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Άγιοι και οι οικογένειές τους στη βυζαντινή τέχνη

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# ΔΕΛΤΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ

## Saints and their Families in Byzantine Art

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Lois Drewer

## SAINTS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN BYZANTINE ART\*

In recent studies Dorothy Abrahamse and Evelyne Patlagean, among others, have explored Greek hagiographical texts for insight into Byzantine attitudes toward children and family life. In contrast, art historians have so far contributed relatively little to the debate<sup>1</sup>. The reasons for this are not hard to discover. Despite the overwhelming impact of the cult of saints in Byzantine art, narrative scenes depicting the lives of the saints are relatively rare. Furthermore, many of the existing hagiographical scenes record the heroic suffering of the martyrs in a seemingly unrelieved sequence of tortures and executions<sup>2</sup>. Other Byzantine representations of saints celebrate the values of the ascetic life including withdrawal from society and from ordinary family life. Yet on some occasions, emphasis is given in Byzantine art to the strength of family ties and to the enduring emotional attachment of parents and children. Recent studies have drawn attention to the emphasis on familial affection in various representations of the Holy Family, but analogous subjects among the representations of saints have been largely unremarked<sup>3</sup>. There are several occasions when children and parents are depicted in connection with Byzantine saints. First, scenes of the infancy and childhood of the saints themselves are included in biographical cycles. Icons and frescoes depicting the life of St. Nicholas, for example, begin with the birth and bathing of the infant saint, clearly modelled after representations of the Nativity of Christ. Nicholas' precocity is demonstrated by his standing unsupported in the basin<sup>4</sup>. The parents of saints are also sometimes shown providing for their education or vocation. Either Nicholas' mother or, more rarely, his father proudly sees him off to school<sup>5</sup>. In the biographical cycle of St. Euthymius in the north aisle of the chapel dedicated to him (1303) at St. Demetrius, Thessaloniki, his mother, Dionysia, presents the young saint to her brother Eudoxios for dedication to the Church<sup>6</sup>. Secondly, miracle-working saints often show special concern for children, in art as well as in hagiographical texts. Both St. George and St. Nicholas are shown acting in response to the prayers of anxious parents of boys captured by Saracens and forced to serve at their table. In a mid-thirteenth-century icon in the British Museum,

St. George rides over the sea to Mytilene on a white horse with a young boy, still holding the glass of wine he was serving when he was rescued, seated behind him. On a Mt. Sinai icon, St. Nicholas returns a similarly

\* This article contains material presented, in different form, in papers read at Parents and Children in the Middle Ages: An Interdisciplinary Conference, held at the CUNY Graduate Center, New York City, on March 2, 1990, and at the Seventeenth Byzantine Studies Conference, Hellenic College, Brookline, Mass., Nov. 7-10, 1991.

1. E. Patlagean, L'enfant et son avenir dans la famille byzantine (IV<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles), in *Structure sociale, famille, chrétienté à Byzance, IV<sup>e</sup>-XI<sup>e</sup> siècles*, London 1981, X, pp. 89-91. Eadem, L'histoire de la femme déguisée en moine et l'évolution de la sainteté féminine à Byzance, *loc.cit.*, XI, pp. 617-23. D. Abrahamse, Images of Childhood in Early Byzantine Hagiography, *Journal of Psychohistory* VI (1978-1979), pp. 497-517. For a review of some approaches taken by art historians to the question of the role of women in Byzantine art, see A. Carr, *Women and Monasticism in Byzantium: Introduction from an Art Historian*, *ByzF IX* (1985), pp. 1-15. See also the papers from the Dumbarton Oaks Symposium on the Byzantine Family and Household, May 5-7, 1989, published in *DOP 44* (1990), pp. 95-226.

2. On the scarcity of narrative scenes, see T. Gouma-Peterson, *Narrative Cycles of Saints' Lives in Byzantine Churches from the Tenth to the Mid-Fourteenth Century*, *Byzantine Saints and Monasteries*, ed. N. M. Vapori, Brookline 1985, pp. 31-44. Scenes of martyrdom predominate in menologion cycles; see, for example, *Il menologio di Basilio II* (Cod. Vaticano greco 1613), Turin 1907, and P. Mijović, *Menolog: istorijsko umetnička istraživanja*, Belgrade 1973 (hereafter *Menolog*).

3. See, among others, D. Mouriki, 'Η Παναγία καὶ οἱ Θεοπάτορες: Ἀφηγηματικὴ σκηνὴ ἢ εἰκονιστικὴ παράσταση, *ΔΧΑΕ, Δ', Ε'* (1969), pp. 31-56; J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie comparée du cycle de l'enfance de la Vierge à Byzance et en Occident, de la fin du IX<sup>e</sup> au début du XIII<sup>e</sup> s.*, *CahCivMéd* 32 (1989), pp. 291-303; I. Kalavrezou, *Images of the Mother: When the Virgin Mary Became Meter Theou*, *DOP 44* (1990), pp. 165-72. Mouriki, 'Η Παναγία καὶ οἱ Θεοπάτορες, pp. 39, 54, pl. 25a, compares depictions of families of saints with the "portraits" of the Holy Family; T. Velmans, *L'église de Zenobani et la thème de la Vision de saint Eustache en Géorgie*, *CahArch* 33 (1985), pp. 33, 35, describes the representations of Eustace's family in Cappadocian churches.

4. N. Ševčenko, *The Life of Saint Nicholas in Byzantine Art*, Turin 1983 (hereafter *Saint Nicholas*), pp. 66-69, pls. 3.1, 4.1, 10.1, 21.1, 28.1.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-75.

6. T. Gouma-Peterson, *The Parecclesion of St. Euthymius in Thessalonica: Art and Monastic Policy under Andronicus II*, *ArtB* 58 (1976), pp. 170, 175, fig. 10.

kidnapped child to his family's dinner table<sup>7</sup>. St. Demetrius, too, is depicted responding to parents' prayers for their children, as in the sequence of mosaics (probably sixth-century) once in the north inner aisle of St. Demetrius, Thessaloniki, devoted to the story of Maria and her family. The child is shown, with her mother, at four ages, from infant in arms to young adolescence, seeking the intercession of Demetrius, and making offerings of candles and doves to him<sup>8</sup>. One of the seventh-century votive mosaics in the same church shows Demetrius as patron saint of children<sup>9</sup>.

In addition, many family groups of saints are commemorated in the Byzantine calendar, and, consequently, depicted in menologion illustrations. Some of these family types, such as married couples or groups of brothers, are also included among the individual figures of saints represented in the lower zones of Byzantine churches<sup>10</sup>. Among the family groups, I would like to draw attention here to depictions of several mother-and-son pairs of saints, and then turn to representations of two nuclear families.

One type of mother-and-son grouping consists of child martyrs and their heroic mothers, for which an important model is the account of the Maccabees, the Jewish family consisting of seven sons and their mother Salomona, martyred with the scribe Eleazar under Antiochus IV in 117 BC. The Maccabees were adopted into the Christian calendar of saints at an early date. The indomitable courage of the mother, Salomona, is cited as an exemplar in the *Lives* of several women saints, including that of Melania the Younger<sup>11</sup>. The story of the Maccabees was widely disseminated and frequently illustrated in manuscripts of Gregory of Nazianzus' *Liturgical Homilies* and in menologion cycles<sup>12</sup>. However, they are rarely seen in monumental art, with the exception of the seventh-century fresco at Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome, where Salomona is shown exhorting her sons to stand fast in their beliefs, and the thirteenth-century frescoes at Sopoćani (Fig. 1), where Salomona and her seven sons appear with Eleazar in medallion portraits on the west arch of the naos<sup>13</sup>.

Other mother-and-son pairs of martyrs appear in Byzantine menologion cycles. A particularly determined child martyr is depicted in one of the episodes from the story of the martyrs of Nagran in Southern Arabia in the eleventh-century menologion manuscript at the monastery of Esphigmenou, Mount Athos. The ruler offered to spare the life of a five-year-old boy if he would agree to renounce his faith and be raised as an adopted son. The boy was so incensed that he not only refused, but bit the ruler on the knee. Rushing to the church where his mother and other Christians were be-

ing burned alive, he plunged into the flames<sup>14</sup>.

In the case of SS. Cyricus and Julitta, a precocious child is blessed with an equally heroic mother. Julitta was a widow, whose three-year-old son declared himself a Christian and withstood his tormentors during the persecution of Diocletian. The most extensive representation of scenes from the lives of Julitta and Cyricus occurs in the private chapel with eighth-century frescoes dedicated to them at Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome<sup>15</sup>. On the north and south walls, narrative scenes of the trial and suffering of the saints are laid out. In the shocking finale, the child Cyricus is dashed by the exe-

7. R. Cormack and S. Mihalarias, A Crusader Painting of St. George: 'Maniera greca' or 'lingua franca?', *BurlMag* 126 (1984), pp. 132-41. London, Royal Academy of Arts, From Byzantium to El Greco: Greek Frescoes and Icons, ed. M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, Athens 1987, pp. 150-51, cat. no. 9. Ševčenko, Saint Nicholas, pp. 143-48, pls. 3.15, 3.16.

8. A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, Paris 1946, II, pp. 88-95, figs. 143-44, pls. XLIX.1-2. R. Cormack, The Mosaic Decoration of S. Demetrius, Thessaloniki: A Re-examination in the Light of the Drawings of W. S. George, *BSA* 64 (1969), pp. 31-37, pls. 3-5, 7-9, 15a. Idem, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and its Icons* (hereafter *Writing in Gold*), London 1985, pp. 87-89, figs. 27-29.

9. G. and M. Soteriou, 'Η βασιλική τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης, Athens 1952, pp. 194-95, pl. 65β, colorpl. following pl. 65β. W.F. Volbach, *Early Christian Art*, New York 1962, pl. 216.

10. For an example of a married couple, see Athanasia and Andronicus (D. Mouriki, *The Wall Paintings of the Church of the Panagia at Moutoullas, Cyprus, Byzanz und der Westen: Studien zur Kunst des europäischen Mittelalters*, ed. I. Hutter, Vienna 1984, pp. 196-97); for the twin brothers Cosmas and Damian, see below.

11. *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, ed. D. Gorce, SC 90, Paris 1962, par. 33; English translation by E.A. Clark, *The Life of Melania the Younger*, New York and Toronto 1984, p. 49. Other parallels are cited by W.H. C. Friend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*, Oxford 1965, p. 30 n. 187. On the cult of the Maccabees, see M. Schatkin, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, *VChr* 28 (1974), pp. 97-113 (with earlier bibliography).

12. See, among others, G. Galavaris, *The Illustration of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus*, Princeton 1969, *passim*; N. Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion*, Chicago and London 1990, pp. 46, 69, 79, 141.

13. P. Romanelli and P. J. Nordhagen, *S. Maria Antiqua*, Rome 1964, p. 34, pl. II. R. Nikolić, *Sopoćanski medaljoni*, *Saopštenja* 9 (1970), pp. 73-75. B. Živković, *Sopoćani*, Belgrade 1984, diagram p. 23.

14. MS 14, fol. 136r; S. Pelekanides *et al.*, *The Treasures of Mount Athos*, II, Athens 1975, p. 336, fig. 334.

15. W. de Grüneisen, *Sainte Marie Antique*, Rome 1911, pp. 117-33, figs. 98-100, pls. XXXIV-XLII. E. Tea, *La Basilica di Santa Maria Antiqua*, Milan 1937, pp. 324-37. Grabar, *Martyrium*, II, pp. 100-01, pl. XLIV.3. Romanelli and Nordhagen, *op.cit.*, pp. 36, 38, pls. 32-33, 36-37. H. Belting, *Eine Privatkapelle im frühmittelalterlichen Rom*, *DOP* 41 (1987) (hereafter *Privatkapelle*), pp. 55-69.

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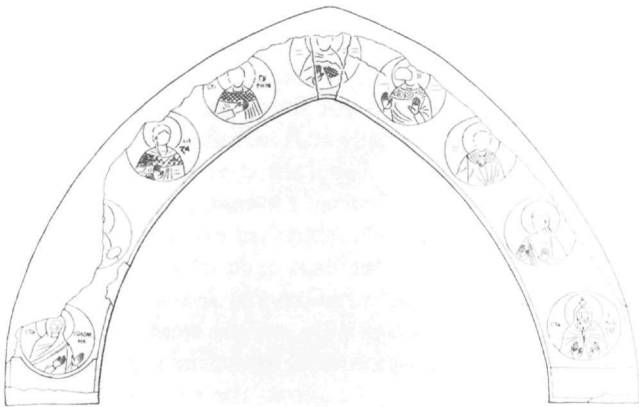


Fig. 1. Sopoćani. Maccabees (after Živković, Sopoćani, p. 23).

Fig. 2. Lagurka. Martyrdom of Cyricus and Lamentation of Julitta (after Beridze et al., Treasures of Georgia, p. 75).

Fig. 3. Lagurka. Martyrdom of Julitta (after Beridze et al., Treasures of Georgia, p. 74).



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cutioner against the steps of the magistrate's throne in a scene which suggests obvious parallels with the Massacre of the Innocents.

In addition to these narrative scenes, the chapel contains three votive frescoes representing the saints. The first, on the east wall in the zone beneath the Crucifixion panel, shows the Virgin and Child enthroned, flanked by the apostles Peter and Paul. At either end are portraits of Pope Zacharias (741-752) extending a jewelled Gospel book, and the donor, Theodotus, offering a model of the chapel. Serving as intermediaries in the presentation of these gifts are the patron saints of the chapel, Julitta and Cyricus. Julitta holds the cross and crown of Martyrdom, while Cyricus is shown in the orant pose of prayer.

On the west wall, left of the entrance, Theodotus, kneeling before the saints, makes an offering of two candles. Finally, on the south wall, another fragmentary fresco shows Theodotus again offering candles, now to the Virgin and Child, and this time accompanied by his wife and small son and daughter. In the most recent discussion of this chapel, Hans Belting<sup>16</sup> suggests that this family votive image may have been intended especially to seek the Virgin's protection for these children.

Both of the main hagiographical themes of the S. Maria Antiqua chapel frescoes — the victory over death through the tragic martyrdom of mother and son, and their intercessory role — are attested in Middle Byzantine church decoration. In the tiny Georgian church of SS. Cyricus and Julitta at Lagurka (dated 1112), we find the two martyrdoms in arched frames on the south wall. In the first scene (Fig. 2), the implacable magistrate who has ordered the execution is enthroned at the right. On the left, the mother laments the death of her child, while an angel brings the wreath of victory. The second fresco (Fig. 3) depicts the subsequent beheading of Julitta. The intercessory role of the two saints is also made explicit in this chapel. A Deesis image appears in the apse, while on the masonry iconostasis below we see, as further intermediaries, Cyricus and Julitta flanked by Stephen Protomartyr and Christina<sup>17</sup>.

An eleventh-century church at Tagar in Cappadocia offers another interesting pairing of intermediaries with Cyricus and Julitta in connection with the Deesis theme. This triconch church originally had images of Christ in all three of its apses. On the north, there is an unusual form of the Deesis image — a large medallion of Christ blessing, flanked by John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary as intercessors offering prayers, and two medallions with Cyricus, associated with John the Baptist, and Julitta, next to the Virgin (Figs. 4-5). The main apse of the church has a traditional Deesis with Christ en-

throned, flanked by angels. In the position parallel to the medallions of Julitta and Cyricus are medallions of the Virgin's parents, Joachim and Anna, also thus shown as intermediators for the worshipper<sup>18</sup>.

The explicit parallel between Joachim and Anna on the one hand, and Cyricus and Julitta on the other, is also found among the mid-fourteenth-century frescoes in the church of the Panagia Phorbiotissa of Asinou. Beneath the Annunciation on the east arch of the center bay, Anna, holding a cross, turns toward Joachim, holding a scroll, while directly opposite, on the west arch, Julitta and Cyricus, holding crosses, stand in similar poses, turning toward each other across the open space of the center bay<sup>19</sup>. This parallelism emphasizes the genealogical aspect of both compositions.

In addition to these child martyrs, the continuing relationship of adult saints with their mothers also finds occasional expression in Byzantine art. The most prominent example is Constantine the Great and his mother Empress Helena, who are frequently represented on either side of the True Cross in Middle and Late Byzantine churches<sup>20</sup>. More surprising are ascetic saints who, despite their explicit withdrawal from society and from ordinary family life<sup>21</sup>, often retain strong emotional ties with their mothers. The mothers in turn are sometimes depicted as taking a leading role in the devotion to their sons' cults<sup>22</sup>.

The ambivalence of the situation is most clearly evident in the life of the pillar saint Simeon Stylites the Elder

16. Belting, *Privatkapelle*, p. 57.

17. The chapel at Lagurka was painted by the court painter Theodore. Standing figures of the two patron saints also appear in the upper zone of the west wall. N. A. Aladašvili *et al.*, *Živopisnaia škola Svaneti*, Tbilisi 1983, pp. 56-77, figs. 15-18, pls. 32-33, 42-47, 49; T. Velmans, *L'image de la Déisis dans les églises de Géorgie et dans celles d'autres régions du monde byzantin*, I: *La Déisis dans l'abside*, *CahArch* 29 (1980-1981) (hereafter *Déisis*), pp. 61-62; V. Beridze *et al.*, *The Treasures of Georgia*, London 1984, pp. 86, 89, figs. pp. 74-75. A similar arrangement exists in the chapel of the Holy Archangels at Iprari (1096) by the same painter, with a Deesis in the apse, and Demetrius and Stephen Protomartyr accompanying Cyricus and Julitta on the iconostasis; Aladašvili *et al.*, *op.cit.*, pp. 33-35, fig. 11, pls. 14, 28-29; Velmans, *Déisis*, I, pp. 60-61, fig. 6.

18. G. de Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin: les églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, Paris 1925-1942 (hereafter *Cappadoce*), II, pp. 187-205, pls. 166.1, 167-68. M. Restle, *Byzantine Wall*



Fig. 4. Tagar. John the Baptist and Cyricus (Bildarchiv Foto Marburg).



Fig. 5. Tagar. Julitta and Virgin Mary (Bildarchiv Foto Marburg).

Painting in Asia Minor, New York 1967 (hereafter *Byzantine Wall Painting*), plan XXXV, pls. 355-62, 364.

19. A. and J. Stylianos, Παναγία Φορβωτισσα Ἀσίνου, Nicosia 1973, pp. 52-54. Id., *The Painted Churches of Cyprus: Treasures of Byzantine Art*, London 1985, pp. 133-34, fig. 65. Cormack, *Writing in Gold*, fig. 61.

In the frescoes on the south wall of the church of Joachim and Anna at Studenica monastery (1314), saints Simeon and Sava, the traditional intercessors of the Servian rulers, are juxtaposed with Joachim and Anna. Here their placement serves to emphasize the connection of King Milutin through his own saintly ancestry with the divine lineage of Christ. See Slobodan Čurčić, *The Nemanjić Family Tree in the Light of the Ancestral Cult of Joachim and Anna at Studenica*, ZRVI 14-15 (1973), pp. 191-95, fig. 1.

20. LChri 6 (1974), cols. 485-490; RbK 2 (1971), cols. 1085-1087.

21. R. Browning, *The "Low Level" Saint's Life in the Early Byzantine World*, *The Byzantine Saint*, University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, ed. S. Hackel, London 1981 (hereafter "*Low Level*" *Saint's Life*), pp. 118-21. P. Brown, *The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity*, in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley 1982, pp. 131-39. Idem, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in*

*Early Christianity*, New York 1988, pp. 213-58. A.-M. Talbot, *The Byzantine Family and the Monastery*, DOP 44 (1990), pp. 119-20.

22. Browning, "*Low Level*" *Saint's Life*, pp. 120-21. In addition to the examples cited by Browning, see also the *Vita* of Simeon the Fool who received news of his mother, including her deathbed words, in visions while he was living as a hermit in the desert (Léontius de Néapolis, *Vie de Syméon le Fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre*, ed. A. Festugière, Paris 1974, pp. 72-74, 125-26). According to the Syriac *Vita* of Archelides, his mother fervently wished to be reunited with her son after he had entered a monastery. But Archelides had made a vow not to "see the face of women", and he prayed for death rather than break his vow. When his mother found him dead, she prayed to join him in death. Mother and son were buried in one coffin (A. J. Wensinck, *Legends of Eastern Saints*, Leiden 1913, pp. 13-20). The Bohairic *Life* of Pachomius also deals with the conflict between the commandment to honor one's parents and a monk's renunciation of family ties. Pachomius does not forbid the monk Theodore from seeing his mother, but he applauds his decision not to do so. The mother is permitted to see her son from a distance, and departs weeping (Pachomian *Koinonia*, I, *The Life of Saint Pachomius and his Disciples*, trans. A. Veilleux, Cistercian Studies Series 45, Kalamazoo 1980, pp. 60-62).



Fig. 6. Simeon Stylites the Younger. Pilgrimage token (The Cleveland Museum of Art, Norman O. Stone and Ella A. Stone Memorial Fund, 72.52).



Fig. 7. Šio-Mgvime chancel screen relief. Simeon Stylites the Younger and Martha (after Beridze et al., *Treasures of Georgia*, p. 183).

(ca. 389-459)<sup>23</sup>, who ran away from home at an early age, and subjected himself to extremes of physical self-denial and mortification of the body, culminating in the more than 30 years he spent on a column at Qal'at Sim'an. His example, and his miracles, which include healing lepers and paralytics and curing barren women, attracted thousands of pilgrims to his monastery. Simeon was sensitive to the potential for impurity implied by the presence of women, who were not allowed into his immediate vicinity<sup>24</sup>. According to the Greek version of his vita, he easily detected a woman who disguised herself as a soldier in order to try to approach him<sup>25</sup>. This restriction even applied to Simeon's mother during her lifetime. When after 20 years, she finally learned of her son's whereabouts, she journeyed to the monastery. She begged to see him face to face once again, but he did not permit it. She wished at least to be blessed by his own hands, but when she began to climb the ladder placed against his column she fell precipitously to the ground. Simeon assured her that they would see one another in this world, but he suggested she rest a while and then he would see her. The mother sat down in the vestibule, and suddenly she died. Simeon had her body brought into the enclosure and placed before his column. Simeon, weeping, prayed to God to receive her soul in peace. While he prayed, his mother revived mo-

mentarily, a smile appearing on her face. The assembled crowd was struck dumb and glorified God. Simeon's mother was buried at the foot of her son's column, and the Greek *Life* tells us that he often remembered her in his prayers<sup>26</sup>.

Despite this limited contact between the adult Simeon and his mother, Middle Byzantine manuscripts sometimes show her as a devotee at the foot of his column, as in the late eleventh-century lectionary in the Library of the University of Chicago<sup>27</sup>. This mode of representation may have been influenced not so much by any of the written versions of Simeon the Elder's life as by a sort of migration from the story of his most famous imitator, St. Simeon Stylites the Younger (521-592)<sup>28</sup>. This Simeon, after a series of lesser ascetic trials, embarked upon life on a column at a site called the Wondrous Mountain southeast of Antioch. His healing miracles also attracted vast numbers of pilgrims and a monastic complex, modelled after that at Qal'at Sim'an,

23. For a recent study of Simeon Stylites the Elder, with the earlier bibliography, see S. Harvey, *The Sense of a Stylite: Perspectives on*



Simeon the Elder, *VChr* 42 (1988), pp. 376-94. The textual sources for Simeon the Elder's life are collected in H. Lietzmann, *Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites*, *Texte und Untersuchungen* 32, Leipzig 1908. There are three principal sources: Theodoret, *Religious History*, chapter 26, written during Simeon's lifetime (440 or 444), English translation by R. M. Price in *A History of the Monks of Syria* by Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Cistercian Studies Series* 88, Kalamazoo 1985, pp. 160-76; a Greek *Vita* written by a disciple named Anthony, French translation in A. J. Festugière, *Antioche païenne et chrétienne*, Paris 1959 (hereafter *Antioche*), pp. 493-506; and a Syriac *Vita* containing the traditions of the monastic community which grew up around his column at Telanissus, English translation in F. Lent, *The Life of St. Simeon Stylites*, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 25 (1915-1917) (hereafter *St. Simeon Stylites*), pp. 103-98. On the iconography of Simeon the Elder, see J.-P. Sodini, *Remarques sur l'iconographie de Syméon l'Alépin, le premier stylite*, *Mon Piot* 70 (1989), pp. 29-53 (with earlier bibliography).

24. During Simeon's lifetime, his column at Qal'at Sim'an was located in a courtyard surrounded by a high wall; this inner enclosure was preceded by a vestibule. Women were restricted from proceeding beyond the vestibule. The queen of the Ishmaelites, cured of infertility through Simeon's intervention, sent her baby to receive the saint's blessings "since women are not allowed access"; Theodoret, *Religious History*, 26.21; *History of the Monks of Syria*, p. 170. Cf. Festugière, *Antioche*, p. 352. Women's prayers and requests were conveyed to the saint through intermediaries, and in return he sent messages and blessed oil, water, and earth out to them. The Syriac *Vita* makes it clear that, even before he ascended the column, Simeon distanced himself physically from the women he cured; see, among other miracle stories, the accounts of the healing of a young paralytic

woman and of a female demoniac; Lent, *St. Simeon Stylites*, pp. 126, 139.

25. Greek *Vita* by Anthony, 23. Festugière, *Antioche*, p. 502. This episode is illustrated in the frontispiece to the *Vita* of Simeon in Mount Athos, *Esphigmenou MS* 14, fol. 2v; *Treasures of Mount Athos*, II, pp. 362-63, fig. 328.

26. This episode appears only in the Greek *Vita* by Anthony, 14; Festugière, *Antioche*, pp. 497-98, and in the *Vita* by Simeon Metaphrastes, PG XIV, 353-356. Theodoret does not mention Simeon's mother, and in the Syriac *Vita* we are told that both of Simeon's parents died while he was still a boy tending the flocks; Lent, *St. Simeon Stylites*, p. 112.

27. Inscribed ἡ μη(τηρ); Joseph Regenstein Library, MS 947, fol. 151v; Princeton University Art Museum, *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections*, ed. G. Vikan, Princeton 1973, pp. 110-11, cat. no. 24. In Mount Athos, *Stauronikita MS* 23, fol. 2r, Simeon on his column is flanked by his mother, with the same inscription, and a monk inscribed ὁ μαθ(ητής) (Ševčenko, *Metaphrastian Menologion*, p. 106, microfiche fig. 3C10). A similar composition, but without the inscriptions, is found in the lectionaries *Vat. gr.* 1156, fol. 242r (Mijović, *Menolog*, fig. 2) and Mount Athos, *Dionysiou* 587, fol. 116r (*Treasures of Mount Athos*, I, Athens 1973, fig. 237). A woman, presumably Martha, also stands at the foot of the column in Mount Athos, *Panteleimon MS* 2, fol. 186r (P. Huber, *Athos*, Zurich 1969, fig. 108).

28. P. van den Ven, *La vie ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune (521-592)*, Brussels 1962 (hereafter *La vie ancienne*). J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Itinéraires archéologiques dans la région d'Antioche. Recherches sur le monastère et sur l'iconographie de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune*, Brussels 1967 (hereafter *Itinéraires archéologiques*).

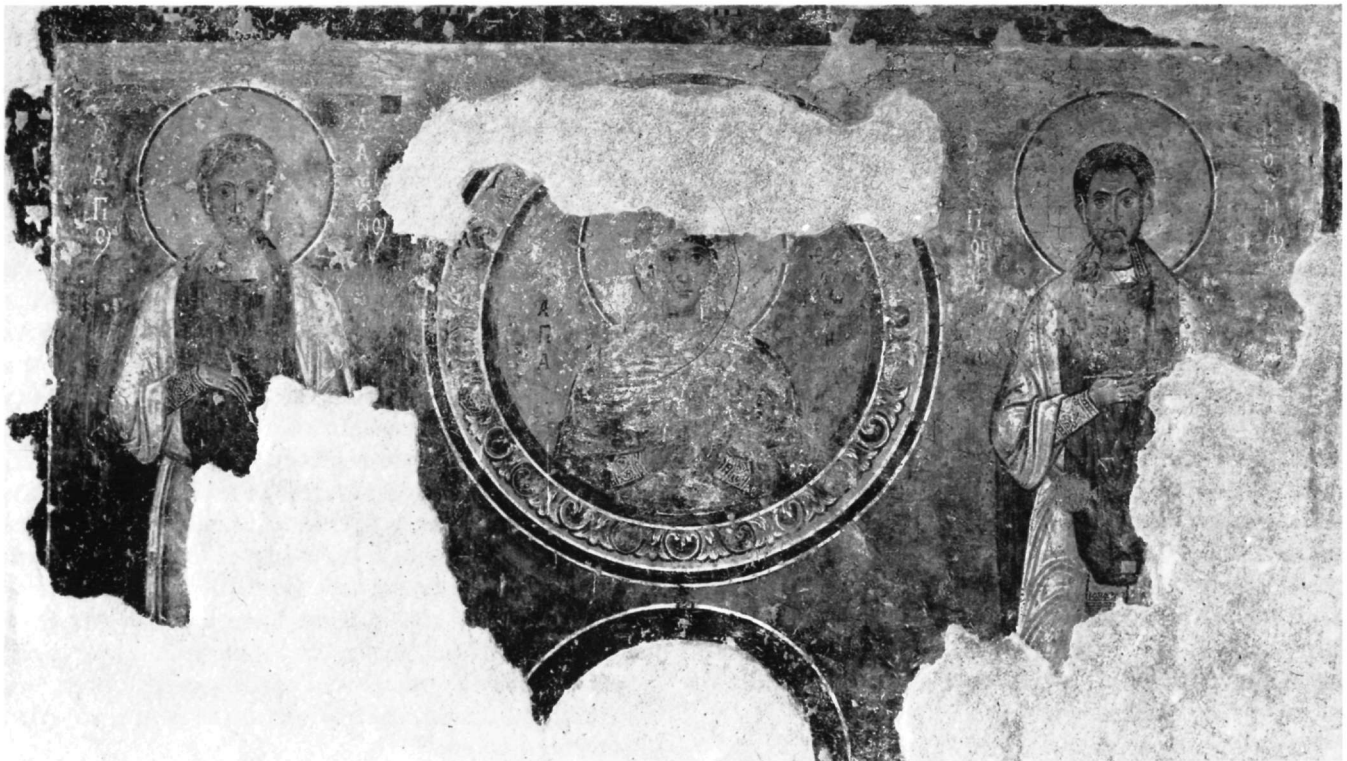


Fig. 8. *Episkopi, Eurytania. Cosmas and Damian with Theodota. Athens, Byzantine Museum.*



Fig. 9. Mount Athos, *Esphigmenou MS 14*, f. 52r. *Baptism of Eustace and his Family, Capture of Theopiste.*

was built around his column<sup>29</sup>. Cures were effected in a variety of ways, both at the monastery and at a distance from it. The supplicant was often healed through the application of various substances (*eulogia*) blessed by the saint, particularly holy dust from the mountain, as Gary Vikan<sup>30</sup> has shown. In addition, some pilgrims seeking miraculous cures were brought directly into the presence of the saint. They gained access by climbing a monolithic staircase, the remains of which are still preserved on the south side of the column, and then mounting a ladder which extended to the platform on top of the column<sup>31</sup>. Unlike Simeon the Elder, the younger Simeon did not avoid physical contact with women. They had the same access to him as men, and he sometimes healed them by laying his hands on the afflicted parts of their bodies<sup>32</sup>.

Also unlike Simeon the Elder, Simeon the Younger maintained a close continuous relationship with his mother Martha, and she played an important role in the

perpetuation of his cult. In the *Vita* Martha is shown interceding with her son. She asks him to reveal the prophecies of impending earthquake he had received in a vision, and when terrible earthquakes did occur throughout the region, to devote a day to prayer for their end. On one occasion, she took a young woman possessed by a demon into the saint's enclosure, and asked him to make the sign of the cross over her and cure her. Martha also had a role in the public life of the monastery. On June 4, 551, when Simeon dedicated the new monastic buildings and prepared to move to a new, higher column, Martha led the dedicatory procession carrying a cross and singing hymns. Upon Martha's death around 560, Simeon the Younger had a triconch church built on the south side of the monastic complex, with a burial chapel which served as the joint martyrion of mother and son<sup>33</sup>.

Interestingly enough, Martha does not appear on the clay pilgrim tokens<sup>34</sup> issued during Simeon the

Younger's lifetime, but she is shown in a prominent position on lead medallions associated with a revival of the cult in the tenth century (Fig. 6). Here Simeon's disciple Konon, who was miraculously healed by the saint, stands on the left of the column, while Martha, holding a processional cross, commemorates this miracle and indicates with raised hand her son's role in it<sup>35</sup>. A similar composition can be found on one of the eleventh-century chancel reliefs of the church of Šio-Mgvime in Georgia (Fig. 7), where Martha stands alone on a platform at the foot of the column, acclaiming her holy son. Behind the column, the detailed architectural rendering of the monastery complex features the triconch burial chapel in the foreground<sup>36</sup>. In both the lead medallions and the sculptural icon, Martha is shown as an intermediary or intercessor between supplicants and her holy son, and also as a leading proponent of his cult.

This may also have been one of the functions of another holy mother, Theodota, in the cult of her sons, the healing saints Cosmas and Damian. Here, however, we have almost no textual evidence, beyond references characterizing her as the mother of the twin sons<sup>37</sup>. None the less, in a few of the many Byzantine paintings of Cosmas and Damian, Theodota assumes a prominent role. In an eleventh-century icon at Mount Sinai, she stands between Cosmas and Damian, who hold the tools of their trade, medicine vials and surgical probes. On the right is another healing saint, Panteleimon<sup>38</sup>. Theodota also occasionally accompanies her sons in church decoration. At Karanlik Kilise in Cappadocia, Theodota, holding a cross, stands beside her sons who hold books and probes. In the detached frescoes from a church at Episkopi, now in the Byzantine Museum in Athens, we can see the workings of a local tradition honoring Theodota along with her sons in the late tenth- or early eleventh-century layer, and again in the thirteenth-century layer. In the later fresco, the half-figure of Theodota is set off within a large medallion with an ornamental border (Fig. 8). She appears as a similar clipeus portrait between her sons in one of the arch soffits at St. Peter, Kalyvia-Kouvaras<sup>39</sup>. While Theodota is recognized as a saint in her own right, it seems probable that Theodota's presence in these frescoes serves in part as a kind of kinship sign — a visual metronymic — to distinguish

29. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Itinéraires archéologiques*, pp. 67-135, pls. XII-XLIV. C. Mango, *Isaurian Builders, Polychronion: Festschrift F. Dölger*, Munich 1966, pp. 358-65; W. Z. Djobadze, *Archaeological Investigations in the Region West of Antioch on-the-Orontes*, ForschKA 13, Stuttgart 1986 (hereafter *Archaeological In-*

*vestigations*), pp. 57-115, pls. 25-58, plans F-G.

30. G. Vikan, *Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium*, DOP 38 (1984) (hereafter *Art, Medicine, and Magic*), pp. 67-74.

31. Djobadze, *Archaeological Investigations*, pp. 60, 69, figs. XX-XXI, 114, 116, 119-20.

32. Van den Ven, *La vie ancienne*, I, p. 156\*. See par. 114, 137, 138, 142, 146, 150, 154, 213, 252.

33. *Ibid.*, par. 105, 107, 113, 126-27. *Vita of St. Martha*, I, pp. 71-73, II, pp. 252-314. The passage from the *Vita of St. Martha* describing the construction of the triconch church is translated into English by C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453, Sources and Documents in the History of Art*, Englewood Cliffs 1972, pp. 126-27. See also Abrahamse, *Images of Childhood*, pp. 503-04.

34. Grabar, *Martyrium*, II, pp. 83-84, pl. LXIII.2. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Itinéraires archéologiques*, pp. 149-57, figs. 82, 84-94. *Eadem*, *Une eulogie inédite de St. Syméon Stylite le Jeune*, *Byzantion* 51 (1981), pp. 631-34, figs. 1-2. G. Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*, Washington 1982, pp. 28, 34-35, figs. 22, 24-25, 29. Vikan, *Art, Medicine, and Magic*, pp. 67-71, figs. 2-3.

35. P. Verdier, *A Medallion of Saint Symeon the Younger*, *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 67 (1980), pp. 17-27 (with earlier bibliography). Vikan, *Art, Medicine, and Magic*, p. 74, fig. 7. See also van den Ven, *La vie ancienne*, par. 129.

36. J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *L'influence du culte de Saint Syméon Stylite le Jeune sur les monuments et les représentations figurées de Géorgie*, *Byzantion* 41 (1971), pp. 188-92, fig. 6 (with earlier bibliography). *Eadem*, *Les liens entre la Géorgie et le monastère de St. Syméon Stylite le Jeune près d'Antioche, et leur incidence sur les pratiques et les représentations figurées géorgiennes*, *L'arte georgiana dal IX al XIV secolo. Atti del terzo simposio internazionale sull'arte georgiana*, Bari-Lecce, 14-18 ottobre 1980, I, Galatina 1986, p. 219, fig. 4.

37. L. Deubner, ed., *Kosmas und Damian*, Leipzig and Berlin 1907, p. 87. *Synaxarium CP*, col. 185.

38. G. and M. Soteriou, *Eikónes tēs Monēs Sinvā*, Athens 1956, 1958, pp. 97-98, pl. 85.

39. Karanlik (Göreme, Chapel 23; Jerphanion, *Cappadoce*, I, p. 401, pl. 99.4; Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting*, plan XXII, erroneously identifies the figure of Theodota as Theodore Stratelates); Episkopi, Eurytania (Athens, National Gallery, *Byzantine Murals and Icons*, Athens 1976, pp. 59, 61, 64-65, pls. III, VI-VIII, 6-7, 16-17; Athens, Old University, *Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art*, ed. M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, Athens 1986, pp. 47-48, cat. no. 36); Kalyvia-Kouvaras (N. Pansélinou, "Άγιος Πέτρος Καλυβίων Κουβαρά 'Αττικής", *ΔΧΑΕ*, Δ', ΙΔ' (1987-1988), pp. 184, 186, figs. 17-18, 20). Theodota also appears with her sons on a relief in San Marco, Venice (A. Χυγοπουλος, *Τό ανάγλυφον τῶν Ἁγίων Ἀναργύρων εἰς τὸν Ἅγιον Μάρκον τῆς Βενετίας*, *ΑΔ* 20 (1965), *Meletai*, pp. 84-95, pl. 47); in frescoes of two churches in Serbia (A. Χυγοπουλος, *Τά μνημεῖα τῶν Σερβίων*, Athens 1957, pp. 43-44, 70-71, 94, 100, figs. 15, 20); a conch from the church of Soter Pantocrator in Zakynthos Castle (late twelfth-century; *Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art*, pp. 39-40, cat. no. 25); and at St. Nicholas Orphanos, Thessaloniki (early fourteenth-century; A. Χυγοπουλος, *Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικολάου Θεσσαλονίκης*, Athens 1964, p. 23; A. Tsitouridou, "Ο ζωγραφικός διάκοσμος τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικολάου Ὁρφανοῦ στή Θεσσαλονίκη", *Thessaloniki* 1986, pp. 197-98, pls. 39, 97-98). The three are accompanied by St. Panteleimon, as on the Mount Sinai icon, in the dome of the church of the Taxiarches near Marcopoulo in Attica (late thirteenth-century; M. Aspra-Vardavaki, *Οἱ βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες τοῦ Ταξιάρχη στό Μαρκόπουλο Ἀττικής*, *ΔΧΑΕ*, Δ', Η' (1975-1976), pp. 210-12, 228, pls. 108-110, 112-113).



her sons (Cosmas and Damian of Asia Minor) from the two other pairs of healing saints named Cosmas and Damian (of Rome and of Arabia) commemorated in the Byzantine calendar<sup>40</sup>.

I would like to turn now from mothers and sons to an examination of representation of two nuclear families, those of saints Eustace and Xenophon, the first a family of martyrs and the second whose family all followed monastic vocations<sup>41</sup>. In the Esphigmenou menologion (Fig. 9) the events leading up to the martyrdom of Eustace, his wife Theopiste, and their two sons are elaborated with unusual attention to the close bonds of parents and children. In the first scene we see the Roman general Eustace out hunting, when he sees Christ appearing between the antlers of a stag. The narrative con-

*Fig. 10. Güllü Dere. Chapel of St. John. Vision of Eustace of Rome and Theopiste (after Thierry, Haut moyen-âge en Cappadoce, pl. 72a).*

*Fig. 11. St. Barbara. Eustace of Rome and his family (after Jerphanion, Cappadoce, pl. 186.4).*



tinues with events following his conversion: first his baptism in a quatrefoil font along with his wife and their two small sons, Theopistos and Agapios. Then follows the first of a series of misfortunes, the kidnapping of Theopiste by pirates, who sail away with her, leaving Eustace forlornly clutching their sons on the shore. In the next scene the father is powerless to save his children as they are attacked by wild animals. At last the family is reunited, only to be brought before a Roman magistrate, and condemned to death for refusing to sacrifice. They were martyred, again as a family group, by being roasted to death in a brazen bull<sup>42</sup>.

In Middle Byzantine church decoration the story of St. Eustace is usually represented with a single episode from the story, most often the vision of the stag<sup>43</sup>. The scene is abstracted from its narrative context, and serves as a votive image. In the Cappadocian churches, however, Eustace's family continues to play an important devotional role. At St. John, Güllü Dere (913-920), the vision of the stag (Fig. 10) is represented in the midst of a series of frontal saints on the south wall of the north chapel. The female saint overlapped by Eustace's horse is his wife Theopiste, shown here in a non-narrational context at the head of a row of unrelated female saints — Euphemia, Eupraxia, Olympias and Christina<sup>44</sup>. Eustace appears again as a bust-length figure in the east niche of the apse, while his son Agapios, identified by inscription, is painted on the west side of the arch soffit. He was presumably originally paired with his brother Theopistos (now destroyed)<sup>45</sup>. The presence of the entire family of saints is evidently thought to be desirable. Another Cappadocian church, Tokali Kilise at Göreme, contains a fresco of the martyrdom of the family — father, mother and young sons — in the brazen bull. None of the other episodes from the story is depicted, and here the location of the panel seems especially significant — one of the chancel screens separating the sanctuary from the bema<sup>46</sup>. Even more remarkable are several depictions in the Cappadocian churches of frontal figures of the four family members where the sons are shown not as children but as youthful martyrs holding crosses or as soldiers. In a niche on the south wall of the church of St. Barbara at Soganli, Eustace appears flanked by his apparently grown sons, followed by Theopiste (Fig. 11)<sup>47</sup>. At Karanlik Kilise, the sons are clearly adults, wearing armor and holding spears. They are represented along with their father, also shown as a soldier, in the northwest bay, but their mother is not included in this group<sup>48</sup>.

40. Theodota is commemorated on January 2 (Synaxarium CP, col.

365, *Synaxaria Selecta*). On the difficult question of distinguishing the three pairs of saints (Cosmas and Damian of Asia Minor, Nov. 1; Cosmas and Damian of Arabia, Oct. 17; and Cosmas and Damian of Rome, July 1), see Xyngoropoulos, *Tó ανάλυτον τῶν Ἁγίων Ἀναργύρων*, *op.cit.*, pp. 84-95; H. Skrobucha, *Kosmas und Damian*, Recklinghausen 1965, *passim*. Cosmas and Damian of Arabia are occasionally singled out by the fact that they wear turbans, as at Dečani; D. Bošković and V. R. Petković, *Dečani*, Belgrade 1941, pl. CLVI.

41. Another interesting nuclear family of saints, George and his parents Gerontius and Polychronia, is represented among the eleventh-century frescoes in the apse of the chapel of St. George Diassoritis near Chalki on Naxos (M. Acheimastou-Potamianou in Νάξος, Βυζαντινὴ τέχνη στὴν Ἑλλάδα. Ψηφιδωτά-Τοιχογραφίες, Athens 1989, pp. 67, 73, diagram nos. 6-8, p. 73, fig. 9). This family will be the subject of a separate study.

42. Mount Athos, Esphigmenou MS 14, fols. 52r-52v; *Treasures of Mount Athos*, II, pp. 363-64, figs. 329-330.

43. See the three recent studies on Eustace and the stag in CahArch 33 (1984): A. Saltykov, *La vision de saint Eustache sur la stèle de Tsebelda*, pp. 1-17; Velmans, *Vision de saint Eustache*, pp. 18-49; A. Coumoussi, *Une représentation rare de la vision de saint Eustache dans une église grecque du XIIIe siècle*, pp. 51-60.

44. The church is also known as Chapel 4, Güllü Dere, or as Ayvali Kilise; N. Thierry, *Haut moyen-âge en Cappadoce: les églises de la région de Çavusin*, I, Paris 1983, pp. 157-58, pls. 72a-72b.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 158-59.

46. A. Wharton Epstein, *Tokali Kilise: Tenth-Century Metropolitan Art in Byzantine Cappadocia*, Washington 1986, pp. 26, 78, fig. 117. The figure of St. Theodore at the right is painted on a later layer.

47. The four family members are framed by an unidentified warrior saint and St. Christopher; they are located above a tomb arcosolium. Jerphanion, *Cappadoce*, II, p. 322, pl. 186.4; L. Rodley, *Cave Monasteries of Byzantine Cappadocia*, Cambridge 1985 (hereafter *Cave Monasteries*), p. 205, fig. 179 (Theopiste).

48. Göreme, Chapel 23; Jerphanion, *Cappadoce*, I, p. 400, pl. 103.3. Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting*, plan XXII, figs. 226, 230. In other representations of the family in Cappadocia, Theopistos and Agapios are sometimes depicted on a smaller scale to indicate their youth, for example, at El Nazar, where a group consisting of a man holding a spear and a cross accompanied by two smaller figures is usually interpreted as Eustace and his sons; Jerphanion, *Cappadoce*, I, p. 182, pl. 41.4; Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting*, plan I, fig. 20.

Theopiste and Agapios appear with both parents at Tavşanlı Kilise (912-959), where the Vision of Eustace is located on the east wall, while the other family members are represented frontally on the adjacent section of the south wall (fragmentary; Jerphanion, *Cappadoce*, II, p. 84; Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting*, plan XXXIX, fig. 388); similarly accompanying a scene of the Vision at St. George, Ortaköy (Jerphanion, *Cappadoce*, II, pp. 241-42, pl. 193.4 (Vision); in arch soffits at Belli Kilise, Soganli (Jerphanion, *Cappadoce*, II, pp. 275, 277; Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting*, plan XLVII); and as standing figures at the Archangel monastery, Cemil (Jerphanion, *Cappadoce*, II, p. 130; Rodley, *Cave Monasteries*, p. 159).

Eustace and the two sons, but not Theopiste, are depicted in medallions in the soffit of the arch of the apse, and repeated as standing figures on either side of the door on the west wall of the chapel of St. Eustace, Göreme; the Vision is found in the narthex (Chapel 11; Jerphanion, *Cappadoce*, I, pp. 150, 153; Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting*, plan XIII, fig. 146). The three also appear in medallions on the south wall of the chapel of the Theotokos, Göreme (Chapel 9; Jer-

Another nuclear family, Xenophon and his wife Mary and their sons Arcadius and John, are also represented both in illustrated menologion cycles and in frescoes, but with important differences from the depictions of St. Eustace and his family. All four members of this family entered monasteries. In the menologia, they are represented as a group, wearing monastic habits<sup>49</sup>. The male members of the family are represented in the twelfth-century frescoes of two monastic churches, the chapel of the Virgin of the monastery of Patmos, and the monastery of St. Chrysostomos at Koutsovendis in Cyprus. At Patmos, the sons flank their father in three medallions on the east side of the doorway on the south wall, while on the west side of the door the corresponding medallions represent three more monastic saints, including Joannicius of Bithynia<sup>50</sup>. At Koutsovendis, the father and sons are depicted as half-figures in the lunette of the northwest recess, opposite Sts. Onuphrius, Paul the Simpleton and Theodosius of Skopelos<sup>51</sup>. In these frescoes, the male members of this family serve as exempla of dedication to the monastic life, but it will be noted that the mother, Mary, who became a nun, has not found a place in this context.

What conclusions can we draw from these varied stories and pictures which appear to promote family values so strongly in Byzantine religious life? I'd like to suggest several possible contexts for their interpretation. First, the presence of the family members of these saints seems to enhance their intercessory roles, by emphasizing their human nature, and therefore their likeness to ordinary church-goers. At the same time, placing the saints in a generational context suggests their likeness to the Holy Family — Joachim and Anna, the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. In other words, it enhances their function as imitators of Christ. Thirdly, the family members of

saints, especially mothers, promote the saint's cult. We are reminded of the role of historical strong-minded mothers like Monica in furthering their sons' careers. On a more mundane level, the presence of family members serves to identify the saint and his or her place in society — functioning, in other words, as a visual surname. Finally, the question of patronage seems crucial. Many — but not all — of the frescoes depicting families of saints are in private chapels or churches donated by local families and endowed with funds or land to support prayers for the founders and their descendants in perpetuity. Perhaps such donors had a special interest in commemorating saints displaying a similar sense of family solidarity to their own.

phanion, Cappadoce, I, p. 124; Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting*, plan XII).

49. Commemorated on Jan. 26. See for example, the Menologion of Basil II (*Menologio di Basilio II*, p. 351); the eleventh-century Lectionary, Biblioteca Vaticana, ms gr. 1156, fol. 295v (Photograph in the Index of Christian Art). Xenophon is represented alone in the fresco menologia at Treskavac (Mijović, *Menolog*, p. 308, pl. 142) and at Dečani (Bošković and Petković, *Dečani*, pls. CXVI, CXVIII). On the practice of entire families entering monasteries, see Talbot, *Byzantine Family and the Monastery*, pp. 121-23.

50. A. Orlandos, 'Η ἀρχιτεκτονική καὶ αἱ βυζαντιναὶ τοιχογραφίαι τῆς Μονῆς τοῦ Θεολόγου Πάτμου, Athens 1970, pp. 169-70, 344-45, pls. 54-55; E. Kollias, *Patmos, Byzantine Art in Greece*, Athens 1986, p. 14, diagram nos. 17-19; D. Μουρική, Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τοῦ παρεκκλησίου τῆς Μονῆς τοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Θεολόγου στὴν Πάτμο, ΔΧΑΕ, Δ΄-ΙΔ΄ (1987-1988), p. 222, figs. 32, 48.

51. C. Mango, with the collaboration of E. J. W. Hawkins and S. Boyd, *The Description of St. Chrysostomos at Koutsovendis (Cyprus) and its Wall Paintings, Part. I: Description*, DOP 44 (1990), p. 192, pls. 162, 170, 172-74, color pl. 5.