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## Cultural Identity and Dress: The Case of Late Byzantine Ceremonial Costume\*

With eight plates

Ceremonial costume is principally rhetorical in function, serving as a vehicle for the symbolic expression of the moral, religious, and political values of social groups. Within the framework of pre-modern, hierarchical states in particular, the ceremonial costume of the members of the ruling class came to be the visual manifestation of their status. The exclusive use of official insignia served to differentiate them from the rest of the population while, at the same time, it created a sense of solidarity among their ranks. The sumptuousness of the costume, made of costly fabrics and often adorned with precious substances, publicized the wealth and consequent power of all those in or associated with authority and produced an awe-inspiring effect in the beholders, thus commanding their obedience and respect. Within the ruling class itself, rank was encoded in the use of particular garments and accessories and in the variation of materials, colors, manufacturing techniques, and decorative motifs of a heraldic character.<sup>1</sup> At the earliest stages of its development, ceremonial costume

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<sup>1</sup> On clothing and personal adornment as signifiers of social and political status whether of individuals or of social groups, see M. E. ROACH – J. BUBOLZ EICHER, *The*

was often a more ornate and luxurious version of contemporary attire.<sup>2</sup> Its use in a ritual context, however, resulted in its becoming imbued with a symbolic significance, a significance that epitomized the political and religious ideology of the state in general and the self-perception of the ruling class in particular. The political and mystical symbolism of ceremonial costume was sufficient to detach it from everyday life<sup>3</sup> and to allow it to develop to a large extent independently of the fluctuations of fashion. As a result, certain designs would continue to be employed in ceremonial contexts long after they had become obsolete in daily life.<sup>4</sup> In such cases the antiquated form itself became semantically significant: it served as a visual statement of uninterrupted continuity with the past that justified the exercise of

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Language of Personal Adornment, in: J. M. CORDWELL – R. A. SCHWARZ (eds.), *The Fabrics of Culture. The Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*. The Hague 1979, 11–17; G. CLARK, *Symbols of Excellence. Precious Materials as Expressions of Status*. Cambridge 1986, 1–12, 82–106; J. SCHNEIDER, *The Anthropology of Cloth. Annual Review of Anthropology* 16 (1987) 409–416; J. SCHNEIDER – A. B. WEINER, Introduction, in: A. B. WEINER – J. SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Cloth and Human Experience*. Washington D.C. – London 1989, 1–29. On the importance of luxurious garments and their ritual bestowal in legitimating the ruler and in cementing ties of loyalty and solidarity within the ruling class in the great empires of Central Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe during the Middle Ages, see T. T. ALLEN, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles. (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization)*. Cambridge 1997, 92–94, 103–104; S. GORDON, *A World of Investiture*, in: S. GORDON (ed.), *Robes and Honor. The Medieval World of Investiture*. New York 2001, 1–19. The work of Thomas Allsen was brought to my attention by Dr. Marcus MILWRIGHT whom I here thank.

<sup>2</sup> Such, for example, was the case of the Roman toga, see S. STONE, *The Toga: From National to Ceremonial Costume*, in: J. L. SEBESTA – L. BONFANTE (eds.), *The World of Roman Costume*. Madison 1994, 13–45.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. MADOU, *Le costume civil (Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental 47)*. Turnhout 1986, 17.

<sup>4</sup> A case in point is that of the Byzantine imperial *loros* which, by the sixth century, had developed out of the *toga picta* (or *trabea triumphalis*), the most elaborate version of the Roman toga worn by the Late Roman consuls as part of their ceremonial attire. The *loros* remained in use as one of the insignia of the Byzantine emperors down to the fall of the Empire in the fifteenth century, more than a thousand years after the toga had gone out of use in everyday contexts. On the *toga picta* and the development of the Byzantine *loros*, see R. DELBRUECK, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler*. Berlin – Leipzig 1929, 60–61; E. CONDURACHI, *Sur l'origine et l'évolution du loros imperial. Arta și Archeologia* 11–12 (1935/36) 37–45; M. G. PARANI, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries)*. Leiden 2003, 18–27.

power in the present.<sup>5</sup> Given, then, the conservative character of ceremonial costume and its symbolic ramifications, any dramatic change in its appearance after a centuries-old tradition of continuity is a phenomenon worthy of investigation, as it may point to a concomitant change in the values-system of the society and state it embodied. One such instance of dramatic change that presents itself for examination is the case of Byzantine secular ceremonial costume in the Late Byzantine period (1204–1453).

By Byzantine ceremonial costume I mean the prescribed dress and insignia of Byzantine dignitaries and civil servants which were characteristic of their rank and office and which were worn by them while participating in different events during the annual ritual cycle of the imperial court. As for female ceremonial costume, though some sort of dress-code for the women in the entourage of the empress and for wives and widows of officials taking part in court rites must have existed, evidence concerning it is less forthcoming<sup>6</sup> and, consequently,

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<sup>5</sup> The importance of the past in legitimizing the present is evident not only in the conservative character of ceremonial attire, with its attachment to antiquated forms, but also in the continual reuse of ancient symbols of authority and, less often, in the incorporation of ancient components in newly fashioned regalia. An interesting example of the first instance is the Holy Crown of Hungary, which was believed to be the crown that the saintly founder of the Hungarian kingdom, St. Stephen, had received from the Pope Sylvester II in 1001. Down to the early twentieth century, the crown remained the single most important coronation symbol, alone able to confer legitimacy to claimants to the Hungarian throne, and possession of it was often hotly contested among rivals throughout its long history. The fact that the actual object was not the original crown that St. Stephen had received from the Pope, but a composite artefact comprising a Byzantine open crown that was sent to Hungary as a diplomatic gift by the emperor Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078) and a hemisphere formed by two crossing bands of western manufacture, did not in the least detract from the symbolic power with which the crown was invested by tradition and popular belief, see É. KOVÁCS – Z. LOVAG, *The Hungarian Crown and Other Regalia*. Budapest 1980, 7–57, 75–81. As examples of the second instance one may mention the incorporation of antique gems in much later crowns, see CLARK, *Symbols* 96, fig. 36.

<sup>6</sup> It is indicative that in the *De cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae*, the ceremonial handbook which was compiled in the tenth century and which incorporates material on Byzantine imperial ceremonial from the fifth century down to the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969), references to female ceremonial dress other than that of the empress are encountered, as far as I know, in only three out of its one hundred and fifty-three chapters, see De Cer. 2, 21, 25–26 (VOGT) (*patrikiaï*, eighth century), 2, 63, 1–66, 14 (VOGT) (*zoste patrikia*, eighth century), 1, 622, 20–624, 19 (REISKE) (*koubikoularaia*, tenth century). To the best of my knowledge, the fourteenth-

it will not be considered here. The most important sources for the study of Byzantine official costume that have come down to us from the mediaeval period are two ceremonial handbooks believed to have been compiled for the use of officials responsible for the staging of imperial ceremonies. The reference is to the tenth-century *De ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae*<sup>7</sup> and the fourteenth-century treatise on dignities and offices by pseudo-Kodinos.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, there is nothing comparable from the period in between, only scant references to official dress and insignia found in historiographical and poetical works. The testimony of the texts is complemented by the visual evidence of portraits of Byzantine officials that have survived in various media<sup>9</sup> and of representations of the Byzantine court in secular illuminated manuscripts, though the latter are admittedly rare.<sup>10</sup> As to primary

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century Byzantine ceremonial handbook of pseudo-Kodinos contains no references to contemporary female ceremonial dress other than that of the empress.

<sup>7</sup> See previous note. For a tabulated chronological synopsis of the sources of the *De ceremoniis*, see A. KAZHDAN, *De ceremoniis*. ODB I 596–597. See, also, J. B. BURY, *The Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogenetos*. *The English Historical Review* 22 (1907) 209–227, 417–439.

<sup>8</sup> J. VERPEAUX (ed.), *Pseudo-Kodinos. Traité des offices*. Paris, 1966.

<sup>9</sup> For a catalogue of surviving portraits of Byzantine officials see PARANI, *Reconstructing* 325–341. To these may be added the portrait of the *proedros* Constantine on a recently published gold and enamel pendant (*enkolpion*), today in a private collection, which probably dates to the eleventh century, see D. BUCKTON – P. HEATHERINGTON, “O Saviour, save me, your servant.” *An Unknown Masterpiece of Byzantine Enamel and Gold*. *Apollo* (August) 2006, 28–33.

<sup>10</sup> One has in mind the mid-twelfth-century manuscript of the chronicle of John Skylitzes now in Madrid (*Madrid Skylitzes*), which, in all probability, was produced in Norman Sicily. The miniatures that are most useful in the study of Byzantine official dress are those which appear to be reproducing slightly earlier Middle-Byzantine models (up to fol. 87), see A. GRABAR – M. I. MANOUSSACAS, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothèque nationale de Madrid*. Venice 1979, 148–155, 174–183 and, more recently, V. TSAMAKDA, *The Illustrated Chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes in Madrid*. Leiden 2002, esp. 373–375, 394–397. To this may be added the illustrated *epithalamion* (bridal song) *Vat. gr.* 1851, which, I believe, was created on the occasion of the wedding of Alexios, son of Manuel I Komnenos, to Agnes of France in 1179, see I. SPATHARAKIS, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*. Leiden 1976, 210–230, pls. 161, 164; C. J. HILSDALE, *Constructing a Byzantine Augusta: A Greek Book for a French Bride*. *Art Bulletin* 87 (2005) 458–483. For alternative attributions and dating of this manuscript see A. IACOBINI, *L'epitalamio di Andronico II. Una cronaca di nozze dalla Constantinopoli Paleologa*, in: A. IACOBINI – E. ZANINI (eds.), *Arte profana e arte sacra a Bisanzio*. Rome 1995, 361–410; C. HENNESSY, *A Child Bride and Her Representation in the Vatican Epithalamion*, *cod. gr.* 1851. *BMGs* 30 (2006) 115–150.

material related to mediaeval Byzantine official dress, this is almost non-existent.<sup>11</sup>

On the basis of what has survived it becomes evident that, down to the late twelfth century, one of the most important components of Byzantine ceremonial dress was the sleeveless mantle called the “*chlamys*”. The *chlamys* had formed part of Byzantine official dress since the fourth century. It was worn both by the emperor and by military and civil officials. Among women, only the empress had the right to wear a *chlamys*. Judging by artistic representations (Fig. 1), the Early Byzantine *chlamys* was an ankle-length cloak of a semi-circular cut, fastened at the right shoulder with a fibula.<sup>12</sup> Attached at the vertical edges of the mantle was a pair of “*tablia*”, square or rectangular textile panels of a color and decoration different from that of the rest of the garment. The imperial *chlamys* was purple with golden *tablia*, while that of the dignitaries was often white with a pair

<sup>11</sup> What have come down to us are items of personal adornment, like rings and *enkolpia*, which are identified by their inscriptions as belonging to Byzantine officeholders. See, for example, M. C. ROSS, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection 2: Jewelry, Enamels, and Art of the Migration Period. With an addendum by S. A. BOYD and S. R. ZWIRN.* Washington, D.C. 2005, nos. 129, 156, 158; WALTERS ART GALLERY, *Jewelry, Ancient to Modern.* New York 1979, no. 429; J. DURAND et al. (eds.), *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises.* Paris 1992, nos. 219–221; H. C. EVANS – W. D. WIXOM (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261.* New York 1997, nos. 172, 173; M. EVANGELATOU – E. PAPASTAVROU – T. P. SKOTTE (eds.), *To Βυζάντιο ως Οικουμένη.* Athens 2001, nos. 96–98. See also above, n. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Portraits of Early Byzantine emperors, empresses and officials wearing the *chlamys* have survived in a variety of media. See, for example, R. DELBRUECK, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantinus Magnus bis zum Ende des Westreichs.* Berlin – Leipzig 1933, pls. 94–97 (silver commemorative plate of Theodosios I, 388); *idem*, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler*, nos. 2 (ivory diptych of Constantios III, cousin of Rome, 417?), 51, 52, (ivory panels with portraits of an empress, probably Ariadne, d. 515), 64 (ivory diptych of an unidentified official, 425?), 65 (ivory diptych of Probianus, vicar of Rome, 400); G. A. MANSUELLI, *La fine del mondo antico.* Torino 1988, 106–107, figs. 4–7 (relief sculptures adorning the basis of the obelisk of Theodosios I in the hippodrome of Constantinople); J. INAN – E. ROSENBAUM, *Roman and Early Byzantine Portrait Sculpture in Asia Minor.* London 1966, nos. 242–243 (two statues of magistrates from Aphrodisias, second quarter of fifth century); A. CUTLER – J. W. NESBITT, *L'arte byzantina e il suo pubblico. Parte Prima: Da Giustiniano all'età media.* Torino 1986, 6–7 (mosaic panels of Justinian and Theodora with their entourage in the church of San Vitale at Ravenna, c. 547).

of purple *tablia*. According to the sixth-century chronicler John Malalas, the purple *tablia* of the dignitaries' cloak were a symbol both of office and of obedience to imperial authority, hence their purple color.<sup>13</sup> The fibula that kept the imperial *chlamys* in place was circular in shape with three pendants, while that of the dignitaries belonged to a distinctive type known as the crossbow fibula.<sup>14</sup>

The testimony of the *De cerimoniis* and other written sources, as well as that of surviving portraits of Byzantine emperors and officials dating from the ninth to the twelfth centuries (Figs. 2, 3), is unequivocal as to the continual use and importance of the *chlamys* during the Middle Byzantine period (seventh to the twelfth centuries).<sup>15</sup> It comprised one of the regalia with which the emperor and the empress were invested during their coronation.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the emperor wore the *chlamys* while participating in the celebrations for the most important religious feasts of the Christian calendar,<sup>17</sup> as well as when presiding over certain secular ceremonies of the court, like audiences, promo-

<sup>13</sup> John Malalas, *Chronographia* II, 8 (23, 66 – 25, 15 THURN).

<sup>14</sup> The imperial fibula can be seen clearly depicted on the commemorative plate of Theodosios I and in the mosaic panel of Justinian at San Vitale in Ravenna, see n. 12 and Fig. 1. To my knowledge, there are no extant examples. On the contrary, the crossbow fibula of Early Byzantine officials is very well-attested in the archaeological record, see, for example, J. P.C. KENT – K. S. PAINTER, *Wealth of the Roman World, AD 300–700*. London 1977, nos. 19–25; J. GARBSCH – B. OVERBECK, *Spätantike zwischen Heidentum und Christentum*. Munich 1989, nos. 11, 13–15; Ai. YEROULANOU, *Diatrita. Gold Pierced-work Jewellery from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> Century*. Athens 1999, 52–54, nos. 170–179.

<sup>15</sup> For surviving portraits see A. CUTLER – J.-M. SPIESER, *Byzance médiévale, 700–1204*. Paris 1996, figs. 107–108 (mosaic panel with an unnamed emperor in the narthex of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople, late ninth or early tenth century), 280 (portrait of Alexios I Komnenos in *Vat. gr. 666*, fol. 2<sup>r</sup>, *terminus post quem* 1109–1111); EVANS – WIXOM, *Glory no. 42* (portrait of the *patrikiōs*, *praipositos*, and *sakellarios* Leo and of his brother, the *protospatharios* Constantine in *Vat. reg. gr. 1*, fols. 2<sup>r</sup>, 3<sup>r</sup>, 940s), on page 82 (portrait of Nikephoros III Botaneiates in *Coislín* 79, fol. 1(2<sup>bis</sup>)<sup>r</sup>, 1078–1081); A. KARAKATSANIS (ed.), *Treasures of Mount Athos*. Thessalonike 1997, 200 (portrait of unidentified dignitary(?) in *Dionysiou* 61, fol. 1<sup>v</sup>, second half of eleventh century); SPATHARAKIS, *Portrait* figs. 42 (portrait of the *proedros* John in *Speer Library, cod. acc. no. 11.21.1900*, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, second half of eleventh century), 45 (unidentified official in *Laura A 103*, fol. 3<sup>v</sup>, twelfth century).

<sup>16</sup> *De cer.* 2, 1, 1–2 31; 11, 1–12, 5; 16, 1–17, 23 (VOGT), 1, 439, 21–440, 11 (REISKE); Michael Attaleiates, *Historia* 157, 15–18 (PÉREZ MARTÍN); John Cinnamus, *Epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum* 28, 20–21 (MEINEKE); Nicetas Choniates, *Historia* 46, 6–8 (VAN DIETEN).

<sup>17</sup> *De cer.* 1, 175, 1–179, 5 (VOGT).

tions, and the reception of foreign visitors.<sup>18</sup> Like their sovereign, Middle Byzantine officials often wore this stately mantle when taking part in the secular and religious ceremonies that punctuated life in court.<sup>19</sup> Some were actually invested with the *chlamys* that was appropriate to their rank by the emperor himself on the day of their promotion.<sup>20</sup> Certain categories of officials, such as the *patrikioi*, owned several *chlamydes*, made of different fabrics and varied in terms of their color and decoration, which they wore on different occasions in accordance with the requirements of court protocol.<sup>21</sup>

Compared to its Early Byzantine predecessor, the Middle Byzantine *chlamys* appears to have been much more elaborate and colorful in appearance. It was made of purple, bright red, brownish red, blue, green, yellow, and white fabrics and patterned with geometric, vegetal, or even animal motifs.<sup>22</sup> The decorative borders—most probably gold-embroidered—that went round its edges enhanced its ornate aspect. As for the *tablia*, those of the imperial *chlamys* remained gold-embroidered, as was the case in the earlier period. On the other hand, those which adorned the cloaks of officials were no longer exclusively purple, but differed in color and decoration according to the rank of the bearer.<sup>23</sup> Judging by artistic representations, the cut of the Middle

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, op. cit. 1, 127, 1–129, 25; 160, 1–17; 2, 11, 3–5; 26, 3–22; 33, 3–20; 37, 3–5; 40, 4–8; 44, 3–15 (VOGT), 1, 566, 15–567, 21; 583, 14–19; 587, 20–21; 593, 18–21 (REISKE).

<sup>19</sup> Op. cit. 1, 7, 16–18; 65, 4–9; 78, 4–7; 82, 4–6; 84, 5–7; 89, 4–7; 94, 18–19; 107, 3–4; 119, 5–11; 137, 6–7; 169, 16–21; 2, 48, 9–27; 65, 7–11; 112, 3–4; 160, 11–17 (VOGT), 1, 574, 6–575, 14; 578, 19–20; 579, 8–12; 585, 5–7; 588, 19–589, 2; 641, 9–17 (REISKE).

<sup>20</sup> Op. cit. 1, 26, 1–28, 7; 33, 1–35, 3; 36, 1–8; 37, 1–38, 7 (VOGT); cf. N. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles*. Paris 1972, 97. According to the testimony of Liudprand of Cremona, in the tenth century, the Byzantine emperor, would also bestow “cloaks of honour” to court officials, along with grants of money, on Palm Sunday, in a manifestation of imperial largesse, see Fr. A. WRIGHT, *The Works of Liudprand of Cremona*. London, 1930, 212. Whether these cloaks were actually *chlamydes* is not possible to say.

<sup>21</sup> De cer. 1, 19, 12–14; 65, 5–6; 102, 25–26; 116, 21–23; 119, 5–9; 132, 20–23; 151, 8–11; 160, 4–7; 169, 16–20; 2, 48, 19–20; 86, 10–12; 94, 8–12 (VOGT).

<sup>22</sup> In artistic representations, the *chlamys* is, as a rule, depicted adorned with geometric or vegetal motifs. Possible references to *chlamydes* decorated with images of animals may be found in the De cer. 1, 119, 9 (peacocks), 169, 19 (lions) (VOGT).

<sup>23</sup> Op. cit. 1, 65, 4–10; 2, 94, 8–12 (VOGT). There is evidence to suggest that the *tablia* that were appropriate to a particular dignity were acquired separately, at the time of promotion, see OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes* 95. Furthermore, it seems that the same

Byzantine *chlamys* did not form a perfect semi-circle. Neither was it always full-length, as the Early Byzantine one had been, but sometimes reached only to mid-calf. It was fastened at the right shoulder as had been the earlier practice or, in what seems to be a Middle Byzantine development, at the front with one or two clasps.<sup>24</sup> Yet, the types of fibulae that kept the mantle in place had changed. Judging by representations, the imperial circular fibula with pendants was replaced by a plain circular type or an arch-topped rectangular one, most probably set with gems or enamelled. None is extant. As to the fibulae of officials, the Early Byzantine crossbow type went out of use in the Middle Byzantine period. In portraits of Middle Byzantine officials the devices holding their *chlamydes* in place are not always clearly depicted. When they are distinguishable, they appear to be brooches of circular shape.<sup>25</sup> To my knowledge, none has been securely identified in the archaeological record so far.

Whatever the differences in appearance between the Early and the Middle Byzantine *chlamys*, only natural when one considers the centuries-long history of the garment, the similarity in basic form, the recurrence of the *tablia*, and, above all, the continuous usage of the

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dignitary could own different kinds of *tablia*, which he could attach to his mantle according to the occasion. This could be the case with the *patrikioi*, who would wear their white *chlamydes* with either golden or red *tablia*, see De cer. 1, 19, 12–14; 65, 5–6; 102, 25–26; 132, 22–23; 151, 9–11; 2, 94, 10–11 (VOGT). The *tablia* do not appear consistently in Middle Byzantine portrayals of officials dressed in a mantle that otherwise looks like the *chlamys*, see, for example, the *patrikios* Leo, the *protospatharios* Constantine, and the unidentified figures in *Dionysiou* 61 and in *Laura A* 103 (n. 15). E. PILTZ has suggested that perhaps the lack of a *tablion* was indicative of (lower?) rank position, see her Middle Byzantine Court Costume, in: H. MAGUIRE (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*. Washington, D.C. 1997, 49. One wonders whether the mantle without the *tablia* was still considered a *chlamys* or whether it had a different name. There is a reference to “plain *chlamydes*” (χλαμίδα λιτά) in the De cer. 1, 116, 23 (VOGT), worn by the *patrikioi* on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on September 14, but one cannot claim that the author is referring to *chlamydes* without *tablia*, even though it is tempting to think so.

<sup>24</sup> The occasions on which the *chlamys* was worn fastened at the front were prescribed in the ceremonial handbooks, see OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes* 167, 189.

<sup>25</sup> Another type which may have been employed at that time is the pin-type fibula. It can be seen in the portrayal of certain Christian martyrs who were anachronistically depicted in Byzantine court dress, see, for example, C. MANGO, *The Monastery of St. Chrysostomos at Koutsovendis (Cyprus) and Its Wall Paintings*. *DOP* 44 (1990) 89, pl. 8b, fig. 144 (St. George, c. 1100).



term “*chlamys*” and its derivatives to describe the principal state official mantle in the Middle Byzantine period, imply a will on the part of the imperial government to maintain the appearance of uninterrupted continuity with the past, namely the time of the first Christian Roman emperors if not an even more distant Roman era. It is interesting to note in this respect that in the sixth century, the chronicler Malalas ascribed an ancient Roman pedigree to the *chlamys*. According to him, it was first adopted by Numa Pompilius, king of Rome after Romulus and Remus, as the official mantle for himself and his dignitaries.<sup>26</sup> Considering that in mediaeval times the Byzantines continued to call themselves “Romans” and held tenaciously to the belief that their polity was the continuation of the Roman Empire,<sup>27</sup> one could suggest that the continual use of the “Roman” *chlamys* may have served as yet another means of highlighting the Roman origins of the imperial establishment in Constantinople.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See above, n. 13.

<sup>27</sup> References to the Byzantines as “Romans” in mediaeval Byzantine texts are too numerous to list individually. However, as an indicative example one may mention the acclamations addressed by the demes to the emperor on the day of his coronation, when the ruler was hailed as “emperor of the Romans”, see De cer. 2, 4, 16–17, 19–20, 23–24 (VOGT). See, also, M. MANTOUVALOU, *Romaios–Romios–Romiossyni. La notion de «Romain» avant et après la chute de Constantinople. Επισημονική Επετηρίς της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών* 28 (1979–1985) 173–182; on the concept—central to Byzantine political theory—of the Byzantine Empire as the continuation of the Roman Empire and on its development and elaboration over time, see, among others, F. DÖLGER, *Rom in der Gedankenwelt der Byzantiner*. Reprinted in his *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt. Ausgewählte Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Darmstadt 1964, 70–115, esp. 71–80, 98–101; H. AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin*. Paris 1975, 48–50; E. CHRYSOS, *The Roman Political Identity in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium*, in: K. FLEDELIS (ed.), in cooperation with P. SCHREINER, *Byzantium. Identity, Image, Influence*. XIX International Congress of Byzantine Studies Copenhagen, Major Papers. Copenhagen 1996, 7–16. The assumption of the title “emperor of the Romans” by western rulers, beginning with Charlemagne in 800, provoked the angry reaction of the Byzantine government, which considered it as an act of usurpation of its rights and prerogatives, see, for example, WRIGHT, *Liudprand of Cremona* 263–266.

<sup>28</sup> Note that the story of the origins of the *chlamys* attested by Malalas in the sixth century was repeated in the *Souda Lexicon*, a Byzantine compilation of the late tenth century, see *Suidae Lexicon s.v. χλαμύς* (IV 809 ADLER). It was also copied by the twelfth-century chronicler George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum* I, 34, 4–35, 6 (BEKKER). However, it is not possible to say whether it was well-known in court circles during the Middle Byzantine period.

The *chlamys*, of course, was not the only ceremonial mantle in the Middle Byzantine court.<sup>29</sup> However, it appears to have been the one worn on the most solemn and stately occasions. Moreover, judging by the portraits that have come down to us, Middle Byzantine officials preferred to be portrayed in the *chlamys*-costume more often than in any other attire.<sup>30</sup> This seems to suggest that they believed that the concept of belonging to the administrative or military establishment of the empire was best expressed by being portrayed in the *chlamys*. Why this was so may be explained by an investigation of the mantle's symbolic connotations as deduced both from contemporary texts and from official portraiture.<sup>31</sup> As pointed out earlier, the *chlamys* constituted one of the coronation insignia. What is more, it was worn by the emperor when he received his court, when he promoted individuals to higher office, and when he granted formal audience to diplomatic delegations. Consequently, one may claim that the *chlamys* was the mantle worn by the Byzantine emperor in his attribute as the head of state and as the source of all authority from which all offices and dignities were obtained. The *chlamys* of the Byzantine officials, which some received from the hands of the emperor himself, was a visual statement of the bond that existed between themselves and their sovereign. It highlighted their proximity to the center of power and pointed towards the source of their delegated authority which they could le-

<sup>29</sup> Another type of sleeveless mantle, also worn by both the emperor and his dignitaries, civilian and military, was the "sagion". Its name is probably derived from the Roman "sagum", which was a rough, woolen military cloak. It is not possible to say in what way the Middle Byzantine *sagion* differed from the *chlamys*, apart from the fact that it lacked the *tablia*. Perhaps, it was a shorter type of mantle. The imperial *sagia* were luxurious garments made of purple or gold-woven fabrics and adorned with gold-embroidered borders and pearls, see, for example, De cer. 1, 63, 17–18; 175, 6; 2, 1, 8 (VOGT), 1, 522, 8–9; 567, 2; 634, 14–16 (REISKE). Those of the dignitaries appear to have been comparatively less ornate, either purple (ἀληθινὰ) or red (ῥοῆς) in color, see, for example, op. cit. 1, 73, 18–19; 74, 1–2; 92, 7; 101, 13; 155, 19; 2, 49, 13, 21; 69, 7; 76, 16 (VOGT), 1, 521, 22; 524, 14–15; 539, 8 (REISKE). Apparently some dignitaries, like the *patrikioi*, the *magistroi*, the *si-lentiarioroi*, and the *praipositoï*, owned *sagia* of both colors. In contrast to the *chlamys*, the *sagion* is never mentioned in ceremonial handbooks as one of the insignia of Byzantine officials. The only official who appears to have owned a *sagion* that was particular to his office, though not given to him upon his promotion, was the *proedros tes synkletou*; it was pink(?) in color, woven with gold (δίχροδον δάχρουσον), see op. cit. 1, 443, 2–3 (REISKE).

<sup>30</sup> See PARANI, Reconstructing, appendix 3, nos. 1, 2, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 26, 31.

<sup>31</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see op. cit. 16–17.

gitimately exercise uncontested. These ideas were given pictorial expression in one of the dedicatory miniatures of an eleventh-century Byzantine manuscript of the Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, *Coislin* 79, now in the Bibliothèque nationale of France.<sup>32</sup> On fol. 2<sup>r</sup> the emperor is portrayed enthroned on a magnificent throne, which is flanked by four standing officials (Fig. 2). Behind the imperial throne, which is likened to the morning star in the epigram that accompanies the image, stand the personifications of Truth and Justice. According to the same epigram, the officials, noble of soul, represent the pinnacle of men loyal to the virtuous emperor. They are not named; only their individual titles accompany their portraits. The emperor and three of his officials are portrayed in their *chlamys*-costume. The shared mantle clearly identifies all as members of the same establishment, with the emperor at its head and the officials as the recipients of his light and power.

Considering then the importance of the *chlamys* and its long history, it is surprising to discover that in the Late Byzantine period it disappears almost completely. It no longer constituted one of the coronation insignia of the Byzantine emperor and there are no surviving Late Byzantine portraits of him wearing one.<sup>33</sup> What is more, judging by the literary and the pictorial evidence, the majority of Byzantine officials and dignitaries no longer wore it. Significantly, the term “*chlamys*” is not mentioned even once by pseudo-Kodinos in his

<sup>32</sup> The manuscript was originally made to be presented as a gift to Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078). However, following Michael’s abdication, it was offered to his successor Nikephoros III Botaneiates (1078–1081). The three original dedication miniatures, including the one discussed here, were maintained with minor alterations to the facial features of the emperor and the necessary renaming of the imperial portraits, while a fourth, entirely new, dedicatory miniature was added at the time, see EVANS – WIXOM, Glory no. 143, with earlier bibliography.

<sup>33</sup> The *chlamys* is not mentioned among the coronation insignia in the chapter on imperial coronations included in the fourteenth-century ceremonial handbook of pseudo-Kodinos, see Pseudo-Kodinos, *De officiis* VII (252, 1 – 273, 18 VERPEAUX). Nor is it mentioned in other descriptions of imperial coronations that have come down to us from the Late Byzantine period, see VERPEAUX (ed.), Pseudo-Kodinos, appendix VI, 351–361; John Cantacuzenus, *Historiae* I, 51 (1, 196, 8 – 204, 3 SCHOPEN); G. P. MAJESKA, *Russian Travelers in Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*. Washington D.C. 1984, 104–113. See, also, PARANI, *Reconstructing* 14–16. The latest surviving portrait of a reigning emperor in the *chlamys* is that of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) in *Vat. gr.* 666, fol. 2<sup>r</sup>, see CUTLER – SPIESER, *Byzance* fig. 280.

mid-fourteenth-century ceremonial handbook.<sup>34</sup> His treatise and existing portraits of Late Byzantine officials make it evident that the *chlamys* had been abandoned as the distinctive dress of Byzantine office-holders in favor of caftans, coats, and head-dresses of oriental, mainly Turkic and Central Asian, appearance and derivation. The most common type of garment worn by Late Byzantine officials—and the one most often represented—was the caftan, made of costly fabrics adorned with geometric, vegetal, or animal motifs (Figs. 4, 7, 8). It was ankle-length and had a vertical opening all the way down the front that was secured with a row of spherical buttons. It could be ample or, more often, tight-fitting, with long sleeves. As a rule, it was worn with an impressive long belt, apparently made of leather and adorned with metal decorative attachments.<sup>35</sup> This type of garment is commonly identified with the “kabbadion” mentioned by pseudo-Kodinos.<sup>36</sup> The name is probably derived from the Persian word “qabā”, denoting a luxurious robe with long sleeves, open down the front and secured with buttons.<sup>37</sup> Other types of garments of oriental extraction that became part of Late Byzantine official ceremonial dress were the “lapatzas”, a coat with exceedingly long sleeves that were provided with slits for the arms,<sup>38</sup> and the “epilourikon”, possibly a type of coat

<sup>34</sup> This observation is based on the text as it appears in VERPEAUX’s edition. Elsewhere I have argued that the “tamparion”, which according to pseudo-Kodinos was worn by the four highest officials of the state, is a mantle and should be identified as the descendent of the Middle Byzantine *chlamys*, see PARANI, Reconstructing 63–64. Surviving portraits of high officials in this Late Byzantine mantle are rare, see op. cit. appendix 3, nos. 38, 43, 66. E. PILTZ, in her *Le costume officiel des dignitaires byzantins à l’époque paléologue*. Uppsala 1994, while at first seeming to agree with the identification of the *tamparion* as a mantle (p. 52), later goes on to say that it was actually a kind of long tunic (p. 75).

<sup>35</sup> See, also, J. ALBANI – P. KALAMARA – A. MEXIA (eds.), *The City of Mystras*. Athens 2001, figs. 159 (miniature portrait of the *protostrator Theodore Synadenos* in Bodleian Library, *MS. Lincoln College gr. 35*, fol. 8<sup>r</sup>, 1327–1342), 163 (portrait of the *skouterios* Kaniotes in the church of Hodegetria, Brontocheion Monastery, Mistra, after 1366).

<sup>36</sup> Pseudo-Kodinos, *De officiis* II (141, 1 – 166, 29 VERPEAUX).

<sup>37</sup> LBG s.v. *καβάδιον*. On the oriental garment see Y. K. STILLMAN, *Arab Dress. A Short History. From the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times*. Leiden 2000, 12, 51. On the popularity of caftans in general throughout the Islamic world, see op. cit. 47, 63–64.

<sup>38</sup> The empty portions of the sleeves were tucked in the belt at the back of the bearer, see Pseudo-Kodinos, *De officiis* IV (218, 29 – 219, 21 VERPEAUX). See, also, Br. CVETKOVIĆ, *Prilog proučavanju vizantijskog dvorskog kostima—γρονάτζα, λαπά-*

which, according to pseudo-Kodinos, was of oriental derivation and was, as a rule, worn in association with a turban.<sup>39</sup>

τῆας. *ZRVI* 34 (1995) 143–156. The term “lapatzas” is of Arabic-Persian extraction, probably derived from the word “libās”, meaning garment, see LBG s.v. λαπά-τῆας; CVETKOVIĆ, Prilog 147; F. STEINGASS, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*. New Dehli 2006, 1116. To my knowledge, there is only one surviving portrait of a Byzantine official in an outer garment that could be identified with the *lapatzas*, see R. ETZEOGLOU, Quelques remarques sur les portraits figurés dans les églises de Mistra. *JÖB* 32/5 (1982) 515–516; ALBANI – KALAMARA – MEXIA (eds), *City of Mystras* fig. 165. For examples of Bulgarian and Serbian dignitaries in the *lapatzas* see CVETKOVIĆ, Prilog, illustrations opposite p. 152. The Byzantine emperor wore a garment similar to the *lapatzas*, called the “granatza”, though with both sleeves hanging freely at the sides and reaching down to his ankles, Pseudo-Kodinos, *De officiis* IV (218, 29 – 219, 5 VERPEAUX). The etymology of the term “granatza” remains unknown, though CVETKOVIĆ, Prilog 154, posits an ultimate Armenian derivation for it. Tunics of possible oriental extraction with exceedingly long sleeves, which were gathered at the wrists when not hanging down freely, had formed part of Middle Byzantine court costume in the eleventh century, see PARANI, *Reconstructing* 55. However, in my opinion, the adoption in the Late Byzantine period of the coat with the exceedingly long sleeves, which were provided with slits for the arms to come through, should be attributed to the influence of contemporary Turkish fashions, as seen reflected, for example, in the attire of *amīr* Basil Giagoupes, a christian military official of Seljuk sultanate of Rūm, portrayed as donor in Kırk dam altı kilise, Hasan Dağı (1282–1295), N. – M. THIERRY, *Nouvelles églises rupestres de Cappadoce. Région du Hasan Dağı*. Paris 1963, 206, pl. 94, fig. 49. It is interesting to note that, among the members of the Turkish upper classes, especially in the Mamluk state, the length of the sleeves of such a coat was considered indicative of the status of the bearer: the longer the sleeves, the higher his rank, see STILLMAN, *Arab Dress* 65.

<sup>39</sup> Pseudo-Kodinos, *De officiis* II (158, 25 – 159, 2, 12–16; 160, 6–8, 11–13; 161, 25–27; 162, 9–11, 21–24; 163, 1–4 VERPEAUX), IV (206, 17–19 VERPEAUX), VII (273, 1–15 VERPEAUX); PILTZ, *Costume officiel* 53. In the Middle Byzantine period, the “epilorikon” [sic] was a type of protective garment worn by soldiers over their mail cuirasses, see LBG s.v. ἐπιλώριζον. On occasion, emperors would wear a luxurious variation of it when celebrating a military triumph, see PARANI, *Reconstructing* 118–119. However, the Middle Byzantine *epilorikon* did not form part of official dress, by contrast to the Late Byzantine *epilourikon*, which was worn in court by both military and civilian officials. Unfortunately, pseudo-Kodinos does not describe the later garment, nor does he mention whether it was worn over armour or not. One wonders whether the *epilourikon* could be identified with any of the different types of protective garments that are depicted worn by military saints over their cuirasses in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Byzantine pictorial contexts and which include waistcoats, jackets, and short, sleeveless tunics, see op. cit. 120. Some of the represented protective garments appear to have a lining of mail, a feature which has been attributed to the influence of Islamic practices on Byzantine military equipment, op. cit. 120–121; see, also, D. NICOLLE, *Arms and Ar-*

As to head-dresses, in addition to the turban, pseudo-Kodinos ascribes oriental origins to another type of head-cover worn at court, namely the “skaranikon”.<sup>40</sup> The *skaranikon* was one of the insignia of Late Byzantine officials and its color and type of decoration denoted the rank of the bearer.<sup>41</sup> The *skaranika* of most dignitaries from the *megas domestikos* down to the *protoierakarios* were adorned with portraits of the emperor standing, enthroned, or on horseback.<sup>42</sup> The presence of the imperial portrait indicated not only the source of the authority of the officials but also highlighted their proximity to the emperor.<sup>43</sup> The *skaranikon* has been identified with the cylindrical head-dress with the flat or rounded top adorned with the image an enthroned imperial figure that is commonly depicted in Late Byzantine portraits of officials (Figs. 4, 8).<sup>44</sup>

Eastern parallels may be found also for two other types of head-dresses which appear in portrayals of Late Byzantine officials. The first type is the hat with a broad brim and what looks like a conical top, which can be seen worn by the anonymous officials standing behind the enthroned emperor, to the right, in the miniature representing John VI Kantakouzenos presiding over the Church Council of 1351 in *Par. gr.* 1242, fol. 5<sup>v</sup> (Fig. 5).<sup>45</sup> It is very similar to the “sarāqūj”, a hat with a pointed conical crown and brim of Central Asian origin, which appears in Islamic miniature painting already in the mid-thirteenth

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mour of the Crusading Era, 1050–1350. White Plains, N.Y. 1988, no. 127A. The identification of the *epilourikon* with the mail-lined garment of the military saints would explain why pseudo-Kodinos ascribed an oriental origin to it. However, the existing evidence does not allow one to construct a case of equivalence between the two garments and any association between them must remain conjectural.

<sup>40</sup> Pseudo-Kodinos, *De officiis* IV (206, 19–20 VERPEAUX).

<sup>41</sup> *Op. cit.* II (145, 23 – 166, 20 VERPEAUX).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Cf. PILTZ, *Costume officiel* 65–67.

<sup>44</sup> PARANI, *Reconstructing* 69–70. The head-dresses of the *megas primikerios* John, the *protostrator* Theodore Synadenos, and the *skouterios* Kaniotes (see above, n. 35) belong to this type. One should note at this point that some believe that the *skaranikon* was a type of tunic and the Late Byzantine successor of the Middle Byzantine *skaramangion*, see A. KAZHDAN, *Skaranikon*. ODB III 1908–1909. However, this interpretation has not gained wide acceptance.

<sup>45</sup> DURAND et al. (eds.), *Byzance* 419. This type of hat should perhaps be identified with the “skiadion”, mentioned by pseudo-Kodinos as worn by both the emperor and his officials, see Pseudo-Kodinos, *De officiis* II (141, 3 – 166, 20 VERPEAUX). See, also, PARANI, *Reconstructing* 70.

century (Fig. 6).<sup>46</sup> The second type of official head-dress for which an Islamic connection may be argued is the impressive head-cover of the *logothetes tou genikou* Theodore Metochites, who was portrayed as donor in the inner narthex of the Chora Monastery (Kariye Camii) in Constantinople (1315–1320/1) (Fig. 7). In appearance, the high-rising head-dress is reminiscent of a turban. One should not exclude the possibility, however, that it was in fact a hat, consisting of a fabric cover over some sort of frame or padding. Such high-rising head-covers, turbans as well as padded hats, were popular among officials and members of the military aristocracy of the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt.<sup>47</sup>

The change in the character of mediaeval Byzantine official dress, implied by the adoption of the oriental styles just described, seems to have been accomplished by the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century: the earliest surviving portrait of a Byzantine official in a *kabbadion* and a *skaranikon* known to me dates from that time (Fig. 8).<sup>48</sup> It is true that the Byzantines wore caftans prior to the thirteenth century.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, instances of imitation of oriental (in this case Arab) fashions in the Byzantine court may be identified from a much earlier date.<sup>50</sup> Among the most obvious exam-

<sup>46</sup> MAYER, Mamluk Costume 30–31; STILLMAN, Arab Dress 68, fig. 19.

<sup>47</sup> See MAYER, Mamluk Costume 31. A possible Mamluk influence for the head-cover of Metochites has also been postulated by E. A. ZACHARIADOU, Η καλύπτρα του Μετοχίτη και οι αραβικοί αοιθοί στη Μονή της Χώρας, in: Δέκατο όγδοο Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης. Πρόγραμμα και περιλήψεις εισηγήσεων και ανακοινώσεων. Athens 1998, 25.

<sup>48</sup> A. BANK, *Iskusstvo Vizantii v sobraniakh SSSR*, vol.3. Moscow 1977, no. 1010.

<sup>49</sup> It has been argued that the “skaramangion”, an item of Middle Byzantine ceremonial attire often mentioned in the *De cerimoniis*, was in fact a short “rider’s caftan”, see N. P. KONDAKOV, Les costumes orientaux à la cour byzantine. *Byz* 1 (1924) 7–49; FR. CUMONT, L’uniforme de la cavalerie orientale et le costume byzantine. *Byz* 2 (1924) 181–191. See, also, PILTZ, Court Costume 45; PARANI, Reconstructing 60–61. To my knowledge, the earliest surviving representation of a caftan of the type that was to become popular in the Late Byzantine period is found in the church of the Hagioi Anargyroi at Kastoria in Greece and is dated to c.1180. In the donors’ panel, the son of the donor of the second layer of the painted decoration of the church is shown wearing a short-sleeved caftan that has a vertical opening at the front secured with buttons and is held at the waist with a belt adorned with metal attachments, see S. PELEKANIDIS – M. CHATZIDAKIS, Kastoria. Athens 1985, 43, fig. 23.

<sup>50</sup> A. GRABAR has suggested that the adoption of oriental fashions in the Byzantine court during the Middle Byzantine period was a deliberate act on the part of the imperial government and should be associated with the renovation of the impe-

ples are striped tunics worn under a shorter outer tunic and visible below its hem,<sup>51</sup> arm-bands adorned with pseudo-kufic characters that were sewn onto tunics in imitation of Arab *tirāz* bands,<sup>52</sup> and turbans.<sup>53</sup> However, what distinguishes the Late Byzantine development from such earlier occurrences of adoption of oriental fashions in the imperial palace is the fact that in the later period the imported designs

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rial wardrobe by the emperor Theophilos (829–842), which, according to the same scholar, was probably undertaken in the aftermath of the Byzantine embassy to Baghdad in 830. It was, apparently, following this embassy that the emperor decided to build a palace which imitated Arab palaces in design and decoration at Bryas, an Asiatic suburb of Constantinople, see A. GRABAR, *Le succès des arts orientaux à la cour byzantine sous les Macédoniens. Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., 2 (1951) 32–60; reprinted in his *L'art de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Âge*, vol. 1. Paris 1968, 286, 289. However, the chronicle that mentions the renovation of the imperial wardrobe does not associate it with the embassy in any way, nor does it mention specifically that this renovation comprised the introduction of new fashions. According to it, the emperor, who loved adornment, had golden-woven imperial vestments made; there is no reference to the dress of court officials being affected by this renovation, see Leo Grammaticus *Chronographia*, 215 (BEKKER); translated in English by C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire: 312–1453, Sources and Documents*. Toronto 1986, 160–161.

<sup>51</sup> The official to the far right in the miniature representing the enthroned emperor flanked by four officials in *Coislin* 79, discussed earlier, wears such a striped undergarment (Fig. 2). For striped garments as a feature of Arab dress, see STILLMAN, *Arab Dress* 59.

<sup>52</sup> Such bands may be seen, for example, on the outer tunic of the *protospatharios* Michael Skepides, portrayed at Karabaş kilise, Soğanlı, in Turkey, see N. THIERRY, *L'art monumental byzantin en Asie Mineure du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle au XIV<sup>e</sup>*. *DOP* 29 (1975) 93, fig. 28. They can also be seen on the tunics of some of the officials in the *Madrid Skylitzes*, see GRABAR – MANOUSSACAS, *Syklitzès* pl. I, fig. 7. On the tradition of *tirāz*, that is, textiles bearing honorific or religious inscriptions, in the Arab world, see STILLMAN, *Arab Dress* 40–41, 120–137. See, also, Sh. S. BLAIR, *Inscriptions on Medieval Islamic Textiles*, in: M. A. M. Salim et al., *Islamische Textilkunst des Mittelalters: Aktuelle Probleme (Riggisberger Berichte 5)*. Riggisberg 1997, 97–100.

<sup>53</sup> The *protospatharios* Skepides at Karabaş kilise wears a turban, see previous note. See also, PARANI, *Reconstructing* 67–68. There is literary evidence to suggest that the habit of wearing turbans during the Middle Byzantine period was not confined to members of the court, but was more widespread, see C. MANGO, *Discontinuity with the Classical Past in Byzantium*, in: M. MULLETT – R. SCOTT (eds.), *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*. Birmingham 1981, 51–52. For the turban as an element of male dress in Middle Byzantine Cappadocia in particular, see J. L. BALL, *Byzantine Dress. Representations of Secular Dress in Eighth- to Twelfth-Century Painting*. New York 2005, 65–67, though the author's assertion that turbans were unknown in Constantinople prior to the Late Byzantine period should be treated with caution.



came to supplant more traditional “Roman” ceremonial garments like the *chlamys*.

At first glance, this development appears incongruous with the fundamental concepts underpinning the cultural identity of the Byzantines and, more particularly, that of the Byzantine ruling class, namely, the Byzantines’ perception of themselves as “Romans” and of their state as the only legitimate continuation of the Roman Empire; their Orthodox Christianity; their pride in the superiority of their Hellenic culture; their view of non-Christian peoples, including the Turks and the Mongols, as barbarians; and their adherence to tradition and a concomitant suspicion of overt innovation. Considering the function of ceremonial dress as a signifier of the political and cultural values of particular social groups, it is reasonable to ask whether the change in official ceremonial attire observed in the Late Byzantine period was symptomatic firstly, of the abandonment of traditional Byzantine political ideology with its ecumenical pretensions that were founded on the “Roman” claim of the Byzantine state and, secondly, of a fundamental change in the self-perception of the Byzantine élite on the one hand and in the official self-image that it wished to project on the other. The answer to this question will have to be negative on all counts. Late Byzantine emperors upon their coronation continued to be acclaimed as emperors “of the Romans” as they had been in the Middle Byzantine period.<sup>54</sup> This is but one indication that the official political ideology of the Byzantine Empire not only remained unaltered, but was clung to doggedly by representatives of both the State and the Church even in the face of an adverse historical reality that no longer justified such an adherence.<sup>55</sup> Characteristic of this attitude is the brazenness with which pseudo-Kodinos, writing his ceremonial handbook around the middle of the fourteenth century,

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<sup>54</sup> See, for example, VERPEAUX (ed.), Pseudo-Kodinos, appendix VI, 357, 2–14 (coronation of Manuel II Palaiologos in 1392). See, also, above, n. 27.

<sup>55</sup> Surveys of the writings of Late Byzantine intellectuals, both laymen and clergymen, furnish numerous passages in which the traditional Byzantine imperial theory is being reiterated with apparent conviction, see, for example, H.-G. BECK, Reichsidee und nationale Politik im spätbyzantinischen Staat. *BZ* 53 (1960) 86–94; I. ŠEVČENKO, The Decline of Byzantium Seen Through the Eyes of Its Intellectuals. *DOP* 15 (1961) 169–170; M. ANGOLD, Byzantine ‘Nationalism’ and the Nicaean Empire. *BMGs* 1 (1975) 49–68; A. STAURIDOU-ZAFRAKA, Νίκαια και Ήπειρος τον 13<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα. Ιδεολογική αντιπαράθεση στην προσπάθειά τους να ανακτήσουν την αυτοκρατορία (*Εταιρεία Βυζαντινών Ερευνών* 7). Thessalonike 1990, 199–218. See also below, n. 57.

could claim that the Byzantine emperor—"the emperor of the Romans"—was being honored by both eastern and western nations as the legitimated successor of Alexander the Great and Constantine I!<sup>56</sup> As to the sense of identity of the Byzantine élite, it is true that certain intellectuals from the ranks of the civilian and the ecclesiastical administration did realize that their state had entered a stage of terminal political decline and came to question the cultural and moral superiority of Byzantium *vis-à-vis* its neighbors in East and West. It is also true that, since the twelfth century, if not earlier, and in response to the pretensions of the Papacy and the Latin West which had their own claims on the Roman imperial heritage, more emphasis was being placed on the Orthodox and the Hellenic components of the Byzantine identity, that is, on those two elements that distinguished the Byzantines from their western antagonists. However, as already pointed out, the Roman component of this identity was neither ceded to the West nor renounced, but remained alive down to the demise of the Empire. What is more, the traditional view of the non-Christian peoples of the East and, especially, the Turks as barbarians was still very much alive in the Late Byzantine period, despite the fact some intellectuals were willing to concede that they had certain positive traits. It could be claimed, then, that in the Late Byzantine period the basic tenets of the Byzantine identity remained the same; what had changed under the influence of current historical conditions was the significance accorded to each in the collective consciousness of the Byzantines. It should be pointed out, however, that the evidence for this subtle change in emphasis is mostly derived from the personal writings of Late Byzantine authors. In official contexts it is the traditional Roman universalist ideas that continue to be advanced.<sup>57</sup> Thus, we find Late Byzan-

<sup>56</sup> Pseudo-Kodinos, *De officiis* II (207, 3–8 VERPEAUX). Having said this, it should be pointed out that pseudo-Kodinos's claim is not entirely without foundation, as in official correspondence with the Muslim courts of the Mamluks and the Ilkanids, the Byzantine emperor was indeed recognized as the heir of Alexander the Great, see D. A. KOROBELNIKOV, *Diplomatic Correspondence between Byzantium and the Mamlūk Sultanate in the Fourteenth Century*. *Al-Masāq* 16/1 (2004) 53–74, esp. 63–65. I thank Dr. KOROBELNIKOV for providing me with a copy of his article.

<sup>57</sup> On the complicated question of Byzantine identity in the Middle and Late Byzantine periods see ŠEVČENKO, *Decline* 167–186; P. J. ALEXANDER, *The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes*. *Speculum* 37 (1962) 339–357; P. CHARANIS, *How Greek was the Byzantine Empire?* *Bucknell Review* XI/3 (1963) 101–116; H. DITTEN, *Βάρβαροι, Ἕλληνες und Ῥωμαῖοι bei den letzten byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibern*, in: *Actes du XII<sup>e</sup> congr. int. d'ét. byz. Ochrid*, vol.

tine officials, decked out in caftans and oriental-looking head-dresses, participating in the ceremonial stations of court life as “Romans” and as the subjects of “the emperor of the Romans”,<sup>58</sup> with no apparent awareness of a contradiction between the signifier—their ceremonial dress—and the significance—the sense of “Roman” identity—it was supposed to convey.

Given, then, that the official self-image which the Late Byzantine ruling class wished to project remained more or less the same, the abandonment of the traditional “Roman” *chlamys* after nine centuries of use gives rise to a series of questions. How did the change in Late Byzantine official ceremonial dress come about? Were Byzantine official circles sensible of a possible discordance between the origins and character of the new ceremonial costume and the traditional political and cultural values it was supposed to embody? Did they make any attempt to reconcile innovation with tradition by “romanizing” the recently-adopted garments and head-dresses?

The adoption of oriental fashions by the Byzantines is not surprising in itself. There was a long tradition of cultural interaction between Byzantium and the Islamic world, which, apparently, was not hin-

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2. Belgrade 1964, 273–299; AHRWEILER, *Idéologie* 60–64, 103–114; P. GOUNARIDIS, ‘Grecs’, ‘Hellènes’ et ‘Romains’ dans l’état de Nicée, in: B. KREMYDAS – Ch. MALTEZOU – N. M. PANAGIOTAKES (eds.), *Αφιέρωμα στον Νίτζο Σβορώνο*, vol. 1. Rethymno 1986, 248–257; R. BROWNING, *Greeks and Others. From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, in his *History, Language and Literacy in the Byzantine World*. Northampton 1989, no. II; M. ANGOLD, *Autobiography & Identity: The Case of the Later Byzantine Empire*. *BSI* 60 (1990) 36–59; P. MAGDALINO, *Byzantine Snobbery*, in: M. ANGOLD (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX–XIII Centuries (British Archaeological Reports, International Series 221)*. Oxford 1984, 58–78, reprinted in P. MAGDALINO, *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Byzantium*. Aldershot 1991, no. I; *idem*, *Hellenism and Nationalism in Byzantium*, in his: *Tradition and Transformation*, no. XIV; *idem*, *Constantinople and the Outside World*, in: D. C. SMYTHE (ed.), *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider. Papers from the Thirty-second Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, University of Sussex, Brighton. Aldershot 2000, 149–162; R. MACRIDES – P. MAGDALINO, *The Fourth Kingdom and the Rhetoric of Hellenism*, in: P. MAGDALINO (ed.), *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*. London – Rio Grande 1992, 139–156. I would like to express my thanks to Dr. Ruth MACRIDES for providing me with valuable bibliographical references on the subject.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. A. GRABAR, *Pseudo-Codinos et les cérémonies de la cour byzantine au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in: *Art et société à Byzance sous les Paléologues. Actes du colloque organisé par l’Association internationale des études byzantines à Venise en septembre 1968 (Bibliothèque de l’Institut hellénique d’études byzantines et post-byzantines de Venise 4)*. Venice 1971, 193–221.

dered by religious, political, or other ideological differences. It is a feature of the process of intercultural transmission that the value-system of a culture serves as a selective mechanism that enables it to accept certain elements of another culture, while categorically rejecting others, especially those that are judged prejudicial to the recipient's fundamental beliefs.<sup>59</sup> The Byzantines, secure in their Orthodox Christianity and confident in their cultural supremacy compared to their Muslim neighbors, could borrow and assimilate Islamic traits that had been judged useful in a practical sense, advantageous for reasons of prestige, or, simply, aesthetically appealing, as long as these did not threaten the ideological foundations of Byzantine identity. No less a person than the patriarch of Constantinople John XI Bekkos (1275–1282) considered it appropriate to offer the emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259–1282) an imported(?) platter adorned with Arabic script as a gift on the occasion of the feast of the Presentation of Christ to the Temple. His gesture was considered insulting and the gift unacceptable only when someone who could read Arabic pointed out that the Arabic characters formed an inscription in honor of the “accursed” Mohamed.<sup>60</sup> We should, therefore, not be puzzled to see Theodore Metochites, a leading exponent of the antiquarian intellectual movement of the early fourteenth century who still classified the Turks as “barbarians”, portrayed kneeling at the feet of Christ dressed in a caftan and wearing a head-dress of possible Mamluk associations.<sup>61</sup> Geographic proximity, diplomatic relations, and commercial exchange must have paved the way for the transmission of Islamic cultural forms to Byzantium. The process, at least as far as the adop-

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<sup>59</sup> L. BROOM – B. J. SIEGEL – E. Z. VOGT – J. B. WATSON, Acculturation: An Explanatory Formulation. *American Anthropologist* 56 (1954) 982–985, 990–991; ALLSEN, Commodity 101–103. Military antagonism on its own was not sufficient to hinder cultural exchange between two competing states when other points of contact could be found, cf. M. ROGERS, Evidence for Mamlūk – Mongol Relations, 1260–1360, in: A. RAYMOND – M. ROGERS – M. WAHBA (eds.), *Colloque international sur l'histoire du Caire*. Cairo 1974, 385–403.

<sup>60</sup> George Pachymeres, *De Michaelae Palaeologo* 6, 12 (573, 20 – 575, 20 FAILLER).

<sup>61</sup> On the life and the work of Theodore Metochites see I. ŠEVČENKO, Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and the Intellectual Trends of His Time, in: P. UNDERWOOD (ed.), *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background*. London 1975, 17–91. On his attitude towards the Turks, see *idem*, Decline 178. On the character of the humanist movement in Byzantium in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries see *idem*, The Palaeologan Renaissance, in: W. TREADGOLD (ed.), *Renaissances before the Renaissance*. Stanford, Calif. 1984, 144–171.

tion of oriental fashions by members of the Byzantine ruling class is concerned, was in all probability facilitated by the fact that Byzantine court culture had a number of common features with the culture of the Muslim courts, ranging from certain ceremonial practices—like the importance accorded to the investiture of officials—to the admiration of artistry and the taste for particular categories of luxury objects, including magnificent textiles.<sup>62</sup> Historical conditions for most of the thirteenth century, which is the period of primary concern to us here, were, it would seem, favorable for such cultural interaction, given the relatively good diplomatic relations between the Byzantine state and the Seljuks of Rūm in Asia Minor, the Mamluks of Egypt, and the Mongols, who appeared on the scene of Eastern Mediterranean politics in the 1230s, the thriving commercial activity between the Byzantines and their Seljuk neighbors, as well as the tolerance and opportunities for advancement provided by the Seljuk state to those members of the Byzantine aristocracy, who, being forced to flee the imperial court, had sought permanent or temporary refuge in Rūm.<sup>63</sup> Besides, in Byz-

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<sup>62</sup> E. A. ZACHARIADOU, *The Presents of the Emirs*, in: *Cultural and Commercial Exchanges between the Orient and the Greek World*. Athens 1991, 79–84, has, in fact, put forward the granting of robes of honour by Turkish princes established in Asia Minor in the fourteenth century to their Christian vassals, Greek and Latin, as one of the factors promoting the dissemination of Turkish styles in Byzantine lands. On the similarities between Byzantine and Muslim court cultures see M. CANARD, *Le ceremonial fatimite et le ceremonial byzantin*. *Essai de comparaison*. *Byz* 21 (1951) 355–420; O. GRABAR, *The Shared Culture of Objects*, in: MAGUIRE (ed.), *Byz. Court Culture* 115–129. The subject of potential similarities between the Byzantine court and the courts of the empire's Muslim neighbors in the Late Byzantine period has not, as yet, been adequately explored.

<sup>63</sup> Sp. VRYONIS, JR., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*. Berkeley – London 1971, 130–133; A. DUCELLIER, *Mentalité historique et réalités politiques: l'Islam et les Musulmans vus par les Byzantins du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. *BF* 4 (1972) 31–63; Cl. CAHEN, *The Formation of Turkey. The Seljukid Sultanate of Rūm: Eleventh to Fourteenth Century* (trans. and ed. P. M. HOLT) Harlow – New York 2001, 86–96, 123–133; M. ANGOLD, *A Byzantine Government in Exile. Government and Society under the Laskarids of Nicaea, 1204–1261*. Oxford 1975, 116; D. O. MORGAN, *The Mongols and the Eastern Mediterranean*, in: B. ARBEL – B. HAMILTON – D. JACOBY (eds.), *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (*Mediterranean Historical Review* 4/1). London 1989, 204, 205; D. KOROBEINIKOV, *Byzantium and the Turks in the Thirteenth Century*. Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University 2003. I am grateful to Dr. KOROBEINIKOV for allowing me to consult the relevant chapters of his thesis. Cf. the interesting reference in the historical work of the fourteenth-century author Nikephoros Gregoras, according to which the

antine eyes, throughout the thirteenth century, the most dangerous and the most hated enemies of their state and their faith were neither the Turks nor the Mongols, but the Papacy and the Christian peoples of the West, and this for both political and religious reasons.<sup>64</sup>

Yet, there is a great distance between following the dictates of fashion and adopting imported designs as part of official ceremonial dress at the expense of garments that had formed part of the official wardrobe since the establishment of a state. Such a change could have been brought about only by a dramatic rupture in tradition. Despite the Byzantines' own assertion concerning the uninterrupted continuity of their polity that went back to the time of Constantine I, the first Christian emperor and founder of Constantinople—the New Rome—, there had been a violent disruption: in 1204 the Byzantine Empire fell under the blows of the infamous Fourth Crusade organized by the Catholic West. The formidable administrative machinery of the

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Seljuks, when hard-pressed by famine during the reign of John III Vatatzes (1221–1254), bought the necessities of life from their Byzantine neighbors, paying for them in coin and in kind, the latter also including textiles, Gregoras, *Historia Romana* 1, 42, 20–43, 15 (SCHOPEN).

<sup>64</sup> See, among others, AHRWEILER, *Idéologie* 75–87, 101, 109–111; D. M. NICOL, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium*. Cambridge 1979, 66–97; M. ANGOLD, *Greeks and Latins after 1204: The Perspective of Exile*, in: ARBEL – HAMILTON – JACOBY (eds.), *Latins and Greeks* 63–86. One may venture to suggest that the almost total absence of western designs in Late Byzantine male ceremonial dress, as prescribed in pseudo-Kodinos and as reflected in Byzantine portraits of officials, was partly a result of political, social, moral, and aesthetic divergences between Byzantium and the West and partly a result of a conscious decision stimulated by religious and military antagonism. It was certainly not a result of ignorance of western fashions on the part of the Byzantines, who had, in fact adopted western garments and head-dresses as part of their non-ceremonial attire, cf. Gregoras, *Historia Romana* 2, 565, 13–568, 8; 3, 555, 10–556, 7 (SCHOPEN). As already pointed out by others, the phenomenon of the adoption of western styles among both men and women was admittedly more pronounced in areas under Frankish or Venetian rule, see, selectively, Ch. MALTEZOU, *Βενετική μόδα στην Κρήτη*, in: Nia A. STRATOY (ed.), *Βυζάντιον. Αφιέρωμα στον Ανδρέα Ν. Στράτο*, vol. I. Athens 1986, 139–147; I. CHRISTOFORAKI, *Female Dress in Cyprus in the Medieval period*, in: *Female Costume in Cyprus from Antiquity to the Present Day*. Nicosia 1999, 13–19; I. ΜΡΙΓΗΛΑ, *Ενδυματολογικές μαρτυρίες στις τοιχογραφίες της μεσαιωνικής Ρόδου (14<sup>ος</sup> αι. – 1523). Μια πρώτη προσέγγιση*, in: *Ρόδος 2,400 χρόνια. Η πόλη της Ρόδου από την ίδρυσή της μέχρι την κατάληψη από τους Τούρκους (1523)*, vol. 2. Αθήνα 2000, 429–448; Αι. ΜΥΛΟΠΟΤΑΜΙΤΑΚΕ, *Ανδρικά καλύμματα κεφαλής στην Κρήτη (11<sup>ος</sup> – 16<sup>ος</sup> αι.)*, in: M. ASPRA-VARDAKAKI (ed.), *Λαμπηδών. Αφιέρωμα στη μνήμη της Ντούλας Μουζίκη*, vol. 2. Athens 2003, 545–560.

Empire collapsed. Members of the Byzantine ruling class, exiled from their traditional seat of power that was Constantinople, created three successor states in the European and Asiatic provinces of the dismembered empire. The most important of these was the Empire of Nicaea in Asia Minor.<sup>65</sup> The system of government adopted by the Laskarid emperors of Nicaea depended on a relatively small number of officials bearing a more limited range of titles mostly taken from the imperial household, rather than on large numbers of professional bureaucrats, as has been the case before the fall.<sup>66</sup> This must have had serious repercussions on court life, since it was the members of the governing class who largely provided both the participants and the intended audience of imperial ceremonies up to 1204.<sup>67</sup> The loss of the traditional setting of court rites, namely the imperial palace and the city of Constantinople itself, as well as the constant campaigning of the Laskarid emperors both in Asia Minor and mainland Greece in their struggle to recapture the lost capital, must have also contributed to a certain relaxation in protocol.<sup>68</sup> This does not mean that the emperors of Nicaea were not sensitive to the uses of ceremonial in the management of their affairs. However, they appear to have paid more attention to it as an instrument of imperial diplomacy rather than as a form of ritual affirmation of court hierarchy or of glorification of imperial authority for internal consumption, as had often been the case prior to 1204. The silk and gold-embroidered garments of the members of the court were meant, above all, to impress upon foreign emissaries

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<sup>65</sup> H. AHRWEILER, L'expérience nicéenne. *DOP* 29 (1975) 21–40; ANGOLD, Byz. Government *passim*.

<sup>66</sup> Op. cit. 147–166; M. F. HENDY, Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, IV: Alexius I to Michael VIII, 1081–1261. Part 2: The Emperors of Nicaea and Their Contemporaries (1204–1261). Washington D.C. 1999, 450–451, 470, 515. On the style of rule of the Laskarid emperors, see also R. J. MACRIDES, From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologoi: Imperial Models in Decline and Exile, in: P. MAGDALINO (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Aldershot 1994, esp. 280–282. I thank Dr. Macrides for providing me with an offprint of her article.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. A. CAMERON, The Construction of Court Ritual: the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies*, in: D. CANNADINE – S. PRICE (eds.), *Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*. Cambridge – New York 1987, 122–123, 130–131; A. P. KAZHDAN – M. McCORMICK, The Social World of the Byzantine Court, in: MAGUIRE (ed.), *Byz. Court Culture* 167–197, esp. 196.

<sup>68</sup> For an informative and lucid summary of political and military developments during the reigns of the three Laskarid emperors, see HENDY, Catalogue 447–452, 467–473, 514–515.

the wealth and consequent power of the empire.<sup>69</sup> Under these circumstances it is not difficult to imagine how the *chlamys*, the symbolic significance of which had been closely linked to the internal hierarchical structure of the Middle Byzantine state and its rituals, was allowed to become obsolete once that structure collapsed and how it came to be replaced by the caftan-like garments that were in vogue at the time. Of course, members of the Byzantine élite had demonstrated the inclination to imitate foreign fashions in dress and hairstyle and to introduce them in court prior to the thirteenth century, causing the scathing criticism of conservative Church prelates who saw in such behavior a disregard of “Roman” custom.<sup>70</sup> However, in the past, Byzantine emperors—when not themselves responsible for the introduction of “barbarian” fashions in court<sup>71</sup>—had tried to curb such tendencies, in order to safeguard tradition and to eliminate the extravagance that ill became the dignity of Roman imperial authority.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> George Pachymeres, *De Michaelae Palaeologo* 1, 14; 2, 25 (61, 25–63, 11; 187, 22–189, 25 FAILLER). Cf. MACRIDES, *From the Komnenoi* 281.

<sup>70</sup> The best-known evidence concerns the twelfth century, see, for example, G. A. RALLES – M. POTLES, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων κανόνων τῶν τε ἁγίων καὶ πανευφήμων ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν ἱερώων καὶ οἰκουμενικῶν καὶ τοπικῶν συνόδων καὶ τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἁγίων πατέρων*, vol. 2. Athens 1852, 534: male hairstyles; Nicetas Choniates, *Historia* 252, 15–20 (VAN DIETEN): costume of Andronikos I, prior to his rise to the throne; *op. cit.* 298: costume of David Komnenos, general of Thessalonike; Eustathios of Thessalonike, *Narratio de Thessalonica urbe Latinis capta* 82, 5–12 (MELVILLE JONES): costume of David Komnenos. Cf. R. BROWNING, Theodore Balsamon’s Commentary on the Canons of the Council in Troullo as a Source on Everyday Life in Twelfth-century Byzantium, in: Ch. ANGELIDE (ed.), *Η καθημερινή ζωή στο Βυζάντιο: Τομές και συνέχειες στην ελληνοβυζαντινή και ρωμαϊκή παράδοση. Πρακτικά του Α’ Διεθνούς Συμποσίου*. Athens 1989, 425–426.

<sup>71</sup> See above, n. 50, on the possibility that the emperor Theophilus was responsible for the adoption of Arab fashions in the Byzantine court in the ninth century.

<sup>72</sup> See, for example, Nicetas Choniates, *Historia* 46, 28–47, 5 (VAN DIETEN): John II Komnenos, 1118–1143. Cf. the late-fourth-century law, according to which wearing trousers or boots—both, items of barbarian costume—, within the city of Rome was punishable with the confiscation of one’s property and exile, see Cl. PHARR (trans.), *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions*. Princeton 1952, 14.10.2–3. Apart from being disrespectful to Roman tradition, the disregard for official dress-code in favor of more fashionable garments might have been perceived by the imperial government as a subtle act of nonconformism that needed to be curbed. The subject of dress and, mainly, hairstyle as an external sign of nonconformism in mediaeval Byzantium has been addressed by H.-G. BECK, *Formes de non-conformisme à Byzance. Académie Royale de Belgique, Bulletin de la Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques* 65/6–9 (1979) 313–329.



This does not appear to have been the case with the Laskarid emperors, who had more pressing priorities on their political agenda and who, perhaps, thought that the magnificent caftans and the impressive head-dresses could serve the purpose of dazzling diplomatic delegations adequately. Having said this, it should be mentioned that John III Vatatzes (1221–1254) did promulgate a law inducing his subjects to buy only those garments and fabrics that were produced in Byzantine lands and not those imported from the Middle East and from Italy. However, the purpose of this measure was to control the immoderate outflow of money for the acquisition of such luxuries and not to protect Byzantine tradition, as had been the case with similar measures in the past.<sup>73</sup>

Thus, I believe, the change in the character of Byzantine official dress came to pass and was allowed to become well established. Apparently, neither the violent overthrow of the Laskarids in 1259 by Michael VIII Palaiologos, the founder of the last ruling dynasty of Byzantium, nor the return soon afterwards, in 1261, of the imperial government to its traditional seat in Constantinople could reverse it. And this despite what appears to have been a conscious effort on the part of the first Palaiologan emperors to reconstitute certain aspects of Byzantine ceremonial as it had been in the twelfth century<sup>74</sup> for the obvious purpose of establishing a link with the imperial past before the Laskarids, a link that would confer legitimacy on the usurped authority of the new dynasty.<sup>75</sup> It would seem that the Palaiologan emperors did not make any large-scale attempt to revive official ceremonial dress as it had been prior to 1204. The only possible exception seems to be the re-introduction of a descendent of the *chlamys* called the “tamparion”, which, according to the testimony of pseudo-Kodinos and the evidence of surviving portraits, was confined to the use of only the highest-ranking dignitaries of the state and to that of very close relatives of

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<sup>73</sup> Gregoras, *Historia Romana* 1, 43, 17–44, 6 (SCHOPEN).

<sup>74</sup> This is suggested by the copying, in the later part of the thirteenth century, of texts which dealt with Komnenian ceremonial. E. and M. JEFFREYS, *Manganeios Prodromos: Text Seminar*, Michaelmas Term 1996 (University of Oxford). On the Komnenian emphasis of the revival inaugurated by Michael VIII Palaiologos following his establishment in Constantinople in 1261, see MACRIDES, *From the Komnenoi* 269–282, esp. 272–275.

<sup>75</sup> On the legitimizing power of the past see D. LOWENTHAL, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge 1985, 40–41, 52–53. I would like to thank Dr. Marina Moskowitz for this reference.

the emperor, whether they held office or not.<sup>76</sup> That in the case of the *chlamys*-like *tamparion* we are probably dealing with the revival rather than the survival of a ceremonial garment is suggested firstly, by the change in the name of the mantle and, secondly, by the mantle's very limited and selective use in the Late Byzantine period.

As may be deduced from the ongoing discussion, Byzantine official circles do not appear to have been sensible of any tension between the Islamic, Turkic or Mongol origins of their newly adopted garments and the Byzantine cultural values and beliefs that these same garments were supposed to express within the context of court ceremonial. Oriental designs were imitated probably because they were familiar and their aesthetic qualities made them attractive to the Byzantines. The fact that certain features of oriental dress, like the exceedingly long sleeves of coats and the high-rising head-dresses, were a symbol of status among the Turks must have facilitated their being adopted in the Late Byzantine court, where they served a similar function.<sup>77</sup> Once incorporated into Byzantine ceremonial dress, eastern designs gradually acquired a set of associations that were clearly Byzantine and which enabled them to develop in their new context independently of their origins. The color and decoration of the orientaling garments and head-dresses, the incorporation of badges of office in their design,<sup>78</sup> the manner in which they were worn, and the choice of other garments and accessories with which they were worn were all prescribed by Byzantine court protocol and were meant to convey rank and precedence within the framework of the hierarchical structure of Byzantine officialdom.<sup>79</sup> To my mind, this "byzantinization" or rather "romanization" is nowhere more clearly evident than in the incorporation of the portrait of the emperor in the *skaranika* of a number of Byzantine officials high up in the hierarchy of the

<sup>76</sup> On the *tamparion* see above, n. 34.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. H. G. BARNETT, Culture Processes. *American Anthropologist* 42 (1940) 31-37.

<sup>78</sup> The vertical gold-and-red bands that adorn the head-dress of Theodore Metochites at the Chora Monastery should probably be understood as such a badge of office. Apparently, the use of decorative bands or stripes on head-dresses as a mark of status in the Byzantine court had been a feature of Komnenian official dress: in the *epithalamion* of 1179 (*Vat. gr.* 1851), fols. 1<sup>r</sup> and 2<sup>v</sup>, the official standing to the right of the enthroned emperor, that is, in greatest proximity to him, is distinguished from the other officials represented in the same miniatures by means of the two horizontal stripes adorning his head-dress, see, IACOBINI, *Epitalamio* figs. 4, 7; PARANI, *Reconstructing* fig. 79.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Pseudo-Kodinos, *De officiis*, *passim* (VERPEAUX).

court: no one could confuse a Byzantine official as being anything but that when he wore a head-dress that was adorned with the portrait of his sovereign, even if he was dressed in what we today would characterize as an oriental-looking caftan.<sup>80</sup>

Tracing the stages of the transformation in form and meaning of the recently adopted garments and outlining the particular circumstances under which this transformation occurred is far from straightforward; sometimes, one can do no more but speculate. The process of “re-identification” of at least some of the new designs, like the *kab-badion* and the *skaranikon*, appears to have been completed by the late thirteenth and the early fourteenth century when we have the first surviving portraits of Byzantine officials in the new costume. I am tempted to think that these initial steps for the systematization of the change in the appearance of Late Byzantine official dress were taken during the reign of the first two Palaiologan emperors, Michael VIII (1259–1282) and Andronikos II (1282–1328), and, especially, following the re-establishment of imperial authority in Constantinople in 1261. These two emperors appear to have paid particular attention to court ceremonial: pseudo-Kodinos, who apparently had access to official documents relevant to court protocol, credits them with the institution of a number of practices that were in place during the middle of the fourteenth century when he composed his treatise.<sup>81</sup> That they would do so was only natural. Ceremonial is a powerful instrument for the legitimization of power and for forging links of dependence between the ruler and the ruling class, and the newly-established Palaiologan dynasty was in need of both. In contrast to the Laskarids, Michael VIII Palaiologos upon his accession surrounded himself with his relatives and with members of other powerful Constantinopolitan aristocratic families who had helped him seize the throne but whose aspirations to more power and wealth were a serious and constant

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<sup>80</sup> As far as I know, the systematic adornment of official head-dresses, or garments for that matter, with imperial portraits was not a feature of Early or Middle Byzantine ceremonial dress. In the past the incorporation of imperial portraits was limited to garments and head-dresses made especially to be given as gifts to foreign rulers, see, for example, *Chronicon Paschale* 613, 18 – 614, 7 (DINDORF); KOVÁCS – LOVAG, *Crown*, or to the costume of influential individuals who enjoyed the proximity of the emperor and had come to yield considerable power in his name or on his behalf, see, for example, DELBRUECK, *Consulardiptychen* nos. 51, 52, 63.

<sup>81</sup> VERPEAUX (ed.), *Pseudo-Kodinos* 26–27, 35–36.

threat to imperial authority.<sup>82</sup> Egos needed to be soothed and ambitions needed to be kept in check. Court ritual was of paramount importance in this respect, because it heightened the participants' sense of belonging to an inner circle of power with the emperor at its center and provided the framework of imperial munificence manifested in the grant of titles, privileges, and money. The first Palaiologan emperors appear to have realized this. That closer attention should be paid to official ceremonial dress at the time, given its function as an indicator of rank and status, seems to me, under these conditions, quite plausible.

A second stage in the process of "romanization" of the new designs is identifiable around the middle of the fourteenth century and, one might add, under historical circumstances comparable to those just described. In this case, however, the Byzantine reinterpretation of the new garments and head-dresses involved the attribution to them of a fictitious "Roman" origin that also accounted for their ultimate oriental extraction. The relevant evidence is provided by the treatise of pseudo-Kodinos. On several occasions pseudo-Kodinos demonstrated an awareness of changes in ceremonial practices on the one hand and in the appearance and nomenclature of imperial and official insignia on the other. On some of these occasions he was forced to admit ignorance as to the circumstances that caused the change, while on others he felt the need to furnish an explanation.<sup>83</sup> In the chapter describing the ceremonies that were associated with the celebration of the feast-days dedicated to Christ, pseudo-Kodinos made two digressions, the first more extensive than the second, concerning the origin of some of the official garments and certain other insignia that were in use at the time. According to him, the *skaranikon*, the *kabbadion*, and the *granatza* were Assyrian garments that had been adopted by the Persian king Cyrus the Great, when he conquered the Assyrian empire. In addition, this same Cyrus adopted the use of the *epilourikon* and the *phakeolion* (turban) from the Medes, after having incorporated their state into his own. Pseudo-Kodinos then goes on to say that the Persian empire established by Cyrus was conquered by Alexander the Great, whose

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<sup>82</sup> On the social undercurrents that contributed to the overthrow of the Laskarids by Michael VIII Palaiologos see, indicatively, AHRWEILER, *Expérience nicéenne*.

<sup>83</sup> This new-found sensibility to the dilapidating passage of time appears to have been characteristic of the intellectual climate during the Late Byzantine period, see GRABAR, *Pseudo-Codinos 197–198*; ŠEVČENKO, *Decline*.

own state was in its turn subjugated by the Romans.<sup>84</sup> The significance of this quasi-historical excursus by pseudo-Kodinos becomes evident when one takes into consideration that Byzantine chroniclers and historians tended to view the history of the world after the Deluge as a succession of empires, beginning with that of the Assyrians, followed by that of the Persians, which was then succeeded by the empire of Alexander the Great, itself taken over by the Roman empire that was still in existence with Constantinople at its center and a Roman emperor at its head.<sup>85</sup> It follows from this that, as far as Byzantine official circles were concerned, the adoption of the garments and head-dresses under discussion was not an innovation but a return to earlier “Roman” practices, since the ceremonial outfits in question were handed down to pseudo-Kodinos’s contemporaries by their ancestors through a line of uninterrupted succession. Thus, the sense of continuity with the Roman past was maintained and Byzantine political and cultural identity emerged once again outwardly unscathed.<sup>86</sup> At present, it is not possible to say whether this invented tradition was a fabrication of pseudo-Kodinos himself or whether he simply set down a story that was circulating at the time. Whatever the case, I do not believe that his intention was to deceive nor do I doubt that he himself and his contemporaries believed in the veracity of this account.<sup>87</sup> At least some of the garments he discusses, like the *kabbadion*, the *skaranikon*, and the turban, had been in use long enough to make plausible their claim on “antiquity” even if this was not as ancient as the Byzantines would have us think.

Interestingly enough, the attempt to codify change in Late Byzantine ceremonial in general and in the character of official costume in particular that is evidenced by the composition of pseudo-Kodinos’s treatise came after a period of slackening in court ritual. According to the fourteenth-century historian Nikephoros Gregoras, the third

<sup>84</sup> Pseudo-Kodinos, *De officiis* IV (205, 1 – 207, 8, 218, 29 – 219, 5 VERPEAUX).

<sup>85</sup> On Byzantine perceptions of world history and the past see E. M. JEFFREYS, *The Attitudes of Byzantine Chroniclers towards Ancient History*. *Byz* 49 (1979) 199–238; MACRIDES – MAGDALINO, *Fourth Kingdom* 120–139.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. GRABAR, *Pseudo-Codinos* 198.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. LOWENTHAL, *Past* 325: “We are often innocent of conscious intent to change what we mean simply to conserve or celebrate”, *i.e.* the past. On the subject of changing the past and the invention of tradition see *op. cit.* 324–362; E. HOBBSBAWM – T. RANGER (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge 1983; Y. HEN – M. INNES (eds.), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*. Cambridge 2000.

Palaiologan emperor, Andronikos III (1328–1341), in contrast to his two predecessors, was not at all interested in following protocol and maintaining proper form and was almost casual with the members of his court. So much so, that the customs and rites of imperial ceremonial, which were supposed to be handed down from one emperor to his successor, were in danger of being consigned to oblivion. According to Gregoras, as result of Andronikos's indifference everyone began to wear whatever they pleased in his presence, including garments and head-dresses that imitated Italian, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Syrian fashions. This situation and, above all, the lack of order that it signified made the more prudent members of Byzantine society, including Gregoras himself, fear for the future of their state and suspect that its customs and institutions would soon be eclipsed.<sup>88</sup> Following the death of Andronikos III and after a catastrophic civil war, John VI Kantakouzenos, a usurper, ascended the throne. It was most probably during his reign (1347–1354) that the ceremonial handbook of pseudo-Kodinos was composed.<sup>89</sup> It attests to a desire to reintroduce order after a period of negligence. To my mind, the composition of this work bears witness to a renewed interest being placed on ceremonial by an imperial government that must have been as keen to appear as the guardian of Roman imperial tradition as it was to consolidate its position in court.<sup>90</sup> The emphasis placed upon tradition within this specific historical context could explain why the apocryphal story of the origins of the most important components of Late Byzantine official dress was recorded at this point, decades after the actual garments had been introduced into the Byzantine court, and not before.

It is interesting to note that in the period following the abdication of Kantakouzenos in 1354, Gregoras accuses the supporters of the new political establishment of abandoning the familiar forms of dress in favour of Eastern, Western and Balkan fashions that made it difficult to tell who was "Roman" and who was not. The fact that an individual could at the same time be wearing garments derived from different sartorial traditions aggravated the sense of confusion, which,

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<sup>88</sup> Gregoras, *Historia Romana* 2, 565, 13–568, 8 (SCHOPEN).

<sup>89</sup> The dating is based on internal evidence provided by the text itself, see VERPEAUX (ed.), *Pseudo-Kodinos* 23–40.

<sup>90</sup> Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, the author of the tenth-century *De cerimoniis*, in the preface of his work also claims that he was prompted to undertake its composition by the laxity and neglect that characterized the organization of imperial rituals at the time, see *De cer.* 1, 1, 1–2, 15 (VOGT).

according to the same historian, was symptomatic of the internal turmoil and anxiety concerning religious matters that plagued the Byzantines at the time.<sup>91</sup> T. ΚΙΟΥΣΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ sees in this adoption of foreign styles an attempt by the members of the upper classes to re-define their identity in order to survive in a period of hardship and uncertainty.<sup>92</sup> However, it needs be pointed out, Gregoras seems to be referring to practices outside a ceremonial context, especially among the young.<sup>93</sup> The continual representation of Byzantine officials in the by-now traditional *kabbadion* and *skaranikon* in portraits dated to the second half of the fourteenth century would lend support to this assertion (Fig. 4). One could claim, then, that in the sphere of ceremonial attire, at least, the Byzantines strove until the end to maintain a link, however contrived, to the past in which the kernel of their traditional collective identity lay.

The measure of how successful the Byzantines were at convincing not only themselves but also others of the antiquity of their ceremonial dress and, by extension, of their state, is given by the comments of the Italian humanist Vespasiano da Bisticci concerning the dress of the Byzantine delegation to the Council of Ferrara-Florence convened to deal with the question of the Union of the Churches (1438–1439): “Non passerò che io non dica qui una singulare loda de’ Greci. I Greci, in anni mille cinquecento o più, non hanno mai mutato abito: quello medesimo abito avevano in quello tempo, ch’eglino avevano avuto nel tempo detto.” (I will not pass without a word of special praise of the Greeks. For at least fifteen hundred years and more they have not altered the style of their dress; their clothes are of the same fashion now as they were in the time indicated.)<sup>94</sup> Vespasiano was writing in the last two decades of the fifteenth century, when the Byzan-

<sup>91</sup> Gregoras, *Historia Romana* 3, 554, 20–556, 7 (SCHOPEN).

<sup>92</sup> T. ΚΙΟΥΣΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, Στοιχεία της βυζαντινής ενδυμασίας κατά την ύστερη εποχή. Τα καπέλα, in: Ch. ANGELIDE (ed.), Το Βυζάντιο ώρμιο για αλλαγές. Επιλογές, ευαισθησίες και τρόποι έκφρασης από τον ενδέκατο στον δέκατο πέμπτο αιώνα. Athens 2004, 194–196.

<sup>93</sup> Gregoras, *Historia Romana* 3, 555, 20–556, 2 (SCHOPEN).

<sup>94</sup> P. D’ANCONA – E. AESCHLIMANN (eds.), Vespasiano da Bisticci *Vite di uomini illustri del secolo XV*. Milan 1951, 16; see also op. cit. 87: “Non passerò qui una loda grandissima de’ Greci che mai non hanno mutato habito, così i temporali come gli spirituali.” English translation: VESPASIANO DA BISTICCI, *The Vespasiano Memoirs, Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century* (trans. W. GEORGE – E. WATERS, intr. M. P. GILMORE). Toronto 1997, 26. It should be noted that, at the time of the Council of Florence, the familiarity of Italian humanists with classical Greek

tine Empire was no more, about an event that had taken place when he had been in his late teens. His surprising claim, coloured as it may be by distance in time and by sentiment in the aftermath of the capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans, is also reflective of—and may have been informed by—the impact that the dress of the Byzantine delegation had on Western imagination, an impact evident in the work of fifteenth-century Italian artists, who employed Byzantine garments and, especially, Byzantine head-dresses in order to portray Late Antique emperors or to characterize some of the depicted figures as Greek.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, some years after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453, Piero della Francesca portrayed Constantine I (324–337) in the famous *Battle at the Milvian Bridge* at San Francesco in Arezzo with the facial features and the distinctive hat of the Byzantine emperor John VIII Palaiologos (1425–1448) (Figs. 9, 10).<sup>96</sup> This seems to me a fitting tribute to the staunchness with which the Byzantines held on to their traditional sense of identity for a period of more than a thousand years.

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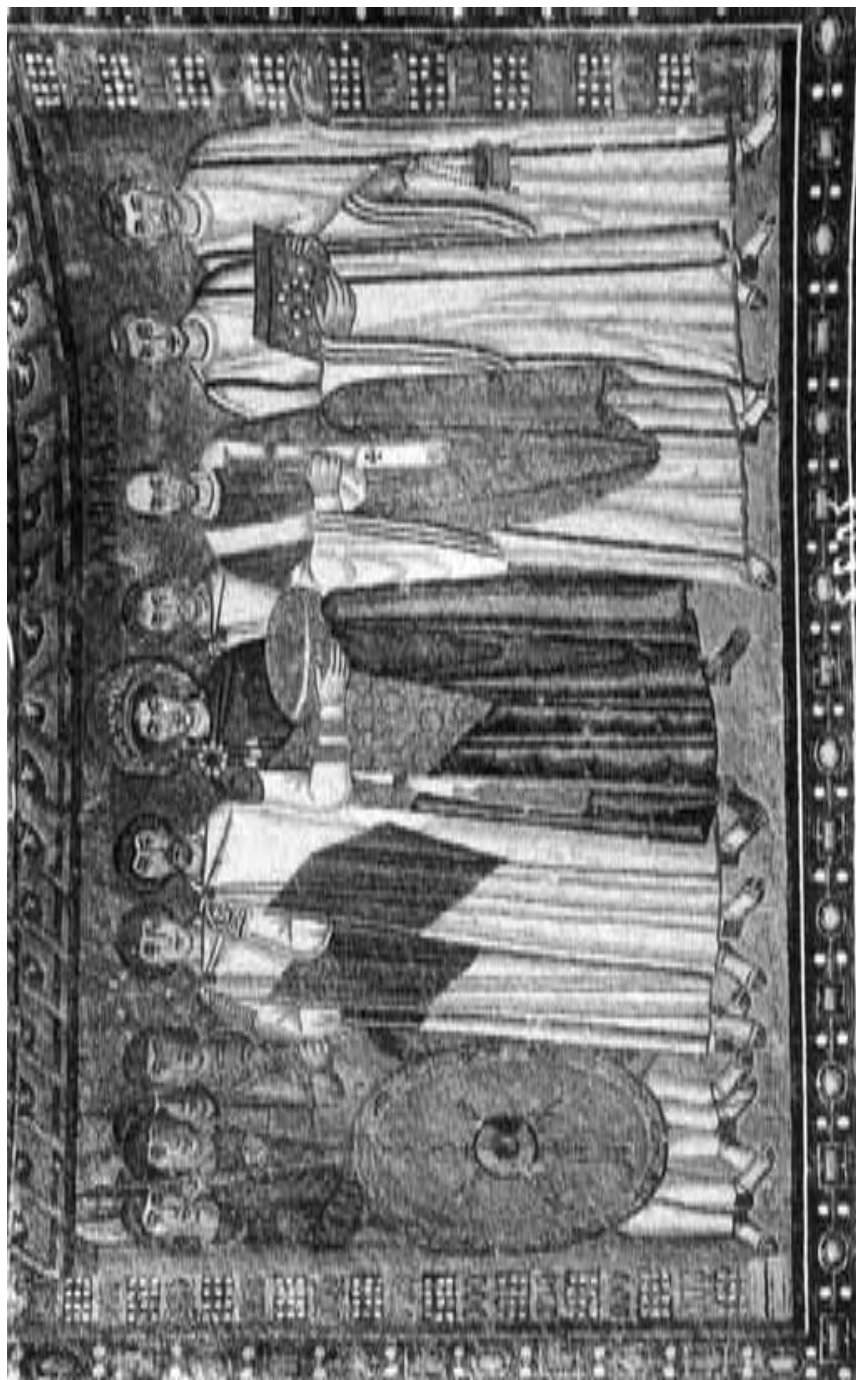
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culture was still largely literary, a fact which meant that they were not yet in a position to know what ancient Greek costume actually looked like.

<sup>95</sup> One has in mind, for example, Italian artists of painted wedding chests (*cassoni*) adorned with scenes from Greek mythology and ancient Greek history, see E. H. GOMBRICH, Apollonio di Giovanni. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 18 (1955) 24–26; E. PANOFSKY, *Renaissance and Resuscitations in Western Art*. New York 1972, c1960, 168–172; E. CALLMAN, Apollonio di Giovanni. Oxford 1974, 33; P. F. WATSON, Apollonio di Giovanni and Ancient Athens. *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin* 37/1 (1979–80) 3–25. I would like to thank Prof. Robert NELSON for bringing this corpus of Italian *cassoni* to my attention. For a discussion of orientaling dress, including Byzantine fashions, in early fifteenth-century French painting, see J. KUBISKI, *Orientalizing Costume in Early Fifteenth-Century French Manuscript Painting (Cité de Dames Master, Limbourg Brothers, Boucicaut Master, and Bedford Master)*. *Gesta* 40 (2001) 161–180.

<sup>96</sup> A. WARBURG, Piero della Francescas Constantinsschlacht in der Aquarellkopie des Johann Anton Ramboux, in his *Gesammelte Schriften* 1 (ed. G. BING). Leipzig – Berlin 1932, 253 (reprinted from a paper given in 1912); M. VICKERS, *Some Preparatory Drawings for Pisanello's Medallion of John VIII Palaeologus*. *The Art Bulletin* 60 (1978) 423; A. CHASTEL, *L'Italie et Byzance*. Paris 1999, 222–225.

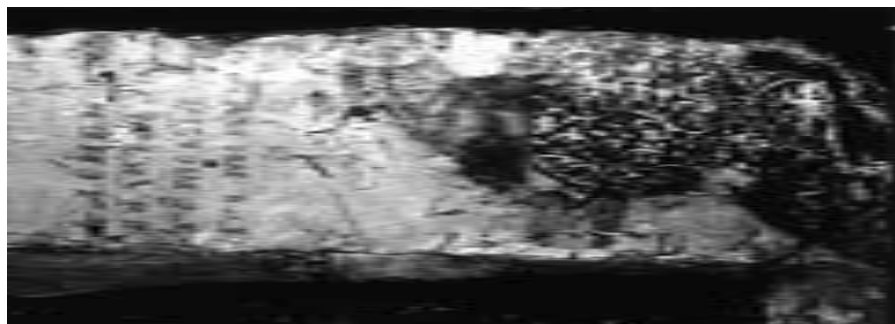




1 Ravenna, San Vitale (c. 547): Justinian, bishop Maximian, clergy, officials, and imperial bodyguards.



2 *Coislin* 79, fol. 2<sup>r</sup> (1071–1081): Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078) enthroned, flanked by four officials.



4 Saint  
Petersburg,  
The Hermit-  
age, icon of  
Christ  
Pantokrator  
(1360–1370),  
detail:  
the *mezas*  
*primikerios*  
John.

3 *Koulou-*  
*moussiou* 60,  
fol. I<sup>v</sup> (before  
1169);  
the *proto-*  
*spatharios*  
Basil and a  
female figure,  
perhaps his  
wife.





5 *Par. gr.* 1242, fol. 5<sup>v</sup> (completed in 1375): John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–1354) presiding over the Church Council of 1351.



6 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS. A. F. 10, fol. 1r (mid-thirteenth century): scenes from the court of a Turkish ruler.



7 Constantinople, Chora Monastery (1315–1321), donor panel:  
the *logothetes tou genikou* Theodore Metochites.



8 Moscow, Tretjakov Gallery, silver-gild revetment of an icon of the Hodegetria (end of the thirteenth-beginning of the fourteenth century): Constantine Akropolites.



9 Saint Petersburg, The Hermitage, medallion by Pisanello, obverse: John VIII Palaiologos (1425–1448).



10 Arezzo, San Francesco. Piero della Francesca, Legend of the True Cross: Battle at the Milvian Bridge, detail (c. 1458).