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Γυάλινα μετάλλια με θρησκευτικές παραστάσεις στο Μουσείο Μπενάκη: συμβολή στη μελέτη των προσκυνηματικών ενθυμημάτων κατά τον ύστερο Μεσαίωνα

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Glass medallions with religious themes in the Byzantine Collection at the Benaki Museum: a contribution to the study of pilgrim tokens in Late Middle Ages

THE BENAKI MUSEUM'S Byzantine Collection contains nine glass medallions with depictions of holy figures and other religious scenes. These objects belong to a large group of more than 200 such medallions¹ which can be found in museums and private collections all over the world. They are made of translucent or opaque glass in various colours and were produced from more than 60 different moulds; their height varies from 2 to 6 cm. The thematic material is almost exclusively religious, and is often accompanied by inscriptions in Greek or Latin.

The basic work on these miniature objects remains the article by H. Wentzel, *Das Medaillon mit dem Hl. Theodor und die venezianischen Glaspasten im byzantinischen Stil*, in: *Festschrift für E. Meyer zum sechzigsten Geburtstag* (Hamburg 1959), in which he classifies the 157 medallions known at the time into 55 different types according to subject and appends a brief catalogue of the examples of each type.² Wentzel concluded his work on this group of medallions in a further article published in 1963.³

Some of the Benaki medallions were known to Wentzel and are mentioned in his articles. They reached a wider audience when they were included in the exhibition *Byzantine and post-Byzantine Art*, held in Athens in 1985-1986, and were discussed by the late Laskarina Bouras in the catalogue.⁴ More recently five were published again in the catalogue of the exhibition *Everyday Life in Byzantium* (Thessaloniki 2001-2002) by the present writer.⁵

This article begins with an overall summary of the views which have been previously expressed as to the date, provenance and purpose of this group of medallions. There follows a description of the items in the

Benaki Collection in the form of brief catalogue entries for each of the nine examples, while the final section discusses the objects in the light of certain characteristics which emerge from the examination of the Benaki medallions and which may shed new light on the general background of the entire group.⁶ The following article by D. Kotzamani, conservator at the Benaki Museum, describes the results of the laboratory analysis of five of the medallions which was recently carried out in order to obtain the fullest possible information as to the material.⁷

Previous studies

The first scholar to make a systematic study of glass medallions was Wentzel, who, as well as cataloguing the known examples, attempted to establish their purpose, date and place of manufacture. The large number of surviving artefacts and their similarity in terms of production methods and form (size, shape, colour of glass and inscriptions) led him to speculate that the medallions were mass-produced in one location, and possibly even in a single workshop, as imitations of ornate cameos carved from precious or semi-precious stones. As the representations and inscriptions were directed to both a western and a Byzantine public, he suggested that they originated in a major centre of glass production which had commercial contacts with Byzantium and the West, 13th-century Venice being a likely candidate.⁸ Noting also that a small group differed significantly from the rest, as their iconography was clearly Byzantine and the motifs and shape imitated Byzantine semi-precious stone cameos, he proposed that these were examples of a type with which the Vene-

tians would have become familiar during the Latin occupation of Constantinople and which served as the models for the other medallions.⁹ As a final point he suggested that the regular use of cheaper materials, the evidence of mass production of the objects and the content of the representations indicated that the main purpose of the medallions was as commemorative souvenirs for pilgrims.

Wentzel's theories have been generally accepted,¹⁰ but the publication of several new examples in museum and exhibition catalogues gave certain scholars the opportunity to express strong disagreement, mainly on the suggested Venetian origin. Chief among these was M. Ross, who in the catalogue of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (1962) made the point that the simple and inexpensive technique of producing the medallions by using a mould had been adopted in the Byzantine world since the 6th century for the manufacture of glass weights and jewellery. Remarking also that some of the motifs on the glass medallions bore a strong resemblance to the iconography of 11th- and 12th-century Byzantine lead seals he concluded that the medallions were a Byzantine concept and an independent art form, not a mere imitation or reproduction of carved stone cameos. On this basis he attributed all the medallions in the collection to Constantinople and explained the western iconography of certain examples by ascribing them to the period of Latin occupation.¹¹

David Buckton took a different approach. His study of the specimens in the British Museum led him to suggest that the medallions could be divided into two groups on the basis of the material used, according to whether the glass was translucent or opaque. He noted that the translucent medallions seem to be a separate group which is characterised by Byzantine iconography and Greek inscriptions, while the opaque examples contained Byzantine and western motifs and inscriptions in both Greek and Latin. Laboratory analysis also demonstrated that the opaque medallions in the British Museum used only three colours of paste, dark purple, red-orange and black, in combinations which give rise to varied shades. According to Buckton, the restricted palette was proof that the artefacts originated in one workshop, and this, combined with the fact that red-orange glass tesserae were a rarity in Constantinople but relatively common in Italian mosaics, caused him to accept Wentzel's view that the workshop must have been located in Venice. As for the trans-

lucent examples, he concluded that as some of the material in the British Museum displayed striking similarities with 11th- and 12th-century Byzantine semi-precious stone cameos, they must have been products of a Byzantine workshop and served as the models for the opaque Venetian medallions.

Buckton's theory, which was based on technical data, represents, in his words, a 'pleasing compromise' between the opposing viewpoints of Wentzel and Ross, but it has never been published in a more expansive form since it first appeared in a two-page summary of conference proceedings¹² and a brief catalogue entry for the exhibition *Byzantium* (British Museum 1994).¹³ As a result, the provenance of glass medallions remained an open question, as the catalogues of subsequent exhibitions clearly demonstrate. Two medallions with Byzantine motifs and Greek inscriptions were exhibited in *The Glory of Byzantium* (New York 1997): one of these, included in a section of the catalogue devoted to Byzantine private devotional works ("Popular Imagery"), was ascribed a firm Byzantine –possibly Constantinopolitan– origin but for the second, displayed in the section "Byzantine Art and the Latin West", no definite solution is given to the 'Venice v Byzantium' problem. In her short catalogue entries M. Georgopoulos adopts Ross' approach and considers that the medallions are "*too closely related to Byzantine seals not to be labelled Byzantine*".¹⁴

In the catalogues of the *Byzance* exhibition at the Louvre (1992) and *Rom und Byzanz* in Munich (1998) respectively, M. Avisseau and M. Dennert attribute similar items to 13th century Venice,¹⁵ largely following Buckton's reasoning, while in the recent *Byzanz, Das Licht aus dem Osten* catalogue (Padeborn 2001), J. Witt notes the existence of translucent medallions with western iconography and inscriptions. He therefore finds the distinction "*translucent= Byzantine, opaque= Venetian*" problematic and suggests a Venetian provenance for all the glass medallions.¹⁶

It will be clear from this brief overview that study of the medallions has to date concentrated on their place of origin, with the question of purpose remaining on the sidelines and iconography being discussed only incidentally, in the context of demonstrating a Byzantine or a western provenance. It seems preferable however to treat these three issues as interrelated and inseparable, and this review of the Benaki medallions accordingly commenc-



Fig. 1. Glass medallion with St Demetrios. Athens, Benaki Museum, inv. no. 13546 (photo: Sp. Delivorrias).



Fig. 2. Lead flask for myrrh (*koutrouvion*) with St Demetrios (from: *Everyday Life in Byzantium* 2002, 184 no. 203).

es with a discussion of their iconography before passing on to examine the surviving written sources in order to extract clues as to, firstly, the purpose of this group of objects and, subsequently, their provenance and place of manufacture.

Catalogue of medallions at the Benaki Museum

1. St Demetrios (fig. 1)

Inv. no. 13546

Oval medallion cast in opaque dark brick-red glass.

Dimensions. 3 x 2.5 x 0.5 cm.

Condition. Intact. Good condition.

Provenance. Unknown.

Description. A half-length, frontal depiction of the saint in military dress, with a spear in his right hand and a round shield with a cross in the centre in his left hand. The breastplate has a rhomboid pattern. He has short, curly hair and a halo of dots. The inscription reads O A(TIOC) / ΔH / [M]H / - TPI / OC.

Publications. *Byzantine and post-Byzantine Art* 1986, 208 no. 233 (L. Bouras).

This medallion of St Demetrios belongs to the most popular type of the group,¹⁷ and around 20 examples with the same shape and near-identical dimensions (c. 3 x 2.5 cm) can be found in private collections and museums in Bologna,¹⁸ Naples, Parma, Mt Athos (Hilandar Monastery),¹⁹ London,²⁰ Oxford,²¹ Berlin,²² Paris,²³ Washington,²⁴ Cyprus and Toronto.²⁵ A particularly interesting example is the medallion which at a later date was set in a mount to form the central section of a silver-gilt enkolpion reliquary, now in Hamburg.²⁶ Most are made of opaque glass in various combinations of black and red, though three green or blue translucent versions also exist.

The patron saint of Thessaloniki appears in military attire in wall paintings and minor art objects from the 11th century.²⁷ Lead seals of the 10th to 13th centuries show him in bust, holding a spear or sword and a round shield, in representations identical to those on the medallions.²⁸ The same iconographic type of military saint also occurs frequently in 11th-12th century semi-precious Byzantine cameos which contain strong similarities to the medallions, and it has accordingly been suggested that this type has a Byzantine origin, and its models have been sought in comparable artefacts.²⁹



Fig. 3. Glass medallion with Agia Sophia. Athens, Benaki Museum, inv. no. 13525 (photo: Sp. Delivorrias).



Fig. 4. Glass medallion with the Virgin Hodegetria. Athens, Benaki Museum, inv. no. 13526 (photo: Sp. Delivorrias).

It may well be significant that the saint's iconography on these medallions closely resembles that on a group of objects which are linked with Thessaloniki, and more specifically with the basilica of St Demetrios: these *koutrouvia* (ampullae or small lead flasks), intended for pilgrims, were used to hold the aromatic myrrh which gushed from the saint's tomb³⁰ (fig. 2).

2. Agia Sophia (fig. 3)

Inv. no. 13525

Oval medallion cast in opaque dark brown glass with brick-red striations.

Dimensions. 2.6 x 2.1 x 0.55 cm.

Condition. Intact, the surface is somewhat weathered.

Description. A female figure in bust, with a sleeved chiton and a maphorion covering her head. Her right arm is placed in front of her breast in a gesture of blessing or prayer and her raised left arm is concealed by her maphorion. The figure is flanked at shoulder height by the inscription Η ΑΓΙΑ / ΟΥ - ΦΙΑ.

Publications. Unpublished.

The six examples of this type recorded by Wentzel,³¹ which include the Benaki medallion, have been joined by three published more recently, in Munich,³² Russia³³ and Bulgaria.³⁴ All are made of opaque glass in shades of black, brown and red and have roughly the same dimensions.

The female figure depicted in the medallions is the personification of Holy Wisdom, the attribute of the Trinity which is often identified in theological belief with the

incarnated Word, the Son.³⁵ This symbolic iconographic type appears until the 12th century in a few peripheral examples, mainly illuminated manuscripts;³⁶ however the closest iconographic parallels to the medallion are found in the 6th- to 8th-century lead seals of officials of the Patriarchate at Constantinople, metropolitans and bishops,³⁷ where she is represented as a female saint, standing upright with her hands in a gesture of prayer or holding a cross to her breast.

3. Virgin Hodegetria (fig. 4)

Inv. no. 13526

Oval medallion cast in opaque dark brown glass with yellow and red striations.

Dimensions. 2.6 x 2.1 x 2 cm.

Condition. Intact, surface badly weathered.

Description. The Virgin is portrayed in the Hodegetria type. On the left traces of the abbreviation MHP. The delicate naturalism of the maphorion drapery on the Virgin's raised right arm and her elegant pose, turned slightly towards Christ, single out this medallion from the remainder of the group, in spite of the surface damage.

Publications. Unpublished.

Wentzel records six medallions depicting the Hodegetria in three broadly similar types, and one with the same subject in reverse.³⁸ A further two examples have emerged in recent publications.³⁹ Their dimensions range from 2.5 to 3.2 cm and they display great variation in colour, with opaque examples in brown, red and dark blue⁴⁰ and

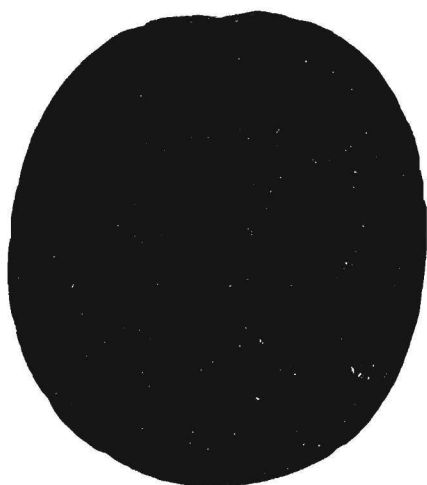


Fig. 5. Glass medallion with St Theodore the dragon-slayer on horseback. Athens, Benaki Museum, inv. no. 13521 (photo: Sp. Delivorrias).



Fig. 6. Glass medallion with St Theodore the dragon-slayer on horseback. Athens, Benaki Museum, inv. no. 13522 (photo: Sp. Delivorrias).



Fig. 7. Enkolpion with glass medallion with St Theodore the dragon-slayer on horseback. Washington, Dumbarton Oaks, inv. no. 38.28 (from: Wentzel 1959, fig. 5).



Fig. 8. Enkolpion with glass medallion with St George the dragon-slayer on horseback. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. no. 132 (from: Wentzel 1959, fig. 18).

translucent versions in bluish green and ochre.

The portrayal of the Virgin in bust holding Christ on her left arm and gesturing towards him with her right hand is a type associated with the famous Hodegetria icon, which was housed in the Hodegon monastery at Constantinople.⁴¹ This miracle-working icon became the palladium of the city and served as the focus for important cult ceremonial which dominated the religious life

of the capital and attracted a host of pilgrims from home and abroad.⁴² Adopted as a model in a large number of works and a variety of media, it became one of the most popular depictions of the Virgin in the Byzantine world.

4a. St Theodore the dragon-slayer on horseback (fig. 5)
Inv. no. 13521
Oval medallion cast in black glass.



Fig. 9. Glass medallion with the Nativity. Athens, Benaki Museum, inv. no. 13524 (photo: Sp. Delivorrias).



Fig. 10. Glass medallion with the Nativity (version A). Berlin, former Kaiser Friedrich Museum, inv. no. 762 (from: Volbach 1930, pl. 4).



Fig. 11. Glass medallion with the Nativity (version B). Washington, Dumbarton Oaks, inv. no. 53.12.74 (from: M. C. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, 1: Metalwork, Ceramics, Glass, Glyptics, Painting* [Washington 1962] pl. LVII, 108).



Fig. 12. Glass medallion with the Nativity (version C). Vatican Museums, inv. no. 697 (from: Wentzel 1956, pl. A.8).

Dimensions. 3.2 x 2.8 x 0.7 cm.

Condition. Intact, fairly well preserved.

Publications. *Byzantine and post-Byzantine Art* 1986, 210 no. 237 (L. Bouras); *Everyday Life in Byzantium* 2002, 521 no. 716 (V. Foskolou).

4b. St Theodore the dragon-slayer on horseback (fig. 6)

Inv. no. 13522

Oval medallion cast in brick-red glass.

Dimensions. 3.05 x 2.55 x 0.4 cm.

Condition. Small section missing at the lower right, surface fairly corroded.

Publications: Unpublished.

The two medallions depict the saint on horseback gal-

loping off to the right, as he spears the dragon which is shown in the lowest part of the representation. In his left hand he carries a triangular shield with a barely visible cross in the centre.⁴³ The inscription reads Ο Α(ΓΙΟ)C / ΘΕ / Ω - ΔΟ / ΡΟ / C. In spite of the small scale and the surface damage the first medallion has some fine detail – notably the saddle strap, the bridle, the horse's tail and the dragon's wings – which is indicative of a meticulously fashioned mould.

The 13 examples of the type recorded by Wentzel⁴⁴ have recently been joined by another in the Cabinet des Médailles.⁴⁵ They all have virtually identical dimensions (c. 3.1 x 2.7 cm) and are made from opaque black, brown or red paste, the sole exception being the translucent yellowish medallion in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection.⁴⁶

The earliest representations of St Theodore as dragon-slayer, dating from before the 8th century, occur on lead seals of the bishops of Euchaita, the saint's birthplace and one of the main centres of his cult.⁴⁷ These early examples, which show the saint spearing the dragon on foot, probably follow the cult icon in the church of his native city.⁴⁸ He appears on horseback in later works, notably in wall painting.⁴⁹

The equestrian saint is a type which rarely appears in Byzantine minor art objects. Military saints are normally depicted standing in frontal pose or in bust, as in ivory⁵⁰ and steatite icons,⁵¹ cameos made from semi-precious stones⁵² and lead seals.⁵³ Though unusual, this type of St Theodore was probably chosen for glass medallions because of the apotropaic character of the mounted dragon-slayer, which suited an object intended for private devotion which could be used as an amulet.⁵⁴

More problematic is Wetzel's observation that the saint is shown beardless on medallions (fig. 7),⁵⁵ especially as a short pointed beard is the defining feature of St Theodore in Byzantine art.⁵⁶ This suggests an indifference to the conventional facial type of the saint which would be highly uncharacteristic of Byzantine practice and belief. When we also recall that an identical version of the type was used for a group of medallions of St George (fig. 8)⁵⁷ – only the inscription differs – it becomes clear that the creators of these artefacts felt free to use the same model for different saints, ignoring the conventional personal characteristics of the holy figures. This behaviour, so foreign to the Byzantine mentality, can be explained as a form of mass production which was prepared to sacrifice

individual detail to the demands of the marketplace.

5. Nativity (fig. 9)

Inv. no. 13524

Oval medallion cast in opaque dark brown glass with black striations.

Dimensions. 3.0 x 2.6 x 0.6 cm.

Condition. Section missing from the upper right.

Description. On the left, Joseph is seated on a stool, supporting his head with his left hand. Mary, opposite him, raises herself from her bed and extends her right arm towards Christ, who is depicted at the centre of the scene lying in the manger. The figures have haloes of dots. The heads of the ox and the ass appear higher up through the apertures of a columned structure. Above Joseph is a crescent moon.

Publications. *Byzantine and post-Byzantine Art* 1986, 210 no. 239 (L. Bouras); *Everyday Life in Byzantium* 2002, 520 no. 715 (V. Foskolou).

According to Wentzel three different versions of the Nativity theme can be found on medallions.⁵⁸ In two of these (A and B) the dimensions (c. 3 cm) and the representations are virtually identical: the single discrepancy appears in the upper section which in version A (followed by the Benaki medallion) contains a crescent moon and, on the other side, a star with two rays pointing towards the Christ child (fig. 10).⁵⁹ This last feature is wholly in keeping with Nativity tradition and iconography, but the symbolism and the origins of the crescent moon raise certain questions.

To find the explanation we need to examine version B, which instead of the two symbols contains at the top a Greek inscription spelling out the title of the representation (Η ΓΕΝΝΗCΙC) in reversed lettering (fig. 11).⁶⁰ This feature suggests two things: that version B is the negative version of a model in which the inscription appeared in its correct form; and also that it originated in an ambience where the phrase was not understood. The placing of the letters, especially the reversed C above the figure of Joseph, indicates that at a later stage (represented by version A) the incomprehensible inscription was transformed into a crescent moon and a star, the latter at any rate being iconographically appropriate to this scene.

This theory is confirmed when we look at version C, which has the same iconography as the other two, but in reverse: the Virgin is on the left and Joseph on the right,

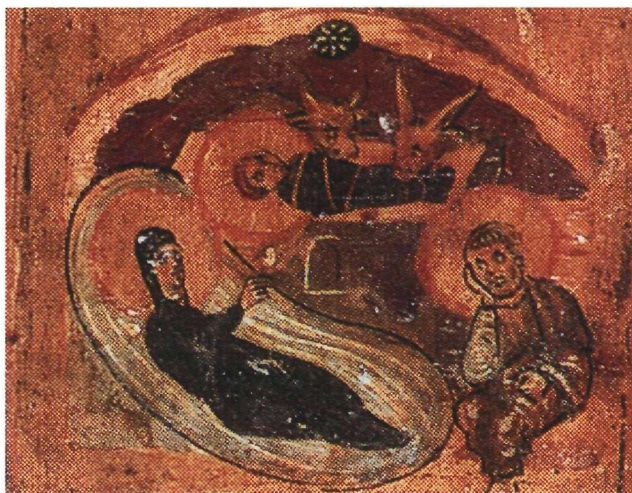


Fig. 13. Icon with the Nativity from Sina Monastery, 9th century (detail). St Catherine's Monastery, Sina (from: K. Manafis [ed.], *Σινά. Οι θησαυροί της Ι. Μονής Αγίας Αικατερίνης* [Athens 1990] 140 fig. 7).

Fig. 14. Ivory plaque with a representation of the Nativity, 7th-8th century. Washington D.C., Dumbarton Oaks, inv. no. 51.30 (from: K. Weitzmann, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, 3: *Ivories and Steatites* [Washington 1972] pl. 3).

Fig. 15. Representation of the Nativity on the Santa Sanctorum reliquary. Vatican Museums (from: J. Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* [London 1997] fig. 118).

while the inscription which frames the scene is written correctly as Η ΓΕ / ΝΗC / IC (fig. 12).⁶¹ A medallion of this type was presumably used to form a new mould, in which the figures and the lettering were engraved exactly as on the original, with the result that the next group of medallions emerged as a negative version of their model. This is corroborated by the fact that the medallions of version C, with the correct inscription, are larger (c. 4.7 cm) and have greater detail and accuracy in their reproduction of the scene. Version C is therefore the earliest, and contains the finest examples, but at some point it must have been reproduced or replaced,⁶² presumably in a non-Byzantine workshop, to judge from the problems caused by the inscriptions and the solutions found to them.

Another interesting feature of this group of medallions is the architectural setting, which was the basic reason for their classification among works with western iconography. For while the Byzantine iconographic tradition locates the Nativity in the cave of Bethlehem, the columned structure, the Virgin's couch and Joseph's stool appear to derive from western art, in which the scene is set inside a stable or against a rich architectural background.⁶³

However the architectural detail found in version C (which, as we have seen, must have been the prototype for the whole group) discloses a fascinating feature which overturns the theory propounded above. This is the manger, with two niches in its façade, which recalls similar representations early icons and ivory plaquettes of the 6th to 8th century, where the manger is depicted as a masonry-built structure with a niche at the front which sometimes contains hanging lamps or fabric (figs 13, 14).⁶⁴ As Kurt Weitzmann has shown, this feature represents an altar, and it has its roots in the iconography of pilgrim souvenirs from the Holy Land such as the wooden reliquary of the Sancta Sanctorum in the Vatican (fig. 15). As these objects contain topographical references to actual churches in the Holy Land, Weitzmann suggested that the structure might symbolise the altar of the Cave of the Nativity in the basilica at Bethlehem.⁶⁵

The motive of the manger-altar was subsequently adopted in the mid-Byzantine iconography of the Nativity, with certain isolated examples showing a niche in one of its sides.⁶⁶ From around the mid-12th century, however, the niches became a standard feature, as attested in a series of manuscripts and wall-paintings.⁶⁷ This cannot have been a chance development or be attributable to the

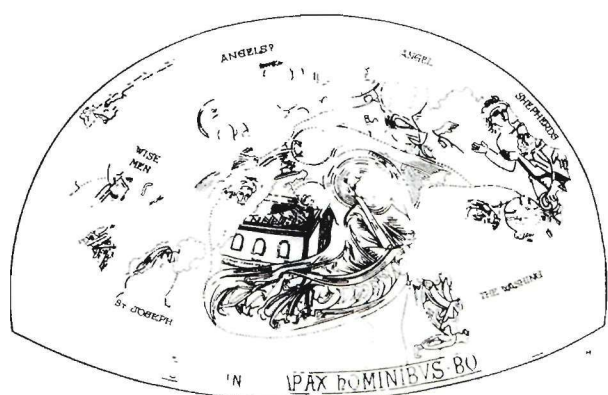


Fig. 16. Sketch of the mosaic representation of the Nativity in the Cave of the Nativity, Bethlehem (1167-1169) (from:

J. Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land 1098-1187* [New York 1995] 371-78 fig. 9.29h).

Fig. 17. The crib (detail from the mosaic representation of the Nativity in the Cave of the Nativity, Bethlehem) (from:

J. Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land 1098-1187* [New York 1995] 371-78 fig. 9.29k).



Fig. 18. Glass medallion with St James and pilgrims. Athens, Benaki Museum, inv. no. 13523 (photo: Sp. Delivorrias).

decorative proclivities of the Komnenan era, as it also occurs in a representation which acquires great significance from its location, the mosaic which adorns the vault of the Cave of the Nativity in the church at Bethlehem (1167-1169) (figs 16, 17).⁶⁸ The inclusion of this motif in the scene depicted near the actual manger suggests that it reflects the contemporary appearance of the manger, and this is confirmed by pilgrim's narratives of the mid-12th century onwards, which contain descriptions of the marble revetment with rounded niches which covered the sacred relic.⁶⁹

It cannot be coincidental that this motif becomes a standard feature in western works at roughly the same time,⁷⁰ and it clearly belonged to an iconographic programme specifically related to the Loca Santa: indeed the clear topographical reference to the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem suggests that the group of medallions discussed here was associated with pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

6. St James with pilgrims (fig. 18)

Inv. no. 13523

Oval medallion cast in opaque brown glass with black striations.

Dimensions. 2.9 x 2.6 x 0.5 cm.

Condition. Intact, fairly well preserved.

Description. In the centre St James full-length and frontally posed: his halo has a dotted outline. The inscription reads S / IAC-OB. The saint is flanked by two kneel-



Fig. 19. Donor portrait, detail from the representation of St James. Bethlehem, Church of the Nativity (from: G. Kühnel, *Wall Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* [Berlin 1988] pl. 13,21).



Fig. 20. Seal of the Parisian fraternity of pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela, 14th century. Paris, Archives Nationales (from: *LCIVII*, col. 29 fig. 4).



Fig. 21. Glass medallion with the Deposition and the Martyrdom of St Bartholomew. Athens, Benaki Museum, inv. no. 9427 (photo: Sp. Delivorrias).

ing figures who are identified as pilgrims by their broad-brimmed hats and tall staffs.

Publications. *Byzantine and post-Byzantine Art* 1986, 210 no. 241 (L. Bouras); *Everyday Life in Byzantium* 2002, 522 no. 718 (V. Foskolou).

Eleven medallions with St James flanked by pilgrims are known; all are made from opaque black, brown and red glass and are approximately the same size (2.9 cm).⁷¹

St James the Elder, the brother of John, was the first apostle to be martyred (Acts xii.1-2). His cult became especially popular in the West after the discovery of his tomb at Santiago de Compostela in Spain in the early

9th century. Santiago developed into one of the main pilgrimage sites of mediaeval Europe, and was the destination of choice for every western Christian after the Holy Land and Rome. It was reached by well-defined routes lined with churches, chapels and hostleries dedicated to the apostle, which were operated by local fraternities on behalf of the pilgrims and served as places of accommodation for the aspiring visitor.⁷² Cockle shells were worn by pilgrims as a token of the successful completion of their hazardous journey and of their veneration at the apostle's grave;⁷³ their significance for western Christians can be judged from a donor portrait in the basilica at

Bethlehem, which shows the subject in veneration before St James with a cockle shell sewn onto a purse attached to his waist (fig. 19).⁷⁴

The apostle's cult in Spain had an influential role on his iconography in the West, in which from the end of the 12th century onwards he appears with the standard accoutrements of a mediaeval pilgrim – a broad-brimmed hat and a long staff – and with a cockle shell tied around his neck or to his hat:⁷⁵ these features can be found on a 14th-century seal belonging to the Parisian fraternity of Santiago de Compostela in which the saint is shown surrounded by venerating pilgrims (fig. 20).⁷⁶ The similarity between this seal and the Benaki medallion suggests that the latter may have some connection with the Spanish shrine, and its size, shape and material all point to it being another form of commemoration of a visit there. As the best preserved example, now in Berlin, clearly shows a shell hanging at the saint's neck⁷⁷ we can be fairly confident that these glass medallions of St James were produced for the souvenir market which grew up around the pilgrimage to his shrine in the church at Santiago de Compostela.

7. Deposition – Martyrdom of St Bartholomew (fig. 21)
Inv. no. 9427

Rectangular medallion with curved edges cast in opaque dark brown and black glass with red striations.

Dimensions. 4.7 x 4.1 x 0.6 cm.

Condition. Intact, fairly well preserved.

The two tiers depict the Deposition and the Martyrdom of St Bartholomew. In the first Joseph on a ladder supports the body of Christ, while lower down Nicodemus attempts to remove the nails from his feet with pliers. The Virgin appears on the left with two female attendants, and on the right are John and another female figure. The second tier shows St Bartholomew naked and seated on a mound, with his arms bound to two slender pillars. Two figures on the left flay the skin from his hand and foot. The inscription reads VI / [-] C / S- B(AR)T / OL / OM / EI. The figures in the upper tier and St Bartholomew have haloes of dots.

Publications. *Byzantine and post-Byzantine Art* 1986, 210-22 no. 242 (L. Bouras); *Everyday Life in Byzantium* 2002, 522 no. 719 (V. Foskolou).

This medallion with the Deposition and Martyrdom of St Bartholomew is an unusual type and only two oth-

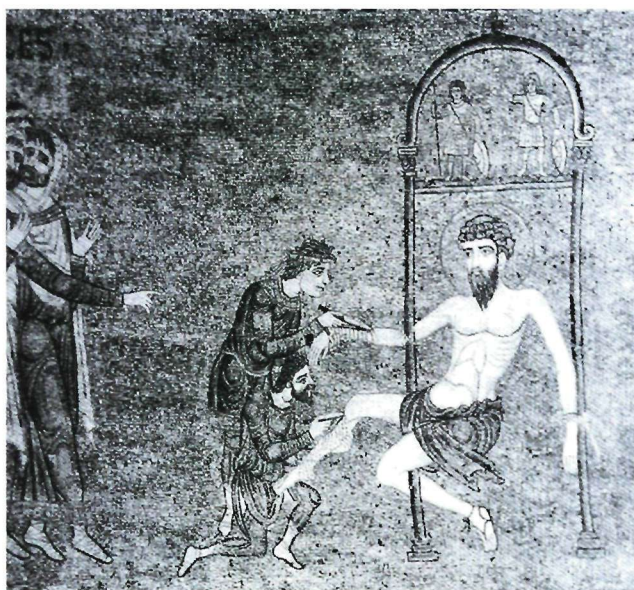


Fig. 22. Martyrdom of St Bartholomew, mosaic, late 12th century. Venice, St Mark's (from: O. Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice, I: The Eleventh and the Twelfth Centuries* [Chicago-London 1984] 2 fig. 359).

er examples with the same shape and dimensions (4.8 cm) are known.⁷⁸

This representation of the Deposition adopts an iconographic scheme that appears in monumental painting of the late 12th century and later became common in Byzantine and western art;⁷⁹ by contrast the martyrdom of St Bartholomew with its Latin inscription suggests a purely western origin, and its iconography points to a more specific association with Venice.

Early Christian traditions concerning the apostolic activity of Bartholomew contain many different versions of his martyrdom – beheading, crucifixion, clubbing to death and flaying.⁸⁰ The Eastern church favoured crucifixion,⁸¹ which appears, albeit infrequently, in Byzantine works,⁸² but no particular version was adopted by the western church, and we find a notable variety of representations of martyrdom, with preference usually given to the most expeditious methods, beheading and crucifixion. Flaying is introduced in the 12th century, when the saint is shown standing with his legs tied to a column.⁸³ The closest parallel to the flaying scene on the medallions occurs in a mosaic in St Mark's, Venice, which dates from the late 12th century (fig. 22).⁸⁴ In



Fig. 23. Glass medallion with St Anne enthroned with the Virgin and Christ flanked by Saints. Athens, Benaki Museum, inv. no. 9426 (photo: Sp. Delivorrias).

both examples the saint is depicted upright with his arms bound to two slender columns, and the executioners are shown in an identical position, while even the treatment of the saint's legs in the medallion is a clumsy attempt at reproducing the monumental prototype.

8. St Anne enthroned with the Virgin and Christ flanked by Saints (fig. 23)

Inv. no. 9426

Oval medallion cast in opaque olive-green paste.

Dimensions. 6.8 x 5.9 x 1 cm.

Condition. The medallion is in three fragments, which have been reassembled and held together in a silver mount.

Description. St Anne is seated on a throne adorned with stars and depicted in frontal perspective: it has a gabled back, gothic finials and a wide footrest. She holds in her lap the Virgin, who in her turn holds the Christ child. The central figures are flanked by four saints and, higher up, by two angels. The letters CA and IOA, found above the second figure on the left and in the lower section on the right respectively, identify the saints as St Catherine and St John the Evangelist. The figures have haloes of dots.

Publications. Wentzel 1963, 17 no. 28a; 19-21 fig. 9; *Byzantine and post-Byzantine Art* 1986, 210 no. 240 (L. Bouras); *Everyday Life in Byzantium* 2002, 521 no. 717 (V. Foskolou).

This is one of the largest known medallions, and belongs to a very rare type only found in one other example, in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, which depicts the Virgin with Christ in her lap.⁸⁵

The earliest surviving instance of a representation of St Anne with the Virgin and Christ is on a sardonyx cameo which dates from the mid-13th century and is believed to be of Italian provenance.⁸⁶ The subject became more widespread in the West after the early 14th century,⁸⁷ and is occasionally found in the East after the fall of Constantinople.⁸⁸ The gothic throne, the elaborate flowing drapery and the 'modern' iconographic theme allow for a fairly secure dating in the late 13th - early 14th century, which makes it the latest of the medallions under review here.⁸⁹

Discussion

In this analysis of the Benaki medallions we have identified two instances of a direct link with sacred sites, the topographical reference to the church at Bethlehem on the Nativity medallion and the symbols of Santiago di Compostela on the medallion with St James. This accords with Wentzel's theory that the medallions were originally intended as pilgrim tokens.

It is highly probable that further associations with shrines can be found among the remainder of Wentzel's 55 types. The iconographic link between medallions of St Demetrios and *koutrouvia*, the lead flasks for the aromatic liquid which poured from his tomb, argues strongly for a link with his shrine at Thessaloniki.⁹⁰ Narratives of the Miracles of St Theodore refer to miracle-working seals from the saint's church at Euchaita, which protected their owner from thieves and runaway slaves,⁹¹ and glass medallions with the apotropaic equestrian representation of St Theodore the dragon-slayer would also seem ideally suited for this purpose. In the same way the weekly ritual at the Hodegon Monastery and the litany of the icon in Constantinople, which are described in the sources⁹² and vividly portrayed in the narthex decoration of the Blachernai Monastery at Arta,⁹³ would have provided opportunities for the sale of souvenirs depict-

ing the miraculous icon to both local and visiting worshippers.⁹⁴

The conversion of certain medallions into apotropaic objects of personal devotion such as *enkolpia* or rings⁹⁵ would also accord with an original role as *eulogiai*, as the mediaeval belief in the prophylactic properties of pilgrim tokens is vividly described in the sources.⁹⁶ The fact that the humble St Demetrios medallion (now in Hamburg) acquired at a later date a silver-gilt mount and was transformed into a precious *enkolpion* reliquary indicates that it possessed a special significance, which may well be connected with provenance from a shrine.⁹⁷

The iconographic link between medallions and specific sacred sites suggests that these objects were intended for major mediaeval shrines, which could be found throughout the Christian world from Spain to Bethlehem, and had a wide clientele drawn from Byzantine, western and 'mixed' communities. This might lead one to speculate that the medallions were manufactured not in one place, but locally in the various shrines, as had occurred with other pilgrim tokens in early mediaeval times from the 4th to the 7th centuries.⁹⁸ In spite of this, the similarities in manufacture and form (shape, size, paste colour and lettering) and certain standard features such as the haloes with dotted outlines are strong evidence for a common provenance in a single workshop. The results of the laboratory analysis of the Benaki medallions also point to one place of production, as they identified common features both of technique and in the composition of the glass.⁹⁹

The same may be said about the wide variation in iconographic types: the later versions of the Nativity medallions, for example, point to a workshop which had no qualms about reducing the quality of its output to meet the increased demand, as does the indiscriminate use of an identical model for St Theodore and St George. This is additional evidence that the objects were produced *en masse*, as is anyway suggested by the production methods involved and even more by the large number of surviving examples.

This combination of mass production and international distribution indicates the involvement of a mercantile power with overseas trade links and a well-organised glass industry. The obvious candidate is Venice, as Wentzel and Buckton suggested, and such a background would also account for the iconography of the scene of the martyrdom of St Bartholomew. It should be noted

that this theory now is also supported by the laboratory analysis of the Benaki medallions, whose components suggest an origin in the glass factories of west Europe and not of the East.¹⁰⁰

Iconography can also play a significant role in establishing the chronology of the medallions. Details such as the manger in the Nativity scene and the flaying of St Bartholomew suggest that they do not predate the mid-12th century, while the modernism of the St Anne with the Virgin and Christ indicate a continuity of production at least until the late 13th - early 14th century. This time-frame can be further clarified with information drawn from the history of Venetian glassmaking, which, when combined with the documentary evidence, may also afford some clues to the basic issue arising from these artefacts – whether they are a purely Venetian invention or use models from Byzantium.

Glass manufacture is recorded in the Venetian lagoon from as early as the 7th century. Information concerning the 10th to 12th centuries mainly comes from documentary sources – state archives and legal documents containing various references to glassmakers – which indicate that it was an unregulated activity whose patronage and clientele were drawn basically from the monasteries. The picture gradually changes from the 12th century onwards, with the loosening of the ties with monastic and ecclesiastical circles and the subsequent organisation of the glassmakers into an official trade guild in 1224. By the end of the 13th century Venetian glass manufacture had become a state-controlled enterprise: critical dates in this development were the guild's adoption in 1271 of a statute, the *Capitolare de Fiolariis*, which provided a legal framework prescribing the parameters for the production and distribution of glassware, and the transfer of the Venetian glasshouses in 1291 to Murano, which became a kind of 'industrial park', allowing further scope for protectionism.¹⁰¹

The 46 articles of the *Capitolare* and a series of supplementary state ordinances ensured tight control over the distribution of raw materials imported from the Middle East, notably Syria, and even the movement of the craftsmen themselves.¹⁰² These last did not consist solely of Venetians: as with the materials, some came from the Latin-occupied Levant. A typical case is that of a certain Gregorio di Napoli, a Greek who around 1280 moved from Peloponnese to Venice.¹⁰³ The sources tell us that he

was a painter of Venetian enamelled glasses, a technique, probably Byzantine in origin, used to create one of the first types of luxury glass artefact to be exported from the Murano workshops.¹⁰⁴ It is clear that the 'industrialisation' of glass production in Venice involved the importation from the East, and from Byzantium in particular, of materials, techniques, new types of artefact and of craftsmen, and in such a context the introduction from Byzantium of this form of glass medallion would be a natural development.¹⁰⁵

The manufacture of medallions with relief motifs by casting or pressing in a mould represents the simplest and indeed the most ancient hot-working process used in glassmaking.¹⁰⁶ Such artefacts were used for various purposes in the Roman, early Byzantine and Islamic worlds,¹⁰⁷ but although nothing comparable survives from the Middle Byzantine era,¹⁰⁸ documentary evidence allows us to be fairly confident that production continued during this period. Catalogues of precious objects, such as monastic and ecclesiastical breviaries and wills, contain frequent references to icons, reliquaries, crucifixes, jewellery and fabrics which were ornamented with inlaid pearls and *ύάλια* or *ύέλια*:¹⁰⁹ these last could have been simple glass imitations of precious stones in various colours and shapes, but they might also have included medallions with representations, such as can be found on the ornamentation of a processional cross in Georgia, which includes two examples of the type discussed here (fig. 24).¹¹⁰

It follows that these objects would almost certainly have been familiar to the Venetians, who probably imported and reproduced moulds or similar medallions for use in their own workshops in the course of the development of their glass industry.¹¹¹ The Nativity medallions, for example, are evidence that craftsmen had at their disposal models which were manufactured elsewhere, one consequence being that they lacked the know-how to reproduce them accurately, as the misinterpretation of the inscription indicates.

The history of glass medallions thus demonstrates how, as noted by Angeliki Laiou, the development of an international market in the 13th century influenced the manufacture of certain types of luxury goods by transforming them into mass-produced articles on the initiative of Venice, the dominant mercantile power.¹¹² The interpretation of these objects as pilgrim tokens now adds

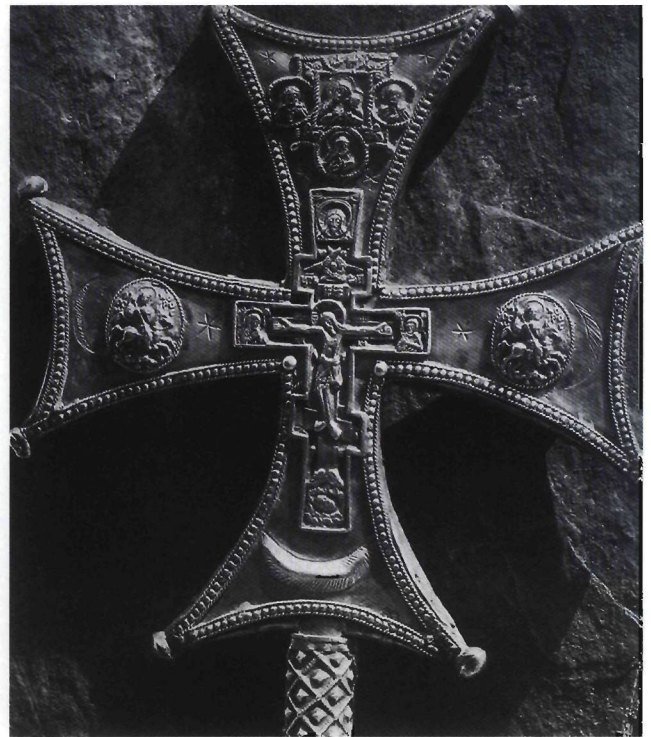


Fig. 24. Processional cross with inlaid glass medallions with St Theodore. Swaneetche, Georgia (from: Wentzel 1959, fig. 4).

a further dimension, for it shows that the Venetian workshops were involved not merely in the large-scale reproduction of artefacts with a limited role in Byzantium, but rather in their conversion into *the* mass consumer product of mediaeval times, which provided access to a vast public and limitless profits.¹¹³ This process can be attributed not only to the increased possibilities of distribution, but also to the rigid state control and the guild system operating in Venice, which encouraged the development of an 'industrialised' production of specialised goods for a specialised public.¹¹⁴

A final point. These humble artefacts may have a contribution to make to the wider study of the ideas and mentalities involved in late mediaeval pilgrimage. We know that in earlier times clay *eulogiai* were manufactured in local workshops from earth taken from the sacred site and filled with sanctified material such as oil or myrrh belonging to the shrine, and that it was precisely these 'elements of provenance' that gave the artefacts their sanctity and their miraculous properties.¹¹⁵ The production of commemorative material in a single centre and

its distribution by the mercantile and naval superpower of the era represents a fundamental change in this aspect of the pilgrimage process, and it may also reflect changes both in the mentality of the pilgrims and in the control mechanisms of the shrines. The collection and study of eulogiai from the middle and late Byzantine eras has already been described as a desideratum of scholarship,¹¹⁶

and a fresh approach to the sources in the context of this material could well open the way to an increased understanding of the entire mediaeval pilgrimage experience.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Volbach 1930: W. F. Volbach, *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Bildwerke des Kaiser Friedrich Museums. Mittelalterliche Bildwerke aus Italien und Byzanz* (Berlin-Leipzig 1930).

Wentzel 1956: H. Wentzel, Mittelalterliche Gemmen in den Sammlungen Italiens, *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 7,3/4 (1956) 239-73.

Wentzel 1959: H. Wentzel, Das Medaillon mit dem Hl. Theodor und die venezianischen Glaspasten im byzantinischen Stil, in: *Festschrift für E. Meyer zum sechzigsten Geburtstag* (Hamburg 1959) 50-67.

Wentzel 1963: H. Wentzel, Zu dem Enkolpion mit dem Hl. Demetrios in Hamburg, *Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunstsammlungen* 8 (1963) 11-24.

LCI: E. Kirschbaum – W. Braunfels (eds), *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* (Rom-Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1968-1976).

LdM: N. Angermann – R. Autz – R. H. Bautier (eds), *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (München-Zürich 1977-1999).

Byzantine and post-Byzantine Art 1986: *Byzantine and post-Byzantine Art* (exhibition catalogue, Old University, Athens 1986).

Byzance 1992: J. Durand (ed.), *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (exhibition catalogue, Musée du Louvre, Paris 1992).

Byzantium 1994: D. Buckton (ed.), *Byzantium. Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections* (exhibition catalogue, British Museum, London 1994).

Everyday Life in Byzantium 2002: D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi (ed.), *Everyday Life in Byzantium* (exhibition catalogue, White Tower, Thessaloniki-Athens 2002).

NOTES

1. In this article the term 'glass medallion' is generally used to describe the objects under review. Though medallions with relief motifs fashioned in a mould are also called 'glasspaste cameos' or 'glass cameos' (camées de verre, Glas-kameo), the adoption of this usage by certain scholars has been felt to be confusing (see on this issue M. Spaer et al., *Ancient Glass in the Israel Museum. Beads and other Small Objects* [Jerusalem 2001] 226), as in the specialised bibliography of glass the term 'cameo glass' is used for objects – medallions or vessels – made of two or more layers of differently-coloured glass, with an engraved top layer forming a decorative pattern or a representation. 'Cameo glass' accordingly signifies a type of material and by extension a specific technique, which first appeared in Rome in the Augustan period (D. Whitehouse, *Cameo Glass*, in: M. Newby – K. Painter [eds], *Roman Glass: Two Centuries of Art and Invention* [London 1991] 19-32). On

cameo glass generally, see also S. M. Goldstein et al., *Cameo Glass: Masterpieces of 2.000 Years of Glassmaking* (Corning-New York 1982) 8-19; D. B. Harden et. al. (eds), *Glass of the Caesars* (exhibition catalogue, The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning – The British Museum, London – Römisch-Germanisches Museum-Cologne, Milano 1987) 53-57.

2. Wentzel 1959.

3. Wentzel 1963.

4. *Byzantine and post-Byzantine Art* 1986, 208 no. 233; 210-11 nos 237, 239, 240, 241, 242 (L. Bouras).

5. *Everyday Life in Byzantium* 2002, 520 no. 715; 521 nos 716, 717; 522 nos 718, 719 (V. Foskolou). I am most grateful to A. Drandaki, curator of the Byzantine collection at the Benaki Museum, for entrusting me with the writing of the

entries and for introducing me to this fascinating material.

6. Locating many of these publications proved a real treasure hunt –especially those by Wentzel, which are the basic works on the subject, but impossible to find in libraries in Athens. I am therefore very grateful to those who assisted in the task, notably Dr Ch. Armoni, who searched the Heidelberg University, and E. Kovaïou and K. Papadakis, librarians of the Close Access collections at the University of Crete Library at Rethymnon, where many of the articles were found in K. Weitzmann's collection of offprints.

7. Γυάλινα μετάλλια με θρησκευτικές παραστάσεις στη Βυζαντινή Συλλογή του Μουσείου Μπενάκη: τεχνική μελέτη. I am extremely grateful to D. Kotzamani for her assistance and valuable cooperation on matters concerning production and technique, not only in connection with the Benaki medallions, but also with glass generally.

8. Wentzel 1959; Wentzel 1963. The view that the medallions were of Venetian origin and dated from the 13th century had been proposed earlier in Volbach 1930, 127.

9. E.g. the square medallion with St Theophano in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and the ring with Christ Pantokrator in the British Museum (Wentzel 1959, 55-56; Wentzel 1963, 22).

10. E.g. J. Philippe, *Le monde byzantin dans l'histoire de la verrerie (Ve-XVIe siècle)* (Bologna 1970) 152-56; M. Vickers, A Note on Glass Medallions in Oxford, *Journal of Glass Studies* 16 (1974) 18-21; D. Buckton, Twelve Medallions, in: H. Tait (ed.), *The Golden Age of Venetian Glass* (exhibition catalogue, The British Museum, London 1979) 13-15; H. Tait (ed.), *Five Thousand Years of Glass* (London 1991) 150-51; *id.*, Venice: Heir to the Glassmakers of Islam or of Byzantium?, in: Ch. Burnett – A. Contadini (eds), *Islam and the Italian Renaissance* (= *Warburg Institute Colloquia* 5, London 1999) 81-82.

11. M. C. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, 1: Metalwork, Ceramics, Glass, Glyptics, Painting* (Washington 1962) 87-91 pl. LVII, 104-09. Similar arguments are used to question the Venetian origin of the glass medallions in Lj. Popovich, An Examination of Chilandar Cameos, *Hilandarski Zbornik* 5 (1983) 34-43.

12. D. Buckton, The mass-produced Byzantine Saint, in: S. Hackel (ed.), *The Byzantine Saint. Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham 1981* (= *Studies Supplementary to Sobornost* 5, 1981) 187-89.

13. *Byzantium* 1994, 189-90.

14. H. C. Evans – W. D. Wixon (eds), *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843-1261* (exhibition catalogue, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 1997) 181 no. 136; 499 no. 336 (M. Georgopoulos).

15. *Byzance* 1992, 441-43 nos 334-39 (M. Avisseau); R. Baumstark (ed.), *Rom und Byzanz. Schatzkammerstücke aus bayerischen Sammlungen* (exhibition catalogue, Bayerischen

Nationalmuseum, München 1998) 242 no. 81; 243 no. 82 (M. Dennert).

16. Ch. Stiegemann (ed.), *Byzanz. Das Licht aus dem Osten* (exhibition catalogue, Erzbischöflichen Diözesanmuseum Paderborn, Mainz 2001) 300-01 no. VI.19 (J. Witt).

17. Wentzel 1959, 66 no. 37.

18. Wentzel 1956, 255 pl. A no. 11; Wentzel 1959, 57 fig. 10.

19. Popovich (n. 11) 34-43; *Treasures of Mt Athos* (exhibition catalogue, Thessaloniki 1997) 333-34 no. 9.13 (K. Loverdou-Tsigarida).

20. Buckton (n. 12); *Byzantium* 1994, 190 no. 204b (D. Buckton).

21. Vickers (n. 10) 19-20 fig. 4.

22. Volbach 1930, 129 pl. 4 no. 6646.

23. *Byzance* 1992, 441 no. 334 (M. Avisseau).

24. Ross (n. 11) 87-89, pl. LVII, 105.

25. Sh. Campbell (ed.), *The Malkove Collection* (Toronto 1985) 197 no. 282.

26. Wentzel 1963, figs 1-3.

27. Chr. Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition* (Aldershot 2003) 76-78, 82-83.

28. Cf. V. Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin VI: L'église* (Paris 1963) nos 455, 460; *II: L'administration centrale* (Paris 1981) nos 941, 1139; G. Zacos – A. Vegler, *Byzantine Lead Seals* 1 (Basel 1972) nos 2681a, 2681b, 2681bis a, 2681bis b, 2731bis; G. Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals* 2 (Bern 1984) nos 356, 409, 422, 731, 733.

29. Buckton (n. 12); Popovich (n. 11).

30. The significant number of surviving flasks are dated on archaeological grounds to the late 12th or 13th century, but they are mentioned in the sources from the 12th century (Ch. Bakirtzis, Κουτρούβια μύρου από τη Θεσσαλονίκη, in: *Akten des XVI. Inter. Byzantinisten Kongresses* II/3 [= *JöB* 32/3, 1982] 523-28; *id.*, Byzantine Ampullae from Thessaloniki, in: R. Ousterhout [ed.], *The Blessings of Pilgrimage* [= *Illinois Byzantine Studies* 1, Urbana-Chicago 1990] 140-49 figs 48-54; *Everyday Life in Byzantium* 2002, 184 [R. Ousterhout]).

31. Wentzel 1959, 65 no. 30. On the three medallions in Berlin, Volbach 1930, 128 pl. 4 nos 764, 2541, 6399. A further example from a slightly different mould can be found in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Wentzel 1959, 65 no. 31. See also H. Swarzenski – N. Netzer, *Catalogue of Medieval Objects: Enamels and Glass, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston 1986) 134 no. 48.

32. Stiegemann (n. 16) 300 no. IV.19 (J. Witt).

33. F. D. Gurevič, Novje dannje o stekljannih ikonah-litakah na territorii SSSR, *VV* 43 (1982) 179 fig. 6. I would like to thank my colleague G. Banev for his help with the

Russian and Bulgarian bibliography.

34. G. Kuzmanov, Icône-médaille byzantine avec une représentation rare de Ste Sophie, *Arheologija* 3 (1975) 51-54 fig. 1 (in Bulgarian with French summary).

35. J. Meyendorff, L'iconographie de la Sagesse Divine dans la tradition byzantine, *CahArch* 10 (1959) 259-77; *id.*, Wisdom-Sophia: Contrasting Approaches to a Complex Theme, *DOP* 41 (1987) 391-92.

36. Meyendorff, L' iconographie (*op. cit.*) 263-66.

37. Laurent VI (n. 28) nos 49, 703, 931, 951; Zacos – Veglery (n. 27) nos 1275-79, 2972.

38. Wentzel 1959, 65 nos 20-23. See also Volbach 1930, 128 pl. 4 no. 9299.

39. K. Totev, Modèle en bronze pour camées en verre du village de Rogačevo, *Arheologija* 2 (1993) fig. 1 (in Bulgarian with French summary); *Byzance* 1992, 443 no. 339 (M. Avisseau).

40. Cf. the Rossano example, which is set in a ring, *Splendori di Bizanzio* (exhibition catalogue, Milano 1990, ed. G. Morello) 196 no. 78 (R. F. Campanati).

41. Chr. Angelidi – T. Papamastorakis, The Veneration of the Virgin Hodegetria and the Hodegon Monastery, in: M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (exhibition catalogue, Benaki Museum, Athens-Milano 2000) 377-78. On the iconographic type, Chr. Baltoyanni, The Mother of God in Portable Icons, in: *Mother of God* (*op. cit.*) 143-45, with previous bibliography.

42. On the icon and its place in the religious life of Constantinople, Angelidi – Papamastorakis (*op. cit.*) 373-85.

43. The shield is more easily distinguishable on the better preserved examples of the type (Volbach 1930, 129 pl. 4 no. 765; Wentzel 1959, fig. 2).

44. Wentzel 1959, 66 no. 39 figs 1-4; Wentzel 1963, 18 fig. 8. See also Wentzel 1956, 256, 269 pl. A no. 7.

45. *Byzance* 1992, 442 no. 337 (M. Avisseau).

46. Ross (n. 11) 90 no. 107 pl. LVII. The same collection houses another example with the same subject but with small differences of detail – e.g. the shape of the dragon and the pose of the horse – which obviously derive from a different mould (Wentzel 1959, 66 no. 40 fig. 5). See also Ross (n. 11) 89 no. 106 pl. LVII; *Glory of Byzantium* (n. 14) 181 no. 136 (M. Georgopoulos).

47. N. Oikonomidès, Le dédoublement de Saint Théodore et les villes d'Euchaïta et Euchaneia, *AnBoll* 104 (1986) 328 fn. 2; Walter (n. 27) 51-53 pl. 23.

48. T. Papamastorakis, Ιστορίες και ιστορήσεις βυζαντινών παλληκαριών, *ΔΧΑΕ* 20 (1998) 214-15; Walter (n. 27) 47.

49. As frequently in Cappadocia, where more than 10 examples are recorded from the 9th to the 13th century (Walter [n. 27] 55-56; *id.*, Saint Theodore and the Dragon, in: C. En-

twistle (ed.), *Through a Glass Brightly. Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Art and Archeology Presented to David Buckton* [Exeter 2003] 99-102). The iconography of the mounted St Theodore slaying the dragon has been linked with changes noted in Byzantine society in the 11th and 12th centuries, and it suggests an aristocratic background, thus associating the saint with the military ruling class of the period (Papamastorakis [*op. cit.*] 215-20).

50. No icon with a mounted saint is included in the corpus of Goldschmidt – Weitzmann, for example (A. Goldschmidt – K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X.-XIII. Jahrhunderts*, 2: *Reliefs* [Berlin 1934] 22).

51. According to I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner the type of the mounted saint appears during the Palaiologan era on two associated examples (I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, *Byzantine Icons in Steatite* [Wien 1985] 65 nos 124, 126).

52. On cameos, H. Wentzel, Die Kamee mit dem Hl. Georg im Schloß zu Windsor, in: *Festschrift Fr. Gerke* (Baden-Baden 1962) 103-12, esp. 104-07.

53. G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l'empire byzantine* (Paris 1884) 502. The catalogue by Zacos – Veglery (n. 27) contains only one example of a mounted saint (no. 2745) as does the corpus of Laurent II (n. 28 no. 1144).

54. The motif of the holy rider who crushes the powers of evil is attested on medallions of similar dimensions and form, which served as amulets, since the early Christian era (Chr. Walter, The Intaglio of Solomon in the Benaki Museum and the Origins of the Iconography of Warrior Saints, *ΔΧΑΕ* 15 [1989-1990] 33-42). In wall painting mounted saints occur more frequently on the periphery of the empire at periods of military unrest, a factor which suits their military character and the apotropaic nature of the motif (S. E. J. Gerstel, Art and Identity in the Medieval Morea, in: A. E. Laiou – R. P. Mottahedeh [eds], *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* [Washington 2001] 270-73).

55. Wentzel (n. 52) 110. Most examples are in poor condition, so that it is not easy to confirm Wentzel's comment from the published photographic evidence. The saint is certainly depicted beardless in the second example in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (Wentzel 1959, 66 no. 40 fig. 5; *Glory of Byzantium* [n. 14] 181 no. 136 [M. Georgopoulos]).

56. H. Maguire, *The Icons of Their Bodies. Saints and their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton 1996) 21-23 figs 11-15; Walter (n. 27) 55, 65.

57. Wentzel 1959, 66 no. 41 fig. 18.

58. Wentzel 1959, 64 nos 6, 7, 8.

59. See also Volbach 1930, 127 pl. 4 no. 762; Wentzel 1956, 268, 270 pl. 9; *Glass from the Corning Museum of Glass. A Guide to the Collections* (New York 1974) 35 no. 37. The type includes eight examples made of opaque black, brown and red glass and one of translucent brown paste.

60. Wentzel 1959, 64 no. 7. Three further examples must

be added to the four mentioned by Wentzel: two in the former collection of the Christian Archaeological Society (XAE 777 and 815): *ΔΧΑΕ* 1 (1892) 129-30 pl. A 1-3, and one in the Cabinet des Médailles (*Byzance* 1992, 443 no. 338 [M. Avisseau]). With the sole exception of a translucent blue example in the XAE collection (no. 815), all the remainder are cast in brown and red glass. The observation that the letters give the title of the scene in reverse was first made by Ross (Ross [n. 11] 90), but he makes no further comment on this issue.

61. Wentzel 1959, 64 no. 8. Wentzel refers to one example in the Vatican Museum: see also Wentzel 1956, 270 no. 697 pl. A8. There is an identical medallion in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Vickers [n. 10] 18-19 fig. 1) and another in the Archaeological Institute of the Russian Academy in St Petersburg (Gurevič [n. 33] 178 fig. 1). All three examples are opaque and red-brown in colour.

62. The medallion in St Petersburg which belongs to type C has been subjected to spectographic analysis. According to Gurevič, who published the results, the special feature of the composition of the glass is the high manganese oxide content (Mn_2O_3), which he considers a characteristic of Byzantine glassware (Gurevič [n. 33] 181 fn. 26). However for comparative material he refers to the analyses of glass artefacts from the factories in Corinth (F. R. Matson, *Techological study of the glass from Corinth Factory*, *AJA* 44 [1943] 325-27), which are now thought to be the work of Italian craftsmen active in the city in the period of Frankish rule (D. Whitehouse, *Glassmaking at Corinth: A Reassessment*, in: D. Foy – G. Sennequier (eds), *Ateliers de verriers: De l'Antiquité à la période pré-industrielle* [Rouen 1991] 73-82).

63. Wentzel 1959, 54. Ross argues by contrast that this a Byzantine invention and that the western-type iconography is due to contacts with western art during the Latin occupation of Constantinople (1204-1261), Ross (n. 11) 90-91. See also *Byzance* 1992, 443 no. 338 (M. Avisseau). On the Cave and more generally on the treatment of the theme in Byzantine art, *RbK* II (1971) 637-62 art. Geburt Christi (G. Ristow); J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Les représentations de la Nativité du Christ dans l'art de l'Orient chrétien*, in: P. Cockshaw – M.-C. Garand – P. Jodogne (eds), *Miscellanea Codicologica F. Masai Dicata I* (Gand 1979) 11-21. On the iconography of the scene in the West, *LCI* II (1970) 103-10 art. Geburt Christ (R. Wilhelm); G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art* 1 (New York 1966) 67-76.

64. Cf. the ivory plaque in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, K. Weitzmann, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, 3: *Ivories and Steatites* (Washington 1972) 38-39 pl. 3; pl. XXI fig. 15. See also Schiller (n. 63) 63 figs 152-54.

65. K. Weitzmann, *Loca Santa* and the Representational Arts of Palestine, *DOP* 28 (1974) 36-39.

66. Schiller (n. 63) 65-67 figs 157-58. The manger is depicted with a niche at Daphni (N. Chatzidakis, *Ελληνική τέχνη. Βυζαντινά Ψηφιδωτά* [Athens 1994] fig. 105), and

in cod. no. 587 of Dionysiou Monastery on Mt Athos (St. Pelekanides et al., *Οι Θησαυροί του Αγίου Όρους Α'* [Athens 1973] 199 fig. 250).

67. Manuscripts: Patmos cod. 274, codex Ebnerianus at the Bodleian Library, Vat. Urb. gr 2 and Ecumenical Patriarchate cod. 3 (E. Tsigaridas, *Οι τοιχογραφίες της μονής Λατόμου Θεσσαλονίκης και η βυζαντινή ζωγραφική του 12ου αιώνα* [Thessaloniki 1986] pls 51-52). Wall painting: Cappella Palatina and Martorana in Sicily (O. Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* [London 1949] figs 17, 55, Latomou Monastery in Thessaloniki (Tsigaridas [*op. cit.*] pl. 6).

68. J. Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land 1098-1187* (New York 1995) 371-78 fig. 9.29h, 9.29k.

69. The marble revetment with round apertures through which the manger was visible is described by the German monk Theodorik (1169-1174) and John Phokas (1185) (J. Wilkinson – J. Hill – W. F. Ryan, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage 1099-1185* [London 1988] 306, 333; *PG* 133, col. 958. See also Folda [*op. cit.*] 372).

70. Schiller (n. 63) figs 165, 169, 173, 175, 178.

71. Wentzel 1959, 66 no. 36. See also Wentzel 1956, 270; Wentzel 1963, 18; Vickers (n. 10) 19 fig. 3; *Byzantium* 1994, 190 no. 204d (D. Buckton).

72. On the cult of St James in the West and his shrine at Santiago de Compostela, L. Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien* III (Paris 1958) 690-95; *LCI* VII (1974) cols 23-25 art. Jacobus der Ältere (S. Kimpel); *LdMV* (1991) cols 253-54 art. Jacobus d. Ä. (R. Plötz); *LdMV* VII (1995) col. 1370-73 art. Santiago de Compostela (J. García Oro – K. Herbers).

73. On the pilgrim badge, E. Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Twelfth Century* (Princeton 1978²) 295; V. Almazán, *The Pilgrim-Shell in Denmark*, in: M. Dunn – L. Kay Davidson (eds), *The Pilgrimage to Compostela in the Middle Ages* (New York-London 2000) 131-42 with later bibliography on the subject. For examples of shell badges, *Santiago de Compostela 1000 ans de pèlerinage européen* (exhibition catalogue, Gent 1985) 291-97. It is significant that the sources refer to the sale to pilgrims of cockle shells as badges of St James from the early 12th century, see J. Viel-liard, *Le Guide du Pèlerin de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle* (Paris 1990³) 96.

74. G. Kühnel, *Wall Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Berlin 1988) 40-43 pl. xiii. See also Folda (n. 68) 456 fig. 10.17c. The significance pilgrims placed on cockle-shell tokens from Santiago de Compostela is indicated by the fact that they kept them for the rest of their lives and were often buried with them (many such objects have been found in graves) (H. Jacomet, *Pèlerinage et culte de Saint Jacques en France: bilan et perspectives*, in: *Pèlerinage et Croisades. Actes du 118e congrès national annuel des sociétés historiques et scientifiques* [Paris 1995] 183-84 n. 378).

75. On the saint's iconography in the West, Réau (n. 72) 695-96; *LCI* VII (n. 72) cols 25-30. It is interesting that the

saint is depicted with the same features in the wall paintings at Acronauplia (late 13th century), which have been associated with a Latin commission: see Gerstel (n. 54) 266-67 fig. 1.

76. On the seal, *LCIV* (n. 72) col. 29 fig. 4.

77. Volbach 1930, 130 pl. 4 no. 2425.

78. Wentzel 1959, 64 no. 12. See also Wentzel 1956, 270 pl. A2.

79. G. Millet, *L'art des Balkans et l'Italie au XIIIe siècle*, in: *Atti del V Congresso Internazionale di Studi Bizantini, Roma, 20-26 Settembre 1936 II* (Roma 1940) 275-81; P. Miljkovic-Peppek, Une icône bilatérale au monastère Saint-Jean Prodrome dans les environs de Serrès, *CahArch* 16 (1966) 177-83; T. Velmans, *La peinture murale byzantine à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris 1977) 106-08.

80. Réau (n. 72) 180-81; *LCIV* (1973) cols 320-22 art. Bartolomäus (M. Lechner).

81. *Συναξάριο της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως: «...σταυρῶ προσ-
νλωθεῖς, ἐν Ἀρβανουπόλει τελειοῦται ἐνδόξως»*, H. Delehaye (ed.), *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Bruxelles 1902) cols 743-45. See also the Menologion of Basil II, *PG* 117, col. 493.

82. Cf. the representation on the door of S. Paolo fuori le Mura in Rome (1066); G. Matthiae, *Le porte bronzee bizantine in Italia* (Roma 1971) 74, 81 fig. 16.

83. *LCI* (n. 72) cols 328-31. Cf. the representation on the Berthold Missal (H. Swarzenski, *The Bertold Missal* [New York 1943] pl. XXIX). He is also depicted seated and with hands and feet bound to one column, e.g. in the Stuttgart Passional (A. Boeckler, *Das Stuttgarter Passionale* [Augsburg 1923] fig. 78).

84. O. Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice, I: The Eleventh and the Twelfth Centuries* (Chicago-London 1984) I, 224; II, fig. 359.

85. On the medallion in Washington, Wentzel 1959, 65 no. 28; Wentzel 1963, 19-20 fig. 10; Philippe (n. 10) 152-53 fig. 77.

86. Wentzel 1956, 243-44 figs 5, 6; Wentzel 1963, 19.

87. J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'Enfance de la Vierge dans l'Empire Byzantin et en Occident II* (Bruxelles 1992³) 109-11; *LCIV* (n. 80) cols 185-90 art. Anna Selb-dritt (J. H. Emminghaus).

88. Cf. the 15th century icon in Zakynthos, *Byzantine and post-Byzantine Art* 1986, 104-05 n. 103.

89. Wentzel 1963, 20.

90. The same iconographic type of St Demetrios is also adopted in the precious enkolpion-reliquary at Dumbarton Oaks, which was clearly aimed at a more demanding and affluent clientele. This suggests the production of a wide variety of artefacts which were associated with the church at Thessaloniki, and it strengthens the probability that the

medallions were used in this context (Ch. Bakirtzis, Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios, *DOP* 56 [2002] 183; K. Loverdou-Tsigarida, Thessalonique, centre de production d'objets d'arts au XIVE siècle, *DOP* 57 [2003] 242-46). On the Dumbarton Oaks enkolpion, see recently *Everyday Life in Byzantium* 2002, 180-83 no. 202 (S. Boyd) with bibliography.

91. A. Sigalas, Η διασκευή των υπό Χρυσίππου παραδε-
δομένων θαυμάτων του αγίου Θεοδώρου, *ΕΕΒΣ* 1 (1924) 334-35. See also Papamastorakis (n. 49) 221.

92. G. P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington 1984) 365; Chr. Angelidi, Un texte patriographique et édifiant: le 'discours narratif' sur les Hodègoi, *REB* 52 (1994) 121-22, 141; N. Patterson-Sevcenko, Servants of the Holy Icon, in: D. Mouriki et al. (eds), *Byzantine East – Latin West. Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (Princeton 1995) 547-49.

93. M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, The Byzantine Wall Paintings of Vlacherna Monastery (area of Arta), in: *Actes du XVe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines, Athènes 5-11 septembre 1976 II A* (Athens 1981) 4-14; for colour reproductions, V. Papadopoulou, *Η Βυζαντινή Ἀρτα και τα μνη-
μεία της* (Athens 2002) 82-87 figs 14, 92, 93, 96.

94. Although the two last associations remain at present unproven, there is certainly evidence for the link between specific shrines and other types of medallion which are not found in the Benaki Museum. One example is the medal-
lion with the Seven Sleepers of Ephesos which has Latin in-
scriptions (Wentzel 1959, 67 no. 45; *Byzantium* 1994, 190 no. 204c [D. Buckton]). The theory that this could have been a commemorative object from the martyrs' grave at Ephesos is supported by archaeological evidence which con-
firms the presence of western pilgrims until the 15th cen-
tury (for this evidence, see Cl. Foss, Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor, *DOP* 56 [2002] 138).

95. Typical examples are two medallion enkolpia in the Dumbarton Oaks collection in the form of a pendant with a precious gold chain (Ross [n. 10] pl. LVII nos 105, 106) and the Rossano ring (*op.cit.* fn 39).

96. G. Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art* (Washington 1982) esp. 11-16; *id.*, Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium, *DOP* 38 (1984) 65-86; *id.*, 'Guided by Land and Sea'. Pilgrim Art and Pilgrim Travel in Early Byzantium, in: *Tesserae. Festschrift für Josef Engemann* (= *JbAC Ergänzungsband* 18, Münster 1991) 74-92.

97. According to Wentzel the type and the mount of the enkolpion are characteristic of Russian art of the late and post-mediaeval era (Wentzel 1963, 11-15 figs 1-3). On this type of enkolpion, see also M. C. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, 2: Jewellery, Enamels and Art of the Migration Period* (Washington 1965) 72-73 pl. L no. 96.

98. G. Vikan, Byzantine Pilgrims' Art, in: L. Safran (ed.), *Heaven on Earth. Art and the Church in Byzantium* (Pennsyl-

vania 1998) 236-40. However there is considerable evidence that the production of pilgrim tokens in the Middle and Late Byzantine eras was no longer connected with the shrine (Vikan [op. cit.] 257-60).

99. cf. the article of D. Kotzamani in the present volume.

100. *Ibid.*

101. The comparison of the Murano workshops with contemporary industrial parks comes from W. Patrick McCray, *Glassmaking in Renaissance Venice. The Fragile Craft* (Aldershot 1999) 48: I am greatly indebted to this book for information as to the history of glassmaking in Venice until the late 13th century, *ibid.*, 38-43, 47-49.

102. On the content of the articles of the Capitolare, McCray (op. cit.) 43-46. On the policies of Venice regarding raw materials, see also D. Jacoby, Raw Materials for the Glass Industries of Venice and the Terraferma about 1370 - about 1460, *Journal of Glass Studies* 35 (1993) 65-90.

103. Tait, Venice: Heir to the Glassmakers (n. 10) 80; McCray (n. 101) 58.

104. Tait (n. 10) 151-52; *id.*, Venice: Heir to the Glassmakers (n. 10) 77-80; McCray (n. 101) 33-34.

105. On the 'independence' of early Venetian glassmaking from the Byzantine glassmaking tradition, Tait, Venice: Heir to the Glassmakers (n. 10); McCray (n. 101) 57-61.

106. Spaer et al. (n. 1) 38-39, 217-18; W. Gudenrath, A survey of Islamic Glassworking and Glass-Decorating Techniques, in: S. Carboni - D. Whitehouse (eds), *Glass of the Sultans* (exhibition catalogue, Metropolitan Museum New York - Corning Museum of Glass - Benaki Museum, New York 2001) 53.

107. On comparable medallions of the Roman period, Harden (n. 1) 23 n. 3. On early Byzantine examples, *Byzanz* (n. 15) no. IV.18 (J. Witt). On the use of the technique in Islamic glassmaking, *Glass of the Sultans* (op. cit.) 133-36 nos 50-52 (S. Carboni).

108. For an overall account of Byzantine glassmaking with further bibliography, V. François - J.-M. Spieser, Pottery and Glass in Byzantium, in: A. E. Laiou (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Washington 2002) 593-98.

109. Cf. the Diataxis of Michael Attaliates (1077) (P. Gautier, La Diataxis de Michael Attaliatè, *REB* 39 [1981] 91), the catalogue of moveable property at the Xylourgos Monastery (1142) (P. Lemerle - G. Dagron - S. Ćirković [eds], *Actes de Saint-Pantéléemôn* [Paris 1982] 69, 74 l. 16,

21), the typikon of the Theotokos Kecharitomene Monastery at Constantinople (early 12th century) (P. Gautier, Le typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitômène, *REB* 43 [1985] 151-53), and the decree of the ecclesiastical court in Thessaloniki ratifying a will (1384) (N. Oikonomidès [ed.], *Actes de Docheiariou* [Paris 1984] 262, 264 l. 23-24, 26-27. On the meaning of the term, J. Thomas - A. Constantinides-Hero (eds), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents 1* (Washington 2000) 371 n. 32.

110. Wentzel publishes a photograph of the cross without giving any further information (Wentzel 1959, fig. 4).

111. A bronze medallion found in Bulgaria could originally have been a mould for the production of the Hodegetria medallion: if so, the size and general shape indicate that the transportation and/or reproduction of moulds would have been a relatively simple process. The Bulgarian medallion was subsequently pierced with two holes and this, combined with the fact that there is no record of glass manufacture in the area in which it was discovered, suggests that it was later put to a different use, possibly as a personal ornament (Totev [n. 39] fig. 1a).

112. A. E. Laiou, Venice as a Centre of Trade and Artistic Production in the Thirteenth Century, in: H. Belting (ed.), *Il Medio Oriente e l'Occidente nell'Arte del XIII Secolo, Atti del XXIV Congresso Internazionale di Storia dell'Arte* (Bologna 1982) 11-26.

113. Our knowledge of the economic dimension of pilgrim souvenirs in the Byzantine world is almost non-existent. There is some indication that in the early Byzantine period they were given away gratis by the shrine, but it is not clear whether this practice existed at all times and in all circumstances (Vikan, Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium [n. 96] 72 n. 43; *id.*, Ruminations on Edible Icons: Originals and Copies in the Art of Byzantium, in: *Studies in the History of Art 20* [Washington 1989] 49-50). By contrast there is clear evidence of the sale of such artefacts in the late mediaeval West (Vikan, Ruminations [op. cit.] with further bibliography).

114. On the role of state policy and the guilds in the development of Venetian glassmaking and the specialisation of output, McCray (n. 101) 22-25, 47-53.

115. Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art* (n. 96); Vikan, Byzantine (n. 98) 234-36; G. Vikan, Icons and Icon Piety in Early Byzantium, in: Mouriki et al. (n. 92) 6-9.

116. A.-M. Talbot, Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts, *DOP* 56 (2002) 161-62 n. 45; Foss (n. 94) 129 n. 3.

ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΗ ΦΩΣΚΟΛΟΥ

Γυάλινα μετάλλια με θρησκευτικές παραστάσεις στο Μουσείο Μπενάκη:
συμβολή στη μελέτη των προσκυνηματικών ενθυμημάτων κατά τον ύστερο Μεσαίωνα

Στο άρθρο εξετάζονται εννέα γυάλινα μετάλλια με θρησκευτικές παραστάσεις της Βυζαντινής Συλλογής του Μουσείου Μπενάκη. Τα αντικείμενα αυτά εντάσσονται σε μια ευρύτερη ομάδα με περισσότερα από 200 ανάλογα παραδείγματα που προέρχονται από 60 διαφορετικές μήτρες, και έχουν κατασκευαστεί από ημιδιαφανές ή αδιαφανές γυαλί σε διάφορους χρωματισμούς, με μήκος από 2 μέχρι 6 εκ. και θέματα, σχεδόν αποκλειστικά, θρησκευτικά, δηλαδή μορφές αγίων ή παραστάσεις, που συχνά συνοδεύονται από επιγραφές σε ελληνική ή λατινική γλώσσα.

Η μελέτη αυτών των αντικειμένων έχει επικεντρωθεί κυρίως στο ζήτημα του τύπου παραγωγής τους. Λόγω του απλού τρόπου κατασκευής, της φτηνής πρώτης ύλης και της πληθώρας των σωζόμενων παραδειγμάτων αρχικά θεωρήθηκαν απομιμήσεις περίτεχνων λίθινων *cameos* τα οποία χρησίμευαν κυρίως ως αναμνηστικά προσκυνήματος και κατασκευάζονταν με βάση βυζαντινά πρότυπα στη Βενετία τον 13ο αιώνα. Παράλληλα, εκφράστηκε η άποψη πως υπήρξαν ένα καθαρά βυζαντινό δημιούργημα, καθώς η τεχνική κατασκευής τους ήταν γνωστή στο Βυζάντιο ήδη από τον 6ο αιώνα, ενώ ορισμένα παρουσιάζουν στενή εικονογραφική σχέση με βυζαντινά μολυβδόβουλα του 11ου και του 12ου αιώνα. Τέλος, έχει προταθεί πως τα μετάλλια θα πρέπει να διακριθούν σε δύο κατηγορίες με βάση το υλικό, δηλαδή σε παραδείγματα από ημιδιαφανές και αδιαφανές γυαλί. Τα πρώτα, καθώς έχουν κυρίως βυζαντινά θέματα και ελληνικές επιγραφές –ορισμένα με σημαντικές ομοιότητες με τα μεσοβυζαντινά λίθινα *cameos*– θεωρήθηκαν βυζαντινά έργα και πρότυπα για τα αδιαφανή βενετσιάνικα μετάλλια. Το ζήτημα, ωστόσο, παραμένει ανοικτό, όπως αποδεικνύουν οι σχετικές συμβολές σε πρόσφατους καταλόγους εκθέσεων.

Θεωρώντας το ερώτημα της προέλευσης αλληλένδετο με τη χρήση και την εικονογραφία των μεταλλίων, στη μελέτη των παραδειγμάτων του Μουσείου Μπενάκη δόθηκε καταρχάς ιδιαίτερο βάρος στην εικονογραφική ανάλυση των παραστάσεων. Τα πιο σημαντικά στοιχεία που προέκυψαν από αυτή την ανάλυση καθώς και τα συμπεράσματα στα οποία μας οδήγησαν, παρουσιάζονται στη συνέχεια.

Ο έφιππος δρακοντοκτόνος άγιος Θεόδωρος (εικ. 5, 6), αν και ακολουθεί έναν εικονογραφικό τύπο γνωστό από τη μνημειακή ζωγραφική ήδη στη μεσοβυζαντινή εποχή, απεικονίζεται χωρίς το τυπικό για τη βυζαντινή εικονογραφία του αγίου οξύληκτο γένι. Η παράληψη αυτή υποδηλώνει αδιαφορία απέναντι στα καθιερωμένα προσωπογραφικά χαρακτηριστικά των αγίων μορφών, ξένη προς τη βυζαντινή πρακτική και αντίληψη. Αυτό, αν συνδυαστεί με το γεγονός ότι ο ίδιος ακριβώς τύπος με αλλαγή της επιγραφής μετατρέπεται σε άγιο Γεώργιο σε άλλη σειρά μεταλλίων (εικ. 7), καθιστά φανερό πως τα εικονογραφικά πρότυπα χρησιμοποιούνται με ελαστικότητα από τους κατασκευαστές αυτών των αντικειμένων με στόχο την κάλυψη της σχετικής ζήτησης.

Ιδιαίτερα ενδιαφέροντα στοιχεία απέδωσε η ανάλυση του μεταλλίου με τη Γέννηση. Το θέμα αποδίδεται στα μετάλλια της ομάδας με τρεις διαφορετικούς τύπους. Στον πρώτο (Α), στον οποίο ανήκει το παράδειγμα του Μουσείου Μπενάκη (εικ. 9, 10), εικονίζεται στο πάνω τμήμα μισοφέγγαρο και αστέρι. Στον δεύτερο (Β), στη θέση των δύο συμβόλων διακρίνονται γράμματα του ελληνικού αλφάβητου που αποδίδουν επί τα λαία τον τίτλο της σκηνής: Η ΓΕΝΗCIC (εικ. 11). Η ανάποδη επιγραφή υποδηλώνει, αφενός πως ο δεύτερος τύπος αποτελεί την αρνητική εκδοχή ενός προτύπου στο οποίο η επιγραφή ήταν γραμμένη κανονικά, και αφετέρου πως δημιουργήθηκε σε ένα περιβάλλον, όπου η φράση δεν ήταν κατανοητή. Στην τρίτη εκδοχή του θέματος (C) απεικονίζεται το ίδιο εικονογραφικό σχήμα με τους προηγούμενους τύπους, αλλά ανάποδα, ενώ η επιγραφή που πλαισιώνει τη σκηνή διαβάζεται κανονικά: Η ΓΕ/ΝΗC/IC (εικ. 12). Είναι επομένως πιθανόν ένα παρόμοιο μετάλλιο να χρησιμοποιήθηκε ως πρότυπο για την κατασκευή μιας μήτρας, στην οποία όμως οι μορφές και τα γράμματα λαξεύθηκαν όπως ακριβώς απεικονίζονταν στο πρωτότυπο, με αποτέλεσμα η επόμενη σειρά μεταλλίων (τύπος Β) να δίνει την αντίστροφη εκδοχή του. Τα μετάλλια του τύπου C έχουν μεγαλύτερες διαστάσεις, περισσότερες λεπτομέρειες και ακρίβεια στην απόδοση της παράστασης, πρόκειται δηλαδή για την ποιοτικά καλύτερη σειρά μεταλλίων, που φαίνεται πως στη διάρκεια της παραγωγής αντιγράφηκε ή

χρειάστηκε να αντικατασταθεί από μία νέα. Η αλλαγή αυτή έγινε στο πλαίσιο ενός εργαστηρίου, το οποίο – όπως αποδεικνύει ο τρόπος που χειρίστηκε την επιγραφή και η λύση που έδωσε στο πρόβλημα που προέκυψε– δεν θα πρέπει να ήταν βυζαντινό.

Ένα ακόμη εικονογραφικό στοιχείο που παρουσιάζει ιδιαίτερο ενδιαφέρον στη σειρά των μεταλλίων της Γέννησης είναι η φάτνη με τις δύο κόγχες, που θυμίζει ανάλογα παραδείγματα σε εικόνες και ελεφαντοστέινα πλακίδια της πρώιμης βυζαντινής περιόδου (εικ. 13, 14). Το μοτίβο αυτό ανάγεται στην εικονογραφία των προσκυνηματικών αναμνηστικών των Αγίων Τόπων (εικ. 15) και από τα μέσα του 12ου αιώνα αποτελεί σταθερό χαρακτηριστικό της φάτνης, όπως μας αποκαλύπτει μια σειρά παραδείγματα σε χειρόγραφα και στη μνημειακή ζωγραφική. Απεικονίζεται επίσης στο ψηφιδωτό της αφίδας του σπηλαίου της Γέννησης στον ναό της Βηθλεέμ (1167-1169) (εικ. 16, 17). Η υπόθεση πως αποτελεί εικαστική αναφορά στη σύγχρονη κατάσταση της φάτνης επιβεβαιώνεται από περιγραφές προσκυνητών, οι οποίοι μετά τα μέσα του 12ου αιώνα περιγράφουν με λεπτομέρειες το μαρμάρινο κιβωτίδιο με τα στρογγυλά ανοίγματα που περιέβαλλε το ιερό λείψανο. Επομένως, το εικονογραφικό αυτό στοιχείο αποτελεί μέρος μιας *locus sanctus* εικονογραφίας της σκηνής και συνηγορεί στην άποψη πως τα συγκεκριμένα μετάλλια υπήρξαν αναμνηστικά προσκυνήματος στον ναό της Βηθλεέμ.

Σε ανάλογα συμπεράσματα οδηγεί η εικονογραφική ανάλυση δύο ακόμη παραδειγμάτων του Μουσείου Μπενάκη. Στο πρώτο, εικονίζεται ο άγιος Ιάκωβος πλαισιωμένος από δύο προσκυνητές με πλατύγυρα καπέλα και ψηλές ράβδους (εικ. 18). Η λατρεία του αποστόλου γνώρισε ιδιαίτερη διάδοση στη Δύση με κέντρο το προσκύνημα στο Santiago de Compostella της Ισπανίας, το οποίο και επηρέασε καθοριστικά την εικονογραφία του αποστόλου στη δυτική τέχνη. Από τον 12ο αιώνα ο άγιος Ιάκωβος απεικονίστηκε με πλατύγυρο καπέλο και μακριά ράβδο –αντικείμενα που χρησιμοποιούσαν οι προσκυνητές του Μεσαίωνα– και με ένα θαλάσσιο κοχύλι –το ενθύμιο του προσκυνήματος στον τάφο του στο Santiago– κρεμασμένο στον λαιμό ή το καπέλο του, συχνά πλαισιωμένος από σεβίζοντες προσκυνητές (εικ. 20). Τα ίδια εικονογραφικά στοιχεία χαρακτηρίζουν την απόδοσή του στα γυάλινα μετάλλια. Καθώς μάλιστα στο καλύτερα σωζόμενο παράδειγμα του Βερολίνου διακρίνεται στον λαιμό του αγίου ένα κο-

χύλι, φαίνεται πολύ πιθανόν πως τα μετάλλια προορίζονταν για την αγορά ενθυμιάτων που είχε διαμορφωθεί γύρω από το προσκύνημα στο Santiago de Compostella.

Για μια ανάλογη αγορά θα πρέπει να προορίζονταν και τα μετάλλια με τον άγιο Δημήτριο (εικ. 1), όπως μας επιτρέπει να υποθέσουμε η εικονογραφική τους ομοιότητα με τα μολύβδινα φιαλίδια –τα λεγόμενα *κουτρούβια*– τα οποία περιείχαν το μύρο που ανάβλυζε από το κιβώριο του αγίου στον ναό του στη Θεσσαλονίκη (εικ. 2).

Τέλος, η εικονογραφική ανάλυση του μαρτυρίου του αγίου Βαρθολομαίου (εικ. 21) μας επέτρεψε να το συνδέσουμε με σχετική βεβαιότητα με τη Βενετία, καθώς το κοντινότερο εικονογραφικό παράλληλο του θέματος βρίσκεται στην αντίστοιχη σκηνή του Αγίου Μάρκου της Βενετίας (τέλη 12ου αιώνα) (εικ. 22).

Συμπερασματικά, η εικονογραφική ανάλυση των μεταλλίων του Μουσείου Μπενάκη απέδειξε πως η υπόθεση που είχε διατυπωθεί στο παρελθόν για τη χρήση τους ως αναμνηστικά προσκυνήματος είναι σωστή. Επιπροσθέτως, η σύνδεση ορισμένων με συγκεκριμένους ιερούς τόπους αποκαλύπτει πως πρόκειται για κάποια από τα σημαντικότερα προσκυνήματα της εποχής που εκτείνονται σε όλο τον τότε γνωστό χριστιανικό κόσμο, από την Ισπανία μέχρι τη Βηθλεέμ. Έδειξε επίσης πως κατασκευάζονται σε ένα εργαστήριο που για να ανταπεξέλθει στη ζήτηση χρησιμοποιεί με ελαστικότητα τα πρότυπά του και δεν διστάζει να υποβαθμίσει την ποιότητα των προϊόντων του, όπως συνέβη με τη νέα σειρά μεταλλίων της Γέννησης, γεγονός που επιβεβαιώνει την άποψη για μαζική παραγωγή των αντικειμένων.

Ο συνδυασμός της μαζικής παραγωγής με τη διεθνή διάθεση αυτών των αντικειμένων παραπέμπει σε μια εμπορική δύναμη με διεθνή εμβέλεια αλλά και οργανωμένη ναυλοργική παραγωγή. Αυτή θα μπορούσε να είναι η Βενετία, όπως είχαν προτείνει παλαιότερα οι H. Wentzel και D. Buckton.

Είναι σημαντικό να σημειωθεί εδώ πως τα αποτελέσματα της εργαστηριακής ανάλυσης που έγινε σε πέντε από τα μετάλλια του Μουσείου Μπενάκη συνηγορούν στην απόδοσή τους σε εργαστήριο της Δύσης (βλ. το άρθρο της Δ. Κοτζαμάνη στον παρόντα τόμο).

Οι πληροφορίες των πηγών για τη βενετσιάνικη ναυλοργία του 13ου αιώνα προσφέρουν τα απαραίτητα στοιχεία για να προσεγγίσουμε το τελευταίο βασικό ερώτημα, αν δηλαδή αυτό το είδος αντικειμένων υπήρξε μια καθαρά βενετσιάνικη εφεύρεση, ή αν είχε τα πρότυ-

πά του στο Βυζάντιο. Σύμφωνα με αυτές τις πληροφορίες, για την ανάπτυξη και την οργάνωση της βιοτεχνικής παραγωγής γυάλινων αντικειμένων οι Βενετοί υιοθέτησαν και εισήγαγαν από την Ανατολή, και ειδικότερα από το Βυζάντιο, πρώτες ύλες, τεχνικές, είδη αντικειμένων αλλά και τεχνίτες. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό θα μπορούσαν να είχαν εισάγει και το είδος των γυάλινων μεταλλίων. Ανάλογα αντικείμενα θα πρέπει να ήταν γνωστά στον βυζαντινό κόσμο καθώς σε καταλόγους που απαριθμούνται πολύτιμα αντικείμενα (δηλαδή κατάλογοι μοναστηριακών περιουσιών και διαθήκες) αναφέρονται συχνά εικόνες, λειψανοθήκες, σταυροί, κοσμήματα και υφάσματα διακοσμημένα με *ύάλια* ή *νέλια* (εικ. 24).

Επιπλέον, η περίπτωση των μεταλλίων με τη Γέννηση απέδειξε πως στη διάθεση των βενετσιάνικων εργαστηρίων υπήρχαν πρότυπα για την κατασκευή των γυάλινων μεταλλίων, μήτρες ή άλλα όμοια αντικείμενα, τα οποία σίγουρα δεν είχαν κατασκευάσει οι ίδιοι, γιατί διαφορετικά θα γνώριζαν πώς να τα επαναλάβουν σωστά.

Η ερμηνεία των μεταλλίων ως προσκυνηματικά ενθυμήματα αποκαλύπτει επίσης πως τα βενετικά ναυουργικά εργαστήρια δεν αντιγράφουν απλώς ένα είδος αντικειμένων που πιθανώς είχε περιορισμένη χρήση στο Βυζάντιο, αλλά το μετατρέπουν στο κατεξοχήν μαζικό προϊόν του Μεσαίωνα, με σημαντικές δυνατό-

τητες κέρδους και πολύ ευρύ αγοραστικό κοινό. Η επιλογή αυτή δεν συνδέεται μόνο με τις δυνατότητες διάθεσης των αντικειμένων που προσφέρει η διαμόρφωση μιας διεθνούς αγοράς τον 13ο αιώνα, αλλά και με τον αυστηρό κρατικό έλεγχο και τη συντεχνιακή οργάνωση, οι οποίες δημιουργούν τις προϋποθέσεις για την ανάπτυξη μιας βιοτεχνικής παραγωγής με εξειδικευμένα προϊόντα και αποδέκτες.

Τέλος, θα πρέπει να τονιστεί πως η παραγωγή προσκυνηματικών ενθυμημάτων σε ένα κέντρο και η διάθεσή τους από την εμπορική και τη ναυτική υπερδύναμη της εποχής σηματοδοτεί θεμελιώδη αλλαγή στις πρακτικές του προσκυνήματος –πιθανόν και στις νοοτροπίες που συνδέονται με αυτό– καθώς, όπως είναι γνωστό, σε παλαιότερες εποχές κατασκευάζονταν στο ίδιο το προσκύνημα και περιείχαν αγιασμένες ουσίες (έλαιο και μύρο) από τον ιερό χώρο, στοιχεία στα οποία όφειλαν την ιερότητα αλλά και τις αποτροπαϊκές-θεραπευτικές τους ιδιότητες.

Η συγκέντρωση και η μελέτη ανάλογων αντικειμένων από τη μέση και την ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο, που έχει ήδη καταγραφεί ως *desideratum* της έρευνας, καθώς και η προσέγγιση των σχετικών πηγών μέσα από αυτό το πρίσμα είναι δυνατόν να ανοίξει νέους δρόμους στη μελέτη του μεσαιωνικού προσκυνήματος.