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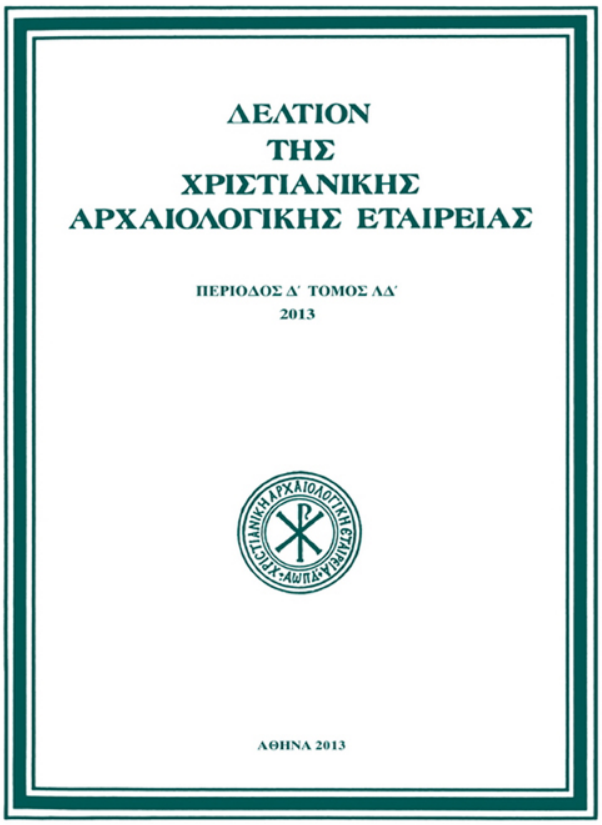

Διασκεδάσεις σκαλισμένες σε ελεφαντοστό: Οι μουσικοί και οι χορευτές στο σκέπασμα του κιβωτιδίου Veroli

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PERFORMANCES ON IVORY: THE MUSICIANS AND DANCERS ON THE LID OF THE VEROLI CASKET*

Το κιβωτίδιο Veroli, κατασκευασμένο από ελεφαντοστέινες πλάκες και οστέινες ταινίες καρφωμένες σε ξύλινο πυρήνα με οστέινα καρφιά, είναι ίσως το πιο γνωστό μεσοβυζαντινό κιβωτίδιο, διακοσμημένο με μυθολογικές μορφές υψηλής ποιότητας. Το σκέπασμά του διατηρεί ένα μουσικό σύνολο και τρεις χορευτές ιδιαίτερου ενδιαφέροντος. Αν όμως στρέψουμε την προσοχή μας από την αρχαϊκή εμφάνιση των μορφών στα μουσικά όργανα που κρατούν και στην εικονογραφία του χορού, τότε μπορούμε ίσως να διακρίνουμε στοιχεία από την καθημερινή ζωή της μεσοβυζαντινής περιόδου κρυμμένα πίσω από ένα αρχαϊκό πέπλο.

The Veroli casket, made from ivory plaques and bone strips attached on a wooden core with bone pegs, is probably the most famous middle Byzantine casket, decorated with mythological figures of the highest quality. Its lid preserves a musical ensemble and three dancers of special interest. If we turn our attention from the antique looking guises of the figures to their attributes, that is the musical instruments and the iconography of the dance, we might be able to discern elements of everyday life of the middle Byzantine period hidden under an antique veil.

The Veroli casket in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (Fig. 1), datable to the 10th century, belongs to a complex group of artefacts, the medieval Byzantine ivory and bone caskets with secular decoration. Known in scholarship as the "rosette caskets," because of the ornamental bone strips of eight-petalled rosettes framing the sides of the artefacts, they are rectangular in shape and can be divided between caskets with flat-topped lids and caskets with truncated pyramidal lids. They are further categorized into three groups: those made of pure ivory panels; those made of ivory and bone plaques attached on a wooden core; and those made exclusively of bone plaques attached on wood, very few of which retain their original wooden core. They are loosely datable from the 9th to the 12th century, and the majority have been serially produced.[1] Their importance lies not only in the raw

Λέξεις κλειδιά
Μεσαίωνας, Κωνσταντινούπολη, ελεφαντοστό, καθημερινή ζωή.

Keywords
Medieval, Constantinople, ivory, daily life.

* It is an honour to offer this paper in memory of Titos Papamastorakis, who as my tutor during my undergraduate years in the University of Crete years ago introduced me to the world of Byzantium.

[1] For the medieval ivory and bone caskets in general see A. Goldschmidt K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeiskulpturen des X.-XIII. Jahrhunderts*, I, *Kästen*, Berlin 1930 (repr. Berlin 1979), 12 13; K. Weitzmann, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 3, *Ivories and Steatites*, Washington DC 1972, 54; A. Cutler, "On Byzantine Boxes," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 42/3 (1984 1985), 32 47; id., *The Hand of the Master. Craftsmanship, Ivory, and Society in Byzantium (9th-11th Centuries)*, New Jersey 1994, 185 225; id., "Mistaken Antiquity: Thoughts on Some Recent Commentary on the Rosette Caskets," *ΑΕΤΟΣ, Studies in Honour of Cyril Mango, presented to him on April 14, 1998* (eds I. Ševčenko I. Hutter), Stuttgart 1998, 46 54; id., "Ehemals Wien: The Pula Casket and the Interpretation of Multiples in Byzantine Bone and Ivory Carving," *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 41 (1999), 117 128; more recently see A. Papagiannaki, *The Production of Middle Byzantine Ivory, Bone, and Wooden Caskets with Secular Decoration,* 3 vls, PhD dissertation, University of Oxford 2006.

Fig. 1. General view of the Veroli casket, 10th century. London, Victoria and Albert Museum 216-1865 (photo © V&A Images / Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

materials they are made of (ivory and bone) and their complex construction, but also in the fact that their decoration comprises the most coherent body of secular art to survive from medieval Byzantium, from gods and heroes of the Graeco-Roman tradition to contemporary Byzantine imperial imagery and ornamental patterns. In the pages that follow, I will focus on the group of musicians and dancers that feature on the lid of the Veroli casket.

The Veroli casket is the most familiar Byzantine casket, and as such it has attracted much scholarly attention.[2] It is a rectangular flat-topped casket, comprised of ivory plaques and bone decorative strips attached on a wooden core with bone pegs. Unlike the majority of the medieval caskets, the Veroli was most likely specially commissioned and not serially produced as indicated by its dimensions.[3] Its decoration comprises mythological figures of the finest craftsmanship. The lid consists of two ivory plaques joined together to form a panel and on the left side preserves the Rape of Europa with stone-throwing male figures, while on the right are a seated Herakles playing the *kithara*; two Centaurs, one playing a transverse flute and the other the panpipes; two putti playing the cymbals; and three dancers, one of which on the far right seems to be male (Fig. 2). Above the seated Herakles two more putti can be seen, apparently dancing in the air. The front panel preserves two ivory plaques, each one formed by two pieces of ivory joined together. The plaque on the left depicts confronted mythological pairs, while the right plaque illustrates the Sacrifice of Iphigenia together with the figures of Hygeia and Asklepios. The left plaque on the

[2] Selectively, see J. Beckwith, *The Veroli Casket*, London 1962; E. Si mon, "Nonnos und das Elfenbeikästchenaus Veroli," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Institut* 79 (1964), 279 336; A. Cutler, "Un Triptyque byzantin en ivoire : La Nativité du Louvre. Étude compare avec le coffret de Veroli, du Victoria and Albert Museum de Londres," *Revue du Louvre* 1 (1988), 21 28 (= A. Cutler, *Late Antique and Byzantine Ivory Carving*, Ashgate 1998, no. 15). H. C. Evans W. D. Wixom (eds), *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843-1261*, Exhibition cata logue, New York 1997, 230 231, cat. no. 153 (A. Cutler); P. Williamson, *Medieval Ivory Carvings. Early Christian to Romanesque*, London 2010, no. 15.

[3] The dimensions of the Veroli casket are: L. 40.5×W. 16×H. 11.2 cm. The average dimensions of the majority of the medieval ivory and bone caskets are L. 27×W. 17.5 cm. or 22×H. 17 cm. For the latter see Cutler, "Byzantine Boxes," op.cit., 35.

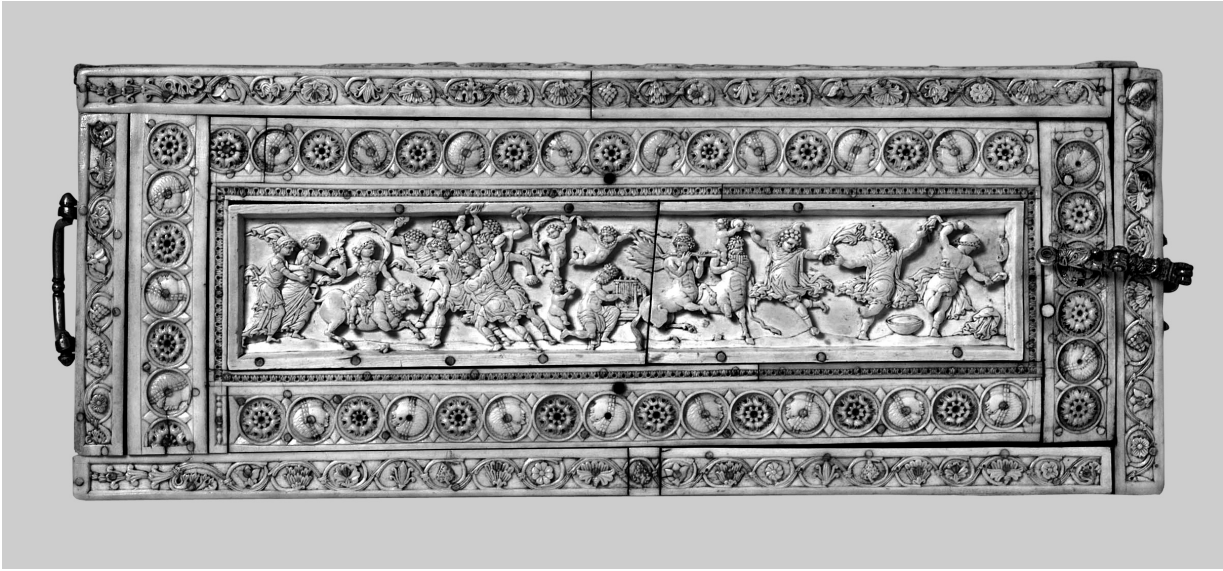

Fig. 2. General view of the lid of the Veroli casket, 10th century. London, Victoria and Albert Museum 216-1865 (photo © V&A Images / Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

back panel shows putti and animals, while the right plaque on the same panel shows a mythological couple and putti frolicking with animals. On the short ends of the casket are two further ivory plaques. At the end with the lock a Nereid rides on a hippocampus, with a putto sitting atop an altar, while on the other end the figure of Dionysos rides on a chariot drawn by felines, while above the felines a putto dives into a basket.

The scenes with the dancers and musicians on the lid of the casket are difficult to identify. Kurt Weitzmann has suggested that they form part of a larger repertoire of hypothetical illustrated mythological manuals.[4] Erika Simon has identified the image as the nuptial celebration of the marriage between Harmonia, daughter of Ares and Aphrodite, and Cadmus, Europa's brother, as described in Book V of Nonnus' 15th-century *Dionysiaca*.[5] More recently, Anthony Cutler, without explicitly disagreeing with Simon's reading, has preferred a comic reading, underlining the incongruity among the depicted images on medieval caskets.[6] Regardless of the precise identification, other elements of this scene are of special interest, and I will begin with the musicians.

Generally speaking, musicians are a common motif on medieval Byzantine ivory and bone caskets. Most of them are depicted as members of the Dionysiac Thiasos, thus exhibiting conventional images of musicians as seen in Late Antique art.[7] Within this group of artefacts, and particularly in terms of craftsmanship, the lid of the Veroli casket displays the finest ensemble of musicians seen on medieval caskets, which may be considered an or-

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[4] K. Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art* (Studies in Manuscript Illumination 4), Princeton 1951, 183 185.

[5] Simon, "Nonnos," op.cit., 302 304.

[6] Cutler, "Byzantine Boxes," op.cit. (n. 1), 32 47. For a comic reading of the figures on the Veroli casket see also H. Hunger, *Reich der neuen Mitte. Der christliche Geist der byzantinischen Kultur*, Cologne 1965, 208.

[7] In medieval Byzantine art images of musicians and musical instruments can be distinguished into two types: biblical and secular, see G. Galavaris, "Musical Images in Byzantine Art," *Λιθόστρωτον. Studien zur byzantinischen Kunst und Geschichte. Festschrift für Marcell Restle* (eds B. Borkopp Th. Steppan), Stuttgart 2000, 79 84. The biblical images refer primarily to David, to his life and his work as a psalm composer. The secular images can be sub divided into two more categories: a) those directly related to classical antiquity and found within such contexts, and b) those of diverse origins, which are found in illuminated holy books where the image is not directly related to the book's subject. The mythological representations found on medieval ivory and bone caskets are most often part of the first sub group, while in the second we can rank images of performers found as initials in manuscripts of religious works, including jugglers and snake charmers, as well as musicians.

Fig. 3. Mythological figures as musicians, detail from the lid of the Veroli casket, 10th century. London, Victoria and Albert Museum 216-1865 (photo © V&A Images / Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

chestra (Fig. 3).[8] If we leave aside the mythological guise of the Veroli figures and turn our attention from the figures to the musical instruments they appear to be playing, we may derive information about how the casket's images reflect contemporary daily life.

As was mentioned above, the musical instruments seen on the lid of the Veroli casket are the transverse flute, the panpipes, the *kithara*, and the cymbals.[9] Of these, the representation of the transverse flute is important, because it is said to have originated in the East, and the Veroli Casket offers one of the earliest extant pictorial sources for this instrument in the Christian world.[10] As an instrument it must have been well established in Byzantine entertainment by the 11th century, when it can be seen in a number of manuscript illustrations.[11] The medieval form of the transverse flute is the keyless flute consisting of a cylindrical flute, plugged at one end with a cork and open at the opposite end. The mouthpiece is close to the cork. It may have various shapes, elliptical or circular, and was sometimes made of a different material, such as bone or metal, and added to the main body of the tube. Such an instrument may be represented in the 11th- or 12th-century fresco depicting musicians and acrobats in the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev.[12] The final features of the instru-

[8] I call this ensemble an orchestra after J. Thibaut's terminology, who distinguished the following types of Byzantine musical ensembles: the organ, military, and Dionysian (organ, military and concert in mod ern terminology), see J. Thibaut, "La musique instrumentale chez les Byzantins," *EO* 4 (1901), 340; see also J. Braun, "Musical Instruments in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts," *Early Music* 8 (1980), 318.

[9] In written sources most Byzantine musical instruments retained their classical names, although in form they were different from their ancient prototypes, see M. Velimirović, "Reflections on Music and Musicians in Byzantium," *To Ελληνικόν: Studies in Honour of Speros Vryonis Jr.,* vol. I, *Hellenic Antiquity and Byzantium* (eds J. S. Langdon *et al.*), New York 1993, 455. The works of the Church Fa thers are a prime example in terms of nomenclature, for which see J. McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, Cambridge 1987. As a result it is difficult for modern scholars to identify, or classify Byzantine musical instruments, see however N. Maliaras, "Μουσικά Όργανα στο Βυζάντιο," *Πολυφωνία* 1 (2002), 5 28 and id., "Μουσικά όργανα στους χορούς και τις διασκεδάσεις των Βυζαντινών," *Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνες* 91 (2004), 68. Furthermore, archaeology is of limited use here since actual examples of musical instruments unearthed are extremely rare, as for example the wood en body of a lute datable to the 10th or 11th centuries discovered in Corinth, for which see F. Anogiannakis, "Ένα βυζαντινὸ μουσικὸ ὄργανο," *ΔΧΑΕ* Γ΄ (1962 1963), 115 123.

[10] On the medieval caskets, the transverse flute is a popular musical instrument, and can be found on 16 caskets and loose plaques data ble from the 10th century to the 12th. The flute players are usually either Centaurs or putti. On caskets datable to the 10th and 11th cen turies, the transverse flute players are in mythological contexts, while on caskets datable to the 12th century, the figures seem to float on the plaque surface and they look as if they represent an echo of contemporary musical ensembles.

[11] Braun, "Musical Instruments," op.cit., 315.

[12] I. F. Točkaja A. M. Zajaruznyj, "I musici dell'affresco ditto degli

Fig. 4. Mythological figures dancing, detail from the lid of the Veroli casket, 10th century. London, Victoria and Albert Museum 216-1865 (photo © V&A Images / Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

ment are six finger holes on the tube.[13] From manuscript illustrations it has been deduced that the length of the transverse flute was approximately 60 cm long, and that it was played right-handed.[14]

Even though the Veroli musical ensemble depicts a mythological group, it could in fact reflect an early representation of a medieval musical ensemble. With the exception of the panpipes and the archaic *kithara*, the rest of the musical instruments can all be seen in later depictions of musical ensembles. Good examples are the 11th-century manuscript illuminations of the *Homilies* of St. Gregory Nazianzenus in the Greek Patriarchate in Jerusalem (Taphou 14) and the Psalter in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (Vat. gr. 752), as well as the 11th- or 12th-century fresco in Kiev mentioned above. The first example comes from a Pseudo-Nonnus manuscript and illustrates the Birth of Zeus (Taphou 14, fol. 310v).[15] An ensemble of four Corybantes is depicted playing the cymbals (or maybe rattles), a fiddle, a drum, and a transverse flute. The ensemble seems to be conducted by a leader, suggesting a contemporary group, a view strengthened by the presence of this image in at least two more illuminated manuscripts.[16] The same can be deduced from the Vatican Psalter, even though it lacks the presence of a conductor. The latter depicts the Canticle of Moses, sung after the Crossing of the Red Sea, and at the centre of the illumination eight musicians are depicted, playing a variety of instruments.[17] Lastly, on the Kiev fresco, one more ensemble can be seen together with acrobats, representing contemporary court entertainment.[18]

If we accept that the iconography discussed above may indeed refer to contemporary entertainment, then we could also entertain the idea that these images may potentially offer us a glimpse into the secular side of Byzantine music, the style, genre, and form of which are largely unknown. This secular side was an important part of daily life, in the

"Skomorochi" nella cattedrale della Santa Sophia a Kiev," *Arte Profana e Arte Sacra a Bisanzio* (eds A. Iacobini E. Zanini), Rome 1995, 285; F. Luisi, "Per una lettura musicological dell'affresco ditto degli "Skomorochi" nella cattedrale della Santa Sophia di Kiev," ibid., 303 314.

[13] N. Bessaraboff, *Ancient European Musical Instruments. An Organological Study of the Musical Instruments in the Leslie Lindsey Mason Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston*, Boston 1941, 48, fig. 5.

[14] Cf. supra, n. 11.

[15] For the Taphou 14, fol. 310v see Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology*, op.cit. (n. 4), fig. 36.

[16] Vatican gr. 1947, fol. 146r, and Athos Panteleimon 6, fol. 163r.

[17] For the Vat. gr. 752 see Evans Wixom (eds), op.cit. (n. 2), 206 207, no. 142.

[18] The musical instruments used in this ensemble are the transverse flute, the shawm, the cymbals, and the organ. For the fresco cf. supra, n. 12.

Fig. 5. A silver dish with a dancing Satyr and a dancing Maenad with thyrsus and tambourine from the Mildenhall Treasure, Suffolk, 4th century. London, British Museum 1946.1007.3 (photo © The Trustees of the British Museum).

Hippodrome and the imperial court, in banquets and taverns, and in marriage celebrations, while the art of instrumental performance was a feature of noble breeding. For example, in the medieval epic poem of Digenis Akrites, the love struck young hero expresses his emotions by playing his *kithara*, in which, the poet informs us, he had been instructed, as well as in other musical instruments.[19]

At the same time, however, music in secular contexts, and especially musical instruments, received, together with dancing and the theatre, the attention and fierce criticism of the Church Fathers. Patristic puritanism targeted entertainment and especially music and dancing because of their close association with pagan cults and rites.[20] John Chrysostom's preaching against secular music particularly singles out certain social contexts, including theatrical performances, marriage songs and the female musicians employed at private banquets.[21] Still, the presence of contemporary musicians and musical instruments in Byzantine iconography may provide musicologists with enough information to potentially reconstruct, at least to a certain extent, the sounds and combinations of musical instruments preferred in the secular realm of the Byzantine Empire.

A second element of interest on the lid of the Veroli casket is the dancers (Fig. 4). The medieval Veroli dancers are mythological dancers, and thus the scholarly convention is that they are mainly to be identified as "Maenads." The primary characteristics of Maenads can be summarised as follows: the make intense dance moves; appear either nude or with revealing garments; play cymbals or frame drums; hold torches, and/or there is a billowing mantle (*Heraion Schema*) over their heads.[22] They are usually accompanied either by a Dionysian ensemble formed mainly by Centaurs and putti, or by a Silenus. There is a plethora of examples mainly from Late Antiquity demonstrating this iconography, with the 4th-century silver plates from the Mildenhall Treasure, today in the British Museum, London preserving well-known examples (Fig. 5). It should be noted, however, that even though the medieval images on the Veroli caskets represent an echo of earlier mythological models, Asimakopoulou-Atzaka has suggested that the Late Antique dancing Maenads possess many of the same characteristics as real Late Antique dancers.[23]

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[19] E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Digenis Akritis. The Grottaferrata and Escorial Versions,* Cambridge 1998, Book IV, v. 396 400.

[20] J. McKinnon, "The Meaning of the Patristic Polemic against Musical Instruments," *Current Musicology* 1 (1965), 69 70. The first Christian polemic against musical performances came from the late 2nd century rhetorician Tatian (fl. *ca.* 160), and it grew in the 3rd and 4th century with Tertullian (*ca.* 170 *ca.* 225) and Arnobius (died *ca.* 330). At the end of the 4th century, John Chrysostom (*ca.* 347 407) continued this polemic against musical instruments.

[21] *In Isaiam* V, 5: *PG* LVI, 62; *In caput* XXIX *Genesium, Hom.* LVI, I: *PG* LIV, 486; In psalmun XLI, 2: *PG* LV, 158.

[22] It has been argued that the motif of the Maenads with a billowing mantle over their heads referred originally to the iconographic type of Aphrodite. For an interesting presentation, although rather old, of the motif throughout the centuries and the arguments for the above theory see Ch. Morgan, "The Motive of a Figure Holding in Both Hands a Piece of Drapery which Blows Out Behind or Over the Fig ure," *Art Studies* 6 (1928), 163 171.

[23] P. Asimakopoulou Atzaka, "Ο χορός στην Ύστερη Αρχαιότητα. Μαρτυρίες κειμένων και παραστάσεων," *Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνες* 91 (2004), 15. Angeliki Liveri on the other hand, considering only one bone casket currently in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York decorated with dancers, putti, and warriors (inv. no. 17.190.239, Evans Wixom (eds), op.cit. (n. 2), 233, no. 156) suggested that the dancers on the front panel of the lid of the casket should not be considered as representations of real life Byzantine dancers because they are members of the Dionysiac Thiasos. I believe that appearances can be deceptive, and as I will demonstrate in the pages that follow, mythological dancers decorating the medieval ivory and bone caskets have more to offer than meets the eye. For Liveri's argu

In artistic representations, professional dancers are depicted according to classical models until about the 11th century. Up until this period, their iconography consists of a billowing mantle over their heads and garments light enough to expose the curves of their bodies, as seen on the silver plates of the Mildenhall Treasure. As one may expect, this did not go down very well with the Church Fathers, who did not pass on the opportunity to hurl their barbs against both dancers and dancing. The relationship of dancing to the worship of pagan divinities associated with fertility, such as Rhea or Cybele, together with their association with sexual license led to the frequent assimilation of performers to prostitutes, since the ecstatic and sensual dance moves of Late Antiquity went against the feminine ideals of modesty and above all sexual purity that the Church was trying to promote.[24] The example of Salome was used to epitomise the evil of dance and its consequences: lust and murder.[25]

However, despite the Christian efforts to construct female dancers as dangerous sexual beings, the reality seems to have been less clear-cut. To begin with, there seems to be a distinction between professional dancers and amateurs, followed by a second distinction regarding the quality of performance.[26] Male and female dancers, whose services were employed in private banquets and weddings, were professionals, and their presence is a feature of the imperial court and wealthy households, not only in the capital but also in the periphery.[27] The early 3rd century contract

Fig. 6. Members of the imperial court, dancers and musicians at the Hippodrome, marble base of an obelisk, Constantinople, about 390. Istanbul, Sultanahmet Meydani (photo ©AnthousaPapagiannaki).

(*ca.* 206) of a *krotalistria* (castanet dancer) from Egypt recorded in a papyrus document offers an insight into what seems to be a fairly organised body of professional performers. According to this contract, Artemisia the banquet hostess requests the *krotalistria* Isidora to bring two more *krotalistries* with her.[28] The existence of such a

ment see A. Liveri, "Der Tanz in der mittel und spätbyzantinischen Kunst," *Wiener Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik. Beiträge zum Symposion Vierzig Jahre Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien im Gedenken an Herbert Hunger* (Wien, 4. 7. Dezember 2002) (eds W. Hörandner J. Koder M. Stassinopoulou), Vienna 2004, 293.

[24] R. Webb, "Salome's Sisters: The Rhetoric and Realities of Dance in Late Antiquity and Byzantium," *Women, Men and Eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium* (ed. L. James), London 1997, 123; on the assimilation of performers to prostitutes, particularly in relation to theatrical performances during Late Antiquity see R. Webb, *Demons and Dancers. Performance in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge Mass. London 2008, 49 50. For the attitude of the Church towards women see also C. Galatariotou, "Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender," *BMGS* 9 (1984 1985), 55 94.

[25] Webb, "Salome's Sisters," op.cit., 135.

[26] This "reality" is also reflected in the well known account of Procopius of Theodora's upbringing in the *Anecdota* or *Secret History*, in which he implies that skilled dancers enjoyed more esteem than a prostitute and stripper like Theodora, since she was not instructed in musical performances or dances, see Procopius, *History of the Wars, Secret History and the Buildings*, vols 1 7 (tr. H. B. Dewing) (LCL), Cambridge Mass. 1914 1940, *Anecdota* ix, 12 13; Webb, "Salome's Sisters," op.cit., 128. Procopius had his own agenda against Theodora and Justinian, thus the polemical intent of his work cannot be doubted. For a discussion of Procopius' treatment of Theodora see A. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century*, London 1985, 67 83. For the impact of this story on the views of modern scholars regarding late antique theatre in general see Webb, *Demons*, op.cit., 5 6.

[27] For house entertainment see Ch. P. Jones, "Dinner Theater," *Dining in a Classical Context* (ed. W. J. Slater), Ann Arbor 1991, 185 198 as well as an Egyptian wooden relief with entertainers datable to the 6th century in the Coptic Museum in Cairo (inv. no. 766) depicting two elaborately coiffed and dressed female musicians, one female dancer equally elaborately dressed and coiffed, and a male acrobat somersaulting. For the relief see G. Gabra M. Eaton Krauss, *The Treasures of Coptic Art in the Coptic Museum and Churches of Old Cairo*, Cairo 2007, 156 157, no. 98; H. C. Evans B. Ratliff (eds), *Byzantium and Islam. Age of Transition (7th-9th century)*, Exhibition catalogue, New York 2012, 196, cat. no. 138.

[28] W. L. Westermann, "The Castanet Dancers of Arsinoe," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 10 (1924), 134 144; W. L. Westermann C. J. Kraemer, *Greek Papyri in the Library of Cornell University*, New York 1926, 53 59; Webb, "Salome's Sisters," op.cit., 129.

contract, with payment details, insurance for the dancers' garments and gold ornaments and with provided transportation, suggests a profession more respectable than the one described later by the Church Fathers.

This is further confirmed by the presence of dancers on the 4th-century base of Theodosius's obelisk (Fig. 6).[29] This monument was erected in the Hippodrome of Constantinople in 390, and its base depicts the emperor Theodosius I (378-395) with his sons and court officials crowning participants in the games, while spectators watch dancers escorted by musicians. C. J. Simpson argued that the scene on the obelisk depicts two groups of dancers and musicians standing for musical activities that took place at the races in the Hippodrome. He suggested that they were perhaps members of the circus factions, and their purpose was to rouse partisan enthusiasm during the games.[30] Simpson's argument is reasonable, and it implies that those dancers were organised professionals. At the same time, these dancers are depicted in the presence of the emperor. Therefore, we might subsequently entertain the possibility that this is a further sign of their status as professionals.

From the 11th century onwards, contemporary women wearing contemporary garments replace the classical image. The light garments change to long brocade dresses with pointed sleeves and elaborate designs of the type worn at court. 11th-century examples of such images can be found on the so-called crown of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055) currently in the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest and on an illumination from the Vatican Psalter mentioned earlier.[31] Other interesting depictions of the same theme come from the contemporary Book of Job in Sinai (Cod. Sin. 3, fol. 13v) depicting male dancers in similar attire and from a 12th-century silver gilded bowl decorated with figures beneath arches today in the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg.[32] The crown, dated to 1042-1050, depicts the emperor Constantine IX Monomachos, the empress Zoe, and her sister Theodora, together with the virtues of Truth and Humility and two dancers. The latter wear long dresses with long sleeves and the *Heraion Schema*, and scholars have proposed a number of identities for them, ranging from the daughters of Jerusalem dancing in honour of King David to Skleraina, the mistress of Monomachos, performing in the private gardens of the palace.[33] The Sinai illustration (Cod. Sin. 3, fol. 13v) depicts two male dancers in contemporary costume performing during a banquet, while the Hermitage bowl depicts a dancer in a long brocade dress with pointed sleeves.

In later Byzantine art such scenes of individual dancers and intense motion are progressively transformed into group scenes of calmness and modesty, where the female dancers are linked together by holding each other's wrists or shoulders.[34] That is the nature of the dance depicted on an illumination from Vat. gr. 752, a full-page illustration of the Canticle of Moses, sung after the Crossing of the Red Sea. Fourteen women are depicted dancing in a circle holding each other around the shoulders. Their dress is like that worn at the court in the 11th century, while each dancer also wears a long hat extending to either side of their head.[35] It has been suggested that the model used for these images were the professional dancers of official ceremonies, since their body parts are covered.[36]

The "Maenads" on the Veroli (Fig. 4) do not bear similarities with the standard image of dancers as depicted on the Mildenhall dishes. They dance with intense moves in what appears to be a circular dance, holding each other with short kerchiefs and accompanied by an orchestra playing the *kithara*, panpipes, transverse flute, and cymbals. These are new elements introduced into the iconography

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[29] M. Voutsa, "Ο γυναικείος χορός μέσα από βυζαντινές και μεταβυζαντινές εικονογραφικές πηγές. Μια πρώτη προσέγγιση," *Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνες* 91 (2004), 45.

[30] C. J. Simpson, "Musicians and the Arena: Dancers and the Hippo drome," *Latomus* 59 (2000), 633 639; see also Webb, *Demons*, op.cit., 42 43.

[31] For the so called crown of Constantine IX Monomachos see Evans Wixom (eds), op.cit. (n. 2), 210 212, cat. no. 145; for the Vat. gr. 752 see ibid., 206 207, cat. no. 142.

[32] K. Weitzmann G. Galavaris, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Illuminated Manuscripts,* vol. 1: *From the Ninth to the Twelfth Century*, New Jersey 1990, pl. CXI, fig. 307. For the Hermitage bowl see M. Evangelatou H. Papastavrou P. T. Skot ti (eds), *Byzantium: An Oecumenical Empire. Byzantine Hours - Works and Days in Byzantium*, Exhibition catalogue, Athens 2002, 47, cat. no. 7 (V. Zalesskaya).

[33] Evans Wixom (eds), op.cit. (n. 2), 210 212, no. 145. Oikono mides, on the other hand, has disputed the authenticity of the Mono machos Crown, see N. Oikonomides, "La couronnedite de Constan tin Monomaque," *TM* 12 (1994), 241 262.

[34] For a general discussion on the iconography of dancers in me dieval Byzantium see T. Steppan, "Tanzdarstellungen der mittel und spätbyzantinischen Kunst. Ursache, Entwicklung und Aus sageeines Bildmotivs," *CahArch* 45 (1997), 141 168; N. Isar, "The Dance of Adam: Reconstructing the Byzantine Χορός," *ByzSl* 61 (2003), 179 204.

[35] Evans Wixom (eds), op.cit. (n. 2), 206 207, cat. no. 147.

[36] Voutsa, op.cit. (n. 29), 45.

of dance around the time the casket was created.[37] Even though the Veroli images retain their classical appearance, the circular dance, kerchiefs and orchestra represent the transition from classical imagery to medieval, as seen on the 11th-century artefacts discussed earlier, such as the Monomachos crown and the Vatican Psalter. Elements of this transition include professional dancers performing circular dances, contemporary garments (long brocade dresses with pointed sleeves, instead of lighter ones, and kerchiefs instead of a billowing mantle over the dancer's head), and the presence of a musical ensemble instead of one musician only.

To conclude, despite the profound, and well publicized, dislike of the Church Fathers towards secular music, the Byzantines ignored their moral preaching and continued to entertain themselves, either in public or in private. This frivolous atmosphere is reflected on medieval Byzantine caskets, where it is possible that medieval orchestras are depicted, though under a Late Antique veil, such as the orchestra seen on the Veroli casket. Church Fathers did not deter the Byzantines from dancing any more than their warnings against music did. On the contrary, dancing retained a central role in ceremonial rituals, first at the Hippodrome and then in the court. A shift in the iconography of dance in Byzantine art also demonstrates this change: from dancers with diaphanous garments we now see figures covered with heavy ornamental garments and holding kerchiefs instead of the Late Antique *peplos*. These elements of contemporary life, hidden under antique looking figures and side by side with diluted motifs derived from earlier models, are depicted on medieval caskets, and are particularly visible on the Veroli casket, offering an insight into the everyday life of the Byzantines.

[37] A circular dance can also be seen in the iconography of the Three Graces throughout antiquity and beyond. However, the circular dance of the Three Graces has nothing in common with the circular dance of the figures on the Veroli casket: the Three Graces dance in a calm manner and close to each other and not in an elongated and vivid circular dance like the one seen on the medieval casket.

Ανθούσα Παπαγιαννάκη

ΔΙΑΣΚΕΔΑΣΕΙΣ ΣΚΑΛΙΣΜΕΝΕΣ ΣΕ ΕΛΕΦΑΝΤΟΣΤΟ: ΟΙ ΜΟΥΣΙΚΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΙ ΧΟΡΕΥΤΕΣ ΣΤΟ ΣΚΕΠΑΣΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΚΙΒΩΤΙΔΙΟΥ VEROLI

Το κιβωτίδιο Veroli στο Victoria and Albert Museum στο Λονδίνο, χρονολογείται γύρω στο 10ο αιώνα και ανήκει στα «κιβωτίδια με διακόσμηση ροδάκων», μια ομάδα πολυτελών αντικειμένων κατασκευασμένων από ελεφαντοστέινες και οστέινες πλάκες/πλακίδια και ταινίες. Η διακόσμησή τους αποτελεί το πιο ολοκληρωμένο σύνολο μεσοβυζαντινής κοσμικής τέχνης που έχει διατηρηθεί έως τις μέρες μας, και η θεματογραφία τους καλύπτει τόσο θεούς και ήρωες από την ελληνορρωμαϊκή μυθολογία όσο παραστάσεις αυτοκρατορικής προπαγάνδας, καθώς επίσης διάφορα διακοσμητικά θέματα. Σε αντίθεση με την πλειονότητα των μεσοβυζαντινών κιβωτιδίων που είχαν κατασκευαστεί en-serie, το Veroli ήταν κατά πάσα πιθανότητα ειδική παραγγελία και η διακόσμησή του περιλαμβάνει μυθολογικές μορφές, η αναγνώριση των οποίων είναι εξαιρετικά δύσκολη.

Αυτή η δυσκολία είναι εμφανής, για παράδειγμα, στις μορφές των μουσικών και χορευτών στο σκέπασμα του κιβωτιδίου, για τις οποίες έχουν εκφραστεί πολλές απόψεις. Ωστόσο, πέρα από το αίνιγμα της αναγνώρισης και ταύτισης των μορφών με συγκεκριμένα μυθολογικά πρόσωπα, υπάρχουν επιπλέον στοιχεία στη συγκεκριμένη παράσταση που χρίζουν εξίσου προσοχής: τα μουσικά όργανα και η εικονογραφία του χορού. Τα μουσικά όργανα που απεικονίζονται στο Veroli είναι ο πλαγίαυλος, η σύριγγα, η κιθάρα και τα κύμβαλα και βρίσκονται στα χέρια μυθολογικών μορφών. Παρά τον αρχαϊκό χαρακτήρα των μορφών, το συγκεκριμένο μουσικό σύνολο είναι πιθανό να αντικατοπτρίζει μια βυζαντινή ορχήστρα του 10ου αιώνα, καθώς με εξαίρεση τη σύριγγα και την αρχαϊκή κιθάρα, τα υπόλοιπα μουσικά όργανα απεικονίζονται σε μεταγενέστερα μουσικά σύνολα.

Οι μεσαιωνικοί χορευτές στο σκέπασμα του Veroli είναι μυθολογικά πρόσωπα συνήθως αναγνωρίσιμα ως «Μαινάδες». Ωστόσο, τα βασικά χαρακτηριστικά των Μαινάδων (έντονες χορευτικές κινήσεις, διαφανή ενδύματα, κύμβαλα ή ντέφι, πέπλος να ανεμίζει πάνω από τα κεφάλια τους) δεν παρουσιάζουν ομοιότητες μόνο με επαγγελματίες χορευτές της ύστερης αρχαιότητας, αλλά τα ίδια κλασσικά πρότυπα χρησιμοποιούνται στην απεικόνιση επαγγελματιών χορευτών μέχρι τον 11ο αιώνα. Από αυτό το χρονικό σημείο και μετά, οι ατομικοί χορευτές της ύστερης αρχαιότητας και ο έντονος χορός τους μετατρέπονται σε ομαδικούς κυκλικούς χορούς με αργά, ήρεμα βήματα, με τους χορευτές πιασμένους χιαστί είτε από τα χέρια είτε από τους ώμους ή κρατώντας μαντήλια, συνοδευόμενοι από μια ορχήστρα. Οι «Μαινάδες» στο Veroli χορεύουν κυκλικά σε έντονο ρυθμό, κρατώντας η μια μορφή την άλλη με μαντήλια, συνοδευόμενες από μια ορχήστρα, στοιχεία που δείχνουν τη μετάβαση από τα κλασικά εικονογραφικά πρότυπα στα μεσαιωνικά. Επομένως, άγνωστες έως τώρα πτυχές της καθημερινής ζωής των Βυζαντινών είναι δυνατό να απεικονίζονται στις μυθολογικές παραστάσεις της διακόσμησης των μεσαιωνικών ελεφαντοστέινων κιβωτιδίων.