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CLASSICAL TRENDS IN BYZANTINE AND WESTERN ART IN THE 13TH AND 14TH CENTURIES

During the last two centuries before the Renaissance of the arts in Italy in the 15th century, different waves of classical trends marked the artistic creation of both Byzantine and western worlds. Between 1220 and 1260 in particular, a parallel development of the revival of ancient forms is noted in both of the above-mentioned traditions. Various artistic expressions later developed independently.

The various artistic tendencies of the period under discussion are well known by the critics but usually Byzantine and Western cultures are studied separately. In the present paper, it is interesting to expose some aspects of the revivals of ancient art in both worlds, namely Byzantine and Latin, during the 13th and 14th centuries. In this way, it will, firstly, be possible to establish a more appropriate method for examining the origin of this extensive wave of ancient revival that took place during the 13th century. Secondly, it is useful to note how this Proto-Renaissance gave way under the weight of more conservative Byzantine forms in 14th century Byzantine painting and, thirdly, it is instructive to show an interpretation of how, in the West, namely in Italy, the classical forms developed unimpeded from 1260 onwards so that they eventually continued into the great Renaissance.

For this purpose, I shall first briefly expose the historical and political situation of the Byzantine Empire vis-à-vis the European world during the period under consideration. I shall then touch upon the artistic phenomena, pointing out the most characteristic cases.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION

During the 12th century, the Slavic states¹, Bulgaria and Serbia, which extended across an area that was previously part of the Byzantine Empire, gradually gained in power. Their power reached its peak in the 13th century. Bulgarians and Serbians dreamt of an eventual Greek-Slavic Empire with Constantinople as its capital. Thus, although they were harsh rivals of Byzantium, they were also fervent admirers of Byzantine culture and ideology, a phenomenon that can be frequently observed in the history of the Byzantine Empire.

Nevertheless, the most important fact of the period was the sacking of the Byzantine capital by the Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, when Constantinople became the seat of the Latin Emperor, Baldwin of Flanders. This event resulted in the division of the European soil, which had previously belonged to the Byzantine Empire, into different feudal states ruled by the Venetians and the Franks. It also resulted in the creation of the Despotat of Epirus, the Empire of Trebizond, the short-lived state of Thessalia and the Empire of Nicaea.

At the same time, a great number of powerful Byzantines left the Latin-occupied areas. These included political and military aristocracy, ecclesiastics, intellectuals and artists who went to Nicaea in Bithynia, where they joined Theodore Laskaris², son-in-law of Alexius III Angelos, who was crowned emperor in 1208.

¹ On the Slavic states: Zlatarski, *Geschichte der Bulgaren*. – Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben*. – Ostrogorsky, *Histoire*. – Velmans / Korać / Šuput, *Rayonnement* 179-180. ² Gianeris, *Empire of Nicaea* 29-33.

It was a natural consequence that the partition of the Byzantine Empire threw into doubt the whole ideological makeup³ of the Byzantines, namely their faith that the Virgin was the protector of Constantinople, that Christ himself was the true founder of the Empire and, finally, that the latter would fall apart only with the end of the world. Thus, in order to confront the desperation and deception caused by the historical circumstances, a spiritual current started in Nicaea⁴, according to which the Latin occupation was only a »passing trial of God«⁵. Reflecting their glorious past, the Byzantines turned to the classic ancient Greek culture, appropriating many of its ideas. Now, for the first time, the term Hellen appeared instead of Roman, a wave of Hellenism quickly emerged and Nicaea became a centre of humanism and of the study of the ancient writers, especially Plato and Aristotle, of philosophy and of natural sciences⁶. It was during this period that the ideas of humanists found real support in the bosom of the church due to the nation's urgency to find the power that would lead to the restoration of the Empire.

According to T. Velmans⁷, the above-mentioned circumstances are the prerequisite for the beginning of a strong artistic current that was marked by classical characteristics in Byzantine art. Nevertheless, what critics have not stressed enough is the fact that there are most probably three main reasons behind the geographical diffusion of the ancient revival from Asia Minor to the Balkans, from the Mediterranean Sea to the North Sea and the Atlantic. Firstly, the massive diaspora of Greek craftsmen who, because of the lack of work in Byzantium itself, accepted the invitation from different Slavic states, as well as from Trebizond, Venice and Georgia later in the 14th century. Secondly, the Crusaders were eyewitnesses to the spiritual and artistic trends at the heart of the Byzantine culture, where they established workshops, and were willing to spread these trends throughout Western Europe. Thirdly, the many relics, reliquaries, manuscripts and enormous quantities of all kinds of art objects with different dates that the Crusaders transferred from Constantinople to the West were of great importance in the diffusion of the classical trend in the West. Even architectural members were imported. These objects dating from the Late Antiquity, from the earlier Byzantine phases or even from the same period functioned as factors of classical tradition in the Latin west. They were copied and had a great influence on the artistic evolution there. Thus, the knowledge of the human body, the sense of rhythm and harmony and the equilibrium in the composition, as well as, to some extent, the approach of nature, are classical elements appropriated by western craftsmen of the 13th century, mostly thanks to imported works of art from Byzantium, especially by the time of the Fourth Crusade.

In the following paragraphs, I shall first expose the artistic evolution of the Byzantine sphere during the period from 1204 to the 1260s. Secondly, I shall endeavour to show how the artistic development of the West has parallel stylistic characteristics to those developed in Byzantine art during the same period. I shall then touch upon the question of the diminishing of the classical revival in Byzantine painting during the following decades and shall also discuss how, in the West, namely in Italy, from 1260 onwards, the classical tendency surpassed every preceding point of development during the medieval period, so that it eventually led to the Italian Renaissance.

BYZANTINE ART

Due to the diaspora of artists and the destruction of the monuments in Asia Minor, the evolution of Byzantine painting during the 13th century can be observed mostly in peripheral monumental art. In the following

³ Bréhier, *La civilisation* 326. – Heidenreich, *Sagen* 1. – Treitinger, *Reichsidee*. – Velmans / Korać / Šuput, *Rayonnement* 181 – Mango, *Theotokoupolis*. – Saradi, *Oecumenical Character of Byzantium*.

⁴ Ševčenko, *The Decline*.

⁵ Velmans / Korać / Šuput, *Rayonnement* 181.

⁶ Gardner, *The Laskaris*. – Bréhier, *Civilisation* 431-432; 445. – Foss / Tulchin, *Nicaea* 65-73. – Angelov, *Imperial Ideology* 95-98.

⁷ Velmans / Korać / Šuput, *Rayonnement* 181-193.

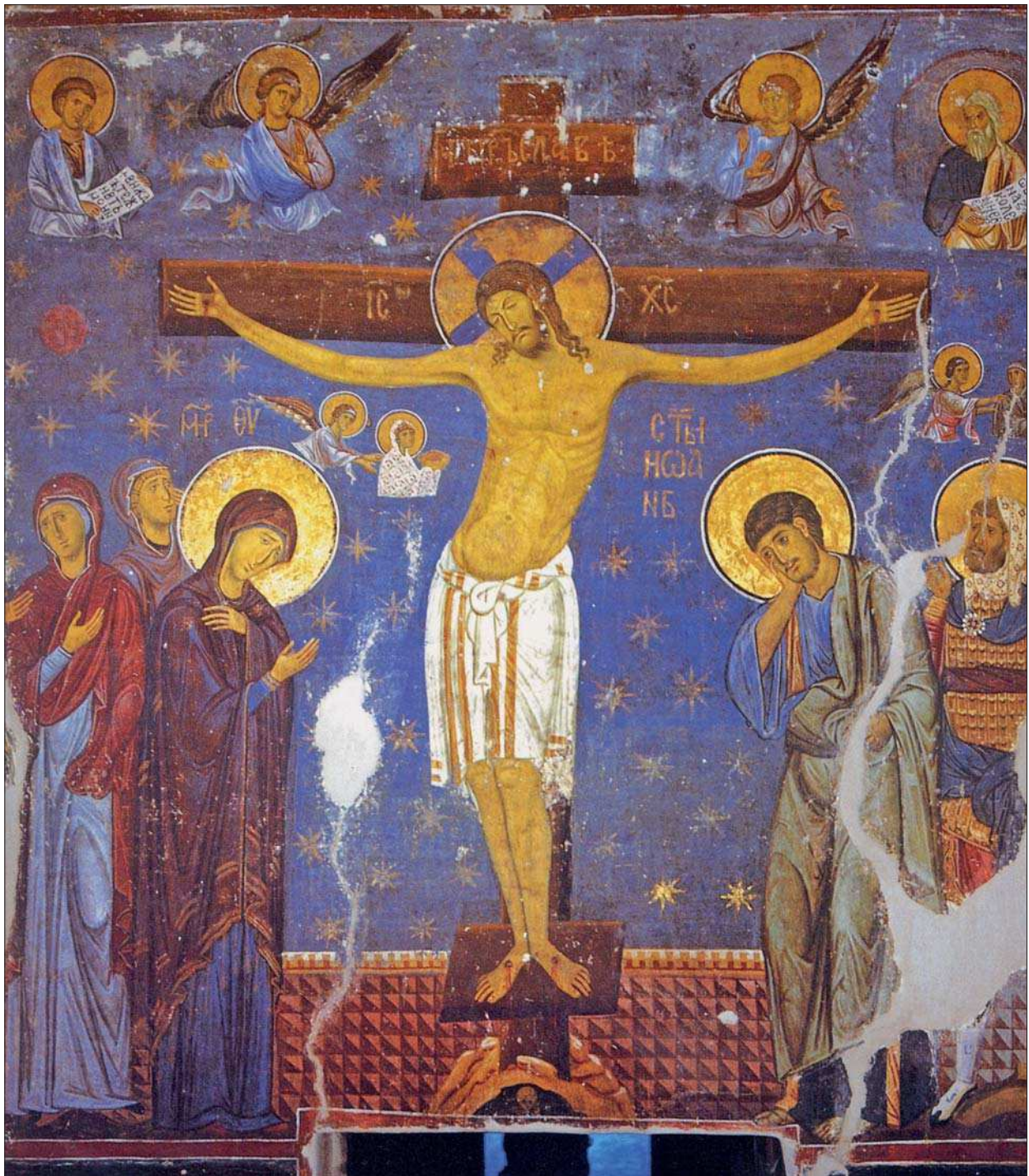


Fig. 1 Crucifixion, fresco. Studenica.

paragraphs, a number of cases will be mentioned that are the most characteristic of the stylistic evolution of painting during the period under discussion.

In the Church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Studenica (dist. Raška, SRB)⁸ (1208-1209), the faces actually appear without the mannerism of the late Comnenean painting and must have been executed by a

⁸ Čirković / Korać / Babić, Studenica. – Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayonnement 183.



Fig. 2 Head of a martyr, fresco. Acheiropoietos (Thessaloniki).



Fig. 3 Virgin of the Annunciation, fresco. Monastery of Mileševa.

Constantinopolitan craftsman. In *The Crucifixion* (fig. 1) and *The Virgin with Child*⁹, the human bodies are not extremely elongated, the linear treatment appears less important in the modelling and the colours give the impression of volume. The remaining paintings of *The Virgin Ljeviška*¹⁰ in Prizren (Kosovo), dated a little later, possibly between 1220 and 1230, show a new tendency in the execution of the faces. In the fragment of *The Therapy of the Blind*¹¹, the head of the young apostle with globular eyes and rounded nose is reminiscent of early Christian works. Moreover, in the scene of *The Virgin with Christ »food provider«*¹², the linear elements of the earlier style are combined with the more voluminous execution of the modelling of the flesh.

The progress of the new style is more apparent in the paintings of *The Virgin Acheiropoietos*¹³ in Thessaloniki (1220-1260), where 18 heads of martyrs still remain (fig. 2). Although the representation of the mouths is schematic and the contour of the eyes too bold, the beard and the hair are executed with large and quick strokes of the brush, whereas highlights mark the relief of the faces. Moreover, the sacred faces

⁹ Velmans / Korać / Šuput, *Rayonnement* pl. 74.

¹⁰ Velmans / Korać / Šuput, *Rayonnement* 185.

¹¹ Velmans / Korać / Šuput, *Rayonnement* 184 fig. 152.

¹² Velmans / Korać / Šuput, *Rayonnement* pl.75.

¹³ Xyngopoulos, *Αι Τοιχογραφίαι* 6. – Mouriki, *Fourteenth Century* 56. – Velmans / Korać / Šuput, *Rayonnement* 185.

have the physiognomy of common persons, something that often characterises the isolated faces of Palaeologan painting.

Nevertheless, there were important changes in style in the paintings of the Church of the Ascension in Mileševa (SRB)¹⁴ (before 1228), decorated by Greeks either from Constantinople, i.e. Nicaea, or Thessaloniki. The human figures have volume and the bodies are heavier and wider. Shading marks the anatomy and the draperies. Line gives way to the relief. The palette of colours has been enriched by intermediate tones that render the graduation of the light. The expression of the sentiments has progressed. The movements appear easier and curvy body shapes dominate the compositions. In the background, the architectures are rendered with regularity, in three-quarter view, so that a certain degree of perspective is conveyed, almost like in ancient art. In the Annunciation (**fig. 3**), for instance, the young and charming face of Mary differs from the usual severe type. The eyes are modelled with shadows rather than with lines, the nose is wider in the lower part and the lips are fleshy. The shade that comes from the head down to the neck shows a specific source of light falling from the right.

Similar stylistic trends also occur in other churches of Serbia, for example, in the Dormition of the Virgin in Morača (Montenegro)¹⁵ (1251-1252) and in the Saint Apostles in Peć (Kosovo)¹⁶ (the painting is dated to 1260). However, similarities with the paintings of the Serbian monuments are also observed in Hagia Sophia at Trebizond (TR)¹⁷ (c. 1255) (**figs 4-5**), a place much farther away from the Balkans. In this case, the same workshop could not possibly have accomplished all these commissions. The stylistic similarities in places that were so far away from each other during the same period can be explained by the artistic current that disseminated starting from the Constantinopolitans in Nicaea. Manolis Borboudakis has shown that the fresco paintings of the church of St. Nicolas in Kyriakoselia, Creta (**fig. 6**) are similar to the 13th century art of the ms No 5 of the Iviron Monastery and that, most likely, they are dated between 1230-1236, when the emperor John Vatantzis had sent a military expedition force in order to connect the island of Creta with the state of Nicaea¹⁸. The classical current grew during the occupation of the Crusaders and reached its apex around 1260. Although it is called the Palaeologan Renaissance, it is worth emphasising according to Tania Velmans¹⁹ that it had almost reached its full development before Michael VIII Palaeologue reoccupied Constantinople.

The mural paintings of St. Trinity in Sopoćani (dist. Raška, SRB)²⁰, dated between 1263 and 1268, represent the peak of the Palaeologan Revival. The best craftsmen of the period worked there. The human figures have gigantic dimensions recalling statues of ancient Greek philosophers with athletic bodies and large necks and they are characterised by pastel colours. The representation of a prophet (**fig. 7**), for instance, shows a wide nose, fleshy lips and eyes discerned in the shade of the concavity of the bones. Moreover, the ear is connected naturally with the rest, recalling a realistic detail of the head.

The compositions in Sopoćani are even more monumental due to the great crowd represented in them. Such is the case of the Dormition (**fig. 8**). Rhythm and harmony dominate the person's movement, as well as chromatic tones. Moreover, episodes of less importance in the same scene are interconnected in a tranquil way. This occurs, for instance, in the transfer of the disciples in a cloud, the presence of Christ holding the soul of his mother, the archangel Michael present in order to bring the Virgin's soul to heaven and, finally, the crowd of people and angels that accompany the funerary. Apart from the above-mentioned

¹⁴ Radojičić, Mileševa. – Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayonnement 185-186.

¹⁵ Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayonnement 186.

¹⁶ Djurić / Čirković / Korać, Pečka Patriaršija.

¹⁷ Talbot-Rice, Hagia Sophia. – Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayon-

nement 188 figs 162-163. – Caillet / Joubert, Trébizonde (publication under preparation).

¹⁸ Borboudakis, St. Nicolas of Kyriakoselia, 178; 179.

¹⁹ Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayonnement 179-193.

²⁰ Djurić, Sopoćani.



Fig. 4 Jesus among the doctors. St. Sophia (Trebizond).

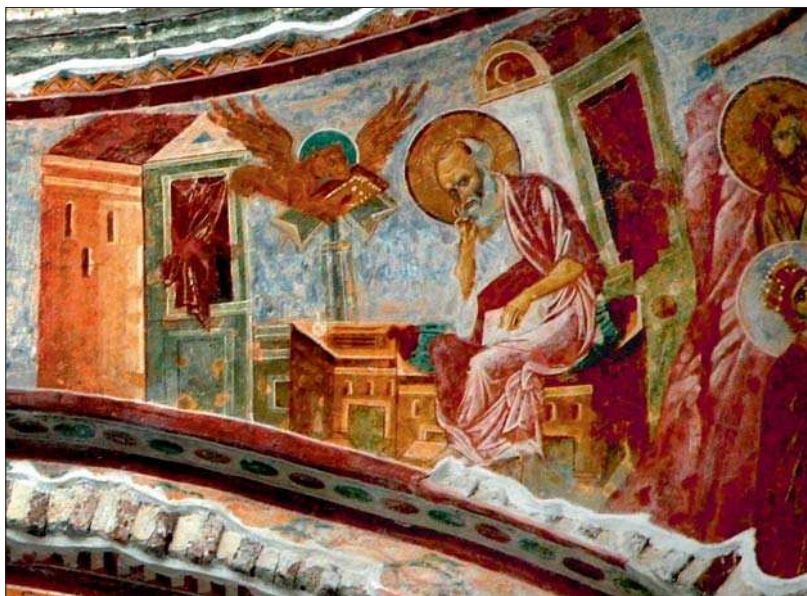


Fig. 5 Evangelist. St. Sophia (Trebizond).

characters that correspond to the ideals of the Antiquity, it can also be observed that there is an almost correct rendering of perspective regarding the décor of the Virgin's bed cover and the painted architectural elements composing the scenery. There is no doubt that, of all the other Byzantine monuments, the painting in Sopoćani is the closest to the ancient models. Nowhere else in Europe does one find a painting



Fig. 6 The Communion of the Apostles, detail, fresco. St. Nikolas at Kyriakoselia (Crete).

of the same period so progressive in the sense of the Italian Renaissance as the painting in Sopoćani. Half a century later, the saints of Giotto are still rigid and conventional²¹.

WESTERN ART

Let us turn to some of the most characteristic works of Western European art dated from the period between 1204 and 1260. The experience of the Crusaders in the heart of Byzantium becomes evident almost immediately after 1204. Among the objects of the Treasure of San Marco (Venice), there is a cross reliquary (**fig. 9 a-b**)²² that Henry of Flanders, king of the Franks and second Latin emperor of Constantinople from 1206 to 1216, ordered to the goldsmith Master Gerard. The creator of the reliquary, who came either from the Meuse river area or from the north of France, most probably worked in Constantinople and joined his own artistic tradition²³ with the cultural environment of the imperial capital. The artefact bears a mixture of western iconographic elements (the pose and gesture of the Virgin, Christ on the cross with three nails, etc.) with strong classical traits, such as the caryatid figures under the



Fig. 7 Prophet, fresco. Monastery of Sopoćani.

²¹ Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayonnement 189-193.

²² Trésor 244 Nr. 33.

²³ As is known, a strong classical current is noted after 1180 with the works of Nicholas of Verdun anticipating classicising ten-

dencies of mature Gothic sculpture; this was limited to the restricted area of the valleys of the Meuse River: Lasko, *Ars sacra* 240-254.

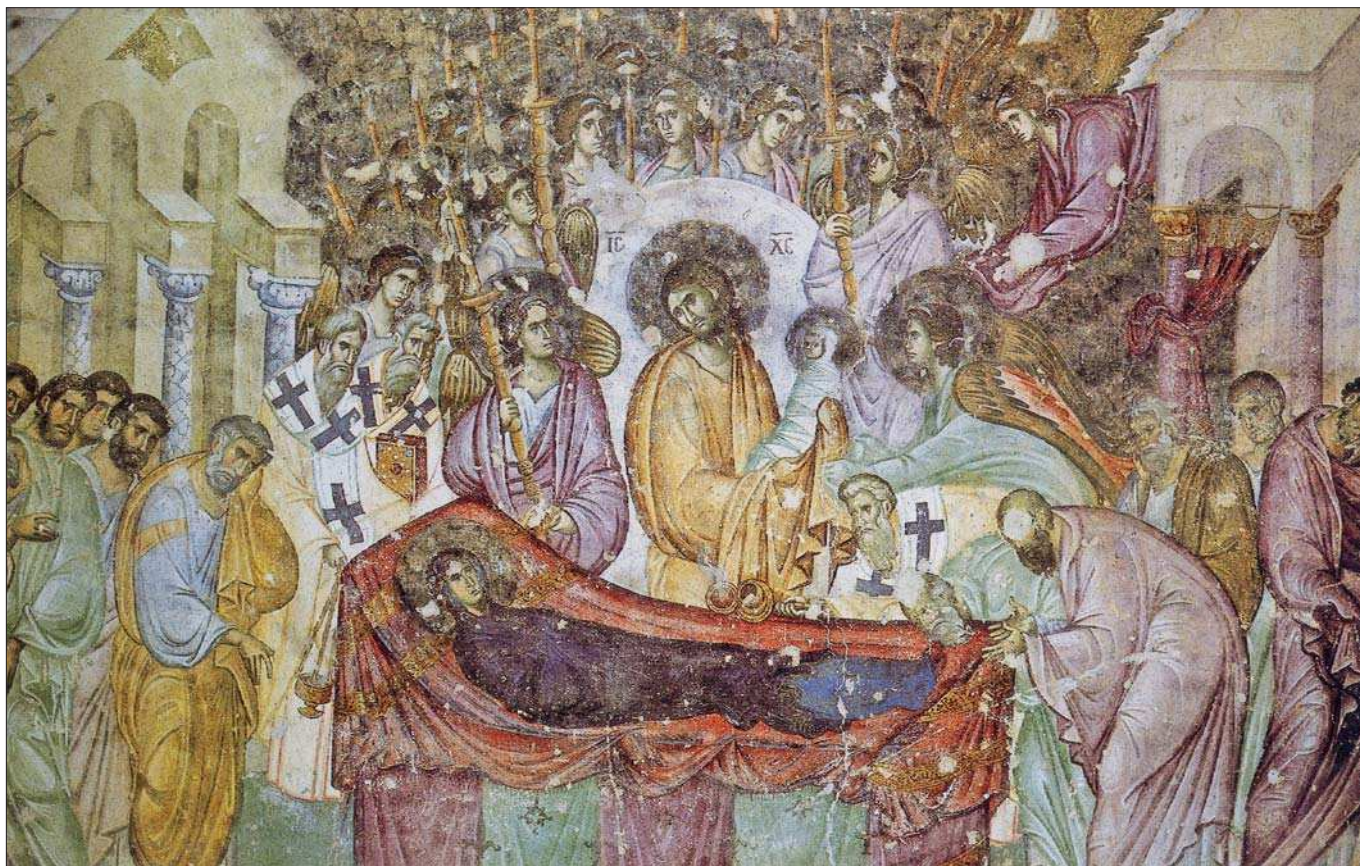


Fig. 8 Dormition, fresco. Monastery of Sopoćani.

cross, the antiquarian garments and attributes (scroll of John), their contrapposto pose and the draperies in which the bodies are wrapped.

However, it is mainly from 1210 onward that an extended classical wave literally swept through the arts in Western Europe, influencing painting, glass-painting, sculpture and the minor arts. Some illuminated manuscripts from Byzantium from the 13th century or earlier must have stimulated the style of a series of illuminated manuscripts in Europe. For instance, the Psalter of Ingeborg²⁴ (Musée Condé, Ms. 1695, c. 1210, Chantilly) (**fig. 10**), wife of Philippe August, representing a luxurious example most likely created in the circle of the French court, bears a clear mixture of Byzantine and classical traits. A more mature step towards the reception of the antiquarian revival seems to have been made later, in the Bible Moralisée (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2554, Vienna), dated between 1220 and 1230 (**fig. 11**), where the lines of the drapery are combined with different tones of colour, so that the bodies become voluminous. Again, an Early Christian illuminated manuscript must be the source for the illumination of the Bible with French text (codex Bibl. Arsenal Ms. 5211, Paris) (1250-54)²⁵ (**fig. 12**), created in the scriptorium of Saint-Jean-d'Acre (Jerusalem). This latter case shows how the characteristics of the Late Antiquity are finally amalgamated with the realism of Gothic art to create a very harmonious tendency towards classical beauty.

With regard to the major worksites during the 13th century, in San Marco (Venice), works were taking place in the mosaic decoration of certain parts of the naos, but chiefly in the atrium of the church. At the same

²⁴ Sauerländer, *Kathedralen* 107.

²⁵ Buchthal, *Miniature* 54-68 pls. 62-81. – Sauerländer, *Kathedralen* 126.



Fig. 9 a Cross reliquary. Treasure of San Marco (Venice). – b Cross reliquary, detail. Treasure of San Marco (Venice).

time, the sculptural decoration of the west façade of the basilica was being constructed. The classical influences have two sources, namely monumental painting and illuminated manuscripts. The Agony in the Garden situated in the naos, dated between 1215 and 1220, is stylistically related mostly to the fresco decorations of the royal foundations in Serbia (Studenica, Zica and Mileševa²⁶. Further on, in the Deesis²⁷ (c. 1270) above the main door of the west wall, the monumental early Palaeologan influence asserted itself through the use of the highlight technique and the volume style that dominated the development of Byzantine painting from about the middle of the 13th century onward: painterly modelling of the draperies and rounded bodies. Finally, stylistic similarities with Serbian monumental art can be witnessed outside of San Marco, in the fragments of the mural painting of the Church San Zan Degolà²⁸ (dated between 1260 and 1300).

However, in the Old Testament decoration of the atrium of the San Marco Church, the miniatures of an Early Christian manuscript, the Cotton Bible, have been translated into mosaics. Between the Creation cupola (c. 1220) and the third Joseph's cupola (c. 1260) (fig. 13), the impact of Late Antique illusionism

²⁶ Demus, *San Marco* 6-21; 207.

²⁷ Demus, *San Marco* 67-70.

²⁸ Pace, *Il ruolo della Serbia* 74-76.



Fig. 10 Ingeborg Psalter.
Musée Condé, Ms 1695
(Chantilly).

contributed to the emergence of a tendency toward classical beauty, harmony and even elegance in Venice. The sculptural decoration (fig. 14) on the arch of the central portal of the San Marco basilica²⁹ shows stylistic similarities with the mosaics of the Joseph cupolas. It is also dated to the same period. Thus, between 1220 and 1260, the classical trend in the plastic arts contributes to a proto-rinascimento embracing the whole cultural sphere in Venice such as had never been seen before. Only in the last cupola of the atrium with the Moses cycle³⁰ (c. 1280), Venetian classicism gave way to a more conservative Byzantine wave, coming most likely from an early Paleologan manuscript betraying restrained classicism, probably from the early 1270s.

²⁹ Demus, History. – Muraro, Pietre.

³⁰ Demus, San Marco 213.



Fig. 11 Bible Moralisée. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2554 (Vienna).

Moving away from Venice, in Tuscany, the relief decoration of the marble pulpit of the baptistery in Pisa (1260), by Nicola Pisano³¹, is surprising due to the credibility with which ancient models are copied. If one passed over a number of medieval traits that are also present (the field is packed with figures – *horror vacui* –, hieratic scale is employed and, of course, the iconography is byzantine), one could easily take them for original works of the Antiquity. In addition, one of the most spectacular revivals occurred in south Italy in the first half of the 13th century within the framework of the cultural program of Emperor Frederick II (1194-1250)³².

On the other hand, in the Ile-de-France, the sculptures of the cathedrals of Paris, Chartres, Amiens and Reims show a strong revival of ancient monumental sculpture. The Visitation or the Prophet in Chartres

³¹ Snyder, *Medieval Art* 446 figs 571-573.

³² Snyder, *Medieval Art* 445; 446.



Fig. 12 Bible in French.
Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Ms
5211 (Paris).

date from 1210-1220³³. The bodies are no longer static, the drapery almost follows the anatomy of the body and the faces seem alive. The classical features are even more apparent in the representations of the Queen of Sheba and of Solomon (c. 1220) (fig. 15)³⁴, where a more realistic execution is to be observed with harmonic proportions and substantial bodies under the drapery, as well as tranquillity in the expressive faces.

In Amiens in the years between 1220 and 1235, classicism makes remarkable progress, as can be seen in the Beautiful Face of Christ (Le Beau Dieu)³⁵, and in the scenes of the Annunciation, the Visitation, and the

³³ Snyder, *Medieval Art* 200.

³⁴ Snyder, *Medieval Art* 201.

³⁵ Snyder, *Medieval Art* fig. 491.



Fig. 13 Third Joseph cupola, detail, mosaic. San Marco (Venice).

Presentation of Christ in the Temple (**fig. 16**) Although the drapery is not so deep that the bodies are delineated underneath, the faces radiate magnificence and nobleness. Almost the same stylistic trend, but somewhat more mature, is seen in the sculptures of Reims (1230-1233) (**fig. 17**)³⁶. Here, one has the impression that the statues come directly from the Graeco-Roman past. The realistic features in particular acquire such importance that some figures could be taken as authentic Roman works³⁷.

As mentioned above, between the years 1210 and 1260, the classical element was diffused over the whole of Europe, in England as well as in Scandinavia, but less so in Spain. There are numerous examples in Germany³⁸. Let us concentrate on the sculptural decoration of the Bamberg³⁹ Cathedral and in the Naumburg Cathedral⁴⁰ not far from Reims. In the first case, as well as in the second, realism is very important, as can be observed in the statue of the unknown cavalier of Bamberg (1235) (**fig. 18**). On the other hand, in Naumburg, the sculptures of the royal couple of Meissen, Uta and Ekkehard (1245-1260) (**fig. 19**), stand as real persons in front of the observer waiting to hear the Last Judgment. Furthermore, in the Last Supper (1250), the faces appear like those of the ordinary men of the region⁴¹.

During 1204 and 1260 in the west, the classical trends developed within the framework of the 13th century proto-renaissance that embraced not only the arts but also spiritual tendencies. There is no doubt that the

³⁶ Snyder, *Medieval Art* 382-384.

³⁷ See for instance the cited figure with the grimacing face (1230/1240): Sauerländer, *Kathedralen* fig. 219.

³⁸ Snyder, *Medieval Art* 414-437.

³⁹ Snyder, *Medieval Art* 434; 445.

⁴⁰ Snyder, *Medieval Art* 434-436.

⁴¹ Sauerländer, *Kathedralen* fig. 332.



Fig. 14 Allegory of the month of August, arch of the central portal. San Marco (Venice).



Fig. 15 Queen of Sheba, Salomon. Chartres Cathedral.

communication of intellectuals and artists, as well as the circulation of models among the different places of Western Europe, was one of the factors behind this phenomenon. For instance, in Venice, during the first decades of the 13th century, Frederick II⁴² was present in the city and in Veneto and most likely influenced the revival of the social structures and of the arts; furthermore, Nicola and Andrea Pisano⁴³ had, for a while, been trained in the worksites of the laguna. Moreover, Michelangelo Muraro⁴⁴ stated that, in Constantinople, during the Fourth Crusade, Franks and Venetians had the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas that had been imported later, in the West. In addition, the Latins mainly came into contact

⁴² Muraro, *Pietre* 46.

⁴³ Muraro, *Pietre* 49; 53.

⁴⁴ Muraro, *Pietre* 49.

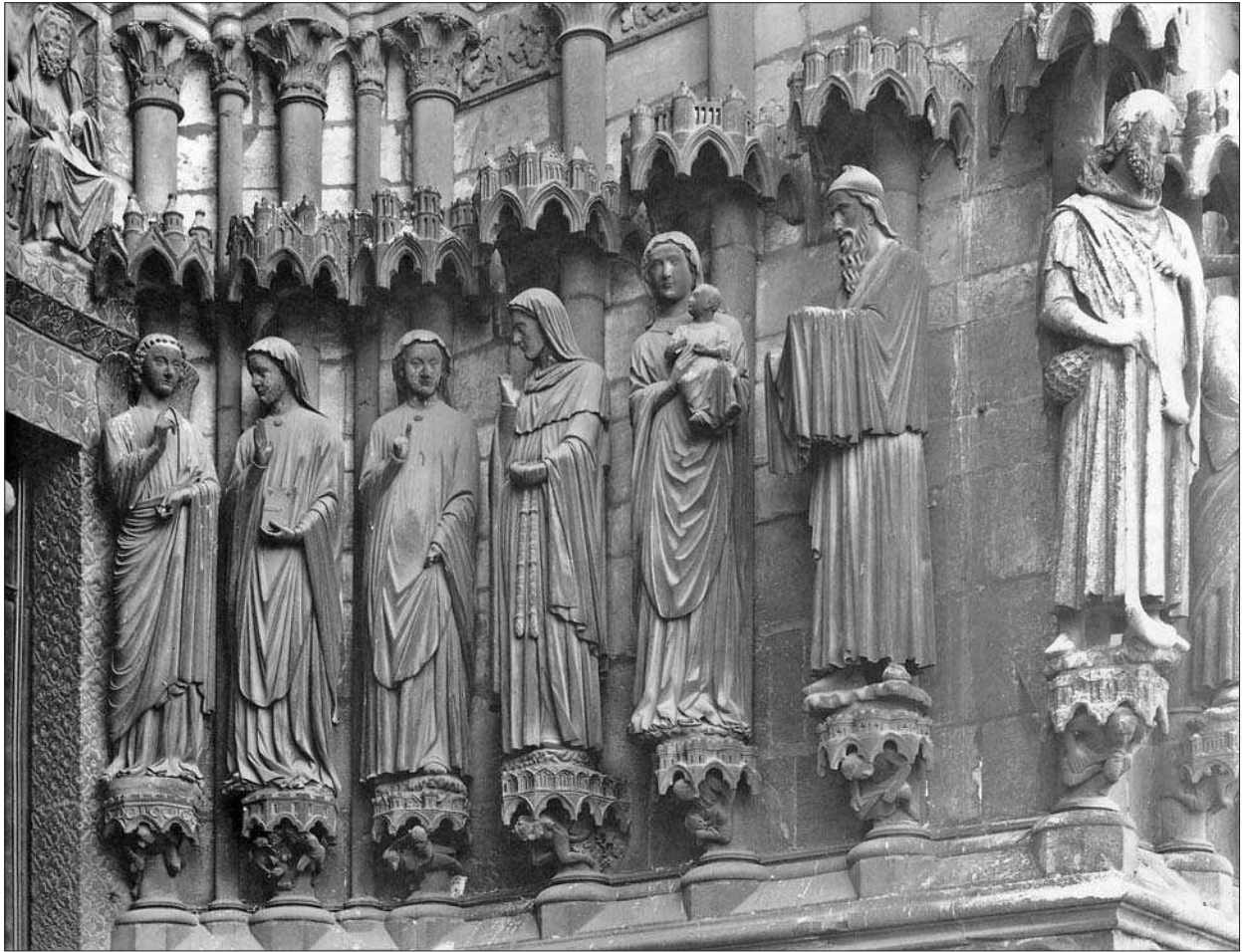


Fig. 16 Annunciation, Visitation, Presentation in the Temple. Amiens Cathedral.

with the Classicism that started in Byzantine intellectual circles immediately after the Latin occupation of the imperial capital in 1204.

REDUCTION OF CLASSICISM IN BYZANTIUM AND COMPARISON WITH ITALIAN ART

The Byzantine Renaissance was a gradual development that took place between the years 1204 and 1265 and that occurred, as already mentioned, during a period of moral crisis that threw the values of Byzantine society into question. At Sopoćani, classicism completely dominated the preceding artistic expression and attained a degree of modernism in sense of the Italian Renaissance that no other monument of Byzantine or Western art had attained. It was there that the revival of ancient art reached a peak that has never been surpassed. The reoccupation of Constantinople in 1261 marked a new reinforcement of the traditional Byzantine requirements regarding the image. The renaissance culminated in Sopoćani. From then on, the classical elements are placed within the frame of a traditional system characterised by the abstraction and idealism of figures and space. Later, the second half of the 14th century is marked with the victory of the

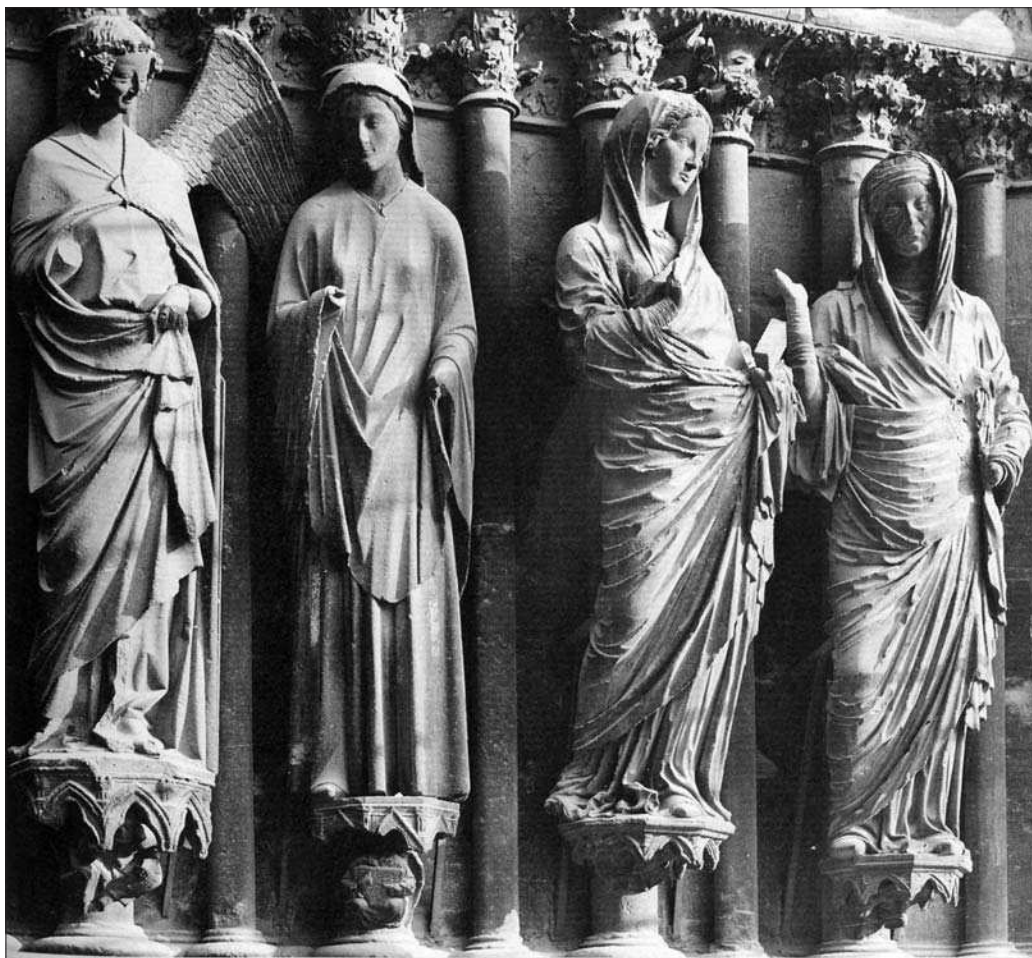


Fig. 17 Annunciation, Visitation. Reims Cathedral.

Hesychasts. Although, as the intellectuals of the Hesychasts' movement have been shown to have been indifferent towards the arts and it is thus hard to define the consequences of this for the pictorial arts, it is nevertheless certain, that, after 1340, a linear tendency is noted. Byzantine painting thus serves Orthodoxy during the 2nd half of the 14th century and the 15th century.

Before the third decade of the 14th century, monumental painting in Thessaloniki and Serbia remains close to the classical researches of the preceding period, as can be seen in the voluminous style of the works of Michael and Euthychios Astrapas. However, without deferring greatly, a more conservative style appears in Constantinople. The mosaics and frescos of the Church of the Saviour in the Chora Monastery (Kariye Djami)⁴⁵ (1315-1320), which are very important in Palaeologan art, show that the figures are more fragile, the body's proportions are not correct, the hands, feet and head are proportionally small. The drapery does not delineate exactly the curves of the body and the faces are idealistic.

As has been pointed out⁴⁶, while at Sopoćani the details of a scene form an organic unity where nothing can be added or abstracted, in contrast, in the Chora Monastery in particular, but also in Palaeologan painting in general, the connection with Antiquity is realised in two ways: firstly, a detail copied from an

⁴⁵ Underwood, Kariye Djami.

⁴⁶ Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayonnement 242-243.

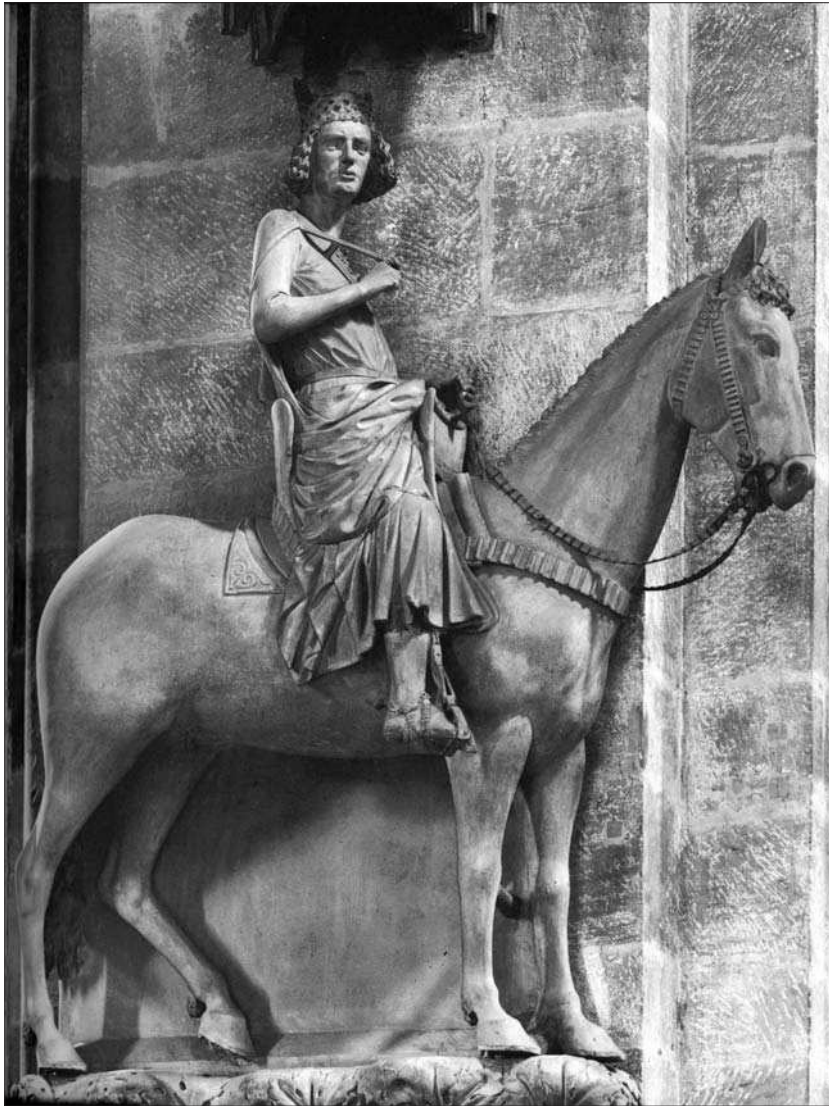


Fig. 18 Cavalier of Bamberg. Bamberg Cathedral.



Fig. 19 Uta. Naumburg Cathedral.

ancient work or a later copy of it is inserted into a composition of a basically Byzantine structure. The detail thus appears as a quotation in a text. For instance, in the scene of the Wedding in Cana in the Chora Monastery (**fig. 20**), the episode of the servant slaughtering a calf is of Hellenistic provenance. Something similar occurs with the group of children in the Multiplication of the Breads⁴⁷. Secondly, the influence of ancient art is more general. In this category, the ancient model is copied approximately, so that the result remains Byzantine, although it retains something of its ancient provenance. Thus, the scenery composed of trees, fantastic rocks and buildings appears completely unrealistic, with false proportions and the confusion of interior and exterior. Although the objects are depicted in three-quarter view, the straight lines that compose levels have many and different vanishing points. As a matter of fact, the result renders a non-realistic, symbolic space, especially if projected against the gold background⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ Underwood, Kariye Djami fig. 118.

⁴⁸ Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayonnement 242-243.



Fig. 20 Wedding in Cana, detail with the slaughtering of a calf, mosaic. Chora Monastery (Kariye Djami).



Fig. 21 Annunciation, icon. St. Clement (Peribleptos), Ohrid.

These practices have a special effect with regard to the spatial arrangement in painting, the study of which is revealing in terms of the degree to which not only the Greeks but also the Italian primitives adopted classical ideals. In the following analysis of some Byzantine and Italian paintings at the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century, I will try to show an aspect of the process of the reception and transformation of the classical models by the Italian primitives⁴⁹.

In some cases, Palaeologan artists almost showed the way that would eventually lead to the correct rendering of the illusion of depth within painting, but it seems that they abandoned this attempt soon after they had started it. The icon of the Annunciation in the Church of St. Clement (Ohrid, FYROM) dated c. 1300 (**fig. 21**) represents a characteristic case. What distinguishes this work from all others is the setting. Whereas in all other scenes of Byzantine painting the action takes place on a unified foreground of the composition, in the Ohrid Annuncia-

⁴⁹ On that subject see: Papastavrou, *L'Annonciation* 89-96.

Fig. 22 Annunciation of the Death of the Virgin, detail of the Maestà, by Duccio. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo (Sienna).



tion, something exceptional occurs. Here, in the middle of the composition, a perpendicular cut (seen in three quarters, i.e. slanting) separates the forefront level into two parts: on the left, the angel steps onto a grey surface and, on the right, on a beige ground, the Virgin sits enthroned »in« her house. Thus, two different spaces on each side are conceived. The partition of the front level into two parts shows how the artist has attempted to render the illusion of depth, which is also rendered by the position of the angel in the lower, left-hand corner of the scene, while the Virgin is positioned »further back« in the upper right-hand corner of the foreground.

Although the proposed solution for depicting depth in the Ohrid Annunciation is progressive, it is not an innovation, because in the background, there is an impenetrable wall, the proportions are incorrect and the lines occur from different vanishing points. In fact, the objects lack diminution towards the back. In Byzantine art, no other composition after this shows a tendency for the development of the scheme described in the above. The attempt to depict depth had started in Byzantium, even before it had become an established method within 15th century Italian art. However, the preference for the continuation of research in this direction did not prevail in Byzantine art itself.

In contrast, at the beginning of the 14th century in Italy, Duccio places the Virgin of the Annunciation (fig. 22) in the interior of a room similar to a box open to the observer, with the angel in front of a room with a half-opened door. No doubt, the space arrangement of Duccio's work is a more realistic rendering of an original scheme of the Late Antiquity. It is known that the Italian primitives were often inspired by ancient works, as it is clear in the Nativity of the Virgin⁵⁰ by Pietro Cavallini in Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome, 1290. This source of inspiration becomes more apparent when we compare the scenes of Duccio's work and those of Cavallini's work with a 5th century manuscript illumination of Aeniad (fig. 23)⁵¹, where

⁵⁰ Snyder, *Medieval Art* fig. 575.

⁵¹ Weitzman, *Manuscripts* 37.



Fig. 23 The Suicide of Didon by Vergilius Vaticanus. Biblioteca Vaticana, cod. lat. 3225 (Vatican City).

we can also see a space like a box with the apparent elements of the roof diminished towards the back. Works of Late Antiquity must have inspired Giotto as well. He went further than Duccio. In his Scrovegni Cappella (Padua) Annunciation (**fig. 24**), each of the figures is placed in two different box-like interior spaces. This solution was popular for several decades in western art. After more than a century, in 1440, Domenico Veneziano (**fig. 25**) created a long corridor in perspective between Mary and the Angel, thus realizing what had appeared symbolically in the Byzantine Annunciation of around 1300.

After 1260, in Italy, unlike the rest of Western Europe, the development of the arts took the unimpeded track that led to the great Renaissance. In fact, the intensive classical current that had started in Nicaea and Constantinople after the Fourth Crusade in 1204 found fertile ground in Italy. There were many reasons for this, some of which are as follows⁵². First, here,

in the cradle of the Roman Empire, the numerous ancient monuments had always been familiar in the artists' eyes. Thus, on the one hand, the above-mentioned artistic tradition in combination with successive waves of Byzantine influence and, on the other hand, the realism of the Gothic element created the conditions that permitted classicism to become established on Italian soil and to develop further towards the Renaissance, from 1260 onwards. Second, the historical, social and spiritual conditions created in the West after the 13th century helped artists to move away from medieval models and to turn not only to ancient art, i. e. the art of Late Antiquity, but also directly to nature. Towards the middle of the 13th century, the philosophy of Thomas Aquinate combined the doctrine of Aristotle with the Christian dogma. During the same period, St. Francis preached love for all of God's creatures and for nature. In literature, psychological tendencies and the feelings of human beings were expressed in the frame of the *dolce stil nuovo*. Finally, the movement of the Humanists turned people to the study of ancient writers.

In the works of Cavallini, Cimabue and Giotto, the Byzantine tradition, Gothic lyricism and the influence of the Late Antiquity are all factors that contribute to a new synthesis leading to the beauty of ancient art. It is possible, for instance, that Pietro Cavallini was directly influenced by the early Christian paintings of San Paolo fuori le mura (Rome) between 1277 and 1290, which he had conserved. This can be observed in the Last Judgment in Santa Cecilia in Trastevere⁵³ where the simplified figures appear voluminous in natural light. In the Enthroned Virgin with the Child (1280) attributed to Cimabue⁵⁴, the classical element is apparent in the frontal representation of the figures and in their voluminous bodies. On the other hand, the architectural elements of the throne are depicted in a more realistic way. What a difference, though, from Giotto's Ognisanti Madonna (**fig. 26**), about 30 years later⁵⁵. There is a new spirit where the direc-

⁵² Snyder, *Medieval Art* 445-449.

⁵³ Snyder, *Medieval Art* colorplate 68.

⁵⁴ Snyder, *Medieval Art* colorplate 72.

⁵⁵ Snyder, *Medieval Art* colorplate 73..



Fig. 24 The Annunciation, fresco by Giotto. Cappella degli Scrovegni (Padua).



Fig. 25 The Annunciation, detail from the Pala di Santa Lucia dei Magnoli by Domenico Veneziano. Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge).

tion of the glance creates a psychological connection within the faces of the group of angels and of other sacred persons that contemplate the Virgin. The willingness for communication is the new characteristic in Giotto's work that distinguishes it from the works of his predecessors and from the Byzantine works of the same period. Moreover, in Giotto's work, the rendering of the illusion of space shows a certain progres-



Fig. 26 Enthroned Madonna and Child (Ognisanti Madonna), panel by Giotto. Uffizi Gallery (Florence).

sion; the angels on the sides are represented one behind the other instead of one upon the other, and the Virgin is seated in a wide, box-like architectural construction.

CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding analysis we have exposed some aspects of the revival of ancient art in Byzantine and Latin worlds, during the 13th and 14th centuries. We have seen that only a few years after 1204 until c. 1265, in byzantine painting, classical features appeared, gradually. Human figures became voluminous, the bodies

heavy and wide and the faces acquired a realistic expression. Moreover, line gave way to the relief and shading marked the anatomy and the draperies; the palette of colors enriched by intermediate tones that render the graduation of the light. The depicted architectures showed regularity.

On the other hand, between 1204 and 1260 in the pictorial arts of the West there is an increasing tendency of rendering faces realistic or ideally beautiful that radiate magnificence and nobleness, while substantial bodies show harmonic proportions, elegance, tranquil poses or realistic movements.

Furthermore, we have seen how, after c. 1265, in Byzantine painting the classical tendency interrupts its evolution towards a real renaissance. In particular, the examination of the spatial arrangement in painting has shown that although the Greeks had come so close to the ancient models, they chose to return to the pictorial norms that have always ruled the Byzantine tradition. Moreover, we have shown an interpretation of how, during the same period, western artists were able to re-evaluate classical art. In Italy, more specifically, the classical tendencies of different waves of Byzantine influence during the 13th century (among other factors that we have already mentioned) contributed greatly to the study of rendering more naturalistically the pictorial space, the proportions of the human body and the psychological connection between the actors, creating the conditions that essentially promoted the Renaissance of the arts.

The main idea of the present paper is that the origin of the extensive wave of ancient revival from Asia Minor to the Balkans and from the Mediterranean Sea to Scandinavia and the Atlantic during the 13th century is due to the Fourth Crusade. In fact, as a consequence of the sacking of the Byzantine capital by the Crusaders, in 1204, Nicaea in Bithynia was destined to be politically the continuation of the Byzantine Empire itself. Moreover, it became immediately a most important center of humanism and artistic radiation. It is easy to imagine that the nicaean trends have permeated other important Greek artistic centers, such as Thessaloniki, which can explain the great expansion of the classical currents, in the first place, from Asia Minor to the Balkans and the Adriatic Sea. In the second place, the ideas of humanists that in artistic matter were translated as revival of ancient art influenced the Franks and Venetians of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, who consequently, along with enormous quantities of byzantine artifacts and Greek craftsmen, imported these trends in Western Europe. Thus, the wave of hellenism from Nicaea must be one of the important factors for the artistic revival also in the Latin world during the 13th century, which eventually led to the great Renaissance in Italy.

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- Fig. 1 According to Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayonnement pl. 72.
 Fig. 2 According to Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayonnement fig. 54.
 Fig. 3 According to Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayonnement pl. 77.
 Fig. 4 Photo F. Joubert.
 Fig. 5 Photo F. Joubert.
 Fig. 6 Photo M. Borboudakis.
 Fig. 7 According to Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayonnement pl. 83.
 Fig. 8 According to Velmans / Korać / Šuput, Rayonnement pl. 82.
 Fig. 9 According to: a Trésor 247. – b According to Trésor 248.
 Fig. 10 According to Sauerländer, Kathedralen fig. 02.
 Fig. 11 According to Sauerländer, Kathedralen fig. 04.
 Fig. 12 According to Sauerländer, Kathedralen fig. 126.
 Fig. 13 According to Demus, San Marco, 2, pl. 71.
 Fig. 14 According to Muraro, Pietre fig. 63.
 Fig. 15 According to Sauerländer, Kathedralen fig. 201.
 Fig. 16 According to Snyder, Medieval Art fig. 493.
 Fig. 17 According to Snyder, Medieval Art fig. 500.
 Fig. 18 According to Sauerländer, Kathedralen fig. 328.
 Fig. 19 According to Snyder, Medieval Art fig. 556.
 Fig. 20 According to Underwood, Kariye Djami, 2, fig. 117.
 Fig. 21 According to Icônes fig. 38.
 Fig. 22 According to Snyder, Medieval Art fig. 581.
 Fig. 23 According to Weitzmann, Manuscripts 37.
 Fig. 24 According to Papastavrou, L'Annonciation fig. 6a, b.
 Fig. 25 According to Papastavrou, L'Annonciation fig. 7.
 Fig. 26 According to Snyder, Medieval Art pl. 73.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG / ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

In den letzten 200 Jahren vor der italienischen Renaissance des 15. Jahrhunderts lassen sich verschiedene Wellen klassischer Strömungen im künstlerischen Ausdruck der byzantinischen und westlichen Welt ausmachen. In beiden Regionen ist besonders zwischen 1220 und 1260 eine parallel verlaufende Entwicklung des Wiederauflebens antiker Formen festzustellen. Weitere künstlerische Ausdrucksformen entwickelten sich später dagegen unabhängig voneinander.

In diesem Beitrag wird versucht, einige Aspekte des Wiederauflebens der antiken Kunst in beiden Welten, der byzantinischen und der lateinischen, im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert herauszustellen. Dabei wird zunächst eine adäquatere Methode vorgestellt, um die Ursprünge dieser umfangreichen »Proto-Renaissance« des 13. Jahrhunderts zu ermitteln. Darüber hinaus scheint es in einem zweiten Schritt nützlich zu sein, ihre Entwicklung unter dem Eindruck der stärker konservativ geprägten Formen der byzantinischen Malerei des 14. Jahrhunderts nachzuzeichnen. Drittens soll eine Interpretation vorgestellt werden, die erklärt, auf welche Weise sich die klassischen Formen im Westen, namentlich in Italien, nach 1260 unbehindert entwickelten und letztendlich bis zur Renaissance führten.

Die vorangehende Analyse zeigt deutlich, dass nur wenige Jahre nach 1204 bis etwa 1265 klassische Charakteristika in der byzantinischen Malerei allmählich Einzug hielten. Menschliche Figuren wurden voluminös, die Körper schwer und groß und die Gesichtszüge erhielten realistische Ausdrucksweisen. Darüber hinaus wurde das Relief stärker betont, die Anatomie sowie die Kleidung wurden durch Abschattungen stärker konturiert und die Farbpalette mithilfe von Mischttönen bereichert, welche die Wiedergabe verschiedener Lichtabstufungen ermöglichten. Die dargestellte Architektur ist von Gleichmäßigkeit geprägt. Auf der anderen Seite ist in der bildlichen Kunst des Westens zwischen 1204 und 1260 eine sich verstärkende Tendenz festzustellen, menschliche Gesichter realistisch oder idealisiert darzustellen, um Pracht und Edelmüt auszustrahlen, während die Körper harmonische Proportionen aufweisen und von Eleganz, ruhigen Posen oder realistischen Bewegungen gekennzeichnet sind.

Nach 1265 bricht die klassische Strömung in Richtung einer regelrechten Renaissance in der byzantinischen Malerei ab. Besonders die Analyse der räumlichen Anordnung in der Malerei hat gezeigt, dass die Griechen, obwohl sie so nah an die antiken Vorbilder herangekommen waren, schließlich zu den bildlichen Normen zurückkehrten die schon immer die byzantinische Tradition bestimmt hatten. Demgegenüber stellen wir eine Interpretation vor, wie in derselben Zeitepoche westliche Künstler die klassische Kunst neu bewerteten. In erster Linie in Italien haben die klassischen Tendenzen verschiedener byzantinischer Strömungen im 13. Jahrhundert (neben anderen schon erwähnten Faktoren) in großem Maß dazu beigetragen, den Bildraum und die Proportionen des menschlichen Körpers sowie die psychologische Verbindung zwischen den Akteuren naturalistischer zu gestalten, wobei die Bedingungen geschaffen wurden, die die Entwicklung zur Renaissance vorantrieben.

Die zentrale Idee des Beitrags ist, den Ursprung der mächtigen Welle des antiken Wiederauflebens von Kleinasien bis zum Balkan und vom Mittelmeer bis nach Skandinavien und dem Atlantik im 13. Jahrhundert mit dem 4. Kreuzzug zu erklären. Tatsächlich trug Nikäa in Bithynien die politische Kontinuität des Byzantinischen Reiches selbst als Konsequenz der Eroberung der byzantinischen Hauptstadt durch die Kreuzfahrer 1204. Darüber hinaus wurde es aber auch plötzlich ein Zentrum der Ausstrahlung des Humanismus und der Kunst. Man kann sich leicht vorstellen, dass die Trends aus Nikäa andere wichtige griechische Kunstzentren wie Thessaloniki durchdrangen, was die großflächige Ausbreitung klassischer Strömungen von Kleinasien bis zum Balkan und der Adria erklärt. Außerdem beeinflussten die Ideen der Humanisten, die auf künstlerische Art und Weise als Wiederaufleben der antiken Kunst umgesetzt wurden, die Franken und Venezianer des Lateinischen Kaiserreiches von Konstantinopel, die infolgedessen diese Strömungen zusammen mit einer enormen Menge byzantinischer Kunstgegenstände und griechischer Handwerker in den Westen exportierten. Folglich muss die hellenistische Welle aus Nikäa einer der bedeutenden Faktoren für das künstlerische Wiederaufleben auch in der lateinischen Welt gewesen sein, die letztlich zur Renaissance in Italien beigetragen hat. J. D.

During the last two centuries before the Renaissance of the arts in Italy in the 15th century, different waves of classical trends marked the artistic creation of both Byzantine and western worlds. Between 1220 and 1260 in particular, a parallel development of the revival of ancient forms is noted in both of the above-mentioned traditions. Various artistic expressions later developed independently.

The present paper aims to expose some aspects of the revival of ancient art in both worlds, Byzantine and Latin, during the 13th and 14th centuries. In this way, firstly, a more appropriate method for examining the origin of this extensive 13th century Proto-Renaissance is established. Secondly, it is useful to note how the revival gave way under the weight of more conservative Byzantine forms in 14th century Byzantine painting and, thirdly, it is instructive to show an interpretation of the way in which, in the West, namely in Italy, the classical forms developed unimpeded from 1260 onwards so that they eventually continued into the great Renaissance.

In the preceding analysis we have seen that only a few years after 1204 until c. 1265, in byzantine painting, classical features appeared, gradually. Human figures became voluminous, the bodies heavy and wide and the faces acquired a realistic expression. Moreover, line gave way to the relief and shading marked the anatomy and the draperies; the palette of colors enriched by intermediate tones that render the graduation of the light. The depicted architectures showed regularity. On the other hand, between 1204 and 1260 in the pictorial arts of the West there is an increasing tendency of rendering faces realistic or ideally beautiful that radiate magnificence and nobleness, while substantial bodies show harmonic proportions, elegance, tranquil poses or realistic movements.

Furthermore, we have seen how, after c. 1265, in Byzantine painting the classical tendency interrupts its evolution towards a real renaissance. In particular, the examination of the spatial arrangement in painting has shown that although the Greeks had come so close to the ancient models, they chose to return to the pictorial norms that have always ruled the Byzantine tradition. Moreover, we have shown an interpretation of how, during the same period, western artists were able to re-evaluate classical art. In Italy, more specifically, the classical tendencies of different waves of Byzantine influence during the 13th century (among other factors that we have already mentioned) contributed greatly to the study of rendering more naturalistically the pictorial space, the proportions of the human body and the psychological connection between the actors, creating the conditions that essentially promoted the Renaissance of the arts.

The main idea of the present paper is that the origin of the extensive wave of ancient revival from Asia Minor to the Balkans and from the Mediterranean Sea to Scandinavia and the Atlantic during the 13th century is due to the Fourth Crusade. In fact, as a consequence of the sacking of the Byzantine capital by the Crusaders, in 1204, Nicaea in Bithynia was destined to be politically the continuation of the Byzantine Empire itself. Moreover, it became immediately a most important center of humanism and artistic radiation. It is easy to imagine that the nicaean trends have permeated other important Greek artistic centers, such as Thessaloniki, which can explain the great expansion of the classical currents, in the first place, from Asia Minor to the Balkans and the Adriatic Sea. In the second place, the ideas of humanists that in artistic matter were translated as revival of ancient art influenced the Franks and Venetians of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, who consequently, along with enormous quantities of byzantine artifacts and Greek craftsmen, imported these trends in Western Europe. Thus, the wave of Hellenism from Nicaea must be one of the important factors for the artistic revival also in the Latin world that eventually led to the great Renaissance in Italy.

Durant les deux siècles précédant la Renaissance italienne du XV^e siècle, différentes vagues de courants classiques ont marqué la création artistique, tant du monde byzantin que du monde occidental. Particulièrement entre 1210 et 1260, on peut noter dans les deux régions une évolution parallèle du renouveau des formes antiques. En revanche, différentes expressions artistiques se développèrent indépendamment par la suite.

Le présent article cherche à exposer quelques aspects du renouveau de l'art antique dans les deux mondes, le byzantin et le latin, durant le XIII^e et le XIV^e siècle. Pour ce faire, on présente tout d'abord une méthode plus appropriée pour étudier les origines de l'importante protorennaissance du XIII^e siècle. Ensuite, il semble utile de noter dans un second temps son évolution sous l'effet des formes plus conservatrices de la peinture byzantine du XIV^e siècle. En troisième lieu, suit une interprétation qui explique de quelle manière les formes classiques se sont développées en Occident, particulièrement en Italie, après 1260 et comment elles ont finalement mené à la Renaissance.

Dans la précédente analyse, nous avons vu que peu d'années après 1204 et jusqu'à environ 1265, des caractéristiques classiques apparurent progressivement dans la peinture byzantine. Les figures humaines gagnèrent en volume, les corps lourds et gros et les visages acquirent une expression réaliste. De plus, le relief fut plus accentué et des ombres marquèrent l'anatomie et les draperies ; la gamme des couleurs fut enrichie de demi-teintes qui permirent de rendre la gradation de la lumière. L'architecture représentée est empreinte de régularité. De l'autre côté, on constate dans les arts picturaux d'Occident entre 1204 et 1260 une tendance croissante de représenter les visages de manière soit réaliste soit idéalisée pour exprimer la magnificence et la noblesse tandis que les corps présentent des proportions harmonieuses et sont caractérisés par l'élégance, les poses tranquilles et les mouvements réalistes.

Après 1265, la tendance classique s'interrompt au profit d'une véritable Renaissance dans la peinture byzantine. L'analyse de la disposition spatiale dans la peinture a particulièrement montré que les Grecs, quoiqu'ils aient été si proches des modèles antiques, sont finalement revenus aux normes picturales qui ont de tout temps déterminé la tradition byzantine. En revanche, nous avons pu démontrer comment les artistes occidentaux ont pu réévaluer l'art classique durant la même période. En Italie, spécialement, les tendances classiques des différents courants d'influence byzantine du XIII^e siècle (à côté des autres facteurs précédemment mentionnés) ont énormément contribué à l'étude de la conception plus naturaliste de l'espace peint, des proportions du corps humain et du lien psychologique entre les acteurs, créant les conditions qui favorisèrent essentiellement la Renaissance des arts.

L'idée centrale de cet article est que l'origine de cette vague puissante du renouveau antique s'étendant au XIII^e siècle de l'Asie Mineure jusqu'aux Balkans et de la Méditerranée jusqu'à l'Atlantique et la Scandinavie, est liée à la quatrième croisade. En effet, en conséquence du sac de la capitale byzantine par les Croisés, en 1204, Nicée en Bithynie garantit la continuité politique de l'Empire byzantin. En plus, la ville devint immédiatement un important centre de diffusion de l'humanisme et de l'art. Il est facile de s'imaginer que les tendances nicéennes marquèrent d'autres importants centres artistiques grecs tels que Thessalonique. Cela explique la grande expansion des courants classiques d'Asie Mineure jusqu'aux Balkans et à la mer Adriatique. De plus, les idées humanistes, qui se traduisirent artistiquement par le renouveau de l'art antique, influencèrent les Francs et les Vénitiens de l'empire latin de Constantinople. Par conséquent,

ceux-ci exportèrent en Occident ces tendances de même qu'un nombre considérable d'artefacts byzantins et d'artisans grecs. Ainsi la vague hellénistique de Nicée a-t-elle dû être l'un des facteurs importants pour le renouveau artistique, même dans le monde latin, et a-t-elle conduit à la Renaissance italienne. A.S.

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TEIL 1 WELT DER IDEEN, WELT DER DINGE

WELT DER IDEEN

Ernst Künzl

Auf dem Weg in das Mittelalter: die Gräber Constantins, Theoderichs und Chlodwigs

Vasiliki Tsamakda

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Umberto Roberto

The Circus Factions and the Death of the Tyrant: John of Antioch on the Fate of the Emperor Phocas

Stefan Albrecht

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Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm

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Tanja V. Kushch

The Beauty of the City in Late Byzantine Rhetoric

Helen Papastavrou

Classical Trends in Byzantine and Western Art in the 13th and 14th Centuries

WELT DER DINGE

Birgit Bühler

Is it Byzantine Metalwork or not? Evidence for Byzantine Craftsmanship Outside the Byzantine Empire (6th to 9th Centuries AD)

Isabella Baldini Lipolis

Half-crescent Earrings in Sicily and Southern Italy

Yvonne Petrina

Kreuze mit geschweiften Hasten und kreisförmigen Hastenenden

Anastasia G. Yangaki

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Ellen Riemer

Byzantinische und romanisch-mediterrane Fibeln in der Forschung

Aimilia Yeroulanou

Common Elements in »Treasures« of the Early Christian Period

Tivadar Vida

Zur Formentwicklung der mediterranen spätantik-frühbyzantinischen Metallkrüge (4.-9. Jahrhundert)

Anastassios Antonaras

Early Christian and Byzantine Glass Vessels: Forms and Uses

Binnur Gürler und Ergün Lafli

Frühbyzantinische Glaskunst in Kleinasien

Ronald Bockius

Zur Modellrekonstruktion einer byzantinischen Dromone (chelandion) des 10./11. Jahrhunderts im Forschungsbereich Antike Schifffahrt, RGZM Mainz

Isabelle C. Kollig, Matthias J. J. Jacinto Fragata und Kurt W. Alt

Anthropologische Forschungen zum Byzantinischen Reich – ein Stiefkind der Wissenschaft?

TEIL 2 SCHAUPLÄTZE

KONSTANTINOPEL / ISTANBUL

Albrecht Berger

Konstantinopel – Gründung, Blüte und Verfall
einer mediterranen Metropole

Rudolf H. W. Stichel

Die Hagia Sophia Justinians, ihre liturgische Einrichtung
und der zeremonielle Auftritt des frühbyzantinischen
Kaisers

Helge Svenshon

Das Bauwerk als »aistheton soma« – eine Neuinter-
pretation der Hagia Sophia im Spiegel antiker
Vermessungslehre und angewandter Mathematik

Lars O. Grobe, Oliver Hauck und Andreas Noback

Das Licht in der Hagia Sophia – eine Computersimulation

Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger

Die justinianische Hagia Sophia: Vorbild oder Vorwand?

Örgü Dalgıç

The Corpus of Floor Mosaics from Istanbul

Stefan Albrecht

Vom Unglück der Sieger – Kreuzfahrer in Konstantinopel
nach 1204

Ernst Gamillscheg

Hohe Politik und Alltägliches im Spiegel
des Patriarchatsregisters von Konstantinopel

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Konstantinos D. Politis

The Monastery of Aghios Lot at Deir 'Ain 'Abata
in Jordan

ANAIA / KADIKALESİ

Zeynep Mercangöz

Ostentatious Life in a Byzantine Province:
Some Selected Pieces from the Finds of the Excavation
in Kuşadası, Kadikalesi/Anaia (Prov. Aydın, TR)

Handan Üstündağ

Paleopathological Evidence for Social Status in a Byzan-
tine Burial from Kuşadası, Kadikalesi/Anaia: a Case of
»Diffuse Idiopathic Skeletal Hyperostosis« (DISH)

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and Economy

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Amorium

Beate Böhlendorf-Arslan

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Edward M. Schoolman

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in der Alltagskultur von Amorium

Johanna Witte

Freizeitbeschäftigung in Amorium: die Spiele

CHERSON / SEWASTOPOL

Aleksandr Ajbabin

Das frühbyzantinische Chersonesos/Cherson

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und Renata Henneberg*

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Recent Multidisciplinary Research in the Southern Region
of Tauric Chersonesos (Cherson)

Tatjana Jašaeva

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EPHESOS / SELÇUK

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Martin Steskal

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der Stadt Ephesos im 6. Jahrhundert

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Vujadin Ivanišević

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Housing in the Lower Town

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Valery Grigorov

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Thomas Otten

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zu Forschungsstand und Quellenlage

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als Abbild der politisch-militärischen Situationen
im westlichen Kleinasien

Sarah Japp

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TELANISSOS / QAL'AT SIM'AN

Jean-Luc Biscop

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of Saint-Symeon

USAYS / ĠĀBAL SAYS

Franziska Bloch

Öllampenfunde aus dem spätantik-frühislamischen
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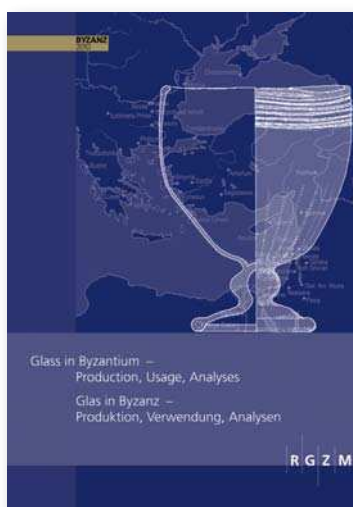
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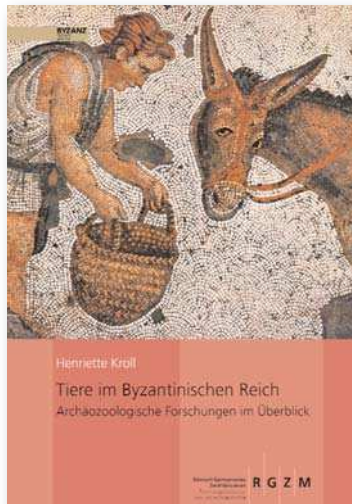
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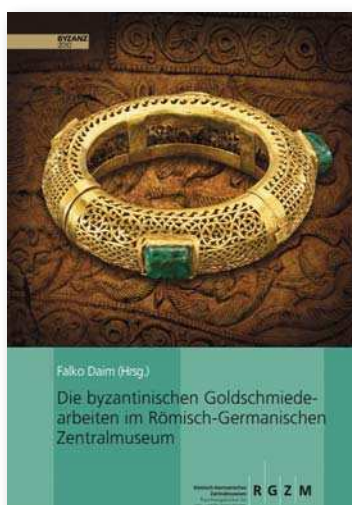
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