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Descending from the Throne: Byzantine Bishops, Ritual and Spaces of Authority

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Religious Studies

by

Justin Richard Rose

December 2017

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University of California, Riverside

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Dedication

To Sayeed, Dudley, Saideh and Lily

Διά τῆς τῶν ὀδόντων βλάβης παρέσχεν ὁ κύων μετά τοῦ τάχους τήν ἰδίαν γένυν τῆ
ἡμετέρα χρεία οἷόν τις ἔμψυχος μάχαιρα τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ γενόμενος.

- St. Gregory of Nyssa, *ΠΕΡΙ ΚΑΤΑΣΚΕΥΗΣ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΥ*, VII.3

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Descending from the Throne: Byzantine Bishops, Ritual and Spaces of Authority

by

Justin Richard Rose

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Religious Studies

University of California, Riverside, December 2017

Drs. Sherri Johnson and Michael Alexander, Co-Chairpersons

Descending from the Throne studies the how medieval and contemporary Byzantine bishops used thrones in monumental art, ritual and text to craft spaces of authority. Constantine the Great and his successors crafted Constantinople innovatively drawing upon the tradition of Rome and Jerusalem to make the imperial city a space of civil and sacred authority.

Drawing upon the tradition of the Great Church, Hagia Sophia, in Constantinople, medieval bishops innovated art, text and ritual to stabilize authority in their local circumstances. This dissertation will consider the work of Demetrios Chomatenos, Archbishop of Ohrid and rival of the Despotate of Nicaea for the patriarchal title following the Latin occupation of the Fourth Crusade. Drawing from his years as a canon lawyer in Constantinople, he innovatively crafted a space of legal authority in the upper narthex of Sveti Sophia in Ohrid to preserve Byzantine tradition.

Nikephoros Moschopoulos, Archbishop of Crete, served as proedros of Mistra because he was not able to occupy his see due to Venetian control of the island granted by imperial decree. In Mistra, Nikephoros inscribed a space of authority using art and ritual to stabilize his claims to land holdings.

Symeon of Thessalonike served as Archbishop of Thessalonike in the last years of Byzantium. The medieval Thessalonians had a deep distrust of nobility and had even ruled the city democratically for a period. Symeon used an ancient liturgical form, called the “Sung Office,” to bring the authority of Constantinople to bear on his unruly flock in Thessalonike.

Contemporary Byzantine bishops, with the loss of Byzantium in 1453, nevertheless continue to innovate using tradition to craft a space of shared authority as evidenced by the development of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy.

Preface

Words have semantic fields. Often the same word can have nuanced meanings depending upon the context. For scholars, the term “Byzantine” refers to history, artifacts, iconography or ideas generated (arguably) from the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great and ending (unanimously) in 1453 with the fall of Constantinople. Although the Byzantines would never have described themselves as byzantine, this term is useful to denote what was going on in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, especially as East and West drifted further apart in the Middle Ages.

If you ask a contemporary Orthodox or Greek Catholic Christian, however, the term “Byzantine” still applies to the ritual, spirituality, theology and identity lived by a diverse group of Christians in places like Greece, Russia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Ukraine, Georgia, Romania, Europe, North and South America. These Christians celebrate the “Byzantine rite” and some, like Ruthenian Catholics, even use the term “Byzantine” as the title of their particular jurisdiction.

Who knew that the meaning of Byzantium could be so *byzantine*?

It has been brought to my attention that, in this dissertation, I have run carefree in these various semantic fields, gathering from each what is useful for my work. Religious Studies offers the freedom to cross disciplines and engage both scholars and practitioners. As such, I beg the indulgence of Byzantinist scholars when I use the term Byzantine in a contemporary context.

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Abbreviations

<i>ArtB</i>	<i>Art Bulletin</i>
<i>BMGS</i>	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
<i>ByzSym</i>	ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΑ ΣΥΜΜΕΙΚΤΑ
<i>Cah Arch</i>	Cahiers Archéologiques
ΔΧΑΕ	ΔΕΛΤΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
ODB	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> , ed. A. Kazhdan et al. (New York, 1991)
OHB	Oxford History of Byzantium
PG	Migne, J. <i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
RTIEB	Recueil des travaux de l'institut d'études byzantines
UNAM	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

INTRODUCTION: DESCENDING FROM THE THRONE

According to the tenth-century *Book of Ceremonies*, when the emperor entered Hagia Sophia, the choir welcomed him with a prayer for his long life and divine protection. He proceeded through the main space or nave dressed in a flowing purple cape and prayed before the altar. Then, he took his place on a throne prominently positioned within the church. The procession and the throne established the emperor's authority and exhibited it within the sacred space. The emperor did not enter alone. He was accompanied by the metropolitan archbishop of Constantinople, the Ecumenical Patriarch, who proceeded to his own high throne in the sanctuary. The Great Church was an authority making space for both. Today, this ritual procession and enthronement continues in Byzantine churches all over the world. Now, however, the bishop has replaced the emperor as the figure of authority.

Byzantium was replete with thrones. In Constantinople, the emperor's thrones could be spectacular and awe inspiring, as we will see below. In churches, the bishops carried out their duty to teach and admonish from a lofty throne. When Byzantines thought of the divine, they also envisioned thrones. In the chapters to come, we will see thrones in art and ritual that create cohesive spaces of authority for the emperors or bishops who occupied or commissioned them. We will study how medieval Byzantine bishops innovatively drew upon the tradition of thrones in Constantinople to craft their own local spaces of authority; their own Constantinoples in microcosm.

My interest in the role of thrones in Byzantine art and ritual did not begin with medieval Byzantine practice, however. As a Byzantine Catholic priest, I always wondered why contemporary Byzantine bishops have as many as four thrones in their churches: two permanent and two movable. Further, unlike Roman Catholic practice where the bishop has one permanent throne in his cathedral church and may have a movable one in local settings, even many small Byzantine chapels will have at least one permanent bishop's throne. In effect, every local Byzantine church is a cathedral in microcosm, which means that every Byzantine church is a space of episcopal authority.

Even today, nearly six hundred years after the fall of the Byzantine Empire, Orthodox¹Christians still celebrate the rites developed and performed in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. In the absence of an emperor, Orthodox bishops have incorporated

¹ In this dissertation, I will use the term "Orthodox" to indicate Christians who follow the system of rituals and beliefs developed in Constantinople. In contemporary practice, there are two major ritual usages based upon this tradition: Greek and Slavic. I also intend "Orthodox" to include those Catholic Churches that were Orthodox and declared communion with the Roman Catholic Church between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

imperial ceremonies and even the imperial throne and in so doing, making rite, vesture and throne their own. In medieval Byzantium, bishops set boundaries inscribing spaces of authority upon the sacred landscape to protect their interests.² Contemporary Orthodox bishops sit enthroned in a very different world, one without an emperor and without a cohesive Byzantine Christian landscape. Despite the accumulation of thrones, art and ritual work together in contemporary Orthodox churches to craft spaces of shared authority.

After the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, Byzantine culture lost its center forever. The imperial throne of the Romans would never again have an emperor as occupant, but the tradition of its placement and ceremonial would be repurposed. One can detect distant remnants of the richness and glory that was Byzantium in a few Orthodox countries today and in Orthodox churches or monasteries scattered all over the world. In these glimmers, modern Orthodox Christians, in ritual celebration, draw from the tradition of a city and a church that once embodied the authority of God on earth.

To explore the way that thrones on the ground and/or in monumental art interacted in ritual to create spaces of authority, I will draw principally on the work of the work of Sharon E. J. Gerstel, Warren Woodfin and Jonathan Z. Smith. Sharon Gerstel studies late medieval Byzantine churches by considering how art and practitioners interacted in ritual. I will draw heavily upon *Beholding Sacred Mysteries, Thresholds of the Sacred* and *Viewing the Morea*, as well as various other articles and chapters in my

² Sharon E. J. Gerstel, ed., *Viewing the Morea: Land and People in the Late Medieval Peloponnese*, (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2013), 358.

own work.³ In these texts, Gerstel demonstrates a deep working knowledge with the various practitioners who would have interacted with monumental art in a Byzantine church. Her work provides a glimpse of how the clergy and people standing in a medieval church during a liturgical service would have experienced the art and ritual around them. Bishops experienced these spaces differently than lay people or even other clergy. My work will also draw upon these privileged vantage points as I consider the role of thrones in Byzantine art and ritual.

Warren Woodfin's monograph, *Embodied Icons*, explores the interaction of monumental art, practitioners and ritual vesture.⁴ Although his work is not as carefully attuned to the various practitioners who would have interacted in a Byzantine church, Woodfin concludes that the interaction of these elements performed authority in Byzantium. I will draw upon his perspective as I study the spaces of authority craft by Byzantine bishops.

Jonathan Z. Smith has studied "how historically specific rituals attempt to create broad patterns of order and meaning."⁵ Byzantine ritual draws upon tradition of three authoritative locations: Rome, Jerusalem and Constantinople. The early emperors and

³ Sharon E. J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, CAA Monograph on the Fine Arts LVI (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1999); Sharon E. J. Gerstel, ed., *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Archaeological, Liturgical and Theological Views on Religious Screens, East and West* (Washington, DC and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Sharon E. J. Gerstel, ed., *Viewing the Morea: Land and People in the Late Medieval Peloponnese* (Washington, DC and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁴ Warren T. Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon: Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁵ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspective and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 11; Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), 104. See also, James Hall, *A History of Ideas and Images in Italian Art*, (London: John Murray, 1983), 143.

bishops designed Constantinople as a space of authority by invoking the tradition of both Rome and Jerusalem. Later Byzantine bishops would draw upon those traditions as well, but then through the lens of Constantinople.

Smith suggests that “ritual...is an opportunity to reflect on the disjuncture between what is and what ought to be; it is a ‘focusing lens’ through which people can attempt to see, or argue for, what is significant in real life.”⁶ A basic liturgical truism applies, *lex orandi lex credendi*. Roughly translated for context, “how one worships shows what one believes.” The ritual and art developed in Constantinople in the imperial basilica of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) formed the belief system and a cultural framework throughout the Byzantine world and beyond.

Byzantine bishops drew from the tradition of Constantinople in their own local worship, art and architecture. Artists formed in Constantinople’s workshops have left evidence of their distinctive training in the construction and decoration of hundreds of extant churches and monasteries. Liturgical commentaries provide evidence that the style of worship that evolved in Hagia Sophia was reproduced throughout the empire. I will argue that Byzantine ritual creates several patterns of order and meaning concurrently. Through the assemblage of material elements and ritual, the Byzantines not only created sacred spaces, but also constructed spaces of authority.

⁶ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 32-51. Bell discusses the historical place of Smith’s theories in, Bell, *Ritual*, 11-12.

Various elements offer testimony as to how medieval Byzantine bishops drew upon the tradition of Constantinople. For the sake of simplicity, I have chosen one aspect of imperial and patriarchal ceremonial in Hagia Sophia; the throne. It is not groundbreaking to imagine that a throne symbolizes, or even embodies, authority. Thus, to say that a bishop uses a throne to establish his authority would not be very interesting. In the throne examples that this dissertation will consider, however, Byzantine metropolitan bishops creatively drew upon the tradition of the authoritative dyad of emperor and patriarch in using thrones in Constantinople.

The next chapter will consider how Byzantine emperors and patriarchs drew upon the tradition of Rome and Jerusalem to make Constantinople a space of authority. In laying out an authoritative landscape, they used art and ritual not to imitate but to invoke Roman civil power and the theological tradition of Jerusalem as the Holy Land.

Gilbert Dagron has examined the complex interplay of authority between Byzantine emperors and their patriarchs.⁷ That the pairing of emperor and patriarch of Constantinople became a “power identity” can be attested to by the “younger” nations (Serbia, Bulgaria, Russia) that imitated this exact formula as they established their system of rule. As we will see, the three medieval metropolitan bishops that form the subjects of Chapters Two, Three and Four, also draw from the tradition of this Constantinopolitan power dyad to strengthen their own authority.

⁷ Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. J. Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) [translation of *Empereur et prêtre: Étude sur le "césaropapisme" byzantin* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1996)].

To explore this, Chapters Two-Four will deal with specific cases of metropolitan bishops in Byzantium who drew upon rituals and art established in Constantinople to strengthen their authority. Their use of thrones in art and ritual will draw from a tradition forged in Constantinople to engender authority in their local space, where that authority was contested in some way. By considering the unique challenges to their authority in each case, we will be able to identify the “disjuncture,” to use Smith’s definition above, between the actual power struggles and what the bishop thought his authority *should be*.

Chapter Two will detail the struggle of Demetrios Chomatenos, Archbishop of Ohrid, to establish his authority as patriarch in the aftermath of the devastating Fourth Crusade when the Franks invaded and plundered Constantinople, establishing a Latin kingdom of Constantinople for nearly sixty years. According to Byzantine rite, he crowned and anointed a claimant to the Byzantine throne in the church of St. Demetrios in Thessalonike. His attempts were complicated by the fact that the Archbishop of Nicaea contested his claim to authority. Years after his reign, his cathedral in Ohrid, Hagia Sophia, boasted an upper chamber in the narthex that was painted with a program that proclaimed the importance of the See and links to the Great Church in Constantinople. This bold new program reflects Demetrios’ own agenda as archbishop.

Chapter Three also features a rivalry; not between patriarchal contenders but between a local bishop and an abbot. Nikephoros Moschopoulos established his authority over land holdings innovating upon the tradition of the throne in Constantinople. The art he commissioned in the narthex of the Metropolis, the cathedral of St. Demetrios in

Mistra bears witness to the ambitions of the man who left testament of his struggle for authority set in stone.

In Chapter Four, we study Symeon of Thessalonike, Archbishop of the second city of the empire in the last days of Byzantium. His writings provide valuable insights into late medieval Byzantine liturgical practice. For our purposes, Symeon's commentary emphasizes the central and absolute power of the bishop to an unruly flock that had, at one time, governed itself. From his throne, Symeon invoked the tradition of an ancient Constantinopolitan liturgy to create a space of episcopal authority.

Chapter Five will consider how contemporary Orthodox bishops continue to draw upon ancient Byzantine rituals and elements to perform authority, but now without the living model of Constantinople. Ironically, even though the modern hierarchical liturgy has incorporated both imperial and patriarchal ritual elements, the authoritative space this combination creates invokes shared not absolute authority.

By examining individual moments in the Late Byzantine world, I hope to contribute to the understanding of contemporary Orthodox Christian practice. Chapters One through Four provide "snapshots;" glimpses into a tradition of authority-making that enriches our sense of Orthodox hierarchical ritual today. Chapter Five considers the shift in authority imagery for contemporary bishops after the trauma and dispersion of Orthodox Christians in the fifteenth century. Byzantines without Byzantium, modern Orthodox Hierarchical Liturgy preserves ancient rituals that once proclaimed the

authority of two men, emperor and patriarch, and the church where it all began, Hagia Sophia.

CHAPTER ONE: CRAFTING SPACES OF AUTHORITY IN BYZANTIUM

τὼ γ' ὡς βουλευσάντε διέτμαγεν: ἦ μὲν ἔπειτα
εἰς ἄλλα ἄλτο βαθεῖαν ἀπ' αἰγλήεντος Ὀλύμπου,
Ζεὺς δὲ ἐὼν πρὸς δῶμα: θεοὶ δ' ἅμα πάντες ἀνέσταν
ἐξ ἐδέων σφοῦ πατρὸς ἐναντίον: οὐδέ τις ἔτλη
μεῖναι ἐπερχόμενον, ἀλλ' ἀντίοι ἔσταν ἅπαντες.
ὥς ὁ μὲν ἔνθα καθέζετ' ἐπὶ θρόνου

When [Zeus and Thetis] had taken counsel together in this way, they parted; [Thetis] leapt straightway into the deep sea from gleaming Olympus, and Zeus went to his own palace. All the gods together rose from their seats before the face of their father; no one dared to await his coming, but they all rose up before him. So, he sat down there upon his throne...

Homer, *Iliad*, 1.531-535⁸

In the *Iliad*, Homer depicts a scene where the king of the gods, Zeus, marks a space of authority by sitting on his throne. The Olympian gods stand in awe of Zeus as he

⁸ Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. A.T. Murray, (London: William Heineman, 1924), accessed on <http://perseus.tufts.edu> on August 8, 2017.

ascended and sat down. The story I will tell in this dissertation also looks at thrones and spaces of authority. It is not set in ancient Greece, however, but in the Byzantine Empire and in contemporary churches that continue the Byzantine tradition of ritual and art.

The medieval bishops I study in these pages would have been familiar with the passage from the Iliad above. As educated men, they learned Greek grammar by laboriously reading Homer. Their common *paideia* (education), gave them access to a world of ideas and symbols. The tradition that developed in Constantinople drew from this common education and incorporated the outside wisdom of Greco-Roman culture and the inside wisdom of the Christian faith. As much as Constantinople was both a new Rome and New Jerusalem, so every Byzantine church acknowledged traditions developed in Constantinople and in her Great Church, Hagia Sophia.

Bishops drew upon the rich tradition of Constantinople to create small spaces of Constantinople all over the Byzantine world. Some of those spaces are extant and offer fleeting glimpses of a once great Empire. When they found their authority in danger, they innovated upon the rich tradition of symbols and rituals that performed both religious and secular authority in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

Pictures cannot do it justice. There really is no way to describe the immensity of the space or the feeling of awe that comes over a person when first walking into the nave of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, now Istanbul, Turkey. The *exo-narthex* and *narthex* in themselves are each the size of most modern churches. Constructed in the early- sixth century, the vastness of this architectural wonder has been the source of envy and

imitation, as evidenced materially by the neighboring Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmet) which rivals Hagia Sophia both geographically and in design. Anyone studying Byzantium, regardless of discipline, must at some point, account for Hagia Sophia. More than a mere backdrop, this meeting place of earth and heaven participated in the development of the Byzantine rite. The space still resonates with the performance of imperial and patriarchal authority.

In the Middle Ages, Hagia Sophia anchored the vast palace complex where imperial rituals took place and stood as the destination for weekly processions that blended sacred and secular authority as they moved through the city. The palace is present now only in scant traces – archaeological remains and small portions of walls. Hagia Sophia remains, designated a museum. One can still catch a glimpse of the grandeur of the rituals once celebrated in those spaces, however. Byzantine churches all over the world today perform the liturgical and spiritual tradition begun in Late Antiquity and developed throughout the Middle Ages in that space and many Orthodox cathedrals throughout the world — even in Los Angeles — bear its name, the Church of Christ, Holy Wisdom. This dissertation will explore the rich perpetuation and innovation of Byzantine tradition through ritual and art in medieval and contemporary sacred spaces.

DEFINING SPACE

As a way to enter this examination, it is important to establish a working definition of “space.” This dissertation will regard both the various physical spaces contained in a church building and the cognitive space that ritual creates, following

Jonathan Smith's definition of ritual space. For Smith, space is a dynamic rather than static phenomenon:

Space is conceived as being already existent, as being divided up into empty loci into which the images by which memories would be recalled are placed. The loci are thought both to preexist and to survive the memories (the point of the oft-repeated analogy to a wax tablet). But what if matters be reversed? What if space were not the recipient but rather the creation of the human project? What if place were an active product of intellection rather than its passive receptacle?⁹

The Byzantines filled church spaces with icons, relics and furnishings and enacted rituals that carried complex and overlapping theological and cultural memories drawn from scripture, temporal and spatial associations, and Greco-Roman *paideia*. Smith explores this human dimension in the idea of the "home":

The nostalgic literature of home is filled with these sorts of reveries: moments of significance, private or shared, incomprehensible to those outside. Home is perceived as the condensation of such reveries. Home is not, from such a point of view, best understood as the place-where-I-was-born or the place-where-I-live. Home is the place where memories are "housed" As such, home is unique: "There's no place like home."¹⁰

For the Byzantines, Hagia Sophia was *home*. This dissertation will argue that Byzantine bishops drew upon the tradition of ritual and art of the imperial/patriarchal home church to create their own spaces of sacred authority. Furthermore, where the medieval bishops considered below had a living template for their reference,

⁹ Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), 26.

¹⁰ Smith, *To Take Place*, 29.

contemporary Byzantine bishops have to rely solely on tradition since the physical space of Hagia Sophia no longer functions as the home church. There is no longer an emperor and the role of the Ecumenical Patriarch has been greatly diminished and circumscribed first by the Ottomans and now, even more, by the secular Turkish government.

The Late Byzantine literary and artistic references to thrones that we will consider below, however, reflect the use and manipulation of tradition. In each of the three medieval cases, the metropolitan bishops, or their successors, depicted a throne in art or detailed its ritual use, to make a connection to Hagia Sophia in Constantinople: authority-central. Contemporary Orthodox bishops perform a nearly identical hierarchical liturgy except for rites that I will argue are actually imperial, not patriarchal in origin.

ROME AND JERUSALEM

The inheritors of Greco-Roman culture who sat at the cross-roads of East and West forged Byzantium as a unique mix of ancient and new with Christianity as its driving force. When the Roman emperor Constantine moved the seat of the Empire from Rome to Byzantium, renamed Constantinople, he founded it as a “New Rome.” He wanted a city that would exude imperial authority. As such, he needed to draw from the memory of the Old Rome so that his new city could be identified as an authoritative space. Thus, Constantinople has seven hills, a hippodrome and various forums in memory of the first Rome.

Constantine’s new empire would not just exude the secular authority of the Roman Empire, however. By embracing Christianity in an attempt to unify his domain,

Constantine would draw upon the memory of the biblical Jerusalem buried beneath the Roman city of Aelia Capitolina. In her imperially commissioned sojourn to the Holy Land, Constantine's mother, the Empress Helena would reach beneath the surface of the current city to make contact with the relics and spaces narrated in Christian scripture. The churches her son commissioned over the sites of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and his crucifixion and resurrection in Jerusalem had nothing to do with the *actual* city that surrounded them. To build on the reported site of Golgotha and the garden tomb where Christ was buried, the Roman temple of Venus had to be destroyed. The original Anastasis basilica had a courtyard to enshrine the peak of Golgotha, the mountain of Jesus' crucifixion. Constantine's building project reached through time and layers of the rebuilt city to contact the memory of the places where Jesus walked, suffered and rose. It was the memory of that Jerusalem, destroyed and built over by the Roman emperor Vespasian and his son Titus more than two hundred years before, that the newly Christian, Roman emperor Constantine wanted to touch. Robert Taft notes that the Byzantines saw Constantinople's Hagia Sophia as the great example of the Heavenly Jerusalem (cf. Rev. 21).¹¹

Modern pilgrims to the Holy Land draw upon their biblical memory of Jesus for piety. However pious Constantine might have been, he certainly had, at least, one other reason for fomenting the memory of Jerusalem. He needed to establish identifiable holy sites to augment his spiritual authority in his new capital. Generations of imperial

¹¹Robert Taft, "*Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm.*" *DOP* 34/35, (1980/1981), 47.

successors would follow his lead. Jonathan Z. Smith called Constantinople a uniquely Christian site: “For Constantinople was designed as far more than a new royal capital; it was deliberately crafted, over time, as a stage for the distinctive drama of the early Byzantine liturgy and for the later complex elaboration of imperial-Christian ritual.”¹² That ritual needed the biblical Christian precedents buried beneath Aelia Capitolina.

Byzantine churches are hierotopic, or sacred, places constructed to imitate Jerusalem.¹³ Robert Ousterhout explores how deep connections were drawn between the two “sacred geographies,” Constantinople and Jerusalem, so that the former city could be linked to the “events on which the tenets of Christianity were founded.”¹⁴ Such linkage was accomplished through allegory rather than imitation. The *Life of Constantine* records that the emperor ordered the construction of a “New Jerusalem” on the spots where Jesus’ suffering and resurrection had occurred.¹⁵

Constantine’s interest in these sites gave Jerusalem an imperial prestige that it had not hitherto had in the Roman Empire, especially as Aelia Capitolina. Smith notes that the imperial patronage granted through the seventh canon of the Council of Nicaea, even

¹² Smith, *To Take Place*, 75.

¹³ Alexei Lidov, “Creating the Sacred Space: Hierotopy as a new Field of Cultural History” (conference paper, *Spazi e Percorsi Sacri*, Padua, 2012, http://hierotopy.ru/contents/LIDOV_Hierotopy_Spazi_%20sacri_2015.pdf, (accessed May, 24, 2015), 61, 68. Eliade considers the concept of divine revelation, or *hierophany* in Mircea Eliade, trans. Willard R. Trask, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Germany, 1957; Orlando: Harcourt, 1987), 26.

¹⁴ Robert Ousterhout, “Sacred Geographies and Holy Cities: Constantinople as Jerusalem,” in *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium*, eds. Bonna D. Wescoat and Robert G. Ousterhout (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1.

¹⁵ Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine*, 3.33, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, eds. Philip Schaff, and Henry Wace, 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1890; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 529. See also Taft, *Great Church*, 65 and Lidov, *Creating*, 73.

placed “Jerusalem” on a par with the metropolitan city of Caesarea. The emperor’s interest in creating a “new” Jerusalem just as he was crafting a “new Rome” out of the small settlement of Byzantium, gave this city a new status through the “idiom of power, prestige and sanctity.”¹⁶

In commissioning new buildings, Constantine did not attempt to copy Golgotha, the mountain of crucifixion, or even the garden tomb. Further, the emperor did not require the builders to uncover the original Jerusalem that had long been hidden beneath the Roman city, Aelia Capitolina. Rather, his sponsored churches and shrines had an allegorical and topographical connection to the sacred events that traditionally occurred in the places over which they were built.¹⁷

In Constantinople, since there were no geographic connections to the Holy Land, emperors drew exclusively from the allegorical associations, fashioning a new Jerusalem through space and ritual.¹⁸ Lidov notes, “...medieval *concepteurs* (sic) usually reproduced not the planning, the architectural forms or the decoration, but an image-idea of the particularly venerated sacred space, recognized by their contemporaries and included in the new context.”¹⁹

The way that Byzantines used and depicted thrones richly illustrates this use of memory of Jerusalem. The *Book of Ceremonies* is an excellent source to explore this use.

¹⁶ Smith, *To Take Place*, 77-79.

¹⁷ For the influence of Jerusalem on the development of the Byzantine rite, see Taft, *Great Church*, 65-75.

¹⁸ Ousterhout, *Sacred Geographies*, 12.

¹⁹ Lidov, *Creating Sacred Space*, 79. See also, Ousterhout, *Sacred Geographies*, 9.

The *Book of Ceremonies*, ΕΚΘΕΣΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ ΤΑΞΕΩΣ, a compiled source for imperial ceremonial in two volumes commissioned by the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos (r. 913-959), contains introductions to both volumes written by the emperor himself. The text, which reaches modernity through the only legible manuscript preserved in the University of Leipzig, was copied by one hand in the generation after Constantine's death, during the reign of the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas.²⁰ "It is a composite work, containing not only material from different periods but also revisions made to that material over time..."²¹ The emperor, himself, provided insights into the intention and methodology of the text. He noted that time and neglect had rendered imperial ceremonial "moribund":²²

Therefore, so that this should not be the case and we should not seem by acting in a disorderly fashion to be insulting the imperial majesty, we believed it was necessary to collect with unremitting effort from many sources those things which were devised by earlier generations and were made known by those who had seen them, and were seen by us, ourselves and practiced in our times, and to set them out in the present arrangement and to record for those who come after us, in the form of an easily comprehended account, the tradition of our ancestral customs which have been neglected.²³

The Emperor thus intended the *Book of Ceremonies* to be both prescriptive and descriptive. As such, this text provides deep insights into the tradition of sacred Byzantine imperial and patriarchal authority. Ancient, but discontinued, ritual practices

²⁰ Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *The Book of Ceremonies*, trans. Ann Moffatt and Maxeme Tall, Australian Association for Byzantine Studies-Byzantina Australiensia 18.1, (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2012), xxiii.

²¹ *Book of Ceremonies*, xxv.

²² "ἀπονεκρωθεισης," *Book of Ceremonies*, 4.

²³ *Book of Ceremonies*, 4.

must be revived according to Constantine, because they speak to the ethos and aura of sacred imperial authority. In the examples considered below, ancient Byzantine historians will note in dismay and disgust those rulers who, by neglecting ceremonial, did not preserve the image of the emperor “above” everyone else. The placement of thrones and the use of imperial vesture, as well as various other elements, set the emperor apart as God’s anointed. Although Constantine focuses mainly on imperial rubrics and mentions the ceremonial role of the patriarch of Constantinople only peripherally, nevertheless, his description of the patriarch’s role in imperial rituals yields significant evidence for this dissertation, especially in conjunction with liturgical diataxeis and in comparison with the Pseudo-Kodinos discussed below.

Constantine’s work has the virtue of summarizing Byzantine court ceremonial so that scholars can speak about long-standing ritual practices. The text challenges scholars, however, who attempt to pinpoint a particular time frame for many practices. Although the possibility for some accurate dating exists through references to buildings recently built or demolished,²⁴ or the mention of Latin or Gothic phrases or court titles that did not survive late antiquity,²⁵ the work functions best when respected as a compilation and taken as a whole.

Moffatt and Tall note that imperial ceremonial was not a concern for all emperors, as Constantine VII, himself, attests. The *Book of Ceremonies* provides rubrics for the preparation or imperial processions, both civil and ecclesiastical, which blend the

²⁴ *Book of Ceremonies*, xxx.

²⁵ *Book of Ceremonies*, xxxi-xxxii.

distinction of the sacred and profane roles of the emperor. The text enumerates, often with exquisite detail, protocols for prescribed acclamations, special vesture and designated routes throughout Constantinople to monuments, churches and shrines. Although the *Book of Ceremonies* enumerates processions and ceremonies throughout the city, it mainly centers on the rituals that take place in the Great Palace and in the adjoining Great Church of Hagia Sophia fig. 1.1).

By comparison to the *Book of Ceremonies*, the fourteenth-century *Τακτικόν περί των οφφικίων του Παλατίου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως και των οφφικίων της Μεγάλης Εκκλησίας*, known as *Pseudo-Kodinos*, is more elusive. Like the *Book of Ceremonies*, the *Pseudo-Kodinos* is a compilation of various lists and rubrics with components that scholars date to various periods.²⁶ While the collective nature of the work defies precise dating, scholars can point to certain elements attributable to a particular emperor, describing a ceremonial innovation or evolution of court attire, among other things to provide *termini a quo*.²⁷ Given the historical record of court practices, Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov conclude that the text was compiled during the reign of John VI Kantakouzenos (r. 1353-1354):

²⁶ Ruth Macrides, J. A. Munitiz and Dimiter Angelov, *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies 15 (Surrey, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 1, 15.

²⁷ *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 10-14.

Pseudo-Kodinos describes practices that were current in the time of the Palaiologoi and in the reign of John VI Kantakouzenos. His protocols were not, as far as can be determined, obsolete ceremonies, dug up from the distant past. Although historians have sometimes labelled Pseudo-Kodinos' work "antiquarian," it has this quality only insofar as Pseudo-Kodinos is interested in origins and reasons for practices. He attempts to convey the practice of his time but he also embellishes the descriptions with historical "notes," with information about what used to be. His is an annotated ceremony book.²⁸

Like the *Book of Ceremonies*, the *Pseudo-Kodinos* blends descriptive elements with prescriptions of what ceremonial should take place on a certain occasion, but may have fallen into disuse. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov note that scholars must tread carefully in assuming that the rubrics found in either work reflect what happened on any given occasion.²⁹ Unlike the earlier work, there is no clear authorship, imperial patronage or commission in the *Pseudo-Kodinos*, which lacks the personal introduction that Constantine VII included in the first two paragraphs of the *Book of Ceremonies*.³⁰

Perhaps the greatest difference, however, between the *Book of Ceremonies* and the *Pseudo-Kodinos* is that the court ceremonies described occurred in completely different locations. As noted, the *Book of Ceremonies* reflects the ceremonial life of the emperor in the Great Palace that adjoined Hagia Sophia and the Hippodrome.³¹ This complex created imperial and patriarchal spaces of authority. After the devastation of the Fourth Crusade, emperors took up residence in the smaller Blachernae palace in the

²⁸ *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 14.

²⁹ *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 359-360.

³⁰ *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 1.

³¹ *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 446.

northeastern corner of the city. *Pseudo-Kodinos*'s rubrics reflect the smaller space of the Blachernae.

Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov note that some scholars have glossed over or ignored this distinction, which has led to dubious conclusions.³² It was not that the emperors were using less of the palace, but that it was a completely different space. As such, one must be responsible in making direct comparisons between the *Book of Ceremonies* and *Pseudo-Kodinos*, especially regarding the “decline” of the later empire. Where scholars once posited a rapid and clearly identifiable deterioration in the Late Byzantine period, a careful examination of the evidence suggests a more complex situation. Certainly, *Pseudo-Kodinos* reveals that the emperor could no longer afford lavish processions, for instance, but imperial ceremonial continued nevertheless.³³ Even though the emperor no longer resided next door to his imperial church, *Pseudo-Kodinos* documents nearly the same number of official yearly visits to Hagia Sophia as the earlier *Book of Ceremonies*.³⁴

Considering these valuable texts together, one can conclude that by the Middle Byzantine period (843-1204), expressions of the memory of Jerusalem were fully developed in Constantinople. Both the emperor and patriarch daily interacted with relics from apostles or the Mother of God, which they had gathered into Constantinople over progressive centuries. The *Book of Ceremonies* details some of these objects regularly

³² *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 359-360.

³³ *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 367-378.

³⁴ *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 447.

taken in procession. On the feast of the Transfiguration (August 6), the *Book of Ceremonies* notes, “All the insignia also went out and formed an escort as usual, that is, the great cross, the rod of Moses, the Roman scepters, the tablets and whatever else is stored in the Church of the Lord.”³⁵ These objects routinely enacted through performance the memory of both Rome and Jerusalem before the eyes of the inhabitants of the city and visitors alike. Robed in their ceremonial vesture, the emperor, patriarch with their respective retinue clearly proclaimed their authority by association with these sacred objects in procession.³⁶

Churches filled with icons of Christ depicted the scenes of his earthly life and miracles in and around Jerusalem. The controversy of Iconoclasm led the victorious iconodules (icon-venerators) to articulate an ancient theological belief that “the honor given to the image passes to the prototype.”³⁷ Icons were “windows into heaven.” They could, also, be windows from heaven as well, conveying the power of the one depicted back to those who venerated them on earth. Thus, by surrounding themselves with relics and icons the Byzantine emperors and bishops supplied themselves with a sacred arsenal that they could deploy at will to establish their sacred and secular authority. In Constantinople, it was difficult, if not impossible, to separate church from state, sacred from secular. The various spaces of the imperial palace-cathedral complex that sat at the

³⁵ *Book of Ceremonies*, 591.

³⁶ For a discussion of the interplay of ritual vesture, monumental art and processions, see Warren T. Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon: Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³⁷ Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Anderson (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1980), 72.

geographic and emotional center of Constantinople were redolent with the authority-making tradition.

Justinian's *Novels* prescribe a respectful cooperation between the patriarch and the emperor. *Novel 6* requires any bishop who wishes an audience with the emperor to first speak to the patriarch and having done this, to approach the emperor together with the patriarch or his referendarius (secretary). In the ninth century the patriarch Photios foreshadowed Smith's assessment when he preached that the "emperor and patriarch of Constantinople worked in harmony, the one having care of the bodies, the other the souls of the people."³⁸ In the examples we will examine below, the ritual prescribed for palace and church reflect this tension between the sacred and the profane, the authority of patriarch and emperor.

Donald Nicol describes an exchange between the Grand Duke of Moscow Basil I and Patriarch Antony IV in 1393, which exemplifies the delicate balance of power. Since Moscow was no longer under the emperor politically, Basil had let lapse the custom of commemorating the emperor at the Divine Liturgy. "Basil I had presumed to let this custom lapse on the grounds that 'we have a church but no emperor'."³⁹ The patriarch of Constantinople, whose authority was still in force over the Russian church at that time, reprimanded the duke. "'The empire,' he wrote, 'might be sadly reduced. The enemy might be at the gates of its capital. But the emperor was still God's regent on earth, the

³⁸ Donald Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium*, The Birkbeck Lectures, 1977 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 3, for translations of Photios, *Epanagoge*, see n. 3.

³⁹ Nicol, *The End of the Byzantine Empire*. London: Edward Arnold, 1979., 67.

anointed of God, the superior of all other Christian princes, the visible head of the universal church of true believers’.”⁴⁰

This “eternal truth,” as Nicol calls it, was the memory that ran so deeply in Byzantine culture and spirituality. The patriarch used his influence to champion the God-ordained authority of the Byzantine emperor, even in the darkest times when few others had any respect for it. That this mystical pairing established sacred authority for the Byzantines may be seen in the various neighboring empires like Serbia and Russia whose tsars (caesars) sought to establish their own sacred authority and autonomy by replicating this Byzantine ruling dyad, emperor and patriarch and even imitating the various titles and bureaucratic posts of the Byzantine imperial court. These memories of byzantine-ness lay at the heart of the cases that this dissertation will examine.

For visitors to Hagia Sophia, it was clear that this space made heaven present on earth. Using Smith’s taxonomy, the “Great Church” constituted a sacred and authoritative space because of the memories formed by the presence and interaction of two people: the emperor and the patriarch. Despite frequent conflicts between them, extant ritual evidence presents the emperor and patriarch functioning as a unit, with very clear boundaries set on each one’s authority. The decline of imperial authority and the concurrent strengthening of patriarchal power in the Late Byzantine period have been well established.⁴¹ Gilbert Dagron’s work, *Emperor and Priest*, carefully details the

⁴⁰ Nicol, *End*, 67-68.

⁴¹See Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) [translation of *Empereur et prêtre: Étude sur le "césaropapisme" byzantin* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1996)].

development and complicated decline of the imperial office and the growth of patriarchal prestige in Byzantium.⁴² This dissertation will not focus on whether the emperor or patriarch had more or less authority, but accepts that the “power dyad” of emperor and patriarch, which was duplicated by the new medieval Byzantine nations like Russia, Serbia and Bulgaria, was drawn upon in ritual and art by bishops in Byzantium, and even by contemporary Byzantine bishops, to establish their authority.⁴³

THRONE OF SOLOMON

In his first visit to Constantinople, the German ambassador, the deacon Liudprand of Cremona, recounts his audience with the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII, author and compiler of the *Book of Ceremonies*. He describes a remarkable throne located in the administrative building known as the Magnaura, derived from the Latin for “Great Hall.”⁴⁴ The Great Palace in Constantinople was, in actuality, a complex of palaces and halls built over time. The Magnaura was located just inside the main entrance to the palace, the Chalke Gate, near Hagia Sophia. Although a later embassy to Constantinople would not be as awe-inspiring, the young Lombard leaves clear evidence that his first imperial audience was remarkable.

In front of the emperor’s throne there stood a certain tree of gilt bronze, whose branches, similarly gilt bronze, were filled with birds of different sizes, which emitted the songs of the different birds corresponding to their species. The throne of the emperor was built with skill in such a way that at one instant it was low, then

⁴² For the scholarly importance of Dagron’s work, see Robert Taft, “The Byzantine Imperial Communion Ritual,” in *Ritual and Art: Byzantine Essays for Christopher Walter*, (New York: Pindar Press, 2006), 1, n.1.

⁴³ Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 103.

⁴⁴ Paolo Squatriti, trans., *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 197.

higher, and quickly if appeared most lofty; and lions of immense size (though it was unclear if they were of wood or brass, they certainly were coated with gold) seemed to guard him, and striking the ground with their tails, they emitted a roar with mouths open and tongues flickering...upon my entry, the lions emitted their roar and the birds called out, each according to its species, I was not filled with special fear or admiration, since I had been told about all these things by one of those who knew them well. Thus, prostrated a third time in adoration before the emperor, I lifted my head, and the person whom earlier I had seen sitting elevated to a modest degree above the ground, I suddenly spied wearing different clothes and sitting almost level with the ceiling of the mansion.⁴⁵

Some scholars suppose that the Byzantines borrowed the idea of automata from Baghdad, whose Caliphs celebrated learning and innovation.⁴⁶ Visiting the throne room of the new round city of Baghdad, now utterly lost beneath the modern city, Byzantine ambassadors surely appreciated the useful applications back in Byzantium for the automata that the Caliph used to emphasize his own Abbasid authority.⁴⁷ In the cultural exchange that occurred between the two great nations, Byzantine ambassadors likely traded the Greek texts that Islamic scholars so earnestly sought for translation in the House of Wisdom⁴⁸ for the secrets of the automata (and perhaps even working examples).

Liudprand's description perfectly demonstrates how Byzantines used the memory of Jerusalem enacted in ritual to create spaces of authority. Every aspect of the experience, from waiting for the audience, to the fanfare of the automata or bronze-gilded mechanical animals created an atmosphere of imperial authority. Liudprand described an escort between two eunuchs and three prostrations in adoration of the emperor whose

⁴⁵ Squatriti, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 197-198.

⁴⁶ See Gerard Brett, "The Automata in the Byzantine 'Throne of Solomon,'" *Speculum* 29,(1954), 483. Also, Colin Wells, *Sailing from Byzantium: How a Lost Empire Shaped the World*, (New York: Bantam Dell, 2006), 141.

⁴⁷ Wells, *Sailing from Byzantium*, 140-141.

⁴⁸ Brett, *Automata*, 482-485. See also Wells, *Sailing from Byzantium*, 138-174.

throne mysteriously ascended and descended; no doubt, supposed the young deacon, through a system of pulleys. Nevertheless, this feature caught the visiting ambassador off guard and the wonderment he conveyed illustrates the success of this deliberately crafted Byzantine authoritative space. Even the distance between the suppliant and the emperor that necessitated a “translator” created an aura of divine and human power converging.

Beyond mere theatrics borrowed from a rival court, however, the Byzantine throne had a deeper association with divine authority. In the *Book of Ceremonies*, Constantine VII calls the very throne that so impressed Liudprand of Cremona, the “Throne of Solomon.”⁴⁹ By drawing upon the scriptural tradition of the third king in Jerusalem, builder of the first Jewish temple and famous for wise judgment, the Byzantine emperors could channel mysterious, divine power from Solomon in Jerusalem to strengthen their own authority by association. Two, nearly identical, scriptural references to Solomon’s Throne provide reference for the fantastic scene that Liudprand related in Constantine VII’s throne room.

The king also made a great ivory throne, and overlaid it with the finest gold. The throne had six steps. The top of the throne was rounded in the back, and on each side of the seat were arm rests and two lions standing beside the arm rests, while twelve lions were standing, one on each end of a step on the six steps. (I Kings 10:18-20 RSV)⁵⁰

⁴⁹ *Book of Ceremonies*, 567. See also *Book of Ceremonies*, 570, 583.

⁵⁰ There is an almost identical account of the throne in 2 Chronicles 9:18-19, except that this version mentions a footstool of gold. See also, Brett, *Throne of Solomon*, 485.

The materials described must have made an impressive display for Solomon's audience. Scripture records that the impressive display of fanfare in Solomon's court along with the wisdom of his judgment held visitors in awe.⁵¹

When the queen of Sheba had observed all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his valets, and his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her. (I Kings 10:4-5, RSV)

For the queen of Sheba, the rich pageantry she encountered in Jerusalem reinforced Solomon's divine authority. The king showed wisdom not only in his legendary judgments,⁵² but also through the organization and scale of his court ritual. By invoking this great God-anointed king in Jerusalem, the Byzantine emperor could draw upon the same awe and create a space of authority in the palace in Constantinople.

The Byzantine emperors who constructed the throne room in the Magnaura used scriptural referents in their plan of construction. The Throne of Solomon in the imperial palace was not mere imitation, however. The lions in Solomon's *biblical* throne did not roar or beat their tails; they were not automata. Josephus mentioned images of trees carved in stone as decoration (*Antiquities* VIII.5.2). The Bible does not mention bronze, gilded trees with brazen birds, however. The Byzantine emperors' throne did not seem to have the image of a half bullock as a backrest on the throne, but instead had the extraordinary innovation of being able to soar up and down in the space, even allowing

⁵¹ Consider the anecdote of the two prostitutes claiming the same child, I Kings 3:16-28 and Josephus, *Antiquities* VIII.5.3

⁵² Brett, *Throne of Solomon*, 485.

for costume changes in the ceiling. Thus, the Byzantine Throne of Solomon was not meant to duplicate the letter, but rather the spirit, of the original, biblical model. The intent, however, was the same in both: emphasizing, and even augmenting authority.

Drawing upon innovative medieval technology,⁵³ the Byzantine ruler invoked the tradition of Solomon to become “greater than Solomon” (Mt. 12:42). Liudprand reported that he had been prepared by a friend to expect the amazing automata.⁵⁴ Nothing prepared him, however, for the sight of the throne rising into thin air and the emperor changing clothes seemingly miraculously. From his prostrate position, Liudprand could only wonder at the inner mechanisms at work in this spectacle.⁵⁵ In that wonderment, Byzantine emperors weaved the mystique of their authority invoking the tradition of Jerusalem.

Akin to the dramatic effect of the original throne of Solomon in Jerusalem, the Throne of Solomon in Constantinople represented pure Byzantine theatrics at their best. In addition to the elements studied above, the considerable distance between emperor and audience, so great as to require a courtier relaying the words of each, made any meaningful discussion cumbersome at best. In fact, the *Book of Ceremonies* related that the emperor had a secondary throne where he could converse more freely with guests.⁵⁶ Emperors used the “Throne of Solomon” to create a space of undeniable, God-given,

⁵³ Brett, *Throne of Solomon*, 486-487.

⁵⁴ Squatriti, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 198.

⁵⁵ “I could not understand how he did this, unless perchance he was lifted up there by a pulley of the kind by which tree trunks are lifted.” Squatriti, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 198.

⁵⁶ *Book of Ceremonies*, 588.

mystical authority. Jonathan Smith considered the dynamics of space and authority in his study of the Temple visions in the book of Ezekiel (40-48). Smith notes:

As the dangerously powerful throne room is approached, the spatial vocabulary shifts to one of increased difficulty of access and increased focus, expressed through the narrowing width of entryways rather than the language of verticality.⁵⁷

Smith's study of the throne room in Ezekiel reveals dynamics opposite to the Byzantine "Throne of Solomon" in the Magnaura. Where Ezekiel's vision depicts narrowing, the Byzantine throne room was expansive and the vertical movements of the "Throne of Solomon" must certainly have "increased focus." Nevertheless, Smith's observation is immediately applicable when he notes that the difficulty of access and increased focus in Ezekiel's vision was a "spatial vocabulary shift" denoting a "dangerously powerful throne room." Any throne denotes power for the one sitting in it. Not every throne, however, draws that authority from Jerusalem and the memory of divinely wise, biblical kings. The "Throne of Solomon" drawing upon the tradition of King Solomon's court in Jerusalem, the mystique that surrounded this great biblical king and a heaping dose of Byzantine theatrics made this space one that united both divine and secular authority.

HAGIA SOPHIA

Invoking the tradition of Jerusalem and King Solomon did not end with the imperial throne room, however. Where technology made the biblical tradition of Solomon's throne room come to life in the palace, emperors and architects drew upon

⁵⁷ Smith, *To Take Place*, 57.

unprecedented technical skill to create a sacred space to enact the tradition of Jerusalem through art and ritual. Citing Dagron, Robert Ousterhout posits Justinian's new Hagia Sophia as a key allegorical link between the imperial city and the Holy Land. "As Hagia Sophia increased in prestige, it came to be regarded as the new Temple of Solomon, thereby equating Constantinople with Jerusalem."⁵⁸ Upon seeing the interior of the newly built Hagia Sophia, the emperor Justinian famously exclaimed, "Solomon, I have outdone thee!"⁵⁹

Justinian's exclamation not only speaks to the hierotopic layer of Byzantine space and ritual, but also to an authoritative dimension. Robert Ousterhout agrees: "The discourse, I would argue, was more about the construction of sacred kingship than about sacred topography." What Justinian and his successors constructed through space and ritual can be understood as *both* sacred *and* authoritative space.⁶⁰

The church as a physical building is centrally important to Byzantine worship. Justinian commissioned Hagia Sophia to embody and perform divine and secular authority. The first structure of this name, which Mathews calls the "Old Hagia Sophia" was completed by the Emperor Constantius in 360, and may have been begun by

⁵⁸ Ibid., 5. See also, Michael Angold, "Imperial renewal and orthodox reaction: Byzantium in the eleventh century," *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th -13th Centuries*, Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies 2 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), 232.

⁵⁹ *Anonymi narration de aedificantione temple S. Sophiae*, 27, ed. T. Preger, *Scriptores originum constantinopolitanarum*, 1 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1907), 105. See Taft, *Great Church*, 47, n. 15. Although this legendary account may not be historically accurate (see Judith Herrin, *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire* [Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008], 57), nevertheless, it demonstrates clearly the hierotopic mindset of the medieval Byzantine author who wrote it.

⁶⁰ For a survey of the history of ritual studies and the various theories regarding ritual, see Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; forward, 2009).

Constantine the Great as early as 326.⁶¹ A timber-roofed basilica, the Old Hagia Sophia was, at least partially, destroyed by fire in 404 in response to the deposition and exile of the patriarch, John Chrysostom. Rebuilt in 415 by the Emperor Theodosius II,⁶² this second iteration of Hagia Sophia lasted until 532 when it burned down in the Nika riots, after which, to quote Peter Sarris, “much of the monumental heart of Constantinople had to be rebuilt.”⁶³ No one had ever imagined building the church that the Emperor Justinian envisioned.⁶⁴ Contemporary photos of the interior of Hagia Sophia cannot adequately convey the vastness of the space (fig. 1.2). As Taft notes, the vision of this cathedral basilica “where the Byzantine rite was molded and celebrated,”⁶⁵ was imitated in miniature all over the Roman Empire. “In no liturgical tradition is liturgical space such an integral part of the liturgy as in the Byzantine, and in no tradition has one edifice played such a decisive role as Justinian’s Hagia Sophia.”⁶⁶

Hagia Sophia, which became the model for later Byzantine churches, contained several separate sections. “Oriented” or set so that the altar area faces east, the bema (holy place) was a raised platform that contained the altar table and the synthronon,⁶⁷ which was staged seating in the apse for the bishop and his clergy. (fig. 1.3) The bema was separated by a divider from the nave, the main area of the church, the gathering place

⁶¹ Thomas Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), 11-12.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁶³ Peter Sarris, “The Eastern Roman Empire from Constantine to Heraclius (306-641),” in Cyril Mango, ed., *The Oxford History of Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 45-46

⁶⁴ Herrin, *Byzantium*, 51.

⁶⁵ Taft, *Great Church*, 47

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* See also, Robert Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History*, American Essays in Liturgy, (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 35-36. See also Smith, *To Take Place*, 75.

⁶⁷ Mathews, *Early Churches*, 85.

of the laity. The divider was originally a “templon” or open railing (fig. 1.4). In Justinian’s time, relief images of the apostles may have decorated the epistyle of the screen. Over time, icons were affixed to this rail to create a full wall that separated the bema from the nave.⁶⁸ In later designs, side chapels flanking the bema were used for the preparation of the bread and wine for the Divine Liturgy. In Hagia Sophia, this preparation happened in the skeuophylakion, a separate building to the north used for staging and storage.⁶⁹ Many Byzantine churches contained a raised platform in the center of the nave, the ambo, where readings were proclaimed. The ambo in Hagia Sophia was so tall that members of the choir stood beneath it. To the west, two narthexes stood as an entrance to the nave. Usually extending the full width of the church, the narthex served several liturgical functions, which we will consider more fully in Chapter Three. Some churches, like Hagia Sophia, also had a secondary exonarthex or “outer narthex.”

A visitor to modern Istanbul can be impressed by the grandeur of the building, now a museum, but it is impossible to fully experience the effect of art, ritual and space as Justinian, his successors, and their contemporaries did. One well-known historical account, however, can shed light on the impact of Byzantine ritual in Hagia Sophia. In the tenth century, Vladimir, the Prince of Kiev, had four visiting envoys: the Muslim Bulgars, “Roman Catholic”⁷⁰ Germans, the Jewish Khazars, and the Byzantine Greeks.

⁶⁸ Sharon E. J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, College Art Association Monograph on the Fine Arts 56 (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1999), 7. For an explanation of the development of the divided holy place in the Byzantine Church read Chapter 1, 5-14.

⁶⁹ Mathews, *Early Churches*, 150.

⁷⁰ This term is anachronistic. The German envoys represented the Western Christian tradition that was beginning to develop separately from the Eastern expressions of Christianity. See Wells, *Sailing from Byzantium*.

Each wanted to convert the pagan prince to their religion. The *Primary Chronicle* records the interchange between Vladimir and each envoy, as the visitors tried to convince him of the truth of their beliefs. Not knowing which religion to choose, his boyars advised him to send emissaries to witness the worship of each religion. Vladimir's diplomats were unimpressed as they duly observed each religion until they arrived in Constantinople. The Emperors Basil II (r. 976-1025) and Constantine VIII (r. 1025-1028) received these ambassadors warmly. When they heard the reason for the official visit, the emperors were eager to comply.

On the morrow, the Emperor sent a message to the Patriarch to inform him that a Russian delegation had arrived to examine the Greek faith, and directed him to prepare the church and the clergy, and to array himself in his sacerdotal robes, so that the Russes might behold the glory of the God of the Greeks. When the Patriarch received these commands, he bade the clergy assemble, and they performed the customary rites. They burned incense, and the choirs sang hymns. The Emperor accompanied the Russes to the church, and placed them in a wide space, calling their attention to the beauty of the edifice, the chanting, and the pontifical services and the ministry of the deacons, while he explained to them the worship of his God. The Russes were astonished, and in their wonder praised the Greek ceremonial.⁷¹

The emissaries witnessed an intricate combination of ritual elements, actions and music in a space designed specifically to contact the *mysterium tremendum* of the holy.⁷² Their awe at the overwhelming experience of the divine, nevertheless, left them yearning to experience more.

⁷¹ S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text* (Cambridge: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953), 110-111.

⁷² Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1923; paperback edition, 1958), 25-30.

... the Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty.⁷³

The boyar emissaries experienced what Rudolph Otto called the overwhelming presence of the “numinous,” expressed in the form of the “mysterious.” As “tremendous” as the religious experience can be, it is nevertheless entrancing. Otto describes this attraction as *mysterium fascinans*. He describes both the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* as two sides of the same coin. When one has an encounter with the numinous, “...beside that in it which bewilders and confounds, he feels a something that captivates and transports him with a strange ravishment, rising often enough to the pitch of dizzy intoxication; it is the Dionysiac element in the numen.”⁷⁴ In Hagia Sophia, the vast dome with the enormous space underneath made known the overwhelming numinous presence of God. The gorgeous ritual that took place in the space drew participants in through “fascination.”

In studying this interplay of Byzantine art, architecture and ritual, George Gerov notes that one can distinguish “actual” space, “symbolic” space, and “represented” space.⁷⁵ Thus, the “actual” space of the church building (e.g. Hagia Sophia) lends itself to symbolic interpretations (e.g. church as paradise) which can be depicted in art or architecture, or when the space becomes “representational” through the ritual “event” that takes place in it.

⁷³ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *Primary Chronicle*, 111.

⁷⁴ Otto, *Holy*, 31.

⁷⁵ George Gerov, “The Narthex as Desert,” in *Ritual and Art: Byzantine Essays for Christopher Walter*, ed. Pamela Armstrong (London: Pindar Press, 2006), 148.

The tradition of the imperial/patriarchal liturgy celebrated in Hagia Sophia left an indelible mark on Byzantine art, architecture and ritual and was reproduced all over the world. Byzantines built churches and celebrated services that reflected the home church. Slavs, Westerners and Muslims alike drew upon the tradition of Byzantium in their own development of sacred and authoritative spaces.⁷⁶

Hagia Sophia was replete with thrones. Both the emperor and the patriarch each had at least two thrones.⁷⁷ The emperor had one movable throne in the narthex in front of the Royal Doors and one in the southeast corner of the nave to the right of the Holy Place (facing east). The patriarch also had a movable throne in the narthex, but his main throne sat at the upper center of the synthronon. Surrounded by his clergy, the patriarch could preach with authority, even in the presence of the emperor who sat enthroned below. Between these two thrones, in the center of the sanctuary stood a solid silver altar table. This was the most important throne in the church: the throne of Christ. As Symeon of Thessalonike notes in the fifteenth century: "...the holy table is itself a throne, with Christ the king of glory seated there through the sacraments and the Gospels."⁷⁸

In his exploration of ritual space and authority, Jonathan Z. Smith describes the power dynamics in the ancient Jerusalem temple: "The hierarchy of status has been put into place: the king's place is that of subordination to the priest; while the hierarchy of

⁷⁶ For a detailed examination of Byzantine contributions to these three "younger" cultures, see Wells, *Sailing from Byzantium*.

⁷⁷ Not counting the movable thrones recorded in *Book of Ceremonies* in the *skeuphylakion*. See the *Book of Ceremonies*, 34, and Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople*, 160.

⁷⁸ Symeon of Thessalonika, *Treatise on Prayer: An Explanation of the Services Conducted in the Orthodox Church*, trans. Harry L. N. Simmons (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College Press, 1984), 79.

power is reaffirmed: with relation to YHWH's royal function, the priest is subordinate."⁷⁹

The *Book of Ceremonies* testifies to this hierarchical shift since the emperor removed his crown upon entering the church narthex.⁸⁰ Furthermore, Smith's observation certainly applies to the placement of the emperor's thrones in Hagia Sophia. The movable throne in the narthex was essentially placed so that the emperor could await the arrival of the patriarch on official occasions. The *Book of Ceremonies* describes the rubrics for the first Sunday of Great Lent, the "Sunday of Orthodoxy," which commemorates the end of the Iconoclast controversy:

The emperor goes into the narthex and sits until the patriarch arrives with the religious procession. When the patriarch arrives, the emperor stands up and they both stand in front of the imperial (royal) doors, and the emperor, having lit candles, prays, while the patriarch performs the prayer of the Entrance.⁸¹

This passage provides some interesting insights into the interplay of authority between the patriarch and emperor in Hagia Sophia. The fact that the emperor had time to sit while awaiting the arrival of the patriarch indicates that there could be a significant amount of time to wait. Liudprand of Cremona bemoaned the ill treatment he received at the hands of Nikephoros II. The emperor demonstrated his disdain for Liudprand's king Otto by making the emissary wait several days before an audience, even though, by Liudprand's account, the palace was quite nearby.⁸² If the emperor in his court could make his authority felt by prolonging the wait of a visiting emissary, it would clearly not

⁷⁹ Smith, *To Take Place*, 62.

⁸⁰ *Book of Ceremonies*, 14.

⁸¹ *Book of Ceremonies*, 158.

⁸² *Liudprand of Cremona*, 238-239.

go unnoticed if the patriarch made him wait in the narthex of Hagia Sophia, especially at times when the two were in disagreement. Thus, the temporary throne could have served not only to make the emperor comfortable but also to preserve some sense of his authority as ruler while he was submitted to wait.

After c. 900, the emperor's wait in the narthex would hold deeper resonance. In 1933, a figural mosaic was discovered over the Royal Doors leading from the narthex to the nave. (fig. 1.5) This mosaic depicts Christ enthroned with two roundels containing, to his left, Mary the Mother of God; to the right, an unnamed archangel. To the right of Christ crouches an unnamed emperor performing a penitential metanoia or prostration. Robin Cormack notes that this icon has stirred various scholarly opinions because the emperor is unnamed.⁸³ This omission is strange so soon after the end of Iconoclasm. The second council of Nicaea, which condemned iconoclasm, decreed that all icons should be labeled with the name of the figures represented.

According to Cormack, the icon was certainly commissioned by Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos (852-925) in 920 "as a record of the subjection of the earthly ruler to Christ and the church."⁸⁴ If this theory is true, then the unfortunate emperor preserved crouching in mosaic was Leo VI (866-912). Leo ran afoul of the patriarch because of his various attempts to produce a male heir for the throne. While his fourth marriage, forbidden in the Orthodox Church, produced a male child, it also led to Leo's

⁸³ Robin Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, Oxford History of Art (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 122-126; Cecily Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 273.

⁸⁴ Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, 123.

condemnation and exclusion by the patriarch who even barred the emperor's entrance to Hagia Sophia at the very royal doors where the mosaic is located.⁸⁵

The suggested 920 date for this mosaic might suggest that Nicholas' choice to leave the image of the submissive emperor unnamed could be explained by not wanting to anger Leo's son, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos, the author/compiler of *Book of Ceremonies*. Whatever Mystikos' reason, however, the emperors who followed *Book of Ceremonies'* rubrics would have been left sitting on a temporary narthex throne facing this icon over the royal doors. The seated emperor might easily identify with the unnamed emperor overhead. As such, enthroned and waiting for the patriarch, whom the emperor needed to enter the nave, and gazing at the icon above, the narthex became a space of imperial submission, rather than authority.

Sometimes the patriarch had to wait for the emperor. In those cases, he also had a portable throne in the narthex. This throne held a very different resonance for the patriarch, however than the portable imperial narthex throne. Everyone was accustomed to waiting for the emperor, so it would not have been so humbling for the patriarch to await his arrival. The patriarch was the one who said the entrance prayer and could bar the emperor from entering the nave; he did not ritually *need* the emperor to enter the church and celebrate the services. Furthermore, if the icon over the royal doors was commissioned by a patriarch to commemorate his exercise of power over an emperor, then the waiting time for the incumbent patriarch gazing at this image of imperial

⁸⁵ Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, 125.

submission immortalized in mosaic could be quite empowering. His meditation upon the scene overhead would hold the exact opposite resonance as it would for a waiting emperor.

Below the icon of the enthroned Christ, engraved in the lintel of the Royal Doors is another throne that will figure prominently in my study, the Hetoimasia (fig. 1.6). This empty throne has the dove, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, and an open Gospel Book with the passage from the Gospel lectionary, “The Lord said, ‘I am the door of the sheep...if anyone enters by me he...will go in and out and find pasture’” (John 10:7-9).⁸⁶ This engraved image advances the theme of authority and humility even further by identifying the Royal Doors as the gates of a sheepfold. Certainly, both the emperor and the patriarch could be likened to shepherds, sharing in the work of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Here, however, the shepherds are also sheep.

Interestingly, on the western wall above the Royal Doors just inside the nave and just below the Empress’ Loge, there is another Hetoimasia, a small icon of the cross enthroned (fig. 1.7).⁸⁷ Its position places this small image literally back to back with the image of imperial submission to Christ over the Royal Doors in the narthex. The relationship of the enthroned Christ with a submissive emperor, the enthroned Gospel of the door to the sheepfold and the enthroned cross speaks to spiritual authority over secular power. Since the Royal Doors could only be used by the Emperor and his retinue,

⁸⁶ See Derek Kreuger and Robert S. Nelson, eds., *The New Testament in Byzantium*, (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2016), 12-13.

⁸⁷ My thanks to Prof. Sharon Gerstel for pointing out this feature.

the message seems clear: enter in humility and depart remembering that Christ, indicated by metonymy in the figure of the cross, holds the ultimate authority.

Where early Christians feared the cross, still used as a dreadful instrument of execution, Byzantine prayers celebrate the cross as a source of power. Liturgical texts reflecting upon the significance of the Holy Cross mention Moses' armies defeating Amalek in the desert by holding his arms up so that he made the form of a cross (Ex 17: 8-13). Byzantine hymnographers also saw a reference to the Cross in the bronze serpent that God told Moses to place on top of a staff to heal the Israelites bitten by poisonous snakes (Nm 21:6-9). These scriptural connections interpreted the cross as an instrument and conduit of divine power rather than as a method of execution and defeat.

The cross that Emperor Constantine saw in his vision before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge⁸⁸ was not an instrument of defeat and execution. Rather, this sign had the power to conquer enemies. By painting it upon the shields and standards of his troops, Constantine was victorious over his rival Maximian. The troparion (hymn) sung on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14) speaks of an instrument of authority. "O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, granting Orthodox Christians victory over their enemies, and guarding Thy commonwealth with Thy Cross."⁸⁹ The enthroned Cross above the head of the departing emperor and his nobles served as a clear reminder of the source of his authority.

⁸⁸ Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiae*, 9.9.

⁸⁹ *The Festal Menaion*, trans. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1969; repr. South Canaan: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1998), 141.

Byzantine hymnographers imbued the Cross with the trappings of victory and kingship. Following the high Christology of the Gospel of John these writers depicted the Cross was a divine earthly throne connected to the heavenly one.

O Lord, although as God you have the heavens as your throne and the earth as your stepping stone, O Christ our Savior, You revealed the Holy Cross to be your footstool. As David the psalmist has taught, we all bow down before it, claiming it as our help and protection as we glorify it in the fervor of our faith.⁹⁰

Jesus, crucified on the cross and rising from the tomb, is revealed as a powerful king who transforms the suffering of the cross into victory. “Even though you were placed in the narrowest of tombs all creation knows you, Jesus, to be truly king with the power to rule heaven and the earth.”⁹¹

INSERTING THE EMPEROR’S THRONE

Furthermore, the icon of the submissive emperor before the throne of Christ is remarkable in that it does not reflect the usual sense of harmony and proportion that characterizes similar scenes. When Jesus is depicted with supplicants, there are equal numbers on each side to balance the scene. The famous deesis (supplication) scene in the upper gallery of Hagia Sophia is a classic example (fig. 1.8). The imperial submission scene in the narthex does have a pair of lunettes of Mary and an archangel in the upper part of the mosaic that complement each other, but the submissive emperor crouches

⁹⁰ Sessional Hymn for Orthros on September 18. _____, *September Menaion*, Service Books of the Byzantine Churches, (Newton, MA: Sophia Press, 1988), 147.

⁹¹ Orthros of Holy and Great Saturday, Lamentations, Stasis 1. _____, *Holy Week: Holy and Great Friday and Holy and Great Saturday*, Service Books of the Byzantine Churches, Vol. 2, (Newton, MA: Sophia Press, 2012), 160.

alone at the feet of the enthroned Christ. In response to the theory that another figure originally balanced the unnamed emperor, Cormack observes, “archaeological evidence shows that a figure on the right side (to Christ’s left) never existed.”⁹² Thus, it would seem that the patriarch-patron intended the jarring void in his commission. It is interesting that the open space occurs on the same side that the emperor’s throne occupied in the nave. Looking at the icon this way, places the reigning emperor, enthroned in the nave, in conversation with the lacuna. Merely by his ritual presence in Hagia Sophia, the emperor, enthroned in the nave, filled in the space in the icon, thus balancing his unnamed predecessor in submission to Christ.

The placement of the emperor’s throne in the nave remains a matter of considerable scholarly debate. There is no literary or material evidence to provide an exact location,⁹³ but the sixth-century poet, Paul the Silentiary, described the newly built basilica in his *Ekphrasis tou naou tes Agias Sophias* that places the imperial throne in the southern aisle:

On the south, you will find a long aisle altogether similar to the northern one, yet it has something in addition: for it contains a space separated by a wall, reserved for the Ausonian emperor on solemn festivals. Here, my sceptered king, seated on his customary throne, lends his ear to [the reading of] the sacred books.⁹⁴

⁹² Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, 124.

⁹³ Mathews, *Early Churches*, 134 and Robert Ousterhout, “The Holy Space: Architecture and the Liturgy,” in ed. L. Safran, *Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium*, (University Park, PA, 1991), 91.

⁹⁴ Paul the Silentiary, *Ekphrasis tou naou tes Agias Sophias* in J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca* (Paris, 1844-1880), vol. 86, col. 2141-2142. Translation W. Letherby and H. Swainson, *The Church of St. Sophia Constantinople* (New York, 1894), 50.

This ancient eyewitness confirms the general location of the imperial throne and that a portable or permanent wall partially closed off the space to form what the *Book of Ceremonies* called the metatorion.⁹⁵ Drawing from the description of *Book of Ceremonies*, Mathews makes a case for a permanent set of spaces reserved for imperial use. The *Book of Ceremonies* described a small oratory in front of the metatorion.⁹⁶ Mathews notes that holes in the pillars on the south side of the nave might show where the walls once were. Later witness, however, suggests that this suite of chambers might not have remained as a permanent structure.

Pseudo-Kodinos notes that, by the fifteenth century, a portable wood structure needed to be constructed in Hagia Sophia to serve as a changing room for the emperor about to be crowned.

After the people and the entire army acclaim him, he descends from the shield and is led to the church of Hagia Sophia where he must be crowned. There is a small wooden chamber there, constructed in advance for this purpose. Leading him to this wooden chamber, they clothe the new emperor in the sakkos and the diadem (loros) that have been blessed by the bishops. On his head he does not wear anything prescribed, rather [he wears] either a stephanos or anything else he might think fit. While these things are happening, the liturgy is celebrated.⁹⁷

It would be strange for the rubrics to call for a temporary structure to be constructed if the permanent one still existed. With the ravages of the Fourth Crusade and the subsequent sixty years of use as a Latin cathedral, various structures used in

⁹⁵ *Book of Ceremonies*, I.1 (p.16) and I.9 (p. 65). See also Mathews, *Early Churches*, 134.

⁹⁶ *Book of Ceremonies*, I.1 (p. 16), Mathews, *Early Churches*, 134.

⁹⁷ *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 219.

Byzantine worship were destroyed or repurposed. Nevertheless, both documents affirm the need for a structure to occlude the emperor from the gaze of his fellow worshippers. His vesture symbolized his authority. It would be humbling to stand divested of these garments awaiting the new ones. Thus, the wall provided privacy and maintained the mystique of imperial authority, especially during wardrobe changes.⁹⁸

Just as *Book of Ceremonies* does not specifically locate the emperor's throne in Hagia Sophia, it likewise sheds no light on the throne's style or material composition. Paul the Silentiary's poetic description of Hagia Sophia reads at times like a geography or geology lesson because of his description of the origins the church's rich materials. Even he simply refers to the seat of Justinian in Hagia Sophia as "his customary throne."⁹⁹ *Pseudo-Kodinos* provides a glimpse of the grandeur of the throne set up for the imperial coronation:

Near the wooden chamber that we have mentioned a platform is constructed, similarly of wood, and they cover it all over with red silks. On this are placed gold thrones, according to the number of emperors; these are not like the other thrones of the emperors but are four or even five steps high.¹⁰⁰

This passage reveals less definitive information about the imperial throne in Hagia Sophia and more about what it was not. According to *Pseudo-Kodinos*, the height of the coronation throne bore comment because it was unusual even for the throne room in the Blachernae Palace.¹⁰¹ The emperors who returned to Constantinople after the Latin

⁹⁸ Mathews, *Early Churches*, 134.

⁹⁹ Paul the Silentiary, *Description of Hagia Sophia*, 50.

¹⁰⁰ *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 219.

¹⁰¹ See *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 219, n. 630.

occupation used the Blachernae because the Great Palace needed extensive repairs, which no one could afford to undertake. It would stand to reason that the smaller and simpler hub of the Late Byzantine emperors would not have the grandiose throne room that the *Book of Ceremonies* described and that wowed Liudprand of Cremona, as we will see below. So, the usual imperial throne was on or near ground level. It seems that the red silk and the gold thrones are special features, but these details do not shed any light on the imperial throne used on other occasions.

Physical and literary evidence suggest that the imperial throne sat on the southeast side of Hagia Sophia, probably near a suite of rooms that was permanent in the early years of the church and temporary in the Late Byzantine period. The “customary” throne of the emperor was not raised far off the nave floor and may have been gold. Further, the icon of Christ enthroned with the crouching emperor to his right left open a space that could have been filled by the current emperor enthroned to Christ’s left in the nave. These details reveal a complex interplay of imperial authority and submission. The emperor was only half of the equation in Hagia Sophia, however. His partner, and sometimes adversary, the Patriarch, also had a throne that expressed his authority.

SYNTHRONON

In describing the western end of Hagia Sophia, Paul the Silentiary mentions the easternmost part: “it is not drawn in a curved arc as it is at the eastern end, where the priests, learned in the art of sacrifice, preside on seats resplendent with an untold wealth

of silver.”¹⁰² The “curved arc” the Silentiary described is a standard feature of the basilica known as the *apse*. Before Christian emperors used the basilica design for churches, this stock layout was used for senate buildings and other spaces of governmental authority.¹⁰³ Because some of these public buildings were coopted for use as churches and moreover because the basilica was the standard architecture to hold a large assembly in late antiquity, Christian churches made this stock layout their own. The synthronon, staged seating that curved with the apse, allowed the patriarch (or bishop) to be enthroned in the center of the apse, surrounded by his clergy; a clear expression of authority in context.

When a bishop sat there, the basilica synthronon did not express governmental authority, however. A recent archaeological team in Kom el-Dikka, near Alexandria, Egypt, has uncovered a collection of late antique lecture halls located in a public complex with access to a nearby bathhouse. (fig. 1.9) Although there were several styles of arrangement in these auditoria, Majcherek notes.

A distinctive feature in all of the halls is the central dais on the short side opposite the entrance. Steps leading up to the dais even if not to the seat itself, were documented in virtually all of the units. Where preserved, this dais takes on various forms. Sometimes it is merely a block raised above the level of the topmost seat. The most monumental of these seats — a real cathedra, was unearthed in [one] auditorium. It featured six steps flanked by low sidewalls, which also gave access to the seating placed high above the floor level.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Paul the Silentiary, *Description of Hagia Sophia*, 417, 450

¹⁰³ Josef A Jungmann, S.J., trans. Francis A Brunner, C. SS. R., *The Early Liturgy: To the Time of Gregory the Great*, (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1959), 122-124.

¹⁰⁴ Grzegorz Majcherek, “The Auditoria on Kom el-Dikka: A Glimpse of Late Antique Education in Alexandria,” (Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth International Congress on Papyrology, Ann Arbor 2007, *American Studies in Papyrology*, Ann Arbor, 2010), 473.

Although he does not use the terms, what Majcherek describes is the synthronon in the apse of a basilica. This common late antique design oriented those in the “nave” toward the apse as a seat of authority. In Christian churches, however, the apse faced east, the region of the rising sun to symbolize the light of the Son of God. In Hagia Sophia, the height of the patriarch’s throne allowed him to preach seated, using the curvature of the apse over his head to help project his voice into the church, just like a teacher in the Kom el-Dikka auditoria.

Many of the Kom el-Dikka classroom spaces still had an extant stone block in the center of the rectangle where scholars believe a reading lectern stood.¹⁰⁵ This format mirrors exactly the structure of the early Christian basilica with the bishop (or patriarch) occupying the synthronon with his clergy and a raised ambo in the center of the nave for the liturgical readings. The evidence at Kom el-Dikka highlights that relationship between these architectural elements throne and ambo created an easily recognized space of authority: “The high chair, thronos, is an inseparable element of representations of teachers and philosophers, found on pottery, reliefs, sarcophagi and sculpture. Representations of this kind, undoubtedly grounded in the realities of life, were also freely adopted into Christian art.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, the standard basilica elements of Hagia Sophia created a clearly discernable space of teaching authority for the Patriarch of Constantinople while, at the same time, circumscribing imperial authority. As with the mosaic of the unnamed emperor in submission before the enthroned Christ and the

¹⁰⁵ Majcherek, *Kom el-Dikka*, 471.

¹⁰⁶ Majcherek, *Kom el-Dikka*, 474.

juxtaposed enthroned Cross considered above, the tradition of these architectural elements was expressed through various artistic media.¹⁰⁷ Thus, by the Late Byzantine period when the synthronon had essentially fallen into disuse because of the addition of a solid icon screen which obscured the apse, the tradition of that episcopal throne would continue to be expressed throughout Byzantium in new architectural features and art.

Of all the components considered above, the most multivalent and richly symbolic element in the Byzantine church was the altar or Holy Table, which stood in the center of the bema area. The Byzantines interpreted the altar in various ways simultaneously. As a “table,” it commemorated the Last Supper when Jesus reinterpreted the ancient Jewish Breaking of Bread and sharing a common cup as his body and blood. (Mt 26:26-30) Theologically, the Last Supper was a precursor to Jesus’ shedding of blood on the Cross the next day in the biblical account. As such, the Holy Table is an altar upon which priests offer a “bloodless sacrifice”¹⁰⁸ of bread and wine, which the Byzantines believed was the actual body and blood of Jesus.

Medieval interpreters like Nicholas Cabasilas interpret the Holy Table as the symbolic tomb of Christ in the context of the Liturgy: “The sacrifice commemorates the death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord, since the precious gifts are changed into the very body of the Saviour, that body which rose from the dead and ascended into

¹⁰⁷ For the interplay between monumental art, architecture, embroidered vesture and ritual, see Woodfin, *The Embroidered Icon*, chapter 3.

¹⁰⁸ In the prayer just prior to the *epiclesis* which invokes the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine, the priest calls the eucharist, “rational and unbloody worship.”

heaven.”¹⁰⁹ Medieval Byzantines saw the entire celebration of the Liturgy as a reenactment of the various events that happened in the biblical life and Passion of Jesus. This interpretation led to the embroidery of the large veil or aer with a scene of Jesus burial, with the other cloths used at the altar symbolizing Jesus’ burial cloths (Jn 20:7). This embroidered veil would eventually become too cumbersome for regular liturgical use and thus fell into neglect until it was reemployed centuries later as the epitaphios, (fig. 1.10) a centrally important feature of the burial service of Christ on Holy and Great Friday. The symbolism of the altar as tomb, however, would lead to the initially simple altar cloth, the antimimension, (fig. 1.11) taking on the embroidered scene of the entombment of Christ.¹¹⁰ This symbolic association would also lead to artistic innovations that would emphasize the sacrifice and death of Jesus in graphic terms.¹¹¹

Seeing the altar as tomb provides further evidence of the Byzantines drawing upon a tradition of Jerusalem; in this case, Byzantine Jerusalem. The altar as tomb symbolism invoked the tradition of the imperial church of the Anastasis built over the site of the mountain of Jesus’ crucifixion and the garden tomb. The placement of the altar in the segregated bema also invoked a tradition of the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem

¹⁰⁹ Nicholas Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1977), 52.

¹¹⁰ The antimimension was initially used as a portable altar stone carrying relics so that any suitable table could be made a temporary altar. Early in its history, the white linen antimimension simply had the relics of a saint sewn into the top and the signature of the issuing bishop. In Byzantium, it was later decorated with the scene of Jesus’ entombment. See Januarius Izzo, *The Antimimension in the Liturgical and Canonical Tradition of the Byzantine and Latin Churches: An Inter-ritual, Inter-confessional Study* (Rome: Pontificum Athanaeum Antonianum, 1975).

¹¹¹ See Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries*, 40.

Temple of Solomon.¹¹² Just like the Ark of the Covenant, which rested in the inner sanctum of Solomon's Temple, the altar was the place of God's presence on earth.

According to Paul the Silentiary, this "all-pure table of gold"¹¹³ would be covered during the celebration of the Liturgy in a richly embroidered royal purple cloth:

But ye priests, as the sacred laws command you, spread out with your hands the veil dipped in the purple dye of the Sidonian shell and cover the top of the table. Unfold the cover along its four sides and show to the countless crowd the gold and bright designs of skillful handiwork. One side is adorned with Christ's venerable form. This has been fashioned not by artists' skillful hands plying the knife, not by the needle driven through cloth, but by the web, the produce of the foreign worm, changing its colored threads of many shades. Upon the divine legs is a garment reflecting the golden glow under the rays of rosy fingered Dawn, and a chiton, dyed in purple by the Tyrian seashell, covers the right shoulder beneath its well woven fabric...He seems to be stretching out the fingers of the right hand, as if preaching His immortal words, while in His left He holds the book of divine message...¹¹⁴

The Silentiary's description provides a snapshot of a ritual of covering the altar by the priests concelebrating the Divine Liturgy. The *Book of Ceremonies* and *Pseudo-Kodinos* both designate the emperor and patriarch to perform this veiling during certain feasts. This ekphrasis offers an important witness that the Holy Table being covered was, despite its various other meanings, also the throne of God, covered in costly imperial purple.

The Silentiary's description reveals that the altar was a divine throne that united the connotations of both imperial and patriarchal thrones in Hagia Sophia. The richly embroidered, wine-purple silk denoted an imperial person. Thus, the emperor and

¹¹² Smith, *To Take Place*, 14.

¹¹³ Paul the Silentiary, *Description of Hagia Sophia*, 720.40.

¹¹⁴ Paul the Silentiary, *Description of Hagia Sophia*, 720.42b-43.

patriarch, by covering the altar with imperial purple, affirmed that Christ is the true king. Furthermore, the embroidered silken image depicts Christ the Teacher. The occupant of that throne, the altar, was both king and teacher. The whole drama of the Byzantine imperial and hierarchical liturgy literally revolved around the altar table. The shift from Paul the Silentiary's description of "priests" unfolding this cloth to the Emperor and Patriarch performing the simple ritual served as a reminder to both that this throne "between" theirs and toward which both were oriented was the true throne of authority.

In all of this, the references invoke tradition of Jerusalem. The Byzantines combined references to the Throne and Temple of Solomon and the Passion Narrative of Jesus in various ways, as considered above. The Holy Table draws these references into one sacred and authoritative space, which will, in turn, inspire tradition of this Constantinopolitan authority center in art and ritual throughout Byzantium. By weaving together threads of pagan and Christian tradition, the Byzantines produced a rich tapestry of sacred and secular authority; a tradition which was duplicated across the breadth of the Byzantine Empire. Chapters Two, Three and Four will explore how three Late Byzantine metropolitan archbishops employed images and rituals that involved the throne, drawing heavily upon the patriarchal tradition of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, to establish their own authority in their unique circumstances. Chapter Five will show that contemporary Orthodox bishops have preserved the patriarchal customs, that had become long standing tradition even before the Fall of Constantinople, for any bishop celebrating the hierarchical divine liturgy. Contemporary hierarchical liturgy, however, has some ceremonial elements attested to by no medieval sources. These new rites which reflect a

tradition of imperial ritual added to the liturgy after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453
open up new interpretive possibilities.

CHAPTER TWO: DEMETRIOS CHOMATENOS

“Don’t stay up there too long.” The docent who unlocked the door was doing me a favor because he had seen me lighting candles and kissing icons. As a practitioner/scholar, visits to still functioning medieval churches served a dual purpose for me. In time, I realized these two aspects of my professional life could work together to provide unique opportunities. As the docent would later explain, he only lets “believers” into the narthex area because most of the visitors to the church do not know how to behave. Sveti Sophia, named by the basilica’s builder, St. Theophylact, to invoke Hagia Sophia in Constantinople now largely hosts tourists and occasional concerts.

In Ohrid, Sveti Sophia’s lower narthex is used now as a staging area for lighting and concert equipment. It did not matter. The space I came to see was above. Making my way through the dimly lit rectangular space, a narrow stone stairway (fig. 2.1) emerged on the north end in the midst of the clutter of backdrops used for concerts and sundry paraphernalia. Excitedly climbing the steep, curving flight, I stumbled into the rectangular room, fifteen feet wide and twice as long. (fig. 2.2) The vaulted ceiling rose

about 20 feet high at its apex with a large tympanum at the north and south axes. In the vault overhead, what remained of the images of the seven Ecumenical Councils stared down. Looking around the room, I returned the placid glance of prophets, bishops, martyrs and monks (fig. 2.3) the whole Orthodox Church, in icon, stood with me at eye level. These icons were interrupted by the door I had entered at the southwest, another door in the northwestern wall, and by the opening with arches and pillars that offered a view above the wooden beams that stretched across the nave below. In the tympanum over the entrance, the icon of a magnificent Hetoimasia, the empty throne, stands flanked by angels (fig. 2.4). One angel, dressed as a soldier, has partially drawn his sword with a menacing scowl. Why was this upper gallery, looking out over the nave and bema of Sveti Sophia decorated with such an enigmatic scene?

To interpret this space and consider the significance of this church, we need to consider the career of the man who is most closely associated with Sveti Sophia, Demetrios Chomatenos. Chomatenos served as autocephalous archbishop of Ohrid from 1216-1236. The years following the Frankish conquest of Constantinople in 1204 and the subsequent establishment of Latin holdings throughout the former Byzantine empire posed a dire obstacle for the Byzantines as they tried to regroup and restore some degree of their faith, governance and culture. As Gunter Prinzing notes:

it was the chaos of that time, the age of the σύγχυσις/synchysis, that led to the emergence of the two Greek-Byzantine successor-states of “Epiros” in the western Greek Balkans (with its centre initially in Arta, later in Thessalonike) and “Nicaea” in north-western Asia Minor, if the special case of Trebizond is left aside.¹

¹ Günter Prinzing, “A Quasi Patriarch in the State of Epiros: The Autocephalous Archbishop of ‘Boulgaria’ (Ohrid) Demetrios Chomatenos,” *RTIEB* 41 (2004): 170.

The “break or split” that Prinzing mentions consisted of a loss of the center of Byzantine culture. For nearly eight centuries, the Byzantines had regarded themselves as the masters of the world, the continuation of the Roman Empire. The conquests of Constantinople and other Byzantine holdings left these medieval Romans scrambling to gather the cultural, political and religious shreds of their lost Empire. In fact, the despotates/empires of both Nicaea and Epiros managed admirably to establish Byzantine outposts, microcosms of culture and faith. Nicaea’s proximity to Constantinople lent credibility to the claims of legitimacy for both Emperor and Patriarch. To the West, however, the Despot-anointed-Emperor Theodore of Epiros, also sought to preserve the tradition of Byzantium, largely through the efforts of his leading prelate, Demetrios Chomatenos, Archbishop of Ohrid. In fact, Demetrios could draw upon an already established Byzantine culture in his See. Bulgaria was already Byzantine. Under Demetrios, it would become Byzantium.

BULGARIA

Originally a barbarian threat to Byzantium, the Bulgars grew to admire and envy the culture and prestige of the Byzantines. Masters at diplomacy, the Byzantines fostered this esteem with gifts and titles. Constantinople, however, never went so far as to grant the most coveted title of “Emperor,” rather using the secondary ruling title from the days of the Tetrarchy, “Caesar” (Tzar).² Mindful that these former barbarians presented a new and rich means of augmenting an empire that had sustained heavy losses from early

² Colin Wells, *Sailing from Byzantium: How a Lost Empire Shaped the World* (New York: Delacourte Press, 2007), Location 2836, Kindle.

Islamic expansion, the Byzantine emperors came into direct competition with Western powers who sought to expand their influence eastward.³ Responding to competition from Frankish King Louis the Byzantines convinced Tzar Boris to accept Byzantine Christianity as the state religion of Bulgaria. According to Browning, Constantinople sent clergy, texts and materials and Tzar Boris ordered mass baptisms. As a result:

The bewildered Slav peasants were rounded up by the Bulgarian army and marched to the nearest river or lake, in which they were immersed *en masse* while a priest from Constantinople intoned a formula of baptism in a tongue incomprehensible to his hearers. Churches were set up in which a Greek liturgy was followed on Sundays by a homily in Greek, which can have done little to edify its audience.⁴

Converting the Slavs brought challenges to the notion that Byzantine Christianity was synonymous with Greek culture and language. The Greek clergy who consented to be missionaries in the hinterland, brought with them a sense that they needed to civilize the Bulgarians as much as Christianize them. Thus, for the Bulgarians conversion to Byzantine Christianity brought political and national changes in addition to spiritual transformations. “The problem that faced Boris was that the adoption of Christianity as the religion of state and ruler meant becoming part of the divine plan for the salvation of mankind, of which the Byzantine emperor as the earthly guarantee.”⁵ Would a clergy acting as agents of Constantinople pose a threat to Bulgaria’s independence? On a spiritual level, “The Slav peasants and townsmen of Bulgaria saw their inherited customs

³ Timothy Gregory, *A History of Byzantium* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publ., 2005), 222.

⁴ Robert Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria: A Comparative Study Across the Early Medieval Frontier* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 147.

⁵ Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 147.

and values treated with tactless contempt by the new Christian clergy.”⁶ How could Boris begin to make Christianity uniquely Bulgarian, however, when it was completely dependent upon Greek texts and clergy?

In 886, Boris found a solution to his dilemma in the persons of Cyril and Methodius. These two missionary brothers, known to Boris for their work of translating some of the scriptures for the Slavs in nearby Moldavia, meant that the Bulgarians could be Byzantine without losing their distinctive Slavic culture or language. The brothers were uniquely suited for the task having interacted with Slavs who had migrated to their native Thessalonike. Boris’ dilemma posed a similar stumbling block to other fledgling Slavic churches; they had no written language. Drawing upon their Greek mother tongue and improvising new characters where necessary, the Glagolitic alphabet that Cyril developed was the precursor for the Cyrillic script still in use.⁷

Browning notes that Boris wisely sent Clement and Naum, the first disciples of Cyril and Methodius, to Ohrid⁸ since the western reaches of his domain had had less influence from Greek Thessalonike. So successful was this effort that Boris felt confident in 893 to expel many of the Greek clergy who could not read or speak Slavonic.⁹ This new religious identity along with two military victories that brought the Bulgarian army dangerously close to Constantinople, led the Byzantines to declare Bulgaria a Patriarchate in 919.¹⁰ Emperor Basil II the “Bulgar-slayer” altered this patriarchal status in 1018 after

⁶ Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 147.

⁷ Gregory, *History of Byzantium*, 213-215. Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 154-158.

⁸ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 168.

⁹ Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 158.

¹⁰ Gregory, *History of Byzantium*, 228.

he defeated an attacking Bulgarian army. He sent soldiers back to Bulgaria in groups of one hundred after having blinded all but one to lead each group back. Reportedly, the sight of this devastating punishment for defeat made Tsar Samuel suffer a stroke and die.¹¹ Taking advantage of Bulgaria's weakened state, Basil downgraded the Bulgarian Patriarchate to an autocephalous archdiocese that answered to the Patriarch of Constantinople.

According to Gregory, the Byzantine Emperor made this decision not just to humiliate Bulgaria in defeat, which he could have done by making the national church a mere archdiocese under the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Because he saw the military importance of Bulgaria, however, especially with relation to the outlying vassal-states:

Basil sought to respect the special importance of Bulgaria, and, although he suppressed the independent patriarchate of Ochrid, he made the archbishop autocephalous, meaning that he was not subject to the authority of the patriarchate of Constantinople, but, in this case at least, he was directly responsible to the emperor himself.¹²

Thus, the church in Bulgaria could continue much as before, except that it no longer had the dignity of the patriarchal title. Prinzing notes that in this case autocephaly meant that only the emperor could appoint the archbishop who answered directly to him, not the Patriarch of Constantinople.¹³ Just as in the relations of states, the Patriarchate in Constantinople and the Archdiocese of Ohrid would exchange officials to relay religious decrees or announcements. In fact, Demetrios Chomatenos held the office of apokrisarios

¹¹ Gregory, *History of Byzantium*, 246.

¹² Gregory, *History of Byzantium*, 246.

¹³ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 168.

(nuntio), the patriarchal ambassador, prior to his election as archbishop of Ohrid.¹⁴

Bulgaria would again become a Patriarchate in 1235, because of the political wrangling; the aftermath of the sack of Constantinople. This time, the condition of its elevation was recognition of the primacy of the Patriarch of Nicaea.¹⁵

The history of Christianity in Bulgaria exemplifies the age-old struggle between religion and culture that lies at the heart of Byzantine Christianity. While Boris of Bulgaria saw Byzantine Christianity as the more attractive or politically advantageous option over Roman Catholicism, he did not want compulsion to Hellenize his national culture or identity. The Bulgarian patriarchate gained at a time when the Bulgarians had the upper hand and downgraded to autocephaly when they did not, speaking to the shifting cultural identities in the medieval Byzantine world. With former barbarians becoming Byzantines, the Byzantines had new allies against the encroaching Turks. And while the new Slavic Byzantines wanted imperial titles, prestige, cultural sophistication and funds, they wanted these gems on their own terms. As we shall see, this enduring conflict between Slavic and Byzantine identity later splashed onto the walls of the upper narthex in Sveti Sophia in Ohrid.

Beyond this more solid basis for his claim to autonomy from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Nicaea, Demetrios could also draw upon a fictional privilege granted by none other than the Emperor Justinian. In 535, Justinian had established Justiniana Prima,

¹⁴ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 171.

¹⁵ George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. Joan Hussey (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969, Revised Edition), 437.

whose territory did partially overlap with the contested Bulgarian metropolitan diocese. Unfortunately for Demetrios, however, the seat of Justinian's Late Antique diocese was in Caričin Grad near Niš, a site that had lain in ruins since 605. Even when ambitious bishops of Ohrid had devised this fiction in the mid-twelfth century, Constantinople had put a stop to their machinations.¹⁶

Demetrios was not just an ambitious upstart, however. Prior to becoming Archbishop of Ohrid, Chomatenos had had a distinguished career as apokrisarios (nuntio), nomotriboumenos (legal expert) and finally chartophylax (chancellor) for the Metropolitan Archbishop of Ohrid.¹⁷ His extant collection entitled, *Ponemata Diaphora* ("Various Works") testify to his brilliance as a canon lawyer. Prinzing notes that although we do not have a firm date of birth for Demetrios or any information about his parents or childhood, his correspondence in the *Ponemata* suggests that he was born in Constantinople sometime in the "third quarter of the 12th century and died around 1236."¹⁸ His literary allusions and the quality of his Greek syntax suggest that he had been educated in the traditional and obligatory enkyklios paideia.¹⁹ Thus, although his claim to the See of Justiniana Prima might have been an exercise in legal fantasy — the kind that would amuse a legal expert — his doubts about the claims of Theodore Lascaris as Emperor in Nicaea and Germanos as Ecumenical Patriarch were certainly the result of his keen legal knowledge.²⁰

¹⁶ Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 169.

¹⁷ Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 171-172.

¹⁸ Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 171.

¹⁹ Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 171.

²⁰ Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 173.

AFTER THE FOURTH CRUSADE

The years following the Latin sacking of Constantinople brought chaos to Byzantine culture, administration and religion. In a chapter entitled, “Fragmentation,” Stephen W. Reinhert writes:

By 1210, from this calculated orgy of violence — prosecuted ‘in the name of God’ against ‘Greeks’ conceived as ‘the enemies of God’ — there had emerged on formerly Byzantine soil some six new Frankish states, dozens of minor dependent lordships, and a vast scattering of Venetian and Genoese colonies.²¹

Some of the Byzantines chose to negotiate with their Latin overlords. Some Byzantine nobles sought to regroup by establishing “Byzantine successor states” in Trebizond, Nicaea and Epiros.²² Trebizond was a separate case since it was established prior to the Fall of Constantinople in 1204 by Alexios and David Komnenos and ruled by that noble family until its fall to the Ottomans in 1461.²³

Close to Constantinople, in Nicaea, Theodore Laskaris, having defeated rivals to the title, declared himself emperor, inviting the exiled Patriarch of Constantinople to crown and anoint him.²⁴ When John X Kamateros (r. 1198-1206) declined, Laskaris essentially promoted the Bishop of Nicaea to patriarchal status drawing upon a lesser known title, Ecumenical Patriarch.²⁵

²¹ Stephen W. Reinert, *Fragmentation*, OHB, 250.

²² Reinert, *Fragmentation*, 251.

²³ Reinert, *Fragmentation*, 251. Niketas Choniates in Harry J. Magoulias, trans., *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 343.

²⁴ Michael Angold, *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context* (Great Britain: Pearson Education Ltd., 2003), 197.

²⁵ Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 428.

Theodore Angelos Komnenos Dukas (r. 1215-1230) became despot of Epiros after his half-brother Michael, the illegitimate son of John Angelos Komnenos the Sebastocrator, or second in command, under the Byzantine Emperor prior to the Latin occupation.²⁶ Michael had led a colorful career as governor of Epiros, adventurer, hostage, collaborator first with Latin Emperor of Constantinople Boniface of Montferrat (r. 1204-1205), then, the Bulgarian Czar Kolojan (r. 1197-1207), and finally, in 1215, self-appointed despot of Epiros. Michael proudly wielded the names of the noble families in his lineage despite his tenuous claim to them.²⁷

His half-brother and successor Theodore was equally proud of his noble pedigree and picked up where his despot-brother left off. Like his Nicaean counterpart of the same name, he too declared himself emperor and began to wear the imperial purple to prove it.²⁸ Michael had encouraged the Epirote bishops not to think of themselves as subject to Nicaea.²⁹ Theodore would take that spirit of independence further by arranging for the ordination of Demetrios Chomatenos as autocephalous archbishop of Ohrid. With Demetrios, Theodore would craft his own empire in the Balkans and Morea.

For both rivals, retaking Constantinople from the Franks was the main objective. Theodore made solid inroads toward that goal by retaking Thessalonike in 1224. This victory ended the Latin Kingdom of Thessalonike and gave Theodore control of Macedonia and Thessaly. In Thessalonike, Demetrios Chomatenos anointed and crowned

²⁶ Donald Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium 1261-1453* (London: Rupert Hart Davis, 1972), 11.

²⁷ Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 432.

²⁸ Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 434.

²⁹ Donald Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 41.

Dukas as Byzantine Emperor later that year. Theodore would come closest to retaking the Queen of Cities in 1230, only to be captured and blinded by John II Asen (r. 1218-1241) of Bulgaria. His defeat also marked the end of any suggestion of a Byzantine empire of Epiros.

Like the Nicaeans, the Epirotes were trying to rebuild Byzantium. Drawing upon the living tradition of the Queen of Cities, they donned imperial trappings, fostered education, and decorated churches using the Byzantine iconographic visual language developed in the famous iconography schools in Constantinople. Leonela Fundić, who has studied Arta, the seat of the Empire of Epiros, draws this conclusion:

I would argue that the patronage of the Epirote rulers was to a large extent informed by a nostalgia for the lost “Queen of Cities.” Indeed, I wish to propose that they consciously sought to model their capital Arta in the image of Constantinople. In this way, they preserved the memory of the imperial capital, while the carefully maintained link with Constantinople served as an ideological base in their attempts to restore the former Empire.³⁰

Demetrios showed considerable vigor in “byzantinizing” his new metropolitan see in Bulgaria. He deposed Bulgarian bishops, replacing them with Greeks. In so doing, he gathered a synod of likeminded bishops around him for support.³¹ Thus, when he needed synodal agreement to crown Theodore Dukas as emperor, his synod was happy to oblige.³² Both the emperor and patriarch in Nicaea were understandably furious.

³⁰ Leonela Fundić “Art and Political Ideology in the State of Epiros during the Reign of Theodore Doukas (r. 1215-1230), *ByzSym* 23 (2013), 221. Michael Angold agrees with this assessment in *Church and Society in Byzantium Under the Comneni: 1081-1261* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 230.

³¹ Angold, *Fourth Crusade*, 21; Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 173.

³² Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 174.

Germanos protested that there could not be two *emperors* or two *patriarchs*. Prinzing sees this statement as an indication that Demetrios was being regarded as a “quasi-patriarch” and not just an autocephalous metropolitan archbishop.³³

BYZANTINE HIERARCHY

A brief survey of ecclesiastical titles will help to clarify the ambiguity surrounding Demetrios’ patriarchal or autocephalous archiepiscopal status. By the thirteenth century, the major positions in the Byzantine church had essentially taken a form that would continue to contemporary times. Although modern factors have made some of these ancient titles mere honorifics, nevertheless little has changed in the titles considered below. On the other hand, chancery offices, most often held by those in clerical (i.e. ordained clergy) status and with titles and duties mirroring the imperial administration, have become greatly reduced and condensed with the fall of Byzantium.

The three ordained clergy are bishop, priest and deacon. As the successors of the apostles, bishops first ordained deacons. The first reference to these two orders in the New Testament come in *Acts of the Apostles*. So that the Greek and Hebrew widows might receive equitable charity from the common funds, the Apostles appointed seven men as deacons. In so doing, they began to define the roles of these earliest ranks of clergy.

‘It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word’ (Acts 6:2-4, RSV).

³³ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 174.

In Byzantium, deacons would come to serve various functions, but their core identity as the pastoral agent of the bishop remains even to the present. For a time, deacons could be male or female since cultural mores forbade men to work closely with women.³⁴ Angold notes that during the twelfth century, deacons were appointed as *didaskoloi*, or teachers of Orthodox theology.³⁵

The word “bishop,” derived from the Greek *ἐπίσκοπος*, denotes an “overseer.” The New Testament writers used several terms somewhat interchangeably. *Acts* 15:22, the “Council of Jerusalem,” refers to “apostles and elders” (*ἀπόστολοι, πρεσβύτεροι*). *I Timothy* 3:1-13 uses the term *episkopos* to refer to the bishop where *Titus* 1:5 employs *presbyteros* to describe the same office. Further, Paul lists “apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers” which all function to “equip the saints in the work of ministry...” (*Eph* 4:11-12) In a relatively short time, it appears that these various “charismatic” offices coalesced into the threefold hierarchical system that endures to this day. While little data exists to say when presbyters, or elders, came to serve as an order distinct from the bishops, we can say that the threefold distinction had become codified certainly by the early second century.³⁶

³⁴ Kyriake Fitzgerald, “The Characteristics and Nature of the Order of the Deaconess,” in Kallistos Ware, et al., *Women and the Priesthood*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1983), 75-95. Also, Paul K. Jewett, *The Ordination of Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1980), 70-74.

³⁵ Angold, *Fourth Crusade*, 194.

³⁶ E.g. Ignatius of Antioch (d. 110), *Letter to the Smyrneans*, 8; *Letter to the Magnesians*, 6.1 and 13.2; and *Letter to the Trallians*, 2.1-36.

Every bishop has a region over which he exercises his authority and pastoral care linked to civil geographic designations.³⁷ Although there is technically no “higher” office in the church beyond a bishop, in practice, bishops of larger and wealthier cities had more resources and prestige. By the fourth century, a bishop of a prominent city came to have oversight of bishops in less important surrounding towns and cities. The first Council of Nicaea made a distinction between metropolitan bishops, or bishops of “mother cities” (μητροπόλεις) and dependant country bishops. Over time, these *chorbishops*, from the Greek *chora*, meaning “country,” lost much of their episcopal character,³⁸ and the title became an honorific for priests with little or no episcopal authority or ministry.³⁹

Aside from differentiating among metropolitan bishops and bishops of less prestigious sees, the Council of Nicaea also paved the way for a few bishops of ancient, key cities to have wider jurisdiction over a much larger (*supra-metropolitan*) region.⁴⁰ Canon VI designated Alexandria, Antioch and Rome as having special privileges. Canon VII elevated Aelia (Jerusalem) to the status of a metropolitanate even though it was already very close to the metropolis of Caesarea Maritima. This elevation came not because the city had grown in wealth or civil prestige, but because of the honor that Constantine bestowed upon it by his building programme and imbued symbolism (chapter one). As a pilgrimage site, Jerusalem’s symbolism would eventually provoke a

³⁷ Aristeides Papadakis, *ODB*, 1359. See also Vera von Falkenhausen, “Bishops,” in Guglielmo Cavallo, *The Byzantines*, Trans. Thomas Dunlap, Fagan and Lambert (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 173.

³⁸ Consider Canon XIV of II Nicaea (c. 787) where the *chorbishop* may only ordain the lowest of the minor orders, the Reader.

³⁹ For the canonical history of the downgrade in episcopal status of the *chorbishop*, see A. Papadakis, *ODB*, 430. The office of *chorbishop* exists today only in the Maronite Church where it is an honorific.

⁴⁰ Aristeides Papadakis and Alexander Khazan, “Patriarchates,” *ODB*, 1599.

rise to an even higher ecclesiastical status as a patriarchate after the council of Chalcedon.⁴¹

These most prestigious metropolitan dioceses were referred to as “archdioceses” (leading dioceses) and their bishops as “archbishops” (leading bishops). Initially, the term archbishop applied only to the bishops of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch.⁴² By the mid fifth century, the island of Cyprus also became an archbishopric.⁴³ Synodal canons reveal that the major concern of both metropolitan and archiepiscopal sees was the right of ordaining the bishops under their jurisdiction respectively.⁴⁴ The Emperor Justinian was the first to refer to the archbishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem as “patriarchs” (“leading fathers”) making their archiepiscopal sees “patriarchates.”⁴⁵

With this new title, the designations of archbishop and metropolitan became much more common and ambiguous. In contemporary Orthodoxy and Catholicism, various jurisdictions use “archbishop” or “metropolitan” to designate the leading hierarch of a particular region.⁴⁶ For instance, the Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America have nine dioceses. In eight, the bishop is a metropolitan with the “primate” in New York called archbishop. The Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America

⁴¹Canon 28. Philip Schaff, ed. *The Seven Ecumenical Councils. Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1901), location 652988, Kindle. See also, Sokrates HE 5.8

⁴² Aristeides Papadakis, *ODB*, 155.

⁴³ Canon 8, Schaff, *Seven Ecumenical Councils*, location 651423.

⁴⁴ von Falkenhausen, “Bishops,” 173-174.

⁴⁵ Justinian, *Novel* 123.3 PG 36:485 B. Also, Timothy (Kallistos) Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1967, reprint), 13-14.

⁴⁶ Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 15-16.

has nine suffragan dioceses. In modern Slavic usage (Orthodox and Eastern Catholic), the terms are reversed with the primate entitled “metropolitan.” Roman Catholics organize the dioceses of a geographic region into archdioceses designating the archbishops of the largest cities as metropolitan archbishops. These bishops have the right to wear the pallium, which is the Western adaption of the Byzantine omophorion.⁴⁷

In addition to the Patriarchal system of descending jurisdictions, however, a parallel structure began to emerge. As early as the sixth century, some jurisdictions were granted “autocephaly.” The bishop of an autocephalous church stands on his own with respect to governance. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware notes that in addition to the five ancient patriarchates, there were “eleven other autocephalous Churches: Russia, Romania, Serbia..., Bulgaria, Georgia, Cyprus, Poland, Albania, Czechoslovakia and Sinai.”⁴⁸

Ware continues:

All except three of these Churches — Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Albania — are in countries where the Christian population is entirely or predominantly Orthodox. The Churches of Greece, Cyprus, and Sinai are Greek; five of the others — Russia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland — are Slavonic. The heads of the Russian, Romanian, Serbian, and Bulgarian Churches are known by the title Patriarch; the head of the Georgian Church is called Catholicos-Patriarch; the heads of the other churches are called either Archbishop or Metropolitan.⁴⁹

These Eastern Churches have maintained the ancient principle of equality so that one autocephalous church does not have a primacy of jurisdiction over another. Unlike

⁴⁷ ODB, 1526. See also Christopher Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church* (London: Variorum Publ., 1982), 9-13.

⁴⁸ Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 13-14.

⁴⁹ Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 14.

the situation with Roman Catholics, for instance, where the Pope can intervene in any Catholic diocese, the Orthodox churches maintain a level of autonomy.

Ware's distinction above regarding the ethnic identity of the various autocephalous churches places us in the center of the controversy that Demetrios Chomatenos engaged in with his accession to the archiepiscopal throne of Ohrid. Whether or not Chomatenos, or the "emperor" Theodore Dukas, regarded Demetrios' position as patriarchal, nevertheless, he certainly ruled as autocephalous archbishop drawing upon the memory of his time as a patriarchal official in Constantinople. Demetrios, however, did not start the controversy over whether a church following the Byzantine rite had to adopt Greek customs, language and culture.

PATRIARCH DEMETRIOS CHOMATENOS

The history of the Church in Bulgaria demonstrates the variable boundaries that shifted due to military conquest, political whim or ecclesiastical agenda. These boundaries were entirely reinterpreted after the Fourth Crusade. As considered above, the imperial pretensions of Theodore Angelos Dukas in opposition to the fledgling Empire of Nicaea and the tenuous "Ecumenical Patriarchate" claimed by the Archbishop of Nicaea all clearly indicate the attempts of the Byzantines to regain footing after the Latin conquest of Constantinople. In founding the Despotate of Epiros, Dukas employed the age-old tradition of the ruling team of Emperor/Patriarch when the Archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrios Chomatenos, crowned and anointed him.

Chomatenos' status as the autocephalous archbishop of Ohrid, who by earlier imperial decree answered only to the Byzantine emperor, gave him the freedom to exercise supra-regional authority in the confused and chaotic aftermath of the Fourth Crusade.⁵⁰ The absence of a traditionally appointed Byzantine emperor in the Latin Kingdom of Constantinople and in the presence of Latin strongholds scattered throughout the Balkans and Morea, largely nullified long held patriarchal and (arch) diocesan authority structures at least in the minds of those who appealed to Ohrid for canonical decisions even when they were outside the traditional boundaries of the Bulgarian archdiocese.

Furthermore, Bulgaria had once held patriarchal status as a condition of remaining Byzantine when the Frankish Latins were conducting strong and increasingly successful missionary activity in Bulgaria.⁵¹ Just as Chomatenos had reached back to Justinian's decree that declared the region *Prima Justiniana* to establish his right to supra-regional authority, he could have recalled the tradition of a Byzantine Emperor declaring Bulgaria a patriarchate. Prinzing notes that Demetrios did argue that Justinian had granted Bulgaria "certain prerogatives,"⁵² one of which was placing the Bulgarian archbishop in third place after Rome and Constantinople. In fact, Canon 2 of Novel 131 states:

We further ordain that in accordance with their determinations, the holy pope of ancient Rome is the first of all the priests, the archbishop of Constantinople, the new Rome, occupies the place next after the holy apostolic seat of ancient Rome, and has precedence over the others.

⁵⁰ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 177.

⁵¹ Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 234.

⁵² Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 175. See Justinian, *Novel*, 131.

Thus far, Justinian's proclamation is redundant, since the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon had already established the priority of the four ancient patriarchates as we saw above. However, Canon 3 of the same *Novel* does not reiterate the placement of the archepiscopal/ patriarchal sees of Alexandria and Antioch in their ranking established in the Ecumenical Councils. Rather, Justinian establishes special status for his birthplace.

The holy officiating archbishop of the First Justinian, our native city, shall always have under his jurisdiction the bishops of the inland Dacia, and Dacia on the river, and of Praevalitana and of Dardania and superior Moesia and Pannonia, who shall be appointed by him. He himself shall be appointed by his own synod, and shall occupy the same position in the provinces subject to him, as the apostolic seat at Rome, according to the provisions made by the holy pope Vigilius.⁵³

By invoking the tradition of the special status afforded to the, by the thirteenth century, defunct *Justiniana Prima* to justify the exercise of his extra-diocesan authority, Chomatenos, the archbishop of Ohrid, invokes a tradition of the Great Justinian to establish his authority.

Demetrios, whose time as a chartophylax or patriarchal secretary⁵⁴ had trained him in the workings of patriarchal bureaucracy, established his own standing synod (ἐνδημοῦσα σύνοδος) of bishops in Ohrid.⁵⁵ From the time when Constantine the Great established Constantinople as an imperial city, the archbishop-patriarch had a standing council of bishops in residence. As the Islamic caliphate spread, more and more Christian bishops from the eastern parts of the former Byzantine empire were unable to occupy

⁵³ Justinian, *Novel* 131.1-2, retrieved from <http://www.uwyo.edu/lawlib/blume-justinian/ajc-edition-2/novels/121-140/novel%20131.pdf>, accessed on February 29, 2016.

⁵⁴ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 172.

⁵⁵ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 178.

their sees. The standing synod, residing in Constantinople, increased in both size and influence, issuing directives affecting the entire patriarchate. By establishing his own *endemousa synodos* Chomatenos could have intended the same broad scope of authority, especially since there was also a local synod of bishops functioning in Arta to the south, within Despotate of Epiros. And, while Demetrios never explicitly referred to himself as a patriarch, he did use the customary patriarchal epithet “emetriotes emon” (ἡμετριότης ἡμῶν), or “our mediocrity.”⁵⁶

The most notable patriarchal act Demetrios performed was the crowning and anointing of Theodore Doukas as Emperor of Epiros in Thessalonike in 1227.⁵⁷ Prinzing sees the coronation as the “central ecclesiastical-political event in the archbishop’s term of office.”⁵⁸ The coronation was not just a momentous event in itself. It threw a gauntlet down before Nicaea, infuriating both the Emperor and Patriarch with its blatant disregard for Nicaean claims to authority. Nicaea objected that Chomatenos’ election as archbishop of Ohrid was already “contrary to previous custom.”⁵⁹ Indeed, even prior to his consecration as emperor, Theodore Dukas had begun to function *like an emperor*, by usurping imperial right to appoint the archbishop of Ohrid and several other episcopal appointments as well.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 178.

⁵⁷ For background on the history of anointing in the Byzantine coronation see, Donald Nicol, “Kaiserabung: The Unction of Emperors in Late Byzantine Coronation Ritual,” *BMGS*, 2.1 (1976), 37-52.

⁵⁸ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 174.

⁵⁹ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 172.

⁶⁰ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 172.

In defense of Demetrios Chomatenos, Karpozilos notes that the archbishop of Ohrid would have had the right to perform the crowning as the highest-ranking prelate in the region.⁶¹ Furthermore, Demetrios did not act on his own authority. “In crowning Theodore basileus, Chomatianos acted in the name of the clergy, the army and the senate, the three constitutional elements of their Byzantine State.”⁶² Karpozilos’ observation is important because despite Nicaea’s claims of offense against its imperial/patriarchal authority, the entire Byzantine world was *irregular* in the sixty years following the Fourth Crusade.⁶³

The three “empires” that arose in Nicaea, Epiros and Trebizond, were merely an attempt to pick up the pieces in the wake of the devastation wrought by the Franks. “So long as Constantinople was in captivity and the Greeks were divided among themselves the imperium could be claimed by anyone until the moment Constantinople was liberated.”⁶⁴ History would remember Nicaea as the *legitimate* claimant to the Byzantine throne, because the Nicaean regent/emperor, Michael VIII, himself a violent usurper, reached the Golden Gate of Constantinople first. When Demetrios crowned Theodore in the newly recaptured Thessalonike, his followers could be optimistic that he would lead them through those triumphal gates. By 1261, however, when Michael’s general retook

⁶¹ Apostolos Karpozilos, “The Ecclesiastical Controversy Between the Kingdom of Nicaea and the Principality of Epiros (1217-1233),” *Byzantina* 7 (1973), 73.

⁶² Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 74.

⁶³ Nicol, *Kaiserabung*, 41.

⁶⁴ Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 49. “The only criterion that would make the patriarch’s and emperor’s claims really legitimate was to regain their respective sees from the Latins. Claiming the title alone was not sufficient.” Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 69.

the city, the forward momentum of the despot/emperor of Epiros toward the Queen of Cities had been neutralized by the Serbs.

Finally, as noted above, Demetrios Chomatenos tried to mollify the Nicaean patriarch by suggesting that because of the great distance, made difficult to govern because of the presence of the Latins, they could work out that most characteristically Byzantine concept, a compromise. “To be sure, they were willing to acknowledge the patriarch’s spiritual authority but not his jurisdictional because he was, like the rest of them, in exile.”⁶⁵ Although Nicaea never accepted this concession, Demetrios Chomatenos seems to have proceeded in exactly the way he had proposed, deciding on canonical issues in regions beyond the archdiocese of Ohrid. “Thus, in the case of Chomatenos, his claim to a quasi-patriarchal position was fulfilled in an obvious manner in his actual episcopal activity, precisely in the patriarchal supraregional nature of his work.”⁶⁶

BYZANTINE TRADITION

Aside from the legal decisions preserved in the *Ponemata Diaphora*, not much remains of Demetrios Chomatenos’ legacy to provide evidence of how he regarded his role in Ohrid. This section will examine the extant imagery in the rectangular second story chamber of the narthex of Sveti Sophia. The two-story narthex was added to the church in 1313/14 under the patronage of the archbishop Gregory. His patronage was

⁶⁵ Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 69.

⁶⁶ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 177.

commemmorated in a brock inscription on the façade: “Having erected a tabernacle for the New Israel, like Moses, Gregory teaches the Mysian peoples the divinely written Law in an all-wise fashion.”⁶⁷ The upper storey of the narthex was painted ca. 1345. The Archbishop of Ohrid, Nicholas, was the patron of the new cycle, yet the imagery on the walls reflect ideologies already developed under Demetrios, who was so closely associated with this church. Ironically, Nicholas of Ohrid was present at Skopje at the coronation of the Serbian King Stefan Dušan as “emperor and autocrat of Serbs and Romans (Greeks).”⁶⁸ Thus, the important archbishops of Ohrid were on two occasions closely connected to coronations, and this tradition must have remained present in the mind of the residents of this important center.

Even before Demetrios’ tenure as autocephalous archbishop, his cathedral was already a constructed tradition of Constantinople. His predecessor, Theophylact, hated his assignment as archbishop of Ohrid in the barbarian hinterland. Formerly a maistor ton rhetoron, or professor of rhetoric in Constantinople, Theophylact likened his time among the Bulgarians as an exile. For him, the basilica of Sveti Sophia in Ohrid preserved the tradition of Constantinople by virtue of its name and design. While it is not intended as a replica of the original, the selection of a basilica plan asserted, through architectural typology, the church’s high status and connections to its namesake in the capital.⁶⁹ For Theophylact, then, having a small bit of his beloved Constantinople, his very own Hagia

⁶⁷ Drpić, *Epigram, Art and Devotion in Later Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 75-76.

⁶⁸ John Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 309

⁶⁹ Marinis, “Ch. 22: Defining Liturgical Space,” in *The Byzantine World*, ed. Paul Stevenson (London and New York: Routledge, 2012, reprint), 291

Sophia, formed an oasis of culture among the barbarous Bulgarians. We can say with Jaś Elsner in his chapter, “The Rhetoric of Buildings in the *De Aedificiis* of Procopius,” that the significance of Sveti Sophia was:

less in the locus of a building than in its locator, less in the special nature and specificity of a monument because of its particularity, whether this be geographical, historical, cultural, mythic or religious, than in the existence of a monument because of who put it there...⁷⁰

Elsner’s distinction rings true when parsing how Sveti Sophia reflects Theophylact’s byzantinizing agenda or how the iconographic program of the upper narthex reflects the aspirations of the city’s archbishops. Jonathan Smith echoes this idea when he asks, “What if space were not the recipient but rather the creation of the human project? What if place were an active product of intellection rather than its passive receptacle?”⁷¹ In fact, Byzantines everywhere drew upon the tradition of Constantinople with its unique ritual and artistic media when constructing religious spaces that reflected their own needs and contexts. Cathedral basilicas in Thessalonike and elsewhere bear the name of Hagia Sophia invoking the “Great Church.” They might have been named, designed and built by human agency, but once standing, they embody the tradition and appropriate the authority of the prototype by their mere existence.

Thus, the spaces in the basilica Sveti Sophia that Theophylact, Demetrios and Nicholas built and used were “minded” ritual spaces.⁷² Traditional elements were

⁷⁰ Jaś Elsner, “The Rhetoric of Buildings in the *De Aedificiis* of Procopius,” in Liz James, ed. *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 35.

⁷¹ Smith, *To Take Place*, 26.

⁷² Theodore W. Jennings, “On Ritual Knowledge,” *The Journal of Religion*, 62, No. 2 (April, 1982): 115.

carefully blended with innovation to create an authoritative space. That ritual and artistic trace of the original, that lives in the space sharing the same name, brought Constantinople to Bulgaria and imbued Ohrid with Byzantine tradition.

Following Elsner and Smith, we can say that the patrons of Byzantine churches drew upon Constantinopolitan tradition to craft spaces that reflected their own needs or concerns. The ritual space of Sveti Sophia modeled a sacred order, “upholding the integrity of one’s world system against violation.”⁷³ Jonathan Smith notes that one can recreate a sacred place simply by association or “substitution,” *pars pro toto*.⁷⁴ Thus, Sveti Sophia is not a replica of the Constantinopolitan original. Rather, the name and the architectural form symbolically invoke Hagia Sophia in Constantinople metonymically.

Theophylact consciously constructed Sveti Sophia as an icon of the virtues of Byzantine culture. He was building an oasis of Byzantium in the hinterland. The addition of an upper narthex chamber added both literally and figuratively on this existing foundation to construct a space of legal patriarchal authority. The extant art and architecture in this upper narthex locus speaks volumes about the intentions of the locator.

William Paden notes that religion can “be impelled and configured by the desire for liberation from false order, where order has become negative...”⁷⁵ Although the upper narthex in Sveti Sophia was a fraction of the size of its counterpart in Constantinople, it

⁷³ Paden, *Sacred Order*, 208.

⁷⁴ Smith, *To Take Place*, 87.

⁷⁵ Paden, *Sacred Order*, 223.

became a microcosm where the clergy could stage the fight for liberation from false order. By “symbolic replication,”⁷⁶ the archbishops of Ohrid rebelled against the forces which mounted against him: the barbarous Bulgars, the occupying Latins, rivals in Nicaea, etc.

CRAFTING SPACES OF AUTHORITY

One enters the upper narthex from the north. A steep winding stair opens to a rectangular single-vaulted room. The vaulted ceiling invokes a memory of the upper gallery of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.. Furthermore, like the original, the east side of St. Sophia’s upper narthex has three arches that look out over the nave, providing a bird’s eye view of the bema below (fig. 2.5). At ground level, the room is surrounded with icons of various classes of saints: prophets, hierarchs, holy monks, etc. (fig. 2.6). These figures could serve as metonymy for the entire heavenly court. In the vaults, the extant cycle forms a complete program of the seven Ecumenical Councils. The southern tympanum has a pericope from the life of St. Peter of Alexandria, with the Ancient of Days in a smaller arch (fig. 2.7). The northern tympanum, over the exit, features the Hetoimasia or Empty Throne, with three angels, one who has menacingly partially drawn his sword. To the left, King David crouches under the rebuke of Nathan the Prophet (fig. 2.8).

The Ecumenical Councils and the Cloud of Witnesses

Although only three of the Ecumenical Councils were held in Constantinople, a Byzantine emperor or empress summoned each. The ruling team of emperor/patriarch

⁷⁶ Smith, *To Take Place*, 86.

were taxed with upholding the canonical orthodoxy defined by these councils and the stock iconographic depictions of the synods came from the workshops of Constantinople. Thus, the painter and patron of this gallery, drawing from the memory of Constantinople crafted a space of Byzantine legal authority in the hinterland of Ohrid by placing the summit of Byzantine canonical authority, the Ecumenical Councils, on the ceiling of his upper narthex.

By the eleventh century, it was common for patrons to commission Byzantine art selectively to interact with ritual. Sharon E. J. Gerstel notes that Late Byzantine apses often had a row of the “liturgical” fathers, or those who had composed the various texts used in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, or other prominent bishop-saints.⁷⁷ These figures are posed as if they were “concelebrating” or joining in the celebration of the Eucharist in progress. The texts on their partially unfurled scrolls are from the anaphora of the liturgy, so that they could silently participate in the ritual that the living bishop or priest celebrated out loud before them.

In his book, *The Embodied Icon*, Warren Woodfin examines the interaction of liturgical vesture, monumental art and ritual. The cycle of dominical feasts (biblical events in the life of Jesus) depicted iconographically on the walls of the church⁷⁸ participate in the liturgy by connecting with celebrating clergy, wearing liturgical garments embroidered with the same scenes and with the other participants. In concert, these various media emphasize the authority of the celebrants whose vestments link them

⁷⁷ Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 15-36.

⁷⁸ Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 49.

to Christ.⁷⁹ Although Demetrios' upper narthex is not a liturgical space,⁸⁰ the same interactions between art and participants seem to have taken place. The extant icons in the space reveal a careful selection of figures and scenes characteristic of Middle and Late Byzantine iconographic programs.

The work of Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner reveal that the proceedings in this elevated space had ritual quality. Van Gennep identified three stages in ritual: separation, liminality and reintegration.⁸¹ Climbing the stair to the upper narthex would provide separation for the bishops of the Standing Synod, as would any opening prayer. Seated in council, the bishops deliberated with and advised the archbishop in a liminal place, outside the realm of their usual world.⁸² As the bishops descended from their holy synod in the Upper Narthex of Sveti Sophia, back into their mundane surroundings below, they were armed with the new authority of the decisions that had been negotiated and duly recorded.

Drawing from Van Gennep's work, Victor Turner suggested that *communitas* was the result of ritual liminality, which Van Gennep had called "reintegration" or "incorporation."⁸³ Part of *communitas* was the recognition of the rights and status of

⁷⁹ Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 90.

⁸⁰ Scholars disagree about the uses of the upper galleries in Hagia Sophia, Constantinople. The space directly to the west of the bema was the "Empress' Loge," where she could "attend" the liturgical services held below. Scholars speculate that parts of this upper space were devoted to administrative offices. See Marinis, *Defining Liturgical Space*, 295. See also, Robert Taft, "Women at Church in Byzantium: Where, When and Why?" *DOP* 52 (1998), 27-87.

⁸¹ Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 9.

⁸² Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 10.

⁸³ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 96-97.

those who had participated in the ritual. The instability of the liminal state produced a stable and more clearly defined position for those who had been a part of it.⁸⁴ Using Turner, we could say that their participation in the Synodos Endemousa imbued the participating bishops with the authority of the original Standing Synod in Constantinople. The ritual itself performed the memory and created patriarchal authority. The painted bishops in the icons of the Ecumenical Councils in the vaulted ceiling overhead had literally defined Orthodoxy. Meeting in their own synod, the Epirote bishops ritually joined these venerable figures in their holy council space. The icon, the memory, the space and the participants transcended time and geography.

The Hetoimasia

As noted above, the northern tympanum is decorated with the icon of the Hetoimasia, or prepared throne. This icon speaks most eloquently to the role of the upper narthex as an evocation of the gallery in Hagia Sophia, Constantinople. The Hetoimasia has a rich history in Byzantium. This image, in fact, predates Christianity and even the Roman Empire. James Hall finds examples of the empty throne in India, among the Hittites and the Etruscans, who would place a throne at the head of the table during a sacred meal so that the gods could join the feast.⁸⁵ Along with this symbolic divine transcendence, the Romans imbued the empty throne with a more immanent, imperial valence:

⁸⁴ Turner, *Ritual Process*, 95.

⁸⁵ James Hall, *A History of Ideas and Images in Italian Art* (London: John Murray, 1983), 95.

Roman courts of justice it was customary, in the absence of the emperor himself as judge, to substitute some symbol of his authority, either his portrait or an empty throne on which were laid a scepter and diadem, the imperial insignia. The presence of Constantine at the sessions of the Council of Nicaea, when he was not attending in person, was evoked in the same way.⁸⁶

Hall notes that the Emperor Caligula joined these two symbolic uses in “emperor worship,” by placing an empty throne in the senate, which the senators were obliged to reverence. Later depictions of the Council of Nicaea will feature a Gospel Book enthroned. In Chapter 1, we saw the enthroned cross on the western wall below the Empress’ loge. This iconographic arrangement invokes not an absent emperor but an unseen God, represented metonymically by the Cross or Gospel Book.

Several scriptural referents made for an easy transition of this pre-Christian image into early Christian and later Byzantine Christian iconography. The apocalyptic vision of the Four Beasts in Daniel culminates in the “Ancient of Days” seated on a prepared throne:

As I watched, thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One (παλαιός ἡμερῶν-LXX) took his throne, his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence. A thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him. The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. (Daniel 7: 9-10, NRSV)⁸⁷

Although the Hetoimasia in the upper narthex does not have rivers of fire, like the one we will see in Chapter Three, it did preside over a synodal space where judgments were made. Prinzing notes that one of the things that pointed to patriarchal pretensions in

⁸⁶ Hall, *Italian Art*, 95.

⁸⁷ Cf. Ezekiel 1:26-28; Revelation 4:2-11, 5:1-14; Psalms 9.

Ohrid was the fact that Demetrios Chomatenos kept official registers just as he would have with patriarchal canonical records in Constantinople in his earlier career as chartophylax.⁸⁸ Such a book of canonical decisions might easily have been in conversation with the Hetoimasia in the tympanum above to perform the “open books” of apocalyptic judgment court description in Daniel. The lack of a book in the painted scene is supplied by the ritual of recorded synodal gatherings.

Annemarie Weyl Carr notes that as the use of the Empty Throne image progressed, the implements of Jesus’ Passion; the lance (Jn 19:34), the sponge on a reed (Mt 27:48), the crown of thorns (Mt 27:29), and the cross all became associated with the Hetoimasia.⁸⁹ Especially in the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, the elements of the passion were linked with Eucharistic themes to combat dualist heresies like the neo-Manichean teachings of the Bogomils.⁹⁰ The Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom, the prayer recited over the bread and wine to make them the body and blood of Christ, provides the impulse for this connection between image and ritual. During the ritual, the deacon lifts the Eucharistic elements while the bishop or priest intones:

Remembering, therefore, all that you have done for our salvation, the Cross, the tomb, the resurrection of the third day, the ascension into Heaven and the second and glorious coming again, we offer you your own from what is your own, in all and for the sake of all.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 173.

⁸⁹ ODB, 926. See also, Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 38-39.

⁹⁰ ODB, 301. Schiller, *Christian Art*, 186.

⁹¹ Joseph Raya and Jose DeVinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship* (New Jersey: Alleleuia Press, 1969), 284.

In the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, Orthodox painters emphasized the connection between Jesus' Incarnation and Passion not only by making connections between the Hetoimasia and the Eucharist but more directly through various icons like the Melisma and concelebrating hierarchs.⁹² Sharon E. J. Gerstel demonstrates how various Late Byzantine apsidal iconographic programs emphasized the real humanity of Jesus in the Eucharist by depicting the baby Jesus on a diskos, the paten that holds the Eucharistic bread. By situating the icon of the body of Jesus in the apse behind the altar but even with the top of the table, the body of Jesus appears to be laying on the altar itself. Iconographic arrangements like this provided powerful connection to the Orthodox teaching about the real humanity, suffering and death of Jesus present in the elements resting on the altar itself.⁹³

In the upper narthex of Sveti Sophia, however, the image of the Hetoimasia does not seem to be primarily Eucharistic. In the context of a council chamber, it would seem to be more a throne of judgment. In fact, instead of more liturgical image of angel-deacons preparing the Throne, as Gerstel describes at St. Panteleimon Church in Nerezi,⁹⁴ the Ohrid Prepared Throne features a menacing angel-soldier with sword partially drawn. With his sword at the ready, this angel is prepared to carry out the judgments that issue from the Throne. His presence exudes authority.

⁹² Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 15-36.

⁹³ Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 39-47.

⁹⁴ Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 39; Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 121.

The bishops who met in the chamber were surrounded by the representatives of the whole church at eye level. They imitated the great councils of the church arranged above their heads as they also sat in council. Among these images in the upper narthex of Sveti Sophia, the archbishop and his council would see the icon of the Council of Nicaea with its own Hetoimasia (now lost), famously placed in the center of the assembled bishops by the Emperor Constantine. Looking up at their Hetoimasia, they could see that they were performing the actions of the great councils. The assembled bishops were seated as their patriarch and the empty throne reminding them of both divine and imperial presence joined the august ranks of the great historical council fathers.

There is no extant evidence of where the archiepiscopal throne sat in the space. It does not matter, however, because the position of the Hetoimasia in the northern tympanum meant that the empty throne could easily be in conversation with the throne occupied by Chomatenos wherever it sat. As such, the Archbishop's position was literally imbued with divine power by visual association. Did the archbishop wish to remind or assert to the assembled that the canons penned in that space held not only earthly but cosmic import? With the eyes of the saints looking on and the image of the awesome judgment seat above, this narrow space exudes spiritual and canonical authority.

In Chapter One, we saw that the episcopal throne in the center of the staged seating that followed the apsidal curve could primarily be interpreted as the seat of a teacher. Seated on that throne, the bishop preached his sermon, teaching his flock rather than eager students. Here, the throne of the bishop would take on more cosmic dimensions. In the words of the synaxarion for Joseph of Thessalonika (ninth century),

the brother of Theodore the Studite, “When you depart from your throne on earth, O Joseph, you find yourself standing at the right hand of the throne of God heaven.”⁹⁵ The canons penned in this space were not the decisions of a local council.

King David and Nathan

To the right of the Hetoimasia the painter depicted King David crouching in repentance under the accusing gesture of Nathan his court prophet. Nathan rebuked David for taking Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite and then having her honorable husband killed (2 Samuel 12:1-14). In Chapter One, we saw the icon of an unnamed emperor in submission at the feet of Christ enthroned over the Royal Doors leading from the narthex into the nave of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. Whatever the intent of the patriarch who commissioned that mosaic, the scene was not altogether unique.

As Elsner noted, the location speaks to the agenda of the locator. For Byzantine emperors, the empty throne established their earthly power with divine approval. Nicholas Temple observes that, “The symbolism was later to become a dominant theme in Byzantine court ceremonial, in which divine kingship was supported by the symbolism of the Hetoimasia and Christ Pantocrator.”⁹⁶

Leonela Fundić suggests that the trope of King David and Nathan the Prophet occurred in the Despotate of Epiros as a reference to Emperor Theodore Dukas:⁹⁷

⁹⁵ _____, *July Menaion*, (Newton Centre: Sophia Press, 1999), 113.

⁹⁶ Nicholas Temple, “Conversion and Political Expedience: Imperial Themes in the Early Christian Baptistery,” *UNAM* 24.80 (2002), 9.

⁹⁷ Leonela Fundić, “Art and Political Ideology in the State of Epirus During the Reign of Theodore Doukas (r. 1215-1230),” *ByzSym* 23 (2013), 236-237.

The relationship between Theodore Komnenos Doukas and the highest clergy of Epiros was harmonious. Apokaukos repeatedly praises Theodore's piety and modesty, and underscores his wise obedience to religious leaders. But the image of David falling on his knees before Nathan also exemplified the virtues of humility and self-control that every ruler was expected to cultivate. As Gilbert Dagron has astutely noted, "Power was absolute, did not allow itself to be confined within legal limits and was deemed sacred; but he who exercised it, whoever he might be, was never considered wholly innocent and might at any moment be convicted of illegitimacy. The Church was there to make him kneel, to bind him and to loose him."⁹⁸

Although Epiros would not regain Constantinople, thereby legitimating imperial and patriarchal pretensions, in 1224, Theodore Dukas was much closer than his Nicaean rivals, having just retaken Thessalonike. Nevertheless, in trying to reestablish Byzantium, Theodore's would-be patriarch and Dušan's archbishop depicted their relationship in the age-old trope of humility and authority that he had seen so clearly in the Great Church in Constantinople.

As we considered above, the Ecumenical Councils occupy the vaulted ceiling above the tympanum with the Hetoimasia with King David and Nathan. Because most of the ceiling art has been destroyed the full cycle of the Councils is no longer extant. If the lost Councils were similar in size, however, we can see that they would not have occupied the entire expanse of the vault. The Council scenes are grouped at the south end of the upper narthex near the tympanum. In each of the extant Councils depicted, one can clearly see the figure of the emperor among the gathered bishops. If the Hetoimasia was in conversation with the archbishop's throne and the bishops in synod were performing

⁹⁸ Fundić, *Political Ideology*, 237. Fundić cites Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 124.

the Councils, perhaps this icon of Nathan and David provided the imperial presence that the bishops would note in the series over their heads. They had a further testament to their creation of a space of authority drawing upon Byzantine tradition.

Thus, the choice of the Hetoimasia carries a dual valence that deeply invokes the tradition of Constantinople. Not only does it establish the authority of the archbishop's own Standing Synod, but it also recalls the constant authoritative tension between church and state, emperor and patriarch. If Demetrios' new empire of Epiros and Nicholas' new emperor of Serbia would be thoroughly Byzantine, they would have to address the age-old dialectic of power and humility. The Hetoimasia speaks as powerfully to that tension as the icon of the unnamed emperor crouching before the enthroned Christ over the Royal Doors in the narthex of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

Fundić's observations, however, do lead to a nuanced difference between the two scenes. The Constantinopolitan mosaic over the Royal Doors likely reflects the repentance of an emperor (Leo the Wise) and represents one patriarch's triumphalist perpetual statement of spiritual authority over temporal in a post-iconoclasm climate. In Ohrid, Fundić notes that although Theodore Dukas enjoyed good relations with his clergy, by the thirteenth century, such depictions of imperial submission had become a standard trope. The Hetoimasia, reflecting the political realities of the church under Demetrios as well as under Nicholas, reflects the interplay of humility and authority commonplace by the late Byzantine period, especially when seen in conversation with its corresponding tympanum at the South end of the vault.

Peter of Alexandria and the Ancient of Days

The south tympanum made a stronger case both for the patriarchal claim and the divine importance placed upon canonical decisions. The scene depicts St. Peter of Alexandria (r.300-311) having a vision of Jesus whose cloak, symbolic of the church, had been torn by the heresy of the “madman” Arius.⁹⁹ The scene emphasizes the importance of right doctrine, thus adding a sober reminder for the synodoal participants debating below of the cosmic impact of their decisions. Reflecting the tension between Imperial and Patriarchal authority and humility we saw in Hagia Sophia in Chapter One, this scene emphasizes the humility of a patriarch who would not occupy his own patriarchal throne because he saw a vision of Jesus sitting upon it.¹⁰⁰

The conversation between Patriarch Peter of Alexandria and the child Jesus whose cloak is torn by Arius¹⁰¹ happens over an enigmatic figure separated from the conversation by an ochre arch. This bearded figure with tongues of flame fringing the base is the “Ancient of Days.” Since this figure has nothing to do with the scene unfolding over his head, it seems like a mere jumble of characters. Only when one compares the two facing tympana, however, does a complete iconographic program fall into place. This enigmatic figure, the Ancient of Days, is the one for whom the Prepared Throne, depicted in the northern tympanum, has been prepared. Taken together, these two figures make a remarkable allusion to the Daniel reading noted above. Where the

⁹⁹ For an English translation of Peter of Alexandria’s vision, see Philip Schaff, ed., *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 14 (Edenborough: T & T Clark, 1899), 278.

Prepared Throne icon does not have fire, the Ancient of Days figure literally “brings” the fire with him. The joining of enthroned and throne suggests a further connection between the humble patriarch, Peter of Alexandria with the humble King David. This scene seems to affirm the authority of the archbishop in relation to the ruler.

THE EDUCATED INVENTION OF A QUASI PATRIARCH

In the upper narthex of *Sveti Sophia*, the patron and painter drew from the stock inventory of available late medieval Byzantine images to craft a space that uniquely proclaimed ecclesiastical authority and political legitimacy. This was an elite space; it was not open to the public gaze as the lower narthex would be. The clergy who gathered there would be able to appreciate the inventive and authoritative message of the figures that surrounded them.

Günter Prinzing, who has studied the 14th-century would-be patriarch and translated his extant writings concludes, “Thus in the case of Chomatenos, his claim to a quasi-patriarchal position was fulfilled in an obvious manner in his actual episcopal activity, precisely in the patriarchal supraregional nature of his work...Chomatenos was not a real patriarch.”¹⁰² Prinzing has the luxury of hindsight not available to the fledgling thirteenth-century Byzantines. In the upheaval of the sacking of Constantinople in 1204 and the Byzantine struggle against the Latins, it was essential to Orthodox faith and culture that the Byzantines re-establish Byzantium. In the kingdom of Epiros, Demetrios Chomatenos functioned as a patriarch, regardless of whether he ever referred to himself

¹⁰² Prinzing, *Quasi Patriarch*, 177.

that way. Crowning and anointing Theodore Dukas, setting up the Synodos Enemdousa, issuing canons for regions beyond the archbishopric of Ohrid and having an official register of these proceedings, all speak to Demetrios' patriarchal self-identity.

The same can be said of Nicholas, who was a powerful archbishop connected to the Serbian court. The space that he created in the upper narthex of Sveti Sophia drew from the visual tradition of Byzantium to express his authority. The archbishop of Ohrid crafted a space that embodied the Byzantine world view in microcosm. If Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, with its omphalos, was the center of the world, his small synodal chamber, at least, reflected the totality of the Church universal with the eye-level ranks of saints, the councils overhead, Peter of Alexandria, the Ancient of Days and the Hetoimasia turning the small space into a divinely infused episcopal court of law.

One wonders what would have happened had Theodore Dukas retaken Constantinople. Would historians like Prinzing record Demetrios as "patriarch" rather than as an upstart autocephalous archbishop who had patriarchal pretensions?¹⁰³ As it is, however, it was an enterprising general of Michael VIII of Nicaea who regained what was left of Constantinople for the Byzantines in 1261. As a result, the memory of Chomatenos has all but been erased. Today, aside from a collection of letters and canonical decisions, only his church and an icon of Christ he commissioned stand as his memorial.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 49, 69, 71, 85.

¹⁰⁴ For the icon commissioned by Chomatenos, see Drpić, *Epigram, Art and Devotion*, 118.

In the next chapter, I will jump from thirteenth to fourteenth century Byzantium to study Archbishop Nikephoros Moschopoulos, who created a space of authority for himself in Mistra. Nikephoros did not attempt to create a space of patriarchal authority, but he was involved in a legal battle over lands rather than canons. We will consider how Moschopoulos drew upon his elite education and Constantinopolitan tradition in the art he commissioned while renovating his cathedral of St. Demetrios. As above, we will explore the interplay of Nikephoros' episcopal throne, the art he commissioned including a fearsome Hetoimasia and his legal land claims, which he, literally, set in stone.

CHAPTER THREE: NIKEPHOROS MOSCHOPOULOS

Τόνδε δόμον πόδεσι φίλος ἐμβεβαῶς ἀγανοῖσι
μνώεο Νικεφόποιο δομήτορος ἀρχιερέως.

O Friend who has crossed into this house with kindly feet,
Remember the builder Nikephoros the high priest.

Inscribed over the main entrance to the Cathedral of the Great Martyr Demetrios or the Metropolis as it is known in Mistra, these two lines of archaizing Greek verse were commissioned by Archbishop Nikephoros Moschopoulos (d. 1322-1332). At first glance, this might seem straightforward; a bishop leaving his name for posterity. This bishop, in particular, was accustomed to boasting about his good deeds. In addition to this inscription, he left two more in the Metropolis, which we will consider below. He also added prominent inscriptions when he donated books from his considerable collection.¹

¹ Robert S. Nelson, "The Manuscripts of Antonios Malakes and the Collecting and Appreciation of Illuminated Books in the Early Palaeologan Period," *Jahrbuch des Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 36

There is more to this inscription, however, than one might first realize. Behind these words, lies a story of land, wealth and authority. And, to make things even more interesting, Nikephoros Moschopoulos did not build the Metropolis.

He did make renovations,² however, and in these additions, we can detect a struggle for authority in which he employed the language and symbols of Byzantine tradition that he had learned from many years of living in Constantinople. Nikephoros did not merely copy what he had seen in the Great Church or other spaces in Constantinople. This gifted and educated bishop crafted a sophisticated and innovative space of authority in St. Demetrios that drew his throne into a conversation with the fearful Hetoimasia he commissioned, as well as with several other elements we will consider in this chapter.

THE LINTEL

The first element of the eastward trajectory is the inscription over the door (fig. 3.1) leading into the narthex. Although I mentioned this in the epigraph to this chapter, the translation bears repeating here. “O Friend, who has crossed into this house with kindly feet, /Remember the builder Nikephoros the high priest.” Following Marinou, we can assert that Nikephoros was the “builder” only of the narthex, although he commissioned some of the paintings in the nave and inscribed the column we will examine below. Nelson suggests that Moschopoulos took credit for building St. Demetrios in an act of *damnatio memoriae*, erasing the contributions of prior

(1986), 250; repr. in Robert S. Nelson, *Later Byzantine Painting: Art, Agency, and Appreciation*, (Great Britain: Ashgate, 2007), XIII..

² Georgia Marinou, *Άγιος Δημήτριος. Η μητρόπολη του Μυστρά* (Athens: Ταμείου Αρχαιολογικών Πόρων & Απαλλοτριώσεων, 2002) 249.

metropolitans who supported union with Rome.³ At the same time, it could also certainly be evidence of rivalry between the metropolitan and his neighbor, Archimandrite Pachomios.

While we could regard the invocation, “O Friend,” (φίλος) as a rhetorical flourish meant to address anyone visiting the church, which was, after all, a public space, I wonder if Nikephoros did not have one particular “friend” in mind when he commissioned this inscription. Aside from the exaggerated claim as “builder” (δομήτορος), that might irk Pachomios, the inscription is written in dactylic hexameter, a nod to an interest in classical poetry common in Late Byzantium. As a follower of Palaiologan culture, Moschopoulos was fond of writing his dedications and inscriptions in poetic verse.⁴ Furthermore, the imperative “remember” (μνῶεο) is an archaic Homeric form that only educated “friends” would understand. Certainly, there is nothing in this inscription to suggest that Nikephoros directed his epigram solely to the cultured and educated Pachomios; any nobleman in Mistra would have had the grounding in Byzantine tradition to recognize this nod to medieval paideia.

Nevertheless, Pachomios would have joined the whole metropolis on major feast days in processions that would have passed through that doorway. In imagining those elaborate ceremonies, one can perceive Nikephoros’ claims to authority clearly in his imagined, sacred landscape,⁵ not only with the lintel inscription but with the Hetoimasia

³ Nelson, “The Manuscripts of Antonios Malakes,” 250-251.

⁴ Nelson, “The Manuscripts of Antonios Malakes,” 250.

⁵ Sharon E. J. Gerstel, “Mapping the Boundaries of Church and Village: Ecclesiastical and Rural Landscapes in the Late Byzantine Peloponnese,” in Sharon E. J. Gerstel, ed., *Viewing the Morea: Land and*

represented on the opposite side. The surviving monumental art in the Aphantiko and Metropolis churches suggests a complex relationship between these two accomplished and sophisticated churchmen; both fraught with land disputes and cooperative in fostering Byzantine culture in Mistra. To understand this complexity, it is necessary to explore the issues that faced monasteries and local bishops in Medieval Byzantium. This chapter will explore how Nikephoros Moschopoulos used his artistic renovations in conversation with his throne in the Metropolis to craft a space of authority in his land disputes with Abbot Pachomios.

A quarter century after Demetrios Chomatenos exchanged his earthly throne for a heavenly one, an enterprising general of Nicaean emperor, Michael VIII (r. 1259-1282), retook Constantinople ushering in the Palaiologan dynasty, Byzantium's last ruling family. Michael and his successors ruled over a fraction of the once great empire. With the Turkish advances from the East, the Bulgars and the Serbs from the West and various and sundry Latin holdings throughout the Greek mainland and islands, the Roman Empire had suffered irremediable losses.⁶ Paradoxically, at the same time, the Orthodox Church had gained in influence through its missionary activity. Where the Emperor saw rivals in the Slavs, the Patriarch saw Orthodox faithful.

People in the Late Medieval Peloponnese (Washington, DC and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 358.

⁶ Donald Nicol, *The End of the Byzantine Empire* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), 29. Donald Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium 1261-1453* (London: Rupert Hart Davis, 1972), 114, considers how the emperor needed revenue to support military efforts. See also, Mark Bartusis, *Land and Privilege in Byzantium: The Institution of Pronoia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 112-115.

Perhaps land ownership provides the clearest expression of the tension between Church and State. In an agrarian economy, the Emperor raised funds by taxing landed produce. Less land naturally meant less revenue. Since the beginnings of the Eastern Roman Empire, Constantine the Great had devised a descending system of taxation. At each level, the public official in charge of collecting material goods or the gold from their sale imposed his tax burden on the nobles under his jurisdiction, who in turn would exact produce from the peasant/ farmers. In late antiquity, these farmers might own their own small plot of land or might work on a larger estate. In time, crushing taxes forced many of these farmers to sell and/or abandon their lands.

Late-antique monastic foundations were, largely, privately owned,⁷ functioning on patronage from a wealthy donor and maintained by the labors of the monastics. The Pachomian typikon,⁸ likewise stipulated daily work at the various tasks required to make the monastery as self-sufficient as possible. Nevertheless, early medieval Byzantine monasteries relied heavily on patronage.⁹ Of course, there was a limit to the number of monks a wealthy patron could support. Studying the extant *Stoudios Typikon*, John Thomas notes that by the tenth century there was a general shift to “formal landed endowments” that provided consistent support for the foundation. Accompanying this shift was an increased emphasis on the monastic performance of liturgical duties rather

⁷ John Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000), 47.

⁸ The term typikon is, like many Byzantine terms, multivalent. It can refer to the order of a liturgical service, the charter of monastic foundation or a monastic “rule.” This chapter will employ the latter two meanings.

⁹ Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 48.

than manual labor.¹⁰ Furthermore, with a few exceptions, these monasteries tended to be smaller, so that their lands could support them.¹¹ Especially by the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, there was only so much land to go around.¹² Emperors had to look at the lands they had with new eyes.

CHARISTIKE

One of the ways that Byzantine rulers found to generate new income was through the Charistike. “The charistike was a public program sponsored by the emperor and ecclesiastical hierarchy for the private management of religious institutions.” At first charistikariat grants were temporary, usually ending with the death of the grantee. Charistike paid for institutional improvement and maintenance and provided administrative fees and taxes in return. Initially, the emperor chose properties that were abandoned or underdeveloped. “At first only ruined foundations were brought into the program, but eventually what amounted to wholesale confiscations of private religious property became the rule.”¹³ What was initially intended to benefit the monasteries and add revenue to the imperial coffers suffered from the greed of land owners who took advantage of a weakened centralized imperial authority.¹⁴ Even if the first generation of

¹⁰ Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 447.

¹¹ Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 48. The *Evergetis Typikon* makes the connection between the number of members and resources. “We do not wish there to be a fixed number of you, but you will be as many as will have enough food.” Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 490.

¹² Bartusis, *Land and Privilege*, 115.

¹³ Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 49.

¹⁴ George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, Trans. Joan Hussey, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969, revised edition), 482-83. Also, Frankopan, *Land and Power*, 117-18.

administrators renewed monastic life, their descendants often secularized properties if there were profitable non-monastic uses.

John VII of Antioch (1090-1155)¹⁵ the Oxite, whose polemical tone annoyed Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, complained bitterly about the evils of the charistike.

It [the charistike] does not give ruined monasteries, but to the contrary the monasteries in a good state and whose revenues are flourishing. And the favor which is attached to certain donations shows this clearly: when it says that one-time assurances that once the expenses of the monastery are provided for, the surplus would revert to the charistikarios, without having to give an accounting.¹⁶

Extant foundation typika from this period witness the attempts of founders to protect their monastic holdings from being usurped by the charistike. Although none of these founders specifically claimed to be reforming monastic practice to protect their monasteries from being given away,¹⁷ we can glean several concerns from the stipulations they included. *Pakourianos*, composed by Gregory Pakourianos for the Monastery of the Mother of God Petritzonitissa in Bačkovo (Bulgaria) and signed in December 1083, clearly states the considerable properties attached to the monastery. Having carefully mentioned all of the pertinent villages, fields and outlying regions, the document continues “all these fields with the aforementioned fort together with all their territory, established tenure, ancient rights of possession and privilege of every kind and all revenue according to the summary of them in the previous delimitation.”¹⁸

¹⁵ The dating is difficult to determine. See Paul Gautier, “Réquisitoire du Patriarche Jean d’Antioche contre le Charisticariat,” *REB* 33 (1975), 80-86.

¹⁶ Gautier, *Jean d’Antioche*, 114, the English translation is mine.

¹⁷ Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 442.

¹⁸ Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 524-525.

Founders were not merely concerned with the issues of real estate, however. Their stipulations about the character of lay people appointed to manage the holdings suggest an awareness of the dangers of an unscrupulous administrator. The Evergetis monastery was founded outside the walls of Constantinople on an inherited estate by a wealthy nobleman named Paul Evergetinos, in 1048 or 1049.¹⁹ His typikon, originally written in 1054, was revised until it reached its final form in 1118. This typikon served as a template for later compositions and contains important witness to the liturgical, spiritual and fiscal practices of Middle Byzantine monasticism. Among the various dictates, *Evergetinos* mentions the need for someone to administer the monastery's dependent properties:

Since then as a consequence of our weakness we have gained possession of some small pieces of immovable property, the superior must have concern for them also, and he should be as careful as he can as to what sort of people are sent to have the oversight of them, that is, they should always be reverent and discreet, and elderly if possible, unaffected by passions because of the attacks of Belial (II Cor. 6:15).²⁰

Presumably, an elderly property manager would be mindful of his impending death and judgment and not have youthful fantasies of wealth and prestige. More importantly, however, various typika address the election of a new superior, providing various possible models. Especially in the case of monasteries founded by private individuals, there was a very real concern that the *charistike* facilitated nepotism and abuses by impious descendants who accepted leadership of a monastery for nefarious purposes. *Pakourianos* stipulates that the current superior should elect the next one in

¹⁹ Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 454.

²⁰ Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 495.

consultation with the most virtuous monks in the monastery. They should make their choice based through prayer and not because of blood relations. The typikon forbids any “innovation” stating firmly that the new leader should abide by the rules of the dead one.²¹

Ensuring that the superior was suitable was important, but patrons could also affect the life of the monastery from the “grassroots.” A stipulation from *Evergetis* reflects concern that monasteries could be compelled by their charistikarioi to accept family members as novices who had no interest in observing the monastic life. The rule prescribes a probationary period for new admissions:

If they persevere in this attitude for six whole months, then they should be enrolled among the brothers by being tonsured and should receive the pledge of the divine and angelic habit. But if they perhaps appear to have grown tired, grumbling and being negligent about instructions, it will be the responsibility of the superior whether they should be accepted or not.²²

Even if a monastery had a superior and monks with a rigorous observance, a few unworthy novices could create dangerous cliques with familial ties to the monastery patrons, that could easily undermine the monastic regime. *Evergetis* also did not require an “entrance gift” from noble aspirants. We can see in this reform a concern that there be nothing that the new novice could hold over the head of his superior.

²¹ Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 529-30.

²² Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 495. See also, Michel Kaplan, “Les monastères et le siècle à Byzance: les investissements des laïques au XIe siècle,” *Acts des congress de la Société des historiens médiévalists de l’enseignement superior public*, 14e congress, Poitiers, (1983), 71, and Gautier, *Jean D’Antioche*, 120.

In his editorial introduction for a series of eleventh-century foundation typika, John Thomas demonstrates the various threats to a monastery's autonomy. Monastic founders sought to insulate their holdings from usurpation from a distance, locally or, even, in house:

In 1031, the author of *John Xenos*, clearly worried about a confiscation under this government program of his many dependent monasteries on Crete, pronounces a curse on an emperor, patriarch or metropolitan who might dare to appropriate his foundation's properties. In more specific terms, *Galesios* portrays its founder desperately trying to maintain his foundation's autonomy (i.e., its private status) from the local metropolitan of Ephesos. Finally, *Eleousa* shows its founder, a bishop, forbidding his own successors in office any rights over the foundation except for the blessing of a new superior.²³

Although critics of the *charistike* feared the secularization of monastic properties, this program had begun with good intentions as a means of reform for monastic life and renovation of unfruitful or degraded properties.²⁴ As the above quotation suggests, the Middle and Late Byzantine periods were complex and unstable for monasteries. Even the unpopular reformer-patriarch Athanasios I (1230-1310) interfered in the finances of various monasteries by confiscating properties. Alice-Mary Talbot, who studied Athanasios remarks: "During his first patriarchate his disciples went around to monasteries and appropriated monastic funds, presumably for distribution to the poor."²⁵ Furthermore, the patriarch agreed with Emperor Andronikos II with the development of a

²³ Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 49.

²⁴ Kaplan, *Les monastères*, 74.

²⁵ Alice-Mary Maffrey Talbot, *The Correspondence of Athanasios I Patriarch of Constantinople: Letters to the Emperor Andronikos II, Members of the Imperial Family, and Officials* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks; 1975), 27.

system of pronoia, where monastic and church lands would be given to feudal knights who would fight against the Turks.²⁶

EPIDOSIS

Land not only supported secular nobility but hierarchy, dioceses and monasteries as well. When lands, especially monasteries were given to other ecclesiastical entities, this was called epidosis. As Thomas elucidates, the emperor, patriarch or even larger metropolia could bestow properties on local bishops for their oversight and benefit:

Diocesan monasteries had now become the principal means of financial support for the hierarchy of the public churches. In the tenth century, the metropolitan sees had the best endowments of monasteries perhaps because they were powerful and energetic enough to assert control over weak foundations.²⁷

Aside from financial benefit from the produce of the monastery's lands, the local bishop, like the other landed nobility we saw above, could meddle in the affairs of the monastery. Middle and Late Byzantine monastic foundation typika reveal that founders took great pains to ensure that their monasteries could never fall under epidosis.

If anyone ever at any time and in any way wishes to gain control over this monastery or put it in subjection or place it under someone's power, whether he be an emperor or a patriarch or some other member of the clergy or of the senate or even the superior of this monastery himself or its steward or simply one of its brothers prompted by an attack of the devil, not only will he be held responsible for the divine body and blood of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ and to the Mother of God our Lady Evergetis, but also "Let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8), as the holy apostle says, and let him inherit the curse of the three hundred and eighteen Holy Fathers and become joint-heir with the traitor Judas and be counted with those who shouted "away with him, away with him, crucify him" (John 19:15), and "his blood be on us and on our children" (Matt. 27:25), because this wretched person has treated wretchedly something which was once a farm and was turned into a

²⁶ Talbot, *Patriarch Anthanasios*, 27-28.

²⁷ Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 156. See also, Talbot, *Patriarch Athanasios*, 23-24.

monastery with much sweat and toil and set up to be free by those very people who established it, placing it with malicious and deceitful intent, perhaps under the power of corrupt and wicked men who look to nothing else but pernicious gain. Not only this but that thrice-wretched, thrice-accursed one, whoever he might be, has trampled underfoot and counted as nothing the crosses of the emperors of everlasting memory which they with pious intent inscribed upon their chrysobulls when granting independence to the monastery. Will he not be called to account, no matter what his subsequent conduct may be? So then those should be the principles established in this way.²⁸

Quite clearly, the founder of the Evergetis monastery held anyone who sought control over the monastic foundation, secular or sacred, in the same low esteem. His formidable curses would fall on any who violated the “crosses” of the emperors inscribed in their chrysobulls. At first glance, Byzantines mentioning crosses might go unnoticed since the cross is a constant and much duplicated motif across the Byzantine landscape. This cross inscribed in a chrysobull, however, was no casual reference. Nor was this cross a source of spiritual protection alone. The planting or inscribing of the cross at the foundation of a monastery was meant to provide physical security.

STAUROPEGIAL MONASTERIES

As we saw above, struggle over the control of lands could affect the inner workings and governance of the monasteries themselves. On the one hand, monasteries could fear intrusion by local noble or bishops. On the other hand, there were capricious imperial confiscations for *charistike or epidosis*. Monastic superiors had to weigh their desire for autonomy and identity with the very real fiscal needs of running the monastery.

²⁸ *Evergetis* 31:482, Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 211.

One way that the monks could protect themselves from both local and distant interference was to obtain “Stauropegial” status from the emperor or patriarch.

The *Book of Ceremonies* describes six kinds of monasteries: imperial, imperial, patriarchal, archiepiscopal, metropolitan and independent.²⁹ Technically, these foundations could be described as “stavropegial,” since the term stauropegion (σταυροπέγιον) originally referred to any monastic foundation, established by the planting or inscribing of a cross. This was similar to the modern practice of dedicating a corner stone. By the Late Byzantine period, however, the term usually referred to monasteries independent of the local diocesan bishop, by virtue of their patriarchal-stauropegial status.³⁰ John Thomas notes that in their quest for autonomy, monastic superiors went to great lengths: “A single monastery could accurately be described as “imperial, patriarchal and independent” in reference, respectively, to its principal patronage, its stauropegion, and its constitutional organization.”³¹

Often, stauropegial monasteries had a chrysobull, or official imperial declaration that enumerated their rights, lands and exemptions.³² The chrysobull took its name from

²⁹ Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 144. Note that these categories are quite different from the concurrent development of religious orders in the West, although issues of control and land ownership were very similar. See Sherri Franks Johnson, *Monastic Women and Religious Orders in Late Medieval Bologna*, Cambridge (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

³⁰ ODB, 1946.

³¹ Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 219.

³² Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 144-148.

the large golden bulla originally attached to the document. Later, the whole text, itself, came to be known as a chrysobull even when it came with no bulla.³³

As early as the sixth century, Byzantine emperors began granting exemptions to monasteries by placing them directly under the supervision of the Patriarch of Constantinople.³⁴ The Emperor Maurice (r. 582-602) granted these privileges to monasteries within Constantinople itself. Basil I (r. 867-886) would extend stauropegial rights beyond the boundaries of the patriarchal “diocese.” “Henceforth they would become increasingly important as the means by which private benefactors escaped the supervisory and regulatory powers of the local bishops.”³⁵ Understanding the zero-sum struggle for control of land and monasteries, provides direct insights into the thinking of the metropolitan of Mistra, Nikephoros Moschopoulos, the subject of this chapter.

ARCHIMANDRITE PACHOMIOS

First settled in the mid thirteenth century, Mistra began as a refuge for Greeks fleeing the Frankish rule in Lakedaimonia (medieval Sparta). In fact, the Franks had held Mistra, as well; long enough to build a castle at the highest point.³⁶ Mistra would not remain under Frankish rule for long, however. By 1262, Greeks were settling there, even though some Franks remained.³⁷ Early in the fourteenth century, the city bustled with

³³ ODB, 451-452. See also, Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 487. Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, “Church Inscriptions as Documents: Chrysobulls, Ecclesiastical Acts, Inventories, Donations, Wills,” *ΔΧΑΕ* 24 (2003), 80.

³⁴ Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 215.

³⁵ Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 139.

³⁶ Runciman, *Mistra*, 36-49.

³⁷ Runciman, *Mistra*, 96.

new building. A former protosynkellos,³⁸ or high-ranking church official, named Pachomios, retired to Mistra to found the Brontochion Monastery on the western edge of city. (fig. 3.2) Having taken over the Church of St. Theodore, by 1310, he had built a new katholikon, or main monastic church, dedicated to the Mother of God Hodegetria (the One who shows the way) (fig 3.3). This appellation directly invoked the memory of the famous monastery in the palace complex in Constantinople.³⁹ According to Sharon E. J. Gerstel, such power associations were common in Mistra and its rival to the south, the fortified city of Monemvasia.⁴⁰

Although Archimandrite Pachomius had “left the world” to become a monk,⁴¹ he retained a worldly shrewdness that served his monastery well. Not only did the name Hodegetria invoke power, but even the nickname of the church, Aphentiko or “Master,”⁴² made a clear statement about Pachomius’ sense of authority. Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter Two, building a church in the basilica style in the Late Byzantine period could make an authoritative statement by evoking the venerable structures of the early Church.⁴³ Several scholars have noted that the elegant design of the architecture and iconography suggest that Pachomios had imported craftsmen from Constantinople. By surveying extant churches in the region, Sharon Gerstel has even identified unique

³⁸ Runciman, *Mistra*, 96.

³⁹ Gerstel, “Mapping,” 335-348. Runciman, *Mistra*, 96.

⁴⁰ Gerstel, “Mapping,” 336

⁴¹ Archimandrite is a monastic title given to an abbot who has authority over more than one monastery. Since there were metochia or small dependent monasteries attached to the Brontochion by imperial decree, Pachomios (and his successors) would appropriately use the title. See ODB, 156.

⁴² Kalopissi-Verti, *Church Inscriptions*, 80.

⁴³ Gerstel, “Mapping,” 348; Vasileios Marinis, “Defining Liturgical Space,” in Stevenson, Paul, ed. *The Byzantine World*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2012, reprint), 287.

elements of a “Mistra School” of painting that these artists developed in the broader region.⁴⁴

Like Theophylact and Demetrios Chomatenos, whose Sveti Sophia made Constantinople present in Bulgaria by invoking tradition of the Great Church, Pachomios’s efforts contributed to a “sacred landscape”⁴⁵ in Mistra that invoked Byzantium. His efforts were part of the flourishing of Byzantine culture and faith that outlived the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 until the Turks took Mistra in 1460.

Unlike, the Archbishop Theophylact, precursor of the would-be Patriarch Demetrios of Ohrid, however, Pachomios did not choose the ultimate “power name” Hagia Sophia for his basilica. His time in church politics had taught him discretion. Although he had served as the chief administrator of Lakedaimonia, the protosynkellos, he was not a bishop. Thus, as a good monk, rather than invoking the seat of patriarchal and imperial power, he chose to emulate the famous monastery in the Great Palace complex itself. The invocation of the memory of the Hodegetria was especially poignant after the recapture of Byzantium in 1261 when the Great Palace was no longer used.

Pachomios did not just assert his authority by symbolic gestures, however. He shrewdly obtained five chrysobulls between 1314-1322, which he had copied in paint on the walls of a chamber to the south of the narthex of the Aphentiko.⁴⁶ These imperial decrees detailed the exemptions and entitlements granted to the Brontochion. They listed

⁴⁴ Gerstel, “Mapping,” 364. See also, Runciman, *Mistra*, 96 and Kalopissi-Verti, *Church Inscriptions*, 80.

⁴⁵ Gerstel, “Mapping,” 335, 358-362.

⁴⁶ Gerstel, *Viewing*, 337-348; Kalopissi-Verti, *Church Inscriptions*, 80 notes that three *chrysobulls* were issued by Andronikos II in 1314-15, 1320 and 1322 and one by Michael IX in 1319.

the lands, estates, fields, vineyards, trees, mills, landed peasants and metochia (dependent monasteries) attached to Pachomios' monastery.⁴⁷ These painted decrees are held aloft by angels, (fig. 3.4) a detail to which we shall return. Gerstel notes that this unique depiction created a kind of vault. "In a sense, the chamber acted as a small treasury, housing texts whose words translated into wealth and material sustenance."⁴⁸ As we saw earlier, monks frequently had to fight for the wealth and goods that they needed to operate. Gaining imperial assurances gave monasteries like the Brontochion a sense of security and independence. Furthermore, the land rights established by the chrysobulls in the Aphantiko created connections between Pachomios' monastery and its holdings and established boundaries. According to Gerstel, these associations and boundaries redefined the landscape.⁴⁹

Neither the chrysobull room in the Aphantiko nor the sacred landscape that it circumscribed existed in a vacuum, however. They were necessary reactions to the claims of another powerful church leader who also sought to craft a sacred landscape, inscribing on it his own authority and claims. In the age-old battle over lands and power between monastery and local bishop, Pachomios' chrysobull chamber provides living witness to his "vying"⁵⁰ with the newly appointed metropolitan whose cathedral was literally steps away. In his Metropolis, as his cathedral is known, this bishop also crafted a space of authority in direct conversation with the Hodegetria, the Brontochion monastery and its

⁴⁷ Gerstel, *Viewing*, 339-343.

⁴⁸ Gerstel, *Viewing*, 345.

⁴⁹ Gerstel, *Viewing*, 346.

⁵⁰ Gerstel, *Viewing*, 348.

archimandrite. To explore his contribution to the sacred landscape of Mistra and the gauntlet he threw down before Pachomius, we first must examine the few extant details about the life of the Metropolitan Archbishop Nikephoros Moschopoulos.

NIKEPHOROS MOSCHOPOULOS

Like so many figures from Byzantium, little historical record remains to provide witness to the life of Nikephoros Moschopoulos. His own autograph in several gospel books that he had given as gifts,⁵¹ a few references in official correspondence, and three monumental inscriptions provide tantalizing clues into the life of a remarkable man who helped establish Mistra as a bastion of Byzantine learning and culture.⁵² Beyond these few words, which we will consider below, we know that he added a narthex to the cathedral which he decorated.⁵³

Alice Mary Talbot suggests that Nikephoros must have been Archbishop of Crete by 1285.⁵⁴ The emperor had signed a new trade agreement with the Venetian doge in June 1285, protecting the Serenissima's presence on Crete.⁵⁵ Because of this, it would have been impossible for Nikephoros to occupy his archiepiscopal see.⁵⁶ As such,

⁵¹ For the autograph texts and commentary, see M. I. Manousakas, "Νικηφόρου Μοσχόπουλου ἐπιγράμματα σὲ χειρόγραφα τῆς βιβλιοθήκης του," *Ἑλληνικά* 15 (1957): 232-248.

⁵² Runciman, *Mistra*, 101.

⁵³ Marinou, *Ἅγιος Δημήτριος*, 249.

⁵⁴ ODB, 1414-15.

⁵⁵ Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 117; Runciman, *Mistra*, 101.

⁵⁶ George Pachymeres, *Historia*, ed. B.G. Niebuhr (Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1835), 241.

Nikephoros joined the considerable group of his brother bishops who were displaced from their sees as well in the Synodos Endemousa in Constantinople.⁵⁷

Patriarch Athanasios I (r. 1289-1293, 1303-1309) had generated animosity among his bishops because he wanted those who had gathered in Constantinople to return to their dioceses.⁵⁸ In a letter to Andronikos II, Athanasios requests an imperial decree to send these bishops back to their responsibilities for two reasons: so that they would cease meddling in affairs in Constantinople and so that they will actually care for the properties they hold in episcopis:⁵⁹

For they are not honest either in their administration or in their judicial decisions; but they instigate unlawful assemblies and other unseemly acts, and every day they get worse. For example, the metropolitan of Crete came, and it used to be my custom to send an ecclesiastic to escort the new arrival; but now they have even given this up and come without any notification or permission.⁶⁰

Was Nikephoros so corrupt and conniving that he warranted specific mention by the patriarch? Perhaps, but Nikephoros was not a friend of Athanasios and had, in fact, supported his rival to the patriarchal throne, John Kosmas.⁶¹ It is no surprise, then, that Athanasios would single out Moschopoulos. At any rate, Athanasios' specific charge that Nikephoros and other bishops were dishonest as administrators and judges fits with the

⁵⁷ Alice-Mary Maffrey Talbot, *Patriarch of Constantinople: Letters to the Emperor Andronikos II, Members of the Imperial Family, and Officials* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks; 1975), 338.

⁵⁸ Pachymeres, *Historia*, 349. See also, Talbot, *Correspondence*, 338 and Alice-Mary Maffrey Talbot, "The Patriarch Athanasios (1289-1293; 1303-1309) and the Church," *DOP* 27 (1973), 21. See also Derek Krueger and Robert S. Nelson, "New Testaments of Byzantium: Seen, Heard, Written, Excerpted, Interpreted," in *The New Testament in Byzantium EDITORS*, (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection: 2016), 87.

⁵⁹ Talbot, *Correspondence*, 337.

⁶⁰ Talbot, *Correspondence*, 61.

⁶¹ Talbot, *Correspondence*, 338.

historical record about the abuses of monastic properties and the fight over land which we saw above.

Talbot notes that Nikephoros did not leave right away since he was present at the Synod in October 1304.⁶² If he did not arrive in Mistra until 1305, as Talbot suggests, we need to account for a lacuna in the historical record. Nikephoros commissioned an inscription on the outside wall of the narthex at the Metropolis of St. Demetrios (fig. 3.5). The engraving is not at the original ground level of the church which suggests that it marks a renovation and the addition of the narthex to the existing church.⁶³ The date of the inscription is 1291-1292.⁶⁴ If Nikephoros went under duress to Mistra during Athanasios' second reign (1303-1309), we can surmise that he had spent some time there prior to departing for Constantinople.

In an undated letter which has been preserved only in Latin translation from a Florentine collection dated 1537, Athanasios dismissed Nikephoros from Constantinople. He also transferred the see of Methymna on the island of Lesbos, which Nikephoros had held in epidosis to the metropolitan of Sardis. In return, Moschopoulos was to receive an annual allowance of 200 gold pieces from one of the suffragan dioceses in Monemvasia.⁶⁵ Was the proximity of the source of this yearly support to his metropolitan

⁶² Talbot, *Correspondence*, 338. She refers to the *Νεαρά* of Athanasios, *PG* 161, col.1065.

⁶³ Marinou, *Άγιος Δημήτριος*, 248. Runciman, *Mistra*, 101, claims that Nikephoros built the whole church perhaps because of the inscription over the door into the *Metropolis*, in which Nikephoros is identified as "founder" δομήτορος. Following Marinou, it seems likely that Moschopoulos conducted renovations, built and decorated the narthex. See also, Manolis Chatzidakis, "Νεώτερα γιά την ιστορία και την τέχνη τής Μητρόπολης τοῦ Μυστρᾶ," *Δελτ.Χριστ.Αρχ.Έτ.* 9 (1979), 177.

⁶⁴ In Byzantine time, calculated from the Creation of the World, the year inscribed was 6800.

⁶⁵ *PG* 142, col. 516. Talbot, *Correspondence*, 338.

see an incentive for him to stay in Mistra? At any rate, a dated inscription on a column in the nave of the Metropolis, which we will examine closely below, places Nikephoros in Mistra in 1312.⁶⁶

Talbot notes that Nikephoros returned to Constantinople in 1317 and was replaced as proedros (administrator) of Lakedaimonia by the metropolitan of Patras.⁶⁷ In his time in Mistra, however long it was, he left a legacy of Byzantine culture and learning. The texts that he donated, with prominent inscriptions that directed attention to his generosity, were important examples of Moschopoulos' engagement with Palaiologan culture. The volumes were ornately decorated in either Constantinople or Mistra.⁶⁸

LANDSCAPES OF AUTHORITY

In her chapter entitled, "Mapping Boundaries of Church and Village: Ecclesiastical and Rural Landscapes in the Late Byzantine Peloponnese," Sharon E. J. Gerstel suggests that Abbot Pachomios and Archbishop Nikephoros Moschopoulos crafted "sacred"⁶⁹ and "imagined"⁷⁰ landscapes in the way that they defined their connections to their outlying holdings. Referring to the Aphantiko's chrysobull room, examined above, Gerstel writes, "Passing through the chamber literally meant passing by lists of rites and properties, a visible proclamation as the bounty of words proclaimed

⁶⁶ Myrtali Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Mystras: Historical and Archaeological Guide* (Athens: Hesperos Editions, 2003), 21. See also Μαρτιν, *ΑΓΙΟΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ ΜΥΣΤΡΑ*, 239, 248-9.

⁶⁷ Talbot, *Correspondence*, 338.

⁶⁸ Nelson, *Later Byzantine Painting*, 248.

⁶⁹ Gerstel, *Viewing the Morea*, 346.

⁷⁰ Gerstel, *Viewing the Morea*, 352.

status and mapped landscapes.”⁷¹ I will prove that these boundaries, which Pachomios defined over the course of seven years and five imperial decrees, pushed back against the boundaries of the landscape of authority that his rival Nikephoros actively imagined in the Morea. Both men imagined multivalent landscapes; sacred and mundane, liturgical and legal, bridging heavenly authority with rival claims to earthly property and income. In fact, evidence suggests that Nikephoros had a hand in designing the program of icons in the narthex of Pachomios’ Aphantiko, the katholikon, or main church of the Brontochion monastery.⁷² In my examination below, it is crucial to remember that Archbishop Nikephoros painted his landscape on a liturgical canvas. He intended the art he commissioned to function in concert with the various ceremonies that took place therein.

As a sacred landscape, the Metropolis conforms to the Byzantine spirituality of incremental sanctity as one moves from West to East. The courtyard, which opens out to the “world,” leads into the liminal space of the narthex, the nave, the realm of the baptized laity and inner sanctum of the bema.⁷³ Jonathan Z. Smith, examining the description of the Jerusalem Temple in the prophecy of Ezekiel, notes that this progressively more sacred space was concurrently more authoritative. “the architectural language is mirrored in the social. The various actors of the ritual drama in the temple exhibit clear spatial placement. They operate in different spheres of relative sacrality,

⁷¹ Gerstel, *Viewing the Morea*, 345.

⁷² Rodoniki Etzeoglou, *Ο ναός της Οδηγήτριας του Βροντοχίου στο Μυστρά, Οι τοιχογραφίες του νάρθηκα και η λειτουργική χρήση του χώρου*, Πραγματοῖται τῆς Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν 67 (Athens: Academy of Athens, 2013), 179.

⁷³ Taft, *Byzantine Rite*, 33.

ranked in relations of power.”⁷⁴ Certainly, the celebration of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy and various other liturgical rites would demonstrate this principle, with clergy and people interacting with the art, objects and architecture in ritual performance of hierarchical authority.⁷⁵

The renovations Nikephoros made to the Metropolis were not “unique.” If his iconographic program were unique, as Smith observes, Moschopoulos’ contribution to the sacred landscape of the Morea would deny “the possibility of comparison and taxonomy.”⁷⁶ What Nikephoros imagined, however, did represent an “individual” vision that while conforming to the standards of Late Byzantine art and liturgical usage, nevertheless represented an innovative expression of his authority and individuality. Using painters directly linked with Constantinopolitan workshops,⁷⁷ Nikephoros’ vision was deeply informed by his time in the capital. Unlike Demetrios Chomatenos, in Chapter Two, Nikephoros’ engagement with the tradition of the Great Church recalls her main ritual trajectory from the narthex to the episcopal and imperial thrones. Drawing from the Byzantine tradition of depicting authority in humility, Moschopoulos’ innovations belie cultural sophistication.

⁷⁴ Smith, *To Take Place*, 57.

⁷⁵ See Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 47-129.

⁷⁶ Smith, *To Take Place*, 34.

⁷⁷ Runciman, *Mistra*, 101. S. Gerstel, “Art and Identity in the Medieval Morea,” *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), 269.

FROM LINTEL TO THRONE

I suggest that Nikephoros arranged his renovations to emphasize his episcopal throne in the Metropolis. By orienting the art and inscriptions he commissioned in tandem trajectories to and from the seat of his authority, Moschopoulos drew his own boundaries upon the Mistra landscape in contention with the Brontochion monastery and its abbot. When we last left our “kindly feet” at the beginning of this chapter, we had just passed under the lintel with its classicizing inscription and had come to stand in the narthex.

The Narthex

Originally an outside porch or courtyard that came to be enclosed,⁷⁸ the narthex is a rectangular space that usually spans the length of the western end of the church, but with narrow width. In Late Antiquity, the narthex served as the gathering place for the community during the synaxis of the Liturgy.⁷⁹ Once the introductory prayers were complete, the celebrant and people would all enter the nave together from the narthex. The contemporary Byzantine Divine Liturgy preserves the memory of this rite in the “Little Entrance,” when the clergy process with the Gospel Book.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Robert Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History*, (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 33; Cyril Mango, *Byzantine Architecture*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1974), 61.

⁷⁹ Marinis, *Defining Liturgical Space*, 294; Thomas, *Byzantine Foundation Documents*, 98.

⁸⁰ *BOC*, 14. See also, Taft, *Great Church*, 49-51.

In monastic churches, some of the minor services in the horologion, or daily cycle of prayers, could be celebrated in the narthex.⁸¹ The Mesonyktikon (middle of the night prayer), Apodeipnon (or compline, after dinner), and the “Little Hours,” dispersed at intervals throughout the day, had a simpler format than the daily morning and evening prayers which required incense and a priestly presence to be fully celebrated. The Metropolis was a cathedral church, however, and decidedly not monastic. Vasileios Marinis notes that anointing for the sick, confessions, marriage betrothals, the Great Blessing of Water for the Theophany on January 6 and the Holy Thursday Nipter service, commemorating Jesus washing the feet of his apostles (John 13: 1-17), might take place in the narthex.⁸² In the Metropolis at Mistra, aside from the icon of the Last Judgement in the south west corner that might spur the penitent on to a good confession, no extant icons suggest that these other occasional services were performed in the narthex. In fact, the space is not large enough to accommodate the Nipter of twelve seated “apostles.”⁸³

The Last Judgement icon might also be connected to funerals, burials and memorial services which could take place in Late Byzantine narthexes. One example of this connection is found in the Chora monastery in Constantinople, renovated in the fourteenth century by Theodore Metochites, where the scene of Last Judgment on the vault of the parekklesion covers a space with multiple burials. As far as I am aware, there are no medieval burials below the pavement in the Metropolis. Furthermore, the Last

⁸¹ Marinis, *Defining Liturgical Space*, 294-95; Sharon E. J. Gerstel, “Monastic Soundspaces in Late Byzantium: The Art and Act of Chanting,” *Resounding Images: Medieval Intersections of Art, Music, and Sound*, Studies in the Visual Culture of the Middle Ages, Vol. 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 139.

⁸² Marinis, *Defining Liturgical Space*, 294.

⁸³ I make this observation as one who has staged and celebrated this rite.

Judgement in the narthex could be there for penitents, not allowed to participate in the services from the nave, to urge contrition. If Nikephoros placed this icon, which occupies space on two walls in the south-west corner of the narthex, to goad sinners to make a good confession, he could easily have placed it on the east wall to provide an apt focus of meditation for the sinful attending liturgical services in the main church from there.

As Marinis notes, while the narthex had a liturgical function, its use and decoration were not standardized as were other spaces in the church.⁸⁴ As such, the iconography in the narthex commissioned by Nikephoros Moschopoulos reveals his intention to craft a space of authority, to define his own boundaries in the sacred and secular landscape of Mistra.

The Ecumenical Councils

Before passing into the nave, one encounters the icons of the Ecumenical Councils on the east wall. (fig. 3.6) Although largely destroyed, the extant images suggest the entire series of councils just as in the upper narthex of Sveti Sophia in Ohrid. In Chapter Two, I suggested that the representation of the councils were in conversation with the image of the Hetoimasia and the Synodos Endemousa convening underneath. Nikephoros intended something similar in placing the councils in his narthex.

In her monograph, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries*, Sharon E.J. Gerstel examines late Byzantine iconographic programs that depicted bishops, especially the hierarchs who

⁸⁴ Marinis, *Defining Liturgical Space*, 295. For discussion of the standardized Late Byzantine program in the *bema*, see Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 21-67.

authored the texts of the Eucharistic Divine Liturgy in the lower register of the apse in the bema. She suggests that the open scrolls with the first words of various prayers of the anaphora allows the bishop-saints to visually “concelebrate” the service as the celebrating priest or bishop recites the same prayers aloud.⁸⁵

In a recent book chapter, Gerstel considered the connection between monumental iconography which portrayed various feasts or scenes that connected to the hymnography sung throughout the liturgical day or year. She suggests that the placement of specific icons connected with the ritual going on near them. Describing the chapel of the Transfiguration of the Savior (“Soteraki”) in Thessalonike, Gerstel considers the series of icons depicting the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.⁸⁶ Gazing at these images, the participants could identify their own liturgical participation in the pictures. In nearly every frame of the sequence, a painted choir “performs” in conversation with the actual chanting choir. At times when a choir would not sing, during the reading of the Gospel, for instance, the painted choir members hold their hats, sharing in the piety of the living choir, doing the same out of respect for the Gospel.⁸⁷

In Chapter Two, we saw the enthroned bishop in his synod connecting with the Prepared Throne standing along and in the icon of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. In both cases, the participants, choir or bishop, could identify themselves with the picture. They were performing what was depicted. By commissioning the placement of the

⁸⁵ Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 15-35.

⁸⁶ Gerstel, “Monastic Soundspaces,” 146-149.

⁸⁷ Gerstel, “Monastic Soundspaces,” 148.

Ecumenical Councils on the east wall, I think that Nikephoros intended participants to see *him*, the bishop, in connection with the imagery. Warren Woodfin examines how Late Byzantine clergy would wear the epitachelion (stole) embroidered with the primary feasts in the life of Jesus. He suggests that the feasts on these garments would connect with the similar cycle of dominical feasts on the walls or ceiling of the church to endow the priest or bishop wearing the vestment with the divine authority of Jesus.⁸⁸ In the performance of the various liturgical services of the church year, with processions and other ritual actions, the priest or bishop became Christ, sharing in his divine power.

In the renovations that Nikephoros made to the Metropolis, I think that he intended those passing into the church, and perhaps one visitor, his rival Abbot Pachomius, to make the same connection that Woodfin describes. In this case, the authoritative space is not created by a link between vesture and art, but between the actual throne of the bishop and art; between the Ecumenical Councils with their famous bishops standing firm in the divine authority of Orthodoxy and the episcopal throne set in the southeast side of the nave. In Chapter One, I suggested that the icon over the Royal Doors of the unnamed emperor with its open space to the left of the enthroned Christ, might relate to the imperial throne which sat in the southeast region of the nave. In that case, it could serve to emphasize the humility of the sitting emperor as he joins his unnamed predecessor in submission to Christ in the narthex mosaic. In Mistra, I suggest a

⁸⁸ Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 47-102. See also, André Grabar, "Un Rouleau Liturgique Constantinopolitain et Ses Peintures," *DOP* 8 (1954), 161, 163-199, who studies the art painted in the margins of liturgical scrolls used by celebrants in the Divine Liturgy. Often, the cycle feasts or other illustrations are calibrated to the action of the liturgy text.

connection between the depiction of the Ecumenical Councils on the eastern wall of the narthex with the bishop's throne in the kleros on the south-east side of the nave. In the former example, the intention of the patriarch who commissioned the icon was to emphasize imperial submission. In the Metropolis, the patron had just the opposite point to make. It seems that Moschopoulos sought to map a landscape of authority by placing this series of icons in a trajectory with his throne in the nave.

The Column

In the design of Byzantine churches, there is a clear west-east orientation toward the bema. As noted above, moving from the narthex through the nave to the bema constitutes a progression in holiness. St. Demetrios in Mistra is a typical Byzantine church in this respect. Upon this "oriented" sacred landscape, however, I suggest that the Nikeophoros inscribed an overlapping space of authority centered on his throne. From the threshold of the narthex just beyond the depiction of the Ecumenical Councils just considered, the eye is drawn forward to the bema, but also at a diagonal to the right toward the bishop's throne. An intermediate stop in that southeastern trajectory is one of four columns in the nave remarkable because of a cruciform inscription. (fig. 3.7)

+Εγὼ ὁ ταπεινὸς μητροπολίτης
Κρήτης καὶ πρόεδρος Λακεδαιμονίας
Νιχηφόρος ὠχοδόμησα τόνδε
τὸν ναὸν εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ
ἁγίου μεγαλομάρτυρος αὐτοῦ Δημητρίου
ἀνήγειρα δὲ καὶ ἐκ βάρων αὐτῶν
μύλωνας εἰς τὴν Μαγοῦλαν καὶ ἐφύτευσα καὶ ἔλαι
ῶνας καὶ περιβόλιον ἐν αὐτῇ. καὶ εἰς τὴν Λεύκην ἄμ
πελῶνας ἐμφυτευτικῶς ἠγόρασα δὲ καὶ τὰ σύ

νεγγυς τῆς ἐκκλησίας ὀσπήτια τοῦ χαρτοφύλακος
Εὐγενίου. Ὁ οὖν εἰσέπειτα βουληθεὶς ἀπὸ τούτων ἐπι
δοῦναι τινὶ λόγῳ κληρικατοῦ ἢ ἀναχαμπτικῶς
ἢ ἄλλῳ τρόπῳ τινὶ ἀπο
σπάσαι τῆς ἐκκλησίας.
ἵνα ἔχοι τὰς ἀρὰς τῶν Τ Ι Η
Θεοφόρων Πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίᾳ
καὶ ἐμοῦ τοῦ ἀμαρτωλοῦ
Ἐτους ς ω Κ Ν Ι+⁸⁹

+ I, the humble metropolitan
of Crete and *proedros* of *Lakedaimonia*,
Nikephoros built this temple for the glory of God and
Of his holy great martyr Demetrios.
And I raised from their foundations
Five mills in Magoulas and I raised both an olive
Grove and the surrounding (gardens?) there. And in Leuke
Cultivated vineyards. And I also bought the houses⁹⁰
Of the Chartophylax Eugenius nearby the church.
Who henceforth wishing afterward to separate them from the church
By some claim of inheritance, either underhandedly
Or by some other way.
For this reason, may he have the curses of the 318
God-bearing Fathers of Nicaea
And (the curse) of me, the sinner.
In the year 6820 [1312] ...+

In this inscription, we detect the voice of the bishop himself. Despite his auto-epithets, ταπεινός, humble, and ἀμαρτωλός, sinner, Nikephoros left written witness to his struggle of authority over land. By describing himself again as the ‘builder,’ he redefined the boundaries of the landscape with his own claims to power. By invoking the Nicean Fathers to curse his rival, the column connects with the painted council in the narthex. The cruciform shape of the inscription likely designated Nikephoros’ stauropegial rights

⁸⁹ Marinou, *Άγιος Δημήτριος*, 239.

⁹⁰ Here, I follow Gerstel’s translation of ὀσπήτια, *Viewing the Morea*, 349.

over the lands inscribed. This cross connected with the real or imagined crosses planted upon his holdings marking the boundaries of his sacred landscape.

Nevertheless, the cross makes this inscription an icon in itself, thus allowing it to become an object of devotion in the church. He commissioned two inscriptions on the outside of the church. He could easily have listed his land claims there, but choosing the specific column in the nave linked his worldly claims with his sacred identity performed liturgically when he occupied his throne. Jonathan Z. Smith's work provides an apt analysis of the mixture of worldly and sacred intentions in this inscription.

A ritual object or action becomes sacred by having attention focused on it in a highly marked way. From such a point of view, there is nothing that is inherently sacred or profane. These are not substantive categories, but rather situational ones. Sacrality is above all, a category of emplacement."⁹¹

Airing his dispute with Eugenius for all to see, Nikephoros not only tried literally to set in stone his version of authority over the landscape, he also embarrassed his opponent by recounting specific details of his alleged machinations. Furthermore, naming his rival as the object of curses, he visually "crushed" him beneath the sign of the cross.⁹² As noted in the examination of the outside lintel, although this inscription was openly visible to anyone in the nave, only a few in Nikephoros' day could read it.⁹³ Aside from

⁹¹ Smith, *To Take Place*, 104.

⁹² During the celebration of Baptism, the bishop or priest makes the sign of the cross in the baptismal water with a hand cross, saying, "May all adverse powers be crushed beneath the sign of your Cross." Συντριβήτωσαν ὑπὸ τὴν σημείωσιν τοῦ τύπου τοῦ τιμίου Σταυροῦ σου πᾶσαι αἱ ἐναντία δυνάμεις. Evagoras Constantinides, trans. *Μικρόν ευχολόγιον ἢ αγιασματᾶριον* (Thessaloniki: Melissa Printing, 1989), 64.

⁹³ Kalopissi-Verti notes that "no notary and no witnesses were needed since the ecclesiastical community as a whole served as witness of the recorded agreement." Kalopissi-Verti, "Church Inscriptions," 87. Only the elites in that community would be able to read it, however.

his obvious target, the unfortunate Eugenius, this column would also serve as a warning to anyone else making rival claims on the land, like the Metropolis' neighbor, Abbot Pachomios.

The Chrysobull Room in the Aphantiko may offer proof that the abbot clearly received Moschopoulos' message. Although invoking the curse of the Fathers of Nicaea was common in the Late Byzantine period, it is interesting that the chrysobulls, dated two years after the column inscription, in the Aphantiko narthex also include this curse.⁹⁴ This could be another indication of Constantinopolitan culture permeating the far reaches of Byzantium. At the same time, it could easily be a reply to Nikephoros' attempts to inscribe the landscape with his own authority.

The Throne

The throne on the south wall of Metropolis dates from the seventeenth century.⁹⁵ As we saw in Chapter One, the bishop used to occupy the center of the elevated synthronon. By the Late Byzantine period, however, apsidal art such as the Melismos, a painted altar behind the standing one,⁹⁶ and the concelebrating hierarchs,⁹⁷ usually take the place of a synthronon or even a simple episcopal throne. Furthermore, with the enclosure of the templon that separated the bema from the nave, the resulting icon screen would have rendered the bishop both invisible and inaudible.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Kalopissi-Verti, "Church Inscriptions," 80.

⁹⁵ Marinou, *Άγιος Δημήτριος*, 69,

⁹⁶ Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 37-47

⁹⁷ Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 15-36.

⁹⁸ Mathews, *Private Liturgy*, 126-7.

Since such obscurity would not emphasize the authority of the bishop, the throne had to be moved to another prominent location. Given the monastic influence on Late Byzantine liturgical practice, it made sense to adapt the model of the monastic stalls in the kleros. This shift was reflected in the iconographic program. In the parekklesion, or side chapel, of St. John the Theologian in the eleventh-century monastery of the Theotokos Mavriotissa in Kastoria, the southeastern wall has icons of various prominent apostles and bishops in the lower two registers. Germanos, Patriarch of Constantinople and Polycarp of Smyrna are at eye level with Cyril, Blaise, John, Nicholas, Peter and Paul below.⁹⁹

In the Metropolis, the construction of the current throne damaged the iconographic program. Marinou identifies the remaining icons around the throne as the dialogue of Jesus with the Samaritan Woman (John 4) and Jesus healing the Blind Man (John 9). Although, one could interpret these icons in conjunction with the throne as linking the authority of the bishop and Jesus, as Woodfin suggests above, these icons are most likely in conversation with the two scenes on the corresponding northern wall, the Healing of the Paralytic (Mark 2:1-12) and Healing of the Epileptic (Matthew 17:14-16).¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, the collection of apostle/bishop icons in the same corner of the Mavriotissa, suggests that the bishop's throne had become a common fixture there by the Late Byzantine period.

⁹⁹ Georgios Gounaris, *Η Παναγία Μαυριώτισσα της Καστοριάς* (Thessaloniki: Pournaras, 2014), 41-42.

¹⁰⁰ Marinou, *Άγιος Δημήτριος*, 88.

In her study of Byzantine hierarchical liturgy through the lens of the seventeenth century writing of Arsenij Suxanov, Vassa Larin considers the diataxis of Gemistos which describes an elevated stasidion (bishop's throne) on the southern wall of the nave.¹⁰¹ Following the *Book of Ceremonies*, Larin suggests that the throne on the south wall invoked the memory of the entrance of the patriarch into Hagia Sophia from his residence to the south of the church down a stairwell that led from the south gallery to the nave below.¹⁰²

Although the platform of the current throne in the Metropolis in Mistra breaks up the design of the tilework underneath (fig. 3.8), nevertheless the ornate rectangle directs attention to that space in the nave. Since this pattern does not occur elsewhere in the church, it focuses attention on that space. Furthermore, since this was the general area of the omphalos where the emperor's throne stood in Hagia Sophia, this area of the church was already a space of authority, albeit imperial authority. Later Byzantine churches mostly did away with the central ambo, which made it possible for the imperial throne to move to the center of the nave, as the Palaiologan seal in the center of Metropolis' nave seems to indicate (fig. 3.9). This shift made it possible for bishops, displaced from their traditional perch on the synthronon, to reinterpret as a space of episcopal power.

¹⁰¹ Vassa Larin, *The Byzantine Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in Arsenij Suxanov's Proskinitarij: Text, Translation and Analysis of the Entrance Rites*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 286 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2010), 160.

¹⁰² Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 146. See also, Robert Taft, "Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *DOP* 34/35, (1980/1981), 49.

FROM THRONE TO BRONTOCHION

As “kindly feet” turn to leave the church, they mark out another leg in the landscape of authority. Here, the bishop’s throne anchors the furthest point in the westward trajectory. The column becomes a meta, or turning point in a hippodrome, around which one retraces steps from the throne back through the narthex and outside to encounter the Brontochion monastery nearby. In the intervening space of authority, as Gerstel suggests above, Nikephoros delineates a landscape with boundaries favorable to himself and at the expense of his rival Abbot Pachomios. In Chapters One and Two, we saw that physical thrones interacted with art and ritual to define spaces of authority. Just as Nikephoros’ throne connected with the images of the Ecumenical Councils and specifically the Hetoimasia in the Council of Nicaea icon on the east wall of the narthex, so too will it interact with the thrones on the west wall of the narthex.

The Last Judgment

As one leaves the nave, the western wall of the narrow narthex looms large. To the left in the southwestern corner, the Last Judgment, mentioned above, warns sinners to repent (fig 3.10). Its Hetoimasia, with a winding river of fire flowing from it, emphasizes the biblical punishment for the damned (Daniel 7: 9-10 and Revelation 20:11-15) as we considered in Chapter Two. For in the upper narthex of Sveti Sophia, the Throne of Judgment made sense in a space of legal authority. The Metropolis (lower) narthex, however, is not a space of exclusive synodal meetings. As we noted above, the Last Judgment could speak to various uses of the Late Byzantine narthex. We also noted, that

this icon seemed ill-placed to goad to repentance sinners, attending liturgical services from the narthex, since it would be behind them.

This powerful image is very well placed, however, if Nikephoros intended it to goad the neighboring Brontochion monastery to repentance over land disputes. This suggestion finds credence in the fact that the Aphantiko's Chrysobull Room occupies the exact same space in that basilica; the southwest corner of the narthex. It seems that Abbot Pachomius made his response to Nikephoros' message of authority and his attempt to set boundaries over the landscape, by commissioning the Chrysobulls that clearly delineated the properties and rights of the monastery. Where angels carry out the work of judgment in Nikephoros' Last Judgment, they carry aloft Chrysobulls in Pachomius' katholikon.

Hetoimasia

In some churches, the Last Judgment might also appear over the exit to serve as one final reminder to live a moral life outside. In that case, the departing worshippers redefine space in the "world" by claiming the landscape of their daily activities for Christ whom they received in the Eucharist and whose warning of judgment sets boundaries on their behavior. The space over the exit in St. Demetrios in Mistra, however, has the third Hetoimasia in the small narthex, and, by far, the most magnificent. This Prepared Throne is not an admonition, but a statement of divine power and authority.

The figure is all the more striking, because aside from the smaller Hetoimasia incorporated into the two other narthex scenes considered above, there is an earlier, and also quite magnificent, Prepared Throne in the diakonikon of the bema. (fig. 3.11) As

explained in Chapter Two, the placement of this Throne and the feature of the angelic hosts bowed in adoration suggests the earlier “Eucharistic” interpretation of this evolving scene. Placed over the exit on the western wall, Nikephoros’ Hetoimasia does not evoke adoration of the unseen God in the eucharistic elements. This Throne, surrounded not by one angel-guard bearing a sword, as in the Ohrid upper narthex had, but by legions of spear bearing angels clearly defines the boundaries of Nikephoros’ authority. Recall that on the lintel opposite this scene, the humble archbishop’s name appears, which I suggested began the eastward trajectory in this space of authority. This interplay of humility and power invokes the memory of the Royal Doors in Hagia Sophia, Constantinople where a small Hetoimasia opposes the scene of imperial humility.

A prayer prescribed in several of the daily services of the Byzantine horologion implores God to “Surround us with your holy angels so that guided and guarded in their camp we may attain the unity of the Faith...”¹⁰³ From its perch over the exit of the Metropolis, the angelic camps surrounding the Hetoimasia seem to be less concerned with establishing the unity of faith and more with surrounding the boundaries set by Nikephoros on his column. These angels stand around the heavenly Throne ready to defend the rights of the occupant of the episcopal throne at the far end of this landscape of authority.

¹⁰³ Τείχισον ἡμᾶς ἀγίοις σοθ Ἀγγέλοις, ἵνα, τῇ παρεμβολῇ αὐτῶν φρουρούμενοι, καὶ ὀδηγούμενοι, καταντήσωμεν εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς Πίστεως... English translation from, *The Horologion* (Boston, MA: Sophia Press, 2009, Second Edition).

CONCLUSIONS

Like Demetrios Chomatenos, we have only tantalizing fragments of the life of Nikephoros Moschopoulos. Where Demetrios' genius shone through his canonical decisions, the artistic programmes Nikephoros designed leave whispers of his culture and refinement. Both Chomatenos and Moschopoulos drew upon Byzantine tradition with innovation to craft spaces that solidified their claim to authority. Where Demetrios tried to create a space of patriarchal authority through his legal decisions in Ohrid, Nikephoros chafed under the authority of the stringent, traditionalist Patriarch Athanasios of Constantinople. The inscriptions Nikephoros commissioned on the Metropolis provide context to understand the interplay of his episcopal throne with the magnificent Prepared Throne in the narthex.

As much as he may have been rivals with the Brotochion monastery and others in the zero-sum business of land ownership and *charistike*, he nevertheless had the political savvy to work with Abbot Pachomius not only in decorating the narthex of the new Aphantiko but in making Mistra a center of learning that would outlast the Byzantine empire for a few short years.

As I have noted repeatedly, the spaces I have considered are multi-valent. In arguing for the dual trajectories that Nikephoros employed to inscribe a space of authority on the sacred landscape of Mistra, I acknowledge that this interpretation does not exhaust the possibilities for what Nikephoros intended by his choices in decorating the narthex. For instance, the conversation of the Hetoimasia over the door, the Last

Judgment, the Ecumenical Councils and the Peter of Alexandria scene could be taken together to suggest the dire consequences awaiting the former bishops who supported union with Rome. From this perspective, the iconography asserts both orthodoxy and the consequences of heterodoxy. In any case, these images bear witness to the struggle for authority of the bishop who commissioned them.

In these last two chapters, I have assumed the rituals that took place in the spaces. My focus was on the interaction between monumental art and the episcopal throne in a ritual context. In the next chapter, the ritual will be specific and important. We will consider the liturgical commentaries of Symeon of Thessalonike. Rather than looking at monumental art, we will examine the way in which Symeon carefully crafted a space of episcopal authority by reaching back into Byzantine tradition to revive a nearly defunct ritual.

CHAPTER FOUR: SYMEON OF THESSALONIKE

The Ecumenical Patriarch declared Symeon of Thessalonike a saint on May 3, 1981, no doubt, because of his important liturgical commentaries, still extant.¹ His canonization took more than 500 years, since I doubt that the inhabitants of Thessalonike, in the 1430's, would have been so inclined to declare their former metropolitan a saint. Like the other bishops in this study, we have limited information about Symeon prior to his appointment as Archbishop of Thessalonike. He was born in Constantinople in the 14th century and was nominated Metropolitan of Thessalonike in 1416 or 1417.² Teeples

¹ Steven Hawkes-Teeples, ed. and trans., *St. Symeon of Thessalonika: The Liturgical Commentaries*, Studies and Texts 168 (Ontario, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2011), 23.

² David Balfour, *Politico-Historical Works of Symeon Archbishop of Thessalonica (1416/7-1429): Critical Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979), 230; Teeples, *Liturgical Commentaries*, 18.

notes that Symeon took on this role in his early thirties after spending the prior years as a monk: “It is not surprising that a man in his thirties who had spent much of his life in an especially fervent monastery might not be prepared for the complex personal and political challenges of being archbishop of the second largest city in the empire.”³ Indeed, Symeon’s first official act was to send a letter to his suffragan bishops urging “obedience and repentance.”⁴ It will come as no surprise that his letter was not well received by the bishops of his metropolis, who wondered why they deserved such criticism. Symeon’s relationship with his bishops did not improve greatly during his reign. Further, the Metropolitan spent much of his twelve-year episcopacy in ill health.⁵

On June 8, 1422, Symeon departed Thessalonike to urge the emperor in Constantinople to send military aid to his See, which was besieged by the Ottoman Sultan Murad II. Barely escaping the Turks who surrounded the city, he fled to Mt. Athos. There is scholarly opinion that because of his ill health, unpopularity and the Turks at the gates Symeon had always intended to escape to Mt. Athos.⁶ Nevertheless, the monks of the Holy Mountain convinced Symeon that his place was within his See, especially during a crisis. Their influence, along with a letter from the Despot Andronikos specifically requesting that Symeon return, convinced the Metropolitan to go back to Thessalonike.⁷

³ Teeple, *Liturgical Commentaries*, 21.

⁴ Symeon of Thessalonike, *Epistle B1*; Balfour, *Politico-Historical Works*, 22; Teeple, *Liturgical Commentaries*, 21.

⁵ Symeon of Thessalonike, *Epistle*, B5:6-7; Balfour, *Politico-Historical Works*, 73-74, 196-97.

⁶ Teeple, *Liturgical Commentaries*, 22.

⁷ Symeon of Thessalonike, *Epistle B5*; Balfour, *Politico-Historical Works*, 70-76, 193-199; Teeple, *Liturgical Commentaries*, 22.

Once there, Symeon convinced the inhabitants of Thessalonike not to surrender to the Ottoman Turks.⁸ The people knew that the Ottomans would spare a city that peacefully surrendered, but would pillage, destroy and enslave those who resisted.⁹ Although they heeded their bishop's wishes with respect to the Turks, he lost his battle of resistance against the Venetians, whom he hated equally as much as the Ottomans. With the permission of his father, Emperor Manuel II, the Despot Andronikos handed Thessalonike over to Venice in September 1423.¹⁰ Despite his utter resentment for the Latins, Symeon worked with them until his death, sometime in September 1429.¹¹

Like Demetrios Chomatenos and Nikephoros Moschopoulos before him, Symeon drew upon a tradition of patriarchal ritual to preserve an ideal vision of authority and Orthodoxy that remained unwavering even when the Turks were outside the gates and the Venetians within. The real and present Ottomans and Latins could not touch Symeon's platonic form of the Orthodox kosmos. An Orthodox city existed within an Orthodox empire with an Orthodox emperor and patriarch who defended and preserved the Orthodox Faith. To some extent, Symeon is simply being Orthodox since as Teeple notes, "For the Greek Christian...the humblest village church is always *heaven upon earth*."¹² Symeon tried to use his authority to make this traditional theological view of the local parish and its liturgy a blueprint for preserving the whole Orthodox world in his own metropolitan cathedral, Hagia Sophia in Thessalonike.

⁸ Symeon of Thessalonike, *Epistles*, B10, 11; Balfour, *Politico-Historical Works*, 83-90, 207-210.

⁹ Teeple, *Liturgical Commentaries*, 23.

¹⁰ Teeple, *Liturgical Commentaries*, 22.

¹¹ Teeple, *Liturgical Commentaries*, 23.

¹² Teeple, *Liturgical Commentaries*, 14.

Two hundred years earlier, Demetrios Chomatenos had crowned Theodore Dukas emperor in Thessalonike. That ritual action had had an immediate and concrete effect on the authority of both men, making the former an emperor and the latter a quasi-patriarch in the wake of the loss of Constantinople as the center of both empire and church. Similarly, the rituals that Symeon celebrated in his Hagia Sophia preserved the tradition of an Orthodox world that no longer existed even in Constantinople. In his *Treatise on Prayer*, Symeon considered the Akolouthia Asmatike (Ακολουθία Ασματική), or “chanted services,” which had fallen into disuse after the Fourth Crusade in favor of the simpler monastic offices.¹³ “This melodic service was originally sung by all of the catholic churches of the entire world, which recited nothing without melody...especially the Great Churches such as Constantinople, Antioch¹⁴ and Thessalonike, where alone today it is performed in the Church of the Holy Wisdom.”¹⁵ The Sung Office required a trained choir and large clergy. After 1261, the Emperor in Constantinople no longer had the resources to support these ceremonies. The Great Church of Hagia Sophia required significant repair before it could be used.¹⁶ We have ample evidence of the decline of the Sung Office when we compare Constantine VII’s *Book of Ceremonies* with the 15th-

¹³ Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today* (Collegeville, MN.: The Liturgical Press, 1993; Second Revised Edition), 273.

¹⁴ Given the fact that Antioch no longer existed by the time Symeon was writing, it is likely that he is simply citing the traditional “Orthodox” Byzantine territories vis à vis “heretical” Alexandria and Armenia whom he criticizes frequently in his commentary.

¹⁵ Harry L. N. Simmons, trans., *Saint Symeon of Thessalonike” Treatise on Prayer* (Brookline, MA.: Hellenic College Press, 1984), 71.

¹⁶ Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 223.

century *Pseudo-Kodinos*, which records that the Emperor attended no more than six feast days a year in Hagia Sophia.¹⁷

For Symeon, the Asmatike Akolouthia “cemented the faith as handed down by the early fathers,”¹⁸ despite the fact that this version of the liturgical services had undergone various reforms and developments over the centuries.¹⁹ In his liturgical commentaries, which will provide considerable evidence for this chapter, the role of the hierarch (celebrating bishop) is central. The Chanted Office continually reinforces the authority of the bishop through ritual movement, vesture and the interaction with various lower clergy.²⁰

Symeon addressed his *Liturgical Commentary* to the people of Crete. Teeples notes that at this time, the Venetians had control of Crete, “and its Byzantine liturgical usages [were] likely threatened by the presence of the Latin Church on the island.”²¹ By championing the all but defunct Asmatike Akolouthia, Symeon was using his episcopal authority to preserve his vision of Byzantine Orthodoxy even as the Empire shrunk. For him, the Orthodox fight against both the Ottomans and the Latins, for whom he had equal hatred, was a “religious struggle between God and Satan.”²² As Clifford Geertz observed,

¹⁷ Ruth Macrides, J.A. Munitz and Dimiter Angelov, *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies, 15 (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013), 187, n. 533

¹⁸ Eugenia Russell, *Literature and Culture in Late Byzantine Thessalonica* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 68.

¹⁹ For an excellent discussion on the development of the Byzantine cycle of services, see Job Getcha, “The Typikon Decoded: An Explanation of Byzantine Liturgical Practice,” trans. Paul Meyendorff (Yonkers, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2012), especially Chapter 1.

²⁰ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 26.

²¹ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 24.

²² Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 53.

“In ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turns out to be the same world.”²³ If this is so, a Christian could never admit defeat to Satan. Such a downfall would have devastating theological and cosmic effects.

Thus, Symeon tolerated the Venetians, preached resistance against the Ottomans and continued to preserve Byzantine Orthodoxy, seemingly single-handedly, by celebrating the Chanted Office. Where even the Patriarch of Constantinople had failed, Symeon would prevail. Except, that he did not. Six months after Symeon’s death, on March 29, 1430, the Ottomans sacked Thessalonike, just as the people had feared. Those who were not slaughtered were enslaved.²⁴

EPISCOPAL AUTHORITY

In each chapter, the bishops we have considered had particular challenges to their authority. For Symeon, establishing his episcopal authority was as much a theoretical issue as it was mundane. As archbishop of Thessalonike, the second city of Byzantium, Symeon inherited a prize sought after by Serbs, Latins and Ottomans alike. For the Thessalonians, this constant turmoil must have caused anxiety. In fact, Symeon was not the first archbishop who faced challenges to his authority by the people. For about seven years in the fourteenth century, some citizens took matters into their own hands. From 1342-1350, working class Thessalonians rallied against the aristocracy to form a

²³ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 112-113.

²⁴ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 23.

republic.²⁵ The so-called zealots would not permit the famous hesychast St. Gregory Palamas, to enter his see.²⁶ When he finally entered Thessalonike, once the zealots had been defeated, Palamas sided with the nobility whom the pro-aristocracy archbishop saw as victims of an unruly mob. He wrote:

Who were those men who ran around the city, sometimes destroying houses and looting their contents, tracking down householders in a great frenzy, wanting to murder them without mercy or humanity? Were they not inhabitants of this city? Who were the victims of such frenzy, uproar, violence and persecution? Were not they too inhabitants of the city, men from whom it had sometimes received great benefits? What suffering! What great wretchedness! The city fights against itself, it becomes its own enemy.²⁷

The archbishop's word choice seems to relate the zealot rebellion through the experience of the nobles. His sermon does paint a picture of the inhabitants of Thessalonike, deserved or otherwise, as unruly and unstable. This reputation must have spurred Symeon, a century later, to demand "repentance and submission"²⁸ from his clergy in his first letter to them.

A few years after Palamas' reign as archbishop, Thessalonike fell under Ottoman control. From 1387 until 1402, Thessalonian Byzantines had to acquiesce to Turkish rule and some even converted to Islam,²⁹ complicating the religious landscape which Archbishop Symeon had to navigate. The result of all this upheaval was low morale,

²⁵ Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 199-207.

²⁶ Christopher Veniamin, *Saint Gregory Palamas: The Homilies* (Waymart, PA: Mt. Thabor Publ., 2009), 579, n. 376.

²⁷ Veniamin, *Saint Gregory Palamas*, 2.

²⁸ St. Symeon, *Epistle*, B1. For a summary, see Balfour, *Politico-Historical Works*, 22.

²⁹ Balfour, *Politico-Historical Works*, 22, 113-14.

drunkenness and slackness of religious observance.³⁰ Symeon sought to recreate a space of episcopal authority in Thessalonike that would foster a space of Orthodoxy. For the archbishop, the call for repentance and obedience to episcopal authority fell in line with his neo-platonic worldview.³¹

For centuries, Christian theologians had used a modified platonic worldview to express the dynamics of salvation history. In brief, God, the One, created the kosmos through a downward “procession,” with spiritual beings ranking as higher in the hierarchy than the lower material beings. The goal of all beings is to “return” to union with the One.³² For Christians, this reunion was made possible through the incarnation, suffering, resurrection and ascension of Jesus (See Phil. 2:6-11). That Byzantine bishops and faithful enact this theology through liturgical celebration, formed a core belief early in Byzantium. Teeples quotes Theodore of Mospuestia’s *Catechetical Homily 15*, written c. 388-392:

Since the bishop performs in symbol signs of the heavenly realities, the sacrifice must manifest them, so that he presents, as it were, an image of the heavenly liturgy...It follows that, since there needs to be a representation of the High Priest, certain individuals are appointed to preside over the liturgy of these signs...³³

Understanding that Symeon sought to craft his See as a space of authority according to Neo-platonism, explains his constant preoccupation with rank and subordination.³⁴ Furthermore, this hierarchical focus naturally drew the archbishop to

³⁰ St. Symeon, *Epistle*, B8:3.2-4; Balfour, *Politico-Historical Works*, 45-47, 119-120.

³¹ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 10-11.

³² See Colm Liubheid, trans., *Pseudo-Dionysios: The Complete Works*, Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), 145, n. 4.

³³ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 5.

³⁴ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 25.

study and admire the works of St. Dionysios the Areopagite, whom he quoted more than any other author.³⁵ Symeon's reliance on Dionysios, as a basis for reestablishing the "Sung Liturgy of the Great Church" (ἀσματική ἀκολουθία), is ironic since this fifth- or sixth-century author was neither the "Dionysios" who listened to St. Paul in Acts 17:34 nor the Pseudo-Dionysios writing about the Byzantine liturgy at all.³⁶ Liturgical scholars detect elements of the Syriac liturgy in Dionysios' commentaries.³⁷

Symeon saw Byzantium as a neo-platonic universe. Everything "processed" from Constantinople with its emperor and patriarch. By preserving Orthodoxy, the rest of Byzantium effected a "return" to the center, ensuring neo-platonic harmony and peace. For Symeon, every hierarchical liturgy reflected the liturgy celebrated in Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, which as we saw in Chapter One, reflected the heavenly liturgy and the Holy Land. For this harmonious vision to be realized, there had to be an Orthodox empire with an Orthodox emperor and patriarch.³⁸

Problematically for Symeon, the Venetians and Turks insisted on intruding in that neo-platonic kosmos. Nevertheless, as Teeple observes, the archbishop believed that, "One must ally oneself with the emperor and against the Muslims, and then trust in God, no matter how unlikely success may seem. Symeon's politics and his theology form a unified whole."³⁹ Thus, the battle with Byzantium's enemies was a cosmic struggle

³⁵ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 19.

³⁶ Liubheid, *Pseudo-Dionysios*, 13.

³⁷ Vassa Larin, *The Byzantine Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in Arsenij Suxanov's Proskinitarij*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 286 (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Orientale, 2010), 35. Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 34.

³⁸ For a detailed explanation of this Byzantine worldview, see Taft, *Their Own Eyes*, 134-58.

³⁹ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 53.

between God and Satan and in the mid-fifteenth century, it appeared that the Devil had the upper hand. The Sung Liturgy provided Symeon with the means of establishing his authority so that he could join the battle for an Orthodox kosmos.⁴⁰

THE SUNG OFFICE

It would be more proper to say that the tradition of the Sung Office empowered Symeon to create a space of Orthodox authority. Symeon's late medieval Byzantium was a weaker successor to Justinian's mighty, late antique empire. Admitting that the liturgical format he encouraged was not even celebrated in Constantinople, gives us insight into Symeon's motive. He sought to create a space of authority that would employ the tradition of the great imperial/patriarchal processions and thereby bring that age into being in his present, if only in the space of his Hagia Sophia in Thessalonike. In fact, the liturgy Symeon describes shows evidence of the redaction and evolution of the Byzantine office.

Two major liturgical systems prevailed in Byzantium: the Constantinopolitan Sung Office (ἀσματική ακολουθία), developed for the yearly cycle of worship in the "Great Church,"⁴¹ Hagia Sophia, and the rites developed in Jerusalem at the Monastery of St. Sabbas. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide detailed accounts of the ἀσματική ακολουθία and the Sabbaitic rite or their ninth-century synthesis in the Stoudios

⁴⁰ For insights into the effect that Thessalonike's socio-political climate had on medieval monumental iconography, see Sharon Gerstel, "Civic and Monastic Influences on Church Decoration in Late Byzantine Thessalonike," *DOP* 57 (2003): 225-239.

⁴¹ See Juan Mateos, *Le Typikon de la Grande Église: Le cycle des douze mois*. *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 165 (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1962).

Monastery.⁴² A brief description here should suffice to demonstrate that while invoking the tradition of the Sung Office, Symeon's usage reflected much of the standard development present elsewhere in Byzantium.

The ancient Sung Office was largely composed of scriptural texts that were sung antiphonally,⁴³ with cantors intoning verses answered by choir and/or congregation singing a stock, often-repeated phrase. Alexander Lingas notes that compared to the present usage of the Byzantine rite, the resulting service would be long, simple and relatively unadorned.⁴⁴ Such a format would likely support the considerable movement of participants in the Constantinopolitan imperial/patriarchal liturgies. The celebration of the Sung Office required many people involved with a variety of ritual actions, sometimes performed concurrently. By contrast, the Sabbaite rite could be celebrated a single priest and cantor.⁴⁵ By the fifteenth century, this simpler format prevailed in Byzantium, as Symeon, himself, concedes.

In the monasteries here, and in almost all of the churches, the order followed is that of the Jerusalem Typikon of Saint Sabas. For this can be performed by one person, having been compiled by monks...All the holy monasteries and churches follow this order, except certain ones specially authorized from time to time by the Great Church of Constantinople...⁴⁶

⁴² For an excellent and exhaustive discussion of these liturgical trends, see Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993), and Job Getcha, *The Typikon Decoded: An Explanation of Byzantine Liturgical Practice*, trans. Paul Meyendorff (Yonkers: NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), 2012.

⁴³ Alexander Lingas, "How Musical Was the 'Sung Office:': Some Observations on the Ethos of the Late Byzantine Cathedral Rite," *The Traditions of Orthodox Music Proceedings of the First International Conference on Orthodox Church Music, University of Joensuu, Finland, 13-19 June, 2005*. Finland, International Society for Orthodox Church Music (2007): 224.

⁴⁴ Lingas, "How Musical Was the 'Sung Office:'," 229.

⁴⁵ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 26; Oliver Strunk, "The Byzantine Office at Hagia Sophia," *DOP* 9/10 (1956): 179.

⁴⁶ Simmons, *Treatise on Prayer*, 22.

According to Symeon, the Sung Office he espoused had become a relic of Byzantine identity that only certain places celebrated and only on select feasts. These few churches likely had sufficient resources and personnel to perform it. Scholars agree, however, that the liturgy these churches would have celebrated was not a pristine reconstruction of the ancient liturgy of the Great Church.⁴⁷ The Sung Office of fifteenth-century Thessalonike likely reflected years of accretion and deletion, much like the contemporary Divine Liturgy of St. James. The yearly Byzantine church calendar calls for two celebrations of this liturgy: October 23, the Feast of St. James the Brother of the Lord, and the Sunday after Holy Nativity. The problem is that the extant versions of this liturgy have been byzantinized with anachronistic texts, musical settings and rubrics. Additionally, without a scholarly edited volume, the celebration of the text becomes an exercise in nostalgia; more about the imagination or agendas of the contemporary celebrants than an historically accurate glimpse at an ancient liturgy.

Similarly, I suspect that Symeon's insistence on the celebration of the Sung Office was more about him than it was about preserving the ancient rites which had not been well documented and which Symeon, himself, admits to augmenting with material from the Sabaitic tradition.⁴⁸ Oliver Strunk notes that the oldest extant manuscripts already reflect "the intermingling of monastic and non-monastic practices."⁴⁹ What Lingas described as Symeon's "polemical subtext"⁵⁰ in favoring the Sung Office, was the

⁴⁷ Strunk, *Byzantine Office*, 198.

⁴⁸ Lingas, *Sung Office*, 221-22, 225. Strunk, *Byzantine Office*, 178.

⁴⁹ Strunk, *Byzantine Office*, 198.

⁵⁰ Lingas, *Sung Office*, 221.

archbishop's attempt to employ the tradition of the golden age of Constantinople with its imperial/patriarchal processions and rituals symbolizing the order and harmony of the Orthodox kosmos in its well-ordered ranks of participants: "And I pray you in Christ that this order be preserved forever and that the tradition of the Fathers remain as a kind of divine spark among us."⁵¹ Symeon intended this celebration to keep alive the tradition of ancient Byzantium as a spark (σπινθήρα) to enkindle Orthodoxy in embattled late Byzantium beset by Latins and Ottomans. Performing this tradition in the rituals of his own Hagia Sophia in Thessalonike, empowered Symeon to create a space of Orthodox authority with the bishop and his throne as the center of attention.

BISHOP AND THRONE IN THE LITURGICAL COMMENTARIES OF SYMEON OF THESSALONIKE

Symeon of Thessalonike wrote two commentaries reflecting his version of the Sung Office, the *Explanation of the Divine Temple* (Ἑρμηνεία περί τοῦ θείου ναοῦ) and *On the Sacred Liturgy* (Περί τῆς ἱερᾶς λειτουργίας). Robert Taft summarizes extant sources on Byzantine liturgy into three groups: "documents that contain (service books), regulate (typika, diataxeis, canonical legislation), or describe (mystagogia, ekphraseis, histories, pilgrim accounts) the celebrations."⁵² Although Symeon describes his works as an explanation (Ἑρμηνεία) and mystagogy (Μυσταγωγία),⁵³ thus as descriptive according to Taft's taxonomy, they often read more like a regulatory typikon or diataxis.

⁵¹ Καὶ δέομαι υμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ συντηπεῖσθαι ταύτην τὴν τάξιν μέχρι παντός καὶ ὡς σπινθήρᾳ τινα θεῖον μένειν ἐν ἡμῖν τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν Πατέρων. Symeon of Thessalonike, *PG* 155, col. 556, translation by author.

⁵² Robert Taft, "Mount Athos: A Late Chapter in the History of the Byzantine Rite," *DOP* 42 (1988), 179-80.

⁵³ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 80.

In this section, I will consider the Symeon's discussion of the role of the bishop and his interaction with the throne, drawing upon both of his liturgical commentaries in tandem, proceeding in liturgical order. To highlight Symeon's unique emphasis of episcopal authority as a liturgical hermeneutic, I will place his work in conversation with two earlier commentators, Maximos the Confessor (580-662) and Germanos of Constantinople (634-733/740). According to Taft, "The commentaries of Maximos Confessor and Germanos are the only extant witnesses to the patriarchal eucharist of the Great Church in the period between Justinian and Iconoclasm."⁵⁴ There is a third medieval commentary by Nicholas Cabasilas (1319/1323-1392), which is invaluable for comparison with Symeon's work because it is closer chronologically. I will not draw heavily upon Cabasilas, however, because he describes a divine liturgy celebrated by a priest and makes no account for the hierarchical rubrics we will examine.

By comparison with Maximos and Germanos, I will demonstrate that Symeon greatly emphasized the role of the bishop and the symbolism of the episcopal throne, drawing upon the tradition of the liturgy of the Great Church to establish his authority in an uncertain time for Orthodoxy. For Symeon, the trajectories between the episcopal thrones marked out a space of authority in the performance of the Eucharistic Liturgy.

⁵⁴ Robert Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *DOP* 34/35 (1980/1981): 49.

Vesting

As Warren Woodfin clearly demonstrates in *The Embodied Icon*, the bishop's vestments were drawn into a conversation with the monumental art and furnishings of the church to establish authority.⁵⁵ Even the process of vesting itself came to symbolize the position of the wearer. In Late Byzantine liturgical practice, the bishop attended the services celebrated prior to the Divine Liturgy, enthroned in the stasidion in the kleros. At some point during the morning prayers, the bishop came down from his throne to put on his liturgical vesture to celebrate the Divine Liturgy:

The hierarch descends from his throne, representing the descent of God, making three reverences to God, and prays for the grace and power to accomplish the divine thing, showing that he is a servant of God and that by His strength He serves His own. Then he puts on the sacred vestments, which are seven because of the seven energies of the Spirit.⁵⁶

Symeon explains the various clerical vestments in detail in both *Explanation of the Divine Temple* and *On the Sacred Liturgy*, with detailed attention on the symbolism and variation of the hierarchical (bishop's) vesture. Even those items also worn by deacons or priests as well (the sticharion, for instance) are treated merely as episcopal. In *Explanation of the Divine Temple*, the priest and deacon's vesture receive one paragraph of explanation each, followed by eight paragraphs on the bishop. In *On the Sacred Liturgy*, after sixteen paragraphs on the symbolism of each of the seven vestments worn by the bishop, Symeon simply notes that the deacon and priest also don their vesture.⁵⁷ In

⁵⁵ Warren Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon: Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, 47-102.

⁵⁶ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 170-171.

⁵⁷ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 181.

contrast, Germanos of Constantinople describes clerical garb following his explanation of the various features of the church space. He devotes six paragraphs to the vestments of deacons, presbyters and bishops in no particular order, before moving on to monastic garb.⁵⁸

On the one hand, Germanos reflects an earlier stage in the development. The Patriarch of trend-setting Constantinople does not mention, for instance, the wearing of cuffs (epimanikia), which did not come into vogue until after Iconoclasm.⁵⁹ As a result, we could expect a later commentator to devote more explanatory space to items that required more explanation. Yet, when considering the fourteenth-century liturgical commentary of Nicholas Cabasilas, commentary on clerical vesture comes parenthetically without segue in a discussion of the role of scripture in the Liturgy: “Robes fulfil their function as clothes, and cover the body; but sometimes, by their style, they indicate the profession, ranks, and dignity of the wearer.”⁶⁰ For Symeon, however, hierarchical vesture, or “privileged vestments,” as Warren Woodfin calls them, both symbolized and realized the authority of a bishop.⁶¹

Descending from the Throne

Woodfin suggests that the embroidered icons worn by the vested bishop interacted with monumental iconography and ritual movement, especially processions,⁶²

⁵⁸ Germanos of Constantinople, St., *On the Divine Liturgy*, Trans. Paul Meyendorff, Popular Patristics Series 8 (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1984): 65-67.

⁵⁹ See Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 8.

⁶⁰ Nicholas Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1977): 27.

⁶¹ Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 13-32; Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 147.

⁶² Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 114-121.

to establish his authority. According to Symeon's explanation, the vested bishop interacted with thrones in the church in much the same way. Drawing from the symbolism developed by earlier commentators, Symeon suggested that the enthroned bishop represented "an abundance of Christ's power."⁶³ This notion echoes Germanos of Constantinople who, citing the Gospel of Matthew, described the bishop's seat on the bema synthronon as the throne of Christ with his apostles. "You shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Mt. 19:28).⁶⁴ When the bishop descends from the throne, according to Symeon, he symbolizes the descent of Christ, the Word of God to earth.⁶⁵ The vesting of the bishop represents the incarnation of Christ who performed his ministry on earth⁶⁶ and descended into Hades following his Passion.⁶⁷ Here too, the Archbishop of Thessalonike drew from the earlier writing of Germanos, who described the priestly stole (στολή) as the flesh of Christ.⁶⁸

This symbolism of Christ enthroned gave the bishop centralizing authority. Moving from his throne to don his vestments, an attendant precedes him with a lighted candle. Both the *Book of Ceremonies* and *Pseudo-Kodinos* cite various examples of the emperor and patriarch carrying candles and being attended by lit candles. Such a practice might simply have the practical purpose of lighting the way. It would not do for the

⁶³ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 97.

⁶⁴ Meyendorff, *Germanus of Constantinople*, 60-61. Germanus also cites Psalm 121:5 (LXX). Both of these references more deeply aligned the Byzantine bishop with the tradition of Jerusalem, as we considered in Chapter one.

⁶⁵ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 179.

⁶⁶ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 111. See George Berthold, trans., *Maximos the Confessor: Selected Writings*. Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1985): 198.

⁶⁷ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 243. For the scriptural basis of Christ descending into Hades, see 1 Pt 3:18-20.

⁶⁸ Meyendorff, *Germanus of Constantinople*, 66-67.

emperor or patriarch to stumble. Several times, the rubrics of the *Book of Ceremonies* calls for an attendant to caution the emperor to watch his step.⁶⁹ Beyond the practical, however, a lighted candle could illumine the emperor or patriarch in a dimly lit liturgical space, reflecting off golden thread in vesture to show the radiance of the personage. Symeon takes full advantage of this symbolic dimension to emphasize the pivotal role of the bishop as Christ:

But the lighted candle going before him also represents the brilliance of the grace in the bishop, and the imparting of grace through him, both to the ordained and also to all the rest of the faithful. For all the gifts in everyone come through the bishop's grace and none without it.⁷⁰

The bishop, moving from the throne that symbolically identified him with Christ, is imbued and imbues with divine grace with “an abundance of Christ's power.”⁷¹ As such, the lower clergy show submission to the bishop by kissing his hand, since it was by the hand of a bishop that they were ordained. In this they not only “partake of his blessing” but then “maintain humility and order.”⁷² Such emphasis on humility and good order in submission to the bishop is perfectly understandable from the perspective of the archbishop of unruly Thessalonike.

Enthroned at the West End of the Nave

Reaching the western end of the nave, Symeon, further developed the authority of the bishop, by noting that nothing can begin liturgically without his blessing: “Then the

⁶⁹ The *Book of Ceremonies* R73.16 notes that during processions, the attendants carry lighted candles and say “careful, Lord” (καπτάτε Δόμηνι) at each step.

⁷⁰ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 175. See also Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 240-241.

⁷¹ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 96-97.

⁷² Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 181, 241.

moment to begin the liturgy is given to the first of the deacons by the bishop. For without him it is not possible to do anything, and the great high priest Jesus says, ‘Without me you can do nothing.’”⁷³ Once again, Symeon connects the bishop standing at his throne with the authority of Christ. Here, as above, the archbishop drew from existing practices to make his point.⁷⁴

Here, too, Symeon’s employment of the ancient liturgical tradition of the Great Church has been tempered by liturgical development and downsizing. As we considered in Chapter One, in the late-antique rite of the Great Church, the *anarxis* of the Liturgy happened in the narthex with the entrance of the Gospel being concurrently the first entrance of the bishop. Written sources indicate clearly that the patriarch had a movable throne in the narthex of Hagia Sophia. The twelfth-century “Order of the Holy Liturgy according to the Rite of the Great Church,” (Τάξις τῆς ἁγίας λειτουργίας κατὰ τὸν τόπον τῆς μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας) annotated and translated by Robert Taft, notes that “the bishop is seated before the beautiful doors.”⁷⁵ As we have seen above, later Byzantine hierarchical celebrations were more compact and streamlined affairs due to the historical evolution of the liturgy. We can see the evidence of these changes in Symeon’s commentary, where he notes that he (the bishop) has been present enthroned in the *bema* or nave throughout the services prior to the Divine Liturgy. The throne at the western end of the nave seems to be a tribute to the earlier narthex enthronement. Despite the change of location of the

⁷³ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 179. See also, Robert Taft, “The Pontifical Liturgy of the Great Church according to a Twelfth-Century *Diataxis* in Codex *British Museum Add.* 34060,” *Liturgy in Byzantium and Beyond* (Norfolk, Great Britain: Variorum, 1995): 284-5.

⁷⁴ Berthold, *Mystagogy*, 199.

⁷⁵ Taft, *Byzantium and Beyond*, 284-5.

throne, Symeon emphasizes that the ritual surrounding it still invokes the authority of the traditional narthex throne.

From Throne to Synthronon

Symeon follows earlier liturgical commentators in describing the movement of the Little Entrance with the gospel book as symbolic of salvation history. Just as the vesting and preparatory rites, considered above, symbolized the incarnation of Jesus, so too would the movement from the throne at the western end of the nave into the bema and up the synthronon represent Jesus' passion, death, resurrection and ascension.⁷⁶ Here, Symeon once again describes the liturgy through the lens of episcopal authority. He follows the explanations of Maximos the Confessor,⁷⁷ who saw the movement of the bishop as symbolic of Christ's nativity, resurrection and ascension; rather than Germanos of Constantinople⁷⁸ or Nicholas Cabasilas⁷⁹ who assigned these events to the movement of the Gospel Book.

These varying interpretations are not surprising since Cabasilas' commentary omits entirely hierarchical rubrics, commenting on the Divine Liturgy as it is regularly celebrated by the priest. Naturally, then, he had to emphasize the allegorical role of the Gospel Book as Christ in the liturgical unfolding of Salvation History. As Patriarch of Constantinople, Germanos actually served in Hagia Sophia, unlike Symeon who had to draw upon liturgy to invoke the tradition of the Great Church to establish his own

⁷⁶ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 243-247.

⁷⁷ Berthold, *Mystagogy*, 198; Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 49-50.

⁷⁸ Germanos, *Divine Liturgy*, 73-74.

⁷⁹ Cabasilas, *Divine Liturgy*, 52, 59.

authority. Thus, Germanos could focus on the ritual role of the Gospel Book because he inhabited the seat of authority, interacting with the emperor on a regular basis.

While Symeon mentions the movement of the Gospel Book, his commentary focuses heavily on the role of the bishop *in persona Christi* and the ritual performance of the lower clergy in submission to his authority. Once again, the throne is a ritual focal point in establishing this authority. According to Symeon, the Little Entrance ends when the bishop ascends the synthronon:

By means of the sacred synthronon, the divine temple depicts the incarnate Word sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven. By means of the steps, is depicted the order and ascent of each of the clergy and the angels, and through the hierarch Jesus, whom the sacred Gospel seen on the altar also typifies, and the cross represents His sacrifice.⁸⁰

In his description, Symeon brings about an interesting symbolic twist. Not only does the bishop seated on his elevated synthronon, serve as an allegory for Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, seated at the right hand of the Father. For Symeon, whatever other valences the throne may have, it remains an episcopal throne and Jesus can be identified as a “hierarch” (ἁρχιερέυς) enthroned thereupon. So, the bishop does not just gain his authority from symbolic identification with Christ the enthroned King. According to Symeon, in the Liturgy, Jesus himself functions as a bishop although unseen. The steps of the synthronon with seated bishops and priests, symbolize the apostles, seated around Jesus the high priest. Symeon notes that the deacons do not sit

⁸⁰ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 93. See also, Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 119, 121, 245.

because they symbolize the angels who attend God at his throne rather than the surrounding apostles symbolized by bishops and priests.⁸¹

Descending from the Synthronon

According to the diataxis, even in contemporary Byzantine hierarchical liturgies, when the bishop descends from the synthronon after the Gospel, he does not approach another throne for the remainder of the service. Standing at the altar, the bishop leads the Eucharistic worship, changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, which he then gives to the assembled clergy and people. For Symeon, the descent from the synthronon provides another opportunity to emphasize his authority.

Several earlier commentators also mention the descent from the *synthronon*. A brief comparison will illustrate the unique way that Symeon uses the tradition of the throne in the Asmatike Akolouthia to establish his authority. For Maximos the Confessor (580-662), the descent from the synthronon had pastoral and spiritual valences: “After the divine reading of the holy Gospel the bishop descends from his throne and there takes place the dismissal and sending away of the catechumens and of others unworthy of the divine vision of the mysteries...”⁸² Maximos explains this pastoral role of the bishop in apocalyptic terms. By dismissing the catechumens, the bishop symbolizes Christ who will descend from heaven at the end of time to separate the faithful for reward and the unfaithful for punishment.

⁸¹ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 245. See also, Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 196.

⁸² Berthold, *Mystagogy*, 200-201.

The eighth-century patriarch and liturgical commentator, Germanos of Constantinople, takes a similar approach to Maximos. Although he does not specifically mention the bishop's descent from the throne, he does consider the blessing of the bishop, which happens at the point when the bishop descends from the synthronon after the Gospel reading and before the dismissal of catechumens. "When the bishop blesses the people, it indicates the second coming of Christ in 6,500 years, as shown by the fingers 'ςφ'."⁸³ As we saw above, making connections between the details of Salvation History and the Eucharistic liturgy, commentators generally interpreted the bishop's ascent to the synthronon as symbolic of Jesus' Ascension and the bishop's enthronement on the synthronon surrounded by his clergy as an image of the enthroned Christ with his apostles in Heaven. For Germanos, then, the descent from the throne would naturally symbolize the Parousia or second coming of Christ at the end of the world. The ritual gesture of blessing, thus interpreted, only makes sense in the moment when the bishop descends from the synthronon. The throne and the ritual interact with the participants to create a space where the tradition of salvation history becomes present.

Warren Woodfin considered this dynamic when he drew upon the connection of embroidered vesture with monumental iconography and participants in ritual activities such as processions.⁸⁴ I find Woodfin's insights about the ability of this combination of

⁸³ Germanos, 83. When a Byzantine Christian bishop or priest blesses, he crosses his thumb and ring finger. One interpretation of this gesture is that it spells out the abbreviation of "Jesus Christ" in Greek, "IC XC" (the C is a lunate sigma in medieval Byzantine Greek usage. Here, Germanos suggests a more eschatological symbolism for the hand gesture. The stigma, ς, is 6 in Greek and the phi φ represents 500.

⁸⁴ Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 116: "The images thus act in concert with the sacrament, not as a substitute for participation in a distant liturgical action, but as visual manifestation of the underlying meaning of the rite."

ritual, architecture and art to proclaim authority especially helpful when distinguishing Symeon's commentary from earlier ones. In his *Explanation of the Divine Temple*

Symeon notes:

When the bishop descends from the seat, this represents the Savior's providence and guardianship for us from heaven, because once He ascended He is not separated from us. Therefore in the prayer for the sovereigns, too, sealing the people <with the sign of the cross> with the trikirion after the Gospel shows that the pious empire is held together *by His priesthood* and the Gospel.⁸⁵

Here, although he does not mention the Parousia directly, Symeon refers to this theological interpretation of the descent from the synthronon albeit in authoritative terms. He then takes the commentary one step further asserting that the blessing shows that the bishop literally holds the empire together, "by his priesthood." As Woodfin found with the interaction of embroidered vesture, monumental art and ritual, here Symeon uses the liturgical interaction of bishop, throne and ritual actions to create a space of authority.

In his work *On the Sacred Liturgy*, Symeon abandons the eschatological symbolism of the descent and blessing altogether in favor of his authoritative interpretation:

The bishop descending immediately from the synthronon represents <Christ> blessing the sovereigns because Christ who after conquering the world by proclaiming <the Gospel>, called his pious empire from unbelief to faith and established it. He blessed it and is blessing it still through the episcopacy.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 123. Emphasis mine.

⁸⁶ Teeples, *St. Symeon*, 249.

In Chapter One, we saw that both emperor and patriarch drew upon the same tradition of both Rome and Jerusalem to craft Constantinople as a space of spiritual and secular authority. Symeon's use of the tradition of the Constantinopolitan Sung Liturgy suggests that ritual, in conversation with the thrones that denote his position, creates an authoritative space that impacts both the empire and the world.

For Symeon, the enthroned bishop is not just the pastoral teacher admonishing his flock from his synthronon with sermons that perform his fatherly authority. In fact, Symeon mentions no sermon at all. In his commentaries, the enthroned bishop's spiritual and secular authority literally hold the world together. There is no record of how the unruly Thessalonians reacted to Symeon's attempts to make his Hagia Sophia the authoritative space of its namesake in Constantinople. Symeon's writings, however, provide us a clear perspective on his insistence that an antiquated form of the liturgy could perform Constantinople and thereby draw upon its authority.

Where is the throne?

Symeon's purpose in reviving the *Asmatike Akolouthia* in Thessalonike was to preserve the ancient rite of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. This liturgy allowed Symeon to craft an authoritative space. As we saw in Chapter One, this ancient rite designated the synthronon as the bishop's throne *par excellence*. From the apse, behind the altar, the bishop could preside over his flock and exercise the authority of a teacher. Evidence suggests that the curved apse served as a sound scoop that projected the bishop's sermon into the nave. We also saw that the ambo or pulpit jutted out into the nave so that the central dome could amplify the reader's voice. Because of this protruding structure the

emperor's throne was displaced to the north-east side of the nave, rather than the center, where he could look up to see the synthronon and hear the sermon being delivered from it.

As we saw above, Symeon mentions by name the apsidal synthronon, used during the readings, and another throne at the west end of the church used prior to the entrance with the Gospel. Beyond these two specific locations, the Archbishop also refers to a throne which the bishop occupies during the daily prayers and preparation rites of the Divine Liturgy. For example, early in *Περί τῆς ἱερᾶς λειτουργίας*, Symeon notes that the bishop comes down from the throne to put on his vestments: “The hierarch descends from his throne, representing the descent of God.”⁸⁷ This throne must be the stasidion that we saw in Chapter Three.

As we saw in Chapter One, there were two episcopal (patriarchal) thrones in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, a portable throne in the narthex and the apsidal synthronon. In the years following the victory over Iconoclasm, the templon, or altar rail, that delineated the bema, gradually became more like a full wall with doors, covered with icons, at times obscuring the altar and nearly completely obscuring the synthronon. Because of this innovation and with the increasing monastic influence, bishops began to use a third throne in the kleros or choir located in the nave just in front of the bema, enclosed by the icon screen. This throne was essentially a monastic choir stall slightly

⁸⁷ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 171.

elevated, with steps and adorned with a canopy and sometimes with an icon of Christ the High Priest. (fig. 4.1)

In his *Explanation*, Symeon notes that after the Great Entrance doors are closed. “When <the bishop> has entered, the doors are closed because it is not for all to see the mysteries, but only for those engaged in the priestly action.”⁸⁸ Symeon seems to indicate that his Hagia Sophia had a full icon screen rather than the earlier templon with curtains. He cites late Byzantine spirituality when he suggests that the holy mysteries were not for the gaze of those in the nave. At any rate, it is difficult to imagine a bishop who writes liturgical commentaries reflecting the centrally important role of the bishop in the liturgy being content to sit in obscurity on the synthronon for more than just the time of the readings.

Further, as we saw in chapter one, in early Byzantine churches, the ambo, a large reading platform linked to the bema, occupied the center of the nave directly under the dome to maximize sound projection. This structure would have made it impossible for a throne to be in the front center of the nave. In fact, the ambo even displaced the imperial throne which, we saw in chapter one, sat to the southeast side of the nave. Given the fact that this space in the nave had traditionally been associated with the imperial throne and thus imperial authority, it is unlikely that Symeon would have had the courage to usurp it even the divinely given authority of the bishop. In this chapter, I linger on the (dis)placement of the imperial throne and the multiplication of episcopal thrones in the

⁸⁸ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 132-133. See Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 15-36.

Late Byzantine period because these arrangements will be centrally important in Chapter Five. Since Symeon's witness constitutes the last extant writing prior to the traumatic fall of the Byzantine empire provide a basis for apt comparison with contemporary usage.

In *Explanation*, Symeon describes the ambo in his church. Using allegorical language reflecting Late Byzantine mystagogy, he describes the ambo in relation to the bema as the tomb of Jesus.

The ambo in front of the sanctuary represents the stone rolled aside from the tomb. There both deacons and priests, typifying the angels, proclaim the divine Gospel, deacons during the sacred-service, and priests at matins as they recite the morning hymns.⁸⁹

The reference to the stone rolled aside and the clergy as angels proclaiming the Good News invokes the Gospel of Matthew's account of the resurrection of Jesus where the stone covering Jesus' tomb had been rolled to the side of the entrance by an angel who, sitting upon it, announced the good news of the resurrection to the women disciples (Matt 28:1-7).

There are examples of Late Byzantine churches that retained the more ancient central ambo. Drawing from available sources, Sharon Gerstel concludes that Hagia Sophia had a "high ambo" in the late-antique style. Symeon, himself, describes the ambo having two sets of stairs.⁹⁰ This structure would be consistent with the central ambo. Comparing the architecture of Hagia Sophia with the neighboring Acheiropoietos basilica

⁸⁹ Teeple, *St. Symeon*, 94-95.

⁹⁰ Gerstel, "Soundscapes of Byzantium," 13.

and following Darrouzès, Gerstel suggests that the ambo would have been on the central axis of the nave⁹¹ at the edge of the dome.

At any rate, the evidence above suggests that the throne Symeon describes for episcopal use prior to the Divine Liturgy, was not in the center of the church. This throne was likely the stasidion common in the Late Medieval period in Byzantine churches. As we saw in Chapter Three, this throne, usually on the south-east side of the nave, in the area called the kleros, usually sat elevated on several steps to distinguish it from the monastic stalls that often surrounded it. Thus, Symeon's rubric of the bishop "descending" from the throne, could as easily refer to the stasidion as to the tiered synthronon.

CONCLUSION

Like Demetrios Chomatenos and Nikephoros Moschopoulos, Symeon of Thessalonike drew from Byzantine tradition to craft a space of episcopal authority. His liturgical commentaries carefully detail the liturgical role of the bishop as another Christ and even Christ as a bishop. Like Demetrios and Nikephoros, Symeon needed to establish his authority in difficult circumstances. He did not have to legitimate a claim to patriarchal authority like Demetrios. He did, however, clearly feel the need to emphasize the central role of the bishop and the need for respect. His struggle was not with a rival claimant to the patriarchal throne, but with unruly Thessalonian clergy and laity who were accustomed to revolt.

⁹¹ Gerstel, "Soundscapes of Byzantium," 13.

With his many years in Constantinople, Nikephoros Moschopoulos had drawn upon Byzantine art and culture in decorating his narthex in Mistra and placing his inscriptions. To craft his space of episcopal authority, Symeon revived the tradition of the “power liturgy” once celebrated in the Constantinopolitan name sake of his Hagia Sophia cathedral. By invoking the tradition of this liturgy, designed to be both patriarchal and imperial, Symeon could emphasize the role of the bishop. And yet, despite his insistence that the bishop’s blessing held the empire together, Symeon did not coopt the imperial rubric of a centralized throne. To do so would have been treason in ritual, in those last years when there was still an emperor whose throne could occupy that space.

As I will discuss in the next chapter, Symeon’s commentaries bear witness that some imperial trappings had begun to migrate into episcopal use by his time. He described the sakkos and the monastic mandyas with tablia added to make it look like an imperial chlamys. In Chapter Five, I will argue that contemporary Orthodox bishops have incorporated these imperial ritual elements and more now that there is no Byzantine emperor to protest. Imperial garb and ceremonial was traditionally designed to craft a space of transcendent authority, with elaborate processions and hidden vesture changes. In the next chapter, I will argue that in adopting these imperial elements, contemporary bishops have crafted a space of shared rather than aloof authority.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE HIERARCHICAL LITURGY AS A SPACE OF IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

Sister Vassa Larin begins her careful examination of the Byzantine Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with a description her childhood remembrances of the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy when the bishop visited.⁹²

As a child growing up outside New York City in a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, I remember the excitement just before the arrival of the Metropolitan for the annual feast of our parish church. The altar boys would be stationed in the bell tower with strict orders to begin ringing the bells *as soon as* they spotted the Metropolitan's car...As the bells began to ring, the priests and deacons filed out of the sanctuary, some of them fully vested. The priests lined up in two rows on each side of the square platform prepared for the Metropolitan. This platform or *kathedra*, covered with red velvet upholstery and with an eagle rug in its center, stood in the center of the Western end of the nave not far from the

⁹² See Chapter 3 for a discussion on what the title metropolitan, bishop and archbishop means in this contemporary context.

narthex...It wasn't until he appeared in the doorway that I saw *Vladyka*:⁹³ white klobuk,⁹⁴ long grey beard, black rjassa⁹⁵ and episcopal staff with a silver knob on the top, escorted by two subdeacons and greeted by the deep voice of the huge protodeacon. The large parish exploded into the beautiful melody of *Dostojno est* (It is worthy), as the subdeacons vested the Metropolitan in a brightly colored mantija (mandyas) with red stripes. I would squirm in between the grown-ups toward the front of the church, where I knew the Metropolitan would advance to kiss the icons, while the altar boy carried the long train of his dazzling mantija. Then the best part would follow: the vesting on the elevated kathedra, one vestment after another...Thus the Byzantine hierarchical celebration somehow retains its splendidous solemnity and enchanting magnificence even in the humblest parochial setting.⁹⁶

I have witnessed and participated in the rituals that Sister Vassa describes many times, once, in fact, in Ephesus standing next to her. For years, I interpreted these ceremonies reserved exclusively for bishops, as pomp for the sake of pomp — merely liturgical embellishment to honor the visiting hierarch. These beautiful ceremonies, however, have a much richer meaning. On face value, Larin's description implies the wholesale incorporation of imperial tradition into the contemporary hierarchical rite. In this chapter, we will consider the imperial roots of the raised, centered episcopal throne, contemporary episcopal vesture and the ceremonial change of vesture at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy. These ritual elements that originally performed the authority of the emperor not the bishop, focus all attention on the authoritative space surrounding the bishop rather than on the activity of the altar area.

⁹³ *Vladyka* is "master," following the pan-Byzantine custom of referring to bishops as "master."

⁹⁴ The *Klobuk* or Greek *Kamalavkion* (*Kalamavkion*) is a cylindrical hat with a flat top. Monastics and bishops wear a black hat with a stylized black veil over it. The Slavic custom is for metropolitans and patriarchs to wear a white hat and veil.

⁹⁵ The *Rjassa* (Greek: *Riassa*) is a flowing black robe open in the front and with wide sleeves. Traditionally, this garment is standard clerical and monastic outerwear in Orthodox countries. It is prescribed for clergy and monastics during prayer services when full liturgical vesture is not required.

⁹⁶ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 27-28.

If early modern bishops had not incorporated these rituals,⁹⁷ described throughout the *Book of Ceremonies* and *Pseudo-Kodinos*, they would have died along with Constantine XI after the last Divine Liturgy in Hagia Sophia on May 29, 1453. The development of a distinctly hierarchical liturgy that incorporates imperial elements demonstrates that contemporary Byzantine Christians still draw from tradition with the innovation and creativity we have seen throughout this dissertation in the writings and practices of Demetrios Chomatenos, Nikephoros Mochopoulos and St. Symeon of Thessalonike. Interestingly, these contemporary rites craft spaces of shared authority that are unique in the history of Byzantine tradition.

INCORPORATING THRONES

In chapter one, we detailed four thrones in use at Hagia Sophia; two portable thrones in the narthex, one for the emperor and patriarch respectively; a portable throne on the north-east side of the nave with a small changing room and chapel for the emperor; and the *Synthronon* for the patriarch (bishop). Contemporary Byzantine churches still have four (possible) thrones, except they all now belong to the bishop.

In this chapter, I will discuss the ritual and art that interacts in order to examine various episcopal thrones used in contemporary Byzantine hierarchical liturgy. I will not discuss the temporary throne that is set up in front of the altar during ordinations, although there is precedent in the *Book of Ceremonies* and elsewhere for a portable chair in the bema for the bishop waiting to begin services. Contemporary Byzantine churches

⁹⁷ Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 209.

have a throne behind the altar in the bema reminiscent of the Late Antique synthronon, although usually single level rather than the ancient tiered, “stadium-style,” construction. There is often a stasidion throne in the kleros area of the nave as we saw in chapters three and four. As Symeon of Thessalonike described, the bishop mostly “presides” from this throne at services rather than using it to celebrate. The only contemporary throne that has no ancient episcopal equivalent is the last one we will consider; a temporary throne, often on a raised platform in the center of the nave, with an eagle rug for the bishop to stand upon, just as Sister Vassa described. I will contend that this is the remnant of the movable imperial throne from Hagia Sophia. Drawing from rituals and art associated with this throne, I will argue that the bishop standing at this throne performs ancient imperial rituals that have been woven into existing hierarchical rubrics. Even more, the current arrangement has created a new and rich space of authority for the contemporary Byzantine bishop as the Good Shepherd at the center of his flock.

TRADITION AND HISTORY

I begin this chapter with caution. It is dangerous for a historian to make claims about continuity. In a series of lectures, later collected into the text, *Through Their Own Eyes: Liturgy as the Byzantines Saw It*, Robert Taft problematizes the contemporary Byzantine tendency toward assuming that nothing has changed in the Byzantine rite since the fourth century.⁹⁸ I am especially mindful of this “myth of immutability” as Warren

⁹⁸ Robert Taft, *Through Their Own Eyes: Liturgy as the Byzantines Saw It*, (Berkeley, CA: InterOrthodox Press, 2006), 69.

Woodfin calls it,⁹⁹ since I have often heard contemporary Byzantines invoking “immutability” to speak of *their* Holy Tradition as a polemic against the “abuses” and “innovations” of post- Vatican II Roman Catholic liturgical reform.

With this caution in mind, there are continuities we can assert with high probability. The text of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy reached its “final synthesis”¹⁰⁰ in the fourteenth century as represented by the commentary of Nicholas Cabasilas and the diataxis of Philotheos. This means that the text that contemporary priests use at altars globally has not changed in content for some six hundred years, with various prayers and usages that are considerably older. Rubrics vary slightly by jurisdiction today, with essentially two major usages: Slavic and the Greek.¹⁰¹ While the text of the Liturgy has not changed, the rubrics for the kind of formal episcopal celebration that Sister Vassa described above with the visit of her metropolitan, do not appear in any diataxis prior to the Fall of Constantinople in 1453. Further, when these hierarchical rite additions do appear in recent liturgical texts, they are identical for both Greeks and Slavs. Thus, one can attend any celebration of the hierarchical Divine Liturgy or search the internet for videos of Byzantine hierarchical entrance ceremonies in various Byzantine jurisdictions and find the same rituals used.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Woodfin, *Embodied Icons*, xxxiii.

¹⁰⁰ Taft, *Great Church*, 45. See also, Robert Taft, “Mount Athos: A Late Chapter in the History of the Byzantine Rite,” *DOP* 42 (1988), p. 180; and Lingas, *Sung Office*, 218.

¹⁰¹ Job Getcha, *The Typikon Decoded: An Explanation of Byzantine Liturgical Practice* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002), 47-52.

¹⁰² For example, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKLxTWS886s>, and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSgaM_Cdkv4, 0:00-10:00, accessed on July 15, 2017.

SOURCES

To illustrate these points, and to establish that these hierarchical additions represent the incorporation of imperial rubrics, I will rely on several sources spanning the centuries from the Fall of Constantinople in the fifteenth century until the present. In her work, Sr. Vassa Larin's studies the *Proskinitarij* of Arsenij Suxanov. This seventeenth-century Russian monk described the hierarchical Divine Liturgy he witnessed in the *Anastasis* (Holy Sepulcher) in Jerusalem. This work is helpful here for at least three reasons. As a seventeenth-century document, it represents one of the first extant examples of the hierarchical additions to the Divine Liturgy in its final form and after 1453.

Larin notes that Suxanov's text reflects the gradual adoption of imperial ceremonial and symbols from the tenth to the seventeenth centuries¹⁰³ and the increasing divergence within the presbyteral rite, as recorded by Nicholas Cabasilas, Philotheos or Symeon of Thessalonike. This "episcopization" accentuated the authority of the bishop among his clergy and laity.¹⁰⁴ Larin's work establishes that *by* the seventeenth century a new hierarchical form of the Divine Liturgy had fully taken shape without documentation but through oral tradition,¹⁰⁵ and that the pontifical rubrics for this liturgy have not changed *since* the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁶

In chapter four, we saw how important this accentuation of authority was in the writing of Symeon of Thessalonike. Although Symeon created a space of authority by

¹⁰³ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 30, 251.

¹⁰⁴ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 33.

¹⁰⁵ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 32.

¹⁰⁶ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 29.

reviving his version of the ancient Constantinopolitan Sung Liturgy, rather than by adopting imperial rubrics, it would not be surprising if bishops similarly found themselves struggling to assert power in the post Byzantine world, drawing upon these now defunct imperial rituals to stabilize their authority. Finally, Suxanov, a Slav, commented upon the differences and similarities he found in the Greek rite celebrated in Jerusalem. As noted above, this text attests that the incorporated imperial rites in the hierarchical Divine Liturgy seem to transcend the Slavic/Greek dichotomy.

In addition to the *Proskinitarij* and Larin's commentary, I will draw upon two early- twentieth-century sources since they reflect the development of the hierarchical liturgy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I will provide the full title of the first work here because it speaks directly to why this source will be valuable in my study. Isabel Florence Hapgood published a *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church: Compiled, Translated and Arranged from the Old Church Slavonic Service Books of the Russian Church and Collated with the Service Books of the Greek Church* in 1906.¹⁰⁷ Hapgood's text was endorsed by both the Russian and Antiochian (Middle Eastern Christians of Greek usage) hierarchy and, in its fifth edition, served as a standard English translation of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy even through the end of the twentieth century.

¹⁰⁷ Isabel Florence Hapgood, *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church: Compiled, Translated and Arranged from the Old Church Slavonic Service Books of the Russian Church and Collated with the Service Books of the Greek Church* (Englewood, NJ: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of New York and All North America, 1795, fifth edition).

I will also include the work of Abel Coutourier, a member of the Roman Catholic “White Fathers” (Missionaries of Africa) order, who worked among the Melkite Byzantine Catholics as a Liturgy professor at St. Anne Melkite Seminary adjacent to the pool of Siloam¹⁰⁸ in Jerusalem. Of his four published volumes, volume III on the Divine Liturgy will be useful here. In his introduction, Coutourier notes that his notes reflect the combination of the various extant (Greek) patristic and later liturgical sources with what he had observed in Melkite Greek Catholic liturgical practice.¹⁰⁹ While a contemporary Byzantine reader might object to his use of Roman Catholic terminology and liturgical spirituality, Coutourier’s role as an eye-witness proves invaluable. Although it was not his intention, Coutourier’s work functions as a diataxis or typikon for contemporary Melkites. I will refer to his episcopal rubrics and commentary below.

Finally, in the last few years several Orthodox jurisdictions have published their own archieratikon or diataxis specifically for the hierarchical Divine Liturgy. I will also draw upon these contemporary texts¹¹⁰ comparatively to highlight the three points that I made above: the development of a unique hierarchical liturgy distinct from the presbyteral form and based upon the incorporation of imperial ritual with pan-Byzantine reception. Even these texts, however, witness the unresolvable ambiguity of oral tradition for many of these rubrics that Larin noted above. Rubrics will often simply instruct

¹⁰⁸ The property still stands with a Crusader church and access to the pool below, just inside the Lion’s Gate also known as St. Stephen’s Gate.

¹⁰⁹ Abel Coutourier, *Cours de Liturgie Grecque-Melkite* (Jerusalem, Franciscains de Terre Sainte, 1930), viii-xi.

¹¹⁰ Al Moutran: A Personal Website for His Grace Bishop Dimitri Khoury, “The Archieratikon,” <http://www.almoutran.com/archieratikon>, retrieved August 10, 2016.

clergy to stand in “the usual place,”¹¹¹ which I can attest, as a practitioner, leads to no end of liturgical interpretation.

IMPERIAL RITUAL IN THE CONTEMPORARY BYZANTINE HIERARCHICAL LITURGY

If Symeon of Thessalonike were transported forward in time to attend a hierarchical Divine Liturgy today, he would likely recognize the celebration as the liturgy he wrote about, albeit in the more common monastic form he rejected. He would be confused, and perhaps outraged, however, at the contemporary entrance rites of the bishop at the beginning of the liturgy. He might wonder why the subdeacons had set a temporary throne in the center of the nave and not near the western wall as he was accustomed. He might also wonder why the bishop entered the nave wearing imperial garments and performed imperial entrance rituals.

The Central Throne

As I noted above, no extant texts document the first shift of the temporary episcopal throne from the western wall of the nave, where we left it in Symeon’s day, to the center where it stands today during the hierarchical Divine Liturgy. I agree with Woodfin and Larin, that this move is part of the larger trend of patriarchal adoption of defunct imperial court ritual and ritual vesture and subsequent “trickle down” to all bishops.

The three episcopal thrones: the Late Antique synthronon, the middle Byzantine stasidion and the contemporary central movable throne (fig. 5.1) aptly illustrate Anton

¹¹¹ See Hapgood, *Service Book*, 5 and Coutourier, *Cours Liturgie*, 44.

Baumstark's liturgical law of accretion where earlier liturgical features are not replaced by later additions, but compounded in a succession from "austerity to richness."¹¹²

As we saw in chapter four, by the Late Byzantine period, the bishop sat on the most ancient synthronon for only a fraction of its original use since it was obscured by the icon screen. As the size of Byzantine churches diminished with the adoption of the cross-in-square plan, the space in the bema did not allow for a large tiered synthronon. Symeon of Thessalonike could stage his version of the liturgy of the Great Church because his Hagia Sophia was a domed basilica and could have had the apsidal space to feature a more traditional synthronon. Sharon Gerstel notes that as the synthronon was reduced or removed altogether, a painted Hetoimasia often took its place.¹¹³ In addition to the Prepared Throne, it was common in Late Byzantine churches for a painted series of hierarchs to "concelebrate" with open scrolls that depicted the text of the Anaphora prayers the celebrant prayed in a quiet voice.¹¹⁴

Symeon's rubrics for the stasidion, or as Coutourier calls it, the parathronion,¹¹⁵ have endured to the present. My contemporary sources agree that the bishop *presides* over the daily liturgical cycle from this side throne and only uses the synthronon or the central throne when celebrating the Divine Liturgy.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Anton Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1958), 20.

¹¹³ Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 38-39.

¹¹⁴ Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 15-36.

¹¹⁵ Coutourier, *Cours Liturgie*, 10, 18, 163.

¹¹⁶ See Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 65,75, 148-149. Hapgood, *Service Book*, xxxi, 87. Coutourier, *Cours Liturgie*, 10.

Only after 1453 is there evidence that there was an episcopal throne in the center of the church. Symeon describes a temporary throne at the western wall of the nave which, I noted above, was likely a hold-over from the original temporary episcopal narthex throne that we saw in chapter one.¹¹⁷ At some point, this movable throne began to occupy the center of the nave. Various sources attest to the fact that this throne, like the now defunct imperial throne in the nave, was movable and set on a platform.¹¹⁸

The Orlets

As Larin described above, during the first part of the hierarchical Divine Liturgy, the Byzantine bishop stands upon a platform at a temporary throne with an orlets or eagle rug beneath. The double headed eagle was the emblem of the Palaiologan dynasty (see fig. 3.9) the last Byzantine ruling family. As the Byzantine Empire fell, the Third Rome, as Moscow would style itself, took on the double-headed eagle crest, making it synonymous with the breadth of Byzantine identity.

Pseudo-Kodinos attests that over time the highest-ranking members in imperial service were granted the right to wear a single-headed eagle on their shoes or regalia. As with several other imperial paraphernalia that we will consider below, the patriarchs, archbishops and then all bishops came to use the eagle rug either by imperial grant or usurpation.¹¹⁹ In contemporary practice,¹²⁰ the bishop stands on a rug with a one-headed

¹¹⁷ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 160.

¹¹⁸ See, Taft, *Great Entrance*, 179; Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 160; Hapgood, *Service Book*, xxxiv, 84; Coutourier, *Cours Liturgie*, 18, 163.

¹¹⁹ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 77, 158, 160.

¹²⁰ For examples of hierarchical rubrics that describe the use of the Orlets, see Hapgood, *Service Book*, xl and 77.

eagle, but there are examples of double headed eagle rugs still in use for hierarchical services (fig. 5.2).¹²¹

Writing just decades before the Fall of Constantinople, Symeon of Thessalonike notes the addition of the eagle symbolism to the episcopal ordination ceremony.

Having traversed the three rivers drawn on the floor with chalk and signifying the gift of teaching, to which he is called, the one who has been elected bishop stops above the city, which is also depicted and signifies his diocese. Above the city, an eagle is drawn, which symbolizes purity, Orthodoxy, and the heights of theology. One also depicts the son of thunder, John the Theologian... For this reason, the eagle also has a halo, the symbol of theology and grace. And so, standing above the city he recites his profession of faith...¹²²

The “three rivers,” drawn on the floor in chalk, invoke the tradition of the green marble rivers that traversed the white, Proconnesian marble floor of the nave in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.¹²³ Thus, the orlets combines symbolism from both the imperial court and the Great Church to create a space of authority for the new bishop.

Larin notes that the chalk drawing Symeon describes came into Russian hierarchal usage and was eventually adopted by all Byzantine bishops. While Symeon described the orlets only for episcopal ordination, it has now trickled down for use in every hierarchical Divine Liturgy. This same dispersion and generalization has occurred with the ceremonies that take place while the bishop stands on his rug.

¹²¹ Three Hierarchs Chapel at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Seminary in Yonkers, NY, double headed eagle on a platform used in Byzantine hierarchal liturgy, see <http://www.svots.edu/category/image-galleries/aug-2014-first-liturgy-2014-2015-photos-glen-mules#>, accessed May 31, 2017.

¹²² Symeon of Thessalonike, *De Sacris Ordinationibus*, PG 155: 408-9, translation in Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 157, see also Hapgood, *Service Book*, xl.

¹²³ See Matthews, *Early Churches*, 98.

Mandyas

In the contemporary Byzantine hierarchical liturgy, the bishop enters the nave in a procession to the temporary central throne with the orlets in the center of the nave from the narthex, or from outside the church altogether, as Larin describes at the beginning of this chapter; or from the Stasidion throne in the kleros on the south side of the nave, as Symeon described in the last chapter. The bishop makes this procession, not fully vested in liturgical vesture as the *Book of Ceremonies* prescribed,¹²⁴ but rather vested in a long cape called a mandyas (μανδύας). This ancient monastic cloak came into episcopal usage because by the middle Byzantine period bishops were regularly chosen from monasteries.¹²⁵ The contemporary episcopal mandyas, however, is not the simple black mantle that Byzantine monks continue to wear while at prayer.¹²⁶

In fact, late Byzantine sources attest that the bishop's mandyas had begun to take on symbolic decorations. Symeon of Thessalonike notes that the bishop's mandyas encased the whole body (ὅλον τὸ σῶμα συνέχων), had colored "rivers" (ποταμοὶ) on it symbolizing the bishop's teaching coming from the Old and New Testaments and four pomata (πώματα) that symbolized the Gospels.¹²⁷ The addition of the pomata to the mandyas invokes the imperial tradition of the chlamys, which had fallen out of use in the imperial court by the Middle Byzantine period. According to the *Book of Ceremonies*, the

¹²⁴ See also, Taft, *Great Church*, 49.

¹²⁵ See Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 19 and Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 75-76.

¹²⁶ See Germanos of Constantinople, *On the Divine Liturgy*, 68-69, Coutourier, *Cours Liturgie*, 15, calls the bishop's mandyas "choir vestments" reflecting the monastic origin of the garment. See also, Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 76, 153 and Hapgood, *Service Book*, xxxix.

¹²⁷ Teeples, *Liturgical Commentaries*, 170-171. See also Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 153-154.

imperial chlamys was a long reddish-purple cloak with four tablia on the front.¹²⁸ (fig. 5.3) The emperor and his highest officials wore the clamys in processions and he would change into other vesture once inside the destination church.¹²⁹

Unfortunately, Symeon does not note the color of the cloak itself. In contemporary usage the mandyas is reddish purple for bishops, blue for metropolitans and green for patriarchs.¹³⁰ Since these colors were still nearly exclusive to the imperial court by the fall of Constantinople, in Symeon's time the mandyas would have still been monastic black since he would likely have noted a change in the color of the mandyas as an innovation.¹³¹

From our perspective, nearly six hundred years later, Symeon documented the beginning of a shift in the way that bishops saw themselves in their ritual context. Soon after Symeon's death in 1429, Byzantine bishops would no longer be a part of a dual team of church and state. The loss of the office of emperor meant that all the ritual and accoutrements associated with the imperial court were adrift and free to be absorbed by bishops. As these new episcopal vestments and rituals became ubiquitous, the long standing hermeneutic links to the Passion of Christ¹³² developed in the Middle Ages, no

¹²⁸ *Book of Ceremonies*, 827. See also, Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 30.

¹²⁹ *Book of Ceremonies*, 187-188.

¹³⁰ See Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 153 and Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 19.

¹³¹ See Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 173-177. It is interesting that in the hierarchical use the colors signify rank in reverse to the imperial court where, according to the *Book of Ceremonies*, the Emperor wore purple, his highest-ranking officials, blue and the lesser dignitaries, green.

¹³² Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 251.

longer applied and new interpretations like Symeon's description of the episcopal mandyas had to be developed.

CLOTHED IN SPLENDOR

As noted above, the vesting of the bishop in the Byzantine rite took place either in the skeuophylakion or, in the case of the patriarch of Constantinople in a private metatorion.¹³³ In either case, the bishop was fully vested from the beginning of the Divine Liturgy.¹³⁴ In the late Byzantine period, the bishop who has attended the morning prayers from his stasidion, either vested there at the time of the Divine Liturgy¹³⁵ or, as Symeon suggested, at a temporary throne along the western wall of the nave. Nevertheless, this simple and functional change of vesture had not yet been endowed with the imperial pomp of the current hierarchical procession and vesting.¹³⁶

In current practice, processing to the central throne, with its orlets rug, the bishop in his mandyas, no longer the simple black monastic cloak but rather decorated with imperial pomata/tablia and in the purple, blue or green drawn from the imperial court,¹³⁷ creates a space of imperial authority at the beginning of during the hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Once at his throne, attendants remove his mandyas and one by one, bring the vestments for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy; a ceremonial changing of vesture worthy of a Byzantine emperor.

¹³³ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 146.

¹³⁴ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 145, 147.

¹³⁵ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 147.

¹³⁶ See Teeple, *Symeon of Thessalonike*, 111, 171.

¹³⁷ Woodfin, *Embodied Icons*, 150-158.

Standing at his center throne, the contemporary Byzantine bishop does not wear the phelonion that was still common in the fifteenth century. Rather, he wears the sakkos, an imperial garment that fell into disuse in the late Byzantine period. The *Book of Ceremonies* prescribes the sakkos (δωτεῖσιον) as the garment that the emperor would change into once inside his private space in the nave of Hagia Sophia.

In the late Byzantine period, bishops had begun to distinguish themselves by adorning their phelonias¹³⁸ with crosses. At first, this polystavrion design was reserved for archbishops, but over time came to be used for all bishops. With the introduction of the sakkos as an archepiscopal and then episcopal garment, the polystavrion lost its privileged status¹³⁹ and came to be used by all clergy. In practice today, even sub deacons wear polystavria.

The Lord is King

While the highest-ranking bishops began to wear the sakkos prior to the Fall of the Empire, the liturgical use of the crown has a much more complicated history. Woodfin notes that “liturgical headcovering in Byzantium was a late development.”¹⁴⁰ Both Theodore Balsamon (1130 or 1140-1195) and Symeon of Thessalonike note that Byzantine bishops did not wear hats during the Divine Liturgy. They both affirm that

¹³⁸ BOC 761

¹³⁹ Woodfin, *Embodied Icons*, 20, 23; Teeple, *Symeon of Thessalonike*, 106-7; Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 26.

¹⁴⁰ Woodfin, *Embodied Icons*, 28. See Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 100.

only the Patriarch of Alexandria wore head covering during the liturgy.¹⁴¹ Thus, we can say that the episcopal crown has no liturgical roots in the Byzantine period.

Woodfin complicates the connection between the imperial crown and the episcopal crown or mitre. Nevertheless, in its current ritual context in the hierarchical liturgy, it seems plausible to suggest that the bishop's crown has imperial origins.¹⁴² The prayer the deacon says while the bishop puts on the mitre comes from Psalm 92:1, "The Lord has become king and He is clothed in splendor; He is clothed with might and girt; He has settled the universe, which shall stand unmoved, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages, amen."¹⁴³ Larin notes that using this psalm verse, "...thematizes kingship giving expression to the mitre's *royal* origins in the Byzantine imperial crown."¹⁴⁴ Her suggestion fits with the evidence presented above that the simple, black, monastic mandyas has been transformed to resemble the imperial chlamys and that Byzantine bishops adopted the sakkos once it had fallen into disuse.¹⁴⁵

CONTEMPORARY SPACES OF AUTHORITY: TRADITION AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

This chapter began with a childhood reflection on the contemporary form of the hierarchical from a liturgical scholar, Sr. Vassa Larin. The awe and formality she described has been described by medieval observers of rites performed by emperors, patriarchs or bishops in Byzantium. In an age of sophisticated special effects and

¹⁴¹ Woodfin, *Embodied Icons*, 28-32. Teeple, *Symeon of Thessalonike*, 109, 182-183. See Gerstel, *Beholding Sacred Mysteries*, 25-29.

¹⁴² Woodfin, *Embodied Icons*, 28.

¹⁴³ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 237.

¹⁴⁴ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 237.

¹⁴⁵ Woodfin, *Embodied Icons*, 169-171.

animation, it might be difficult for contemporary observers to imagine the impact that ritual and art had in the medieval world. The bishops we have considered above created spaces of authority using the most sophisticated media of their time. Drawing upon tried and true Constantinopolitan tradition, their awe-inspiring innovations strengthened their power. Byzantine bishops today, by incorporating imperial tradition into the long standing episcopal tradition, have opened the possibility for new hermeneutics of authority.

Now, absent an emperor, the bishop fills both patriarchal/episcopal and imperial roles himself signified by the central throne he occupies at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy and the synthronon which he now uses only briefly. At the central throne, he wears the crown but when he uses the synthronon he uncovers his head in the ancient usage. Although unnoticed today, the imperial is present still in the Byzantine rite.

The central placement of the episcopal throne, however, lends itself to new interpretations as well. As we saw in chapter one, the synthronon gave the seated bishop the long-standing authority of a Late Antique teacher, seated amid his students, one of whom might be the emperor seated below and to the side of the nave. The tiered synthronon not only enhanced acoustics, it gave the bishop authority in the liminal space between earth and heaven where he sat.

The middle and Late Byzantine stasidion throne in the kleros identified the bishop as a member of a monastic community standing in the choir. Nevertheless, his ornate, elevated throne stood out among the simple monastic choir stalls emphasizing his

authority. We saw in chapter three how Nikephoros Moschopoulos used his stasidion throne on the south side of the nave to connect with the narthex Hetoimasia, surrounded by a menacing garrison of soldier-angels ready for battle, to inscribe boundaries over the lands inscribed on the pillar which stood in between. Nikephoros' Hetoimasia created a unique space of spiritual authority in his dispute with his rival, the neighboring Archimandrite Pachomios, over mundane matters of land ownership. Although the synthronon throne would have been in a straighter trajectory to the narthex Hetoimasia, the icon screen would have visually blocked the bishop and the proximity of the pillar inscribed with his property rights would have been lost.

In contemporary practice, the bishop remains the “chief teacher” in his diocese, although he now preaches standing in the Holy Doors, rather than seated upon the synthronon obscured by the iconostasis. He also uses the stasidion to preside at daily prayers in the same way that Symeon of Thessalonike described in the fifteenth century and Arsenij Suxanov described in the seventeenth. His formerly imperial central throne, however, has had the effect of bringing the bishop to the center of his flock “like a father surrounded by his children.”¹⁴⁶ Although the central throne is often on a platform, it nevertheless allows the bishop to be at eye level with his flock, especially when seated.

Throughout the dissertation, I have noted the interplay of authority with humility. The icon of the humbled emperor before the enthroned Christ in Hagia Sophia Constantinople and the inscription of the lintel of the door on the opposite wall to the

¹⁴⁶ Hapgood, *Service Book*, xxxiv.

Hetoimasia with its fierce garrison in Mistra. One imperial custom that by and large was not adopted was the vesting in secret to preserve the mystery of the emperor. Unlike the imperial vesture change that awed visitors kneeling before the Throne of Solomon and preserved the mystique of the emperor who was never seen in his simple garments, the contemporary bishop makes his procession wearing the mandyas, altered to invoke the tradition of the imperial chlamys, removes this garment and stands waiting to be robed in liturgical vesture wearing only his simple rason. The magic is gone when the magician lets the audience see how it is done. Once again, episcopal authority is balanced by the humility of appearing in the basic garment common to the lowest cleric or monk.

Furthermore, unlike the emperor who had a full staff of attendants to dress and undress him away from the gaze of his subjects, the contemporary Byzantine bishop often relies on the clergy or members of the local parish to bring each of his vestments, without which he could not celebrate. Standing eye to eye with his spiritual children at his central throne and on his eagle rug, the bishop dressed only in his rason, needs his people to endow him with the vesture that marks his authority. Thus, ironically, the adopting of imperial ritual and vesture, although emphasizing the bishop's authority has also provided the opportunity for an expression of shared authority and communion.

In the current form of the hierarchical liturgy, the proto-deacon recites psalm verses that accompany the putting on of each vestment. These verses are the same for priests who say the prayers for themselves. Thus, the whole process of vesting in the hierarchical liturgy creates a liminal space of shared authority and communitas, which ends when the bishop blesses the congregation in his full regalia, reasserting his episcopal

authority. In contemporary usage, the sakkos is often fastened not by buttons but by bells with more bells on the fringe of the garment as well. Neither *Book of Ceremonies* or *Pseudo-Kodinos* ever mention bells on imperial vesture; nor does Symeon of Thessalonike or Arsenij Suxanov. Hapgood attributes this innovation to shepherds using bells to call their sheep. She aligns the bells on the sakkos to the symbolism of the bishop's omophorion as the lost sheep which the Good Shepherd carried on his shoulders (John 10:11-18). The bishop is the shepherd among his sheep. Again, it is interesting that the sakkos, with its imperial roots could be endowed with the humility of a shepherd as much as it invokes the authority of an emperor. The space of authority of a shepherd among his sheep is vastly humbler and more hands-on than an emperor among his subjects. Yet the sakkos has now come to invoke both meanings.

Recall in chapter one that we saw a Hetoimasia with an open Gospel lectionary identifying the Royal Doors in Hagia Sophia as the gates of the sheepfold. (see fig. 1.6) I said there that both the emperor and the patriarch could see themselves as shepherds but also as flock as they passed under that icon. The enthroned Gospel open to the passage of Jesus the door of the sheepfold added an additional meaning to the imperial throne that imitated and interacted with the Hetoimasia. By incorporating the imperial throne into the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, contemporary bishops have innovated on the tradition of that ancient ruling pair, now that there is neither Byzantine emperor nor empire.

Throne to Platytera

The central throne also invites new conversations with the monumental art that is standard in contemporary Byzantine churches. As we saw above, Sharon Gerstel demonstrated that Late Byzantine apsidal programs included hierarchs bearing the text of the anaphora which the celebrant would recite during the Divine Liturgy. Their silent recitation allowed the painted hierarchs to function as concelebrants with the bishop (or priest) standing at the altar. It also influenced the celebrating bishop or priest by aligning him with the great examples of Orthodoxy at times when heresies were wide-spread.

Most contemporary Byzantine churches have an icon of the Platytera or enthroned Virgin with the child Jesus enthroned either in her lap or in her womb (fig. 5.4). In many churches, the Platytera sits in the apsidal conch above the icon screen. As such, she can be seen clearly from nearly any vantage point in the nave. With the movement of the bishop's throne to the center, there is a direct conversation between the Mother of God who shares Jesus with the world through her maternity and the bishop who shares Jesus with the world through his sacramental ministry. In fact, the bishop frequently wears an enkolpion, a round medallion decorated with the icon of the Platytera. Emperors granting the permission for bishops to wear his medallion in the Late Byzantine period.¹⁴⁷ As Warren Woodfin demonstrated, vesture and monumental art often connected the celebrant to the figure depicted in spaces of authority. The bishop or priest who wore (wears) an epitachelion embroidered with the cycle of feasts commemorating the

¹⁴⁷ Larin, *Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy*, 229.

ministry, passion and resurrection of Jesus created a space of authority in conversation with the same festal cycle depicted monumentally. So, too, with the placement of a center throne, the bishop's enkolpion stands in direct trajectory with the apsidal Platytera.

As we saw in chapter two, the Hetoimasia in the tympanum of the upper narthex in St. Sophia, Ohrid, was paired with the enigmatic Ancient of Days opposite it. These, in turn, were in conversation with the throne of Demetrios Chomatenos in the space of legal authority below. Perhaps, considering Hapgood's analogy above, the bishop is *another Christ* enthroned just like the child Jesus with his Mother. We saw that Symeon conflated the bishop enthroned on the synthronon with Christ the High Priest. Perhaps, the bishop fulfills the same role in this context as another Christ enthroned opposite the Mother of God with Jesus in her lap. Certainly, this would sit well with the Good Shepherd symbolism developed in the bells on the sakkos and the omophorion. It could also make the ritual movement of bishop in the Divine Liturgy symbolic of the life of Christ unfolding progressively through the service.

For Symeon of Thessalonike, interpreting the bishop enthroned on his synthronon as Christ among his Apostles, gave the bishop divine authority over all of Byzantium. The ritual of the bishop ascending and descending the synthronon during the readings performed both earthly and cosmic hierarchy. In contemporary hierarchical Divine Liturgy, bishops still draw upon their various thrones to create spaces of sacred authority, but these spaces have become more complicated, nuanced with messages of shared power.

CONCLUSION

Whenever the Byzantine emperor sat on his throne, in the palace or the church, the rituals emphasized his august authority. Hidden vesture changes allowed him to craft a space of mysterious and awe-inspiring authority, whether he was in his private metatorion in Hagia Sophia or rising up to the secret chamber in the ceiling on the Throne of Solomon in the palace. In Late Antique Byzantium, the bishop enthroned high above the nave on the synthronon exercised the pastoral authority of a teacher, relying on the Mysteries of Jesus' suffering and resurrection in the Divine Liturgy, rather than theatrics, to underline his sacred authority. By contrast, the contemporary Byzantine bishop, enthroned in imperial splendor and pomp, has, nevertheless, crafted a space of shared authority; of "transparent" authority to borrow a popular fiscal and political term.

The central throne, the vesture and rituals may be imperial, but the new conversation that ensues among participants, monumental art and thrones in the contemporary Byzantine liturgy is not about performing imperial authority any more. Today, these elements have been thoroughly incorporated into episcopal usage. Byzantine tradition lives on in this new form, inscribing in the various spaces that it is celebrated, the boundaries of a sacred landscape for those who have eyes to see it.

CONCLUSION

During my first visit to Istanbul in 2010, wandering in Hagia Sophia, I noticed my friend, Hiermonk Maximos of Holy Resurrection Monastery (now) in St. Nazianz, WI, putting in ear buds to listen to a recording on his phone. Meeting my questioning gaze, he explained that he was going to listen to the *Capella Romana* version¹ of the “Imperial Acclamations for Constantine XI Palaiologos” as he walked through the Royal Doors, so that he could get a sense of what the emperor might have experienced in the procession to his throne. Father Maximos could imagine the boundaries of the sacred landscape traced by the steps of emperors and patriarchs for over a thousand years in that same space because he knew the historical importance of this authoritative dyad in Byzantine tradition.

So much of Byzantium must be left to the imagination today because Hagia Sophia has not been used as a church for nearly six hundred years. Fluttering silks, silver

¹ *Capella Romana, Byzantium 330 AD to 1453 AD: A Compilation Album*, (London: Royal Academy of Art, 2009), track 11.

altar, the enormous ambo with space for chanters underneath; these exist now only in recorded tradition. Of course, the building itself is still a wonder to behold. Standing under its dome, even in its current iteration as a museum, this space still unites heaven and earth.

We can only imagine the splendor of the imperial palace with its awe-inspiring Throne of Solomon and the grand processions from palace to imperial church described in such painstaking detail in the *Book of Ceremonies*. A lonely door to nowhere in the gallery of Hagia Sophia bears witness to the walkway that once allowed the imperial court to enter the church directly from the palace. The grand palace buildings are now just ghosts who linger in the broad plaza between the Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia. You can still see the outline of the Hippodrome in the paved streets that trace its track. Standing on the grass near the Obelisk of Theodosius, I tried to imagine the kathisma from which the emperor would preside over races and other events. Today, there is a newsstand just about where the bridge from the palace once extended overhead to the kathisma.

You can view bits of the floor from the imperial palace in Istanbul's Mosaic Museum which reveal small glimpses into the beauty and tradition of Byzantium. Standing on the museum's platform looking down on the fragments preserved, I could not help imagining the emperors, empresses, court officials and servants whose footsteps traversed that space of civil and sacred authority. As it is today, the floor reveals no trace of the crimson imperial shoes that crossed it. There are no hints of the blue or green or other colored shoes used to designate the various and sundry administrative roles of those

whose long-muted footsteps carried out important imperial business, marking out that space of authority, that center of the Byzantine cosmos.

Beyond these tantalizing remnants, we find fragments of the tradition of imperial and patriarchal authority in spaces scattered from one end to the other of what was once the Byzantine Empire. Each faded icon proclaims the noble culture that once produced it. Every surviving church is a little Constantinople, Byzantium in microcosm. These spaces still speak, albeit in whispers, of the bishops who crafted spaces of authority for themselves by drawing upon Byzantine tradition with innovation and creativity.

In Ohrid, I could imagine Demetrios Chomatenos pacing around his upper narthex, hammering out legal decisions. Standing there in the shadows, I could feel the weight of the Ecumenical Councils bearing down from the vaulted ceiling above, reminding the would-be patriarch of his weighty responsibility in preserving Byzantine tradition through his space of canonical authority. I could imagine Demetrios looking up at the Hetoimasia from his quasi-patriarchal throne during a meeting of his Synodos Endemousa and thinking of the throne he wanted to occupy in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. He never would. His emperor, Theodore Dukas, lost his eyes and his rule. The victorious emperor and patriarch of Nicaea would restore Byzantium and attempt to erase all memory of their Epirote challengers.

It is not difficult to imagine Nikephoros Moschopoulos in the Metropolis. He saw to that himself by inscribing his name all over the church that he had renovated. I was sitting in a café in nearby Sparta when I read about the cross-shaped inscription of his

holdings on the column nearest his throne. Downing my coffee and jumping in my rental car, I sped back to Mistra, cursing the Spartan tourist bus that slowed my progress. Within minutes, I was back in the Metropolis studying the engraving around which Moschopoulos crafted his authoritative space. Standing there, I could feel the flutter of Nikephoros' vestments as he passed the column in a procession, his steps tracing out his authoritative landscape over the sacred one.

I could imagine Archimandrite Pachomios working very hard not to look up at the lintel bearing his rival's name as he passed it in a festal procession. Did he mutter something under his breath about his rival? Did he shudder as he exited the church through the narthex with its fearsome Last Judgment and formidable Hetoimasia? Of course, he had his own holdings inscribed on the wall in the narthex crysobull room of his Aphantiko, but the angels painted on his wall holding up the crysobulls were not as fierce as the legion guarding the Empty Throne over the door in Nikephoros' Metropolis narthex.

Having served under a bishop for many years, I freely admit that I would not have enjoyed being a priest under Symeon of Thessalonike. I can imagine my response to his first general letter demanding repentance and obedience; a reaction that I will leave to the *reader's imagination*. His liturgical commentaries recount how he drew upon the ancient tradition of the Sung Liturgy in the Great Church of Hagia Sophia to bring Constantinopolitan authority to unruly Thessalonike. By using that traditional liturgy to craft an authoritative space, Symeon showed innovation and creativity. Through the Asmatike Akolouthia, Symeon re-inscribed Thessalonike into the boundaries of the

sacred Byzantine landscape despite the occupying Venetians and the Ottoman Turks at the gates.

Standing in modern Thessalonike on Egnatia St. built over the stones of the ancient Via Egnatia still running through the city, I could see how short the distance was between the city's gates and imagine the anxiety I would feel within besieged walls in the small city space. Symeon believed that his authority as bishop held the empire together. He must have also hoped that he could craft a space of authority that would keep the enemy at bay.

I can imagine these things because I am not just a scholar who studies Byzantine tradition, I am a practitioner who participates in the crafting of new spaces of shared authority in the Byzantine Hierarchical Liturgy. My scholarly work has greatly enhanced my ability to see the ghosts and hear the whispers of Byzantium, even in contemporary churches far away from the traditional boundaries of the empire; the sacred, authoritative landscape has become much wider, if even more abstract. Nevertheless, the ritual of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy interacting with the monumental iconography makes even modern Byzantine churches spaces of traditional Byzantine authority, invoking both emperor and patriarch in innovative ways.

This dissertation has told a story of the interplay of tradition and imagination, of spaces crafted through innovation and imitation. Byzantium in microcosm depended upon the macrocosm of the Byzantine Empire with its secular and sacred authoritative

spaces. For contemporary Byzantines, however, there is no longer a *living* macrocosm; Byzantium exists now only in tradition.

In retrospect, as sacred and authoritative as the Byzantine landscape was, it was also imminently fragile. Wandering the famous cave churches of Cappadocia, one stands in spaces that are now museums or archaeological sites at best. It is hard to imagine a sacred space when you must wade through sheep dung to see faded icons on the cave church ceiling. Repurposed or abandoned as they are, however, they were spaces that once performed the tradition of Constantinople. Extant medieval Byzantine churches in places like Greece, Turkey or Macedonia (FYROM) witness both to former glory and how easily spaces of authority can be transgressed.

Byzantium is no longer an interconnection of civil and sacred spaces; of stavropegia, dioceses and themes. Barbarians no longer besiege the gates of Constantinople. Foreign dignitaries no longer seek imperial titles or favors. The oikoumene of the Ecumenical Patriarch is no longer a cohesive, contiguous landscape. He no longer sits enthroned in Hagia Sophia. His chancellors and secretaries craft legal decisions in the tiny offices of the Phanar rather than the broad upper galleries of the Great Church. The Royal Doors lay open for anyone to pass.

Using Smith's parlance, Byzantine art and ritual has always navigated the space between what is and what ought to be. Demetrios, Nikephoros and Symeon each crafted spaces of authority that celebrated an ideal Byzantium in the face of marauding Franks, land-hungry monks or unruly sheep. Their creativity drew from Byzantine tradition with

Constantinople as its template. Constantine the Great and his successors had done nothing less in drawing upon the traditions of Rome and Jerusalem to turn Constantinople into a sacred and authoritative landscape to craft a new Christian Roman Empire, worthy of imitation and innovation.

I have heard contemporary Orthodox Christians more than once characterized as “God’s frozen people.” For a thousand years, Byzantines thought of themselves as God’s *chosen* people; the descendants of the great Roman Empire, ushering in the New Jerusalem. In Byzantium, tradition invited innovation. Today, Orthodox Christians closely defend tradition with a spirit of preservation. As we noted above, the trauma of 1453 left Byzantines grasping at shreds of their once great culture and faith in diaspora. The invention of the printing press allowed for definitive texts to take the place of local innovations of the tradition of Hagia Sophia. And yet, as I suggested in Chapter Five, there is still space for innovation as evidenced by the development of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, incorporating the Byzantine tradition of both emperor and patriarch in new, creative ways to craft new, innovative spaces of shared authority. The last word has not been written on the innovative ways that Byzantines craft traditional spaces of authority through art and ritual to envision what should be amid what is; the ink is not dry yet.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig 1.1 Hagia Sophia. Istanbul, Turkey (photo: J. Rose)



Fig1.2 Hagia Sophia interior. Istanbul, Turkey. (photo: A. M. Wright)



Fig 1.3 Synthronon from Basilica of St. John in Ephesus, Turkey (photo: A. M. Wright)



Fig 1.4 Artist's model of templon in Hagia Sophia Constantinople (photo: <http://2natures.blogspot.com/2012/10/hagia-sophia-byzantine-liturgical.html>, accessed August 25, 2017)



Fig1.5 Christ enthroned with crouching emperor over the Royal Doors on the narthex side in Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey. (photo: <https://www.pallasweb.com/deesis/leo-hagia-sophia.html>, accessed August 25, 2017)



Fig 1.6 The Hetoimasia below the icon of the crouching emperor before the throne of Christ over the Royal Doors in the inner narthex of Hagia Sophia . Istanbul, Turkey. (Photo: S. Gerstel)

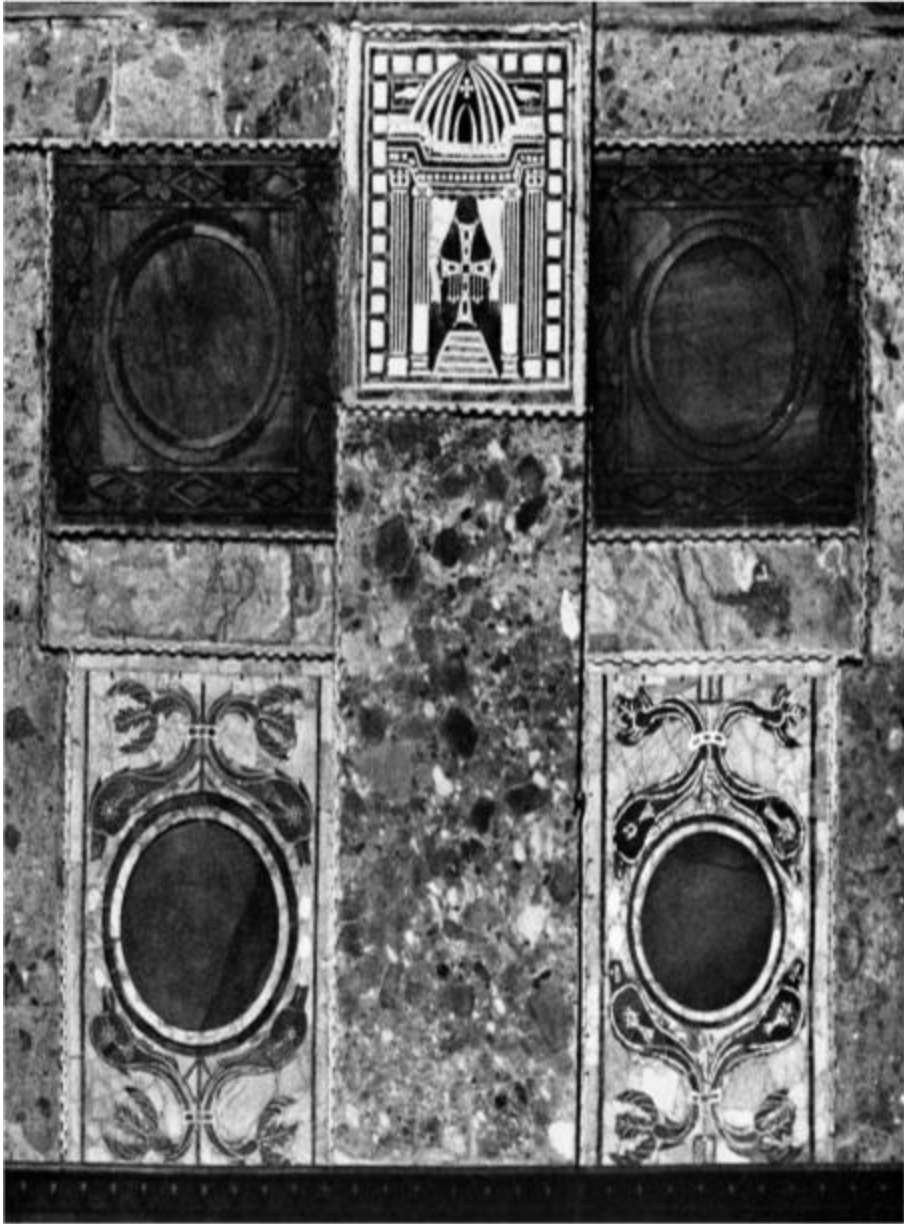


Fig 1.7. The enthroned cross on the western nave wall underneath the Empress' loge in Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey. (Photo: S. Gerstel)



Fig 1.8 Deisis Gallery, Hagia Sophia . Istanbul , Turkey. (photo: J. Rose)



Fig 1.9 Kom el-Dikka lecture hall with synthronon. Alexandria, Egypt. (Photo: After M. Krawczyk)



Fig 1.10 Epitaphios. Birmingham, AL. St. George the Great Martyr Church. (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 1.11 Antimneshion. Birmingham, AL. St. George the Great Martyr Church. (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 2.1 Sveti Sophia. Lower narthex and stairs. Ohrid, Macedonia (FYROM).
(Photo: S. Gerstel)



Fig 2.2 Sveti Sophia. Upper narthex. Ohrid, Macedonia (FYROM). (Photo: S. Gerstel)



Fig 2.3 Sveti Sophia. Upper narthex icons of Ecumenical Councils in the vault, various ascetic saints on the lower wall and the Hetoimasia in the tympanum. Ohrid, Macedonia (FYROM). (Photo: S. Gerstel)



Fig 2.4 Sveti Sophia. Upper narthex, tympanum with the Hetoimasia. Ohrid, Macedonia (FYROM). (Photo: S. Gerstel)



Fig 2.5 Sveti Sophia. View from upper narthex into nave and bema. Ohrid, Macedonia (FYROM). (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 2.6 Sveti Sophia. Monastic saints on the north wall of the upper narthex. Ohrid, Macedonia (FYROM). (Photo: S. Gerstel)



Fig 2.7 Sveti Sophia. Southern tympanum in the upper narthex depicting the Ancient of Days flanked by St. Peter of Alexandria's vision of Jesus. Ohrid, Macedonia (FYROM). (Photo: S. Gerstel)



Fig 2.8 Sveti Sophia. Northern tympanum depicting the Hetoimasia with King David's rebuke by the Prophet Nathan. Ohrid, Macedonia (FYROM). (Photo: S. Gerstel)



Fig 3.1 Mistra., Greece The lintel over the exterior door in the Metropolis. (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 3.2 Mistra, Greece. Brotochion monastery. (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 3.3 Mistra, Greece. Interior of the Hodegtria church, Brotochion monastery. (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 3.4 Mistra, Greece. Detail of the Chrysobull Room in the Church of the Virgin Hodegetria (Aphentiko).
(Photo: S. Gerstel)



Fig 3.5 Mistra, Greece. Inscription by Nikephoros Moschopoulos, southern narthex exterior wall of the Metropolis church. (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 3.6 Mistra, Greece. Icon of an Ecumenical Council on the eastern wall of the narthex in the Metropolis. (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 3.7 Mistra, Greece. Northwestern column in nave of Metropolis with cruciform inscription commissioned by Nikephoros Moschopoulos . Note the trajectory between the bishop's throne in the background and the column. (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 3.8 Mistra, Greece. Detail of the bishop's stasion throne against the southern wall of the nave in the Metropolis. The current throne has been laid over previous mosaic work. (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 3.9 Mistra, Greece. The imperial seal of the Palaiologos family in the center of the nave before the Holy Doors of the bema in the Metropolis. (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 3.10 Mistra, Greece. The scene of the Last Judgment on the southwestern wall of the narthex in the Metropolis. (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 3.11 Mistra, Greece. Metropolis. Hetoimasia on western wall in the narthex over the entrance. (Photo: J. Rose)



Fig 3.12 Mistra, Greece. Metropolis Church. Hetoimasia scene from the diakonikon. (Photo: after G. Marinou)



Fig 4.1 St. George Church, Birmingham, AL. Bishop's stasion throne with icon of Christ the High Priest. (Photo: J. Rose)

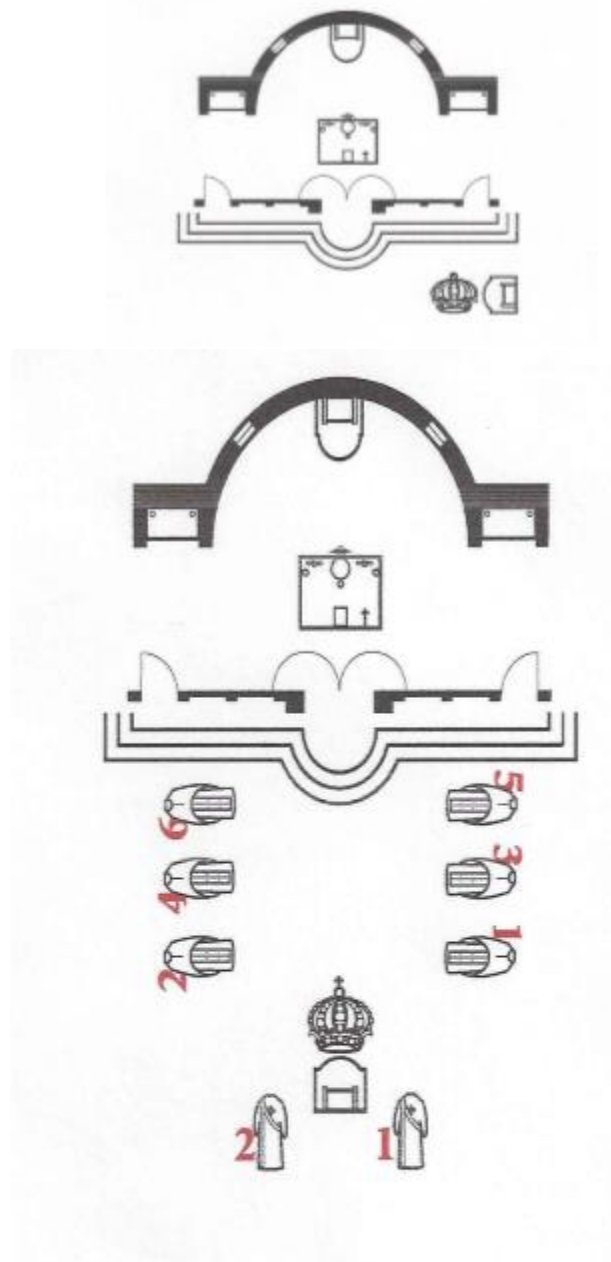


Fig 5.1 Diagrams from an Antiochian Orthodox archieratikon showing the placement of the episcopal throne for a bishop who presides from the stasion (top) or celebrates (bottom). The crown symbol designates the bishop. (www.almoutran.org)



Fig 5.2 Crestwood, NY. Double headed Orlets rug in the Chapel of the Three Hierarchs, St. Vladimir's Seminary. (Photo: <http://www.svots.edu/sites/default/files/images/Eagle%20rug%20new%20year%20Liturgy.preview.jpg>)

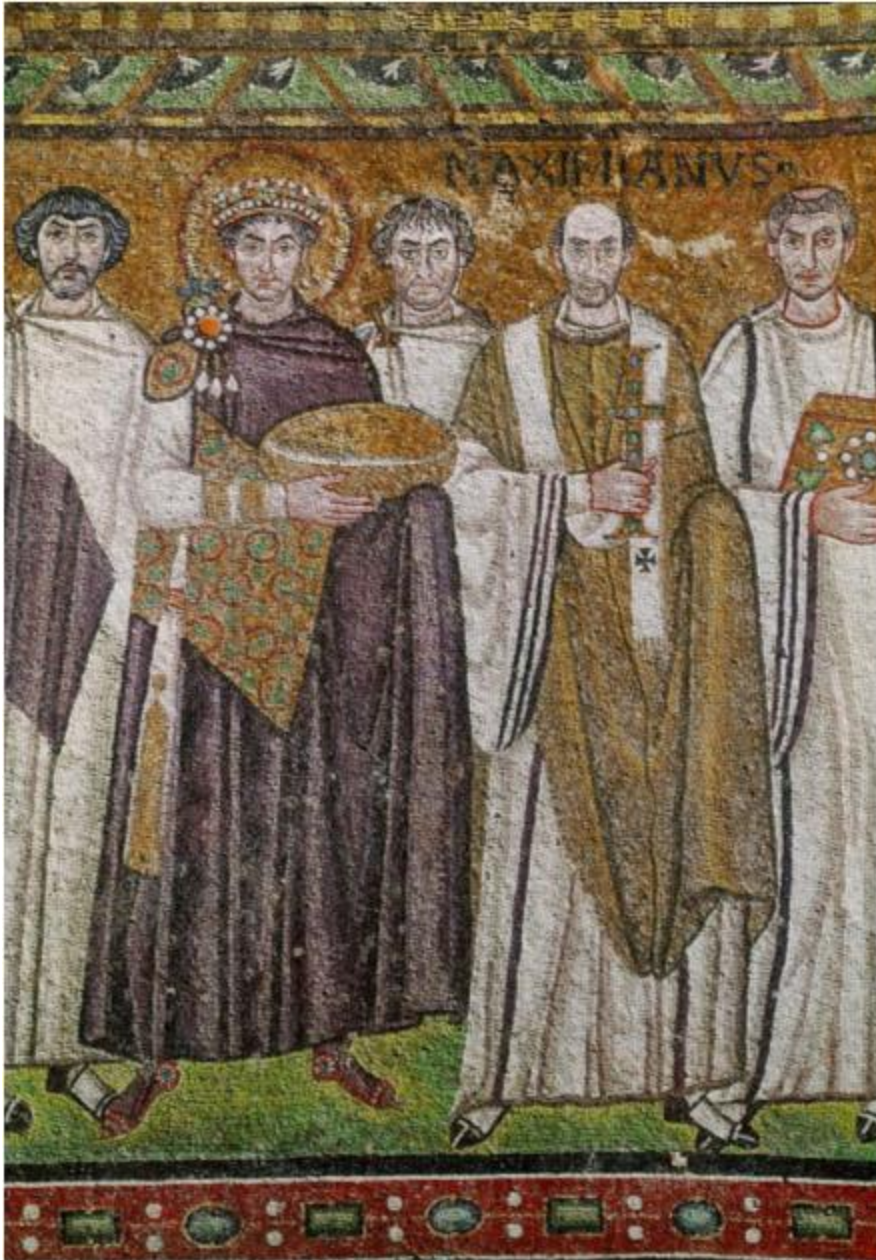


Fig. 5.3 Ravenna, Italy. Detail of apse mosaic of Emperor Justinian in his chlamys. Church of San Vitale. (Photo: S. Gerstel)



Fig 5.4 Birmingham, AL. The Platytera in the apse of the Church of St. George the Great Martyr. (Photo: J. Rose)

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