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Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline

The Late Byzantine period (1261–1453) is marked by a paradoxical discrepancy between economic weakness and cultural strength. The apparent enigma can be resolved by recognizing that later Byzantine diplomatic strategies, despite or because of diminishing political advantage, relied on an increasingly desirable cultural and artistic heritage. This book reassesses the role of the visual arts in this era by examining the imperial image and the gift as reconceived in the final two centuries of the Byzantine Empire. In particular, it traces a series of luxury objects created specifically for diplomatic exchange with such courts as Genoa, Paris, and Moscow alongside key examples of imperial imagery and ritual. By questioning how political decline reconfigured the visual culture of empire, Professor Hilsdale offers a more nuanced and dynamic account of medieval cultural exchange that considers the temporal dimensions of power and the changing fates of empires.

CECILY J. HILSDALE is Associate Professor in the Department of Art History and Communication Studies at McGill University. Her research concerns cultural exchange in the medieval Mediterranean, in particular the circulation of Byzantine luxury objects as diplomatic gifts, as well as the related dissemination of eastern styles, techniques, iconographies, and ideologies of *imperium*.

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

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It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107033306

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First published 2014

Printing in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd., Padstow, Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Hilsdale, Cecily J., 1971–
Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline / Cecily J. Hilsdale.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-107-03330-6 (hardback)
1. Byzantine Empire – History – Palaeologi dynasty, 1259–1448. 2. Byzantine Empire – Foreign relations – Europe. 3. Europe – Foreign relations – Byzantine Empire. 4. Arts and diplomacy – Byzantine Empire. 5. Diplomatic gifts – Byzantine Empire. I. Title.
DF632.H55 2014
709.495′0902 – dc23 2013030432

ISBN 978-1-107-03330-6 Hardback

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This book was published with the generous assistance of a Book Subvention Award from the Medieval Academy of America.

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Plate 7 (=4.3) Author portrait, works of Dionysios the Areopagite, Louvre, Paris, MR 416 fol. 1r (photo: © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, New York)

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Plate 8 (=4.4) Palaiologan family portrait, works of Dionysios the Areopagite, Louvre, Paris, MR 416 fol. 2r (photo: © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, New York)

Plate 9 (=5.2) Front of the "major" *sakkos* of Metropolitan Photios, 1414–17, Kremlin Museum, Moscow (TK-4) (photo: © Blagov V. V., State Historical and Cultural Museum-Preserve "The Moscow Kremlin")

Plate 10 (=5.5) Detail of the hem of the front of the "major" *sakkos* of Metropolitan Photios, 1414–17, Kremlin Museum, Moscow (TK-4) (photo: © Blagov V. V., State Historical and Cultural Museum-Preserve "The Moscow Kremlin")

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Acknowledgements

This book offers a critical reappraisal of the visual arts in the final centuries of the Byzantine Empire. As such, it owes a great debt to the "Byzantium: Faith and Power" exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2004 and the scholarly momentum that followed in its wake. It was this exhibition that prompted me to reframe my longstanding interests in art and diplomacy around the question of decline in the later Byzantine period. But the thinking that led to this reframing and to the refining of this book's central thematics would not have been possible without the intellectual generosity, interest, and engagement that developed through sustained dialogue with a range of peers and mentors. Though it is not possible to list all of those who have in some way influenced this project, special mention goes to Nell Andrew, Jennifer Ball, Charles Barber, Elena Boeck, Sarah Brooks, Annemarie Weyl Carr, Kristen Collins, Sally Cornelison, Anthony Cutler, Antony Eastmond, Helen Evans, Hannah Feldman, Megan Holmes, Anthony Kaldellis, Holger Klein, Aden Kumler, Christopher MacEvitt, Ruth Macrides, Kathleen Maxwell, Margaret Mullett, Bob Ousterhout, Maria Parani, Georgi Parpulov, Glenn Peers, Daniel Richter, Nancy Ševčenko, Alice-Mary Talbot, Allie Terry-Fritsch, Thelma Thomas, Galina Tirnanic, Alicia Walker, Warren Woodfin, and last but certainly not least Ann Marie Yasin, who has been a constant source of support and inspiration.

A number of individuals read portions of this study in advance of its publication and offered generous comments. Chapter 3 benefited from Jonathan Shea's numismatic expertise, and Chapter 5 was vastly improved by Christian Raffensperger's extensive knowledge of the Russian material. My longtime Chicago interlocutors Lucy Pick, Daisy Delogu, and Rebecca Zorach read much of the book as a series of works in progress. Their critical insights and encouragement were fundamental to the development of the project. Portions of the final text were read by Anna Christidou and Tera Lee Hedrick, who also compiled the index. Jonathan Sachs and the anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press offered feedback on the complete manuscript. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all my readers for their insightful comments; needless to say, the faults that remain in the final text are entirely my own.

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A number of institutions have supported this project and it is my pleasure to acknowledge and thank them formally here. My research has been supported by a Standard Research Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, a Franklin Research Grant from the American Philosophical Society, a Junior Fellowship from Northwestern University's Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, an Individual Research Grant from Northwestern University, a Summer Stipend from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and most recently a book subvention from the Medieval Academy of America. I would also like to thank Dumbarton Oaks for allowing me to include as Chapter 1 a slightly revised version of my article "The Imperial Image at the End of Exile: The Byzantine Embroidered Silk in Genoa and the Treaty of Nymphaion (1261)," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 64 (2010), 151–99 (© 2011, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Trustees for Harvard University). The final form of the book has also benefited from wonderful research assistants at McGill University, including Victoria Addonna, Jackson Davidow, and Alexandra Kelebay, who provided much-needed help with image permissions. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the many collections that have offered permission to publish portions of their holdings and to thank the many individuals who have helped facilitate the process of acquiring those images, especially Kimberly Bowes.

At Cambridge University Press, I would like to thank Michael Sharp for his early interest in and continued commitment to this project, as well as Elizabeth Hanlon for shepherding the manuscript so efficiently through to publication.

While work on this book progressed through a range of academic posts across the Midwest from Ann Arbor, Michigan, to Lawrence, Kansas, to Northwestern University, it came to completion in Montreal at McGill University, where it benefited from the support and encouragement of my colleagues in the Art History and Communication Studies Department. In particular, I thank Angela Vanhaelen for her mentorship: she was instrumental in bringing me to McGill at precisely the right moment in my personal life and my academic career.

Although the book took on its final form at McGill, its roots reach back further than I would like to admit, to the myriad graduate seminars on Byzantine art at the University of Chicago offered by Robert S. Nelson, my *doktorvater* who, quite frankly, taught me most of what I know about Byzantium. Although this book bears only a loose connection to the dissertation I wrote under his direction, it was through his discipline, combined with the intellectually stimulating environment of the University of Chicago, that my

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practice was shaped and the foundation for my current trajectory was laid out firmly. I would like to acknowledge my other mentors there as well: the late Michael Camille for his gleeful excitement about all things medieval, Walter Kaegi for his comprehensive introduction to Byzantine historiography, Tom Cummins for his wicked wit and anthropological rigor, and, especially, Linda Seidel for serving as an inspiration in so many ways and for insisting that I never lose sight of the stakes of an argument. At the University of Chicago I also benefited from an intellectually generous cohort of fellow Byzantinists, many of whom continue to serve as the most challenging and supportive of interlocutors. The late Angela Volan in particular deserves special mention: although her brilliance was cut tragically short, her memory lives on.

Byzantine texts are fond of expressing gratitude through insufficiency. Seldom are words capable of capturing the magnitude of a sentiment; words fall short where gratitude is beyond measure. For gifts that should never be measured but hopefully reciprocated in some small way, I thank Jonathan Sachs most of all, and I eagerly await the new chapter in our lives that has begun with the little *belette* growing inside me as I type.

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Abbreviations

ArtB	*Art Bulletin*
ArtH	*Art History*
BFP	*Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. Helen C. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).
BMFD	*Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders'* Typika *and Testaments*, ed. John Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000).
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
BSl	*Byzantinoslavica*
ByzF	*Byzantinische Forschungen*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CA	*Cahiers archéologiques*
DOC	*Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, edited by A. R. Bellinger, P. Grierson, and M. F. Hendy (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1966–99)
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
ΔΧΑΕ	*Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias*
ΕΕΒΣ	*Epeteris Hetaireias Byzaninon Spoudon*
EHB	*The Economic History of Byzantium from the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, edited by Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002)
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*
JÖBG	*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft*
OCP	*Orientalia christiana periodica*
ODB	*Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, edited by A. Kazhdan *et al.* (Oxford University Press, 1991)
PG	*Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, edited by J.-P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1857–66)
PLP	*Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, edited by E. Trapp *et al.* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1976–96)

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REB	*Revue des études byzantines*
REG	*Revue des études grecques*
RESEE	*Revue des études sud-est européennes*
RN	*Revue numismatique*

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