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“Servants of the Holy Icon”

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KURT WEITZMANN has long concerned himself with Byzantine icons, and he has brought many of them to the notice of other scholars for the first time. In this article I wish to honor him by recalling a few of the modest laymen who served the icon in their own way and in their own time as faithfully as he has in his.¹

In his *typikon* for the Pantokrator monastery in Constantinople founded in 1136, John II Komnenos makes provision for the services to be performed in his memory. One of his requests is that every year on the anniversary of his death the icon of the Virgin Hodegetria be brought from its sanctuary across town into his tomb chamber, where it should remain overnight. When the icon leaves, the people who brought it are to be paid the considerable sum of fifty *nomismata hyperpyra* divided as follows: six for the icon (λόγω της ἁγίας εἰκόνας), twenty-four for the twelve “κούδου,” and two each for the bearers and “other servants of the holy icon” (εἰς

τοὺς βασταγarioύς καὶ λοιποὺς δουλευτάς τῆς ἁγίας εἰκόνας). The remainder is to be divided into smaller denominations and given “to the σίγνα,” that is, to the other icons involved in the procession.²

Who might these servants of the holy icon be?³ Processions of icons were no rare sight in Constantinople, and that of the icon of the Virgin Hodegetria was certainly one of the most familiar.⁴ Every Tuesday it was brought out to a square near the Hodegon monastery to work its healing miracles.⁵ From the twelfth century on, it was regularly moved from its own sanctuary to the Pantokrator monastery—not only for John’s yearly memorial services, but for those of various other members of his family as well.⁶ During the fourteenth century at least, it was also taken annually to the imperial palace on the Thursday before Palm Sunday, and carried back ten days later on the Monday after Easter.⁷ On certain occasions it went to the church of Hagia Sophia.⁸

¹ Many of the sources presented here have been cited elsewhere; my purpose has been merely to bring them together conveniently in one place, in hopes that more material will thereby be eventually brought to light. I have benefited from conversations with John Nesbitt and John Cotsonis on the sigillographic material and with Annemarie Weyl Carr on the changing role of the icon; some of her results appear elsewhere in this volume.

² P. Gautier, “Le typicon du Christ Sauveur Pantokrator,” *REB* 32 (1974), 81–83 (lines 883–900). For the reading of “signon” as processional icon, cf. my article “Icons in the Liturgy,” *DOP* 45 (1991), 45 n. 7. On the income-producing possibilities of icons, cf. N. Oikonomides, “The Holy Icon as an Asset,” *DOP* 45 (1991), 35–44. A *bastagarios* appears in a list of officials of Hagia Sophia included in the euchologion; he “carries the saint of the church in processions and on important feasts” (βαστὰ τῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἁγίων εἰς ἱεροῦ καὶ ἁγιῶν ἐπισημῶν), J. Gour, *Enchiridion sive Rituale Graecorum* (Venice 1730; reprint Graz 1960), 230. J. Darrouzès discounts the importance of this list, however, as it is essentially sixteenth-century and Cypriot. *Recherches sur les officia de l’église byzantine* (Paris 1970), 230. A certain John Kanaboutzes was a *βασταγarius* in Constantinople in 1370 (*PLP*, no. 10870).

³ The most recent articles on Byzantine confraternities, all with bibliography on Western equivalents, are those of G. Dagron, “Ainsi rien n’échappera à la réglementation”. Érat, Église, corporations, confréries: à propos des inhumations à Constantinople (IV^e–X^e siècle),” in *Hommes et richesses dans l’Empire byzantin*, ed. V. Kravari, J. Lefort, and C. Morrisson, vol. II (Paris 1990), 155–182; J. Nesbitt and J. Wiita, “A Confraternity of the Comenian Era,” *BZ* 68 (1975), 360–384; P. Horden, “The Confraternities of Byzantium,” in *Voluntary Religion*, ed. W. J. Sheils and D. Wood (Studies in Church History 23) (Worcester 1986), 25–45; and P. Magdalino, “Church, Bath and *Diakonía* in Medieval Constantinople,”

in *Church and People in Byzantium. 20th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. R. Morris (Manchester 1986), 165–188. Important groundwork on the identification of attendant figures in Byzantine painting was done by N. K. Moran, in his study of the psaltai: *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting* (Leiden 1986). Cf. also H. Belting, *Bild und Kult. Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich 1990), 215–217, and the article by A. Weyl Carr in the present volume.

⁴ On the journeys of the Hodegetria, cf. R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l’empire byzantin*, vol. I, *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat œcuménique*, iii, *Les églises et les monastères*, 2d ed. (Paris 1969), 205–206; G. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (DOS 19) (Washington, D.C. 1984), 364–366. Both Janin and Majeska confuse the weekly presbeia procession at the Pantokrator with the yearly commemorations of the founder: the Hodegetria icon was brought in only for the latter. On liturgical processions in general, cf. J. F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship. The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Rome 1987).

⁵ Cf. p. 548 below. The procession is attested also in 1206: A. Heisenberg, *Neue Quellen zur Geschichte des lateinischen Kaiseriums und der Kirchenunion* (SBMünch 1923, pt. 2, 16), 11–52. Pilgrims report that the icon of the Virgin τῆς Κούρου was brought out and performed miracles on Fridays (Majeska, *Russian Travelers* [as in note 4], 329–331); this may have been a routine comparable to the Tuesday procession of the Hodegetria, or merely indicate the participation of this icon in a Friday night presbeia service (see below, p. 551).

⁶ Gautier, “Typicon” (as in note 2), lines 883–887.

⁷ Pseudo-Kodinos, *Traité des offices*, ed. J. Verpeaux (Paris 1966), 251, lines 1–12.

⁸ See below, p. 548.

Such journeys of the icon of the Hodegetria evidently involved a considerable retinue. Details concerning the processions—which are virtually unrecorded by Byzantine writers—have been provided by a number of foreign pilgrims to the city. For them, these processions were of the utmost interest, one of the more famous sights of Constantinople that few visitors could afford to pass up. Their reports, though often cited, are worth reviewing once again here.

All who describe it marvel at how this heavy, jewelled icon is carried about, and at the crowds that accompany it. One pilgrim, Stephen of Novgorod (1348 or 1349), describes how:

They bring out this icon every Tuesday. It is quite wonderful to see. All the people from the city congregate. The icon is very large and highly ornamented, and they sing a very beautiful chant in front of it, while all the people cry out with tears, "Kyrie eleison." They place [the icon] on the shoulders of one man who is standing upright, and he stretches out his arms as if [being] crucified, and then they bind up his eyes. It is terrible to see how it pushes him this way and that around the monastery enclosure, and how forcefully it turns him about, for he does not understand where the icon is taking him. Then another takes over the same way, and then a third and a fourth take over that way, and they sing a long chant with the canonarchs while the people cry out with tears, "Lord have mercy." Two deacons carry the flabella in front of the icon, and others the canopy. A marvelous sight: [it takes] seven or eight people to lay [something] on the shoulders of one man, and by God's will he walks as if unburdened.⁹

The so-called Russian Anonymous (ca. 1390) says: "At this monastery the icon of the holy Mother of God is brought out into the monastery every Tuesday, and it performs a great miracle, healing the sick and tiring the eight men [carrying it]."¹⁰

According to a Spanish pilgrim, Clavijo (1403–6):

The Picture is painted on a wooden board, square in shape and six palms high by the like across. The board stands supported on two feet, and the painting itself is now covered over by a silver plate in which are encased numerous emeralds, sapphires, turquoises and great pearls with other precious stones. The Picture is preserved [for safety]¹¹ in an

iron chest. Every Tuesday is its feast-day when a great concourse of folk assembles, clerics and lay persons who are of pious mind. These with many of such as are clerics from the other churches of the city, when they have said the Hours [oras or "prayers"], piously take the Picture out from this church and carry it to a court [plaza] near by. As it goes forth it is found to be so heavy that it requires three or four men to carry it, using straps of leather, attached to cramping irons [con unos como jintos de cuero que tienen con sus feras] by which the frame must be supported.¹² When it is thus brought forth it is set up in the middle of that court where all present make their prayers and devotions with sobbing and wailing. This being done there comes forth an old man, who prays before this image of Our Lady, and then he lifts up the Picture and carries it off, as though it were of but a trifling weight, and all by himself he bears it in the procession that returns forthwith to the church. Indeed it is a miracle how one man can possibly thus lift so great a weight [as is the burden of the frame]. They say that to no others is it possible thus alone to lift and carry it save to this particular man [and his brothers]. But this man is of a family any of whom can do so, for it has pleased God to vouchsafe this power to them one and all. On certain feast-days of the year they carry this Picture with great solemnities to Santa Sophia, thus to display it for the great devotion in which the people hold the same.¹³

Yet another Spanish pilgrim, Pero Tafur (1437), says:

It is painted on stone, and with the frame and stand it weighs, they say, several hundredweight. So heavy is it as a whole that six men cannot lift it. Every Tuesday some twenty men come there, clad in long red linen draperies which cover the head like a stalking-dress. These men come of a special lineage, and by them alone can that office be filled. There is a great procession, and the men who are so clad go one by one to the picture, and he whom it is pleased with takes it up as easily as if it weighed only an ounce. The bearer then places it on his shoulder, and they go singing out of the church to a great square, where he who carries the picture walks with it from one end to the other, and fifty times round the square. By fixing one's

barton Oaks, for very kindly checking the translation of the entire passage for me.

¹² Literally, "And the image is so heavy that it takes three or four men to move it using something like leather belts fastened to rods with which they seize the image."

¹³ Clavijo, *Embajada* (as in note 11), 54, lines 6–31; Clavijo, *Embassy* (as in note 11), 84–85.

⁹ Majeska, *Russian Travelers* (as in note 4), 36–37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 138–139.

¹¹ "e está metida en una casa de fierro": R. González de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamerlán*, ed. F. L. Estrada (Madrid 1943), 54, line 11. The bracketed phrase was added by the translator: R. González de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403–1406*, trans. G. Le Strange (London 1928), 84. I would like to thank Javier Urcid, Pre-Columbian Fellow at Dum-

eyes upon the picture, it appears to be raised high above the ground and completely transfigured. When it is set down again, another comes and takes it up and puts it likewise on his shoulder, and then another, and in that manner some four or five of them pass the day. There is a market in the square on that day, and a great crowd assembles, and the clergy take cotton-wool and touch the picture and then, still in procession, they take it back to its place. While I was at Constantinople I did not miss a single day when this picture was exhibited, since it is certainly a great marvel.¹⁴

These accounts, which are fairly consistent, indicate that the icon of the Hodegetria was transported to the square on Tuesdays by a special brotherhood—it is even suggested that the privilege of attending this icon could remain in the same family for generations.¹⁵ Several of the members at once are needed to bring out the icon, though some or all seem to have been trained in how to carry the icon individually on their shoulders. The relationship of the various members of this brotherhood was expressed in their dress: all wore red linen robes with hoods or special hats.¹⁶

A comparable brotherhood serving a different icon of the Virgin in Constantinople is attested as early as the eleventh–twelfth centuries. A manuscript of that period contains an account of the icon of the Virgin "Romaia," with events purporting to take place in the ninth century during the time of Michael and Theodora.¹⁷ The icon had miraculously returned to Constantinople and was deposited in the church of the Chalkoprateia. "After this, the procession of the Virgin of the Hodegon having been instituted on Tuesdays, the more zealous of the Orthodox community established a service (δικονία) of brothers, and they took up this [icon] from the church of God, and deciding that it was right to carry it in procession along with the Hodegetria, in that godly and most sacred *litania* which takes place once a week, as was stated, they arranged for it to make the rounds of the pious churches of the saints, just as ancient tradition has determined up til now."¹⁸

Elsewhere in this text we learn something more of

the nature of the brotherhood attached to the icon of the Virgin Romaia: it was apparently responsible for managing the miracle-working properties of the icon and could as a body recite prayers and even exorcisms on behalf of those awaiting a cure. The head of the brotherhood was called "ὁ κορυφαῖος τῶν ἀδελφῶν."¹⁹

Processions of this sort were by no means limited to Constantinople. In twelfth-century Thessalonike, an icon of the Hodegetria, revered as the protectress of the city, was escorted around the city (weekly?) by its own brotherhood:

At this time, the all-hallowed Mother of God, who has among us the appellation of the Hodegetria, also revealed an unfavorable sign, showing that she had turned away from us and did not wish to support us. For in the course of a procession, on the day when it is ordained that this beautiful ceremony should take place, she had travelled around to those places in the city which the brotherhood desired that she should visit. Then, when she was being carried back again to her home [εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτῆς] and was approaching the entrance, she made such a strong resistance at the doorway that the man who bore her was forced backward, and when he began to exert himself to move forward, he was oppressed by a great weight and came near to falling; and he was not alone in this, but the same thing happened to the others who were participating in the work of carrying her. In the beginning it was suspected that the bearer of the image had devised this on his own initiative, this being the sort of charlatany in which many engage. But when holy men [ἄγιοι ἄνδρες] also, of upright life and incapable of contriving anything improper, joined in lending their strength to that of the others, and their combined force was unable to overcome the resistance of the sacred icon [ἱεροῦ σίγνου], and when it could not be persuaded to enter but refused steadfastly to be borne within, then fear overtook all prudent men for what they were about to suffer. They burst into tears raising a storm of weeping, they lifted up their voices to the

ἰαν ἀδελφῶν συστησάμενοι ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκόρησις ταύτην ἀνέλαβον καὶ ἐν τῇ θεῖα καὶ ἱερατῇ λιτανείᾳ τῇ τελουμένῃ καθ' ἑβδομάδα μίαν, ὡς εἴρηται, καὶ αὐτὴν μετὰ τῆς Ὁδηγητρίας ἐπὶ προελπίσεως προπορεύσασθαι διακρίσαντες ἐν τοῖς σεβασμίαις νοαῖς τῶν ἁγίων φορέαν διατάξοντο, καθὼς ἢ ἀρχαίαι παραδόσεις μέγιστον δέλεον διακρίσει. Von Dobschütz, "Maria Romaia" (as in note 17), 202, lines 3–10. Though the word σπουδαιότεροι recalls the σπουδαῖος known from sources dealing with early confraternities, the context here would seem to call for a straightforward reading of the term. Cf. S. Pétrides, "Spoudai et Philopones," *EO* 7 (1904), 341–348. I am at a loss to explain why the icon is taken from the "church of God" when both the Hodegon and Chalkoprateia monasteries were dedicated to the Virgin.

¹⁹ Von Dobschütz, "Maria Romaia" (as in note 17), 202 (line 26)–203 (line 17).

¹⁴ Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures*, trans. M. Letts (London 1926), 141–142.

¹⁵ Nesbitt and Wista, "Confraternity" (as in note 3), 382–383, have, however, cautioned that the pilgrims may be confusing brotherhood with blood relations.

¹⁶ Their being blindfolded, a fact mentioned only by Stephen of Novgorod, is probably to be connected with the imagery of the monastery itself, which was noted for its healings of the blind.

¹⁷ E. von Dobschütz, "Maria Romaia. Zwei unbekannte Texte," *BZ* 12 (1903), 173–214, esp. 202. Von Dobschütz dates the manuscript (Paris, Bibl. Nat. gr. 1474) to the eleventh century, A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche*, vol. II (Leipzig 1938), 623–624, to the twelfth.

¹⁸ Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα τῆς κατὰ τριτην προελπίσεως τυποπίσης τῆς Θεοτόκου τῶν Ὁδηγῶν, οἱ τῆς ὀρθοδόξου ἀληγύρας σπουδαιότεροι δικο-

most high Son of the all-holy Mother of God and they did not cease until, now that the sign had been received, the bearer [ὁ βαστάζων] of the sacred image was able without straining and without hindrance to bring it to its appointed place.²⁰

The disaster foretold by this untoward event was the fall of the city to the Normans in 1185.²¹

An important text reedited recently by John Nesbitt and John Wiita reveals the existence of a confraternity active in the service of an icon in a more rural locale, namely the area of Thebes, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.²² The forty-nine members of this brotherhood devoted themselves to the service of the icon of the Virgin Naupaktissa. Each member (the ones who could write, at any rate) signed himself "δοῦλος τῆς ὑπερραγίας Θεοτόκου τῆς Ναυακτιῆσης" (servant of the most-holy [icon of the] Virgin of Naupaktos),²³ and committed himself to transporting and tending an icon of the Virgin. The icon was to be moved from one church to another and to remain a full month in each place. This extended stay was probably due to the fact that in this rural setting the distances between the various sanctuaries were substantially greater than in the capital; otherwise the principle of rotation was essentially the same. The members of the group, many of whom were priests, and some of whom were women, did more than carry the icon and take good care of it when it arrived at a nearby church: they recited common prayers, agreed to help each other in sickness, and to assemble for each other's burial and memorial services.

A few works of art help round out our impressions of these icon processions and their attendant brother-

hoods. A thirteenth-century fresco in a monastery near Arta, published by Myrta Acheimastou-Potamianou, shows the Constantinopolitan icon of the Hodegetria out in the marketplace, accompanied by the clergy and a large throng of women with candle holders; market-day genre scenes include sellers of drinks and fruits (Fig. 1).²⁴ The icon itself is being shouldered by a single bearer, his arms stretched out "as though crucified." He wears a knee-length brownish red tunic and a strap diagonally across his chest, which is probably the leather "belt" to which, according to Clavijo, iron rods were attached. Two other brethren stand nearby awaiting their turn; they wear the same caps and diagonal strap.

The verisimilitude of this fresco is unusual, matched only by a Russian tapestry of ca. 1498, where an icon of the Hodegetria is once more involved, this time in Moscow (Fig. 2).²⁵ Its bearded bearer again has his arms stretched out to the sides and is dressed in a long brownish tunic. At the base of the icon is a triangle of rods; the central vertical rod is apparently inserted into straps that form an X across the bearer's chest.²⁶ Other participants carry two large semicircular fans or banners and two smaller lozenge-shaped fans, as well as a dozen colorful long branches; the latter have led to the identification of this as a Palm Sunday procession.²⁷ Other less narrative, more liturgical images (scenes illustrating the Akathistos Hymn or the feast of the Sunday of Orthodoxy) show the icon resting on a stand, flanked by two members of the brotherhood (e.g., a fresco at Dečani and an icon in the British Museum, both fourteenth-century; Figs. 3 and 4).²⁸ The men are clad in wide-sleeved red tunics, with special tall, rounded red hats

²⁰ Eustathios of Thessalonike, *The Capture of Thessalonike*, trans. J. R. Melville Jones (Canberra 1988), 142, lines 5–21. A distinction is drawn here between the brotherhood and the holy men, the latter presumably monks. The icon is earlier called "ἡ πολιοῦχος ἡμῶν" (42, lines 11–12). An icon of the Hodegetria, probably the same one, was housed in the fifteenth century in a chapel adjacent to Hagia Sophia in Thessalonike and brought out daily for services in that church and to other churches in the city on special feast days of the Virgin. Our source for this information, Symeon of Thessalonike, does not specify who transported the icon to the other sanctuaries; when it went from the chapel into the church, it could presumably be rolled out on the kind of wheeled stand we see in the frescoes (e.g., A. Pätzold, *Der Akathistos-Hymnos. Die Bilderzyklen in der byzantinischen Wandmalerei des 14. Jahrhunderts* [Stuttgart 1989], figs. 76a, b, 114). Cf. R. Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins (Bithynie, Hellespont, Latvie, Galicie, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique)* (Paris 1975), 382.

²¹ Eustathios's comment on the possible "charlatany" involved in the erratic movement of icons calls to mind the staggering bearers of the Hodegetria icon noted by the pilgrims in Constantinople.

²² Nesbitt and Wiita, "Confraternity" (as in note 3).

²³ *Ibid.*, esp. 366–368.

²⁴ M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, "The Byzantine Wall Paintings of Vlacherna Monastery (Area of Arta)," in *Actes du XV^e Congrès international d'études byzantines, Athènes, Septembre 1976*, vol. II (Athens 1981), 1–14, esp. *aff.*; and now eadem, "The Basilissa Anna Palaiologina of Arta and the Monastery of Vlacherna," in *Women and Byzantine Monasticism. Proceedings of the Athens Symposium, 1988*, ed. J. Y. Perreault (Athens 1991), 43–49. The caption says "Χορὸ τῆς ὑπερραγίας Θεοτόκου

τῆς Ὁδηγητριάς τῆς ἐν τῇ Κωνσταντινουπόλει," a reference to the "healing grace" of the Virgin Hodegetria.

²⁵ N. A. Maïasova, *Drevnerusskie ikoni* (Moscow 1971), no. 27; N. A. Maïasova, *Medieval Pictorial Embroidery. Byzantium, Balkans, Russia* (Moscow 1991), no. 17; Moran, *Singers* (as in note 3), 130–131, fig. 85; A. Grabar, "Zametka o metode ozhivleniia traditsii ikonopisi v russkoi zhivopisi XV–XVI vekov," *Tr-Di-Lit* 36 (1981), 289–294.

²⁶ The same triangular underpinning is visible in a thirteenth-century miniature in the Hamilton Psalter (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, cod. 78 A 9, fol. 139), showing a family in proskynesis before an icon of the Virgin Hodegetria. The rods are inserted into a pedestal-like base: Belting, *Bild und Kult* (as in note 3), fig. 24.

²⁷ The procession is more liturgical than the one in the Arta fresco, in that the market-day elements are absent and the icon is attended by high-ranking ecclesiastics and even members of the imperial family. It is tempting, however, to see in the twelve branches the twelve koudai that accompanied the Hodegetria icon to the Pantokrator monastery; cf. p. 547 above. Similar leaflike forms visible in the Arta fresco are probably rhipidia, or liturgical fans.

²⁸ Pätzold, *Akathistos-Hymnos* (as in note 20), with earlier bibliography and many plates. Cf. Ševčenko, "Icons" (as in note 2), 47–50. These figures act here less as bearers than as an honor guard, flanking the image as attendants flank the emperor or as angels flank the seated Virgin and child, e.g., an image in the Vatican Kokkinobaphos manuscript (Vat. gr. 1162, fol. 50v). Belting, *Bild und Kult* (as in note 3), fig. 179. On the angel wings given the bearers in the Sunday of Orthodoxy icon, cf. Ševčenko, *ibid.*, 48.

similar to those worn by psaltai.²⁹ Occasionally a sort of strap is visible running diagonally across their chests; in frescoes on Mount Athos, the straps actually have a buckle, confirming Clavijo's statement that they were made of leather (Fig. 5).³⁰

Some depictions of icons other than the Hodegetria also include the figures of icon bearers but do not indicate whether the bearers belong to a brotherhood. A fresco in the fourteenth-century Akathistos cycle at Markov Manastir, for example, shows a bearer bent forward carrying a large icon of the Virgin Eleousa on his back in just the way that porters carry extraordinarily heavy loads in Istanbul today (Fig. 6).³¹ His body, except for his head and legs, is invisible behind the *podexa*, the embroidered cloth hanging from the icon; when he walked about, the icon must have given the impression of moving on its own.³² In the fresco in the church of Sopoćani showing the translation of the relics of St. Stefan (Symeon) Nemanja to Studenica, the icon of the Virgin "Paraklesis" is being brought out to greet the body of the saint. The bearer is again barely visible behind the *podexa* (Fig. 7).³³

The evidence regarding lay brotherhoods devoted to purposes other than the service of icons has recently begun to be collected and studied.³⁴ Here I shall mention only two of these brotherhoods, the two that clearly involved service in liturgical processions (and thus perhaps the transportation of icons).

A miracle of St. Artemios has been cited as witness to the existence of a brotherhood "of the pannychis" (a vigil service), as early as the seventh century.³⁵ The hero of the story, who lived alone, had devoted himself from his early youth to the pannychis (προσκαρτερῶν τῆ παννυχίδι) of the Constantinopolitan church of John the Baptist in the Oxcia.³⁶ His regular habits were noted by a thief, who seized the occasion of his participation in the pannychis for the feast of the birth of John the Baptist to break into his house and steal his clothing. When morning came and the man had to dress formally for the service, he found all his clothes gone, so that he was unable to participate. Rebuked first by St. Ar-

mios and then by the money changer who served as "treasurer of the brotherhood[?] of the pannychis" (ὁ ἀρκάριος τοῦ φιλικοῦ τῶν τῆς παννυχίδος) for not showing up for his usual duties (escorting τὰ ἅγια in procession, with his candle), he was requested by the arkarios not only to turn in his candle but also to pay a fine.

The outfit he was supposed to wear is not described in any detail, except that he complains that he has not one piece of clothing left, not even his "καρτάλιον," a word of uncertain meaning.³⁷ The fact that the thief could brazenly claim that he had been loaned the clothes to wear to a wedding suggests that the costume was rather fancy, but not that it was specifically related to membership in the brotherhood. The thief's brother was hauled in, already dressed in the stolen clothes, including even the man's "λουρίον."³⁸ The hero gets all his clothing back in the end, though he graciously allows the thief's brother to keep the stolen undertunic and britches to avoid stripping him quite nude at the public hearing.

This miracle reveals that the pannychis was served by a group of men whose regular duties involved singing and the bearing of candles in processions, and that the brotherhood had a treasurer. The brotherhood could presumably also issue its own seals, for on an eighth-century seal is an inscription that reads "Τῆς παννυχίδος τῶν Χαλκοπρατ(ε)ίων."³⁹ Another seal, even closer in date to the Artemios miracle, bears the inscription "Του φ[. . .] παννυχίδος τῶν Χαλκοπρατ(ε)ίων";⁴⁰ using the miracle text as a guide, we might reconstruct this inscription as "Τοῦ φιλικοῦ τῆς παννυχίδος τῶν Χαλκοπρατ(ε)ίων" ([seal] of the brotherhood[?] of the pannychis of the Chalkoprataion). This seal bears on its obverse an image of the Virgin and child, which has been thought to represent an icon in the church of the Chalkoprataia.⁴¹

Another liturgical service that may also have had regular lay attendants was the presbeia, a Friday night office of the Virgin that, in Constantinople at least, included a procession across town with icons from various sanctuaries.⁴² We hear of a tenth-century layman, Stephen Katzator, who, after being cured by the Virgin

²⁹ Cf. Moran, *Singers* (as in note 3), esp. 32–38.

³⁰ The frescoes in the katholikon of Lavra are dated 1535; G. Millet, *Monuments de l'Arbos* (Paris 1927), pl. 131:2; cf. also pl. 228:1.

³¹ A. Grabar, "L'Hodigiteria et l'Eleousa," *Zbornik za likovnu umetnost* 10 (1974), 3–14, esp. 12.

³² Perhaps this is what Pero Tafur meant when he said, "By fixing one's eyes upon the picture, it appears to be raised high above the ground and completely transfigured." On the *podexa*, cf. A. Frolov, "La 'Podexa', un tissu décoratif de l'église byzantine," *Byzantion* 13 (1938), 461–504.

³³ Ševčenko, "Icons" (as in note 2), 55.

³⁴ Cf. the articles cited in note 3 above.

³⁵ A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Varia Graeca Sacra* (St. Petersburg 1909), 20 (line 4)–25 (line 28).

³⁶ The word προσκαρτερῶ is used for the waiting that precedes the appearance of the saint during incubation. But it does include the idea of a waiting upon, a commitment, an adherence or allegiance (cf. note 56 below).

³⁷ "Καρτάλιον" is another word for a περιζώμα, an apron or piece of underclothing.

³⁸ The meaning of the term is again unclear, but it may be the same as a λουρίον (λουρί, in modern Greek): a strip of leather. My thanks to Virgil Christofullis for this suggestion.

³⁹ G. Zacos and A. Vegliery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* (Basel 1972), no. 770; V. Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin*, vol. V, part 2: *L'Église* (Paris 1965), no. 1145. Zacos and Vegliery associate the seal with the imperial visit to the shrine on special feasts of the Virgin, but the pannychis at the Prodromos church mentioned in the Artemios miracle took place not only on major Baptist feasts, but every Saturday night.

⁴⁰ Zacos and Vegliery, *Lead Seals* (as in note 39), no. 1118 (seventh century).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 719.

⁴² On the presbeia, cf. Ševčenko, "Icons" (as in note 2), 50–54. The seals inscribed "Ἡ προσβεία τοῦ ἁγίου Παντελεήμονος τοῦ ΚΑΠΟΥΑΓ(Ι)ΟΝ λεοδόρου Γ'" should probably be connected with a Friday presbeia service in a sanctuary of St. Panteleimon: Laurent, *Corpus*

at her shrine at Pege, "committed himself in writing to be a servant of the Virgin" (καὶ τὸ εἶναι δοῦλος τῆς Θεοτόκου διὰ γραφῆς πιστωσάμενος), and went on to become "the chief of the brothers of the presbeia" (πρῶτος τῶν ἀδελφῶν τῆς πρεσβείας), a post which he still occupied when the miracle was set down.⁴³ We are not told what this position involved, but the passages reveal that a lay brotherhood was indeed associated with the presbeia; its duties may have included the care of "the icon of the presbeia" (τὸ τῆς πρεσβείας σίγνον, as it is called in the Pantokrator *tyricon*), which is used in the service.⁴⁴

From their seals, we know that three laymen of considerable standing served as πρῶτος τῆς πρεσβείας in the eleventh century:⁴⁵ John, who was both a patrikios and πρῶτος τῆς πρεσβείας of Blachernai; Michael, patrikios and πρῶτος τῆς πρεσβείας (the church is unspecified); and Nicholas Skleros, protoprosdokos, megas skeuophylax of Blachernai, and πρῶτος τῆς πρεσβείας, presumably also at Blachernai.⁴⁶

Membership in a brotherhood clearly required some formal commitment, apparently a written one. Stephan Katzator signed on the dotted line to become a δοῦλος τῆς Θεοτόκου; so did the members of the Theban confraternity, most of whom wrote "ὁμολογῶ εἶναι δοῦλος τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου τῆς Νεπακτιτήσης" (with varying degrees of literacy). In these cases, the common designation δοῦλος τῆς Θεοτόκου has acquired a technical meaning: it refers to someone who has committed himself to the service of the Virgin—to her icon or her

liturgy—as he would to a lord or the emperor.⁴⁷ A passage in the story of the icon of Maria Romaia implies the same thing, if more indirectly: the brotherhood is referred to as "the group of those pledged to the Virgin" (ἡ δὲ τῶν συναλεγμένων τῆ Θεοτόκου πλῆθος).⁴⁸

The phrase "δοῦλος τῆς Θεοτόκου" occurs repeatedly on seals of the seventh to eighth centuries. Although in most cases it should be understood as a forerunner of the invocation "κύριε [οἱ Θεοτόκε] βοήθει τῷ δοῦλῳ σου" standard on seals from the eighth to ninth centuries on, in some cases it may be being used in this technical sense, as indication of membership in a brotherhood. The relevant seals are those of John "stratelates, servant of the Forty Martyrs" (δοῦλος τῶν ἁγίων μεγαλομαρτύρων),⁴⁹ of Diazouzis, "apo eparchon . . . servant of St. Theodore" (δοῦλος τοῦ ἁγίου Θεοδώρου),⁵⁰ of an unknown "servant of St. Sophia" (δοῦλος τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας),⁵¹ of Constantine the kourator, "servant of the Great Church" (Θεοτόκε βοήθει τῷ σὸ δοῦλῳ Κωνσταντινῶ δοῦλῳ τῆς Μεγάλης Ἐκκλησίας καὶ κουράτορι),⁵² of Hadrian, "servant of the Holy Trinity" (Θεοτόκε βοήθει Ἀδριανῶ πιστῷ δοῦλῳ τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος),⁵³ Might these designations refer to sanctuaries to which these men were attached?⁵⁴ Are there perhaps other occasions where the phrase "δοῦλος τῆς Θεοτόκου" is used without our being aware of its technical meaning?⁵⁵ We should at least be on the alert.

A commitment to a brotherhood, whether it was a brotherhood of the icon or of the pannychis or of the presbeia, involved regular attendance at services and

des sceaux (as in note 39), no. 1206. The seal bears a bust of St. Panteleimon.

⁴³ *Acta* 55 November, III, 888C. The miracles are usually dated to the tenth century; the manuscript containing the text (Vat. gr. 822) dates to the twelfth.

⁴⁴ Gautier, *Tyricon* (as in note 2), lines 751, 799–800. Cf. also Ševčenko, "Icons" (as in note 2), 55 n. 72.

⁴⁵ On the office, cf. Darrouzès, *Rachera* (as in note 2), 314 n. 5. According to a miracle of St. Artemios, men in high places (τῶν ἐξελόντων) were involved in the pannychis of John the Baptist every Saturday. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Varia Graeca* (as in note 35), 14, lines 19–21.

⁴⁶ Laurent, *Corpus des sceaux* (as in note 39), nos. 1200–1202. On Nicholas Skleros, cf. W. Seibt, *Die Skleroi. Eine prosopographisch-sigillographische Studie* (Vienna 1976), 93–97. Laurent (no. 1205, ninth century, and no. 1205, eleventh century) also describes seals inscribed "The return of the Holy Apostles" ("Ἡ ὑποστρόφη τῶν Ἁγίων Ἀποστόλων), and "of the diakonia of the Blachernai return" (τῆς διακονίας τῆς ὑποστρόφης τῶν Βλαχερνῶν), which he interprets as those of a brotherhood responsible for the return trips of the imperial procession.

⁴⁷ For individuals registering their commitment to secular lords, cf. *PLP*, s.v. "δοῦλος."

⁴⁸ Vnn Dobschütz, "Maria Romaia" (as in note 17), 202, lines 35–36. Perhaps the enigmatic γράμμα, the women who helped out at the presbeia service at the Pantokrator, were called that because they had signed a written agreement: Gautier, *Tyricon* (as in note 2), lines 787–794.

⁴⁹ Zacos and Vegliery, *Lead Seals* (as in note 39), no. 2888, seventh century.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 1281 A, ca. 700.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, no. 307, ca. 700.

⁵² *Ibid.*, no. 1807, ninth century.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, no. 624, eighth century. There are several seals where, as here, individuals invoke the Virgin's help while declaring themselves "servants" of someone else: e.g., *ibid.*, nos. 1470, 1505, 1606 C, 2501. Cf. also the seals of Andrew, δοῦλος τῆς σπουδῆς, no. 2781 (eighth century) and of Zeno hypatos and δοῦλος τῆς σπουδῆς, no. 2937.

⁵⁴ The formula "δοῦλος τοῦ . . ." is not used that often on seals of clerics or monks. Note, however, the seal of Constantine πρεσβυτέρου, δοῦλου τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας (Zacos and Vegliery, *Lead Seals* [as in note 39], no. 307); Theodore who signed an Athonic document in 1018: Θεωδόρος μοναχὸς δοῦλος τοῦ ἁγίου Γεωργίου τοῦ Σενεφόντος (*Actes de Latina*, ed. P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, and N. Svoronos, vol. I [Paris 1970], no. 29, line 27); and the seal of Eudokia, an eleventh-century nun and servant of "the Peridoxos": Θεοτόκε βοήθει τῇ σῇ δοῦλῃ Εὐδοκίᾳ μοναχῆ καὶ δοῦλῃ τῆς Περιδόξου. Her seal bears an image on its obverse of the Virgin orante, inscribed ἡ Περιδόξου (V. Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin*, vol. II, *Administration centrale* [Paris 1981], no. 1294, second half of the eleventh century); it is possible that this nun was serving a particular icon, that of the Virgin Peridoxos. There is also the slight possibility that when the sanctuary is referred to on a seal by an *epithet* of the holy figure to whom it is dedicated, this means the diakonia is actually serving the *icon* of that sanctuary, e.g., the diakonia τοῦ Ἀντιφώνητου (Laurent, *Corpus des sceaux* [as in note 39], nos. 1207 and 1208), or the diakonia τοῦ τροπαιοφόρου, in an epigram by John Mauropus (*Iohannis Euchariorum Metropolitae, quae in Codice Vaticano Graeco 676 Saeperveni*, ed. P. Lagarde [Göttingen 1882; reprint Amsterdam 1979], nos. 71–72). But this is by no means certain.

⁵⁵ The phrase is so widely understood as a topos that it scarcely ever makes any index verborum.

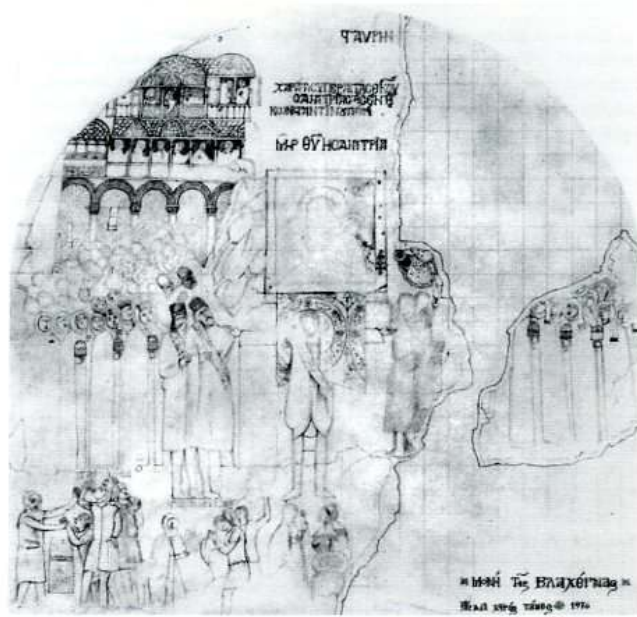
sometimes the escort of an icon on its various journeys about the city or countryside. The members could expect benefits in return: cash payment from the sanctuaries they visited (as was provided them by Emperor John II), mutual support in times of illness, and special treatment from the saint whose sanctuary or icon they had served. When the man whose clothes were stolen later developed a testicular tumor at age sixty-two and faced surgery, he protested to Sts. John the Baptist and Artemios (and to their companion in the shrine, St. Febronia), "So, St. John and St. Artemios and St. Feb-

ronia! I have served you [δεδούλευκα] from the age of ten until now, only to be mutilated in my old age! If I had committed myself to some individual on earth [εἰ τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς ἀνθρώπων τινὶ προσκαρτέρουν], I would have been found worthy of [receiving] support and care and attention. Now that's the sort of compensation I expect!"⁵⁶ St. Artemios, of course, hastily rewarded this faithful servant with a miraculous cure.

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⁵⁶ Ναί, ἄγιο Ἰωάννη καὶ ἄγιο Ἀρτέμιε καὶ ἄγιο Φεβρονία, οὕτως ὄντων ἀπὸ δεκαῖτους καὶ ὄδε χρόνου δεδούλευκα. ἵνα εἰς τὸ γῆρας ἀνάπηρος γένομαι, εἰ τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς ἀνθρώπων τινὶ προσκαρτέρουν, εἶχον ἂν καὶ συγ-

κροτήσεως καὶ ἐπιμελείας καὶ προνοίας ἀξιώσθην. ἰδέ εἰς ποῖον πλήρωμα ἦλθον. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Varia Graeca* (as in note 35), 29, lines 11–15 (literally: "See, for such a recompense have I come").



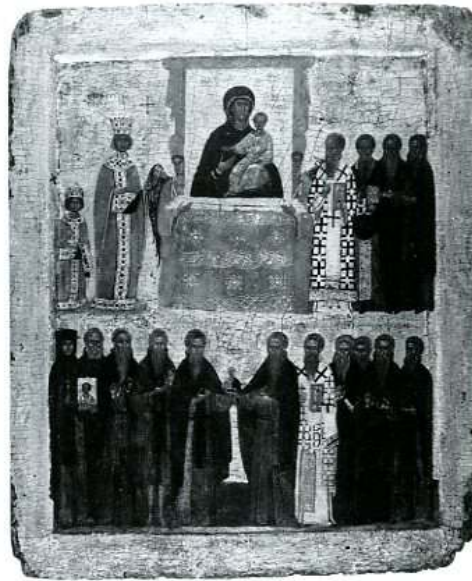
1. Arta, Blacherna monastery, fresco of the procession of the Hodegetria icon, late thirteenth century



2. Moscow, Historical Museum, tapestry showing the procession of an icon of the Hodegetria, 1498



3. Dečani, church of the Pantokrator, fresco illustrating strophe 20 of the Akathistos Hymn, ca. 1350



4. London, British Museum, icon of the feast of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, fourteenth century



5. Athos, Lavra monastery, katholikon, fresco of the feast of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, 1555



6. Markov Manastir, church of St. Demetrios, fresco illustrating strophe 23 of the Akathistos Hymn, ca. 1375



7. Sopoćani, church of the Trinity, fresco of the arrival of the body of Stefan (Symeon) Nemanja at Studenica, third quarter of the thirteenth century