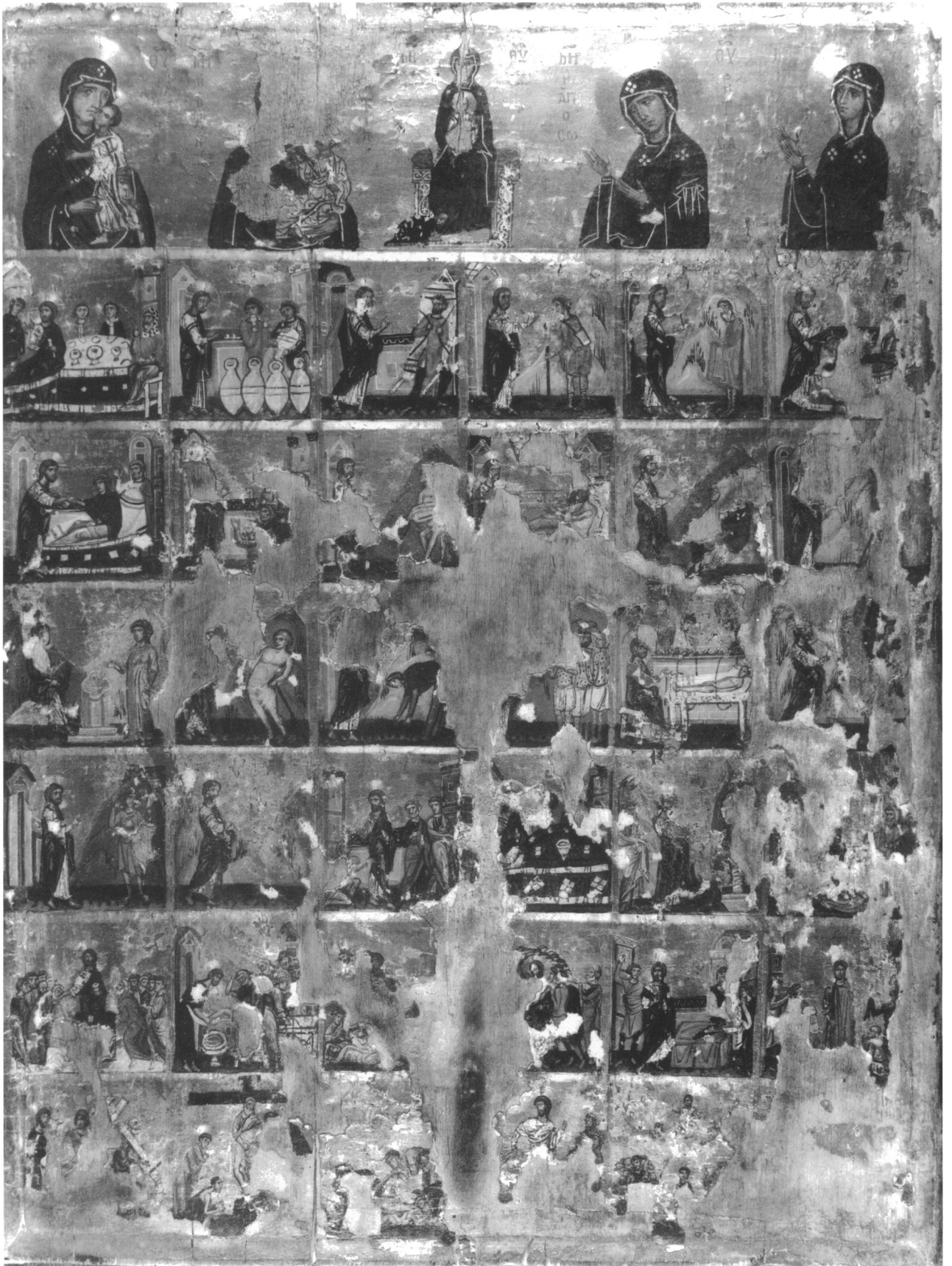
¹³ Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae*, PG 112:1021–28: whether the *episkepsin* in the reliquary church of the Virgin's veil at Blachernai was an icon is unclear, but it is clearly followed by references to other icons of the Theotokos: one outside the *metatorikion* where the silver cross is (1021C); a silver icon in the bath to the right of the piscina (1025A); another silver icon in the right apse over the piscina (1021B); and a marble icon from whose hands water flows (1028A).

¹⁴ S. Der Nersessian, "Two Images of the Virgin in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection," *DOP* 14 (1960): 77–78.

¹⁵ A. Papageorgiou, *Icons of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1991), 9, pl. 3; S. Sophocleous, *Icons of Cyprus, 7th–20th Century* (Nicosia, 1994), 77, no. 4, pl. 4.

¹⁶ Der Nersessian, "Two Images of the Virgin," 77–86.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 81, citing especially the eastern piers of the church of the Panagia tou Arakos at Lagoudera, Cyprus, on which a figure of Mary in the profile orante posture faces a figure of Christ labeled ὁ Ἀντιφωνήτης. See A. Kazhdan and H. Maguire, "Byzantine Hagiographical Texts as Sources on Art," *DOP* 45 (1991): 15 and figs. 25–26.



1 Icon with five icons of the Mother of God and scenes of the miracles and Passion of Christ, Mount Sinai (photo: Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)



- 2 Icon with five icons of the Mother of God, detail: The Blachernitissa, Mount Sinai (photo: Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)



- 3 Silver two-thirds miliaresion of Constantine IX with the Mother of God Blachernitissa, Dumbarton Oaks



- 4 Lead seal of John Πρωτοπρόεδρος καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλικῆς σακέλλης, with the Mother of God Blachernitissa, Zacos Collection, Bern (after G. Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 2 [Bern, 1984], 522)



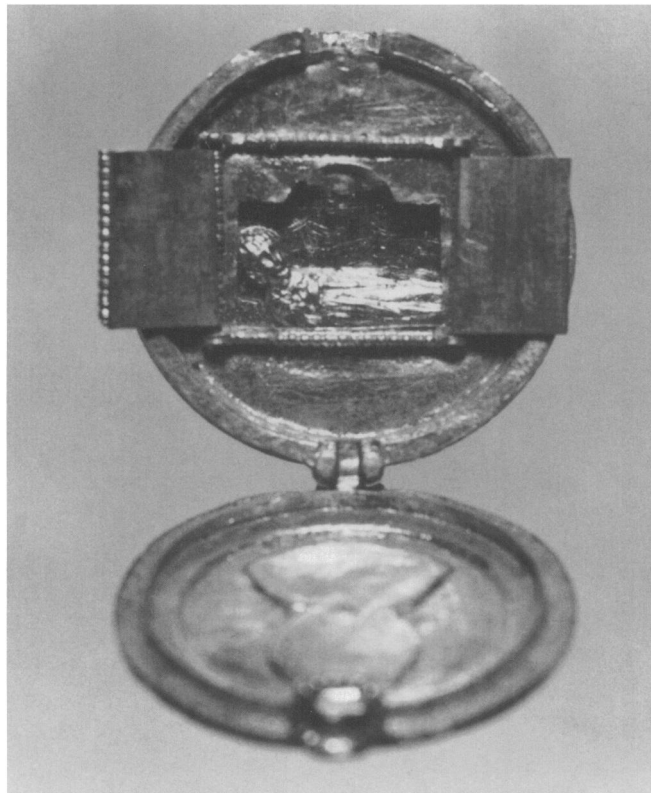
5 Aspron trachy nomisma of Theodore Doukas, with the Mother of God Hagiosoritissa on the obverse, Dumbarton Oaks



6 Icon with five icons of the Mother of God, detail: The Hagiosoritissa, Mount Sinai (photo: Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)



7a Enamel enkolpion with St. Demetrios, exterior, Dumbarton Oaks



7b Enamel enkolpion with St. Demetrios, interior showing the saint in his tomb, Dumbarton Oaks



8 Icon of the Mother of God Zoodochos Pege, Byzantine Museum, Nicosia (photo: Cultural Foundation of Archbishop Makarios III of Cyprus)



9 *Hagioi Theodoroi*, Mistra. Line drawing of fresco of the Mother of God Zoodochos Pege (after G. Millet, *Monuments byzantins de Mistra* [Paris, 1910], pl. 90.2)

its own chapel at Chalkoprateia.¹⁸ One could, then, imagine them united—the Hagiosoritissa and Antiphonetes—as responsive name icons of Chalkoprateia.

But problems quickly arise. First, though many pilgrims went to the Chalkoprateia church to venerate Mary, not a single pilgrim speaks of a great icon of Mary there;¹⁹ pilgrims speak instead of Mary's relics, and about the icon of Christ Antiphonetes. Antiphonetes in this case, however, means "Guarantor": the icon guaranteed a series of loans for a merchant named Theodore. The Guarantor stood above the altar of its own chapel, and so in a central place that would not readily accommodate a second icon of Mary.²⁰ The Guarantor had a long history of attentive visitation, and though we do not hear of deliberate votive journeys to it, it is far more nearly a pilgrimage object in its own right than an icon of Mary at Chalkoprateia. Second, the name Hagiosoritissa is not exclusively wedded to this image. Numismatic images labeled Hagiosoritissa show Mary not only as a profile but as a frontal orante,²¹ in some cases spreading her arms over a circuit of walls (Fig. 5).²² Far more than Chalkoprateia, Blachernai was linked by both legend and location with the walls of Constantinople. Blachernai, as well as the Chalkoprateia, had a Soros with Marian relics. Thus "Hagiosoritissa" could refer to the Soros not at Chalkoprateia, but at Blachernai.²³

That two of the images on the Sinai icon should refer to Blachernai is not impossible. Blachernai was a complex site. There were in fact a number of significant icons at Blachernai. We have seen that the emperors venerated several icons during their ceremonial visits in the tenth century. Though the locations, functions, and very existence of Blachernai's icons varied from one period to another, we gather that when the Sinai icon was made in the early twelfth century, there was at least one icon of special note in the Soros and one of note in the main church, one a panel painting and one a marble relief.²⁴ This said, however, it was only at limited periods in Blachernai's history that any of these icons assumed visibility in the pilgrimage visitation of the site. The most identifiable is the veiled icon of the "usual miracle," attested during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.²⁵ Its spectacular Friday night manifestations drew crowds—unquestionably including many pilgrims—and were reported as far away as western Europe.²⁶ However, Friday night spectacles had been a feature of Blachernai for centuries already, centering not upon icons but on other

¹⁸ C. Mango, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen, 1959), 142–48; Kazhdan and Maguire, "Byzantine Hagiographical Texts," 15–16.

¹⁹ As is in fact noted by Der Nersessian, "Two Images of the Virgin," 78.

²⁰ Mango, *The Brazen House*, 146. Cf. the paper by J. Cotsonis in this volume.

²¹ The frontal orante labeled "Hagiosoritissa" is seen in the coins minted during the 13th century in Thessalonike for Theodore Doukas: see M. Hendy, *DOC* 4.2:551 and pl. xxxviii.

²² T. Bertelé, "La Vergine aghiosoritissa nella numismatica bizantina," *REB* 15 (1958): 233–34. For an especially impressive reproduction of a coin with the Hagiosoritissa spreading her arms over a circuit of walls, see Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God*, 369, no. 53, a hyperpyron of Andronikos II Palaiologos now in the Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 31544.

²³ This is suggested by N. P. Ševčenko, "Virgin Hagiosoritissa," *ODB* 3:2171.

²⁴ K. N. Ciggaar, "Une description de Constantinople dans le *Tarragonensis* 55," *REB* 53 (1995): 121–22, in which a Latin priest visiting Constantinople around 1100 speaks of a "Dei genetricis sancta et venerabilis ycona aurea" in the Soros that makes the weekly miracle, and a "Dei genetricis ycona marmorea non manufacta sed nutu divino operata"—that is, an *acheiropoietos*—in the main basilica.

²⁵ See J. Cotsonis, "The Virgin with the 'Tongues of Fire' on Byzantine Lead Seals," *DOP* 48 (1994): 221–27, and V. Grumel, "Le 'miracle habituel' de Notre-Dame des Blachernes à Constantinople," *EO* 30 (1931): 129–46.

²⁶ Grumel, "Le 'miracle habituel,'" 129–35.

events: a weekly procession to Chalkoprateia;²⁷ weekly meetings of the confraternity overseeing the healing bath;²⁸ and the imperial ceremonies at the *Soros*.²⁹ It is these, and not the “usual miracle,” that form the staple of pilgrims’ accounts of the site. Anthony of Novgorod, for instance, speaks only of relics there.³⁰ He does describe the site as “Blachernai on which the holy spirit descended.”³¹ This is often regarded as a reference to the “usual miracle.” Michael Psellos had said of the “usual miracle” that it was “a true prodigy and indeed the descent of the holy spirit.”³² The belief that Blachernai was a place where the holy spirit descended makes its appearance as early as the tenth-century *Lives* of Andrew Salos and Eirene of Chrysobalanton,³³ but in neither of these cases is there any intimation that its descent was associated with an icon. Thus it seems that Blachernai had been a site of ceremonies evoking the spirit’s descent for centuries. Only at a certain phase of its history, however, had this descent been embodied in a ritual centered upon a particular icon. We do not know how that icon looked, and we have no evidence that it was ever regarded as constituting the source or even the symbol of Blachernai’s special potency. The strength of the Mother of God of Blachernai far superseded any one icon or symbol of her presence. It is impossible to identify *an* icon in the images bearing its label. It is hard in these circumstances to see in the Sinai icon a portrait of *the* icon—or even *the icons*—that constituted the object of pilgrimage to Blachernai. “Blachernitissa,” and even “Hagiosoritissa,” seem far more likely to evoke sites—as the Virgin of the Bush between them also does—than to quote specific great icons.

The third of the four named icons is the Chemevti. An icon of similar name, meaning enameled, is cited in Constantine VII’s *Book of Ceremonies*,³⁴ but we know nothing more about it and no pilgrim account speaks of it.

This leaves us with the Hodegetria.³⁵ The image on the Sinai icon exhibits the posture we identify with the great icon of that name, and pilgrims from the twelfth century onward offer us ample evidence about the Hodegetria’s prominent public life. A particularly good description of the weekly procession of the Hodegetria is given by the Latin author of a description of Constantinople from around 1100.³⁶ He describes the hymns and crowds, tells us that other icons joined in the procession, preceding the Hodegetria like handmaidens (*quasi famulas*),³⁷ and says that when the procession passed the chapel of Christ—

²⁷ N. P. Ševčenko, “Icons and the Liturgy,” *DOP* 45 (1991): 50–52.

²⁸ A. Dmitrievskii, *Opisanie liturgicheskikh rukopisei*, 3 vols. (repr. Hildesheim, 1965), 2:1042–52, drawing on Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Coislin 213, of 1027.

²⁹ See note 13 above.

³⁰ Anthony of Novgorod, trans. George Majeska, typescript.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Grumel, “Le ‘miracle habituel,’” 137: παράδοξον καὶ τοῦ θείου πνεύματος ἀντικρυς κάθοδος.

³³ L. Rydén, “The Vision of the Virgin at Blachernae and the Feast of Pokrov,” *AB* 94 (1976): 63–82; J. O. Rosenqvist, *The Life of St. Irene Abbess of Chrysobalanton. A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Notes and Indices* (Uppsala, 1986), 58–59.

³⁴ Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *Constantine VII Porphyrogenète. Livre des cérémonies*, ed. A. Vogt, 2d ed., 2 vols. (Paris, 1967), 1:158.

³⁵ On this great icon see most recently C. Angelidi and T. Papamastorakis, “The Veneration of the Virgin Hodegetria and the Hodegon Monastery,” in *Mother of God* (as above, note 8), 373–87, and R. Cormack, *Painting the Soul. Icons, Death Masks and Shrouds* (London, 1997), 58–64 and *passim*.

³⁶ Ciggaar, “Une description,” 127, lines 349–76.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 127, line 359.

perhaps that of the Responder nearby at the Chalkoprateia—the Hodegetria of its own accord would bow to her son.³⁸ That other icons joined the Hodegetria's procession is clear from various indications.³⁹ At the same time, with its retinue of what must have been other icons of Mary—since they were handmaidens, not male retainers—the Hodegetria's procession reminds one of the procession on the fifteenth of August in Rome, which was joined on its journey toward the meeting of Christ and Mary by the Marian icons of the eighteen Diakoniae of Rome.⁴⁰ At the culmination of this procession the great Marian icon of the *Salus Populi Romani* bowed to the icon of her son. The detail of the Hodegetria's bow is recorded only in the one text of 1100, and it seems to be a reflection of the author's own, Western understanding of an urban icon procession. It implies that the Hodegetria's procession became linked in his mind with the icon processions of Rome.

In both Rome and Constantinople, the pageantry of the icon processions became a magnet for pilgrims. But there is a difference. Scholars have suggested a genesis for the icon processions of Rome that was deeply rooted in the uneasy relationship of city and papacy within Rome itself.⁴¹ We have no comparable insight at all into the genesis of the Hodegetria's procession. We have simply assumed that the Hodegetria was a great pilgrimage object that was paraded at weekly intervals in the city. In fact, we have no idea how the procession originated. It is altogether unclear how the Hodegetria itself was related to the healing spring at the monastery that housed it; we do not know how—if it was related to the spring—it liberated itself from the spring to become an object in its own right; perhaps above all in the context of the current inquiry, we cannot say whether the procession was directed initially to a pilgrim audience or was colonized by pilgrim attention as time went on. The Sinai icon is very early among the sources we have about the Hodegetria's autonomy as a public figure, and it is not at all clear at this point how that autonomy emerged.

In sum, the Sinai icon reflects a bouquet of epithets and images honoring Mary, so suggesting icons that served not as accessories to a site but as objects of pilgrimage in their own right as the icon of Kykkos was. Yet it is only the Hodegetria that can be identified as an icon of an icon; the other images seem to function above all through their names, which refer less to images than to sites. What, then, can we learn from them about icons as objects of pilgrimage?

ICONS AND PILGRIMAGE

That icons were densely woven into the rituals of pilgrimage in the Byzantine world is perfectly clear. One sees this in at least five ways. First, the one we most often think of is the icon as a marker, identifying a sacred person or place. This is exemplified by the many shrines that were marked with an icon of the person whose relics were venerated there.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 127, lines 370–75.

³⁹ See the reference in the narrative of the Maria Romaia charging this icon's confraternity with the obligation of bringing it to join the other icons in the Tuesday processions of the Hodegetria in E. von Dobschütz, "Maria Romaia. Zwei unbekannte Texte," *BZ* 12 (1903): 202.

⁴⁰ H. Belting, "Icons and Roman Society in the Twelfth Century," in *Italian Church Decoration of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*, ed. W. Tronzo (Baltimore, Md., 1989), 27–41.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 40 and *passim*.

Paradigmatic was the shrine of Artemios in St. John Oxeia in Constantinople, with icons of Artemios and Christ at the top of the stairs leading to the crypt where the relics were.⁴² The icon of Artemios marked the way to the saint literally, and also psychologically by putting visitors in mind of the saint whom they would meet in very fact in the entombed relics below. Thus clothed in his image, Artemios could meet his petitioners more compellingly. In one instance a miraculous cure was described as being effected by way of the icon itself rather than by the relics below.⁴³ But usually it is the relics that supplicants seek; the animated figure of the saint himself, recognizable by his kinship to the icon, appears to them as they sleep there and effects the often starkly physical cure that they seek. A similar disposition of icon and relic seems to have characterized the shrine of St. Nikon of Sparta;⁴⁴ the icon of Hosios Loukas is over the site where his relics were lodged;⁴⁵ and funerary icons, too, performed in this way. How intimately image and relic might be associated is illustrated by the fourteenth-century St. Athanasios, patriarch of Constantinople, whose icon was painted inside his coffin lid, conjuring the compelling scenario of corpse and effigy side by side.⁴⁶

This relationship of icon to pilgrimage object might be summed up visually in the enameled lockets of St. Demetrios (Figs. 7a, b).⁴⁷ The locket bears the icon of the saint and evokes his presence. But the icon is not alone. Behind the image, inside the locket, is a relic: a relic of Demetrios's *myron* set in a model of his tomb. If the image evokes and identifies Demetrios's power, it is the relic that embodies it. It is the tomb and its *myron*, not the image, that would be the object of a pilgrimage journey. Occasionally we hear of devotees who profess that simply seeing a saint's image is contact enough for their faith, but this is rare; more often, seekers resembled the blind man at St. Athanasios's tomb. His prayer was to see the icon, but his pilgrimage brought him to the relics, and he gripped the saint's coffin as he prayed.⁴⁸ In their strong bond to the tangible relic, these Byzantine icons retain much of the referential role assigned to the images adorning pilgrim tokens in late antiquity.⁴⁹ There, too, the image put the token's owner in mind of the saint, while the material of the token effected the contact with the saint's healing power. What distinguishes the two eras is less the autonomous power of the icon than the physical division of image and material relic.

Second, icons served to disseminate the saint from the site of her or his tomb or relic. For the pilgrim, this often took the form of a remembrance, as in the tokens that pilgrims

⁴² *The Miracles of St. Artemios: A Collection of Miracle Stories by an Anonymous Author of Seventh-Century Byzantium*, ed. V. Crisafulli and J. Nesbitt (Leiden, 1997), 17 and passim. See also C. Mango, "On the History of the *Templon* and the Martyrion of St. Artemios at Constantinople," *Zograf* 10 (1979): 40–43, and P. Maas, "Artemioskult in Konstantinopel," *BNJ* 1 (1920): 377–80.

⁴³ *The Miracles*, 218–19, miracle 43. Here a mother thanks the icon for her son's cure.

⁴⁴ Kazhdan and Maguire, "Byzantine Hagiographical Texts," 14–15; D. F. Sullivan, *The Life of Saint Nikon* (Brookline, Mass., 1987), 215, in which a monk seeking Nikon's intervention sees himself at the top of the western stairway of Nikon's monastery, where there are icons of Nikon himself and Christ Antiphonetes.

⁴⁵ Kazhdan and Maguire, "Byzantine Hagiographical Texts," 15.

⁴⁶ A. M. Talbot, *Faith Healing in Late Byzantium. The Posthumous Miracles of the Patriarch Athanasios I of Constantinople by Theoktistos the Stoudite* (Brookline, Mass., 1983), 26.

⁴⁷ Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium*, 167–68, nos. 116, 117, with earlier bibliography, esp. André Grabar, "Un nouveau reliquaire de saint Démétrios," *DOP* 8 (1954): 305–13.

⁴⁸ Talbot, *Faith Healing*, 81.

⁴⁹ See Vikan, "Icons and Icon Piety," 573: "the image brings the saint, and the blessed substance—and not the icon itself—brings the cure."

took with them.⁵⁰ Once again, such remembrances could often in themselves serve as potent objects, saving their owner from the vicissitudes of life or of the journey. But they were enabled in this by their contact—the pilgrim's actual contact, or the tokens' implicit contact—with the saint's presence at the pilgrimage site from which they were brought. Along with tokens, painted panels—and eventually engraved prints—served a similar purpose.

Third, the icon could function as a votive gift or gesture. This might take the form of a graffito incised into an image already at the pilgrimage site, like those studied by Nicole Thierry and Catherine Jolivet-Lévy in Cappadocia.⁵¹ The image was, after all, a marker, which one could appropriate with one's own mark. Or it might be a new icon given to the site to mark in perpetuity one's own being there.⁵²

Both the remembrance—whether pilgrim token or painted icon—and the votive image play into the fourth role of the image in pilgrimage, and this is as a stimulus to pilgrimage. Knowing through an image about a saint or an exceptional intervention could prompt a pilgrimage.⁵³ This was true in a literal sense. But we often see it metaphorically, too. Thus, among the most gripping stories of an icon's prompting pilgrimage is that of St. Leontios of Jerusalem.⁵⁴ On the icon shelf of a priest who took him in as a wandering seeker, Leontios saw a small icon of the infant Christ. The icon moved him profoundly, prompting him to take it with him to a lonely mountaintop, where he spent three days of agonizing asceticism beseeching Christ's direction in his spiritual quest. The icon became the metaphor for Leontios's decision to redirect his spiritual journey. A similar role is played by the icon of Symeon the New Theologian in several posthumous miracles that can be exemplified by the story of a middle-aged man of substance led by a pilgrimage to abandon his life in the world and become a monk in Symeon's monastery.⁵⁵ But soon a demon of

⁵⁰ Middle Byzantine pilgrim tokens are far less numerous than late antique ones, though 10th-century Symeon tokens are discussed by Vikan, "Icons and Icon Piety," 576, and a group of some 170 surviving glass medallions, many of Venetian manufacture, are often identified as pilgrim tokens. On this latter group of objects see D. Buckton, "The Mass-Produced Byzantine Saint," in *The Byzantine Saint*, ed. S. Hackel (London, 1981), 187–88; M. Vickers, "A Note on Glass Medallions in Oxford," *JGS* 16 (1974): 18–21; H. Wentzel, "Das Medallion mit dem hl. Theodor und die venezianischen Glasplasten im byzantinischen Stil," in *Festschrift für Erich Meyer* (Hamburg, 1959), 50–67, who gives a catalogue of 157 examples; and M. C. Ross, *DOCat* 1:87–91 on the medallions in the Dumbarton Oaks collection. D. Buckton, ed., *Byzantium. Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections*, catalogue of exhibition at the British Museum, London, 1994 (London, 1994), 187–88, nos. 202 and 203, includes 12th-century pilgrim ampullae from Jerusalem, but while it can well be argued that such objects spring from a Middle Eastern tradition, their 12th-century revival surely depended more heavily upon the Latin revival of pilgrimage to Jerusalem than upon Byzantine habit.

⁵¹ N. Thierry, "Remarques sur la pratique de la foi d'après les peintures des églises rupestres de Cappadoce," in *Artistes, artisans et production artistique au Moyen-âge. Colloque international*, ed. X. Barral y Altet, 3 vols. (Paris, 1990), 3:703–30; C. Jolivet-Lévy, "Çarıklı Kilise, l'église de la précieuse croix à Göreme (Korama), Cappadoce: une fondation des Mélissènoi?" in *EYΨYXIA. Mélanges offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler*, 2 vols., *Byzantina Sorbonensia* 16 (Paris, 1998), 1:301–12.

⁵² See the many icons at Sinai showing the standing Virgin with the Child before her chest accompanied by a standing figure that Kurt Weitzmann regards as likely to have been votives: Weitzmann, "*Loca Sancta*," 53, figs. 48–51.

⁵³ Certainly this was the case in post-Byzantine times with the paper icons; in Byzantine times see Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos's comment that he learned of a 12th-century cure at the healing spring of the Theotokos tes Peges by seeing an icon that commemorated it: A. M. Talbot, "Epigrams of Manuel Philes on the Theotokos tes Peges and Its Art," *DOP* 48 (1994): 161 note 119.

⁵⁴ D. Tsougarakis, *The Life of Leontios Patriarch of Jerusalem. Translation, Commentary* (Leiden, 1993), 36–37.

⁵⁵ Nicéas Stethatos, "Vie de Syméon le Nouveau Théologien (949–1022)," ed. and trans. I. Hausherr and G. Horn, *OrChr* 12 (1928): 207–11.

envy overcame him, and he saw Symeon's icon taunting and making faces at him. Clearly, the man's monastic profession had been prompted by a vainglorious infatuation with his own presumed spirituality. Symeon's taunting visage showed him that he must shed his affectation and begin the pilgrimage of his monastic profession over again.

Finally, in the fifth place, we have the icon as a surrogate for pilgrimage. A beautiful example of this is offered by the story in the *Life* of St. Nikon of Sparta of the young monk who prays to Nikon before an icon in his cell that he might be relieved of a terrible illness of the jaw.⁵⁶ Thus praying, he falls asleep and sees himself standing before the icons of Nikon and Christ the Responder at the top of the western stairway in the church of Nikon's monastery. A voice from the icon of Nikon tells the youth to drink the oil from the lamp in front of it; as he reaches toward it, the lamp tips and tumbles its full contents into his mouth. As it does, he awakens and finds himself before the icon in his cell, the lamp before it still full and untouched, and his jaw healed. The icon in this case enabled the journey, as if miraculously snapping closed the locket of image on the one hand, and pilgrimage site on the other.

In each of these roles there were opportunities for the icon to mediate the efficacy of the object of pilgrimage. Often, icons at the site of a saint's relics would become themselves active, forming a focus of activity and a proof of successful contact with the saint. The oil of their lamp might prove to be inexhaustible, or curative, or fragrant;⁵⁷ the cord holding the lamp might prove to have remarkable capabilities;⁵⁸ the icons might speak;⁵⁹ the eyes might move.⁶⁰ Such manifestations were surely directly related to pilgrimage, either as responses to successful pilgrim visitations or as ploys to attract pilgrims. By the same token, images at a pilgrimage site often acquired their own stories, as the icons in Hagia Sophia did for the Russian pilgrims.⁶¹ Such embellishments show us that images were expected to be avenues of contact with the divine. In some cases, where there were not relics, an icon might come by a process of elision to stand for a site, as in the case of the icon of St. Michael the Archangel tou Eusebiou, adjacent to healing springs in Constantinople, that drew pilgrims because the oil of its lamp was regarded as thaumaturgic.⁶² But these embellishments do not tell us that the icons in question were themselves the object of the journeys that brought people to them. They were avenues or accessories to the object. An especially vivid insight into the relationship of icon and relic is offered by the *Life* of St. Theodora of Thessalonike. Already before her death, Theodora's icon flowed with fragrant oil, and in time many cures were effected by it. Recurrently, however, the accounts of the cures refer

⁵⁶ Sullivan, *The Life of Saint Nikon*, 214–16.

⁵⁷ A vivid example is offered by the lamp burning before the icon of St. Theodora of Thessalonike, cited in note 63 below.

⁵⁸ See the description of an icon of St. Stephen in Hagia Sophia by Anthony of Novgorod (as in note 30 above). Sufferers from headache could assuage their pain by wrapping around their heads the hemp from the cord that held the lamp in front of the icon.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*: see the icon of the four-fingered Christ, who scared its iconographer to death by reprimanding him.

⁶⁰ Ciggaar, "Une description," 123–24, esp. lines 207–11 with the oft-told and oft-varied story of the icon that turns its eyes to the faithful servant of a powerful man.

⁶¹ See in particular Anthony of Novgorod's descriptions of icons in Hagia Sophia, sketched on pp. 80–81 above.

⁶² Pantaleon, "Narratio Miraculorum Maximi Archangeli Michaelis," in PG 140:573–92; Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 154–56, 186–87.

back to the relics of the saint.⁶³ The icon was auxiliary to the relics; without them it would not have functioned. What, then, of that sixth kind of pilgrimage function: the icon as the object of its own pilgrimage cult?

How tantalizing the evidence about icons can be is illustrated by the cult at the church of the Virgin Pege in Constantinople, so beautifully reconstructed by Alice-Mary Talbot.⁶⁴ The components just inventoried are all there. There is the pilgrimage objective: the healing spring, placed under the care of Mary, as the healing springs of Blachernai and the Hodegon had been, as well. There are images of Christ and Mary that acquire special capabilities: as Talbot has pointed out, Leo VI's mistress Zoe is supposed to have been enabled to conceive the future Constantine VII by placing around her own body a string that had been measured around an image of the Virgin in the underground sanctuary of the Pege. There are votive images: Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos reports miracles of which he says he learned through the votive images at the shrine that recorded them. There was an identifying name for the presence of Mary at the Pege: *he Zoodochos Pege*. Natalia Teteriatnikov has shown that an image of Mary associated with that name must have begun to take shape in the years between 1306 and 1311, when the shrine was rebuilt after the stairs leading to the spring collapsed under the press of a particularly heavy crush of pilgrims, but that it was only toward the end of the century that the now-familiar iconography of the orante Virgin with the Child on her breast rising from a chalice-like fountain surrounded by swimmers emerged: an example of the image still in its formative phase is offered by the late fourteenth-century mural painting at the church of the Saints Theodore in Mistra (Fig. 9).⁶⁵ A panel painting of much the same date in Cyprus is the earliest portable icon I know that is labeled with this name (Fig. 8).⁶⁶ Its iconography is quite different, however, with Mary folding her Child to her heart above haloed, half-length forms of the apostles Peter, Paul, and John. Rather than constituting an icon of an icon, it suggests once again a case in which the power of the site is carried by way of the name. Only slowly did a consistent iconography of the Virgin of the Pege impose itself. Many of the Russian pilgrims who visited Constantinople also visited the Pege.⁶⁷ But not a single one

⁶³ On the icon see A. M. Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in Translation* (Washington, D.C., 1996), 210–11, ¶54 (online at <http://www.doaks.org/talbot7.pdf>). For the relation of its oil to the relics of the saint, see for instance the cure of a "certain distinguished and honorable woman" who "took in her hands the vessel containing the oil as if it were the blessed <Theodora> herself or one of her relics" (¶56, p. 212), or the statement of the *vita's* author that by recounting one of Theodora's miracles "I propose to make known that, just as she fulfills expediently the requests of those who come with pure *testimony of their conscience* to the abundant fountain of blessings (I am referring to her living relics, from which the grace of her miracles gushes forth like a river and encompasses all the land), and also <fulfills the requests> of those who invoke her greatly desired name from a distance, in the same way she leads those who are dubious about her blameless life away from their lack of faith in her, as out of the depths of the sea" (¶58, p. 214). Here the imagery of gushing beneficence, applicable to the oil, is applied to the relics as if to show the auxiliary role of the icon that yields the oil.

⁶⁴ Talbot, "Epigrams of Manuel Philes," 135–65.

⁶⁵ N. Teteriatnikov, "The Virgin Zoodochos Pege. The Origin of the Image," paper read at the international conference *Mother of God*, 12–14 January 2001, the Benaki Museum, Athens.

⁶⁶ Athanasios Papageorgiou, *He Autokephalos Ekklesia tes Kyprou. Katalogos tes Ektheses. The Autocephalous Church of Cyprus. Catalogue of the Exhibition*, Byzantine Museum of the Cultural Foundation of Archbishop Makarios III, Nicosia, 15 September–15 October 1995 (Nicosia, 1995), 142.

⁶⁷ G. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, DOS 19 (Washington, D.C., 1984), 325.

of them speaks of a major icon there; they all speak of the spring. All of the evidence from pilgrim visits focuses on the spring. People brought to incubate are brought to the spring; the people hurt when the throng of pilgrims caused a structural failure were crowded on stairs leading down to the spring. There were surely one if not more icons of Mary at the Pege. But the role of the image seems not to have been as an object of pilgrimage. Its importance seems to have been quite other: to clothe the capabilities of the spring in a conceivable form for those who were *not* there—to function, in short, as a stimulus to, or a surrogate for, pilgrimage.

Linking named icons to the great Marian shrines of Constantinople, as the icon at Sinai had seemed to do, has proved in the end to be unexpectedly difficult, challenging the belief that icons constituted the goal of pilgrimage in these places. They turn attention back to the pilgrimage sources to see the ways in which icons actually do relate to sites in them. I have tried to survey two kinds of sources: the reports of long-distance pilgrims, for which I am deeply indebted to Krijnie Ciggaar and George Majeska,⁶⁸ and hagiographic narratives.⁶⁹ In the inventories of the long-distance pilgrims, the accounts of icons are notable for two features. One is the degree to which the icons they cite function not as images but as objects. The icons are characterized on the one hand by stories and on the other hand—often in addition—by secretions: usually of oil, blood, or water. The icon stories eddied like leaves in autumn among the churches of the city, gathering around the icons now in one place, now in another, with minor variations, shifting as one site or another appropriated and sought distinction through them. Icons that had been attacked by Jews, icons that had spoken, icons that had wept or been rescued appear in varying avatars and are duly noted by pilgrims. Rather than the images, it is the stories that are replicable and recognizable, and it is they that lend specialness to the panels in which they come to roost. Without the stories, the panels would revert to mere images again; with them, they have the capacity to mark the special sanctity of the sites or shrines they occupy. The effluvia, in turn, concretize the blessings of that site, and it is they—not replicas of the icons—that are carried away by eager pilgrims as *memoria* and memorabilia.

It is in much this way that the icons cited by the late twelfth-century Anthony of Novgorod functioned.⁷⁰ He tells us that he kissed the Hodegetria in the palace, but otherwise, excepting his passing references to the Guarantor, the Mandylion, and an icon in the palace that spoke to a priest, the icons that figure in his account are all in Hagia Sophia. The relic of Christ's tomb slab is the first object of his veneration in Hagia Sophia; the very next is an icon: the icon of the all-holy Mother of God wounded by a Jew. Of this, Anthony reports that he kissed the blood that flowed from it. Then he describes an icon of the Mother of God that wept, the tears flowing from her eyes into those of her son. Water from her weeping was available to all for anointing. Having passed the four-fingered Christ and an icon of Boris and Gleb where painters exchange icons, he then arrives at an icon of St. Stephen with a lamp that one can draw up in front of it. People with eye afflictions bind

⁶⁸ See Ciggaar, "Une description" (as above, note 24); eadem, "Une description de Constantinople traduite par un pèlerin anglais," *REB* 34 (1976): 211–67; eadem, "Une description anonyme de Constantinople du XIIe siècle," *REB* 31 (1973): 335–53; and Majeska, *Russian Travelers*.

⁶⁹ In stalking these, one owes a great debt of gratitude to A. P. Kazhdan, *The List of Saints of the 1st–10th Centuries in a Chronological Order*, 3 vols. (unpublished typescript, Dumbarton Oaks, 1993).

⁷⁰ See the translation by George Majeska (as above, note 30).

their head with the hemp that is used to draw up the lamp, and their eyes are cured. This is followed by the icon from Beirut that bled. Recurrently, what focuses Anthony's interest and veneration is the tangible by-product of the icon—blood, water, hemp. It is this that constitutes its memory, and no doubt that was also taken home as a remembrance. To replicate the icon itself would have been gratuitous.

A comparable account is given already in the seventh century by Arculf, who reports seeing a small panel with a bust of Mary that a Jew had thrown in a privy.⁷¹ He does not say where he saw it. The icon thrown in an unseemly place is among the most recurrent stories of pilgrim lore. In this case, the icon exuded oil, of which Arculf says, "This marvelous oil proves the honor of Mary the Mother of Jesus." The oil, then, validated not the efficacy of the icon, but the honor of Mary herself. It was surely oil that Arculf took away as his pilgrim's blessing, and the oil stood as an attestation of the sanctity of Mary. As also for Anthony, a replica of the icon was not important. Its role was not as a spectacle, but as a vehicle for a physical blessing. This challenges our belief that spectacles as such—even such spectacular ones as the "usual miracle"—could serve the pilgrim as a fully meaningful goal.

Long-distance pilgrims inventoried their experiences by collection, not by item, and it is hard to say for certain whether a figure like Anthony of Novgorod was drawn to Hagia Sophia for the sake of the site as a whole or for the sake of one or more items within it, like icons. Nonetheless, it is notable—and this is the second striking aspect of the long-distance pilgrims' accounts—how rarely such pilgrims ever comment on a site for the sole sake of its icon. This is never the case with Blachernai, the Chalkoprateia, or the Pege, as we have seen; even in the case of the Hodegetria, we hear of the processions but not of votive journeys to the monastery where it was housed; and it is perhaps notable that the notorious "spurious letter of Alexios I" inventorying the holy objects of Constantinople includes no icons at all.⁷² It is only in the fourteenth century that we encounter pilgrims who clearly visited places for the sake of their icons. It is at this point that we hear of pilgrim visitations to the icon at the church of the Virgin ton Kyrou, for instance,⁷³ though the icon itself figures already in middle Byzantine texts;⁷⁴ Russian pilgrims also visit a site on the walls along the Golden Horn because an image of the Guarantor could be seen.⁷⁵

We are indebted for these written accounts to long-distance pilgrims, most of them foreigners to Byzantium. They offer invaluable documentation. The vast bulk of pilgrim traffic must, however, have been short-distance pilgrims, local inhabitants drawn by personal need to nearby points of holiness. These people did not inventory their experiences,

⁷¹ J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster, 1977), 115, ¶15.1–9.

⁷² E. Joranson, "The Spurious Letter of Emperor Alexius," *AHR* 55 (1949–50): 813–15.

⁷³ Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 329–30, citing Ignatius of Smolensk and the Russian Anonymous.

⁷⁴ Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium. Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. H. J. Magoulias (Detroit, Mich., 1984), 107, reports the dream of a certain Mavropoulos in which the icon of the Mother of God in the church of the Virgin ton Kyrou implores the military saints to protect Constantinople but finds them unwilling to do so (*Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J. van Dieten, 2 vols., CFHB 11 [Berlin, 1975], 1:190–91). Yet far earlier is an incident in which St. Artemios cures an ailing child whose mother had taken him to the church of the Mother of God ton Kyrou, on the grounds that—as St. Artemios explains to her—"Christ our God, born of the Theotokos, this very One heals you." See *The Miracles of St. Artemios* (as above, note 42), 98–101, miracle 12. An icon may have provided a focus for such petitions at the church ton Kyrou.

⁷⁵ Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 356–60.

and we must rely for glimpses of them upon other kinds of texts. Saints' lives offer vivid insights into religious behavior, as we have already seen in cases drawn from the *vitae* of St. Theodora of Thessalonike, St. Nikon of Sparta, and St. Leontios of Jerusalem; especially valuable are the compilations of miracle stories that gathered around healing shrines like those of Sts. Artemios, Nikon of Sparta, Loukas of Stiris, Symeon the New Theologian, or, later, St. Eugenios in Trebizond.⁷⁶ For all their documentary vividness, however, these sources have significant drawbacks. They are often sketchy, barely describing the journeys either of the saints' devotees or of the saints themselves when they visited holy sites: Cyril the Philotee's biographer, for example, tells us that Cyril went each Friday to Blachernai.⁷⁷ But he does not explain with any specificity what drew him there, making it impossible to guess whether his goal was a liturgy, a spectacle, a meeting of a confraternity, or the opportunity to venerate a great miracle-working icon of Mary. More significantly, when the *vitae* move into the narration of a saint's posthumous activity at his or her cult site, they and their miracle compilations are bound by the need to cycle the saint's capabilities back to the sponsoring institution of the cult site itself. Under these conditions icons are unlikely to be conceded autonomous cults of their own, but are firmly controlled as mediators of the site and its relics. What one craves under these conditions are compilations of miracles devoted to a great icon rather than a great saint. Such compilations are well known in the post-Byzantine centuries; the *Diegesis* of the Kykkotissa cited at the opening of this article is an example. In Byzantium itself, however, such compilations are exceedingly rare. Their rarity in itself must be a testimony to the rarity of autonomous cult icons. When, then, did these appear?

OUTSIDE CONSTANTINOPLE: THE EVIDENCE OF THE HOLY LAND

Contrasting with the Constantinopolitan accounts of Marian icons are the late twelfth-century descriptions of two icons in the Holy Land. One of these is the "incarnate" icon at Saidnaya near Damascus.⁷⁸ Saidnaya had, indeed still has today, an icon of the Virgin Mary that had developed breasts—they felt like leather, according to a Latin visitor—⁷⁹ and the breasts exuded holy oil. Especially on Marian feasts it attracted pilgrims of every religious persuasion, Muslim as well as Christian, who gathered at Saidnaya to receive a blessing of the oil, as many as five thousand taking away oil in a day. As in the pilgrim accounts of icons

⁷⁶ On the miracle accounts see esp. H. Delehay, "Les recueils antiques des miracles des saints," *AB* 38 (1925): 1–85, 305–25; and V. Déroche, "Pourquoi écrivait-on des recueils de miracles? L'exemple des miracles de Saint-Artémios," in *Les saints et leur sanctuaire: textes, images, monuments*, ed. C. Jolivet-Lévy, M. Kaplan, J. P. Sordini, Byzantina Sorbonensia 11 (Paris, 1993), 95–116. For the 14th-century miracles of St. Eugenios, see J. O. Rosenqvist, *The Hagiographic Dossier of St. Eugenios of Trebizond in Codex Athous Dionysiou 154* (Uppsala, 1996). The miracles of Artemios, Nikon, Loukas, and Symeon the New Theologian are cited in notes 42, 44, 45, and 55 above.

⁷⁷ E. Sargologos, *La Vie de saint Cyrille le Philéote, moine byzantin (†1110). Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes*, SubsHag 39 (Brussels, 1964), 83, ¶14:1: Φιλεκκλήσιος δὲ ὦν ὁ ὄσιος καὶ φιλόθεος τετύπωκε κατὰ Παρασκευὴν τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἅπαντα εἰσέρχεσθαι πεζῇ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει καὶ τὴν ἐν Βλαχέρναις Δέσποιναν ἡμῶν Θεοτόκον προσκυνεῖν καὶ κατασπάξασθαι καὶ μετὰ τὴν συμπλήρωσιν τῆς νυκτερινῆς δοξολογίας ἐπανέρχεσθαι οἴκαδε.

⁷⁸ D. Baraz, "The Incarnated Icon of Saidnaya Goes West," *Le Muséon* 108 (1995): 181–91 with earlier bibliography, above all P. Peeters, "La Légende de Saidnaya," *AB* 25 (1906): 137–57.

⁷⁹ H. Michelant and G. Raynaud, eds., *Itinéraires à Jérusalem* (Geneva, 1882), 173–74, quoting the Anonymous continuator of William of Tyre.

in Constantinople, the benefaction of the icon here is a tangible one, and it is the little vials of oil, not the image as such, that were said in the Middle Ages to dot the relic collections of western Europe. Nonetheless, what stands out in the case of the Saidnaya icon is the clear centrality of the panel itself. It was not to Saidnaya, but to the icon that pilgrims came. It is precisely this situation that is so curiously hard to find in the reports of middle Byzantine Constantinople.

Equally notable is a second report by a Holy Land pilgrim from the late twelfth century. In the apse of a small vaulted chapel at the desert monastery of Calamon, the Greek pilgrim John Phocas saw, as he says: “a picture of the Virgin with the Saviour Christ in her arms, being in form, colour, and size like that of the Hodegetria in the imperial city. There is an ancient tradition that it was painted by the hand of the Apostle and Evangelist St. Luke; and what tends to corroborate this story are the frequent miracles wrought by the picture, and the thrilling perfume which proceeds from it.”⁸⁰ Two features of John’s description stand out. One is the panel’s identity in form, color and size to the Hodegetria. This is an icon confirmed in its specialness not by its readily recognizable icon *story*, but by its readily recognizable resemblance “in form, colour, and size” to a great icon. It is known by its appearance. It is an icon of an icon. The other feature that stands out is the character of the panel’s blessings: its sweet odor and miracles. These stand as surety not of the honor of Mary, as Arculf had said, but of the efficacy of the panel itself, a work of St. Luke.

CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE MARIA ROMAIA

The two Holy Land accounts illustrate attitudes that had proved unexpectedly hard to find in the pilgrimage accounts of Constantinople, and especially in the accounts of its Marian shrines. These include on the one hand the summing up of the pilgrim’s goal in a particular icon, and on the other the summing up of the icon’s efficacy in the spectacle of its own recognizable and replicable image. Each of these is integral to the Marian icon cults of late and post-Byzantium. But how characteristic were these of middle Byzantine pilgrimage sites? In Constantinople itself, it is the Hodegetria, cited within John Phocas’s text, that most answers these criteria. There surely were other icons with similar appeal. This is indicated by the story of an icon known as the Maria Romaia. Its narrative is preserved in a manuscript of the eleventh or twelfth century.⁸¹ The story of Maria Romaia accompanies four other icon stories—of the Mandylion, the Guarantor, the icon wounded by an *Arapes* (a Blackamoor or bogeyman), and the bleeding icon of Beirut—and it takes as its core yet another classic story: that of the icon that sailed to Rome to avoid Iconoclasm. But uniquely in this case, the classic kernel is then carried on into the present day, and we hear of the icon’s ongoing miracle-working activity, managed by a confraternity whose members orchestrated showy public exorcisms before it.⁸² The icon’s beneficiaries very clearly came to it, not to its church or to a relic, and they joined, as well, in public cere-

⁸⁰ J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099–1185* (London, 1988), 331, ¶24.2–4.

⁸¹ Dobschütz, “Maria Romaia,” 173–214. The manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, gr. 1474, is assigned by Dobschütz (p. 192) to the 11th century and by Albert Ehrhardt to the 12th century: see N. P. Ševčenko, “Servants of the Holy Icon,” in *Byzantine East, Latin West* (as above, note 3), 549 note 17.

⁸² Significant portions of the text are translated in Ševčenko, “Servants of the Holy Icon,” 549, and A. W. Carr, “The Mother of God in Public,” in *Mother of God* (as above, note 8), 329.

monies when the Maria Romaia was taken by its confraternity to join the Hodegetria's Tuesday processions.

No surviving icon that I know bears the name of the Maria Romaia, and the panel's image is not known. Thus we cannot tell if it was replicated in other icons that drew for their reputation upon the form of the miracle-working original. Its *Diegesis* is strikingly similar to those of the shrines of saints; it closely resembles also the narratives of the later and post-Byzantine pilgrimage icons. Its purpose, like theirs, was surely to market its cult. It is, however, unique in middle Byzantine sources; even the story of the Hodegetria is presumed to have taken shape only later, in the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁸³ More than a long-established phenomenon, then, the Maria Romaia's narrative may reflect a hagiographic genre that was fairly new when it was transcribed in the late eleventh or twelfth century. Like the Holy Land accounts, it suggests that the later eleventh and twelfth centuries may have marked a phase in the formulation of the cult icon.

CONCLUSION

In 1328 after ascending to the purple the emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos made a pilgrimage to an icon of the Mother of God, an *acheiropoiotos* housed in Hyrtakion near Kyzikos.⁸⁴ By the fourteenth century, we are in a world dotted with pilgrimage icons. It is these that figure in Nicolas Oikonomides' memorable article on the holy icon as an asset;⁸⁵ the great named icons of post-Byzantine pilgrimage, too, are emerging into visibility. The icons of Megaspilaion, of Soumela, of Kykkos, of Karyes, of Pelagonia can all be traced back to the mid-fourteenth century.⁸⁶ Like the icons on the Sinai panel, these have names of their own. But in contrast to the ones on the Sinai panel, they also have distinctive forms, that get closely repeated in replicas. These are, then, not simply names that carry the power of a place; they are icons that get replicated in other icons. And they make an appeal through their replicas and their narratives to pilgrims. And so we return to our central question: what can we learn about icons that take a place as primary objects of pilgrimage cult?

Perhaps a first lesson is how significantly pilgrimage sites were places to be, rather than things to see. Though the Constantinopolitan sites in particular were richly encrusted with spectacle, from splendid buildings to spectacular tricks like weeping, bleeding, or metamorphosing icons, spectacle in itself was rarely if ever an adequately meaningful experience, and in most of what we have seen the pictures were at best secondary: mediators

⁸³ C. Angelidi, "Une texte patriographique et édifiant: le 'Discours narratif' sur les Hodègoi," *REB* 52 (1994): 132, which assigns the formulation of the Hodegetria's story to the 13th century.

⁸⁴ Dobschütz, *Christusbilder*, 84.

⁸⁵ N. Oikonomides, "The Holy Icon as an Asset," *DOP* 45 (1991): 35–44, esp. 39–43.

⁸⁶ On the Megaspilaitissa see the chrysobull of John VI Kantakouzenos dated 1350 and addressed to the "venerable Peloponnesian monastery of my queen, known by the name of the honored and all-pure Lady and Mother of God called Megaspilaitissa": F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Monasteriorum et Ecclesiarum Orientis*, 5 vols. (Vienna, 1887), 5:191. On the Pelagonitissa see G. Babić, "Il modello e la replica nell'arte bizantina delle icone," *Arte cristiana* 76 (1988): 61–78. The icon of Soumela is cited in the chrysobull of 1365 of Alexios III Komnenos (1349–90): E. T. Kyriakidos, *Ιστορία της παρά την Τραπεζούντα ιερᾶς βασιλικῆς πατριαρχικῆς σταυροπιγιακῆς Μονῆς τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου τῆς Σουμελά* (Athens, 1898), 65–66. The Karyiotissa, or Axion Estin, has been cleaned and is believed to be an icon of around 1300: K. Chrysochoides, G. Tavlakes, and G. Oikonomake-Papadopoulou, *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστίν. Παναγία ἢ Καρυώτισσα. Ἡ Ἐφέστια Εἰκόνα τοῦ Πρωτάτου* (Mount Athos, 1999), 19–23 and *passim*. I am working on a study of the Kykkotissa.

of the more tangible objects of pilgrimage that were in turn the mediators of the holy. Only in special circumstances did they become autonomous mediators of the holy in their own right, as pilgrimage objects.

These special circumstances were certainly complex, and some were surely operative at all times. Determinative was the icon's autonomy, standing for itself rather than as the adjunct of a relic or spring. Absence of relics must have made it far easier for elisions of site and image. A good early example of this process may be the icon of the Archangel Michael at St. Michael tou Eusebiou, in which journeys to a healing spring became elided as journeys to the icon, whose lamp effected cures.⁸⁷ Angels were particularly apt candidates for such elisions because they did not have relics. Above all, of course, it was the Mother of God who figured in this way. It is she who figures in all of the icons listed just above as great pilgrimage objects. In this respect, the icon from Mount Sinai on which the beginning of this article was focused is important: its icons were all icons of the Mother of God.

But I think that time, too, played a role in these special circumstances. There is a pattern in time in the instances of icons that function as goals of pilgrimage, and icons that are known by their appearance rather than their stories or effluvia, that suggests a shifting history of the icon itself. Even so famous an object as the Mandylion, after all, assumes visibility only at certain periods, and is notably fugitive as an image in the pilgrim reports before the twelfth century. The icon of the Guarantor, too, though its history is full of problems, seems to offer itself in history first as a story and a name, then from the late eleventh century on as a name attached to an image, though not necessarily to the same image, and finally in the fourteenth century as an image as such: an icon of an icon, that was visited on the walls along the Golden Horn. The images of the Mother of God, too, trace much the same chronological pattern, emerging in the eleventh century as bearers of names, appearing then as objects of public cult, and taking preeminence finally in the fourteenth century as named icons of consistent form and significant pilgrimage attention. In this respect, the icon at Sinai is notable, for it appears in the twelfth century when this process was very much under way.

The panel with the five icons of Mary at Sinai may be indicative in a second way, as well. This is suggested by the form of the figure labeled "Blachernitissa." Traditionally, the images bearing this label assumed an orante form: occasionally the profile orante, more often the frontal orante with arms open to either side, and sometimes the frontal orante with the medallion of Christ superimposed on the breast.⁸⁸ John Cotsonis and Bissera Pentcheva have both interpreted these images as visual expressions of the enspirited icon, the icon upon which the Holy Spirit has descended.⁸⁹ They have associated this enspiriting with the term *empsychos*. "Empsychos" begins to figure in descriptions of icons in the second half of the eleventh century—most notably in Michael Psellos's description of the "usual miracle" quoted earlier⁹⁰—and continues to be used in the twelfth century.⁹¹ The figure on the icon at Sinai does not assume any of the orante guises. Instead, it

⁸⁷ See note 62 above.

⁸⁸ See note 11 above.

⁸⁹ Cotsonis, "The Virgin with the 'Tongues of Fire'" (as above, note 25); B. Pentcheva, "A New Image of the Virgin in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Constantinople," *BSCAbstr* 25 (1999): 34.

⁹⁰ See note 32 above.

⁹¹ H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. E. Jephcott (Chicago, 1994), 261–62.

displays a posture of tender maternal intimacy, with Mary caressing a youthful Child who moves eagerly toward her embrace. In its tenderness, the posture reflects the qualities of emotive warmth and humanity that had first led Hans Belting to single out the term *empsychos* and introduce it to art historical discourse.⁹²

Little links Cotsonis's and Pentcheva's use of *empsychos*—as filled with the spirit of God—with Belting's interpretation of the term—as filled with the feeling of human vulnerability—except the capacity of the image in each case to move the viewer. This said, it is clear in the history of Marian veneration that the elaborate ceremonies of enspiriting like the “usual miracle” cease to be cited after the first half of the twelfth century, and tenderly expressive forms of the Mother of God come ever more to dominate Marian iconography.⁹³ In essence, the space of enspiriting has shifted, from a famous site to the space hallowed by the relation of the icon to its viewer. The “usual miracle” had offered its icon as the spectacular expression of the sanctity of a long-hallowed setting; the emotionally affecting icons extend an invitation to the one venerating to “come in” to their own emotive space and share that feeling. One can certainly not claim that this shift caused a shift in the pilgrimage function of icons. Artistic forms far more often reflect than inflect their viewers' behavior. Yet the change might serve as a correlative: an expression of shifting strategies of engagement with the icon, and especially of engagement with those icons that could claim as their own the space of special and intense veneration. Through the novel form of its “Blachernitissa,” the panel with the five Virgins registers this shift in the icon's claim to identification with the space of veneration. Accordingly, it emerges not as a simple illustration of a long-established pilgrimage habit in Constantinople, but as a view into a development in progress.

Just what the forces were that were driving this development remain to be explored. But I think we can ask one final question. Why have we believed so firmly that the great Marian shrines of Constantinople were characterized above all by spectacular icon cults that drew pilgrims from far and wide? Here, I think, it might be worth noting that the most vivid middle Byzantine accounts of these shrines are those of the Western pilgrims. It is they, too, who have played such a central role in our research. They gave us the Turners' paradigm of pilgrimage, as the journey toward the transforming (in)sight. They were the pilgrims most vividly struck by the icon spectacles. And they were pilgrims who went to see. The icon spectacles of the City may well have made a more indelible impact on them than on the icon-inured Orthodox pilgrims, who came to be in the City's great sites, as much as to see its sights.

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⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ On the “usual miracle” see Grumel, “Le ‘miracle habituel,’” 141; on the iconography of Mary see in particular C. Baltogianni, *Εικόνες. Μήτηρ Θεοῦ βρεφοκρατούσα στήν Ἐνσάρκωση καί το Πάθος* (Athens, 1994).