

ICONS OF THE ICONODULE: GENDER, POLITICS, AND ORTHODOXY IN THE
PALAIOLOGAN IMAGERY OF SAINT THEODOSIA

by

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Saint Theodosia of Constantinople, an iconodule martyr of the eighth century, was credited with leading the resistance to the destruction of the icon of Christ on the Chalke Gate. This thesis focuses on the icons of Theodosia, which date largely to the Palaiologan period (1261-1453). The icons are examined through an investigation of the cult of Theodosia in the Palaiologan period, taking into account important contemporary political and religious issues, such as the relationship between Byzantium and the West and the nature of Orthodox doctrine. Issues regarding women and icons will also be considered.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 726 the iconoclast emperor Leo III (717-741) ordered the destruction of the icon of Christ that hung on the Chalke Gate, the entrance to the palace in Constantinople. This incident generated legendary accounts of the defense of the image by the Constantinopolitan nun Theodosia and her companions, who became the first martyrs of Byzantine Iconoclasm (726-787 and 815-843). This thesis focuses on the icons of St. Theodosia of Constantinople, which date largely to the Palaiologan period (1261-1453), and the saint's image in the British Museum icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, which dates to around 1400 (fig. 1). Five of the icons of Theodosia are housed in the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Sinai, Egypt (figs. 2-6). Another icon of Theodosia is in the homonymous church at Niochori in the Chora of Naxos, and another, T 179, is in the Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki (figs. 7-8). These seven are the only published icons of Theodosia, although there may be other examples that are either undiscovered or have yet to be published.

Although this thesis deals with the icons of Theodosia, it should be noted that the saint is represented in manuscripts and frescoes as well. The saint is depicted in illustrations in the *Menologium of Basil II* and in *synaxaries*. Monumental representations of the saint can be found in Prizren at Bogorodica Ljeviška (1307-9), in Yugoslavia at

Staro Nagoričino (1317), and in the narthex of the church at Peć (1561).¹ At both Staro Nagoričino and Peć, Theodosia is accompanied by Saints Yakinthos and Aimilianos, both of whom share Theodosia's feast day of 18 July.

The icons of Theodosia are noteworthy because icons of female saints are relatively rare in Byzantine art. The five icons of Theodosia at Sinai constitute a relatively large number—no other female saint (excluding the Virgin and St. Catherine, the patron saint of the monastery) is represented in as many icons in the monastery's collection. The Naxos icon and the Thessaloniki icon of Theodosia add to this number.

The icons of Theodosia all follow a standardized iconography. She is dressed in the garb of a nun and usually holds a gold cross, signifying her status as a martyr. Sometimes she is depicted holding an icon of Christ, presumably meant to represent the Chalke icon associated with her legend. Theodosia's face is invariably rendered as youthful, with large eyes, plump cheeks and full lips.

Doula Mouriki has studied the Sinai icons of Theodosia in an article entitled "Portraits of St. Theodosia in Five Sinai Icons," from 1994.² The article is valuable for its reproduction of the icons, three of which had not been previously published, and for its formal analysis of the icons. Mouriki states that the five icons of Theodosia "represent a large number even for the richest collection of icons to have been preserved at a Greek

¹ For Bogorodica Ljeviška, see Draga Panić and Gordana Babić, *Bogorodica Ljeviška* (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1975), 57, drawing 15; For Staro Nagoričino, see Pavle Mijovic, *Menolog: istorijsko-umetnicka istrazivanja* (Belgrade: Arkheoloski Institut, 1973), 283; for Peć, see *ibid.*, 375.

² Mouriki, "Portraits of St. Theodosia in Five Sinai Icons," in *Thymiama Stemmeme tes Laskarina Bouras*, 213-219 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1994). George Galavaris takes up Mouriki's approach to the icons in "Two Icons of St. Theodosia at Sinai," *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias*, 4th ser., 17 (1993-1994): 313-316.

Monastery,” and goes on to relate the icons to the written sources about the cult of Theodosia and her representation in Byzantine art.³ She states that she has been unable to trace any other icons with the figure of Theodosia as its sole representation; thus she was evidently unaware of the other three icons that will be included in this thesis. Although she acknowledges that the Sinai icons represent a relatively large number, she states that the number of icons “can be judged in a more correct perspective if it is related to the evidence provided by the written sources about the cult of St. Theodosia and her portraits in Byzantine art.”⁴ After an overview of the written sources and images of Theodosia, Mouriki comments on the “rarity” of the images of Theodosia and argues that the presence of the icons in the Monastery of St. Catherine reflects connections between Sinai and Constantinople.⁵ Mouriki does not relate the icons of Theodosia to other representations of holy women in icons. Nor does she include the Naxos icon or the Thessaloniki icon in her discussion of the Byzantine portraits of Theodosia. And despite her statement about the written sources, Mouriki’s largely formalist analysis of the Sinai icons does not provide a contextual framework through which to understand them.

The icons of Theodosia stand as visual evidence of the popularity of her cult during the Palaiologan period, and they should be considered together as important examples of female saintly portraiture in icons. No previous study has included a survey of all seven of the icons of Theodosia. This is also the first time that the icons of Theodosia will be explored along with her image in the British Museum icon and other

³ Mouriki, “Portraits of St. Theodosia,” 216.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 219.

depictions of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. Theodosia's inclusion in icons of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, all of which date from the Palaiologan period and later, provides further evidence of the popularity and importance of this saint during the Late Byzantine period. Furthermore, an analysis of the British Museum icon offers the opportunity to compare the image of Theodosia with those of the other iconophile saints depicted in the icon.

Chapter One of this thesis examines the evidence provided by the written sources about Theodosia's life and legend. The highly problematic written sources on the removal of the icon of Christ from the Chalke Gate are compared in order to understand how St. Theodosia came to be accepted as the first martyr of Iconoclasm. The role women might have played in opposing Iconoclasm is also discussed. Chapter Two explores the political and religious climate of the Palaiologan period in order to contextualize both the cult and the icons of Theodosia. The evidence of devotional practices and miraculous healing at Theodosia's shrine is examined in order to shed light on the icons of Theodosia, which stand as visual documents of the popularity of the saint's cult. This chapter also deals with the relationship between Byzantium and the West, focusing on the historical events of the restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII (1259-1282) and the reversal of the Union of Lyons under Andronikos II (1282-1328). In light of the information provided in the previous two chapters, Chapter Three takes an iconographical approach to the analysis of the icons of Theodosia. The seven icons of Theodosia, looked at together here for the first time, are compared to the representation of other female saints. Issues concerning provenance and function are also considered. Chapter Four deals with the image of Theodosia in the British Museum icon

of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. The icon represents the Restoration of the Holy Images, understood as the final defeat of Iconoclasm. The British Museum icon is discussed in relation to the concern over Orthodoxy in the Palaiologan period and to the state of the Empire in its last centuries. The depiction of the Triumph of Orthodoxy is viewed as a symbol of hope and Byzantine faith.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE AND LEGEND OF ST. THEODOSIA OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Information on the life of St. Theodosia of Constantinople comes primarily from a short notice in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople* for 18 July.⁶ According to this source, Theodosia was born and raised in Constantinople and placed in a nunnery at the age of seven by her widowed mother, whose fortune was bequeathed to Theodosia. The *Synaxarion* does not provide any further information on Theodosia's life within the convent, except that she was a defender of icons during the Iconoclasm of the eighth century and commissioned three gold and silver icons of Christ, the Theotokos, and St. Anastasia the martyr.⁷ According to the *Synaxarion*, the iconoclast emperor Leo III (717-741) deposed the patriarch Germanos and "hastened to remove and commit to the flames the holy and sovereign icon of Christ our God, the one fixed above the gates among which was one called the Holy Chalke Gate because of this image."⁸ Leo's destruction of the Chalke icon is considered the first official act of Byzantine Iconoclasm. The Chalke (Bronze) Gate was a key focus of the city; it was the vestibule through which one entered

⁶ The earliest reference to Theodosia in the *Synaxarium* is in the Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS gr. 1617, dated 1071. See Berge Aran, "The Church of St. Theodosia and the Monastery of Christ Euergetes," *Jahrbuch österreichischen Byzantinistik* 28 (1979): 212. For the text see Hippolyte Delehaye, ed., *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano* (Brussels: Society of the Bollandistes, 1902), 828, 55-56; 830, 1-3.

⁷ Probably the Roman martyr of the third century. See Nicholas Conostas, "Life of St. Theodosia of Constantinople," in *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), 5, n. 25.

⁸ Conostas, "Life of St. Theodosia," 6. Conostas (note 28) notes that the *Synaxarium*, following the *Life of St. Stephen the Younger* (PG 100:1085C), conflates the outbreak of Iconoclasm in 726 with Leo's deposition of Germanos in 730, thereby situating the Chalke incident in the patriarchate of Anastasios.

into the imperial palace complex in Constantinople and was situated at one end of the Mesê, a main thoroughfare in the city.⁹ Leo ordered the *spatharios* (a member of the elite imperial guard) to remove the icon with an ax. Theodosia, “together with other pious women,” knocked the *spatharios* down from his ladder, killing him. They then proceeded to the patriarchate and threw stones at the patriarch Anastasios (730-754). As a result, the women were sentenced to death. All but Theodosia were decapitated. A public executioner dragged Theodosia through the streets of Constantinople to the Forum of the Ox, where she was slain with a horn.¹⁰ Theodosia is thus credited with being the first martyr of Byzantine Iconoclasm (726-787 and 815-843).

The icon, one of the most important icons in Byzantium, was called Our Lord of the Chalke, and was popularly known as *Christos Chalkites*.¹¹ Its history prior to Iconoclasm is uncertain and obscure, and it is not known exactly when or by whom it was placed on the Chalke Gate.¹² There are no descriptions of an icon of Christ on the Chalke Gate and no record of Leo’s removal of any such portrait in written accounts before

⁹ Cyril Mango, *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen: I Kommission hos Munksgaard, 1959), 97.

¹⁰ Constatas, “Life of St. Theodosia,” 7. Another version of the *Synaxarium* notes that Theodosia was taken to a place near the Forum of the Ox by a soldier, who slit her throat with a ram’s horn. Hippolyte Delehaye, ed., *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano* (Brussels: Society of the Bollandistes, 1902), 827-828.48-50, as cited in Constatas, “Life of St. Theodosia,” n. 36.

¹¹ Mango, *Brazen House*, 108.

¹² On the Chalke image before Iconoclasm, see *ibid.*, 108-112.

800.¹³ The eighth-century chronicler, Nicephorus, writes of Leo III's destruction of holy images, but he does not mention the Chalke icon of Christ.¹⁴

The only independent account of Leo III's removal of an icon from the Chalke Gate comes from the ninth-century *Scriptor Incertus*, which records the removal of a copy of the Chalke icon of Christ in 814 by Leo V (813-820), in imitation of Leo III.¹⁵ The icon Leo V removed had been put up by the iconodule empress Eirene (797-802) around 800. Eirene ruled as regent for her nine-year-old son Constantine VI from 780 to 797, after her iconoclast husband Leo IV died, and it was under her regency that the first restoration of icons took place in 787. According to the *Scriptor Incertus*, "Above the image [of Christ] was the inscription, 'This which aforetime the Emperor Leo took down, Eirene has restored here,' and it was that Leo who removed the image which had existed

¹³ Scholars have questioned the significance of the Chalke icon before Iconoclasm and whether or not the icon actually existed under Leo III, because it is not mentioned in the sources until the ninth century. According to Marie-France Auzépy, the icon of Christ on the Chalke Gate did not exist before Eirene, who put the image into place for political reasons and claimed to be restoring what the Iconoclasts had taken down in 726. Robin Cormack agrees with Auzépy's interpretation that the idea of the Chalke Christ icon was an iconophile myth invented around 800, when the new icon was hung over the Chalke Gate by Eirene. The tradition was invented, he asserts, so that the iconophiles would not be viewed as heretical innovators. Cyril Mango puts forth that the Chalke icon did exist under Leo III, but that it held no special significance up to the time of its destruction because it is not mentioned in any documents dated before Iconoclasm. Mango argues that the icon was probably not in place before the seventh century and only gained importance in the eighth century with the outbreak of Iconoclasm. Similarly, Haldon and Ward-Perkins state, "...one can imagine a scenario in which a quietly-accepted piece of religious decoration in such an important position assumed deep significance only after it had been removed or destroyed." See Marie-France Auzépy, "La destruction de l'icône du Christ de la Chalcé de Léon III: Propagande ou réalité?" *Byzantion* 60 (1990): 445-492; Robin Cormack, "Women and Icons, and Women in Icons," in *Women, Men, and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (New York: Routledge, 1997), 41; Mango, *Brazen House*, 111-112; John Haldon and Bryan Ward-Perkins, "Evidence from Rome for the Image of Christ on the Chalke Gate," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999): 296.

¹⁴ Haldon and Ward-Perkins, "Evidence from Rome," 289.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 291.

since the foundation of the City.”¹⁶ Leo V’s removal of the Chalke icon that Eirene had previously restored ushered in the second period of Iconoclasm (815-843). There is no way to know for certain when the Chalke icon was originally put into place, but the account of its removal from the Chalke Gate, generated in the years between the two periods of Iconoclasm (787-815), continued in popularity after the end of Iconoclasm in 843.¹⁷

Conflicting narratives describing Leo III’s destruction of the Chalke icon of Christ have prompted scholars to question the historicity of St. Theodosia, as certain versions of the story exclude her altogether. One such account comes from the First Letter of Pope Gregory II to emperor Leo III, widely accepted as a forgery dating to around 800.¹⁸ In the letter the Pope praises a group of “zealous women” for attempting to save the Chalke icon and rebukes Leo for his actions.¹⁹ This dubious account places the destruction of the icon at the Chalkoprateia, the location of an icon of Christ Antiphonetes, instead of at the Chalke Gate. The *Life of St. Stephen the Younger*, written around 809, situates the removal of the icon in 730, the year Anastasios was placed on the patriarchal throne. According to the *Life*, a group of “honorable women” defended the

¹⁶ Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), 157.

¹⁷ Leslie Brubaker, “The Chalke Gate, the Construction of the Past, and the Trier Ivory,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999): 280-281.

¹⁸ Mango, *Brazen House*, 113-114.

¹⁹ Jean Gouillard, “Aux origines de l’iconoclisme: le témoignage de Grégoire II?” *Travaux et mémoires* 3 (1968), 293.221, as quoted in Constas, “Life of St. Theodosia of Constantinople,” 2.

icon, which Leo had ordered to be taken down and burned.²⁰ After killing the *spatharios* who was carrying out the emperor's orders, the women rushed to the patriarchal palace and threw stones at Anastasios, who fled to Leo and convinced him to execute the women.²¹ This version of the incident is similar to the account of the *Synaxarion*; however here, no mention is made of Theodosia. According to the *Chronicle* of Theophanes, it was the "populace of the Imperial City" that defended the image of Christ and killed Leo's soldiers. Many of the citizens, especially those "who were prominent by birth and culture," were subsequently punished with "mutilation, lashes, banishment, and fines." This in turn led to the "extinction of schools and of the pious education."²² Theophanes' account is interesting for the emphasis placed on the punishment of the upper class and the destruction of educational institutions. Theodosia does not appear in Theophanes' account of the destruction of the Chalke icon.

Two hagiographic versions of the incident, the older "Marian" redaction and the "Theodosian" account, further complicate matters. The "Marian" version comes from an anonymous *Passio* of the martyrs of the Chalke written in 869, which is largely based on

²⁰ *Vita Stephani Junioris, Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, 100:1069-186, 1085c.12, as quoted from Nicholas Conostas, "Life of St. Theodosia of Constantinople," in *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), 2. Conostas notes that the *Synaxarium* notice for St. Theodosia reproduces verbatim the description of the Chalke Gate incident found in the *Vita* of St. Stephen. Conostas, "Life of St. Theodosia," 2, n. 4.

²¹ Mango, *Brazen House*, 115.

²² Theophanes (Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, eds.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 559-560.

the *Chronicle* of Theophanes and the Life of St. Stephen the Younger.²³ According to the text, known as the *Passio SS. Martyrum Constantinopolitanorum*, a group of ten men, led by an aristocratic woman named Maria, killed the *spatharios* in an attempt to save the Chalke icon of Christ.²⁴ Leo was willing to pardon Maria because of her imperial descent, but she chose instead to be executed along with her companions. The “Theodosian” account of the defense of the Chalke icon, which appears first in the *Menologion of Basil II* (c. 1000), replaces Maria with Theodosia of Constantinople.²⁵ Although the *Menologion* states that Theodosia lived during the reign of Constantine V (741-775), anachronistically it credits her with defending the icon of Christ during the reign of Leo III.²⁶

One of the most intriguing aspects of the defense of the Chalke icon is the role that these writers give to women in opposing Iconoclasm. Anonymous groups of pious women are repeatedly credited for defending the Chalke icon in the sources, and the only named protagonists, Maria and Theodosia, are women. Looking at the connection between women and icons more broadly, two of the most notable iconodules in Byzantine history include the empresses Eirene and Theodora. The restoration of images in 787 and 843 came under the respective reigns of Eirene and Theodora, both of whom ruled on behalf of their young sons after the deaths of their iconoclast husbands.

²³ *Acta sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur: vel a catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur* (Paris: Apud Victorem Palme, 1863-1940), Aug. vol. II, 428-448, as cited in Mango, *Brazen House*, 116, n. 27.

²⁴ Constas, “Life of St. Theodosia,” n. 6.

²⁵ *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca* 117, 580 B, as cited in Mango, *Brazen House*, 117.

²⁶ Mango, *Brazen House*, 118.

However, although anonymous women are often mentioned in the sources for their role in opposing Iconoclasm, individual female iconophile saints are poorly represented in Byzantine hagiography.

Alexander Kazhdan and Alice-Mary Talbot have approached the topic of women and Iconoclasm through an examination of the evidence of the hagiography of iconodule women and the letters of Theodore of Stoudios.²⁷ Their study raises several interesting points regarding the role of women in Iconoclasm. Very few female saints are noted for their resistance to Iconoclasm, especially in comparison to the number of male saints.²⁸ Only eight women of the eighth century and first half of the ninth century were commemorated as saints in the tenth-century version of the *Synaxarion*, and of these only three are specifically noted as opponents of Iconoclasm: Theodosia of Constantinople, Anthousa of Mantineon, and the empress Theodora.²⁹ Entries for male saints between 700 and 850 significantly outnumber female saints in the *Synaxarion*, and a higher proportion of male saints are noted for their resistance to Iconoclasm.³⁰ Furthermore, in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, produced sometime between 843 and 920, only male saints are

²⁷ Alexander Kazhdan and Alice-Mary Talbot, "Women and Iconoclasm," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 84/85 (1991/1992); 391-408.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 395-396.

²⁹ Anthousa of Mantineon was an abbess who suffered torture under Constantine V for her iconodule beliefs. Persecution of Anthousa ceased after she predicted the birth of a son and daughter to the emperor and his wife. See Kazhdan and Talbot, "Women and Iconoclasm," 393; Alice-Mary Talbot, "Life of St. Anthousa of Mantineon," in *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), 13-20.

³⁰ Kazhdan and Talbot, "Women and Iconoclasm," 396.

included in the section devoted to acclamations of heroes of the iconodule movement.³¹ Thus, a reading of the hagiographic evidence alone suggests that women did not play an important role in opposing Iconoclasm.

However, a different picture emerges when one examines the correspondence of Theodore of Stoudios. His letters date to the first half of the ninth century and offer insight on the role women played in the second phase of Iconoclasm. Almost all of the female correspondents of Theodore of Stoudios held iconophile views, and a large number of them maintained their views even when their husbands or other male relatives were iconoclasts.³² In order to make sense of the evidence, Kazhdan and Talbot hypothesize that Byzantine society of the eighth century assumed a more patriarchal character than it had in the previous century, and that this patriarchal tendency incited women's resistance. They go on to suggest that the iconophile victors inherited the iconoclasts' misogynist position, creating a society under which women's role in cultural life decreased, the evidence of women's participation in opposing Iconoclasm was obscured, and the celebration of saintly women who defended icon veneration was limited.³³

Judith Herrin has investigated the relationship between women and icons in the early Christian and Iconoclast periods. Through an examination of women's roles in the development of icon veneration, she came to the conclusion that the cult of icons was

³¹ Ibid., 397.

³² Ibid., 398-399.

³³ Ibid., 404.

particularly suitable to women because of their secluded position within the home and the limited opportunities available to them in ecclesiastical life.³⁴ Icons thus offered women, who were excluded from public services, an unrestricted, personal, and private form of worship. Upon first reading Byzantine accounts of female devotion to icons, Herrin had dismissed them as “yet another example of the common slurs on womankind perpetrated by uniformly male writers.”³⁵ That is, male writers positioned women as a deviant group of icon venerators, unable to understand higher points of theology. According to Robin Cormack, Herrin’s initial response to the evidence was correct, and he argues that the documents of Iconoclasm should be understood as reflective of the discourses of religious polemics; the textual and visual evidence should be read not as evidence for women, but as representations of women, written by men.³⁶ He suggests that the story of rioting women at the Chalke Gate might have originally been iconoclast polemic, absorbed somehow into later iconophile writing.³⁷ Thus, for Cormack the iconophile texts are not to be taken at face value or as historical fact.

A mixture of the above scenarios might offer a possible explanation of the relationship between women and icons, since these ideas are not necessarily mutually exclusive. It seems likely that women did have a special affinity for icon veneration and were subsequently positioned as the deviant group by the iconoclasts. Cormack’s

³⁴ Judith Herrin, “Women and the Faith in Icons in Early Christianity,” in *Culture, Ideology, and Politics: Essays for Eric Hobsbawn* (Boston Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), 56-83.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

³⁶ Cormack, “Women and Icons,” 24-51.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

assertion that iconoclast polemic was subsumed under later iconophile writing seems to make sense, although it does not necessarily exclude the idea of women as especially devoted to icons. Even though relatively few women achieved sanctity and are noted in hagiography for their role in opposing Iconoclasm, it does not mean that women in general were not opposed to Iconoclasm, as the letters of Theodore of Stoudios seem to suggest. Kazhdan and Talbot's idea that iconophiles inherited the iconoclasts' misogynist position and subsequently obscured their role in opposing Iconoclasm would explain them being underrepresented in hagiographic sources.

Whether or not women in general had a special role in opposing Iconoclasm, it was St. Theodosia who was credited with attempting to save the Chalke icon of Christ. Although the confusion surrounding her life and legend may frustrate scholars, her role as a defender of icons was clearly defined to believers from as early as circa 1000, when her story first appears in the *Menologium of Basil II*. Theodosia developed a cult following, which grew especially strong during the Palaiologan period (1261-1453). Nearly all depictions of Theodosia in icons date to this period, and in them Theodosia is represented alternately in single portraits, in icons with other saints, and in icons of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, where she is depicted alongside other important iconophile saints. In addition to the icons that stand as visual evidence of her cult, there are several written accounts of miracles of healing occurring at her shrine in Constantinople. The written sources are also useful for the information they provide concerning cult devotion at Theodosia's shrine. The next chapter will investigate Theodosia's cult during the Palaiologan period, particularly during the reign of the emperor Andronikos II (1282-1328), through an

examination of the evidence of pilgrimage accounts and the works of the hagiographer Constantine Akropolites and the historian Georgios Pachymeres.

CHAPTER III

THE CULT OF ST. THEODOSIA IN THE PALAIOLOGAN PERIOD

The Palaiologan period witnessed a revival of hagiography, which had experienced a decline in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and during the Latin occupation (1204-1261).³⁸ With the revival of hagiography also came the increased production of accounts of miraculous healing. Palaiologan collections of such *miracula* were for the most part devoted to saints of previous centuries, indicating a renewed interest in previously established cults.³⁹ Theodosia, as an eighth-century martyr, is a perfect example of such a saint. The hagiographic sources show that Theodosia developed a significant cult following in Constantinople during the Palaiologan period, and nearly all of the existing accounts of miraculous healing at her shrine date to this time. The visual evidence of her surviving icons, all of which date to between the thirteenth and fifteenth century, provides further proof of the popularity of her cult and will be discussed in the next chapter. An examination of the cult of Theodosia and a look at the historical, political, and religious climate of the Palaiologan period follows, in order to contextualize the icons of Theodosia.

³⁸ Alice-Mary Talbot, "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002): 165. On hagiography in the Palaiologan period, see Alice-Mary Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles: The Rewriting of Saints' Lives in the Palaeologan Period," in *Twilight of Byzantium*, ed. Slobodan Curčić and Doula Mouriki (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1991), 15-26.

³⁹ Stephanos Efthymiadis, "Late Byzantine Collections of Miracles and Their Implications," in *The Heroes of the Orthodox Church: The New Saints, 8th-16th c.*, ed. Eleonora Kountoura-Galake (Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2004), 241.

The Church of Theodosia, built soon after the end of Iconoclasm in 843, is generally accepted as located on the north coast of Constantinople on the slope leading down to the gate now known as the Aya kapı (fig. 9).⁴⁰ This gate, located in the sea walls along the Golden Horn, has been identified as the Byzantine Gate of St. Theodosia.⁴¹ It is unclear whether the body buried in the Church of Theodosia is that of Theodosia of Caesara (Tyre) or of Theodosia of Constantinople.⁴² The identities of the two saints seem to have merged during the fourteenth century, when the relic in the church along the Golden Horn was assumed to be the body of Theodosia of Constantinople.⁴³ This is reflected by the fact that *synaxaria* dating from 1071 through the fourteenth century list the feast day of St. Theodosia of Constantinople as 18 July, but the Cod. Coisl. gr. 223,

⁴⁰ Schäfer's archaeological study has shown that the traditional identification of Gül Camii, or Rose Mosque, with the Church of St. Theodosia is incorrect. Hartmut Schäfer, *Die Gül Camii in Istanbul. Ein Beitrag zur mittelbyzantinischen Kirchenarchitektur Konstantinopels*, IstMitt, Suppl. 7 (Tübingen, 1973), 82-85, as cited in George P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1984), 347.

⁴¹ Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 347; Aran, "Church of St. Theodosia," 211.

⁴² Anthony of Novgorod claims to have seen Theodosia's body near the Monastery of St. Aninas in the southwest part of Constantinople in 1200. Russian pilgrims of the fourteenth century alternately record the body of Theodosia of Constantinople as housed in the Kyra Martha Convent, located on the hillside south of the Church of the Holy Apostles in the central part of Constantinople, and in a nunnery bearing the saint's name. Since these accounts differ from Anthony's description of the location of Theodosia's relics, Majeska argues that Theodosia's body was transferred to Kyra Martha sometime between 1200 and 1349. The fifteenth-century pilgrim Zosimos, however, does not mention Theodosia's body among the relics he saw at Kyra Martha and places it in the Monastery of Christ Evergetes instead, suggesting that by the fifteenth century Theodosia's cult had been completely merged with that of St. Theodosia of Caesara (Tyre), whose body lay in the church overlooking the Golden Horn. See Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 346-351.

⁴³ Majeska argues that the Church of Theodosia on the Golden Horn originally housed the body of Theodosia of Caesarea, not Theodosia of Constantinople. For one, the patronal feast of the church was originally 29 May, the feast day of St. Theodosia of Caesarea. Furthermore, Stephen of Novgorod, the Russian Anonymous, and Alexander the Clerk record seeing the body of Theodosia in the Kyra Martha Convent and two of them specify that it was the Theodosia who was killed with a goat horn; this must be Theodosia of Constantinople. In the same text, however, Stephen and the Anonymous pilgrim see the relics of Theodosia in a shrine overlooking the Golden Horn. Majeska points out that this must be the body of Theodosia of Caesara. See Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 350.

dated 1301, records the saint's feast day as 29 May, the feast day of Theodosia of Caesarea, and subsequent *synaxaria* list this date as well.⁴⁴

Russian pilgrims who traveled to Constantinople have described cult practices that took place at Theodosia's shrine in their accounts. As early as 1200 Anthony of Novgorod records that Theodosia's relics were contained in a silver casket and carried in procession through Constantinople and used to heal the sick.⁴⁵ Stephen of Novgorod (1349) describes what he saw at Theodosia's shrine:

Then we returned from there [the Monastery of Saints Cosmas and Damian] to the city and went to the convent near the sea named after St. Theodosia the Virgin where we kissed her [body]. It is quite wonderful; every Wednesday and Friday is like a holiday [there]. Many men and women contribute candles, oil, and alms, and many sick people suffering from various diseases lie [there] on beds, receive cures, and enter the church. Others are carried in and are laid before her one at a time. She intercedes, and those who are ill receive healing. Singers chant from morning to the ninth hour, and so they perform the liturgy late.⁴⁶

Stephen's description tells us that both men and women sought healing from Theodosia and that her relics were used to cure a variety of ailments. The Russian Anonymous (1390s) writes:

You go east from there [the Monastery of Saints Cosmas and Damian] to St. Theodosia. There is a Monastery of St. Theodosia; the body of St. Theodosia reposes there. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday they carry her and place her on the sick, and healing comes from her.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Aran, "Church of Saint Theodosia," 212.

⁴⁵ Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 349.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 346-347.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 150.

Thus, according to Anthony and the Russian Anonymous Chronicle, Theodosia's relics were carried in procession and placed on the sick to promote healing, whereas according to Stephen people visited Theodosia's relics within her church to receive cures. It is likely that on feast days people were cured through contact with her relics carried in procession, while at other times people received cures within the church. These accounts demonstrate the widespread popularity of Theodosia's shrine as a site of pilgrimage and miraculous healing. Although the accounts of Russian pilgrims do not record seeing icons of Theodosia at her shrine, they were no doubt present, since icons were integral to the cult devotion of any saint. Furthermore, at least one of the *encomia* written for Theodosia mentions an icon of the saint.

We know of three *encomia* written for St. Theodosia. The earliest, composed by an anonymous author, is preserved in the twelfth-century manuscript at Mount Athos, Koutloumousiou Monastery, cod. 109.⁴⁸ Ioannis Stavrakios, deacon and chartophylax in Thessaloniki, wrote another *encomium* for the saint in the thirteenth century, although the text remains unpublished.⁴⁹ Constantine Akropolites, the most prolific hagiographer during the Palaiologan period, wrote a third *encomium* for Theodosia around the year 1300.⁵⁰ Akropolites, termed "the new Metaphrastes," was the son of the historian George

⁴⁸ M. I. Gedeon has published part of the text, which he considers a *vita* of St. Theodosia. According to this work, after the Chalke Gate incident Theodosia returned to her convent near Skoteinon Phrear and was martyred ten years later at Leomakellon under Constantine V (741-775). See M. Gedeon, Βυζαντινὸν Ἑορτολόγιον (Constantinople, 1899), 130-133, as cited in Conostas, "Life of St. Theodosia of Constantinople," n. 10.

⁴⁹ Mouriki, "Portraits of Theodosia," 216, n. 17.

⁵⁰ *Sermo in S. Martyrem Theodosiam, Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca* 140:893-936, as cited in Conostas, "Life of St. Theodosia of Constantinople," 3.

Akropolites and had served the emperor Andronikos II (1282-1328) as *logothetes tou genikou* and later as *megas logothetes*, from 1294-1321.⁵¹

At the end of his *encomium*, Akropolites describes three miraculous healings that took place at the shrine of Theodosia. The healed included Akropolites himself, his son-in-law, Michael of Trebizond, and a crippled boy; each was cured through contact with Theodosia's relics and anointment with oil from the lamp that hung at her shrine. The first miracle involves a severely crippled boy who was unable to walk upright and was forced to drag himself along the ground. Akropolites, familiar with the boy, was amazed to see him standing straight up one day. The youth told Akropolites that he had been taken to Theodosia's shrine where he had anointed himself with oil from the lamp that hung above her reliquary. Upon doing so, he miraculously regained the use of his limbs and kissed Theodosia's icon in gratitude.⁵² The icon mentioned here likely had much in common with the icons of Theodosia that will be discussed in the following chapter. This account confirms the obvious: that icons of Theodosia were present at her shrine and were part of devotion to her cult. Akropolites also recounts the miraculous healings of Michael of Trebizond and himself. A riding accident had left Michael in a coma from which he awakened in a deranged state. After doctors tried unsuccessfully to cure Michael by bleeding him, Akropolites took him to the shrine of St. Theodosia, where he was miraculously healed through contact with her relics and anointment with oil from her

⁵¹ Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles," 17.

⁵² Alice-Mary Talbot, "Healing Shrines in Late Byzantine Constantinople," in *The 'Constantinople and Its Legacy' Series. The Hellenic Canadian Association of Constantinople* (Toronto, 2000), 10.

lamp.⁵³ Akropolites was also healed at the shrine of Theodosia. He had been kicked in the legs by a horse and long suffered from chronic pain. Doctors proved ineffective, but he was miraculously healed when he visited the shrine of St. Theodosia.⁵⁴ Akropolites' *encomium* was probably connected to the growing reputation of Theodosia's shrine as a site of miraculous healing, and was likely written either in gratitude for the cures of himself and his son-in-law or as a commissioned piece.⁵⁵ Andronikos II might even have commissioned Akropolites' work, since some *encomia* were meant to be read at the dedication ceremonies of churches restored by the emperor.

Another account of miraculous healing at Theodosia's shrine comes from the historian Georgios Pachymeres, who recorded the miraculous cure of a deaf and mute boy, Pegonites, in 1306.⁵⁶ The boy had a dream in which Theodosia appeared to him and pointed him to her shrine.⁵⁷ After the boy visited her church and anointed himself with the oil from her lamp, his hearing and voice were miraculously restored. The event attracted the attention of the emperor Andronikos II, who requested that the cured boy be tested in the presence of the patriarch.⁵⁸ After witnessing the boy's cure, the emperor,

⁵³ *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca* 140:925D-932A as cited in Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles," 18.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 140:932A-933B.

⁵⁵ Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles," 18.

⁵⁶ *Georges Pachymérès, Relations Historiques*, ed. A. Failler [CFHB 24/4], Paris 1999), XI.32:497-501.

⁵⁷ Efthymiadis, "Late Byzantine Collections of Miracles," 243.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 243.

accompanied by the patriarch and the senate, held an all-night vigil of thanksgiving at the Church of Theodosia.⁵⁹

The visit paid by Andronikos II to Theodosia's church is of interest because it provides evidence for significant imperial involvement with her cult. Constantine Akropolites' *encomium* further supports the idea of official involvement with her cult, because Akropolites was a trusted official of Andronikos II and part of the imperial elite. Thus, there seems to have been imperial promotion of Theodosia's shrine as a site of healing. Andronikos II's participation with the cult of Theodosia was not unique; imperial involvement with healing cults was widely documented during his reign. The fourteenth-century writer Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos recorded the *miracula* that occurred at the shrine of the Theotokos of the Pege, which was built over a spring whose waters had miraculous healing powers. In addition to recounting miracles that occurred there in the tenth century, Xanthopoulos included seventeen contemporary miraculous cures. Among the beneficiaries the author includes Andronikos' son Michael IX and his daughter-in-law Eudocia.⁶⁰ Xanthopoulos praises Andronikos II by associating his reign with the occurrence of countless miracles.⁶¹ Xanthopoulos also authored an account of miracles taking place at the healing shrine of Saint Euphrosyne the Younger. He includes the first and second wives of Andronikos II as two of the recipients of miraculous

⁵⁹ *Georgii Pachymeris de Michaelae et Andronico Palaeologis libri tredecim*, ed. Immanuel Bekker, 2 vols. (Bonn: Weber, 1835), 2:452-55, as cited in Constan, "Life of St. Theodosia of Constantinople," 3.

⁶⁰ Efthymiadis, "Late Byzantine Collections of Miracles," 248.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 248.

healing.⁶² These accounts suggest Andronikos' own participation in the healing cults of saints, which would have been further promoted by the miraculous cures of the imperial family.

Alice-Mary Talbot, who has studied healing *miracula* in Byzantium, notes that there are three periods of intense interest in pilgrimage to healing shrines: the fifth to early-seventh century, the post-Iconoclastic period of c. 850-1000, and the period in the late thirteenth century following the Latin occupation; she suggests that increased pilgrimage to healing shrines was “a reaction to triumph over crises within the Church and empire.”⁶³ The increased pilgrimage to healing shrines most likely occurred in tandem with an increase in the number of miracles being performed at the shrines. The hagiographic sources seem to suggest that the efficacy of healing shrines was linked to a harmonious political and religious climate within the Empire. Talbot proposes a connection between the abundance of *miracula* and the spiritual climate under the pious Andronikos II and suggests that a number of texts were composed to mark the consecration of new or restored churches or to revive their cults.⁶⁴

With regard to miracles occurring at the shrine of Theodosia, the following can be observed. The accounts of Russian pilgrims show that miracles were believed to have occurred at the shrine of Theodosia as early as 1200, when Anthony of Novgorod witnessed the use of Theodosia's relics to heal the sick. Theodosia's healing powers are documented throughout the fourteenth century, and cult practices at her shrine seem to

⁶² Talbot, “Healing Shrines,” 11-12.

⁶³ Talbot, “Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines,” 168.

⁶⁴ Talbot, “Healing Shrines,” 24; Talbot, “Old Wine in New Bottles,” 26.

have been set in place by the middle of the fourteenth century. Stephen of Novgorod and the Russian Anonymous provide similar descriptions on the festivities that took place at her shrine every Monday (according to Stephen), Wednesday, and Friday. The two texts by Akropolites and Pachymeres offer the most detailed descriptions of miracles occurring at Theodosia's shrine, and both were written during the reign of Andronikos II. Although none of the icons of Theodosia discussed in this thesis is dated securely to the reign of Andronikos, it is easy to imagine the creation of icons of the saint during this time, since the emperor played a role in promoting Theodosia's cult.

The fact that the icons of Theodosia all roughly date to the Palaiologan period reflects the strength of her cult during this time and the reputation of her shrine as a miraculous site of healing. Important events and issues of the Palaiologan period might shed light on the prevalence of icons of Theodosia during this era. An exploration of the issues that faced Byzantium in the Palaiologan period follows in order to contextualize the icons of Theodosia and to help understand her inclusion in representations of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, which will be discussed later.

The Palaiologan period begins with the restoration of Constantinople in 1261 by the emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-1282). The capital had been under occupation by the Latin Crusaders since 1204. Hagiographers of the Palaiologan period often write of the interruption of miraculous activities during the time of the Latin occupation of Constantinople. This is not surprising, considering the fact that Byzantine hagiographers tended to be both anti-Unionist and anti-Latin. Miracles had reportedly ceased to occur at Theodosia's shrine in Constantinople during the time of the Latin

occupation.⁶⁵ Miracles also ceased to occur at the monastery of Sts. Kosmas and Damian at the Kosmidion during the Latin occupation, according to Maximos the Deacon.⁶⁶ These examples suggest that the Latin occupation of Constantinople was viewed as a period of adulterated sanctity.

Once Constantinople was restored to Byzantine rule, Michael VIII focused on strengthening what was left of the Empire after the Latin occupation. In 1274, Michael VIII made a strategic diplomatic move to reunite the churches of Rome and Constantinople under the Union of Lyons. The Union was politically necessary for it aligned Michael with the papacy and ensured that Charles of Anjou could not lead a religious crusade against Byzantium; however, monks, clerics, and a large majority of the population were staunchly anti-Unionist and saw the Union as anathema to Orthodoxy.

Andronikos II's first official act as emperor was to reverse the unpopular policy of political and religious Union with the West that his father had established. The emperor Andronikos II ascended the throne when his father, Michael VIII, died on December 11, 1282. The empire was in religious turmoil, and the controversy over the Union of the churches was just one of the problems Andronikos II faced upon his ascent to the throne. The empire he inherited was in disrepair. The financial situation was deplorable; the treasury was empty and the coinage devalued. Michael VIII had neglected Asia Minor, which was not adequately defended, and almost all of it had been lost to the Turks. The new emperor faced the hostility of western powers including Venice, Angevin

⁶⁵ Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 349, n. 74.

⁶⁶ Efthymiadis, "Late Byzantine Collections of Miracles," 242.

Naples, the papacy, and France. Needless to say, Andronikos had many challenges to face upon his ascent to the throne, challenges that the Empire would continue to face until its demise in 1453.

The major goals of Andronikos' religious policy were to restore Orthodoxy and to bring peace and unity to the Byzantine Church. Andronikos II was a deeply religious man whose personal piety guided many of his decisions as emperor.⁶⁷ The reversal of the Union of Lyons greatly improved relations between the emperor and the Byzantine clergy, and the spiritual climate under Andronikos II was one of increased religiosity. Of the saints who lived during this period, most were of monastic background, and many were noted for their opposition to the Union of Lyons.⁶⁸ The efflorescence of hagiographical accounts of miraculous healing during the reign of Andronikos II, such as the descriptions of miracles attributed to Theodosia, reflects the return to a more Orthodox rule.

Devotion to Theodosia's cult during the Palaiologan period can be explained in part by the political and religious state of affairs, particularly during the reign of Andronikos II. As Constantinople was restored to Byzantine rule under Michael VIII, the city underwent a revitalization that included church building and restoration, and which continued to be carried out under Andronikos II. The restoration of Constantinople seems

⁶⁷ On the foreign policy of Andronikos II, see Angeliki E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II 1282-1328* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).

⁶⁸ See Ruth Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood in the Early Palaiologan Period," in *The Byzantine Saint. University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Sergei Hackel (London: Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1981), 67-87; Interestingly, there are no new female saints documented during the Palaiologan period. See Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles," 15-16.

to be connected to the promotion of healing shrines and cult devotion, especially to previously established cults of older saints, such as Theodosia. The renewed interest in the cults of older saints offers yet another explanation to the prevalence of icons of Theodosia dating to the Palaiologan period. The healing cult of Theodosia flourished in the Late Byzantine period, an era of increasingly troubled times, as the Empire faced imminent collapse. The image of Theodosia would have recalled in the mind of the viewer the miraculous healing powers of the saint as well as her role as a heroic defender of icons. In an idea that will be explained further in Chapter four, Theodosia's image would have also been associated with Orthodoxy, which was understood as vital to the survival of the Byzantine Empire.

CHAPTER IV

THE ICONS OF ST. THEODOSIA

Icons that feature female saints are extremely rare in Byzantine art, which makes the relatively large number of icons of Theodosia all the more interesting. The seven icons of Theodosia range in date roughly from the early thirteenth century to the first half of the fifteenth century, placing them for the most part in the Palaiologan period (1261-1453). There are five icons of Theodosia in the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Sinai (figs. 2-6). In addition to these, there is one large icon of Theodosia in Naxos (fig. 7) and another in the Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki (fig. 8).

The icons of Theodosia follow a standardized iconography. A strong nose, small fleshy mouth, and large brown eyes characterize Theodosia's face, and she is dressed in the garb of a nun, complete with *chiton*, mantle, and headdress. In all of the icons Theodosia carries a cross, symbolizing her status as a martyr saint. Theodosia is depicted with the attribute of an icon of Christ (presumably the Chalke icon) in one of the Sinai icons, as well as in representations of the Triumph of Orthodoxy (figs. 1, 4, 18-20). The figure of Theodosia is represented in bust-length in three of the icons and in full-length in the other four.

The majority of the icons of Theodosia are located in the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Sinai, which contains the largest collection of icons in the world, numbering over two thousand. Between 548 and 565, the Byzantine emperor Justinian (527-565)

built the fortified monastery and church, which was originally dedicated to the Theotokos. Around the tenth or eleventh century the relics of St. Catherine of Alexandria were translated to the monastery, and it was subsequently renamed in her honor. St. Catherine had already been widely venerated in the West, and the translation of her relics brought the monastery even greater prestige. The impressive collection of icons housed in the monastery is one of the great treasures of the world, and includes some of the earliest extant icons, which escaped Iconoclasm because Sinai was no longer part of the Byzantine Empire after the Islamic conquests of the seventh century.

There are problems concerning the study of icons at Sinai and their attribution. Kurt Weitzmann has studied the collection, and divides the icons into three chronologically organized groups: (1) sixth through early seventh century; (2) later seventh through the first half of the ninth century; and (3) later ninth through the tenth century.⁶⁹ Weitzmann's methodology is problematic in part because his dating relies on his comparison of the Sinai icons with each other. His method, however, is understandable given the lack of comparanda from the sixth through tenth centuries outside of Sinai. His dating of the icons is based almost entirely on his analysis of their formal qualities, as none of the icons belonging to this period bear evidence of provenance, date, or artist. With regard to provenance, it is important to remember that while some of the icons housed at Sinai were actually made there, others were made by

⁶⁹ See Kurt Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, the Icons* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976).

artists elsewhere and brought to the monastery either by monks or pilgrims. Furthermore, artists from outside of Sinai could have come to the monastery to paint icons *in situ*.

The earliest of the five Sinai icons of St. Theodosia dates to the early thirteenth century (fig. 2).⁷⁰ This work is the most frequently published icon of Theodosia, and is generally accepted as being from Constantinople.⁷¹ The small scale of the panel and the thickness of the board suggest that the icon might have been placed on a *proskynetarion*, a stand used for the display and veneration of icons on a saint's feast day, or used for private devotion.⁷² This is the largest of the five Sinai icons of Theodosia. The icon is made of tempera and gold on wood, and the reverse side is covered with white gesso. The icon's gold is of high quality and in very good condition, with evidence of red underpainting underneath. The inscription, *Η ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΔΟCΙΑ*, written in red, identifies the saint. The half-length figure of Theodosia holds a gold martyr's cross with her left hand and holds her right hand, palm outwards, in a gesture of acknowledgement. The face and clothing of Theodosia are delicately modeled with highlights. A finely incised nimbus surrounds her head. Theodosia is dressed in the garb of a nun with a pinkish-brown *chiton*, a purple-brown mantle, and a black headdress.⁷³ This costume is typical:

⁷⁰ I am relying on Doula Mouriki's dating of the Sinai icons. See Mouriki, "Portraits of St. Theodosia," 213-219.

⁷¹ On this icon, see Robert S. Nelson and Kristen M. Collins, ed., *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006), cat. no. 46, 241; Konstantinos A. Manafis, ed., *Sinai: Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine* (Athens: Ekdotike Athenon, 1990), 111, fig. 39; Helen C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), cat. no. 238, 383.

⁷² Mouriki, "Portraits of St. Theodosia," 213.

⁷³ On the headdress worn by St. Theodosia, see Galavaris, "Two Icons of St. Theodosia," 315-316.

St. Phevronia, a nun who was martyred under Diocletian (284-305), wears a similar costume in an icon from Sinai (fig. 11).⁷⁴

The high quality of the image and the Constantinopolitan origins of the saint suggest that this icon might have been brought from the Byzantine capital to Sinai. The presence of five icons of Theodosia at Sinai might indicate a close relationship between the Monastery of Saint Catherine and Constantinople, the center of Theodosia's cult, since no chapel of Theodosia has been identified in the monastery or nearby.⁷⁵ It would be useful to know more about the relations of the monastery with Constantinople during the Palaiologan period. Their small size suggests that Sinai icons were probably used primarily for private devotion. Monks at the monastery likely venerated the icons of Theodosia, since female monastic saints could serve as models for both nuns and monks.

The next Sinai icon of Theodosia also dates to the early thirteenth century (fig. 3). The icon is made of tempera and gold on wood and the back of the panel is covered in white gesso decorated with red brushstrokes. The saint's name, *H AΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΔΟCΙΑ*, is inscribed on the front of the icon. Here Theodosia is represented in full-length, holding a cross in her right hand and making a gesture of acknowledgment with her left hand. She wears a light brown *chiton*, a black *analabos*, a red brown mantle, and a black head

⁷⁴ This is the only panel of St. Phevronia preserved at the Monastery of Saint Catherine. On this icon, see Doula Mouriki, "Icons from the 12th to the 15th Century," in *Sinai: Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine*, ed. Konstantinos A. Manafis (Athens: Ekdotike Athenon, 1990), 111, fig. 38.

⁷⁵ See Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, cat. no. 238, 383; Mouriki, "Portraits of St. Theodosia," 219.

covering.⁷⁶ A small nimbus is incised around her head. This icon has much in common with the previous one in terms of the way Theodosia's face and headdress are rendered.

The next icon of Theodosia dates to the middle of the fourteenth century and is located in the Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki (fig. 8). Theodosia is rendered in half-length, with a nimbus surrounding her head. She holds a thin cross with her right hand and makes a gesture of prayer with her left. A folded wimple decorated with trim drapes her high *polos*. The turban-like headdress can be compared to that in the Sinai icon of Nicholas and Theodosia (fig. 6). Sharply delineated folds characterize the costume in this icon, and the neck covering is not as pronounced as in the Naxos icon (fig. 7). The panel is highly abraded, especially in the lower-right corner.

The next icon of Theodosia is located at Sinai and dates to around 1400 (fig. 4).⁷⁷ The back of the icon is covered with white gesso painted red brown. There are traces of two hinges on the left side of the panel, indicating that the icon formed the right leaf of a diptych or triptych. Mouriki suggests that the missing leaf may have depicted one of the protagonists of the iconophile cause, such as Stephen the Younger or Theodore of Stoudios.⁷⁸ The full-length figure of Theodosia stands under an arch in relief and on a green ground. Images of single saints are generally represented in busts or in half-figures; full-length figures are usually found in icons with more than one saint.⁷⁹ This would be

⁷⁶ Since I was not able to view the next four Sinai icons in person, I have relied here on photographs and Doula Mouriki's descriptions. See Mouriki, "Portraits of St. Theodosia," 213-219.

⁷⁷ On this icon of Theodosia, see Galavaris, "Two Icons of St. Theodosia," 313-316.

⁷⁸ Mouriki, "Portraits of St. Theodosia," 214.

⁷⁹ Galavaris, "Two Icons of St. Theodosia," 315.

the case with this icon, since the missing leaf must have included another saint. Theodosia's name is inscribed, *Η ΑΓ(ια) ΘΕΟΔ[Ο]ΥΣΙΑ*. The saint wears an olive *chiton*, a black *analabos*, a red brown mantle, and a black headdress with a grayish-white covering over her neck. Theodosia holds a thin gold cross with her right hand and with her left an icon of Christ, presumably meant to represent the Chalkites icon of Christ. Several tiny punched-out holes surround the figure of the saint, revealing that the icon had once been covered with a metallic revetment.⁸⁰ This icon has several characteristics that set it apart from the others in the Sinai group. The light-colored neck covering and the icon of Christ that Theodosia holds are not present in the other icons of Theodosia from Sinai, nor is the integrated arch under which the saint stands. This is also the only icon to evidently have been covered with a metallic revetment.

Another icon of Theodosia from Sinai dates to the early fifteenth century (fig. 5).⁸¹ A cross, surrounded by foliate decoration, is carved into the back of the panel (fig. 10).⁸² The cross is inverted, which suggests that the panel had a prior use and was reused for the depiction of Theodosia.⁸³ The gold ground, which is only preserved around the saint's head, is highly abraded and reveals an orange ochre underpainting. The inscription of Theodosia's name is partly preserved: *Η [Ο]ΥΣΙΑ Θ[Ε]ΟΔ[Ο]ΥΣΙΑ*. A small nimbus is

⁸⁰ Mouriki, "Portraits of St. Theodosia," 214.

⁸¹ On this icon, see Galavaris, "Two Icons of St. Theodosia," 313-316; John Galey, *Sinai and the Monastery of St. Catherine* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1980), fig. 68.

⁸² The carved design is associated with Coptic works. See Mouriki, "Portraits of St. Theodosia," 215.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 215.

incised around her head. Theodosia stands on a strip of ground painted red and is represented in full length. The inclusion of a painted ground is similar to that in the previous icon (fig. 4). Theodosia holds a thin cross in her right hand and makes a gesture of speech or blessing with her left hand. She wears a red brown *chiton*, brown mantle, and red brown headdress. Her costume resembles female monastic garb as represented in some works from the thirteenth century on.⁸⁴

The fifth Sinai icon of Theodosia is the only example of the group that pairs Theodosia with another saint, St. Nicholas of Myra (fig. 6). It dates to the early fifteenth century. The back is covered with white gesso decorated with wavy brushstrokes in red. Two hinges on the left edge indicate that the panel was the right leaf of a diptych or triptych, similar to the earlier Sinai icon (fig. 4). The diptych or triptych form of the icon suggests that it had a more complex theological program. The icon was likely intended for the private devotion due to its small size.⁸⁵ Inscriptions identify both saints. Theodosia's name reads, *Η ΑΓ(ια) ΑΓΙΑ (sic) ΘΕ[Ο]ΔΟCΙΑ*. Theodosia and Nicholas are each represented in full-length. Theodosia holds a double cross with her right hand and holds her left palm outwards in a gesture of acknowledgement. She wears a deep olive *chiton*, a black *analabos*, a red brown mantle, and a black headdress. Nicholas, dressed in a bishop's garb, wears an *omophorion* decorated with large crosses. He holds a Gospel book in his right hand and gestures to the left. The figures of both Nicholas and Theodosia are each depicted with the left leg slightly bent.

⁸⁴ Ibid., n. 9.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 215.

St. Nicholas of Myra is a composite of two different homonymous saints, the fourth-century bishop of Myra and the sixth-century Nicholas of Sion, co-founder and archimandrite of the monastery of Sion. By the tenth century the cult of Nicholas of Sion was subsumed by that of Nicholas of Myra, with the miracles of Nicholas of Sion added to the rather sparse life story of Nicholas of Myra.⁸⁶ This conflation is parallel to that of St. Theodosia of Constantinople and St. Theodosia of Caesara. The popularity of St. Nicholas of Myra is interesting because he was not martyred, he left no theological writings, and his name is virtually never mentioned in polemical literature of the eighth and ninth centuries.⁸⁷ Ninth-century writers, however, lauded Nicholas's staunch Orthodoxy and his effectiveness as a miracle-worker.

The pairing of Nicholas and Theodosia is interesting for several reasons. For one, the fact that Theodosia is shown next to one of the most widely revered saints underscores her own importance. The feast day of St. Nicholas is 6 December and Theodosia's feast day is 16 July, which eliminates the possibility of a calendrical arrangement.⁸⁸ It is not known which other saints were included in the missing leaf(s), but we can hypothesize why Nicholas and Theodosia were paired. Both were staunch defenders of Orthodoxy; St. Theodosia defended icons and St. Nicholas was active in driving out paganism and eliminating heresy in his see.

⁸⁶ Nancy P. Sevcenko, *The Life of St. Nicholas in Byzantine Art* (Torino: Bottega D'Erasmus, 1983), 19.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁸⁸ Such a chronological arrangement can be found at Staro Nagoričino and Peć, where Saints Yakinthos and Aimilianos accompanied St. Theodosia.

The large icon of St. Theodosia from Naxos is dated to the first half of the fifteenth century and is meant for placement on the iconostasis (fig. 7).⁸⁹ The bust-length figure of Theodosia is represented under an arch supported by two columns. The arch frames the saint in a similar manner as the Sinai icon from circa 1400 (fig. 4). In the Naxos icon Theodosia grasps a substantial gold cross in her right hand and holds her left hand palm outwards. She wears a cream-colored scarf around her neck, as does the figure in the Sinai icon mentioned above (fig. 4). Her olive-green wimple, bordered in gold, falls over a high *polos*. Chrysanthi Baltoyanni has focused on the iconographic elements of Theodosia's dress in the Naxos icon, and points out that the high *polos* was a distinctive trait of saintly women of high birth, like Theodosia.

The icons of Theodosia share certain characteristics with images of other female saints. Most female saints, with the exception of ascetics, are represented as young and beautiful, with a facial type consisting of large eyes, fleshy faces, and plump lips. A round face was considered by the Byzantines to be a mark of beauty.⁹⁰ Female martyrs are generally represented with a simple *maphorion* covering the head, closed at the breast, and usually hold a cross in the right hand and make a gesture of prayer with the left. Three Sinai icons of St. Marina, a martyr under Diocletian, include these features (figs. 12-14).⁹¹ Certain female saints have identifying attributes, like Theodosia's icon of

⁸⁹ Chrysanthi Baltoyanni, "An Icon of Saint Theodosia the Constantinopolitan in Naxos," (In Greek) *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaologikes Hetaireias* KB (2001), 227.

⁹⁰ Henry Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies: Saints and their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁹¹ St. Catherine, who is depicted with Marina in two of the Sinai icons, was also a martyr, but she is not shown wearing a simple *maphorion*; instead, she is clad in imperial dress since she was a princess of

Christ (fig. 4). In an icon from Thessaloniki, St. Anastasia the Healer (Pharmakolytria) is depicted with her attributes of a green *maphorion* and a vessel of healing balm, as in an icon from Thessaloniki (fig. 15).⁹²

Although the icons of Theodosia have much in common with depictions of other female saints, there are some notable differences. The light scarf wrapped around Theodosia's neck in two of the icons is a distinctive trait (figs. 4, 7). The neck covering is also present in the representations of Theodosia at Bogorodica Ljeviška and at Staro Nagoričino.⁹³ Mouriki points out the Western influence exhibited by the neck covering, which is similar to the Western wimple in the garb of nuns and other women in Western art, such as in the depiction of St. Anne in the frescoes by Ugolino di Prete Ilario in the Duomo of Orvieto (figs. 16, 17).⁹⁴ However, in the icons of Theodosia a high rectangular *polos* accompanies the scarf. The rectangular headdress, without the scarf, is represented in the early fifteenth century Sinai icon of Theodosia (fig. 5). Baltoyanni argues that the scarf worn around her neck alludes to her martyrdom by emphasizing the site of her fatal wound. She cites the twelfth-century MS 109 in the Koutloumousiou monastery, the Jerusalem Stavros codex 40, a *vita* of Theodosia by Nikodemos the Athonite, and the

Alexandria. The pairing of Catherine and Marina is probably due to the fact that the sixth-century Church of St. Catherine contained a chapel specially dedicated to Marina. On these icons, see Jaroslav Folda, "The Saint Marina Icon: Maniera Cypria, Lingua Franca, or Crusader Art?," in *Four Icons in the Menil Collection*, ed. Bertrand Davezac (Houston: Menil Foundation, 1992), 114-117.

⁹² On this icon, see Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, cat. no. 115, 195; Yuri Piatnitsky, ed. *Sinai, Byzantium, Russia: Orthodox Art from the Sixth to the Twentieth Century* (London: Saint Catherine Foundation, 2000), cat. no. B126, 150-151.

⁹³ Baltoyanni, "An Icon of Saint Theodosia," 227.

⁹⁴ See Mouriki, "Portraits of St. Theodosia," 214, n. 6; See also, Galavaris, "Two Icons of St. Theodosia," 316.

encomia of Constantine Akropolites, which all tell of the saint's grisly execution by a ram's horn to her throat.⁹⁵ The iconography of the scarf together with the high rectangular *polos* seems to be unique to Theodosia, but these elements have not been examined. A thorough study of the costume of nuns and a more systematic study of the icons of female saints needs to be undertaken.

The relatively large number of icons of Theodosia underscores the importance of the saint. As previously mentioned, the five Sinai icons outnumber the representations of other female saints (excluding the Virgin and St. Catherine) at the monastery. The presence of five icons of Theodosia at Sinai suggests her popularity there, and reflects a connection between Constantinople, where her cult was centered, and the monastery. The popularity of the cult of Theodosia becomes more apparent when the Naxos icon and the Thessaloniki icon of Theodosia are considered together with the five Sinai icons. The seven icons of Theodosia stand together as important visual documents of the strength of Theodosia's cult. The icons seem to suggest that the cult of Theodosia reached beyond the capital, since it is unlikely that they were all created in Constantinople.

The fact that the image of Theodosia developed a standardized iconography is further evidence of the importance of the saint, and might suggest a greater pictorial tradition in icons. Of course, there is no way of knowing just how many icons of Theodosia actually existed. As is the case with the icons of other female saints, other extant icons may not yet be published. A systematic study of the icons of female saints is much needed. Such a study would provide valuable comparative material and should

⁹⁵ See Baltoyanni, "An Icon of St. Theodosia," 227-228.

include the icons of Theodosia, which stand as important examples of the representation of female saints.

CHAPTER V

ST. THEODOSIA IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM ICON OF THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY

The British Museum icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy dates to about 1400 and represents the celebration of the official end of Iconoclasm on 11 March 843, when a Constantinopolitan church council declared icons as integral to Orthodox Christian practice (fig. 1). The event is commemorated each year in the Orthodox Church as the Festival of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday of Lent. The British Museum icon most likely functioned as the display icon for devotion in a church on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. The British Museum icon is the earliest known pictorial representation of the restoration of icons and includes an image of Theodosia in the lower left section of the panel. Theodosia and the empress Theodora (who presided over the Restoration of the Holy Images while serving as regent for her son Michael III (843-867)) are the only two female saints depicted in the icon. This chapter will compare their images, and examine Theodosia's image in the British Museum icon in light of the evidence surrounding her cult and the political and religious milieu of the Palaiologan period.

The British Museum icon is divided into two horizontal registers and depicts important defenders of image veneration, some of whom who played a part in ending Iconoclasm. The icon also features the "icon-within-an-icon" of the Virgin and Child in the center of the upper register of the panel and two smaller ones of Christ in the lower

register. The large central icon represents one of the most renowned icons of Constantinople, the Hodegetria. It is believed that the evangelist St. Luke painted the Hodegetria from life, and regardless of whether or not that was the case, it was considered an authentic portrait of the Virgin and Child. A miracle-working icon, it functioned as the palladium of Constantinople. It was housed in the Monastery of the Hodegetria in Constantinople and was carried in a public procession every Tuesday. In the British Museum icon, the Hodegetria rests on a red draped *podea* with red curtains drawn back, and is carried by two members of the confraternity, wearing red robes and domed hats. They are depicted with angels' wings, added to elevate the confraternity and the feast to a "heavenly" or "liturgical" level.⁹⁶

The British Museum icon depicts several important iconophiles, many of whom were directly involved with the re-establishment of Orthodoxy. In the upper left corner of the icon, in imperial dress, stand the regent empress Theodora and her young son, Michael III, who ruled the Byzantine Empire at the time of the official ending of Iconoclasm in 843. All of the figures in the icon are identified with inscriptions, though many of these are considerably abraded. To the right of the Hodegetria icon is the iconodule Methodios (843-847), who replaced John VII on the patriarchal throne. Methodios is shown wearing a cross-covered *sakkos*. Three unknown monks stand to his right. In the middle of the lower register two saints are shown holding a small icon of Christ. Partial inscriptions identify the figures as Theophanes the Confessor on the left and Theodore the Stoudite on the right. At the far left, her name clearly inscribed, is St.

⁹⁶ Nancy P. Ševčenko, "Icons in the Liturgy," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991): 48.

Theodosia, who holds a martyr's cross and an icon of Christ. The icon Theodosia holds alludes to her attempted protection of the image that hung from the Chalke Gate. It also refers to the liturgical procession, which passed through the Gate on the day of the Restoration of the Holy Images in 843. The next three inscriptions are illegible, but Nano Chatzidakis identifies the fourth figure as Saint Ioannikios.⁹⁷ Dimitra Kotoula identifies the seventh and eighth figures as the Graptoi brothers, Theodore and Theophanes.⁹⁸ The identity of the next figure is uncertain. The last two figures are inscribed as Theophylaktos the Confessor and Arsakios.

The iconography of an icon of the Virgin surrounded by the faithful has been related to council representations and to representations of the procession of the Hodegetria icon, especially in cycles of the Akathistos Hymn (figs. 18, 19).⁹⁹ The annual feast celebrating the restoration of icons, presumably instituted by Methodios and established by the end of the ninth century, included a procession that led from the church of the Theotokos at the Blachernai to Hagia Sophia. The church of the Theotokos, located in the northwest corner of Constantinople, became the most famous shrine to the Virgin after the Virgin's Robe was brought there from Palestine in the fifth century. At the end

⁹⁷ Nano Chatzidakis, *Icons. The Velimezis Collection* (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1998), 88.

⁹⁸ It is not entirely clear to which figures the inscriptions apply. It seems as though the bishop is labeled *Theodoros* and the figure to his right, *Theophanes*, which would suggest that the two are the Graptoi brothers. However, it was Theophanes who was elected bishop, not Theodore. The two saints are usually both depicted as monks. Dimitra Kotoula suggests that this iconography is based on the illustration of the Skylitzis manuscript, where Theophanes is shown as a bishop confronting the emperor Theophilos. See Dimitra Kotoula, "The British Museum Triumph of Orthodoxy Icon," in *Byzantine Orthodoxies: Papers from the Thirty-sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Durham, 23-25 March 2002*, ed. Andrew Louth and Augustine Casiday (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 126-127.

⁹⁹ Ševčenko, "Icons in the Liturgy," 47.

of the procession a banquet was given either by the patriarch or the emperor at Hagia Sophia. A church service would then be held that included a reading of the anathema of 843 and the singing of the *kanones* composed by Theophanes Graptos and Methodios.¹⁰⁰

What is interesting about the British Museum icon as far as Theodosia is concerned is that she is the only saint of those identified who is not directly connected with the events of 843 and the Festival of Orthodoxy.¹⁰¹ She is not recognized in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*. The empress Theodora is the only female saint included in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, in the section for acclamations of emperors.¹⁰² The Patriarch Methodios played an instrumental role in restoring icon veneration, and, according to Jean Gouillard, he wrote the first version of the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy* along with a hymn commemorating the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843.¹⁰³ Theophanes the Confessor (c. 760-c. 817) founded a monastery at Sigriane in the Propontis and authored a chronicle of the seventh and eighth centuries. He was a steadfast iconodule who was harshly critical of the emperors.¹⁰⁴ Theodore of Stoudios (759-826) was a theologian, icon theorist, and abbot of the Constantinopolitan Monastery of Saint John Stoudios. He wrote a refutation of iconoclast ideas, developed John of Damascus's theory of the image, and

¹⁰⁰ Alexander P. Kazhdan, ed. *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), s.v. "Triumph of Orthodoxy."

¹⁰¹ Kotoula, "Triumph of Orthodoxy Icon," 126.

¹⁰² Talbot and Kazhdan, "Women and Iconoclasm," 397.

¹⁰³ Kotoula, "Triumph of Orthodoxy Icon," 125.

¹⁰⁴ Kazhdan, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, s.v. "Theophanes the Confessor."

led the monastic opposition to Iconoclasm.¹⁰⁵ Methodios wrote an important version of the *Life* of Theophanes the Confessor and initiated the translation of Theodore the Stoudite's relics to Constantinople in 844.¹⁰⁶ The Graptoi brothers, Theodore and Theophanes, were monks from the Lavra of Saint Sabas outside of Jerusalem. They were exiled by Leo V (813-820) in 815 and later summoned by the emperor Theophilos (829-842) for interrogation and beating. Theophilos had their foreheads tattooed with 12 iambic lines declaring them heretics, thus earning them the nickname *Graptoi* (inscribed).¹⁰⁷ Theophanes Graptos was elected archbishop of Nicaea after the end of Iconoclasm and wrote a hymn on the day of the Restoration of the Holy Images, which influenced the development of the feast of the Sunday of Orthodoxy.¹⁰⁸ According to the *Life* of St. Theodora, Arsakios and Ioannikios, hermits from Mt. Olympus in Bithynia, urged Theodora and Methodios to restore the veneration of icons.¹⁰⁹ Ioannikios was a prominent and influential saint who is frequently mentioned in other saints' *vitae* and in writings of the ninth century. Theophylaktos, a monk of the Agauroi monastery, was a disciple of Ioannikios. The feast on the Sunday of Orthodoxy ended with a ceremonial

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, s.v. "Theodore of Stoudios."

¹⁰⁶ Kotoula, "Triumph of Orthodoxy Icon," 125-126.

¹⁰⁷ Dorothy Abrahamse and Douglas Domingo-Forasté, "Life of Sts. David, Symeon, and George of Lesbos," in *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), 204 n. 302.

¹⁰⁸ Kotoula, "Triumph of Orthodoxy Icon," 126.

¹⁰⁹ Martha P. Vinson, "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," in *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), 375 n. 77.

proskynesis at the chapel of Saint Theophylaktos.¹¹⁰ Each of these saints, with the exception of Theophylaktos, is lauded in the *Life of St. Theodora* as “champions of virtue and the orthodox faith.”¹¹¹ It seems possible that *Theodora’s Life* might have served as one possible source for the British Museum icon, although no mention is made of Theodosia.

Presumably, St. Theodosia is included in the British Museum icon because of the legend of her defense of the Chalkites icon of Christ and subsequent martyrdom. The first martyr of the iconophile cause, Theodosia is the only martyr saint depicted in the British Museum icon. She is placed in the lower register of the icon along with other monastic saints who together represent the monastic opposition to imperially sponsored Iconoclasm. The icon is not composed chronistically; although most of the figures were alive during the restoration of icons in 843, three were not—Theophanes the Confessor, Theodore of Stoudios, and Theodosia, the earliest of the saints depicted. However, the anachronism is permissible, for the icon deals with the timeless realm of the divine and is a symbolic rather than a literal representation of the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy.

Theodosia and Theodora are the only female saints represented in the British Museum icon (not including the image-within-an-image of the Virgin Hodegetria). Theodosia is a monastic saint martyred for her iconophile beliefs, while Theodora is an imperial saint whose power enabled her to restore image veneration. These two female

¹¹⁰ Kotoula, “Triumph of Orthodoxy Icon,” 126.

¹¹¹ Vinson, “Life of St. Theodora,” 370.

saints bracketed Iconoclasm; its outbreak coincided with the martyrdom of Theodosia, and the end of Iconoclasm and the restoration of icons came under the rule of the empress Theodora.

The *Life* of Theodora tells the story of a woman of provincial origins who became the wife of the iconoclast emperor Theophilus (829-842). After his death she ruled as regent for her son Michael III (843-867) and presided over the Restoration of Icons. After Michael III ascended the throne, Theodora eventually withdrew from court life and died in a convent. Theodora's sainthood was political rather than strictly religious in nature; she was recognized for her leadership in defending icon veneration, rather than for more typical saintly qualities. No prophecies or miracles were attributed to her, and she did not develop a personal cult following.¹¹² Nothing is known of her relics or any posthumous miracles. Despite her role in restoring image veneration, Theodora is virtually absent from Byzantine icons. This is probably due to the fact that she did not develop a cult following, unlike Theodosia, whose icons reflect the popularity of her cult during the Palaiologan period. Only three Byzantine iconic images of Theodora survive: in the *Menologium of Basil II*, in a fresco in the fourteenth-century Cretan church of the Virgin Gouverniotissa, and in the British Museum icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy.¹¹³

Nevertheless, Theodora's *Life* is useful for the information it provides on the Iconoclast period. Martha Vinson states, "The portrait of Theodora that emerges from the *Life* is that of an exemplary wife and mother, whose defining virtue, moreover, appears

¹¹² See *ibid.*, 353-382.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 356.

to be her deference to male authority, be it civil, religious, or domestic.”¹¹⁴ Theodora is praised for her piety, charity, wisdom, and maternal virtue. Her *Life* tells how, fearful of her iconoclast husband, Theophilos, Theodora was forced to hide her veneration of icons:

She feared her husband’s angry and irascible disposition, his foul moods, his implacability in matters of punishment, the vehemence of his anger, the harshness of his voice, how very ferocious he looked when little by little he screwed his face up into a knot. So, in terror of him, she held her tongue.¹¹⁵

With God’s intervention, Theodora restored icon veneration:

But God the humane and merciful, Who ever and always cares for the salvation of mankind and in His providence manages everything for the good, did not overlook her good intentions but soon revealed through her the blameless and soul-saving orthodox religion and restoration of the holy and venerable images...¹¹⁶

After Theophilos died on 20 January 842, Theodora succeeded to the throne with her son, Michael III, who, “at the urging, encouragement, and instruction of his venerable and holy mother Theodora,”¹¹⁷ restored the veneration of icons:

For even though in chronological age the emperor Michael was still a babe—after all, as mentioned above, he was only five and a half years old—still God Himself, Who *out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hath furnished praise*, enabled [one even so young as] this to celebrate and demonstrate and affirm with brilliant clarity the truth of the divine doctrine...¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 354.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 370.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 370.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 374.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 374-375.

Theodora's virtue seems to be bound up in her role as mother to Michael and the wisdom and guidance she imparts to her son. After Michael succeeds the throne, Theodora, the "truly good mother and wise preceptor,"¹¹⁹ responds:

She did not delay her retirement from imperial life, nor did she seek to regain the sovereignty that her husband had entrusted to her even through a substantial portion of the senatorial order wanted her to. On the contrary, she asked her son to come see her and expressed to him the following views with regard to the state and provided her son with expedient advice as well.¹²⁰

Theodora is once again portrayed in her *Life* as an acquiescent and humble woman who is celebrated for her maternal virtues and wisdom.

However, in the British Museum icon Theodora is given prominence of place at the top, right next to the Hodegetria icon in the center. St. Theodosia also stands out as the sole female monastic and because she holds the Chalkites icon of Christ, one of the most important icons in Byzantium. Robin Cormack asserts that Theodora and Theodosia are present in the British Museum icon because they had a part to play in the discourses of heresy and persecution. He is against reading the icon as a visual document of the importance of women in the promotion of icons.¹²¹ Cormack does not give these two female saints enough credit, however; Theodora and Theodosia do not represent the average woman—they are particular female *saints* who were understood to have important roles, Theodora especially, in the defense of icons. Theodora and Theodosia, along with all of the other figures in the British Museum icon, represent spiritual models

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 378.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 378.

¹²¹ Cormack, "Women and Icons," 43.

of Byzantine Orthodoxy for their fervent support of icon veneration and, in Theodora's case, for their connection to the Restoration of Icons.

The Restoration of Orthodoxy was a popular subject in Post-Byzantine icons as well. An icon from the Velimezis collection, dated to around 1500, is strikingly similar to the British Museum icon (fig. 20).¹²² The iconographic similarities suggest either the direct copying of one icon from the other or the use of a common model or working drawing.¹²³ Nano Chatzidakis identifies the following figures: Michael III and Theodora, Methodios, Theodosia, Theophanes the Confessor, Theodore the Stoudite, and St. Ioannikios. All of these figures in the Velimezis icon occupy the same position as in the British Museum icon. In addition, Chatzidakis identifies the figure to the right of Methodios as the bishop Theodore, and the figure to the right of Theodore the Stoudite as Arsenios.¹²⁴ Another icon, from the Benaki Museum in Athens, entitled the *Restoration (Anastelosis) of Icons*, dates to the first half of the sixteenth century (fig. 21).¹²⁵ This large icon contains many figures, including several women and singers, some holding candles or inscriptions anathematizing iconoclasts.¹²⁶ A third icon of the subject can be found in the collection of the Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in

¹²² Chatzidakis, *Icons. The Velimezis Collection*, no. 5, 86-91.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 86-88.

¹²⁵ This icon has the forged signature of the Corfiot painter Emmanuel Tzanfournaris (1570/75-c. 1631). See Andreas Xyngopoulos, *The Collection of Helen A. Stathatos* (Athens: Athenais Archaologike Hetaireia, 1951), no. 6, 8-10.

¹²⁶ David Buckton, *Byzantium: Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections* (London: British Museum Press, 1994), 130.

Venice. The Corfiot painter Emmanuel Tzanfournaris painted this icon, entitled *Orthodoxia*, in the first half of the sixteenth century (fig. 22).¹²⁷ The icon includes the figures of Michael III, Theodora, Methodios, Theophylaktos of Nicomedia, Michael of Synnada, Euthymios of Sardis, and Emilianos of Cyrica in the upper register, and the figures of Theodosia, Ioannikios, Stephanos the Higoumenos, Thomas, Peter, Markarios of Pelekete, Stephen the Younger, Joseph, John Katharon, Arsenios, and Andrew in the register below.¹²⁸ The addition of figures not found in the British Museum icon suggests a different literary source for the work. Other sixteenth-century depictions of the Triumph of Orthodoxy can be found in the wall paintings of Mount Athos. Theophanes the Cretan painted these works, which are located in the Lavra Monastery (1535) and the Monastery of Stavronikita (1545-1546).¹²⁹ Theophanes reverses the figures represented in each of the two registers, placing the Hodegetria icon, the imperial figures and Methodios below and the monastic saints in the register above (fig. 23). St. Theodosia is represented in all of these representations of the Triumph of Orthodoxy.

The British Museum icon is the earliest extant pictorial representation of the subject of the Restoration of Holy Images, though it was created over five hundred years after the actual event of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. No icons representing the subject exist from the ninth or tenth centuries, when the Festival of Orthodoxy was being

¹²⁷ See Manolis Chatzidakis, *Icônes de Saint-Georges des Grecs* (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1962), no. 63, 96.

¹²⁸ Buckton, *Byzantium*, 130.

¹²⁹ See Gabriel Millet, *Monuments de l'Athos* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1927), pl. 131-132; Manolis Chatzidakis, *The Cretan Painter Theophanes* (Athos: Holy Monastery of Stavronikita, 1986), pls. 122-123.

instituted. The British Museum *Triumph of Orthodoxy* icon might be considered an expression of Orthodox faith during a time of great uncertainty about the future of the Byzantine Empire. The icon's inclusion of the Hodegetria, the protector of Constantinople, further supports this idea. As Annemarie Weyl Carr states, "Welding the theme of icon veneration to the icon of defense, and that of right belief to that of invincibility, our painting offers a veritable icon of Byzantine faith."¹³⁰ The strength of the Church and Orthodoxy were thought by many contemporaries to be integral to the future survival of the Empire. The Empire was in distress and facing imminent collapse during the Palaiologan period. Donald M. Nicol points out that the historian Giorgios Pachymeres "admits that there were those who believed that, since the Church had been restored to peace by the Emperor [Andronikos II], God had rendered all the Empire's enemies powerless and ineffectual."¹³¹

Both Andronikos II's reversal of the Union of Lyons in 1282 and the Restoration of the Holy Images in 843 put an end to heretical policies and restored Orthodoxy to the Church and Empire as a whole. A parallel between the resistance to Iconoclasm in the eighth and ninth centuries and the resistance to the Unionist policies of Michael VIII can be found in Theodora Raoulaina's composition of the *vita* of Theodore and Theophanes Graptoi. Theodora was a nun, part of the intellectual elite, and a contemporary of the hagiographer Constantine Akropolites (who wrote the *encomium* for Theodosia,

¹³⁰ Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Icon with the Triumph of Orthodoxy," in *Byzantium: Faith and Power: 1261-1453*, ed. Helen C. Evans (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), cat. no. 78, 155.

¹³¹ Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium 1261-1453* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 107.

discussed earlier).¹³² Theodora wrote the *vita* while imprisoned by Michael VIII for her rejection of the emperor's conciliatory policy with the Latins in the Union of Lyons. Theodora clearly related to the Graptoi brothers' persecution under the emperor Theophilos. Her choice of subject matter can also be connected with the blinding and imprisonment of her own brothers-in-law by the emperor Michael VIII for their anti-Unionist beliefs.

The parallel between the repeal of the Union with the West and the Restoration of Icons might be connected to the appearance of the depiction of the Triumph of Orthodoxy in the Palaiologan period. The British Museum icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy can be viewed as representative of a period in Byzantine history when the heresy of Iconoclasm was overcome and Orthodoxy restored. A similar situation occurred in the late thirteenth century with the reversal of the Union of Lyons by Andronikos II. Even though the British Museum icon is roughly dated to about 1400 (on stylistic grounds), just over a hundred years after the renunciation of union with Rome, its theme of Orthodoxy was still highly relevant—the definition of Orthodoxy was a key theological interest in Constantinople, and was the subject of the Constantinopolitan councils of 1341, 1347, and 1351.¹³³ Furthermore, the British Museum icon would have given its viewer hope as a symbol of the strength of the Empire to overcome its enemies, both spiritual and political.

¹³² On Theodora Raoulaina, see Donald M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Lady: Ten Portraits 1250-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 33-47.

¹³³ Maria Vassilaki, *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens: Skira, 2000), cat. no. 32, 340.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

This dreadful day on which the city was captured happened to be the festival and holy day on which the holy martyr Saint Theodosia was commemorated. The whole community was represented at this celebration, and there were many, both men and women, who had passed the night, from evening onwards, at the tomb of the saint. When dawn came, they were proceeding to make their act of worship, men and women together, carrying tapers and incense, and arrayed in their finest clothing and ornaments, when most of them were trapped by the Turks.¹³⁴

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fifteenth-century historian

This thesis has shown that the icons of St. Theodosia stand as important evidence of the popularity of her cult in the Palaiologan period. The icons of Theodosia functioned in several ways. Icons were used in devotional practices at Theodosia's shrine in Constantinople. The small icons from Sinai suggest both the portability of her cult and their intimate use in private devotion, perhaps by monks who lived at the Monastery of Saint Catherine. The large Naxos icon, with its placement on the iconostasis, shows that icons of Theodosia could be used in public devotion as well. The presence at Sinai of icons of Theodosia, whose healing cult was centered in Constantinople, might suggest that icons could offer access to the healing powers of the saint in distant locations.

The image of Theodosia can be considered as a symbol of Orthodoxy when the information on her life and cult is looked at in relation to the political and religious

¹³⁴ J. R. Melville Jones, *The Siege of Constantinople 1453: Seven Contemporary Accounts* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1972), 100.

concerns of the Palaiologan period. Theodosia's role in opposing Byzantine Iconoclasm, which was retrospectively viewed as a period of heresy, associates her with the Orthodox cause, since icon veneration was central to Orthodox doctrine. The inclusion of Theodosia in representations of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, such as the British Museum icon, furthers this association. The popularity of the healing cult of Theodosia in the Palaiologan period coincides with important political and religious issues concerning Orthodoxy. In the written sources the reign of Andronikos II was associated with the Empire's return to Orthodoxy, after having suffered both the Latin occupation and the Union of Churches under the emperor Michael VIII. The definition of Orthodoxy was the concern of the Constantinopolitan councils of the fourteenth century. The strength of the Church and Orthodoxy were understood to be integral to the survival of the Empire. Ironically, the fall of Constantinople occurred on the feast day of Theodosia, May 29, 1453.

When the icons of Theodosia are considered together, they show that Theodosia's image followed a standardized iconography unique to the saint. These icons stand as important examples of portrait icons of female saints. There is a need for a systematic study of female saints in icons, which would provide scholars with valuable comparative material, much of which remains unpublished. Analysis of the icons of Theodosia should be a cornerstone of such a study.

APPENDIX: FIGURES

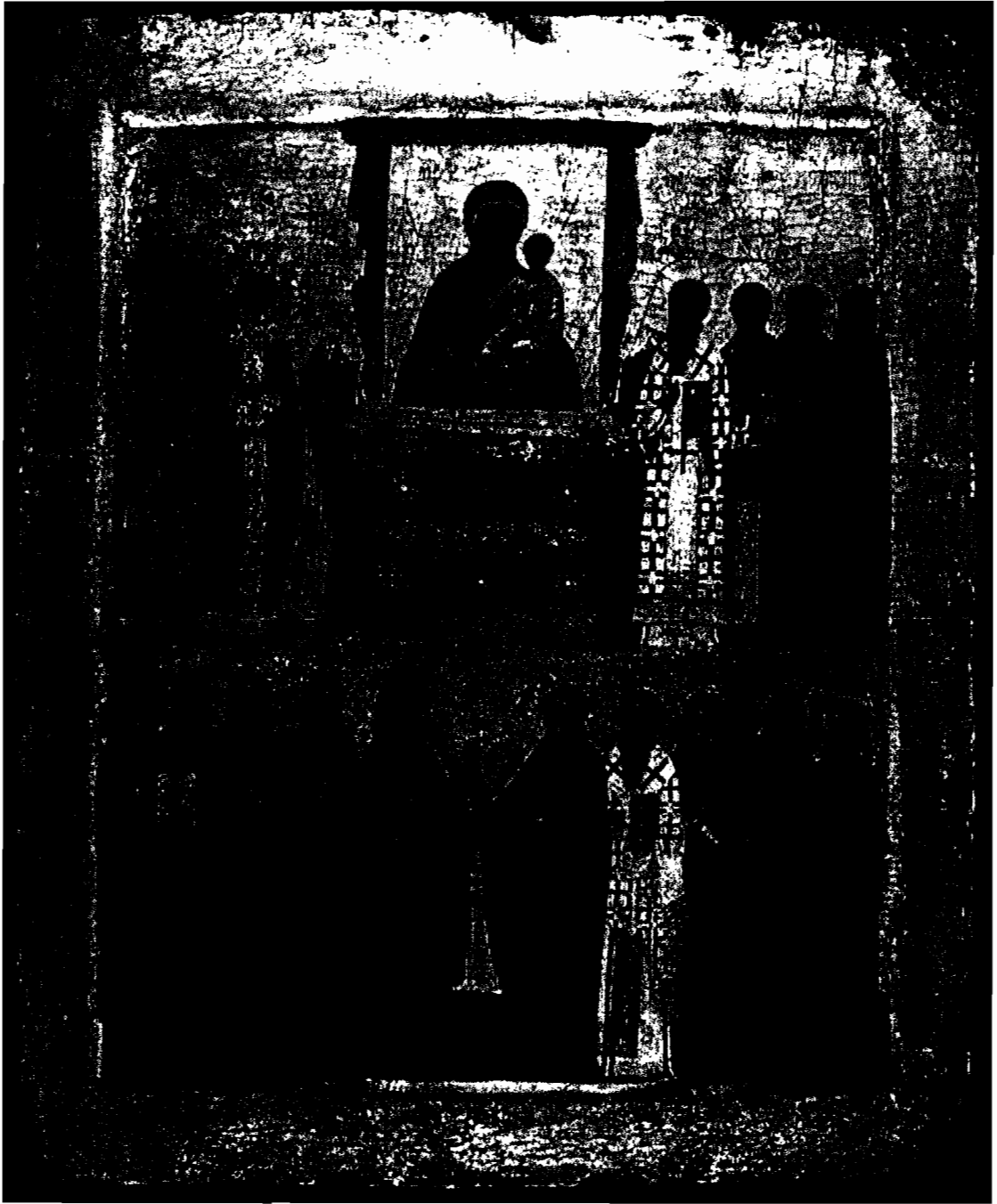


Fig. 1. ICON WITH THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY. Constantinople (?), tempera and gold on wood, c. 1400. British Museum, London. (39 x 31 cm)



Fig. 2. ICON WITH THEODOSIA. Constantinople, tempera and gold on wood, early 13th century. The Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt. (33.9 x 25.7 x 2 cm)



Fig. 3. ICON WITH THEODOSIA. Tempera and gold on wood, early 13th century. The Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt. (26.7 x 21 x 2 cm)

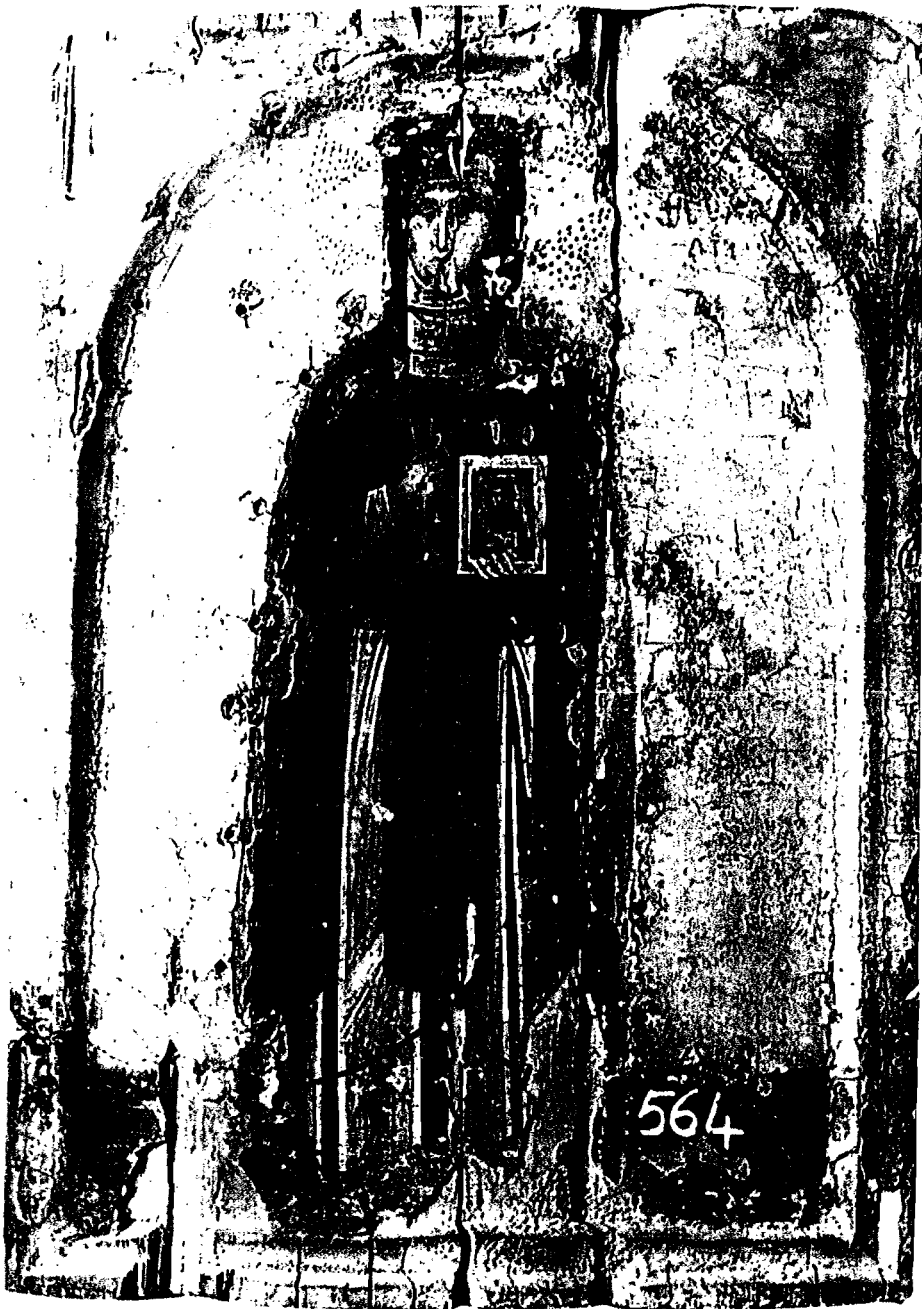


Fig. 4. ICON WITH THEODOSIA. Tempera on wood, c. 1400. The Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt. (25.5 x 17.4 x 1.7 cm)

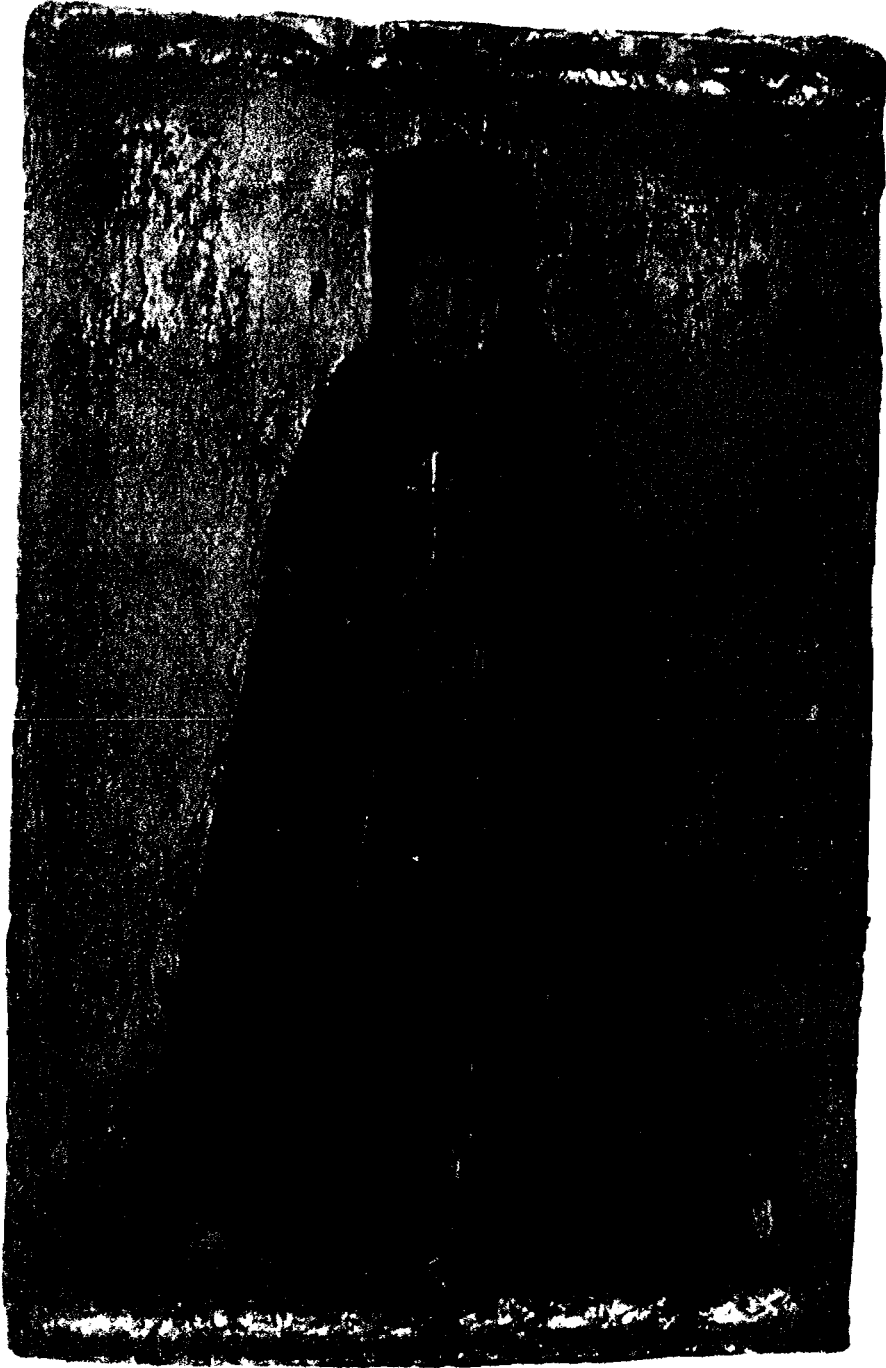


Fig. 5. ICON WITH THEODOSIA. Tempera and gold on wood, early 15th century. The Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt. (22.4 x 14.1 x 2.3 cm)



Fig. 6. ICON WITH NICHOLAS AND THEODOSIA. Tempera and gold on wood, early 15th century. The Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt. (23.8 x 18 cm)



Fig. 7. ICON WITH THEODOSIA. Tempera (and gold?) on wood, first half of the 15th century. Naxos. (98.4 x 69 cm)



Fig. 8. ICON WITH THEODOSIA. Tempera (and gold?) on wood, mid-14th century. Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki.

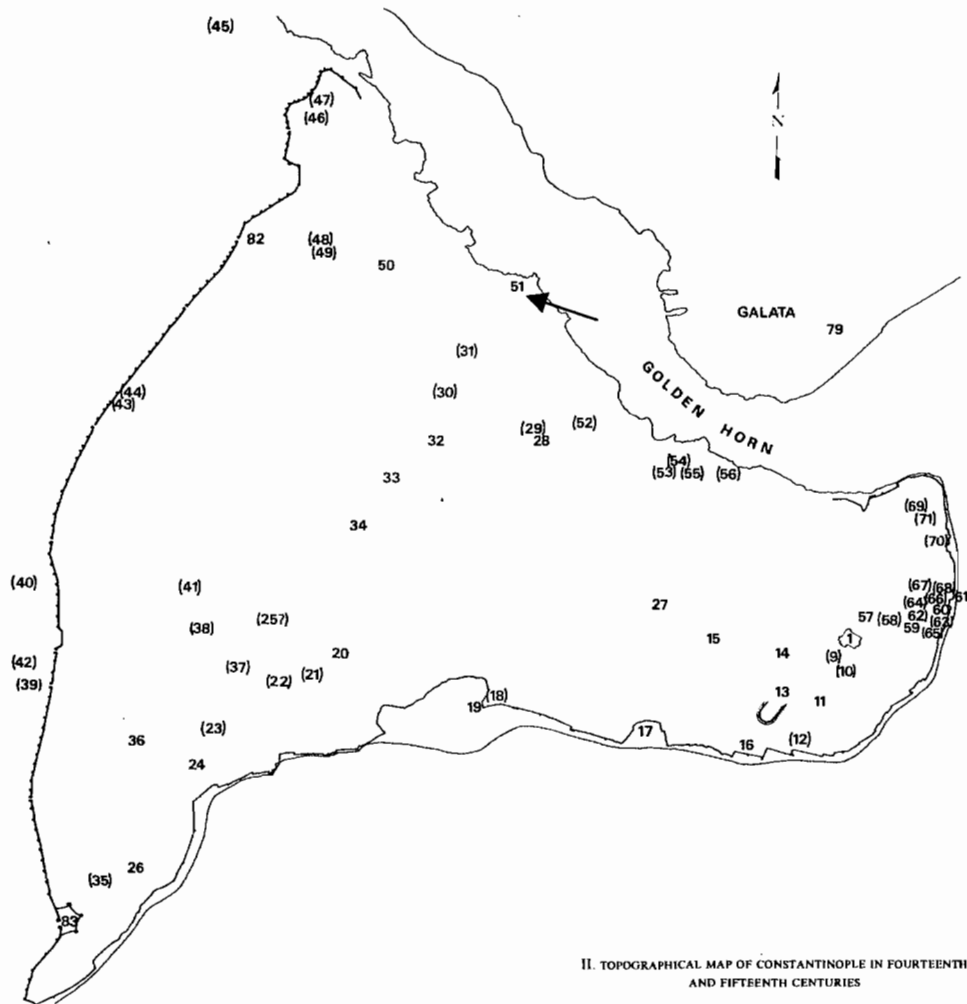


Fig. 9. TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP OF CONSTANTINOPLE IN THE 14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES. (51): Church of St. Theodosia (Source: George P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*)

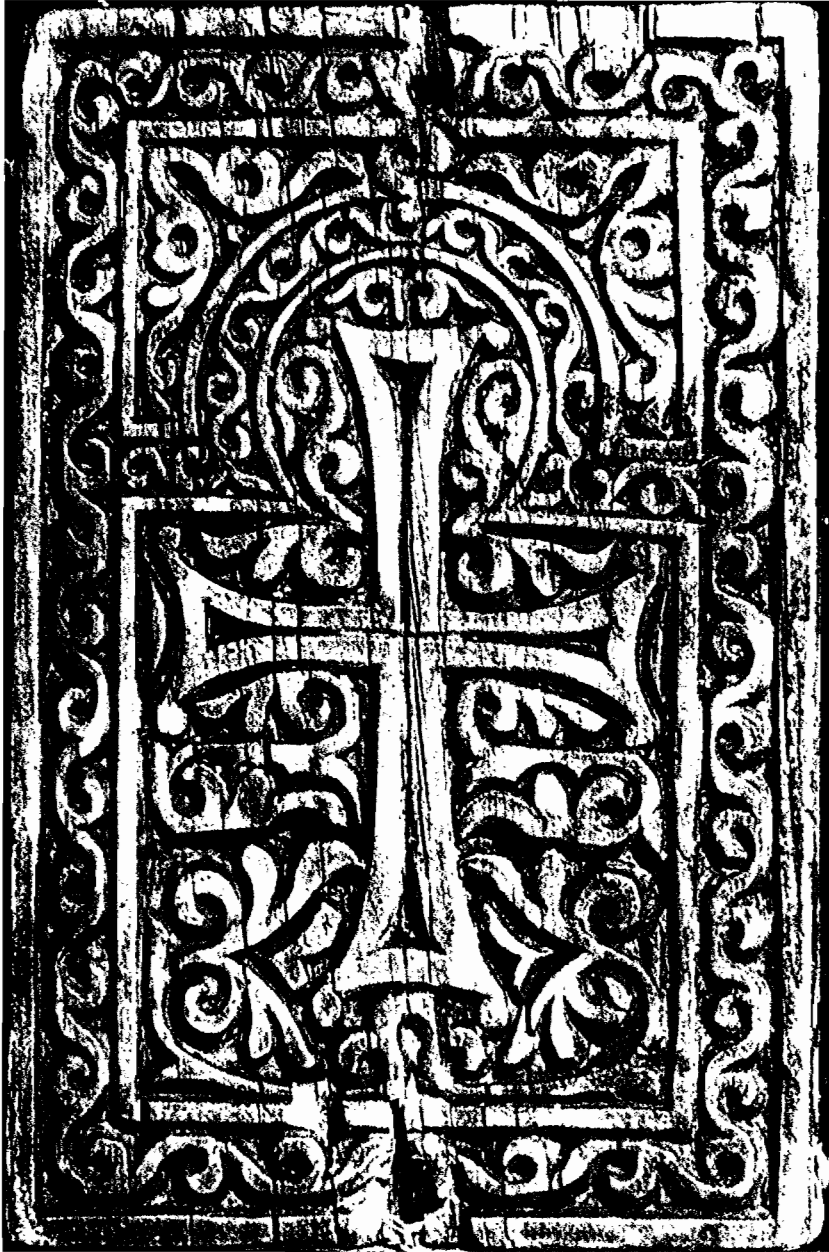


Fig. 10. Cross with foliate decoration. (Reverse of fig. 5)



Fig. 11. ICON WITH PHEVRONIA. Tempera and gold on wood, second half of the 13th century. The Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt. (58 x 36 cm)



Fig. 12. ICON WITH MARINA. Tempera on wood, 12th century (?). The Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt.



Fig. 13. ICON WITH CATHERINE AND MARINA. Tempera (and gold?) on wood, 13th century. The Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt.



Fig. 14. ICON WITH MARINA AND CATHERINE. Tempera (and gold?) on wood, 13th century. The Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt.

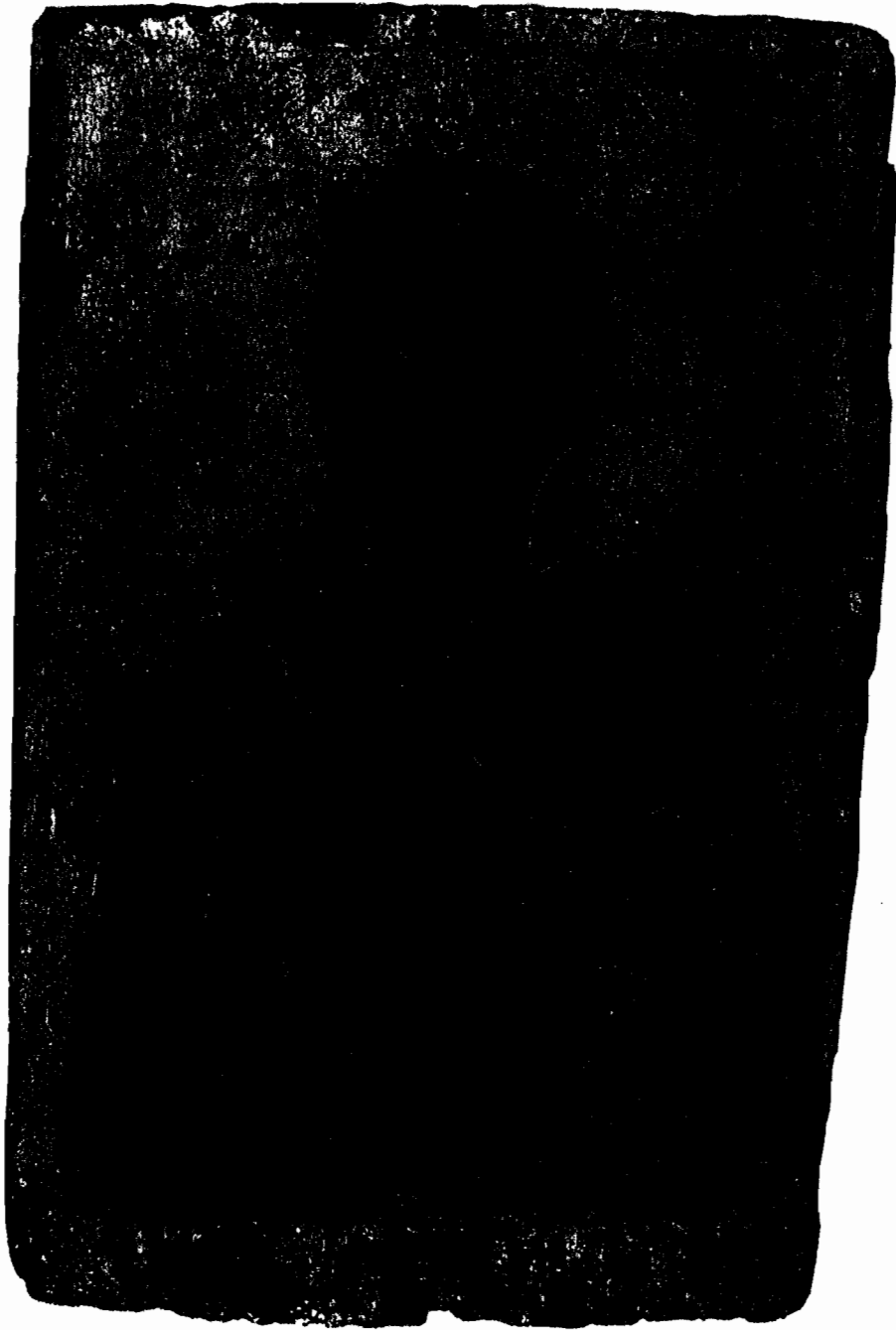


Fig. 15. ICON WITH ANASTASIA (PHARMAKOLYTRIA). Thessaloniki, tempera and silver on wood, late 14th – early 15th century. State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg. (99 x 65.5 x 3 cm)



Fig. 16. UGOLINO DI PRETE ILARIO, *The Annunciation of Saint Anne*. Fresco, c. 1370. Duomo di Orvieto.

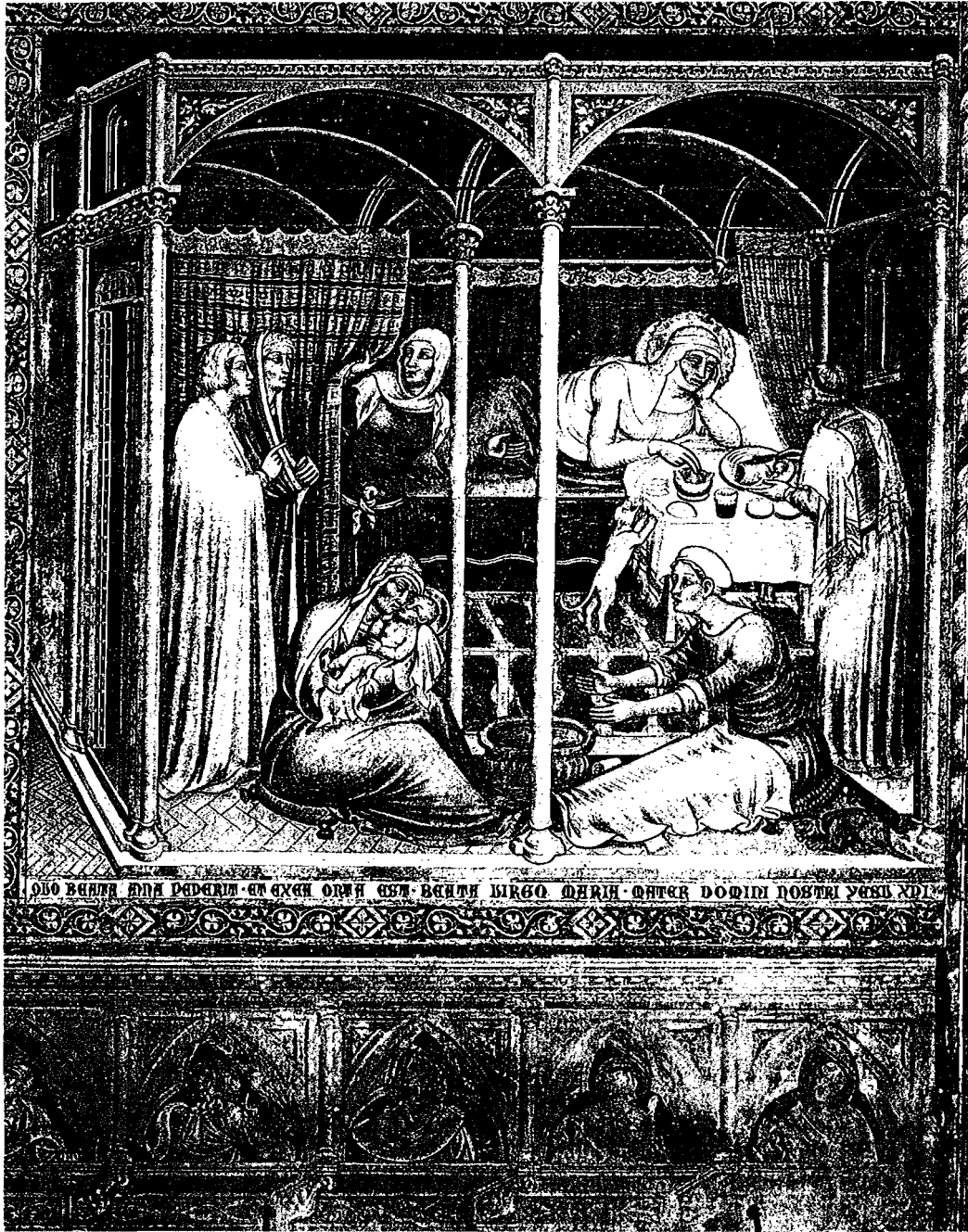


Fig. 17. UGOLINO DI PRETE ILARIO, *The Nativity of the Virgin*. Fresco, c. 1370.
Duomo di Orvieto.



Fig. 18. STANZA 24 OF THE AKATHISTOS HYMN. Markov manastir.



Fig. 19. STANZA 24 OF THE AKATHISTOS HYMN. MS gr. 429, fol. 33v. State Historical Museum, Moscow.

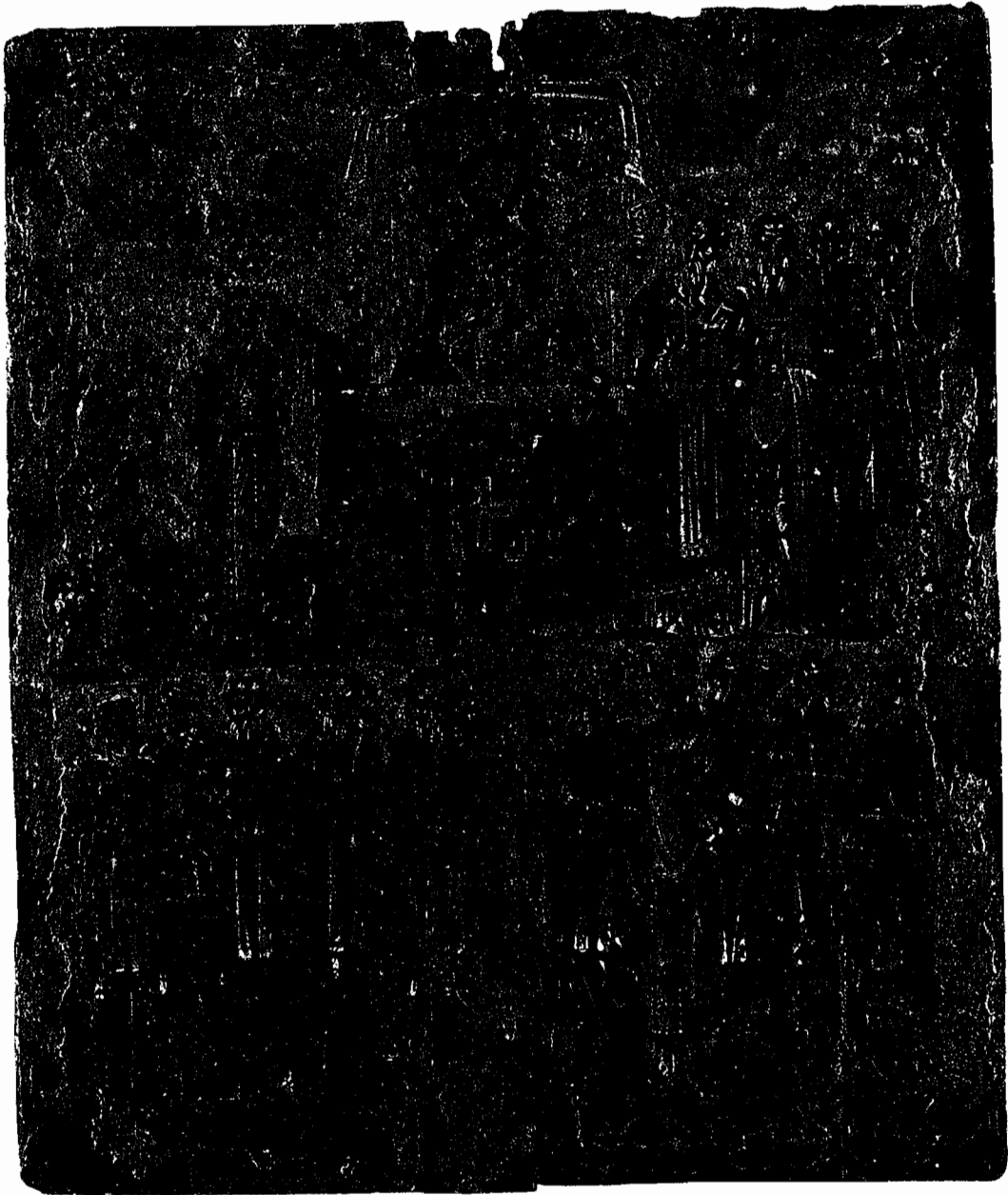


Fig. 20. ICON WITH THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY. Tempera and gold on wood, c. 1500. Velimezis Collection. (36.4 x 31 x 1.9 cm)



Fig. 21. ICON WITH THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY. Tempera (and gold?) on wood, first half of the 16th century. Benaki Museum, Athens.



Fig. 22. ICON WITH THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY. Emmanuel Tzanfournaris, tempera (and gold?) on wood, first half of the 16th century. Greek Institute, Venice. (43.5 x 37.5 cm)

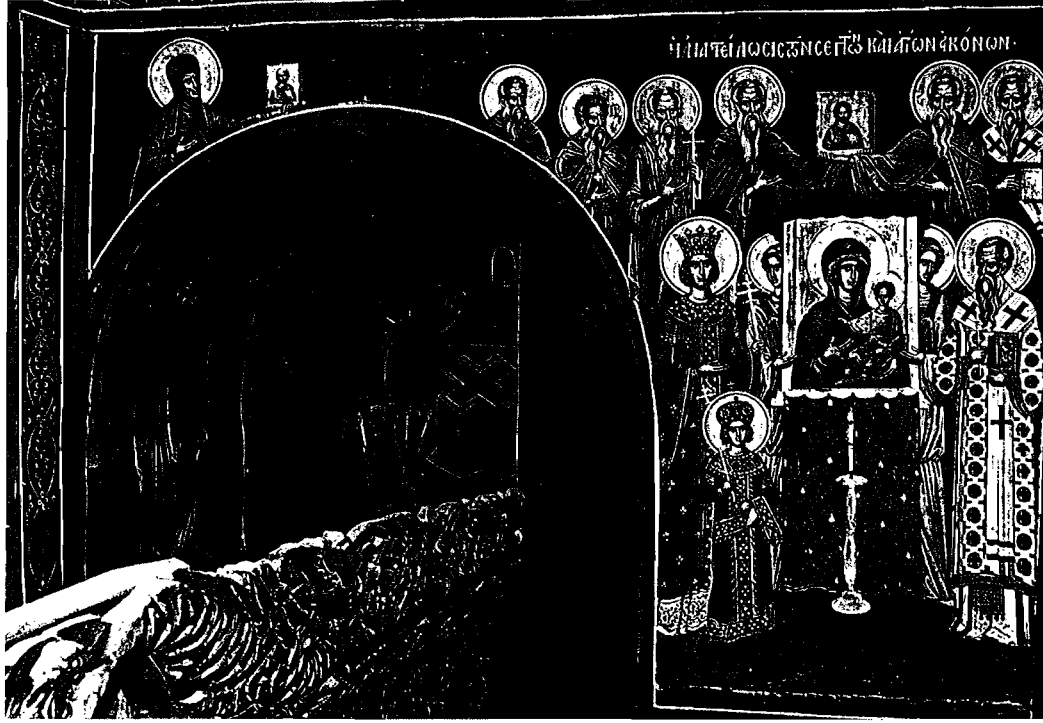


Fig. 23. THEOPHANES THE CRETAN. Fresco of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, 1545-1546. The Monastery of Stavronikita, Mount Athos.

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