

## Donor Portraits in Byzantine Art

This book explores the range of images in Byzantine art known as donor portraits. It concentrates on the distinctive, supplicatory contact shown between ordinary, mortal figures and their holy, supernatural interlocutors. The topic is approached from a range of perspectives, including art history, theology, structuralist and post-structuralist anthropological theory, and contemporary symbol and metaphor theory. Rico Franes argues that the term “donor portraits” is inappropriate for the category of images to which it conventionally refers and proposes an alternative title: contact portraits. He contends that the most important feature of the scenes consists in the active role that they play within the belief systems of the supplicants. They are best conceived of not simply as passive expressions of stable, pre-existing ideas and concepts, but as dynamic proponents in a fraught, constantly shifting landscape. The book is important for all scholars and students of Byzantine art and religion.

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# Donor Portraits in Byzantine Art

## The Vicissitudes of Contact between Human and Divine

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