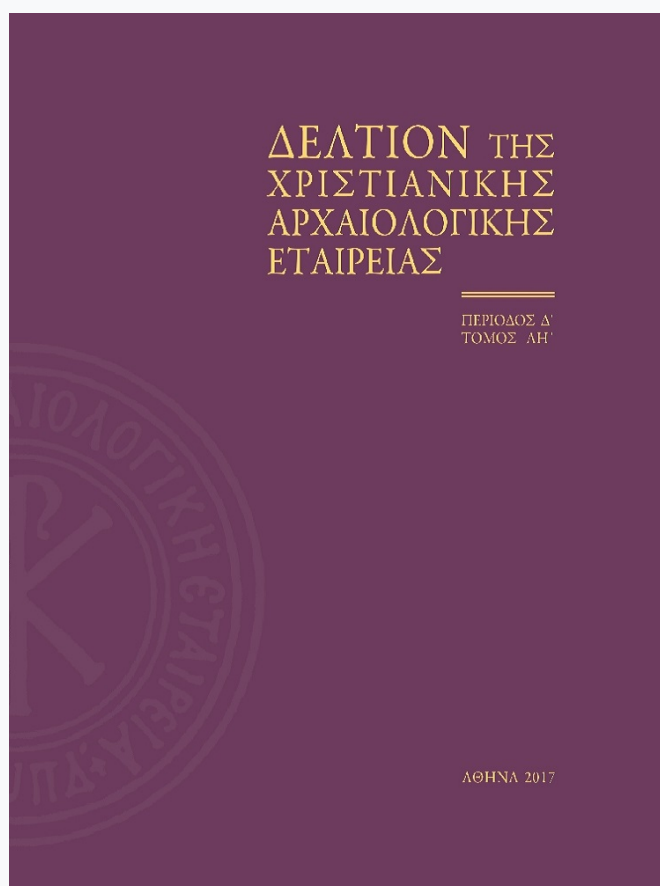


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Η «ύπαρξη» στην Κωνσταντινούπολη (4ος-15ος αιώνας) με βάση τις μαρτυρίες πολύτιμων υφασμάτων

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‘BEING’ IN CONSTANTINOPLE (4TH-15TH CENTURIES) WITNESSED THROUGH THE TESTIMONY OF PRECIOUS TEXTILES

Το άρθρο ερευνά με ποιο τρόπο τα πολύτιμα ενδύματα οδήγησαν στην ενσωμάτωση της «ύπαρξης στην Κωνσταντινούπολη» σε διαφορετικά επίπεδα εμπειρίας μεταξύ του 4ου και του 15ου αιώνα. Το θέμα εξετάζεται με λεπτομερή ανάλυση των «υπάρξεων» που εμπεριέχονται και με την εντύπωση που προκαλούσαν τα πολύτιμα υφάσματα στην τελετουργική και λειτουργική αναπαράσταση σε αυτές τις ξεχωριστές κατηγορίες της ύπαρξης. Το άρθρο καταλήγει στο ότι τα πολύτιμα υφάσματα ήταν συνώνυμα με την «ύπαρξη σε διαφορετικά επίπεδα» στην Κωνσταντινούπολη έως τον 15ο αιώνα.

The article investigates how precious textiles came to embody ‘being in Constantinople’ at different levels of experience between the 4th-15th centuries. The subject is explored through close analysis of the different types of ‘being’ involved and of the impact of precious textiles within ceremonial and ritual enactment, on those distinct categories of being. The article concludes that precious textiles were ‘synonymous with being at different levels’ in Constantinople by the 15th century.

Λέξεις κλειδιά

Πολύτιμα υφάσματα, ‘ύπαρξη’, λειτουργικό και τελετουργικό, Κωνσταντινούπολη, παράσταση, υπερβατική και μη υπερβατική, παρουσίαση του Κράτους.

Keywords

Precious textiles; ‘Being’; Ritual and ceremonial; Constantinople; Performance-transcendental and non-transcendental; Performance of State.

The present paper examines the ways in which the use of precious textiles both reflected and encouraged the emergence of the key political, religious, social and economic tenants that underpinned ‘being’ and more broadly norms of existence, in Constantinople, between the fourth and the fifteenth centuries. The paper is concerned with general trends that appear and persist over a broad period of time rather than with detailed analysis of narrow specific cases of precious cloths used at any one particular date. The paper specifically asks, ‘How can ‘being in Constantinople’ be defined and what role did precious textiles play in the creation of this sense of being?’

It is not the primary purpose of the paper to enter into detailed discussion of the precious silk textiles cited. These silks have been the subject of very extensive publication by the author elsewhere, not only in her seminal corpus of the surviving Byzantine textiles,

but also in her three volumes of collected studies and in further later publications. Copious references are given in the footnotes both to the author’s publications and to later relevant bibliography of other authors¹. The aim here is to cover new ground: that is to attempt to

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¹ The dating of silks in this study follows that established by the author following ten years pioneering technical analysis of all the surviving material in over one hundred and twenty European church treasuries and in museums all over the world, as subsequently published in A. Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, Vienna 1997. For some of the theoretical aspects of the present paper, refer to A. Muthesius, “Silk Culture and ‘Being’ in Byzantium: How far did precious cloth enrich ‘Memory’ and shape ‘Culture’ across the Empire (4th-15th centuries)?”, *DChAE* 36 (2015), 345-362, with further bibliography.

understand the role that the precious cloths might have played within forging a sense of personal and of collective 'being' to be enjoyed by citizens of Constantinople. The paper first explores aspects of the complex concept of Byzantine 'being'. It considers 'being' both in the sense of actual physical human existence, and in the sense of concrete actions undertaken by humans using objects such as precious cloth, as an expression of human existence. In the two senses described, the paper finds that Byzantine 'being' can be seen to touch upon the relationship (body and soul) of man to nature and to God.

The paper then proceeds briefly to summarise some key points about the physical and historical context within which the use of precious cloths operated in Constantinople as a developing urban centre, between the fourth and the fifteenth centuries. It draws attention to what sort of urban infrastructure supported the development of the textile industry in the Capital (Imperial and non Imperial institutions, public spaces for display of the cloths, and public facilities to sustain the textile workers). The paper next raises questions about the 'mentalities', which drove the silk industry of Constantinople. It questions what social norms might have affected the types of precious textiles in production and what were the different messages embedded into the precious cloths, and it asks why were different motifs on the cloths specifically selected?

Subsequently, the paper proceeds to explore three concepts in greater detail: 'Constantinople of collective memory'; 'being in Constantinople', and the *reality* of being in the Constantinople. These three concepts are considered in relation to the reflection of Byzantine 'mentalities' as they were revealed through the use of the precious textiles.

The first concept ('Constantinople of collective memory') deals with how Constantinople's pagan past, its Roman heritage, and its theocratic Christian present were melded together to form a 'collective memory' (or type of 'mental image' held in common), through which Constantinople could be celebrated. Within this concept lies the idea of the City as a stage for public display. This display included symbolic expression of 'transcendental' belief, such as 'the idea of the Imperial court as reflection of the celestial hierarchy', or 'the good order of Church and State'. The paper goes on to argue that

precious cloths were central to this kind of public display, whether in the form of 'transcendental' evocation of divine blessing or as secular 'non-transcendental' expression of Imperial power and authority.

The discussion of the second and third concepts ('being' and the 'reality of being' in Constantinople), distinguishes between how far individual 'being' as a personal reactive experience, and collective reactive 'being' to public display, might have differed. For example, subject matter such as the Crucifixion and Deposition of Christ on precious cloths might have been used to provoke heightened emotional response and to affect individual spiritual well being. On the other hand, precious textile flags, banners and costumes with symbolic secular Imperial eagle, griffin, hunter and charioteer motifs, displayed during public Imperial victory parades or used during Palace ceremonies, primarily transmitted collective or group messages of Imperial power and authority. These secular messages acted to transmit Imperial ideology and to promote a sense of the stability of the State. The latter type of message acted to promote a sense of secular well being for citizens of Constantinople.

The paper concludes with the suggestion that the use of precious cloth in Constantinople within public ritual and ceremonial context was so marked as to become synonymous with Byzantine 'being' (non-transcendental physical, sensory and material, and transcendental spiritual and emotional 'being'). At some points the 'transcendental' and 'non transcendental' were blended through enactments involving use of precious cloth within the Byzantine court, so as to reflect the combined 'divine' and secular nature of Imperial office.

Outline definition of 'being' and of 'being in Constantinople'

Following the general outline presented above, the paper returns here to a more detailed theoretical discussion of how the Byzantines might have viewed 'being', and what it might have meant to enjoy that type of 'being' in the context of living in Constantinople.

A useful source for the historical understanding of the definition of 'being' in Byzantium, is found in the work of D. Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West*.

*Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom*². Bradshaw traced the understanding of ‘being’ from Aristotle through to what he termed ‘the world view of Eastern Christendom’. Bradshaw quoted Aristotle’s view on degrees of being, ‘Now if living is, alike for every animal, its true being, it is clear that the one who will ‘be’, in the highest degree and the most proper sense, is the thinker, and most of all when he is in action (ἐνεργή) and contemplating the most knowable of all things’³.

Bradshaw also pointed to Aristotle’s distinction between the actuality of being (state or fact of being actual as a reality) and the potentiality of being (actual conditions or facts of being) (*Metaphysics* V,7, 1017, a35-b6)⁴.

Bradshaw saw the broad doctrinal history of the East Christian definition of the term ‘being’ as a parallel to the revision of Neoplatonism, begun under the Cappadocian Fathers and Dionysius, and he asked, ‘Where does philosophy end and theology begin?’⁵. The main discussions centred on the distinction between the actuality and the potentiality of being in relation to what type of ‘being’ was attributable to God, from whom all being stemmed. How was God himself, beyond being, and yet still active in the world? The Cappadocian Father’s approach Bradshaw reported ‘spoke only of the Divine Nature itself as simple, infinite, eternal’⁶. On the other hand Bradshaw emphasised that St. Maximus (580-662) in a spirit closer to Dionysius wrote, ‘Both the names ‘being’ (τὸ εἶναι) and ‘non-being’ (τὸ μὴ εἶναι) are to be reverently applied to Him, although not at all properly. In one sense they are both proper to Him, one affirming the being of God as cause of beings, the other denying in Him the being which all beings have, based on his pre-eminence as cause.’ (*Mystagogy*, PG 91, 664 B-C)⁷. St. Maximus also wrote, ‘Being is derived from Him but He is not being. For he is beyond being

itself, and beyond anything that is said or conceived of Him, whether simply or in a certain way.’ (*Ambigua* 10, PG 91, 1180D)⁸.

Bradshaw then proceeds to take the concept of *energeia* as introduced by Aristotle (as part of the actuality and reality of being), to show how this term was refined and developed in East Christian thought, up to a point where the concept of being (life) / the ‘reality of being’, ultimately came ‘to be counted as amongst the paradigmatic *energeiai* of God’⁹. Thus, Byzantine ‘being’ covered many things: ‘the status and meaning of nature; the relationship of body/soul; of sensible to intelligible; the relationship of symbols and images to their prototypes; of theory to practice; of person as a category irreducible to nature; of the nature of God and of the possibility of human communion with the divine’¹⁰.

Given that Byzantine ‘being’ was a complex concept in itself, how might it have related to notions of what it was to live in Constantinople, and further what relationship might have existed between ‘being’ and the manufacture and use of precious textiles in the Capital? These questions will be addressed in two parts. First an outline of the historical context of production and use of precious textiles in Constantinople will be provided and secondly and finally the concepts and mentalities that informed their use as part of Byzantine being will be explored.

The historical context of precious textile production in Constantinople

Mango in his paper, ‘The development of Constantinople as an urban centre’, rightly pointed out, ‘Ancient Byzantium, which had existed a thousand years before Constantine, never grew up into a really major city.... The natural function of Byzantium in antiquity as in modern times was to serve as a gateway to the Black

² D. Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West. Metaphysics and the division of Christendom*, Cambridge 2004.

³ Ibid., 5 with reference to Aristotle’s *Protrepticus: an attempt at reconstruction* (ed. and trans. I. Düring), Göteborg 1961, B86.

⁴ Ibid., 13 with reference to *Metaphysica* (ed. W. Jaeger), Oxford 1957, 7, 1017a35-b6.

⁵ Ibid., 124, 153-187.

⁶ Ibid., 190-191.

⁷ Ibid., 191 with reference to PG 91, 664B-C, *Mystagogy*, Introduction.

⁸ Ibid., 191, note 14, with reference to PG 91, 1180D, *Maximus the Confessor* (trans. A. Louth), London – New York 1996, *Ambigua* 10, with translation.

⁹ Ibid., 189-195.

¹⁰ Ibid., 187, where Bradshaw argues that these essentially philosophical issues were taken up by Christian authors as part of a ‘fundamental revision of Neoplatonism’.

Sea. This traffic depended on the existence of the Greek colonies on the northern coast of the Black Sea, which were mostly wiped out in the third century A.D. As a result, the very trade on which the well-being of Byzantium was predicated was no longer operative by the time of Constantine. One cannot say therefore, that Constantine made an obvious choice of capital given the circumstances of the early fourth century¹¹.

By the fifth century, Constantinople had fourteen urban regions, with 5 Palaces 14 churches, 162 public and private baths, 4 forums, 4 harbours, 52 major streets, 322 minor streets, and 4,388 houses, and new granaries, harbours, and walls and cisterns¹². Roman civil institutions were taken over in to Byzantine use, and the earlier Roman legal framework was expanded. It was time to consolidate the Imperial image. From the fourth to the sixth century, an Imperial monopoly over the production and use of the highest categories of purple silk and of gold embroidery was established, with serving, hereditary Imperial silk and embroidery guilds¹³. Alongside this Theodosius and Pulcheria adopted Christian cult practices and amalgamated promulgation of the cult of the Virgin into Imperial ceremonial as form of legitimisation of their rule¹⁴. This was important because cloth relics of the Virgin, particularly her maphorion, belt, and veil, in time came to act as defenders of the city of Constantinople against attack by her enemies¹⁵. In the same way later the mandylion of Christ was credited to

be not a painted image but an impression on cloth, and a supernatural defender of Constantinople¹⁶.

Civil strife marked the fifth to sixth centuries with the Nika riot in 532 A.D. and the plague of 542 A.D.¹⁷. At the time of the riot Imperial silks had been displayed in the House of Lamps and had been offered for sale to the aristocracy as a sign of delegation of authority and of loosening of imperial privilege but to no avail¹⁸. The hereditary Imperial silk guilds had become too large and it was time to off-load some precious cloth on to the privileged upper echelons of Constantinopolitan society¹⁹.

Under Justinian in the sixth century, in Constantinople, churches and monasteries, not least Hagia Sophia, St. Irene, St. Sergios and Bacchus, and St. Polyeuktos were built or rebuilt²⁰. Amongst the textiles donated to Hagia Sophia by Justinian, was an altar cloth, which depicted the deeds of the Emperor alongside religious scenes, thus creating a parallel between the secular and the religious authority of the Emperor and affirming his

¹¹ C. Mango, "The development of Constantinople as an urban centre", *17th International Byzantine Congress, Main Papers*, Washington, D.C. 1986, 117-136.

¹² See *ODB*, 1, 508-512 (C. Mango).

¹³ On the silk guilds refer to, A. Muthesius, "The Byzantine silk industry: Lopez and beyond", A. Muthesius, *Studies in Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving*, London 1995, 255-314. On Byzantine dyes including purples, see A. Muthesius, "Cloth, colour, symbolism and meaning in Byzantium (4th-15th century)", *DChAE* 37 (2016), 181-197. Both studies offer extensive additional bibliography.

¹⁴ V. Limberis, *Divine Heiress. The Virgin Mary and the creation of Christian Constantinople*, London – New York 1994, 47-61.

¹⁵ A. Cameron, "The Virgin's robe: an episode in the history of early seventh-century Constantinople", *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 42-56. More recently with some suggested revisions of Cameron's theories, see B. V. Pentcheva, "The supernatural protector of Constantinople: The Virgin and her icons in the tradition of the Avar siege", *BMGS* 26 (2002), 2-41.

¹⁶ A. Cameron, "The history of the image of Edessa: the telling of a story", C. Mango – O. Pritsak (eds), *Okeanos: Essays presented to Ihor Ševčenko on his sixtieth birthday*, Cambridge, MA 1984, 80-94. K. Weitzmann, "The Mandylion and Constantine Porphyrogenitus", *CahArch* 11 (1960), 163-184.

¹⁷ Consult, *ODB*, 2, 1473 (W. E. Kaegi), with further bibliography on the Nika revolt. Further, see *ODB*, 3, 1681 (J. Scarborough – A. Kazhdan), and P. Allen, "The Justinianic plague", *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 5-20. T. L. Bratton, "The identity of the plague of Justinian", *Transactions and Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia*, n.s., 3 (1981), 113-124, 174-180, and P. Horden, "Mediterranean plague in the age of Justinian", *The Cambridge companion to the age of Justinian* (ed. P. Maas), Cambridge 2005, 134-160.

¹⁸ After the Nika riots the rebuilding of the centre of Constantinople served to provide a public space for the enactment of Imperial ritual and ceremonial. See G. Greatex, "The Nika riot: a reassessment", *Journal of Hellenistic Studies* 117 (1997), 60-86, where the riot is described as being the result of the combined actions of a discontented aristocracy and a Constantinopolitan mob. For Constantinople under Justinian, see B. Croke, "Justinian's Constantinople", *Companion to the Age of Justinian*, op.cit. (n. 17), 60-86.

¹⁹ On the Imperial and the private silk guilds of Constantinople, see A. Muthesius, *Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving*, chapter 16, 255-314, with further bibliography.

²⁰ D. Alchermes, "Art and architecture in the Age of Justinian", *Companion to the Age of Justinian*, op.cit. (n. 17), 343-375, especially 355-366.



Fig. 1. Lyon, Musée Historique des Tissus. Imperial Hunter Silk, from Mozac, 8th-9th century, Byzantine.



Fig. 2. Rome, Vatican, Museo Sacro. Hunter Silk, 8th-9th century, Byzantine.

status as ruler chosen by God²¹. Precious cloth began to act to re-enforce the spiritual image of the ruler alongside the purple and gold embroidered silks, which categorised his secular power and authority²². By the eighth century Imperial hunter themes appeared as for example, on the Imperial Hunter silk from Mozac at Lyon, and on the Lion and Panther Hunt silk at the Vatican in Rome (Figs 1, 2).

In the seventh to eighth century there followed a Byzantine decline, with Imperial territorial losses to the Arabs, and sieges and blockades of Constantinople in 626, 674-78, 717-718 A.D., as well as plague (747 A.D) and earthquake (740 A.D.)²³. All this co-incided with Iconoclasm, which had a profound effect on the production of precious cloth in Constantinople²⁴. The Iconoclast Emperors ordered that charioteer and hunter themes replace religious scenes. Religious iconography had existed on textiles at least from the time of St. John Chrysostom, who had complained against the use of such fabrics for secular clothing in the fourth century²⁵.

There was production too, of singular silks, which pointed to the pagan past of Constantinople. The Brussels Charioteer silk for example, shows Helios in the driving seat and this would have found a parallel in Constantinople with the statue of the Emperor Constantine in his

²¹ Paulus Silentarius, *Description of St. Sophia and its ambo. Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentarius* (ed. P. Friedländer), Leipzig – Berlin 1912, 755-805, passage translated in C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents*, New Jersey 1972, 88-89.

²² For purples specifically reserved for Imperial use, see A. Muthesius, *Cloth, colour*, op.cit. (n. 13), and earlier, see A. Muthesius, “Essential Processes, looms and technical aspects of the production of silk textiles”, *The Economic History of Byzantium from the seventh through the fifteenth century*, Washington, D.C. 2002, 1, chapter 11, 147-168, especially 158-160. The key early article on the history of Byzantine purples is G. Steigerwald, “Das kaiserliche Purpurprivileg in spätrömischer und frühbyzantinischer Zeit”, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 33 (1990), 209-239.

²³ For bibliography on the plague see note 17 above.

²⁴ Under Constantine V, the promotion of hunter and charioteer themes in art during Iconoclasm, was twice recorded by the Deacon Stephen in 806 A.D. See *Vita S. Stephani iunioris* (translation C. Mango), op. cit. (n. 21), 152, 153, columns 1112-1113 and column 1172.

²⁵ Asterius of Amaseia, *Homilies*, Homily 1, PG 40, 165-168 (translation C. Mango), op. cit. (n. 21), 50-51.



Fig. 3. Brussels, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire. Charioteer Silk, 8th-9th century, Byzantine.

Forum atop a porphyry column, depicted in the guise of Helios (Fig. 3)²⁶. The Romans associated Helios with chariot races and Helios was considered the protector of the Emperor²⁷. The silks embedded popular historic memory, which appears to have re-surfaced during the troubled times of Iconoclasm²⁸. Similarly, the Maastricht Dioscurides silk with Castor and Pollux and with pagan Mithraic bull sacrifice, echoes Constantinopolitan

pagan heritage (Fig. 4)²⁹. Castor and Pollux were figures of astral cult practice and their historic memory is reflected in Byzantine sources well beyond Iconoclasm. At the same time the Iranian sun God Mithra was recognised in the Roman Empire and his cult was approved under Aurelian and Diocletian and adopted by soldiers³⁰. The cult disappeared only in the fifth century. The question, which arises is, 'Did these silks form part of the debate for and against the use of the graven image during Iconoclasm?'³¹.

²⁶ For the Brussels Charioteer silk, see A. Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving A.D. 400-1200*, Vienna 1997, 72-73 and 173-174, pl. 22A, for silk M30. The silk is discussed in A. Muthesius, "Memory and Meaning: Graphic sign and abstract symbol in Byzantine Silk Weaving (6th-10th/11th centuries)", I. Garipzanov – C. Goodson – H. Maguire (eds), *Graphic Signs of Power and Faith in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cursor Mundi 27), Turnhout 2017, 351-381.

²⁷ On the symbolism behind the veneration of Helios, see *ODB*, 2, 910 (A. Kazhdan), with further bibliography.

²⁸ The concept of 'historic memory' is discussed in A. Muthesius, "Silk, culture and being in Byzantium: How far did precious cloth enrich 'memory' and shape 'culture' across the Empire (4th-15th centuries)?", *DChAE* 36 (2015), 345-362, with further bibliography.

²⁹ For the Maastricht Dioscurides silk, see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, op.cit. (n. 1), 64, 73, 79 with notes 90-93, and also see 175-176 for silk M36, plate 22B. The Dioscurides silk is discussed in Muthesius, "Memory and Meaning", op.cit. (n. 26), 375-376, both with further bibliography.

³⁰ For Mithraism consult *ODB*, 2, 1385-1386 (F. R. Trombley), and for discussion of Byzantium's use of Mithraic symbolism on the Dioscurides silk, see Muthesius, "Memory and Meaning", op.cit. (n. 26), 376.

³¹ Much work remains to be done on interpretation of source materials associated with Iconoclasm. These sources have been gathered together in, L. Brubaker – J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the*

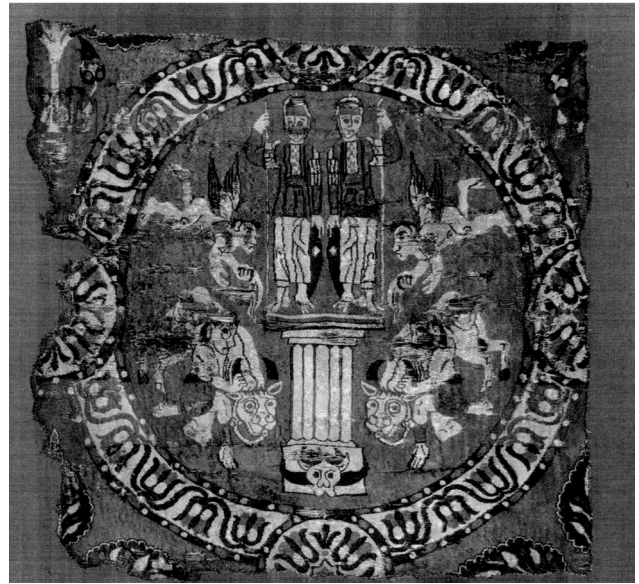
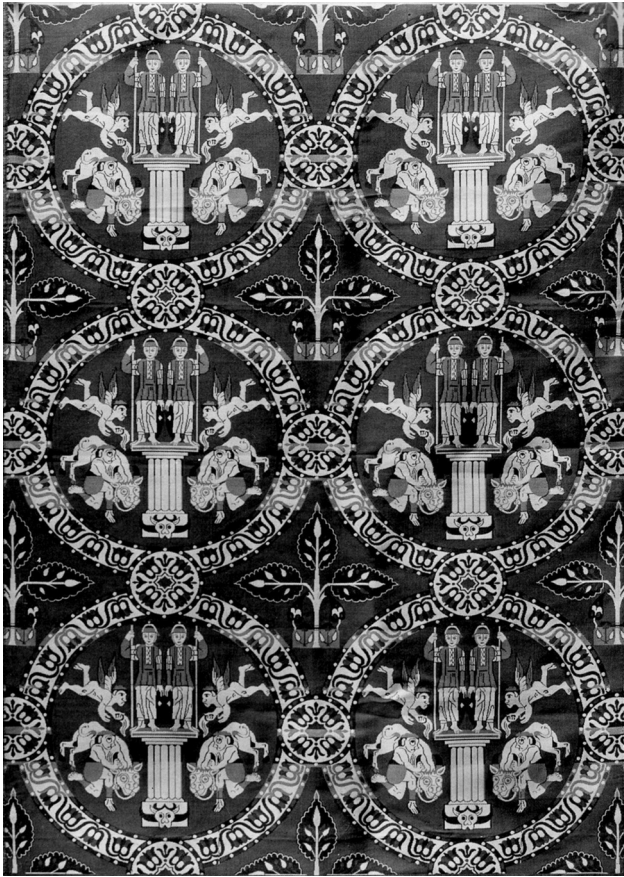


Fig. 4. Maastricht, St. Servatius. Dioscurides Silk, 8th-9th century, Byzantine. Left: Crefeld, School of Art. Painted copy, 1895. Right: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Fragment.

Between the eighth and the tenth century urban dwellings were still spread out across the Capital, influential residences being situated on the southern Propontis shore near the Akropolis, between the harbours of Julian and Theodosius, and in the centre of the City. But in the ninth century there was decay of public facilities such as baths and less use of public entertainment by way of the Hippodrome. Post Iconoclasm (843 A.D.) Imperial palaces were refurbished, and old churches repaired alongside establishment of new hospices, but no new civic monuments were erected, even as part of a

Macedonian return to a glorious ancient past³². Nevertheless, precious secular silks continued in production in Constantinople during Iconoclasm (Fig. 5)³³. To this period of strife belonged a variety of secular hunter and charioteer silks as discussed above³⁴. To the period after second Iconoclasm belong two fragments of silk in the Vatican with the Annunciation and Nativity (Fig. 6)³⁵. Mainstream production of religious silks may have

Iconoclastic Era (c. 680-850). The Sources, an annotated survey (Birmingham, Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs 7), Aldershot 2001. In this publication, there was an attempt by Brubaker to add to the present author's analysis of the textiles. Brubaker's description of the textiles came directly from Muthesius, but her interpretation of the textiles as a 'non-textile specialist', produced much misleading information.

³² ODB, 1, 508-512 with bibliography (C. Mango).

³³ See Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, op.cit. (n. 1), chapter 7, 65-79.

³⁴ Ibid., 68-73, sections 7.3, 7.4.

³⁵ Ibid., 67, section 7.2 and also see 175, silk M35, plates 20A and 20B for the author's detailed discussion of the basis for dating the silk fragments to post second Iconoclasm. Concerning the dye analysis of these two fragments, see D. King – M. King, "The Annunciation and Nativity silks: A supplementary note", *CIETA Bulletin* 63-64 (1986), 20-21 and R. Pfister, "Sur les tissus du Sancta Sanctorum", *XIX congresso internazionale degli orientalisti*, Rome

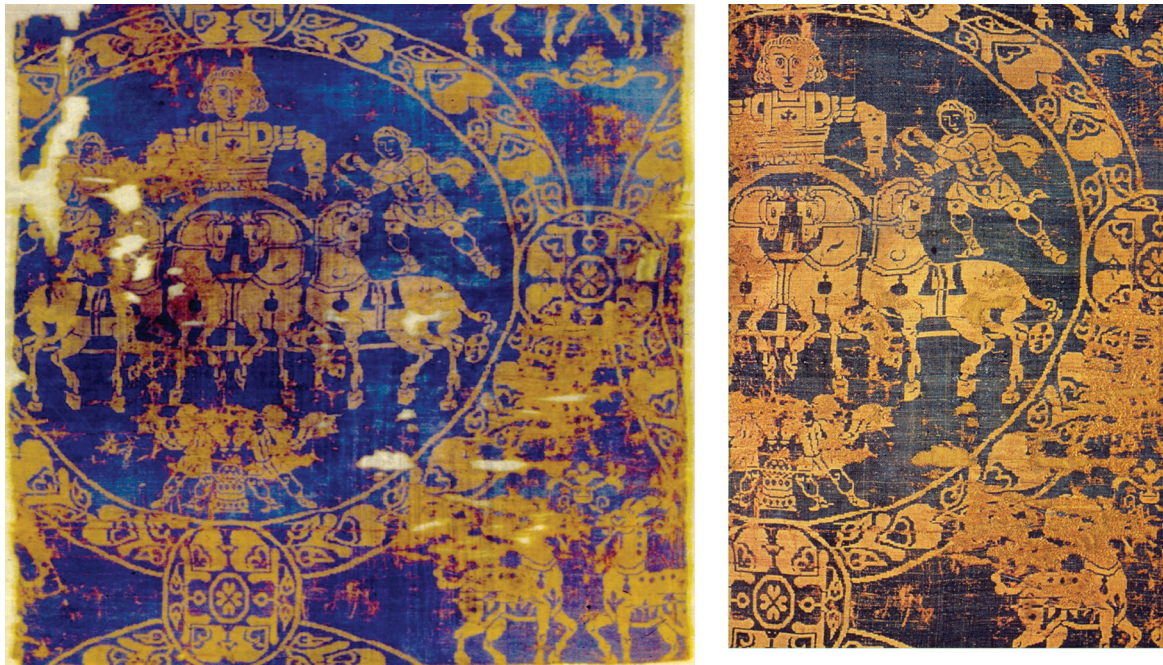


Fig. 5. Charioteer Silk, two fragments, 8th-9th century, Imperial Byzantine. Left: Aachen, Cathedral Treasury. Right: Paris, Cluny Museum.

been centred in Christian workshops operating under Arab rule in Syria and these silks in huge numbers were being exported for use by the Papacy in Rome³⁶.

1938, 661-666. For a different dating of these two fragments, see M. Martiniani-Reber, "Nouveau regard sur les soieries de l'Annonciation et de la Nativité du Sancta Sanctorum", *CIETA Bulletin* 63-64 (1986), 12-15. Before a modern dye analysis is undertaken it is not possible to claim that the Annunciation and Nativity silk fragments represent the remains of two distinct silks, most particularly as their weave analysis shows no such distinction. For this reason the two fragments are linked together in this study as 'the Annunciation and Nativity fragments of silk'.

³⁶ Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, op.cit. (n. 1), 23-24 and note 28, 66, 74 note 25, 75 note 26, 124-126, section 14.1.3, including detailed primary and secondary source references. The *Lib-er Pontificalis* refers to silks of Tyre (*de Tyreo*), which reached churches of Rome, and this raises the issue of the possibility of Christian narrative silk weaving during Iconoclasm in Syria (see 66, and note 26 for source reference). Certainly, there were fifth century pattern looms weaving both wool and silk in Syria as described by Theodoret of Cyrrus (see 23 with source reference in note 28). There was silk weaving earlier (1st-2nd century) at Palmyra in Syria, see A. Schmidt-Colinet – A. Stauffer – K. al-Asad, *Die Textilien aus Palmyra, Neue und Alter Funde*, Mainz 2000,

It is uncertain if the Church of the Virgin at the Forum built for use of market place artisans represented a new or a renovated building³⁷. The tenth century certainly saw the rise of the private guilds including those of the textile industry, and an expansion of the commercial sector³⁸. Strict rules governed the production and distribution of silks produced by the private silk guilds and retailed by the merchants of domestic and of imported silk garments³⁹. The civic role of these silk guilds

reviewed by J. P. Wild, "Textiles of Eastern Promise", *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 15 (2002), 675-680.

³⁷ For the Church of the Virgin at the Forum, see C. Mango, "The life of St. Andrew the Fool", C. Mango, *Byzantium and its Image*, London 1984, 302-303, of chapter 8.

³⁸ The guild regulations were edited by J. Koder, *Das Eparchienbuch Leons des Weisen*, Wien 1991.

³⁹ The organisation of the Byzantine silk guilds is discussed in detail in, A. Muthesius, *Studies in Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving*, London 1995, chapter 16, 280-290, and in A. Muthesius, *Studies in Silk in Byzantium*, London 2004, chapter 3, 37-65, and see especially 51-53, with extensive further bibliography. The author undertook two research trips as Aurel Stein, British Academy Fellow (1987 and 1988) to examine the non-industrialised



Fig. 6. Rome, Vatican, Museo Sacro. Annunciation and Nativity (two silk fragments), 9th century (post 843), Byzantine.

will be discussed further below as will their impact on wider distribution of precious cloths lower down the social scale. In the ninth to tenth century, the Black Sea was opened under Kievan merchants and they too looked to purchase silk textiles of Constantinople under the auspice of special trade treatises⁴⁰. These merchants were kept at bay at St. Mammas, and the opening of this trade route brought its own danger in the form of Russian attacks on the Capital (860, 941 and 1043 A.D.)⁴¹. In contrast to other foreign merchants, Syrian

silk merchants could reside in the Capital for longer than three months and Constantinople did import silk clothing from Armenia and Syria as well as lesser value silks from Egypt⁴².

silk industry of India. The Ministry of Textiles to the Indian government provided the author with transport to sericulture and silk weaving centres all over India. The Sericulture Institute at Mysore provided the author with much literature on the processes of raw silk production. The result of the research was incorporated in to the two publications cited and was also made available to J. Koder in extensive discussions held in Vienna in 1997, before his publication of the silk guild regulations in the *Book of the Prefect* (op. cit. n. 38).

⁴⁰ I. Sorlin, “Les traités de Byzance avec la Russie au Xe siècle”, *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 3 (1961), 313-360, 447-475.

⁴¹ For privileged terms of sale of Byzantine silks to Russians, see S. H. Cross, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, Laurentian Text,

with O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Medieval Academy of American Publications 60), Cambridge, MA 1953, 73 forward. For Russo-Byzantine trade contacts, see S. Franklin – J. Shepard, *The emergence of the Russ 750-1200*, London 1996, 103-111, with further bibliography on 104, note 54. For Byzantine contacts of 920-960 A.D. see p. 112-138 with further bibliography, and for the attack of 1043 A.D., consult p. 216.

⁴² Koder, *Eparchenbuch*, op.cit. (n. 38), 94-95, chapter 5.2, provides a record of the existence of Syrian merchants, who had resided in the Capital for ten years. However, on p. 96-97, in chapter 5.5 it is reported that Syrian merchants bringing in garments were not allowed to reside more than three months in the mitata of the Capital. Imported garments from Syria and Seleucia were detailed on p. 94-95, in chapter 5.1. In the Baggage Train account appended to the *Book of Ceremonies*, there are described, valuable Byzantine silks as well as a category of lesser silk imported from Egypt. These were intended for campaign distribution to distinguished and to lesser rank captives. See J. Haldon, *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions* (CFHB 28), Wien 1990, 289-291 and passim. Two categories of earlier, patterned, fine quality silks

As part of the miraculous and divine protection of Constantinople textiles played a seminal part. The maphorion of the Virgin in particular, by the ninth to tenth century was recognised publicly as a conduit for the dispersal of Divine protection to the city under attack⁴³.

The tenth century, although it did not bring great strides in Imperial civic building did entail the massive

were recovered from sixth to seventh century graves of Akhmim and Antinoe in Egypt. The Akhmim silks, some with inscriptions, probably were woven in Egypt, but the Antinoe silks have been termed 'Sassanian'. For discussion of the Akhmim and Antinoe silks as distinct weaving groups, see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, op.cit. (n. 1), 80-84. On one example of Akhmim silks refer to A. Stauffer, *Die Mittelalterliche Textilien von St. Servatius in Maastricht*. Schriften der Abegg-Stiftung Riggisberg, VIII, Bern 1991, 92-94, cat. no 28. For some examples of Antinoe silks further refer to M. Martiniani-Reber, *Textiles et mode sassanides. Les tissus orientaux conservés au département des Antiquités égyptiennes*, Paris 1997, and M. Martiniani-Reber, *Lyon, musée historique des tissus. Soieries sassanides, coptes et byzantines Ve-XIe siècles*, Paris 1986, 36-60. For Byzantine and Islamic period Egyptian textiles and dress in the Whitworth Museum collection, Manchester, consult F. Pritchard, *Clothing Culture: Dress in Egypt in the First Millennium A.D.*, Manchester 2006, 60-82 and 83-115.

⁴³ For the history of the maphorion, see A. Cameron, "The Virgin's robe: an episode in the history of early seventh century Constantinople", *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 42-56. In 860 A.D., at the time of the later Russian siege of Constantinople, the maphorion served as part of the Marian cult of the Capital. It was carried on the walls of the City to provide divine protection. See *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* (translation C. Mango), Cambridge, MA 1958, 102-103. Earlier, the procession of the maphorion was reported during the Avar attack of 620 A.D. This is recorded in the *Diegesis Opheimos* (BHG, no. 1060), PG 92, 1354D-1372, at 1357A. The prophylactic uses of the maphorion are fully explored in, B. V. Pentcheva, "The supernatural protection of Constantinople: the Virgin and her icons in the tradition of the Avar siege", *BMGS* 26 (2002), 2-41; see 20, 24-25 for its use in 620 A.D. and 27-28 for the maphorion's later use in 860 A.D. The Virgin's maphorion in 926 A.D., was used in a prophylactic capacity by the Emperor Romanos 1 Lekapenos (920-944 A.D.). He placed it about his person whilst negotiating a peace treaty with the Bulgarian ruler Symeon. This episode is recorded in, Ioannes Skylites: *Synopsis historiarum* (ed. I. Thurn), Berlin – New York 1973, 219. On cloth relics of the Virgin as a whole, consult, A. W. Carr, "Threads of Authority, the Virgin Mary's Veil in the Middle Ages", S. Gordon (ed.), *Robes and Honor. The Medieval World of Investiture*, New York 2001, 59-94.

use of precious textiles by the court in celebration of their legitimacy as rulers of New Rome. It might even be suggested that the development of tenth century Imperial ceremonial and ritual through the use of precious cloth came to supplant the earlier great civic building acts of the founding Emperors of Constantinople. The *Book of Ceremonies* provides marvellous testimony to the symbolism of the use of precious textiles in Imperial court and diplomatic context and the detailed uses will be examined below⁴⁴. This was also the period of the production of the diplomatic inscribed Imperial Lion and Elephant silks (Fig. 7). By this time Imperial silks were indispensable to the Imperial image and they were carried in to battle in the Imperial baggage train⁴⁵.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries vast Imperial monastic complexes with social and educational, welfare and financial functions were constructed: the Peribleptos (Romanos III), St. Cosmas and Damian (Michael IV), St. George of the Mangana (Constantine IX), and under the Comnenii also, the 'orphanage' of St. Paul with its sixth century church, the Christ Pantocrator, and the St. Mokios foundation⁴⁶. On a commercial front the period saw the growth of the Latin trader colonies on the Golden Horn and their increasing pre-occupation with the Byzantine silk trade⁴⁷. Textile production

⁴⁴ See references in note 77 below.

⁴⁵ For the inscribed silks refer to Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, op.cit. (n. 1), 34-43. For silks taken on campaign, see Haldon, *Baggage Train*, op.cit. (n. 42), 215, C222. The terminology for textiles is difficult to decipher as some terms used have no parallels and clearly are trade terms. This is discussed in, *Constantine Porphyrogenetos. The Book of Ceremonies* (translation A. Moffatt – M. Tall) (Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, Byzantina Australiensia 18.1), Canberra 2012, 1, 468.

⁴⁶ *ODB*, 1, 511 with further bibliography (C. Mango).

⁴⁷ For the Latin trader colonies, see R. J. Lilie, *Handel und politik zwischen dem byzantinischen Reich und den italienischen Kommunen Venedig, Pisa und Genua in der Epoche der Komnenen und Angeloi (1081-1204)*, Amsterdam 1984. Compare, D. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice, a study in diplomatic and cultural relations*, Cambridge 1988, 50-67, especially 60-62 for trade privileges granted to Venice, with bibliography on 60 note 1, and on 61 note 1. Also consult, G. W. Day, *Genoa's response to Byzantium 1155-1204. Commercial expansion and functionalism in a medieval city*, Urbana – Chicago 1988, 2-8, 17-46 and references in 38 note 24, 39-40 note 42, 41-42 note 47, for trade and diplomatic relations between Genoa and Byzantium. Further note two papers by,

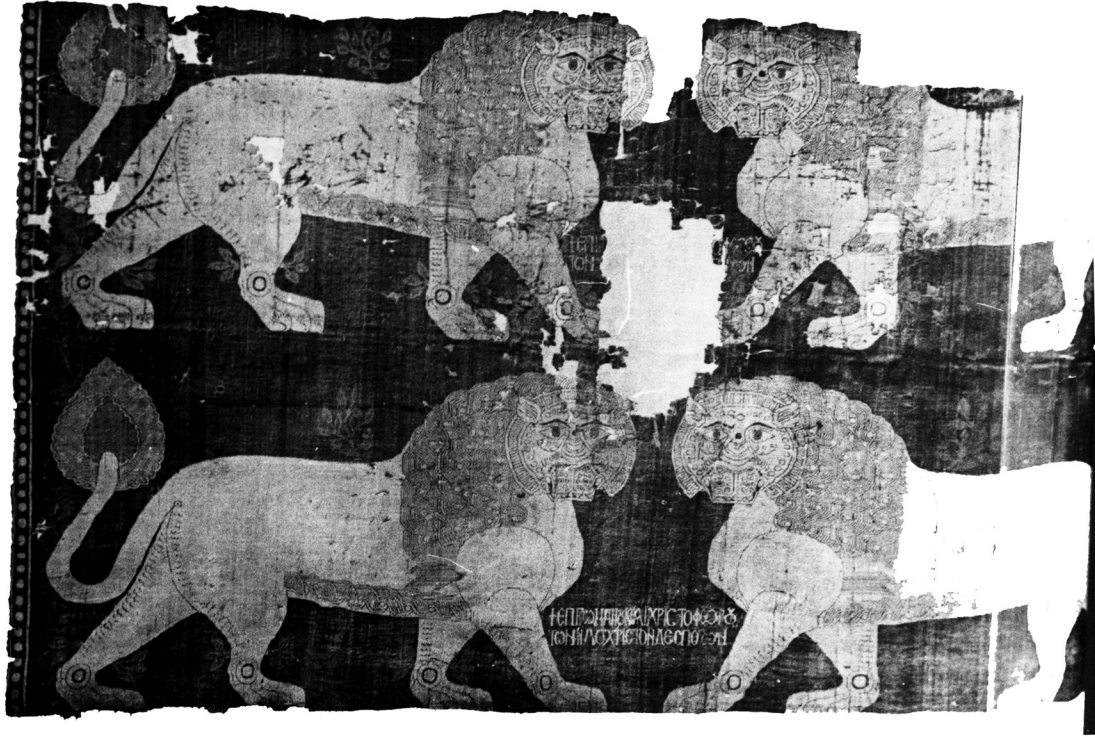


Fig. 7 Berlin, from Siegburg. *Imperial Lion Silk, 921-923, Constantinople.*

had broadened and use of precious fabrics had moved lower down the social scale in Byzantium. Silk production and manufacture had become well established in the Peloponnese beyond the confines of the previously centralised Constantinopolitan industry⁴⁸. At this time,

D. Jacoby, “The Venetian quarter of Constantinople from 1082-1261: topographical considerations”, and “Genoa silk trade and silk manufacture in the Mediterranean region (c. 1100-1300)”, D. Jacoby, *Commercial Exchange across the Mediterranean*, Aldershot 2005, 153-170 chapter 3, and 11-40 chapter 11, respectively.
⁴⁸ The source material has been expertly gathered together in D. Jacoby, “Silk in western Byzantium before the fourth Crusade”, D. Jacoby, *Trade Commodities and Shipping in the Medieval Mediterranean*, Aldershot 1997. Nevertheless, Jacoby is not a textile specialist and therefore, it should be borne in mind, that his conclusions on silk types and where they were woven is largely speculative, sometimes totally technically misguided, and often not in tune with the evidence of the surviving Byzantine silks, themselves. Consider his contention that red silks were woven on Andros (p. 462) or his discussion concerning half-silks (p. 475). On 476 Jacoby relies on Guillou’s analysis of silk production in Calabria, but the raw silk yield and so the volume of production, was vastly

the Imperial house itself, moved from the Great Palace near the harbour of the Boukoleon, to the Palace of the Blachernae on a hill-top dominating the Land Walls⁴⁹. The Great fire of 1203 A.D. and the Latin occupation of the city followed (1204-1261 A.D.)⁵⁰. The Constantinopolitan textile industry was still documented but there was finishing and repair of imported textiles alongside

over-estimated by him. This error was pointed out to Guillou by the present author, who gallantly acknowledged the error. See A. Muthesius, “From seed to samite: Byzantine Silk production”, A. Muthesius, *Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving*, London 1995, 119-134, chapter 7, especially 126-127. See further, note 52 below.
⁴⁹ On the Palace of Blachernai, see *ODB*, 1, 293 with further bibliography (C. Mango).

⁵⁰ On the conquest and capture of Constantinople in 1204 A.D. consider the Latin account, *The Hystoria Constantinopolitana*, of Gunthyer of Paris (ed. and translation, A. J. Andrea), Philadelphia 1997. Further, see J. R. M. Jones, *The siege of Constantinople 1453: seven contemporary accounts*, Amsterdam 1972. Also note, E. Methuen, “Der Fall von Konstantinopel und der Lateinische Westen”, *Historische Zeitschrift* 237 (1983), 1-35.



Fig. 8. Sinai, St. Catherine's Monastery. Epitrachelion, 15th century, Byzantine.

diminished domestic production⁵¹. Under the Latin occupation Imperial silk production appears to have been centred rather at the court in Nicaea. The Peloponnese was charged with the production of lesser silks and other cloths for widespread distribution at home and abroad⁵².

After 1261 A.D. and the end of the Latin occupation of Constantinople, an initial building programme recovery

was made under the Palaeologoi (e.g. Virgin Pammakaristos, Christ of the Chora churches) and the Imperial gold embroidery workshops continued in production in the Capital. A Patriarchal gold embroidery workshop is also suggested by the presence of non-Imperial and mainly unpublished gold embroideries in monasteries of Athos⁵³. By the fourteenth century whilst the Latin quarter of Pera prospered, Constantinople had reached a point of decay prior to its fall to the Turks in 1453 A.D.⁵⁴. It is evident, however, that the early fifteenth century Imperial workshops continued to produce gold embroideries and there is evidence that these workshops

⁵¹ See Matschke reference in note 52 below.

⁵² See D. Jacoby, "The production of silk textiles in Latin Greece", D. Jacoby, *Trade Commodities*, op. cit. (n. 48), 22-35, chapter 12, especially 23-24. Also, D. Jacoby, "Silk production in the Frankish Peloponnese: the evidence of fourteenth century surveys and reports", D. Jacoby, *Trade Commodities*, op.cit. (n. 48), 501-561. Further, see K. P. Matschke, "Tuchproduktion und Tuch produzenten in Thessalonike und in anderen Städten und Regionen des späten Byzanz", *Byzantiaka* 9 (1989), 69 forwards. On Latin trade of cloth in Constantinople, see K. P. Matschke, "Commerce, trade, markets and money: thirteenth-fifteenth centuries", *The Economic History of Byzantium* (ed. A. Laiou), Washington, D.C. 2002, 2, 771-806, especially, 776-777. For references to late Byzantine silk weaving in Mistra, note I. P. Medvedev, *Mistra*, Leningrad 1973, 85 forwards.

⁵³ For Byzantine gold embroideries, see G. Millet, *Broderies religieuses de style byzantin*, Paris 1939-1947. P. Johnstone, *The Byzantine tradition in Church Embroidery*, London 1967. A. Chatzimichali, "Τα χρυσοκλαβάρικα, συρματένια, συρμακέσια κεντήματα", *Mélanges offerts à Octave et Melpo Merlier*, 2, Athens 1956, 447-498. See also, M. Theochaes, *Ecclesiastical Gold Embroideries*, Athens 1986.

⁵⁴ On the Latin quarter of Pera see under "Galata", *ODB*, 2, 815-816 (C. Mango).

survived to the bitter end⁵⁵. Important fifteenth century gold embroideries survive in the Kremlin, Moscow, and at the monastery of St. Catherine, Sinai (Fig. 8).

Concepts and mentalities that informed the use of the precious textiles as part of ‘being’ in Constantinople

In attempting to decipher why precious textiles should have been so central to urban existence in the Capital, the relationship of the three interlinked concepts discussed so far: the concept of a ‘Constantinople of collective memory’; the concept of ‘being in Constantinople’, and the concept of ‘actual being’ as part of the experience of ‘reality’ in the City, must be understood. ‘Constantinople of collective memory’ refers to Constantinople as ‘New Rome’, and to the incorporation of a ‘collective memory’ of its Roman heritage and its pagan associations in to its theocratic Christian present⁵⁶. Seat both of Emperor and Patriarch, Constantinople acted like a stage upon which Byzantium could ‘act out State as cultural performance’. The use of precious cloth served as part of ‘cultural representation’. Meanings embedded in to the cloths were put on public display across the City. The Polis publicly reflected the good order of Church and State through its ceremonial and ritual enactments using the symbolism of the precious cloths, and a parallel was drawn between the court and the celestial hierarchies⁵⁷. At first, the Emperor acted as ruler-priest, that

is as Divine representative serving between God and his people⁵⁸. After the fall of Constantinople to the Latins between 1204-1261 A.D. and certainly by the fourteenth century, the Patriarch rather than the Emperor increasingly assumed centre stage to overcome the crisis facing the Empire⁵⁹. This was reflected in the development of the Christ patriarch iconography on gold embroidered vestments⁶⁰.

In Byzantine terms, ‘actual being’ referred to the ‘actuality of being’ that is to real human existence, and also to the ‘potentiality of being’ that is to the operation of human faculties involved in concrete activities, which allowed humans ‘to be’. ‘Being in Constantinople’ as human experience would have varied according to birth, rank, status, occupation, gender, ethnicity, education, and the like, but precious cloths would have touched all ranks of society, whether through personal contact or via the visual senses. The court was awash

Boustani – A. Y. Reed (ed.), *Heavenly realms and earthly realities in Late Antique religions*, Cambridge 2004. The concept that earthly events and structures reflect heaven occurs in Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic literature. In the Graeco-Roman period the concept informed theories of how to rule, see discussion on 124. The concept of the fusion of the immaterial and the material, occurs in Gregory of Nazianzus, “On baptism”, see 299-300.

⁵⁸ The relationship between the sacral role of Emperor and of ecclesiastical hierarchy is explored in, G. Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre. Étude sur le ‘césaropapisme’ byzantin*, Paris 1996, 290-322. The original publication was re-issued as a revised and extended publication, see G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (translation J. Birrell), Cambridge 2003. On the theme of Imperial ‘priesthood’, see op.cit., 127-191.

⁵⁹ P. Magdalino, “Court and Capital in Byzantium”, J. Duindam – T. Artan – M. Kunt (eds), *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires. A Global Perspective*, Leiden 2011, 131-144, especially 143. On the Patriarchate of Constantinople, see *ODB*, 1, 520-523 with bibliography (A. Kazhdan – A.-M. Talbot). For the Epanagoge and the definition of the roles of Emperor and Patriarch, see *ODB*, 1, 703-704 with bibliography (A. Schminck).

⁶⁰ Christ as High Priest appears on a fourteenth century epitachelion with the Great Deesis, at St. John’s monastery, Patmos, see M. Theocharis, “Church gold embroideries”, A. D. Kominis (ed.), *Patmos, treasures of the monastery*, Athens 1988, 192-193, figs 8, 9. The whole of the silk treasury of the monastery of St. John, Patmos has been catalogued and analysed by the present author, for publication at a future date. For the iconography, see T. Papamastorakis, “The Christ High Priest”, *DChAE* 17 (1993-1994), 67-76.

⁵⁵ See A. Muthesius, “The Thessaloniki Epitaphios: a technical examination”, A. Muthesius, *Studies in Silk in Byzantium*, London 2004, 175-195, chapter 11, especially 192-194, with extensive earlier bibliography. Note printing errors, on 195 for Manuel VIII read Michael VIII. The final print setter confused labels in composing the technical diagram on 182. The wrong labels were applied to each figure within the diagram. The correct labels are as follows: for bakladota read kamarakia; for kamarakia read amygdalo (with oval not diamond compartments); for kotsakia read bakladota; for amygdalo read kotsaki. The label as printed for kotsaki should read kotsakia.

⁵⁶ These silks were discussed in, A. Muthesius, “Silk culture and being in Byzantium”, op.cit. (n. 1), 345-348, with bibliography in notes 2-12.

⁵⁷ See H. Maguire, “The heavenly court”, H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court culture from 829-1204 A.D.*, Washington, D.C. 1995, 247-258. As background to the concept it is interesting to consider the perception of heaven in Late Antiquity. See R. S.

with precious silks and these received public display in court and across the City⁶¹. The silk guilds were responsible for the production and for the public display of precious cloths; the clergy were vested in precious silks and their churches were furnished with them, and even the Church relics were clad in silk, and the icons veiled with silk⁶². Silk was used for military uniforms of parade and for distribution to prisoners of rank on campaign⁶³. Officials appointed to Imperial office were awarded Imperial silk uniforms, and these were worn as ceremonial dress for court and civic displays⁶⁴. Imperial

silks could also be awarded to the military aristocracy after successful military campaigns and some of these were later presented to private religious foundations⁶⁵. Lower down the social hierarchy by the eleventh century silk dresses could be purchased on the open market in Constantinople and households would have had access to Byzantine domestic furnishings of silk: bedcovers, divans of silk, silk cushions and carpets, which also could form part of Mediterranean wedding dowry tradition⁶⁶. Thus, precious cloth in Constantinople enriched 'being' in a material sense in relation both to worship of God and to the reality of urban existence, across all levels of society, whether it was enjoyed directly as personal experience, or as indirect experience perceived only through the visual senses. In addition, religious silks with Christian narrative were read in a special manner that involved the viewer emotionally and heightened the senses to meanings beyond the narrative of the images viewed⁶⁷. This led to the development of iconography such as the lamentation with angels weeping over the dead Christ, and with and to whom the viewer could personally relate their sorrow at the thought of Christ's crucifixion⁶⁸. This empathetic exercise found parallels

⁶¹ Discussed in three papers as follows: A. Muthesius, "Silk in Byzantium: Cultural Imperialism, identity and value"; "The 'cult' of Imperial and ecclesiastical silks in Byzantium", and "Courtly and aristocratic silk patronage", all three in Muthesius, *Silk in Byzantium*, op.cit. (n. 39), chapter 1, 1-22, chapter 2, 23-35, and chapter 5, 85-108, respectively. Further consider three more relevant papers: A. Muthesius, "Silk as politics in Byzantium"; "Silken dress codes, gender and power in Byzantium" and "The importance of textiles to the understanding of Byzantine civilisation", Muthesius, *Studies in Byzantine, Islamic and Near Eastern Silk Weaving*, op.cit. (n. 39), 14-30, chapter 2, 294-315, and chapter 17, respectively. All three studies include extensive further bibliography. Further note, J. Ball, *Byzantine Dress*. New York 2005, chapter 2, 37-56. For the earlier sumptuary regulation of dress in Byzantium, see J. Arce, "Dress control in Late Antiquity. Codex Theodosianus 14.10. 1-4", A. Köb – P. Riedel (eds), *Kleidung und Repräsentation in Antike und Mittelalter*, München 2005, 33-44.

⁶² For discussion of the widespread uses of silks in Byzantium, refer to, A. Muthesius, "A millennium of Byzantine silks", Muthesius, *Byzantine, Islamic and Near Eastern silk weaving*, op.cit. (n. 39), 1-13, chapter 1. For the operation of the silk guilds see reference in note 39 above.

⁶³ See Haldon reference in note 42 above.

⁶⁴ In the tenth century *Book of Ceremonies* there are numerous references to the Imperial distribution of silk uniforms to court officials and to their use during court ceremonies. For example, see Constantini Porphyrogenita Imperatoris, *De Cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae* (ed. I. I. Reiske), 1-2, Bonn 1829-1831, v. 2 chapters 40-41, p. 637-641, and v. 2, chapter 15, p. 566-598. Appended to 2, see chapter 52 (702-783), *Philotheos Kletorologion*, with descriptions of robes as part of the Imperial household insignia. For Imperial vestiture, see J. Ebersolt, *Le vêtements impériaux dans le cérémonial. Mélanges d'histoire d'archéologie byzantine*, Paris 1951, part 2, 50-69, chapter 6. E. Piltz, "Middle Byzantine Court Costume", Maguire, *Court Culture*, op. cit. in (n. 57), 39-51 and E. Piltz, *Le costume officiel des dignitaires byzantins à l'époque paléologue*, Uppsala 1994. Further on Byzantine dress note, P. Kalamara, *Le système vestimentaire à Byzance du 4ème jusqu'au 11ème siècle*, Lille 1997.

⁶⁵ Discussed in A. Muthesius, "Precious cloths and Byzantine monasticism", Muthesius, *Silk in Byzantium*, op.cit. (n. 39), 143-155, in chapter 9, with further bibliography.

⁶⁶ Imported Syrian and Cilician silk garments were on sale in Constantinople at the beginning of the tenth century according to the *Book of the Prefect*, see Koder, *Eparchenbuch*, op.cit. (n. 38), 95, chapter 5.1. Silk garments made in Constantinople were also on sale see 93, for chapter 4.8. For the dating of the *Book of the Eparch* to 911-912 A.D., see 31-32. For silk furnishings including Byzantine bed covers consult, S. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 4, London 1983. Refer to 105-137, together with appendix C297-309, especially C303 for Byzantine silk bed covers.

⁶⁷ On ekphrasis as applied to the description of works of art, see A. Kaldellis, "Christodoros on the statues of the Zeuxippos Baths: a new reading of the ekphrasis", *GRBS* 47 (2007), 361-383. R. Macrides – P. Magdalino, "The architecture of ekphrasis: construction and context of Paul the Silentiary's poem on Hagia Sophia", *BMGS* 12 (1988), 47-82. L. James – R. Webb, "To understand ultimate things and enter secret places: ekphrasis and art in Byzantium", *Art History* 14 (1991), 1-17. Earlier refer to, H. Maguire, "Truth and convention in Byzantine descriptions of works of art", *DOP* 28 (1974), 111-140, and H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium*, Princeton 1981.

⁶⁸ See reference in note 55 above for the Thessaloniki epitaphios



Fig. 9. Thessaloniki, Museum of Byzantine Culture. The Thessaloniki epitaphios, detail, 13th-14th century, Byzantine.

in the way preachers presented their sermons to the public, with interjections and imaginative additions to the Biblical narrative designed to arouse the emotions and to remind the congregation of their ‘being’ in and through God⁶⁹. The heightened emotional atmosphere is

well depicted on the Thessaloniki epitaphios with lamenting angels (Fig. 9).

In Byzantine Constantinople, the ‘reality of being’ involving the use of precious cloths, as described,

with lamenting angels. Further for a discussion of religious iconography on silk embroideries note, A. Muthesius, “Silken embroidery and Orthodox Faith in Byzantium”, Muthesius, *Byzantine, Islamic and Near Eastern Silk Weaving*, op.cit. (n. 61), 52-69, especially 64-66, with further bibliography on 49 in note 65.

⁶⁹ Useful in this respect is, M. B. Cunningham – P. Allen (eds),

Preacher and Audience, Leiden 1998. Here the relationship between genre/subject matter/context/audience, and exegesis/evocation of emotional response, are explored within the field of homiletic literature. For an understanding of how emotion was processed in Byzantium consult, V. Manolopoulou, “Processing emotion; Litanies in Byzantine Constantinople”, L. James (ed.), *Experiencing Byzantium*, Farnham 2013, 153-171.

'BEING' and the 'REALITY of BEING' in CONSTANTINOPLE

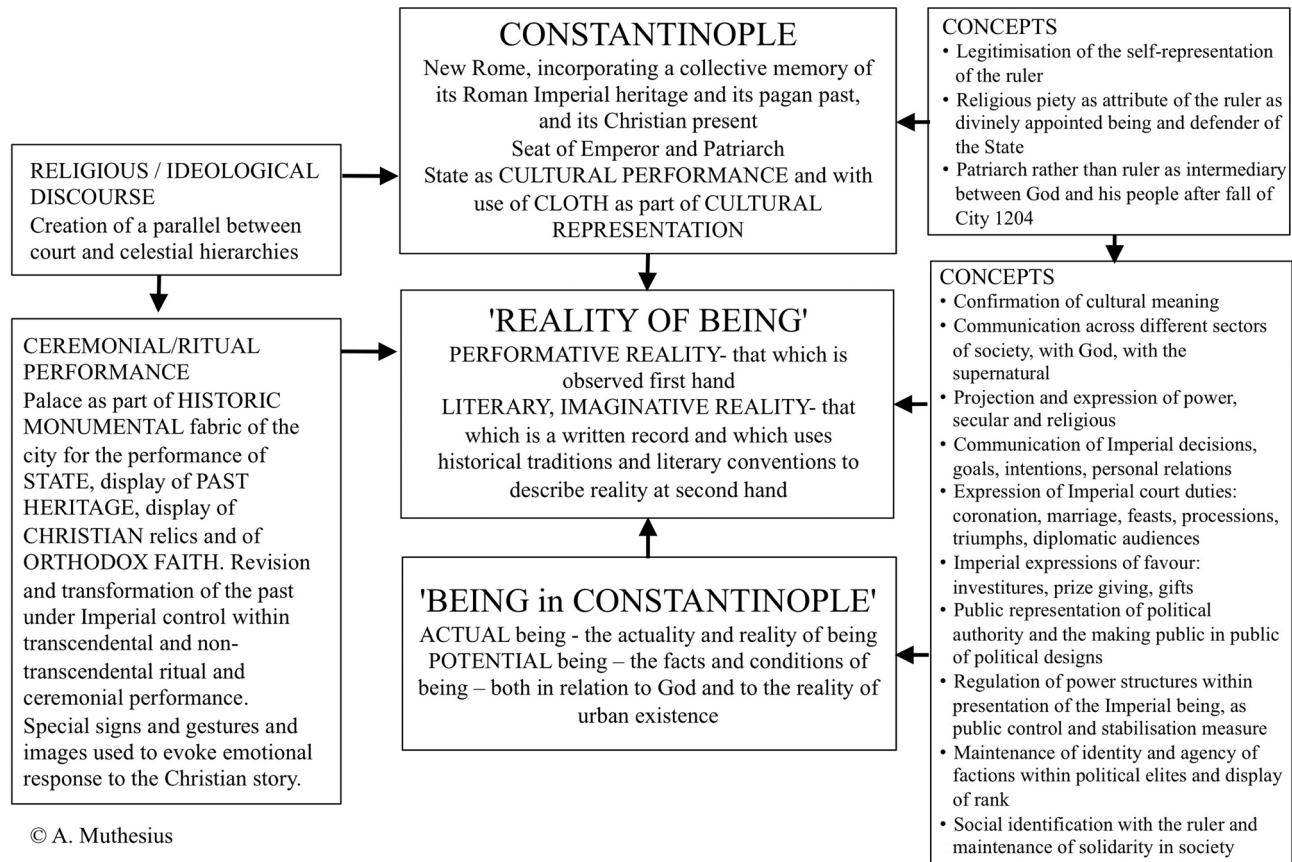


Fig. 10. "Being" and the "Reality of Being" in Constantinople, chart.

could either take the form of 'performed reality' experienced first hand, or it could assume the form of a literary presentation, 'incorporating use of imagination, and presenting an interpretative reality', and shaped by historical tradition and literary conventions⁷⁰. It is true to say that the operation of many concepts underlined the 'mentality' involved in the operation of the

system of precious cloth display described. These concepts encompassed topics which ranged from: use of precious cloth as legitimisation and self-representation of the Emperor and as expression of duty or favour; to their use to project and regulate power systems; or as part of representation of political authority in urban public space; or as a form of public control to encourage stability; or for confirmation of cultural meaning, maintenance of solidarity in society, and as medium for communication with God/the supernatural, or more generally for embodiment of messages across society. 'Being' and the 'Reality of Being' in Constantinople in relation to these concepts are shown on a chart (Fig. 10).

'Performance' of and 'use' of precious cloth could be non-transcendental or transcendental in nature, as

⁷⁰ 'Being' as a concept is considered in, A. Muthesius, "Silk, Culture and Being", op.cit. (n. 1), 348 and notes 6-11 with further bibliography. Rituals within diplomacy intended to expose emotion, to make visible decisions and goals, to reveal hostile or friendly intentions, to expose personal relations or to symbolise rank are fully explored in, A. Beihammer, "Die Kraft der Zeichen: symbolische Diplomatie des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts", *JÖB* 54 (2004), 159-189.

IMPERIAL 'PERFORMANCE OF PRECIOUS CLOTHS'

Non Transcendental performance

1. Use of **Imperial Topography** – **Pragmatic and symbolic use of civic space**- to link court and the public, with vested public processions to render the Emperor responsive and accommodating, and with use of Imperial public address (Silent at Easter)
2. Use of **special silken rites**, Adventus, Triumphs, Raising on the shield, Emperor as Christian ruler and defender of the people
3. Use of **ceremonial Robes** – crown, loros, shoes and Imperial ceremonial vestments as agent of legitimisation through the appeal to tradition
4. Use of **Rhetorical Conventions** – expression of Imperial virtue and of Imperial ideology with textile imagery woven in to texts
5. Use of **self representation of the Emperor** to promote stability of the State – through approval naturally by God, but in this context also by the army, the Senate and the citizens of Constantinople – acclamations and ceremonies dressed in precious cloth symbolism
6. **Distribution of Imperial offices and honours** – cloth as sign of office and mark of Imperial allegiance
7. Use of devices for the **propagation of the ascendancy of the Emperor** to re-enforce hierarchy and promote community – Formulas, epithets, titles and Imperial imagery on cloth
8. Use of **non-performed symbolic acts** – services before battle, hymns for the fallen, death rites for repatriated bodies, rituals in tents on campaign
9. Use of ceremonies and rituals for **diffusion of Ideology abroad** – precious cloths for diplomatic and other audiences, receptions, embassies
10. Use of cloths for **celebration of non-Christian feasts**, or Christianised occupational festivals – Feast of the Notaries, Broumalia, and Feast of 'Agathe'

Transcendental performance

1. Use of **liturgical re-enactment** – for example, Christmas and Easter at Hagia Sophia to celebrate and elevate the Emperor as 'image of God'. Emperor as defender of Orthodox Faith to include involvement of officials outside those active at the court or guests at court receptions. Use of precious cloth for vestments and for liturgical furnishings
2. Use of further public outreach through **worship at Churches beyond the Palace** – Maundy Thursday, distribution of alms, visits to old age homes. The Emperor taking holy bath at the Church of the Blachernae to acclamations of the divinely approved ruler by the City Factions, (Blues and the Greens). Symbolic use and display of silk and linen cloths
3. Use of **devotional acts to promote God's favour** – foundation and patronage of religious foundations to include gifts of many precious cloths
4. Use of the **promotion of Christian cults** and of cloth relics– for example Cult of the Virgin – to stress Imperial piety and the link between God and the Imperial House. Cloth relics as defenders of the Faith and religious cult as spiritual legitimisation
5. Use of the **imagery of Emperor as priest**, - although subject to Patriarch, Emperor initially seen as intercessor for his people, but after 1204 A.D. seen more as an adjunct to the Church as defender of the Empire and of Orthodox Faith

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Fig. 11. Imperial “Performance of Precious Cloths”, chart.

shown on a chart (Fig. 11)⁷¹. The *Book of Ceremonies* and the *Book of the Eparch* present the realities of uses of precious cloth across the City. For example, on a private citizen of the Capital level, the regulations governing the silk guilds of Constantinople reveal an advanced approach to guild formation and operation. The guild member was under the control of the Prefect as head of weights, measures, standards of production and of oper-

ation of distinct specialisations within the manufacturing process, of prices, and of guild and civic obligations of the textile guild members⁷². ‘Actual being’ as a member of the guilds represented performing ones practical textile duties alongside duties owed to Emperor and to the City, and to God, and to ones fellow guild members. It was a ‘being’ within ‘precious cloth production and distribution’, as shown on a chart (Fig. 12).

Equally swamped in non-transcendental performance of precious cloth were the Emperor and his court, as shown on the chart of Fig. 11⁷³. This performance

⁷¹ For example, see P. Magdalino, “Court and Capital in Byzantium”, op.cit. (n. 59), 131-144. Magdalino, 143, argues that by the fourteenth century, the Patriarch and not the Emperor stood as figurehead of the Capital. This was not so in the 12 century, see G. Dagron, “Le caractère sacerdotal de la royauté d’après les commentaries canoniques du XIIe siècle”, N. Oikonomides (ed.), *To Βυζάντιο κατά τον 12ο αιώνα*, Athens 1991, 165-178.

⁷² On the office of Eparch of Constantinople, see *ODB*, 1, 705 with further bibliography (A. Kazhdan).

⁷³ M. G. Parani, “Cultural Identity and Dress: the case of late Byzantine costume”, *JÖB* 57 (2007), 95-134. The use of ceremonial

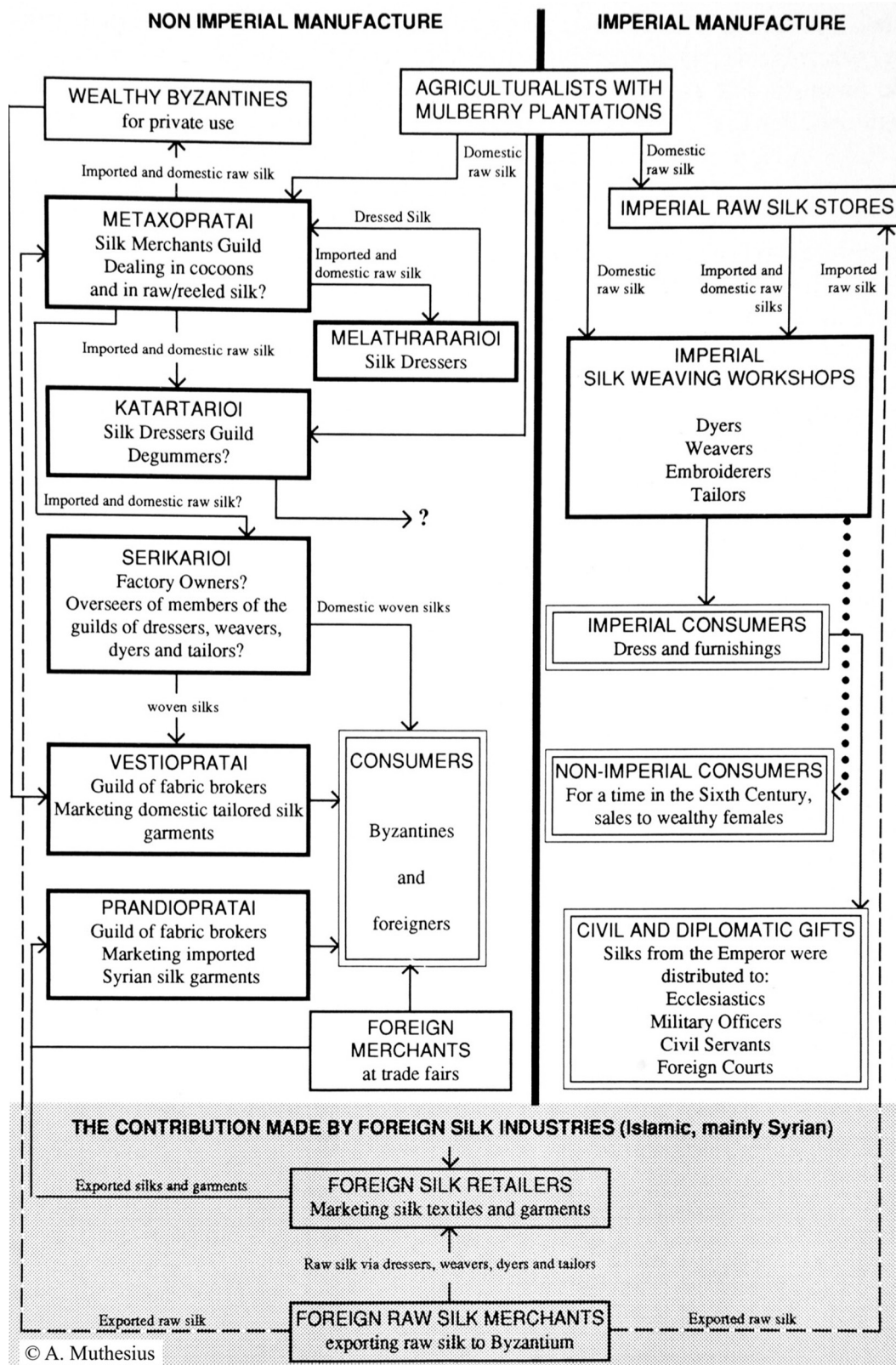


Fig. 12. Organisation of the Byzantine Silk Industry, chart.

was based on the public and symbolic use of Imperial topography and civic space, on the use of ceremonial robes, and the use of oral presentation of rhetorical convention with symbolic gestures and expressions. This created the impression of an Emperor and court as responsive and accommodating rather than as remote and aloof. The traditional ceremonial robes acted as a mark of authenticity of Imperial status and authority and as a legitimising agent. Rhetoric enabled the expression of Imperial ideology and virtue and was used to draw parallels between earthly and heavenly hierarchies as a form of social control mechanism.

The legitimisation of the self-representation of the Emperor was important to promote the stability of the State. The Emperor dressed in precious robes drew the approval of God, the army, the Senate, and the citizens of Constantinople. Through the distribution of honours the Emperor drew the nobility close to him and this process involved the distribution of precious garments of office, later to be worn on ceremonial occasions in honour of the ruler. The propagation of the ascendancy of the Emperor reinforced hierarchy and strengthened community. The precious cloths were medium for this. Formulas, titles and epithets of the Emperor were both chanted, and woven on cloth (see Fig. 7)⁷⁴. Imperial imagery including eagle, griffin and lion symbols were woven on cloth and celebrated in literary form to display the power of the Emperor⁷⁵. These were used on diplomatic silks and on Imperial garments and complimented the use of *loros* and crown⁷⁶. Special rites were performed with Emperor

ceremonially dressed, to include rites of Adventus, Triumphal Entry, Raising on the shield, the performance of the Silention (public address of the Emperor at Lent) and so forth⁷⁷. The Imperial ideology couched in silken fabric was also exported abroad, through audiences, receptions, embassies, via visits of envoys to Haghia Sophia, and through the witness of pilgrims, travellers and visiting merchants⁷⁸. Less public were non-transcendental performed acts involving use of precious textiles, such as services before battle, hymns for the fallen, death rites for repatriated bodies, rituals of campaign performed in tents, and regime change on campaign⁷⁹.

Transcendental performance served to evoke the blessings of God. Just as non-transcendental performance was used to elevate the Emperor, so transcendental performance served to celebrate the Emperor as image of God. The Christmas and Easter celebrations at Haghia Sophia, for instance, emphasised the Emperor's divine sanction and these occasions drew in officials outside court and Imperial reception audiences⁸⁰.

l'origine et l'évolution du *loros* imperial”, *Arta si Archaeologia* 11-12 (1935-1936), 11-12, 37-45. See also, E. Piltz, “Middle Byzantine court costume”, Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture*, op.cit. (n. 57), 39-51.

⁷⁷ For example, refer to, M. Mullett, “Tented ceremony: ephemera performances under the Komnenoi”, Duindam et al. (eds), *Royal Courts*, op.cit. (n. 71), 489-513, chapter 18. In the same publication see also, C. Angelidi, “Designing rites in the Palace”, 465-486, chapter 17.

⁷⁸ For court display and diplomatic relations at the Byzantine court refer to, O. Kresten, *Staatsempfänge im Kaiserpalast von Konstantinopel um die Mitte des 10. Jahrhunderts. Beobachtungen zu kapitel 11's des sogenannten Zeremonienbuches*, Vienna 2000. J. M. Featherstone, “δὲ ἐνδοξίμ: Display in Court Ceremonial (*De Cerimoniis* 11, 15)”, A. Cutler – A. Papaconstantinou (eds), *The Material and the Ideal: essays in medieval art and archaeology in honour of J.-M. Spieser*, Leiden 2008, 75-110. Note also, A. Beihammer – S. Constantinou – M. Parani (eds), *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of power in Byzantium and the Eastern Mediterranean* [Medieval Mediterranean peoples, economies and cultures (400-1500), 98], Leiden 2013.

⁷⁹ Mullett, *Tented Ceremony*, op.cit. (n. 77), 508-510.

⁸⁰ See for example, *De Cerimoniis*, op.cit. (n. 64), Book 2, chapter 40, p. 637-641, where the symbolism of the use of Imperial *loroi* on Easter Sunday by the Emperor, magistroi, proconsuls and patriarians, is described. Book 1, chapter 23 (op.cit., 128-136), describes the special ceremonial costumes including purple silks, which were worn by the Emperor and his court at Christmas.

dress for legitimisation and for purposes of continuity of the Roman Imperial tradition is highlighted here. The use of ceremonial dress also forged inter-dependence between ruler and ruling class.
⁷⁴ For the Imperial Lion and Elephant silks and their use of Imperial epithets see references in note 45 above. A. Berger, “Imperial and ecclesiastical processions in Constantinople”, N. Necipoglu (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, topography and everyday life*, Leiden 2001, 73-87, discusses processions and the use of public space.

⁷⁵ For Imperial use of symbolic imagery including eagle, griffin, and lion, see A. Muthesius, “The Byzantine Eagle”, Muthesius, *Silk in Byzantium*, op.cit. (n. 39), 227-236, with extensive further bibliography.

⁷⁶ T. Dawson, *The forms and evolution of the dress and regalia of the Byzantine court c. 900 - c. 1400 A.D.* (doctoral dissertation), University of New England, Melbourne 2002. E. Condurachi, “Sur

Within this sphere of Imperial activity in the Capital fell public religious Festivals and Feasts, acclamations for the Emperor alluding to his special relationship with God, and the Feast of the Foundation of Constantinople (11 May, 330 A.D.)⁸¹.

Public outreach was further strengthened through performance of worship bathed in precious textiles outside the confines of the Palace. For example, there was distribution of alms on Maundy Thursday, visits to old age homes, and the taking of the Imperial bath associated with acclamations from the Blues and Greens, factions of the City, at the Blachernae⁸². On the other hand there must have been also, moments involving precious textiles patronage, whether to individuals or to monastic and other religious foundations, which acted as surety that clerics and monks would remember the Emperor in their institutional every day prayers to God⁸³.

In a category of their own and eventually banished by the Church was the pagan based Feast of the Notaries and the celebration of Brumalia⁸⁴. These involved

the public and dressing for the part, and undesirable behaviour, which led to condemnation from the Church. A more respected public celebration was the Feast of Agathe, which involved textile workers staging re-enactments of weaving at different public stations in the city as a celebration of their art. This tied in with the celebration of weaving as a literary metaphor for the incarnation, where the Virgin acted as the loom for the creation of the Saviour of mankind and it echoed the religious commentaries, which spoke of weaving as a divine art.

Conclusion

In the space of a short paper it is not possible to cite all the many uses of precious cloth in Constantinople as these uses affected 'being' experienced across the City. However, what is clear is that the theo-centric government of the Capital and its rich Roman Heritage and use of urban civic space, played in to the hands of those determined to express State as performed cultural practice. The precious textiles with their embedded messages were the perfect medium for presentation of State power and Religious authority. Not only did the use of precious textiles enable the State to 'go public' but it also emphasised the Polis as a reflection of Imperial and by association of Divine good order. Whilst God assured that all ran smoothly in heaven, so the Emperor ensured that in appearance if not always as matter of fact, all was well on Earth. The Heavenly hierarchy was mirrored on Earth, where all 'being' whether Constantinopolitan or not came from and was dependent upon God as supreme, intangible, ruler of the world.

In answer to the question posed at the beginning of this paper on the definition of 'being' in Constantinople and the part played by precious textiles in this sense of 'being', two points stand out.

- 'Being' as part of human existence in Constantinople denoted living life in relation to God. First hand participation in silk laden eucharist centred ritual re-enactment, as expression of communion with God within Orthodox faith, served as accepted publicly performed cultural practice.

- 'Being' as part of human sensory experience denoted direct and or second hand participation in a silk laden ceremonial expression of State, which again served

⁸¹ In *De Cerimoniis*, op.cit. (n. 64), Book 2, chapter 15, p. 566-598, describes an elaborate reception for ambassadors from Tarsos with display of many silks.

⁸² For the Blues and Greens, see A. Cameron, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*, Oxford 1976, London 21999.

⁸³ As witness to the widespread Imperial patronage and donation of precious objects including silks to Imperial monasteries, there exists the positive evidence of the extant silks themselves, and the negative evidence of documented silk Imperial gifts once at the monastery but since lost. Consider for example, the surviving Imperial gold embroideries at the monastery of St. John, Patmos, but also the many lost silks detailed in the monastic inventory of 1200 A.D. See A. D. Kominis (ed.), *Patmos, Treasures of the Monastery*, Athens 1988, and especially, M. Theocharis, "Church Gold Embroideries", 185-217. For the inventory with descriptions of silks once at the monastery, see C. Diehl, "Le trésor et la bibliothèque de Patmos au commencement du XIIIe siècle", *BZ* 1 (1892), 488-525. C. Astruc, "L'inventaire dressé en septembre 1200", *TM* 8 (1981), 15-30. Imperial monastic silk patronage is discussed further in, A. Muthesius, "Precious cloths and Byzantine monasticism", Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, op.cit. (n. 1), 143-155, with extensive further bibliography.

⁸⁴ For the Brumalia, see *ODB*, 1, 327-328, with bibliography (F. R. Trombley). On the Festival of 'Agathe', see A. Laiou, "The Festival of 'Agathe': comments on the life of Constantinopolitan Women", A. E. Laiou, *Gender, Society and Economic Life in Byzantium*, London 1992, 111-122, chapter 3.

as an acknowledged aspect of publicly performed cultural practice.

This paper proposes that these symbolic ritual and ceremonial applications of precious cloth (4th-15th centuries), had become so embedded, indispensable, and integral to human spiritual and sensory experience across

all social levels in Constantinople, as indeed, to render their use ‘synonymous’ with Byzantine ‘Being’.

Provenance of the figures

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Anna Muthesius

Η «ΥΠΑΡΞΗ» ΣΤΗΝ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΗ (4ος-15ος ΑΙΩΝΑΣ) ΜΕ ΒΑΣΗ ΤΙΣ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΕΣ ΠΟΛΥΤΙΜΩΝ ΥΦΑΣΜΑΤΩΝ

Το άρθρο εξετάζει την έννοια της «ύπαρξης στην Κωνσταντινούπολη» μεταξύ 4ου και 15ου αιώνα, όπως αντανakλάται στην παραγωγή, στη χρήση και στην εφαρμογή πολύτιμων υφασμάτων στην ανάπτυξη της πολιτικής ιδεολογίας και των θρησκευτικών και κοινωνικών πεποιθήσεων στο Βυζάντιο. Ο ορισμός της «ύπαρξης» ως πολλά διαφορετικά πράγματα ανιχνεύεται στο γενικό πεδίο της «ύπαρξης» ως σχέσης του ανθρώπου (σώμα και ψυχή) με τη φύση και με τον Θεό. Το άρθρο θέτει το ερώτημα του πώς μπορεί να ορίζεται η «ύπαρξη στην Κωνσταντινούπολη» και ποιον ρόλο έπαιξαν τα πολύτιμα υφάσματα στη δημιουργία της έννοιας της «ύπαρξης».

Εξετάζεται η χρήση του πολύτιμου υφάσματος ως κεντρικού μέρους της αστικής πολιτισμικής απεικόνισης. Ερευνώνται τρεις αλληλοσυνδεόμενες έννοιες της «ύπαρξης»:

- Η «ύπαρξη» ως ανθρώπινη παρουσία
- Η «ύπαρξη» ως φυσική και ιστορική πραγματικότητα της ζωής στην Κωνσταντινούπολη
- Η «ύπαρξη στην Κωνσταντινούπολη» ως εμπειρία στη συλλογική μνήμη της πρωτεύουσας ως «Νέας Ρώμης», ένα χαράμι του παγανιστικού παρελθόντος και του θεοκρατικού χριστιανικού παρόντος.

Αναλύονται οι έννοιες και οι νοοτροπίες που σχημάτισαν την τελετουργική και λειτουργική χρήση των πολύτιμων υφασμάτων ως αντανάκλαση της τάξεως του Κράτους και της Εκκλησίας εντός του πλαισίου της ευνομούμενης πόλης της Κωνσταντινούπολης. Ερευνάται, επίσης, η εναλλαγή στις τύχες της Πόλης σε σχέση με τη διακύμανση της εξουσίας μεταξύ Εκκλησίας και Κράτους, καθώς και αλλαγές στο είδος των μηνυμάτων που διαχέονται μέσω των πολύτιμων υφασμάτων. Τα υφάσματα εξετάζονται ως καταλύτης τόσο για τη δημόσια τελετουργική παρουσίαση της κρατικής εξουσίας, όσο και για τη συμβολική τελετουργική αναπαράσταση της πνευματικής εκκλησιαστικής εξουσίας. Οι πολίτες της Κωνσταντινούπολης μπορούσαν να συμμετέχουν στις τελετουργικές και λειτουργικές πράξεις είτε πρωτογενώς, ως μέρος της «αναπαριστώμενης πραγματικότητας της ύπαρξης», είτε δευτερογενώς, μέσω της «κυριολεκτικής παρουσίασης» της αρχικής «αναπαριστώμενης πραγματικότητας της ύπαρξης». Η δευτερογενής εμπειρία θα αμβλυνόταν από τις συμβάσεις της κυριολεκτικής παρουσίασης αλλά και από τους κανόνες της ιστορικής παράδοσης.

Οι συσχετισμοί με τα πολύτιμα υφάσματα μπορούσαν να είναι είτε μη υπερβατικοί είτε υπερβατικοί.

Αυτοί οι συσχετισμοί θα μπορούσαν να έχουν καθαρά πρακτική φύση, όπως για παράδειγμα στην επεξεργασία του μεταξιοῦ στις συντεχνίες του μεταξιοῦ της πρωτεύουσας κατά την παραγωγή των πολύτιμων υφασμάτων, ή θα μπορούσαν να βασίζονται σε ισχυρές συμβολικές χρήσεις. Έτσι, για παράδειγμα, η έκθεση σε δημόσια θέαση του αυτοκρατορικού τελετουργικού ενδύματος θα έφερνε στον νου την εξουσία του αυτοκράτορα υπό την έγκριση του Θεού, του στρατού, των αξιωματούχων και των πολιτών της Κωνσταντινούπολης. Αυτού του είδους η «υπερβατική παρουσίαση» των πολύτιμων υφασμάτων χρησιμοποιούνταν αναμφίβολα για να φέρει στον νου τις ευλογίες του Θεού και για να ενθαρρύνει τις αναλογίες ανάμεσα στην ουράνια και την επίγεια αυλή.

Το άρθρο καταλήγει στο ότι η θεοκεντρική κυβέρνηση της Κωνσταντινούπολης με την πλούσια ρωμαϊκή

της κληρονομιά και τη χρήση του αστικού πολιτικού χώρου γινόταν υποχέριο όσων ήταν αποφασισμένοι να εκφράσουν το κράτος ως παράσταση πολιτισμικής πρακτικής. Η «ύπαρξη» ως μέρος της ανθρώπινης αισθητηριακής ύπαρξης στην Κωνσταντινούπολη σήμαινε είτε την πρωτογενή είτε τη δευτερογενή εμπειρία της βαρυφορτωμένης με μετάξι τελετουργικής έκφρασης του κράτους, μια αναγνωρισμένη πολιτισμική πρακτική. Τα πολύτιμα υφάσματα του 15ου αιώνα στην Κωνσταντινούπολη ήταν συνώνυμα με το να ξει κανείς στο Βυζάντιο.

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