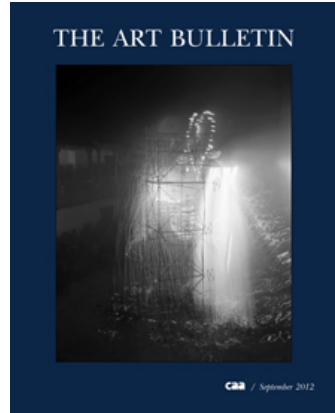


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Publisher: Routledge

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The Art Bulletin

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcab20>

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Published online: 30 Jan 2014.

To cite this article: Jaś Elsner (2012) Iconoclasm as Discourse: From Antiquity to Byzantium, *The Art Bulletin*, 94:3, 368-394, DOI: [10.1080/00043079.2012.10786048](https://doi.org/10.1080/00043079.2012.10786048)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00043079.2012.10786048>

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Iconoclasm as Discourse: From Antiquity to Byzantium

Jaś Elsner

Byzantine iconoclasm remains of perennial interest to the historian, the theologian, and the historian of art. The subject appears to be well attested by documentary sources—only for us to find these extremely and intriguingly difficult to use, since they are largely couched in a theologically or hagiographically inflected language of apology and polemic that is not only very distant from modern habits of mind but also nearly impossible to pin down in factual terms. The result has been a plethora of explanations—indeed, what was already in the 1970s branded “a crisis of over-explanation.”¹ Clearly, the advent of iconoclasm in Byzantium partakes of a multistranded series of causes,² which are perhaps impossible to unpack in their entirety, some of them proximate and some belonging to a very long historical process. Moreover, because the issues are so fraught around a topic of such central religious importance to the cultural history (and historiography) of Western Europe,³ the attraction for scholars of every religious persuasion (Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, not to speak of Jewish) as well as of no persuasion, or even of militantly secular atheism, is compelling.

Both key concepts in my title, “iconoclasm” and “discourse,” are controversial. To take the second first, I am indebted to Averil Cameron’s work on the development of Christian discourse, but my definition necessarily differs from her formulation “all the rhetorical strategies and manners of expression that I take to be particularly characteristic of Christian writing,” since I am concerned with characteristics as much material and cultural as rhetorical or literary.⁴ My focus is on images, their making and breaking (and stories, often fictional, of such making and breaking), and only partially on writing. My interest extends, for comparative reasons, to a scope and range of activity that are not exclusively Christian. Some parallels to the discursive nature of iconoclasm in the late antique and Byzantine context may be found in the study of the European Reformation, whose iconoclasm has been characterized as “an expected cultural routine” in which both art and its experience are “preceded and succeeded by iconoclasm.”⁵ The advantage of the model of discourse is that it includes, without prejudicing one before the other, both theory and practice. Scholars tend to emphasize either practices of image veneration over the theology that appears to justify them, or intellectualist theological positions over the acts of devotion that may have preceded the theory but certainly also came to depend on it. By cultural discourse, I mean in part the mutual reinforcement of theory and practice, with each implying and underpinning the other, although, of course, they may reflect different social and cultural milieus, depending on the literacy and education of those concerned.

The term *iconoclasm* carries many meanings—from a period in Byzantine history,⁶ via a set of events that are meant to have occurred at that time, to a form of activity involving

damage to images at any time and place in human history. I will use it specifically to mean physical attack on images within the Greco-Roman-Byzantine world, from archaic antiquity up to and including the period known as the Iconoclastic era in Byzantium. But my interest is in how the process of theorizing both iconoclasm and the iconophile response to it enabled a long tradition of thinking about what an image was, a tradition going back deep into pre-Classical Greek antiquity, to come to a clear and mature conceptual position on the issue of the relation of a visual image to the model or prototype that it imitated through representation. The range of positions on the nature of images offered during Byzantine iconoclasm constitutes a fundamental conceptual contribution to the problem of image as representation as it developed in the Western tradition. In my reading, the conceptual developments of Byzantine iconoclasm—cast as theological arguments in a deep dispute that had numerous entailments in politics, society, and ritual—are the final completion of the process of philosophical thinking about images in the Greco-Roman heritage. What came to matter is that a particular form of image—the icon of Christ—should have been taken (perhaps invented, or deemed necessary) for the job of having been destroyed. The justifications of, recriminations about, and responses to this destruction from all sides in the dispute were in themselves revealing of theoretical positions (explicit or implied) about representation as well as of changes and developments in such positions at a key point of transition between antiquity and the Middle Ages.

In a deep way, much of how one interprets the subject and formulates the questions depends on the disciplinary frame from which one starts. Historians have tended to be interested in proximate or immediate as opposed to long-term causes, theologians in the span of argument reaching back to the early church. One of the dividing lines in interpretation is whether we should see the question of images, which our sources stress, as central to iconoclasm or as a form of cultural sublimation for a range of other problems and anxieties.⁷ Needless to say, as an art historian, I will take the internalist emphasis on the image, and the understanding of what was an appropriate sacred image in the context of a long history of such images, to be central. A second great division is whether we should see Byzantine iconoclasm in a relatively narrow historical context as the result of watershed developments of the seventh century or in a much longer time frame, reaching back into early Christianity or even pagan antiquity⁸—that is, whether we highlight proximate causes or longer-term processes. The profound discussion, ongoing for at least half a century, about when exactly the rise of the cult of images, or its intensification, in Byzantium took place is precisely a debate about this issue, since iconoclasm is always seen (and surely rightly) as in part a response to the religious devotion to icons. If you see the cult of images as taking a

significant step forward in the sixth,⁹ or the seventh,¹⁰ or the later seventh century,¹¹ or even within and as a result of iconoclasm itself,¹² then you circumscribe (to use a nice iconoclastic term) the appropriate historical limits of the inquiry. It is worth noting at the outset that all parties in the arguments for and against images (that is, our sources) are very keen on situating themselves within the *longue durée*—not only of Christian history but also of the pagan and Jewish sources, which the early church fathers and apologists both cited and refuted.¹³

The range of citations is extremely complex for us to handle because all have done violence to their original context, which in many cases no longer survives except for what is offered by the citation, and the text's original meaning, through the process of selection and excision. Some have been significantly adapted (which may involve being wildly interpreted or rewritten, by our standards), some have been forged outright. To criticize such varieties of fabrication is, of course, to apply anachronistic standards of scholarly objectivity and source criticism to a rhetorical culture whose concern was persuasion within a polemically and apologetically inflected model of discourse, where the florilegium occupied something of the authority in valorizing the arguments made that the substructure of footnotes has today in scholarly writing.¹⁴ Moreover, such anthologies constituted an extremely ancient forum for conducting learned, scholarly, and philosophical discussions, and they have to be read with respect for their genre.¹⁵ The issue raised by such anthologies is not so much authenticity or accuracy as authority—although each party could indeed undermine the authority of his opponents' arguments by questioning their authenticity. However, for my purposes (and I write unashamedly as a Classicist interloper in the history of Byzantine art), in taking a *longue durée* approach, it may be said that the *longue durée* model is at least in part based on an internalist view of the place of Byzantine iconoclasm in the long Christian culture of the Roman Empire, as adopted by all sides in the controversy.

I have to come clean that my approach, in concentrating largely on attitudes formulated in Constantinople, is metropolitan and reductive in that it does not treat the full scope of views and actions across the Byzantine world (let alone the West or Islam). Clearly, the variety of positions and responses in the eastern Mediterranean (especially the world that had been Byzantine until the mid-seventh century but was by the eighth under the political control of Muslim conquerors)—in Egypt and Syria, in languages like Coptic, Syriac, and Armenian as well as Greek, in Jewish, pre-Islamic, and Muslim as well as Christian cultures—would add a vast and variegated richness to the story. There is no doubt that at least two gestures from the East—the anti-imagistic acts of the early eighth-century caliphs and the theological defense of images conducted by Saint John of Damascus—had a significant effect on players in the Byzantine imperial center. However, my reason for focusing mainly on Constantinople—on church councils, their surrounding theology, and their pronouncements—is that this is where most of the key Christian theorizations of the image took place.

One core point needs to be emphasized. Iconoclasm in all premodern contexts from antiquity to the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy was about “real presence.”¹⁶ The damage

done to the image is an attack on its prototype, at least until Byzantine iconoclasm, and it presupposes some kind of assault on real presence as contained in the image.¹⁷ This has proved hard for many modern thinkers to accept—not least because real presence in pre-Christian antiquity was both assumed and undertheorized, so that ancient theorists would not have been entirely clear (should they have thought to ask) in what sense, to what extent, and in what way a person's memory or a god's divinity was contained inside an image. It is my contention that part of the contribution of Byzantine iconoclasm (by which I mean arguments advanced by both iconophobes and iconophiles) was to help clarify these questions.

My specific aim here in setting some of the issues into a *longue durée* historical context is to show how the overt and conceptually astute reconsideration of a series of ancient problems about images, worship, and theology could be transformative for how those problems came to resonate in the succeeding culture. The age-old themes, to which I argue the Iconoclastic era addressed itself, resonate on several levels. First, there are the fundamental questions of representation, real presence, animation, and worship in relation to images, which can be traced back to archaic antiquity.¹⁸ Not heavily theorized in antiquity, these come through largely as instinctive attitudes and responses among those who used images, especially in a religious or epiphanic context.¹⁹ But it needs to be said that some aspects of representation had been theorized much earlier—especially in the accounts of mimesis by Plato and Aristotle, the variety of takes on these theories (some philosophically serious and many playful) in the Hellenistic and Roman eras, and especially the theories and practices of statue animation among the Neoplatonists,²⁰ which certainly underscored divine presence in images. These are models of thought and argument that proved influential on the church fathers right up to iconoclasm.²¹ Second, the Iconoclastic period was preceded by a long history of image breaking as a legal sanction in the Roman system (in both the republic and the empire), which cannot be entirely separated from assumptions about real presence in images. Third, the particular interpretative takes that Christianity, partly in relation to its Jewish heritage, brought to this twofold problematic (as did Islam in a later and different context) were inherited from polytheistic antiquity.

Within this thought world, reaching back to the pre-Socratics in Greece and to ancient Judaism, pretty well every possible position—iconic, aniconic, anti-iconic—had been tried. We are looking, in the developments of the sixth to the ninth centuries, less at innovations than at reformulations, nuances, and changed emphases. This is the case in terms not only of expressed views about images but also of varieties of ritual, image cultivation (which includes all forms of devotion to images, from the uses of kissing, candle lighting, and worship to dressing, framing, covering, and exposing them), and practiced religion, which are rarely overtly theoretical but always carry the thrust of an implicit theological perspective.

The *Longue Durée*: Representation and Real Presence, Memoria and Memory Sanctions

Let us take these three areas one by one. First, the problem of representation and especially the question of whether an

image, as an imitation of its referent in a pictorial medium, is *not* the same as its referent and thereby expresses the *absence* of that referent even as it refers to it, or whether it is a site for the *real presence* of its prototype, embodied in the image.²² Both attitudes were common in antiquity—even if we may think them contradictory—and the questions they raised were never fully resolved. From the beginnings of the earliest Christian art in the third century CE, the theme of presence and absence remained in play. In all periods characterized by the hegemonic religious dominance of pagan polytheism and Christianity, the main marker of real presence is the *cultivation* of images: that is, a matter of particular practices—the use of images as items in ritual, their place as recipients of ritual, even of worship, their ability to embody a kind of charisma as a result of or in response to such cultivation. Notably, the violent denial of the appropriateness of such cultivation—namely, the act of iconoclasm—is itself often a tribute to the perceived power and potency of real presence inside an image.²³ There is no doubt at all that part of the problematic of Byzantine iconoclasm in the eighth and ninth centuries was a very direct concern with real presence in the icon, but my point is that this concern was a very old one, reaching back to archaic times.

Second, in the Roman world, the potency of images to carry at least some aspects of a person's presence into posterity, through his or her *memoria*, made them a prime object of memory sanctions as early as the Middle Republic.²⁴ In her recent history of this theme, Harriet Flower traces the ways that a disgraced aristocrat could be denied a funerary mask or the accompaniment of the masks of his ancestors at his burial,²⁵ how the banning of all portraits in all media and all locations came to accompany the postmortem penalties imposed on enemies of the state,²⁶ how by the Late Republic various conflicts between different aristocrats and factions in Rome were conducted through the creation, veneration, and destruction of images.²⁷ By the time the Principate was in full swing after Augustus, a discourse of image destruction and memory erasure for those who were rivals or former favorites of emperors, including women, became normal, rising to special and comprehensive treatment in the destruction, demolition, and recutting of portraits in the cases of disgraced former emperors.²⁸ Such destruction—going frequently by the modern name of *damnatio memoriae* in scholarship²⁹—involved all kinds of monuments and inscriptions but centered on statues, which might be demolished, or have their heads recut, or simply have new inscriptions added to replace those of the disgraced (or a combination of the last two).³⁰ The discourse rapidly became highly sophisticated, with significant differences in representation between a complete airbrushing of the condemned to leave the impression that he or she had never existed versus a marked erasure making it quite clear that the condemned should be noted and remembered as condemned.³¹ In the case of the destruction of multiple statues of one individual, it appears that by late antiquity one or two examples were usually allowed to remain; to be effective, the attack on memory had to tolerate exceptions so that the condemnation itself would be remembered.³²

The development of a *discourse* of iconoclasm in the Roman world—that is, the erasure of images in response to condem-

nation of memory—is extremely important for the context of the cult of images and its oppositions in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. While scholarly work on Byzantine iconoclasm has explored most aspects of the controversy, from the artistic to the sociopolitical,³³ the status of iconoclasm as a discourse in Byzantine society and culture has hardly been touched. By the word “discourse,” I mean an exchange or communication between two or more parties in a society, in which all the parties concerned understand the rules by which they are playing. In this sense, a discourse is rather like a game of Monopoly: it implies the complicity of the people involved in playing the game, even if they are playing *against* one another.

On this definition of iconoclasm as a discourse, we find that it recurs as a normal strategy in both ecclesiastical and imperial politics outside the period generally defined as “Iconoclastic” and reaching back through Byzantine history to Roman practices of *damnatio memoriae*. On the fall of an emperor, it was normal practice to order that his images be removed (or, particularly if his throne had been usurped, destroyed) and to replace them with images of the new *Basileus*. In fact, such a political strategy is not at all surprising, given that the Byzantines believed that the image of the emperor in some sense *was* the emperor and that the honor offered to it was transmitted to its model (the emperor himself).³⁴ No new usurping *Basileus* would want his predecessor's image—which is not simply a memory but a very presence—interfering with his own reign. Parallel to this political iconoclasm of the destruction and replacement of imperial images is a persistent trend of religious iconoclasm in the early Byzantine period, in which ecclesiastical politics was conducted in part through a discourse of destroying and setting up images. The sixth-century Syriac historian John of Ephesus records that images of Monophysite church fathers were replaced “everywhere” by those of John III Scholasticus, the patriarch of Constantinople (r. 565–77), and that on John's death *his* portraits were replaced by those of Eutychius, his predecessor and successor on the patriarchal throne. John of Ephesus certainly accepted this iconoclastic strategy as normal in ecclesiastical politics.³⁵

More striking still is the evidence of Deacon Agathon on the rampant politico-theological iconoclasm of the early eighth century. In 712, before his solemn entry into the city of Constantinople, the new Monothelete emperor of Byzantium, Philippicus Bardanes, ordered the destruction of the image (in the vestibule of the imperial palace) of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (681–82), which had anathematized Monotheletism. Further, he replaced it with images of Patriarch Sergius I of Constantinople (r. 610–38) and Pope Honorius I (r. 625–38), who had accepted Monotheletism and been anathematized by the Sixth Council. In addition, he placed images of the first five ecumenical councils (accompanied by images of himself and Sergius) in the vault of the Milion, the great domed mile-marker monument that recorded distances across the empire from the imperial center at Constantinople, arguing through this continuity of conciliar images that his faith was the true Orthodox faith and asserting by his act of iconoclasm that the Sixth Council was heretical.³⁶ This is a formidable testimony to the power of the image in the early medieval period. In a sense, the gist of

Philippicus's religious and political stances was presented in terms of what images had been set up and what destroyed. His successor, Emperor Anastasius, as a proclamation of his Orthodoxy, proceeded to destroy all the images of Philippicus, Honorius, and Sergius, to replace that of the Sixth Council in the palace vestibule, and to add the Sixth Council to the other five in the Milion. Again, we see images and their destruction proclaiming policy. Anastasius, while utterly denying the theology of his predecessor, nevertheless accepted wholeheartedly the strategy of his discourse.

Scholars attempting to explain the cult of icons in Byzantium have had frequent recourse to these topics—especially the cult of the imperial image—as an explanatory factor.³⁷ The point here is that Byzantine society (up to and including the period known as Iconoclastic) conducted its public gestures of political action and power through a discourse of images related both to the dominance of particular emperors or bishops and to the ascendancy of particular theological positions adopted by the ruling party. This discourse is the developed and the developing form of discursive practices in the late Republic and early Principate, themselves derived from ancient civic and cult traditions in the Mediterranean world.³⁸ A scintillating example of where the cultural politics of iconoclasm and of representation coincide, in the Hellenistic world, is offered by an inscription of the fourth century BCE from Delphi. In an act of liquidating the past, the Delphians recorded their payments to Eucrates (eight drachmas and three obols) to remove (*exagagein*) from the precinct (*exos hierou*) the bases (*bathra*) and the images (*eikonas*) of the Phocian generals Onomarchus and Philomelus, who had earlier ransacked the sanctuary.³⁹ Further, they agree to pay Cleon seven drachmas to destroy (*anelein*) the horses (*hippous*) and the statues of the men (*andriantas*).⁴⁰ In play—as early as the 340s BCE—is the kind of iconoclasm we find continuously in Byzantium until the eighth century CE: that is, the political and public announcement of condemnation of enemies and simultaneously the assertion of identity by the destroyer. The act of iconoclasm is accompanied by the need to record its effect so that the act of forgetting will be remembered (found here in a sanctuary inscription excavated by the French in 1894) and by a remarkable linguistic emphasis on the *eikon*. The *eikon* is described as separate from its base (which carries the inscription identifying the two condemned Phocians) and from the specific elements that make it up—namely, the bronze equestrian statues of the two generals, which are described as “horses” and *andriantas*, which is a word one would normally render as “statues” but must mean here the statues of the men as opposed to the horses. The Delphic inscription divides the iconoclastic process into removing and destroying, giving different elements to different executors at different sums. It also shows—more than a millennium before the iconoclastic controversy in Byzantium—a potential for systematic and analytic thought about what an *eikon* is and what its constituents are.

The *Longue Durée*: Judeo-Christian Positions

Late antiquity witnessed a significant change in the particular problematic of Christian attitudes to idolatry, inherited from Jewish Scripture and possibly some strands of Jewish practice,⁴¹ and the complications of this problematic in relation

both to pagan images (which were themselves, of course, by definition idols) and Christian images (which might or might not be). It should be said that Jewish and Christian positions differ from pagan polytheist ones in terms of the weight accorded to dogma, since pagan religion is more open-ended theologically, perhaps largely because so little is written down. The traditional view⁴² that the early church was hostile to the visual arts⁴³ has been strongly resisted in the last generation.⁴⁴ The modern consensus is that the attacks on idols by the early fathers and Christian apologists are primarily directed against pagan polytheist practices in the Greco-Roman environment rather than against the Christian cultivation of religious images.⁴⁵ But strong versions of the modern view need a certain amount of nuance.⁴⁶ We possess patristic writings, such as the letter of Epiphanius of Salamis to John of Jerusalem (and a number of other works by Epiphanius, who died in 403 CE), that represent the doubts of at least one significant fourth-century bishop and distinguished theologian as to the appropriateness of image worship by Christians (as well as attesting to its widespread practice) and articulate an iconophobic if not fully iconoclastic position—although Epiphanius tore down a curtain inside a church decorated, as he tells us, “with an image of Christ or one of the saints.”⁴⁷ This text and others—such as the letter of Eusebius (263–339, bishop of Caesarea and Constantine's biographer) to Constantine's half sister Constantia arguing against the use of an image of Christ—may be forgeries contrived by the iconoclasts in a much later period as patristic evidence for their position,⁴⁸ but they may also be genuine.⁴⁹ It seems to me reasonable to argue that on the theoretical and philosophical level, the early church (if we may use that generalization for the variety and range of locally, ritually, doctrinally, and linguistically diverse Christianities) had no consistent view on the matter of images.⁵⁰ As in Judaism, a certain low-level iconophobic unease, rooted in, or at least justifiable through Scripture, could easily manifest on occasion. What Christians certainly did not do is to elevate images to the level of Scripture, because that is what Mani, the Manichean prophet (ca. 216–276) had done,⁵¹ and perhaps some other Gnostic sects.⁵² Yet the range of attitudes, from strong approval at one end of the spectrum to resistance at the other, appears to have been as broad as the range of practices, from the worship of Christian images to their tearing down and destruction.

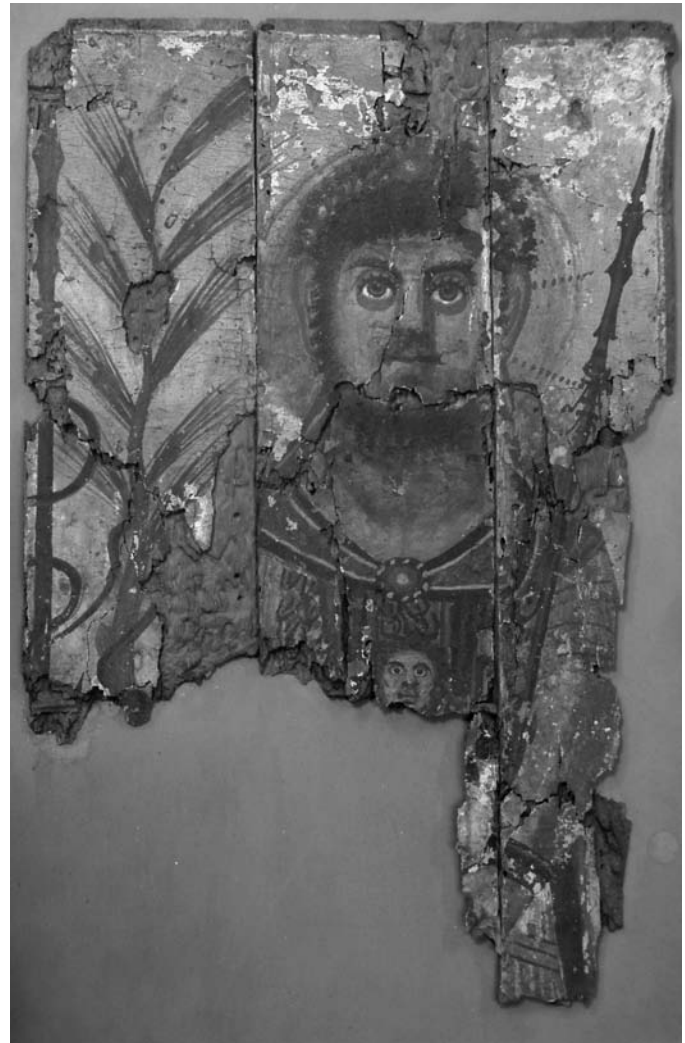
At the same time, a number of Early Christian texts—both pre-Constantinian and fourth-century (like the Epiphanius examples just cited)—appear also to give evidence of significant image cultivation by people who saw themselves as Christians. Notably, as early as the second century CE, the apocryphal Acts of John reports that a portrait (*eikon*) of the apostle is worshiped in private with garlands and candles.⁵³ Likewise, in the same period, Irenaeus of Lyons railed against Carpocratian Gnostics (and we must ask in what sense are such people *not* to count as Christians?), who venerated images not only of Jesus but also of various ancient philosophers such as Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle.⁵⁴ On the level of material culture, we have no images from the early period that we can definitively prove to have been devotional icons, but equally, we cannot prove any of our surviving images were not usable as icons for veneration by someone. We have some



1 Gold glass medallion of Saint Agnes in the orans posture, between doves, 4th century CE. Pamphilus Catacomb, Rome (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, Rome)

portraits of saints (for example, the gold glass medallions of Christ and a number of saints from the Roman catacombs, Fig. 1)⁵⁵ that have no obvious narrative context. There is every possibility that these kinds of images were put to private devotional use, whether in a funerary context, where the surviving materials were found, in a liturgical space, or in the domestic arena.⁵⁶ Such Christian images appear to have pagan precursors—not only in the devotions performed before portraits⁵⁷ but also in the corpus of votive or cult panels depicting deities or heroes, of which more than fifty survive from late antiquity and which are currently being assembled into a corpus (Fig. 2).⁵⁸

The early evidence is important. Since the 1970s it has been assumed that the “rise of the cult of icons in the sixth and seventh centuries [Figs. 3, 4], and not the origins of Iconoclasm, . . . is the central problem of the Iconoclast Controversy.”⁵⁹ This model of historical explanation (based on proximate causes—that is, a posited recent rise in the cult of icons—and in opposition to *longue durée* causes, such as the persistence of forms of *damnatio memoriae*) is fundamentally realist. That is, it assumes that because we have more textual evidence about the cult of images for the sixth to the eighth

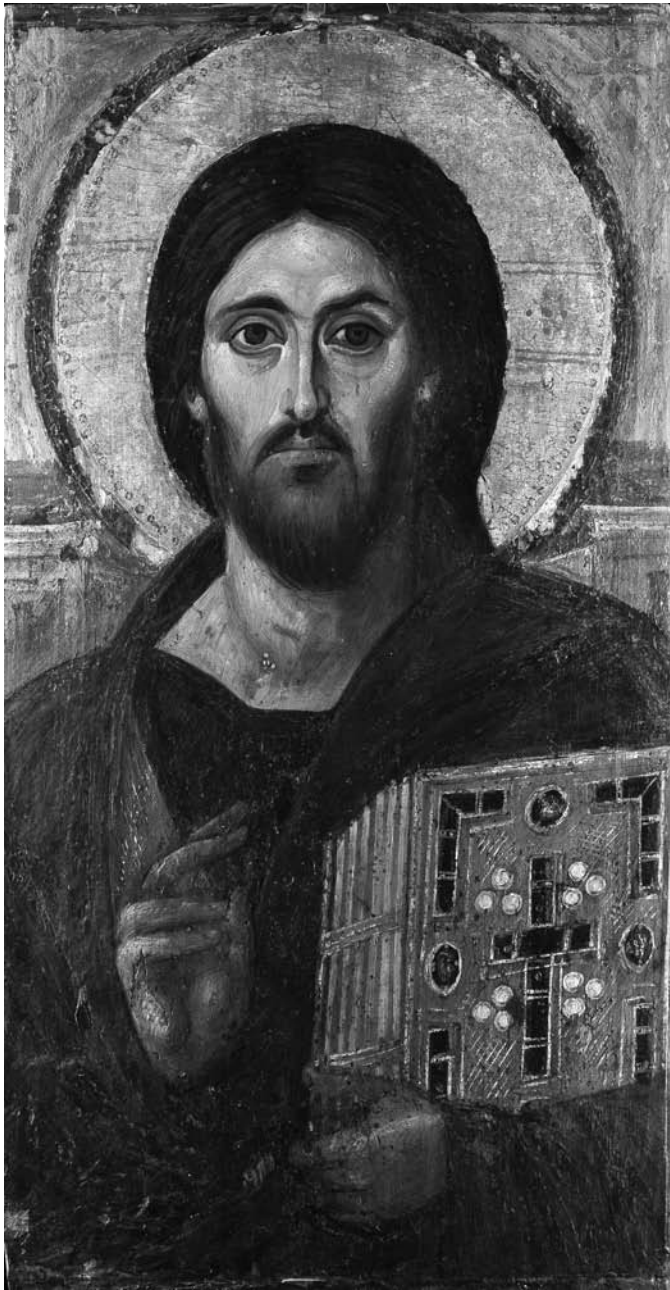


2 Panel of a bearded god in military dress with halo (the Thracian god Heron?), 2nd or 3rd century CE, tempera on wooden panel, 15½ × 10 in. (38.4 × 25.3 cm). Aegyptisches Museum, Berlin (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by Constantine J. Mathews)

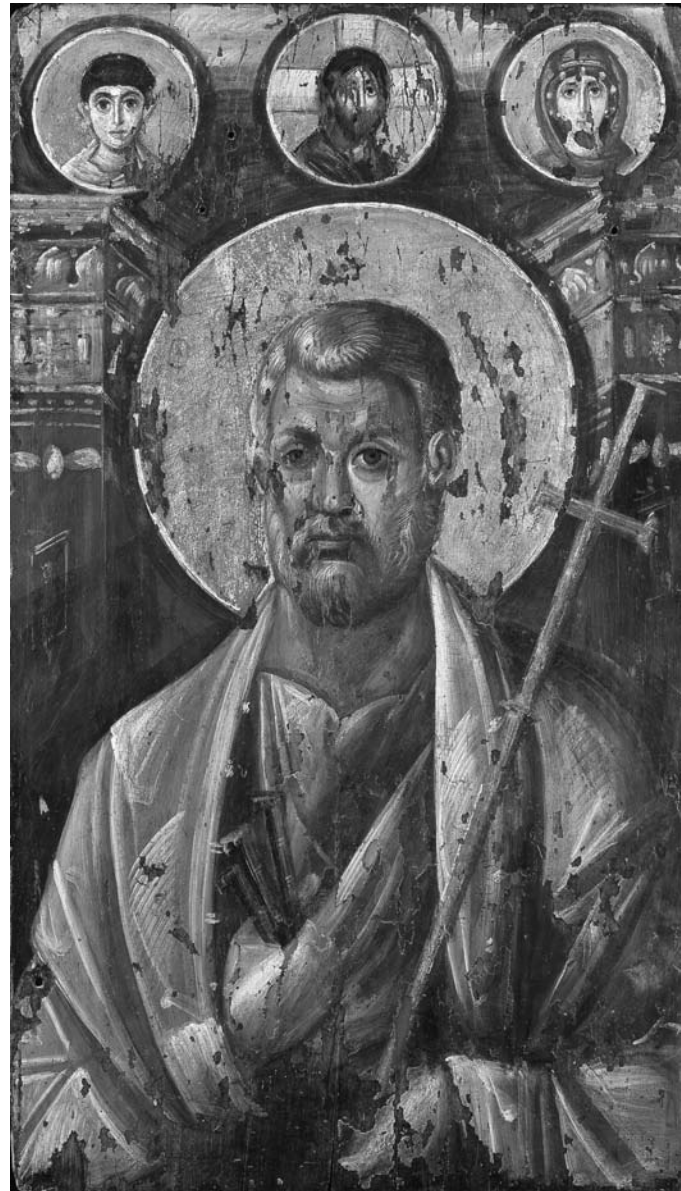
centuries, it means there really was more of a cult of images in that period rather than a shift in what texts decided to highlight: a shift, in other words, in rhetoric rather than reality. I do not myself see any reason for preferring reality to rhetoric as an interpretative historical move in this context, given the rich earlier evidence—up to the third and fourth centuries, say—for varieties of image cultivation, both pagan and Christian. The choice to privilege realism is a value judgment, and I myself would prefer to leave the matter open. It is possible there was no rise in the cult of images, just a rise in the textual noise about the cult in the materials that have survived to us.⁶⁰

The mix of attitudes in the relations of Christians to images and worship, that is, to the complex arena where idolatry might be seen as a problem,⁶¹ encompasses not only their own images but also those of the pagan environment.⁶² From the fourth century and certainly the fifth—the moment of Christian hegemonic ascendancy—there is plenty of evidence, both literary and in the archaeological record, for Christian destruction of pagan idols and sanctuaries.⁶³ Yet

evidence also exists that even cult images could be cared for with intense antiquarian enthusiasm—looked after, restored, collected, and brought to adorn the multiple private and public spaces of late antique Constantinople.⁶⁴ The extent to which such images were successfully stripped of their religious meanings and pagan connotations is moot, and certainly in the course of Byzantine history, such ancient dedications were always capable of showing demonic possession.⁶⁵ There is even evidence—in the case of the Parthenon itself—of the same monument being both the target for Christian iconoclasm and the object of a long history of antiquarian affection and preservation.⁶⁶



3 Icon of Christ with a jeweled Gospel book adorned with a cross, 6th century, wax encaustic on wooden panel, $33\frac{1}{8} \times 17\frac{7}{8} \times \frac{1}{2}$ in. ($84 \times 45.5 \times 1.2$ cm). Monastery of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the Holy Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai)



4 Icon of Saint Peter holding a cross and keys, with medallions of Christ, the Virgin, and perhaps John the Evangelist at the top, 6th century, wax encaustic on wooden panel, $36\frac{3}{4} \times 21\frac{1}{8} \times \frac{1}{2}$ in. ($93.4 \times 53.7 \times 1.2$ cm). Monastery of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the Holy Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai)

The evidence discussed so far provides two conclusions about the Byzantine strategy of iconoclasm. In the first place, it involves not simply the breaking but also the setting up of images: it is a process of creation as much as destruction. Second, the strategy surely reflects the impact of images as a major form of propaganda and polemic on both the political and ecclesiastical levels, and, for numerous church fathers East and West as well as even the iconoclast emperors Michael II and Theophilus (in their letter to Louis the Pious in 824), a crucial didactic tool.⁶⁷ In effect, what this implies is that the discourse of the image—or rather, the use of images as a discourse in society to make statements that were heavily loaded, either politically or theologically—was prevalent and



5 Gold solidus of Justinian II: obverse showing the imperial portrait; reverse showing the true cross on steps, minted in Constantinople before 692. The American Numismatic Society, 1986.177.1 (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the American Numismatic Society)

completely normal from Roman imperial times through to the eighth century and beyond.

Specific archaeological evidence points to the relatively sophisticated and subtle uses of images in the seventh and eighth centuries as part of the discourse of international politics, especially in the paintings surviving from the seventh and eighth centuries in the church of S. Maria Antiqua in Rome.⁶⁸ This material is strongly supportive of the importance of images as a means of discourse not only in Constantinople but also among the church hierarchy of the West. The most impressive argument for the power of image discourse in the seventh century comes from the numismatic evidence. A “polemic of images” undoubtedly was carried on between the coin issues of Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik and Justinian II in his first reign (Figs. 5–13).⁶⁹ The caliph appears to have imitated the Byzantine coinage (Fig. 5) but to have changed Justinian’s portrait on the face of the coin, borrowing from earlier Sassanian and Byzantine types, including the coinage of Emperor Heraclius (r. 610–41) (Fig. 6).⁷⁰ On the back, ‘Abd al-Malik replaced the cross—which always had the potential for devotional use among Christians (Fig. 7)—with the lance or scepter of the Prophet, whether on a stepped base or in an arched niche (Figs. 8, 9).

The radical nature of Justinian’s response can hardly be overestimated (Fig. 10). In a unique gesture, he replaced his own image on the coin’s obverse with that of Christ, bearing the text “REX REGNANTIUM” (King of Kings). On the reverse, Justinian is represented as “SERVUS CHRISTI” (Slave of Christ), itself possibly a Byzantine appropriation of an Arabic formulation, since *Abd* is Arabic for “slave.” Thus, ‘Abd al-Malik means “slave of the chief” and Abdallah means “slave of God.”⁷¹ It was unprecedented for a Byzantine emperor to be represented as a slave and on the back of a coin. Yet a slave of the King of Kings is better than one who rejects him altogether, and in terms of an image war, Justinian had won. There was no image that could outdo his. ‘Abd al-Malik’s initial response, an image, on both gold and cheaper alloy coins, of a standing figure with a sword or scabbard on the front of the coin, which may represent the caliph but may equally be intended to show the Prophet himself (Figs. 11, 12), gave way swiftly to a wholly aniconic coinage in which the use of images altogether was rejected (Fig. 13). His response



6 Gold solidus of Heraclius: obverse showing the emperor flanked by his sons Heraclius Constantine and Heraclonas, all crowned and carrying orbs with crosses; reverse showing the true cross on steps, minted in Constantinople, 629–41. The British Museum, London, 1922.0623.4 (artwork in the public domain; photograph © The Trustees of the British Museum)



7 The Wilton Cross, gold solidus of Heraclius (dated 613–30) in a cruciform pendant setting of gold and garnets, probably made in East Anglia in the first half of the 7th century. The British Museum, London, 1859.0512.1 (artwork in the public domain; photograph © the Trustees of the British Museum). Either the coin has been set upside down so that it would appear right-side-up from the wearer’s viewpoint or the design was interpreted as showing a pendant cross so that the coin image echoed the Anglo-Saxon function. This object shows the sacred and devotional potential for coins of this type and those with the image of Christ.

to Justinian’s master stroke was an equal master stroke: the decision to coin an entirely nonfigurative, epigraphic coinage, replacing images with Qur’anic texts, and, in effect, to deny that the game could any more be played by the old rules. His new kind of nonfigurative image heralded Islamic art’s break from the Greco-Roman representative tradition. This dialogue over coinage was itself prefatory to the attempt



8 Gold dinar of 'Abd al-Malik: obverse showing three standing figures with orbs but without crosses or crowns; reverse showing the scepter of the Prophet on steps, minted in Syria, ca. 690. The British Museum, London, 1954.1011.1 (artwork in the public domain; photograph © The Trustees of the British Museum)



11 Gold dinar of 'Abd al-Malik: obverse showing a standing figure with a sword; reverse showing the scepter of the Prophet on steps, minted in Jerusalem, 695. The British Museum, London, 1954.1011.2 (artwork in the public domain; photograph © The Trustees of the British Museum)



9 Silver drachm of 'Abd al-Malik: obverse showing a portrait bust (of the caliph?); reverse showing the lance of the Prophet in an arched niche, perhaps a mihrab, minted in Syria, mid-690s. The American Numismatic Society, 1944.100.612 (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the American Numismatic Society)



12 Alloy coin of 'Abd al-Malik, minted in Syria, mid-690s. The British Museum, London, OR.7282 (artwork in the public domain; photograph © The Trustees of the British Museum)



10 Gold solidus of Justinian II: obverse showing the bust of Christ in benediction holding the Gospels and inscribed "Jesus Christ, King of Kings"; reverse showing the standing emperor holding the cross on steps, inscribed "Justinian, slave of Christ," minted in Constantinople, 692-95. The British Museum, London, 1852.0903.23 (artwork in the public domain; photograph © The Trustees of the British Museum)



13 Aniconic gold dinar of 'Abd al-Malik with Qur'anic inscriptions, minted in Damascus, 696-97. The British Museum, London, 1874.0706.1 (artwork in the public domain; photograph © The Trustees of the British Museum)

to cover up the mosaics of the Great Mosque in Damascus with white cloths by Caliph Umar II (who reigned from 717 to 720 and was the defeated party when Emperor Leo III broke the Muslim siege of Constantinople in 717-18) and to the subsequent edict against images by Umar's successor, Yazid II (r. 720-24),⁷² although doubt has been cast on whether this edict really happened.⁷³

One interesting aspect of these various polemics of images is the ways they cut across and relate different societies functioning in different languages. Although the papacy was primarily occupied by Greeks in this period,⁷⁴ its main congregation was Latin-speaking. The caliphate was Arabic-speaking but operated in the seventh and eighth centuries in the broadly Syriac- and Greek-speaking Christian culture of conquered Syria and the Levant. Byzantium was, of course, Greek. But the question of the place of images in Islam is tantalizing. At the same time as the rise of Byzantine iconoclasm, and in response to the same long dynamic of discus-

sive practices inherited from antiquity (that is, in part from Classical antiquity, but modulated by the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanian models of imperial culture to the east), Islam also responded to the ancient image both with iconoclasm and with a rethinking of the nature of what images should be and how they relate to the divine economy. Islam's choices and conceptual approaches would prove very different from those of Byzantium. Effectively, Islam moved away from the figurative toward the decorative, away from the idolatrous dangers of real presence associated with the icon. By contrast, Byzantium would ultimately affirm real presence in response to the iconoclasts and develop a full visual economy of the icon.⁷⁵ The fact that both cultures confronted the great inheritance of antiquity in this matter at the same time—and with such different results—remains fascinating and the reasons for it unresolved.

Byzantine Iconoclasm and the Theorization of the Image: From the Ontology of the Icon to the Epistemology of Knowing God

It is within this context of the regular creation and destruction of images as a visual discourse pervading the competition for imperial authority and religious doctrine (both within Christian factionalism and between Christianity and Islam) that we need to place the specific developments of Byzantine iconoclasm. The key issues have less to do with the cult of images as such or attacks on images than with two fundamental interruptions to the discursive structures that had prevailed since before the beginnings of the Christian imperium. The first of these is the move to the full theorization of the image, both as a justification for images and as a justification for the attack on them. We may place this with the theological positions articulated by John of Damascus, writing at some point between 730 and 750 in defense of images, and by the iconoclast Council of Hieria, which met in 754 and styled itself the Seventh Ecumenical Council. As usual in this game, the arguments of Hieria do not survive in their own right but only as excerpted and represented by the opponents who anathematized everything the iconoclasts stood for—not ideal territory for objective assessments on our part. More to the point is that from both sides in the debate, images acquired a level of philosophical theorization to which they had never before been subjected in the entire tradition of Greco-Roman image making, reaching back to archaic antiquity. From the art historian's point of view, and from that of anyone trying to understand the cultural significance of images in a society, this is a huge development. It meant that the discourse of images would never again be conducted without potential recourse to rigorous theological arguments and justifications, effectively a structure of pseudolegalistic precedent, which would extend in somewhat different modulations to the Western Roman Empire⁷⁶ and would, of course, come to be central to the arguments of the European Reformation.

Side by side with this fundamental shift—and hardly separable from it—went a profound change in Byzantine theology, which has been insufficiently stressed.⁷⁷ Byzantine ecclesiastical life proceeded through a series of church councils, many of which claimed to be ecumenical and only seven of which were accorded that distinction by the tradition as it

developed, but we may differentiate between the focus of the theological debates these councils were summoned to resolve. Until the iconoclast Council of Hieria of 754 and the Council of Nicaea of 787, which reversed Hieria's pronouncements and justified images, the fundamental course of Byzantine theology in its church councils was primarily ontological—sorting out correct designations for the nature of God and attempting to find resolutions for disputes about such designations. Especially after the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451, which saw an ultimately irreparable division of Christian communities between those who insisted on distinguishing two natures in the person of Christ (the Dyophysites, whom we call Orthodox) and those whom their opponents accused of accentuating the Divine Nature (whom we tend to call Monophysite or Miaphysite), there was huge political pressure to find compromises, such as Monergism or Monotheletism.⁷⁸ All of these attempt ever more precisely to define the ontological nature of Christ's being, which is also his relation to the other members of the Trinity. What has gone surprisingly unremarked, either in connection with the study of the development of Byzantine theology or the study of the theorization of images, is the significance of the shift in the eighth and ninth centuries to icons as the subject of theological dispute, not only at Hieria and the Second Council of Nicaea but also in the iconoclast Council of 815 and the iconophile Council of 843, which resulted in the so-called Triumph of Orthodoxy. It signaled a change from an emphasis on *ontology* (that is, the being of God) to a greater accent on *epistemology* (that is, how God is to be known). This is no less substantive and meaningful a transformation of the thrust of theological thinking since the first Ecumenical Council of 325 than is the rigorous theorization of the image after millennia of ritual uses and practice.

It should be stressed that I do not mean there was no epistemology before Hieria and no ontology after. Rather, both in the focus of theology and in the discussion of images (which at this moment turn out to be the same thing), there is a movement in interest and priority toward epistemological questions and interpretations over ontological ones. A good example of the combined discussion of ontology, epistemology, and images in relation to thinking about the divine from a much earlier era is an excerpt from the philosopher Antisthenes (ca. 445–365 BCE), a student of Socrates, which survives—like so many of the texts discussed here—only as a citation in a number of church fathers (Clement, *Protrepticus* 6.71.2 and *Stromata* 5.14.108.4; Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 13.13.35, 15–16): “God is like no one (or nothing)” [an ontological statement], he said, “and on account of this no one is able to know him through a likeness” [an epistemological statement]. This is a rich text, which puns on the etymological link between “to be like” (*eoikenai*) and “likeness” or “image” (*eikonos*).⁷⁹ The point is that the epistemological tradition offered by the likes of Antisthenes is taken up and reversed by iconophiles like John of Damascus, so that because God is man (through the Incarnation) and because we may know other men and women through their likenesses and images, so God is knowable through his likenesses: images are a means for knowing God and for opening a route to approach him.

Before directly addressing these issues, it is worth noting in

passing the outbreak of iconoclasm on the part of priests against Christian images that appears to have taken place in late sixth- or early seventh-century Armenia,⁸⁰ as well as a series of defenses of images against either iconophobic doubters or outright iconoclasts during the sixth and seventh centuries.⁸¹ All these instances are complex, since the sources that report them are often later and always partisan, if not polemical, while the sociopolitical and intellectual contexts of such outbursts of iconoclasm are uncertain and at best hypothetically reconstructed. They include the justification of images and “material adornments in sanctuaries” that survives among the *Miscellaneous Inquiries* of Hypatius, bishop of Ephesus, in the 530s,⁸² the early seventh-century sermons delivered against the Jews in Cyprus by Leontius of Neapolis, whose fifth sermon includes a defense of images,⁸³ and the Armenian defense of images associated with the figure of Vrt’anes K’ert’ogh.⁸⁴ All these texts have been doubted—both as to date and as to authenticity—as one might expect in so polemical an arena and with our survivals being often in secondary contexts and fragmentary forms.⁸⁵ Beside the rise of an apologetics of the image after the sixth century (which can be paralleled in the West with both Serenus of Marseilles’s attack on images and Gregory the Great’s riposte)⁸⁶ and alongside the iconophobic positions that such apologies seem to respond to, we must place the significant commentary on images embodied in three canons from the Quinisext Council of 692. These are not a wholesale theology of the image, nor are they a full turn to the epistemological themes implicit in theologizing the image, but they have been rightly singled out (and only rather recently) as key steps toward a fully theological articulation of images within church practice.⁸⁷ The three canons—all effectively restrictive of what the council saw as excesses—forbade the placing of crosses on the floor (Canon 73), placed a premium on the representation of Christ as a man rather than as a symbol such as a lamb (Canon 82), and perhaps somewhat vaguely objected to any images that “corrupt the mind and excite base pleasures” (Canon 100).⁸⁸

The Breaking of a Discourse

It is within this discourse of image politics, often involving iconoclasm (particularly in Constantinople), that the act heralding the rise of Byzantine iconoclasm (agreed on by all our sources) took place. That act was, of course, the breaking of an image. In 726 or 730 (our two best sources disagree on the precise date)⁸⁹ Leo III, Byzantine emperor from 717 to 741 and a superb general who had defeated the Arab assault on the city of Constantinople in 717, had the image of Christ above the Chalke Gate to the imperial palace removed (it has been supposed to resemble the iconography of the bust of Christ as seen in Figs. 3, 4, 10, 14).⁹⁰ Until about 1990, no one doubted the written evidence of our sources: history was realist and sought, after removing any rhetorical excess from highly polemical documents, to come to a judicious sifting of the nuggets of truth amid the dross. However, after 1990 a series of reviews of the evidence make it quite possible—perhaps even very likely—that the Chalke Christ is a fabrication of the late eighth or early ninth century,⁹¹ a phantasmagoric prefiguration of an icon of Christ that really was set up by the iconophile Empress Irene in the wake of the Second

Council of Nicaea in 787⁹² and was then removed by Emperor Leo V about the time of the second iconoclast council of 815.⁹³ If this is true, then it offers the delicious irony that Irene’s icon, replacing an earlier image of the cross,⁹⁴ was itself an act of iconophile iconoclasm within the charged context of the image polemics of the last years of the eighth century. At any rate, the Chalke Christ was restored in a full-length standing version in mosaic after the Triumph of Orthodoxy (and the final restitution of icons) in 843.⁹⁵

Our sources report rioting and image destruction at the purported outbreak of iconoclasm in the 720s or 730s, which is what one would expect from writings of a violently iconophile bias.⁹⁶ They fail to report any other iconoclastic outburst during the rest of Leo’s reign, or executions or persecutions in relation to the two attested iconoclastic acts. Even more awkward for those who would portray Leo as a rabid iconoclast, there is no mention in his *Ecloga* or legal code of 741 of images at all—either penalties for making them or penalties for venerating them.⁹⁷ What is important is how little iconoclasm we can in fact establish for the first decades of the period we call Iconoclastic; in fact, there is hardly any attested in the first ten years of Constantine V, until the iconoclast council of Hiereia in 754.⁹⁸

What is interesting is that within the folklore of iconoclasm, the Chalke Christ shortly became the key icon whose destruction would be forever associated with the inception of iconoclasm. In the mythology concocted within the eighth century, iconoclasm was made to stand or fall by an image. We might say that this is no more than the same discourse of images and iconoclasm that was a normal part of Byzantine politics in the period before iconoclasm. It is not especially iconoclastic. And yet the destruction of the Chalke Christ is not quite comparable to any iconoclastic strategy that preceded it. Leo had not just come to the throne. He was not attacking an image that was theologically controversial, as was the Sixth Council to a Monothelete or Patriarch Sergius to an Orthodox. On the contrary, Leo had made a completely unproblematic image into a controversial one. What Leo had done is not parallel to the to-and-fro iconoclasms of Philip-picus and Anastasius, whose theological disagreements nonetheless involved an acceptance of the rules of the game of image discourse. It is much closer to the act of ‘Abd al-Malik, who, when faced with the figurative sign for the transcendental absolute, the image of Christ as Rex Regnantium, had refused to play by the rules that allowed that sign to exist at all. Leo’s act, as reported by the folklore, in destroying the Chalke Christ makes a similar gesture. It says that this discourse—the discourse of images for theology, of images *as* theology—is unacceptable. The mythical attack on the Chalke Christ is not an attack on images so much as an assault on the discourse of Byzantine society, a discourse that had been unproblematically accepted and that was a part of that society’s self-definition. Small wonder, then, that it was so outrageous—or rather, if the Chalke icon is a late eighth-century fabrication, that so outrageous an object for the break in discourse had to be invented in the folklore. Leo’s iconoclasm lies not so much in image breaking as in the wider metaphoric sense that the word carries in English today. Leo was iconoclastic in the wholesale negation of the image discourse implicit in the destruction of the Chalke

Christ and of the self-image of Byzantine society that was in some way predicated on the acceptance of an image discourse for the sacred. It may be added that the folklore's focus on the image of Christ is a genuflection to the key ontological justification for the sacredness of Christian images, namely, the myth of the *acheiropoieton*, the image not made by human hands. Supremely, such images were miraculous icons of Christ—Veronica's cloth, the Mandylion or shroud in which the dead Christ had been wrapped, and so forth. I have not drawn attention to this theme because the *acheiropoieton* is an exceptional—indeed, unique—image, a kind of relic, while the attack on and the defense of icons in Byzantium turned ultimately on images that had been made by human hands.⁹⁹

Whatever replaced the imagined icon of the Chalke Christ—a cross, a nonreligious image, or nothing at all—the result was the same: at a stroke, the entire discourse of figurative images as a means of enunciating or representing the holy was thrown into question. What Leo had done was to deny its validity. However, it was only after the act (what may itself, as we have seen, been a later invention) that the theology came—both the justification for the rightness of the act (which is to say, the wrongness of images) and the attack on the wrongness of iconoclasm, which was also the defense of icons. In fact, on the level of texts, it was the mature statement in defense of images that came first, in the form of the three orations written by John of Damascus, a monk in Palestine, perhaps based at the Monastery of Mar Saba near Jerusalem, and hence living under the caliphate and never within Byzantine imperial jurisdiction.¹⁰⁰ These have been dated as early as 726 (that is, as an immediate response to Leo's destruction of the Chalke Christ, depending on when one dates this, if it happened at all) or as late as the 750s, that is, before the iconoclast Council of Hieria in 754.¹⁰¹ The three orations may be read as separate works (in which case there is a great deal of self-plagiarism on John's part) or as three versions of the same treatise for different occasions or purposes.¹⁰²

For and Against Images: The Turn to Epistemology

John of Damascus opens his defense in the first oration by confronting head-on an issue central to the whole Christian discourse on images and the history of the reluctance to give them full play, namely, the problem of idolatry. At 1.4–7 (repeated at 3.6–7 and partially at 2.8), he quotes a series of the Old Testament prohibitions on images and concludes “that He forbids the making of images because of idolatry and that it is impossible to make an image of the immeasurable, uncircumscribed, invisible God.” Then he turns to the Incarnation as the special case that justifies images: “When He who is bodiless and without form . . . is found in a body of flesh, then you may draw his image and show it to anyone willing to gaze upon it” (1.8; 3.8). This leads directly to the question of worship: “Use every kind of drawing, word, or color. Fear not; have no anxiety; discern between the different kinds of worship. . . . For adoration [ἡ τῆς λατρείας προσκύνησις] is one thing, and that which is offered in order to honor [ἡ ἐκ τιμῆς προσαγομένη] something of great excellence is another” (1.8). This leads to a long and careful distinction between image and prototype (1.9–13),

which is followed by the distinction within worship between that which is appropriate for God alone (*latreia*, or adoration, 1.14) and that which is appropriate for images (*proskynesis*, honor or veneration, 1.15–16).¹⁰³ In a brilliant and passionate summary, which is much quoted and may be said to encapsulate the later theology of the icon, John wrote, “I do not worship [*ou proskynō*] matter; I worship the Creator of matter who became matter for my sake, who accepted to dwell in matter, who worked out my salvation through matter. Never will I cease adoring the matter, which wrought my salvation!” (1.16; 2.14)¹⁰⁴ The line of argument is admirably clear, and it is developed explicitly in the second half of the third oration (introduced at 3.11–15), where John concentrates first on what an image is (3.16–26) and then on the nature of veneration (3.27–42). The emphasis on what images are refutes the charge of idolatry, but the shift to the use of images in the process of approaching and honoring the Godhead is key. The image is “a likeness, a paradigm, an expression of something, showing in itself what is depicted in the image” (3.16), and this means that “images reveal and make perceptible those things which are hidden” (3.17). The image “was devised that man might advance in knowledge, and that secret things might be revealed and made perceptible” (3.17). Effectively, although he opens on a question of the ontology of the image, John shifts the parameters of the argument to an epistemological claim about how images work within the divine economy to take man toward God.¹⁰⁵

It is important to note that Christology—that is, the precise definition of what the Incarnation means in terms of Jesus being both man and God—is the crucial mechanism for John's argument.¹⁰⁶ Because Christ was fully man, then he must be capable of representation, as any other man may be. Because Christ can be represented in images, the images that portray him give access to the Godhead within. This is hardly unrelated, of course, to the special focus of the iconoclastic attack on the image of Christ (whether actually or in later folklore).¹⁰⁷ In theological terms, the shift to Christology was a clever move not only because of its centrality to John's Incarnational defense of the icon but also because Christology had been the traditional and key language of theological argument since the First Ecumenical Council's pronouncements in 325. That is, the icon's validity is dependent on its justification through Christological ontology, but its purpose and function within the divine economy were epistemological—a means to know and approach the hidden God, where the worship given to the image is transferred to the prototype (see 1.21 and 1.36, where John quotes Saint Basil directly).¹⁰⁸ The icon is ontologically validated through its Incarnational participation in Christ's two natures, and it is through its quality as matter—fully accessible to humanity—that its access to Christ's divine nature is made possible. The Christology both justifies the icon on ontological grounds as acceptable and gives it its epistemological position as conduit by which one may know God.

It is frequently asserted that iconoclasm was about idolatry.¹⁰⁹ And it is certainly true that iconoclasts used polemical accusations of idolatry against iconophiles, just as iconophiles accused iconoclasts of being Arian heretics.¹¹⁰ But this kind of heresiological mudslinging is what we would expect in the world of Byzantine theological polemics. The best evidence for the fundamental shift (effected by John of Damascus)

from issues of idolatry to issues of Christology is that in the *horos* or definition of its decisions, pronounced by the iconoclast Council of Hieria in 754,¹¹¹ relatively little attention is given to the icon as idol, although idolatry is mentioned explicitly in relation to the Devil's misleading of Christians into worshiping the creation rather than the Creator, especially at 221D.¹¹² Rather, the *horos* of the council, as it survives in the sixth session of the *acta* of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, whose primary purpose was to refute it, is concerned with an attack on images couched in the Christological discourse introduced by John. After affirming its communion with the six earlier Ecumenical Councils and their long list of anathemas, the *horos* of Hieria proclaims: "Having looked into these matters with great diligence and deliberation under the inspiration of the all-holy Spirit, we have found also that the unlawful art of painters [τῆν ἀθέμιτον τῶν ζωγράφων τέχνην] constitutes a blasphemy. . . ." (240C). Blasphemy and the issue of idolatry are construed not ontologically—as in "an image is an idol"—but epistemologically, as an inappropriate act of cultivation, a mistaking of creation for the Creator. This leads to the "error of those who make and those who pay respect" to icons (245D), an argument that has been connected with the *Peuseis*, or *Inquiries* of Emperor Constantine V, which themselves survive only in very fragmentary form within the refutation conducted by the ninth-century Patriarch Nicephorus.¹¹³

The argument of the *horos* of Hieria then turns, with some acuity and theological brilliance, to the icon of Christ (252A). That is, it confronts both the Christological basis of John of Damascus's defense of images and (implicitly) the specific icon of the Chalke Christ, which at least later tradition identified with the first act of image breaking.¹¹⁴ Christ, the *horos* tells us, is both man and God. Thus, in "describing created flesh," the painter has either "circumscribed the uncircumscribable character of the Godhead [συμπεριέγραψε ... τὸ ἀπερίγραφον τῆς θεότητος]" or he has "confused that unconfused union [συνέχεε τὴν ασύγχυτον ἕνωσιν], falling into the iniquity of confusion."¹¹⁵ These two errors—circumscription and confusion—are described as "blasphemous" against the Godhead, again focusing not on the icon as an ontological problem, an idol that is the site of a presence that is not God, but on the icon's appropriateness as a means for approaching or knowing God. Interestingly, those who venerate icons are guilty of the same error as those who make them. An imagined iconophile riposte (256AB) that "It is the icon of the flesh alone that we have seen and touched. . . ." is dismissed as equally heretical, since it represents a splitting of the two natures of Christ (human and divine), which is "impious and an invention of the Nestorian misfortune." One might object that the iconoclasts have hardly offered the best theological case that an iconophile could make for icons,¹¹⁶ but certainly, it has the effect of opening a theological double bind for the adherents of icons. Either they think "that the divinity is circumscribable and confused with the flesh" (a heresy and a blasphemy) or they think "that the body of Christ was without divinity and divided," and hence they worship only the image of the flesh (also a heresy and a blasphemy; 260AB).

Therefore, whatever an icon may be, it is a product of heresy. The only true image is the Eucharist (261E–264C),

for it alone has been sanctified by a prayer in the Apostolic tradition.¹¹⁷ There is no consecrating prayer for an icon (268C and 269D). The rejection of the icon of Christ then allows the rejection of images of the Virgin and the prophets, apostles, and martyrs (272B, 272D), but on the relatively weak grounds that since the icon of Christ "has been abolished, there is no need for" the others (272D). This position would in principle call for much more argument than we are given, especially because all these other figures are "not of two natures, divine and human" (272B, 272D). It is possible such argument was given in the acts of the Council of Hieria (which do not survive) and even in a segment of the *horos* not preserved.¹¹⁸ But it is also of minimal importance. For all sides agreed that the epistemological case for the image as acceptable representation lay in the icon of Christ: Could it be a correct means for access to the divine, or, by being a false means, was it effectively a barrier to such access?¹¹⁹ That Christological case, although couched in the language developed over centuries by the church to define the ontology of the Second Person of the Trinity, which is to say the nature of the Incarnation and of the process of salvation that depends on the Word becoming flesh in the Christian dispensation, is now used epistemologically to determine whether God may be approached through images.

Following these arguments (all too baldly put, perhaps, which is in part the result of their being in the form of a final conciliar definition but may in part be the effect of the cuts and selections made by the iconophile council of Nicaea on what survives of the declarations of the iconoclast council of Hieria, not only in the *horos* itself but also in relation to the loss of the rest of the documentary materials presented at Hieria), the council proceeded to an examination of biblical and patristic testimonia in favor of its position and then to a series of anathemas, some related to earlier condemnations pronounced by previous ecumenical councils and many related to the specific case of images. These latter include anathemas on anyone who attempted to make or venerate an icon or set one up in a church, a private home, or in hiding (328C). This is interesting both for the repeated conflation of making and worshiping images as one sin and for the range of spaces in which icons abound and need to be resisted. Further anathemas are directed at anyone who turned to understand God (*katanoēsai*) "through material colors" (336E), who tried to "circumscribe with material colors in icons, in an anthropomorphic way, the uncircumscribable essence" (337D), who tried to "paint in an icon the undivided hypostatic union of the nature of God the Word along with that of the flesh" and thus confuse the two natures (340C), or who thought of the Incarnate God as "mere flesh and consequently, endeavors to describe it in an icon" (341A), and so on. We might be tempted to agree with the iconophile refuters of Hieria in commenting on these anathemas that "repeating in cycles the same kinds of things, they make so many pronouncements that what they chatter will be almost beyond numbering" (341D). Yet the range of anathemas concerns not whether an icon per se is an idol or bad in its own right but the range of (in the view of the iconoclasts) mistaken positions about what God is and how he may be approached, which the use of icons may entail—and those positions are many and subtle.



14 Hexagonal censer with figural busts, front with a medallion showing Christ holding a book, Peter holding a cross to the right and Paul to the left, probably Constantinople, first decade of the 7th century, found in Cyprus, silver, $2\frac{3}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ in. (6.7×10.9 cm). The British Museum, London, 1899.04925.3 (artwork in the public domain; photograph © The Trustees of the British Museum)

Particularly significant, it seems to me, and fundamentally underemphasized in the excessively Protestant literature on the iconoclast position is an ordinance that appears after the first anathema but is not in itself an anathema. The council says:

At the same time we ordain that no one in charge of a church or pious institution shall venture, under pretext of destroying the error in regard to images, to lay his hands on the holy vessels in order to have them altered, because they are adorned with figures. The same is provided in regard to the vestments of churches, cloths, and all that is dedicated to divine service. However, should anyone, strengthened by God, wish to have such church vessels and vestments altered, he must do this only with the assent of the holy Ecumenical patriarch and at the bidding of our pious Emperors. So also no prince or secular official shall rob the churches, as some have done in former times, under the pretext of destroying images. (329E–332E)¹²⁰

This injunction, related to figurally decorated liturgical vessels and fitments (such as seen in a range of objects from pre-Iconoclast times, Figs. 14–20), does not anathematize existing images or icons in liturgical use, nor does it allow anyone, including priests and other officials, any kind of free rein on iconoclasm (meaning the destruction of such images), in part to protect church property,¹²¹ although alterations may be made with the consent of higher authority. Certainly, it conceives of churches operating with icons in the key utensils of divine service even under the dispensation of the iconoclast Council of Hierieia. The Second Council of Nicaea finds such a conclusion a piece of absurd contradiction: “While they defame the holy Church of God and decree she is wrong in accepting iconographic representations . . . now as if forgetting their own wicked decision, they



15 Back view of Fig. 14, showing a medallion of the Virgin, Saint John the Evangelist to the right and Saint James to the left. The British Museum, London, 1899.04925.3 (artwork in the public domain; photograph © The Trustees of the British Museum)

reckon that these should stay” (332C). But this is polemic. The passage seems to give substantial support to the view that the iconoclast position in 754 is about not icons per se but their inappropriateness epistemologically for approaching God. What is needed, according to Hierieia, is not wholesale destruction but the end of new production. As far as icons are concerned, Hierieia was about making and not breaking images. In terms of liturgy, what Hierieia called for was implicitly a gradual reform that would translate the church from an institution dependent on icons to one where, rather than use “the forms [*ideas*] of the saints in inanimate and speechless icons made of material colors [*ἐν εἰκόσιν ἀψύχοις καὶ ἀανάδοις ἐξ ὑλικῶν χρωμάτων*], which bring no benefit,” the worshiper should “paint in himself their [the saints’] virtues as living icons [*ἐμψύχους εἰκόνας*], consequently to incite in himself the zeal to become like them” (345CD). The true icon is not a painted image but the virtues of the saints painted in oneself, as well as the Eucharist that the worshiper eats (which is described as “the icon of his body, the giver of life [*ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ ζωοποιῶν σώματος*],” 264A).¹²²

The theoretics of the first Iconoclastic era, then, both in the defense of images mounted by John of Damascus and in the assault on images conducted by the Seventh Council of 754, constitutes a move away from ontological issues, both in theology and in the definition of holy images (as potential idols) toward epistemological concerns about how images may or may not be appropriate as a means for accessing the hidden God. The image is ontologically justified by means of the Incarnation, but its purpose or function—the reason it matters at all—is epistemological, to direct the worshiper toward the divine, to help the pious know the divine, and to be an appropriate channel for veneration of the divine.

The death of Constantine V’s heir, Leo IV, in 780 brought to the throne his iconophile wife, Irene, and their nine-year-



16 Chalice showing grapevines and images of Christ amid apostles, probably the vicinity of Antioch, ca. 400–ca. 530, found near Antioch, silver-gilt, 7½ × 5⅞ in. (19 × 15 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cloisters Collection, 1950, 50.4 (artwork in the public domain; image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, provided by Art Resource, NY)

old son Constantine VI. A shift in theological policy, blamed on Irene (at any rate, by the iconoclast synod of 815), led in 786–87 to the calling of the Second Council of Nicaea, which has come subsequently to be regarded as an Ecumenical Council.¹²³ It has been argued—correctly, I think, and strikingly—that Nicaea II sought to lower the stakes and the temperature of the argument about images by avoiding the clamorous levels of Christological debate,¹²⁴ and effectively aimed to circumvent disputed questions with an appeal to tradition and a rejection of Hierieia on the procedural grounds that it failed to do its job properly and misrepresented most of its citations by taking them out of their literary or historical context.¹²⁵ The *horos* or definition of Nicaea II makes two fundamental claims in relation to icons.¹²⁶ First, it ordains,

with all exactitude and diligence that, like the image of the revered and life-giving Cross, so too sacred and holy icons, whether of paint, of mosaic or other suitable materials, should be offered and dedicated to the holy churches of

God, on sacred vessels and vestments, on walls and on wooden panels, at home and in the streets, whether of the image of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ or of our immaculate Lady the Mother of God or of the blessed angels and all saints and holy men.¹²⁷

The aim here is clearly to enumerate the range of materials in which icons may be made and on which they may appear, as well as the spaces where they may be erected and the variety of holy beings who may be accorded them. All this is clearly in response to the limitations, restrictions, and prohibitions imposed by Hierieia. At some issue has been the question of whether the *horos* of Nicaea II ordains that icons *may* be dedicated in addition to the cross or *ought* to be set up.¹²⁸

At least as significant is the follow-up statement in the *horos* of the Nicene Council of 787:

For the more often they [the saints] are seen through pictorial representations [είκονικής ἀνατυπώσεως], the



17 Book cover showing the apostle Paul in an arch holding a book, with a surrounding frame of grapevines and peacocks in the upper corners, 6th century, found near Antioch, silver, $10\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ in. (27.3 × 21.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, 1950, 50.5.1 (artwork in the public domain; image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, provided by Art Resource, NY)

more are those who contemplate them aroused to the remembrance and the desire of the prototypes [τὴν τῶν πρωτοτύπων μνήμην τε καὶ ἐπιπόθησιν], to offer them kisses and prostrations though not true adoration [ἀληθινὴν λατρείαν], which according to our faith is due to the divinity alone, but the kind of veneration that we accord to the holy and life-giving Cross and to the holy books of the Gospel and the rest of the holy dedicated offerings, and to proffer incense and lights in their honor as was the revered custom among the ancients, because the honor to the icon passes to the prototype, and prostrations before the icon are prostrations to the person represented in the icon.

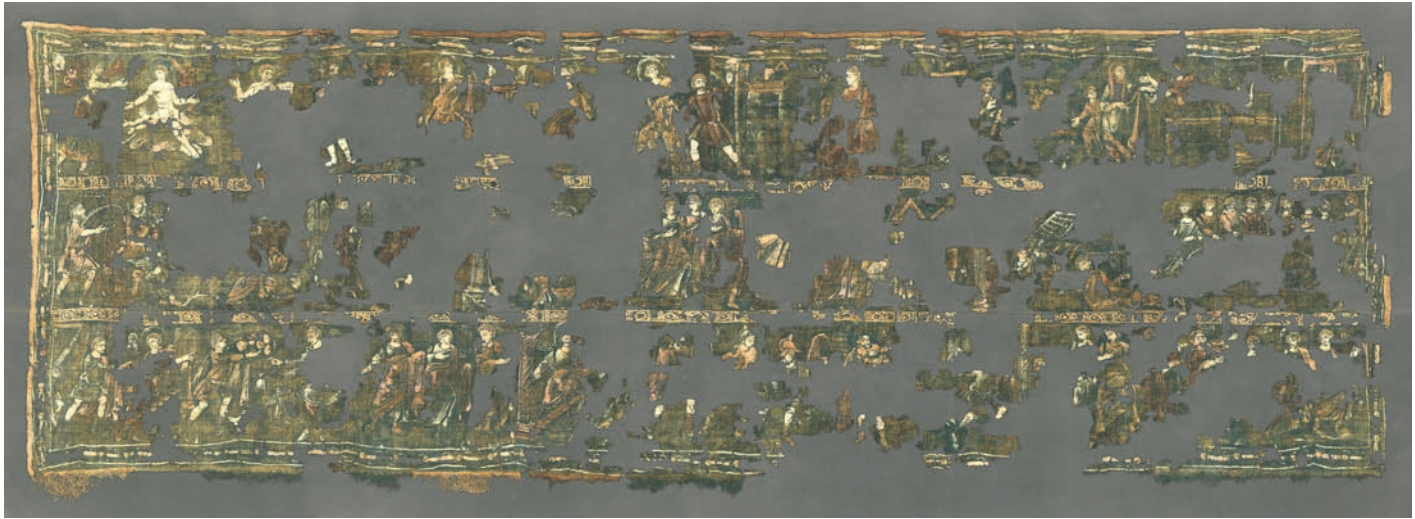
Most striking about this passage, clearly a direct riposte to the claim of Hieria that the true icon is the virtue of the saint in the worshiper's heart, is the complete avoidance of ontological argument about what an icon is or even of Christology. Instead, following the affirmation of the range of icons permitted and the spaces in which they are allowed, it gives a firm statement of the nature and variety of worship that may be directed to and through them. In the end, the whole rationale of Nicaea's argument rests on its implicit reference to Saint Basil's dictum about the honor

being transferred to the prototype, which John of Damascus had explicitly cited.

The iconophile dominance lasted only until the ascent to the throne of Leo V (813–20), who in 815 caused the abdication of the iconophile Patriarch Nicephorus and the calling of a second iconoclast council, at St. Sophia.¹²⁹ The second Iconoclastic era seems to have been a very different phenomenon from the first. While the Council of 815 ratified and therefore appeared to accept all the arguments of the Hieria Council of 754, its concerns seem to have been very different.¹³⁰ It accepted that images are not idols, and it essentially abandoned the heavy-duty Christological arguments of Hieria. Does this mean that the bishops of 815 thought Hieria's Christology had effectively been defeated by John of Damascus and the arguments of 787? In short, iconoclasm was now wholly a debate about appropriate epistemology—about how the holy is to be known, worshiped, and approached. The real criticism of the Seventh Ecumenical Council offered in 815 is that Nicaea “confounded worship [τὴν λατρευτικὴν ἡμῶν προσκύνησιν] by arbitrarily affirming that what is fit for God should be offered to the inanimate matter [ἀψύχῳ ὕλῃ] of icons.”¹³¹ The *horos* of St. Sophia ostracized “from the Catholic Church the unwarranted manufacture of spurious icons,” which are “unfit for veneration and useless.”¹³² It annulled Nicaea II on the grounds that it “bestowed exaggerated honor to painting [*chrōmasi*, literally, “to colors”], namely, the lighting of candles and lamps and the offering of incense, these marks of veneration being those reserved for the worship of God [*latreia*].”¹³³ It explicitly pronounced that “we refrain from calling them [icons] idols since there is a distinction between different kinds of evil.”¹³⁴

Here, “iconoclasm” did not mean a rejection of icons, or their breaking, or even necessarily their removal. The letter of the iconoclast emperors Michael II and Theophilus to Louis the Pious of 824, which admittedly is a document targeted to a Carolingian readership and may be highly selective and careful about what it chooses to argue, accepts the use of icons for didactic purposes but removes them from positions near the ground to places high up, so as to prevent worship.¹³⁵ What mattered about worship was proximity, a sense of mediation with the spiritual through the material. But this was unacceptable as far as icons are concerned; the letter objects to the veneration of images, to their use in place of the altar or cross, and to a series of practices including the mixing of paint scraped off images with the Eucharistic bread and wine and the use of images as baptismal godfathers.¹³⁶ The icon itself is the least controversial element here. The second Iconoclastic era is not about images at all but about what counts as abuse in worship.

It should be added that the ninth century is a time that has been seen as generative of a liturgical revolution.¹³⁷ As part of his reform of the monasteries, Theodore of Studion adopted the new monastic liturgy finalized in Mar Saba in Palestine a little less than a century earlier.¹³⁸ This liturgy, infused with poetic hymnography, was more mystical. When art resurged in the later part of the century, one main difference with the pre-Iconoclastic era was its new liturgical character. The second Iconoclastic era played a vital part in the debate that led



18 Painted cloth with Old Testament scenes, probably Egypt, 4th century, linen, 53½ × 171½ in. (136 × 436 cm). Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberg (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Christoph von Viräg, ©Abegg-Stiftung)



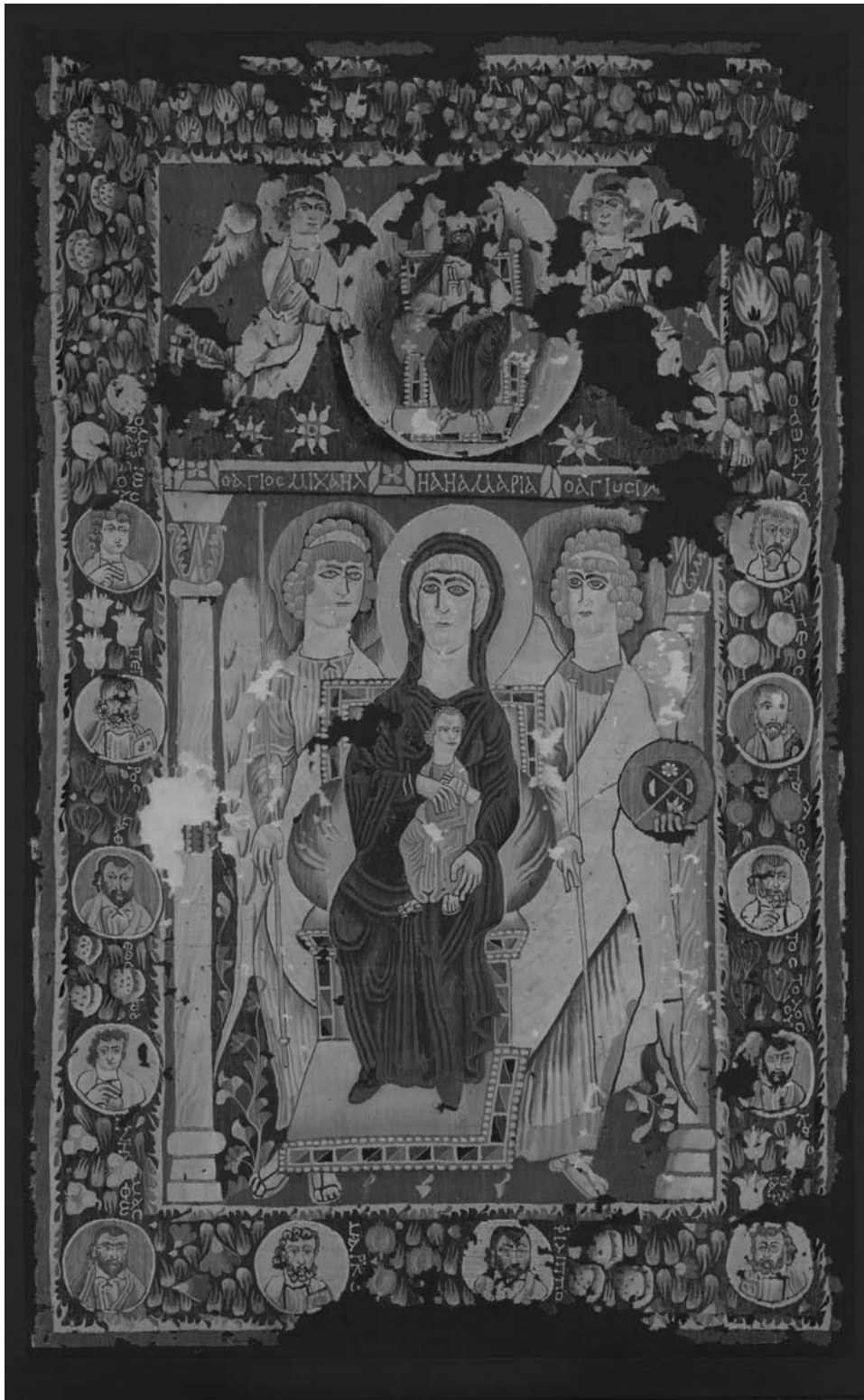
19 Detail of Fig. 18 from the upper left of the cloth showing life in the form of a winged soul coming to Adam and Eve. Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberg (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Christoph von Viräg, ©Abegg-Stiftung)

(with the defeat of the iconoclasts) to a radical liturgical dispensation that is the distinctive feature of the arts in the medieval Byzantine period.¹³⁹

Image and Prototype

It may be worth revisiting the fundamental steps in the contribution of Byzantine iconoclasm to thinking about images, including their significance and the impulse to break them. Riffing on the key text of Saint Basil by which the iconophiles from John of Damascus to the *horos* of the Second Council of Nicaea have justified images, one of the greatest modern experts on iconoclasm has defined the demolition of images thus: “The dishonor paid to the image . . . does not simply

pass to its prototype, but actually damages the prototype itself.”¹⁴⁰ This formulation is right for the long process of iconoclastic action, what I have called a discourse of iconoclasm, reaching back from Greek antiquity (wonderfully attested in the Delphic inscription about the condemnation of the Phocian generals Onomarchus and Philomelus) via *damnatio memoriae* in the Roman world to the early eighth century CE in Constantinople when Emperor Philippicus demolished the image of the Sixth Ecumenical Council and subsequently had his own images destroyed by his successor, Anastasius. On this model, some element of real presence inhered in the image—not fully theorized, to be sure, but potent enough to be worthy of attack through iconoclasm. The key point is that



20 Textile icon showing the Virgin and Child between angels and, in the upper section, Christ enthroned between angels, with a border including the twelve apostles, probably 6th century, wool, 70 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 43 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (178 × 110 cm). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., Fund, 67.144 (artwork in the public domain; photograph © The Cleveland Museum of Art)

when Leo III destroyed the icon of the Chalke Christ (whether in reality or in later legend), this discourse had irreparably changed. No one—iconoclast or iconophile—wished to dishonor, let alone to damage, the prototype, that is, Christ himself.¹⁴¹ The issue had moved from a direct tie to prototypes, and therefore the potential for a direct attack on prototypes through their images, to whether the image itself, as representation, was an appropriate means of making the prototype present. It was formulated by asking whether the

icon was an appropriate means for knowing, honoring, and accessing the hidden God through his Incarnate Son, the Trinity through its Second Person.

Or, to put it another way: Was the image's existence in its own right an act of dishonor to the prototype (because the icon falsely represented it), or was it a locus of real presence and therefore the correct recipient of veneration? In other words, the shift in the ancient discourse of iconoclasm to the image of Christ—which is also the shift, engineered by

the arguments of John of Damascus and the iconoclasts at the Council of Hiereia, to Christology as the philosophical language with which to think about images—is a move to consider the image entirely *as representation*. This is a transformative moment in the discourse of images, signaling the semiotic liberating of the image from an unarticulated and generally assumed ontological tie to its referent to place the image instead in an epistemological relation to its referent (as either a true or a false way of knowing God). That epistemology was for iconophiles always grounded ontologically in the Incarnational logic that God had become matter, meaning that matter could lead back to God. By the second Iconoclastic era, all discussion of idolatry and even Christology had been superseded by questions of ritual—how close icons might be to viewers, whether offerings should be made to them at all, and, if so, of what sort. From the specific assault either on the prototype or even on the image itself, the issue had become the status of the icon in its own right as a means of mediation in the wider sacred economy. The end result, after the final defeat of iconoclasm in 843, was that John of Damascus’s Incarnational theory of images, refined by Nicephorus and Theodore of Studion in the early ninth century, enabled a fully thought-through theoretics of the image in which its materiality, sanctified by God having become matter in the person of Jesus, allowed epistemological access through ritual to the holy.¹⁴² The conceptualization of real presence in images had never been fully articulated or justified before.

To return to the key text from Saint Basil on which the iconophile case in the end came to rest, when it was first articulated, as an illustration within a sermon on the Holy Spirit,¹⁴³ it offered a formulation of something that was patently accepted in the culture but not necessarily theorized or overtly stated. Basil represented the relations of image and prototype in the positive as honor transferred from one to the other, but clearly the discourse of iconoclasm participated in the same assumptions—the prototype being damaged through damaging the image. What Byzantine iconoclasm did, in the probable myth of the removal of the Chalke Christ, in the theological works of Constantine V (his *Peuseis*), and in the pronouncements of Hiereia, was to break the link of image and prototype and to announce that far from damaging the prototype, the destruction of its false and blasphemous images was itself a form of honor. The defense of images, arguing that their very materiality was the guarantee of their being an appropriate way of honoring and accessing the divine in the aftermath of the Incarnation, reaffirmed, justified, and grounded real presence and the logic by which it operated as never before in the ancient Greek or Roman worlds. That defense set up the space that would be challenged by the iconoclasts of the Reformation—but it must not be supposed that theirs was precisely the same target as that of the Byzantine iconoclasts. For no Byzantine wanted to damage Christ, the Virgin, or the saints, whereas many in the Protestant north were opposed to anything except the immaterial God and his Scriptural witness.

In discursive terms, the logic of Byzantine iconoclasm replays that of the numismatic “wars” of ‘Abd al-Malik and Justinian II at the end of the seventh century, but on a philosophical level of theoretical argument rather than in

purely visual terms. Justinian’s move to place the icon of Christ on the coinage is analogous to John of Damascus ratcheting up the stakes of the icon by making its validity depend on the Incarnation and on a full Christological argument. ‘Abd al-Malik’s abandonment of figural images on the coinage altogether is analogous to the image denial of iconoclasm (justified Christologically at Hiereia). We may say that the structure of the two arguments in terms of image making, raising the stakes, and image denial are utterly parallel, although in the earlier case of the coinage we have only images themselves to do the arguing, while in the later case of Byzantine iconoclasm we have almost no images at all but a veritable flood of textual polemic and theology. The first “image war” (in numismatics) is between cultures and between rival empires—one in which effectively a shared late antique heritage of portraiture and coinage came to be disavowed, with the Muslims going for aniconism while the Christians went for the affirmation of the image of Christ. The second “image war”—Byzantine iconoclasm itself—is internal to Eastern Christianity, although it is interesting that the most potent advocate of the strongest Incarnational raising of the stakes was a monk writing from within the caliphate. But the two sets of arguments over images, in the coinage and in polemical theology, coming so close together and being so alike in structure, point to a period when the image as object and as object-to-think-with was as powerful a discursive and polemical weapon as it would ever be in the Western tradition.

There is no doubt that the variety of positions offered during Byzantine iconoclasm constitutes one of the deepest conceptual contributions to the problem of the image as representation ever conducted.¹⁴⁴ The difficulty for us is that the formulation of these discussions, in highly theological terms that, to secularly educated moderns, seem abstruse at best and repugnant to many, has prevented Byzantium’s developed theoretical interrogation of the image from being appreciated by those with an interest in the issue in other areas of the history of art. To grasp the depth and effect of the theoretics of the icon in the period of iconoclasm, let us start again from the *longue durée* and isolate three moments in European culture when the image takes on significant potency as the object of reflection in the intellectual environment.

The rise of naturalism in Greek art during the fifth century BCE in visual terms marks the birth of representation in the West. That is, the archaic image as double (both sign for its referent and container of that referent), figuring presence in absence and presence as absence,¹⁴⁵ was supplemented by the naturalistic image, which is effectively a commentary on the life it represents—no longer usually the full, real presence of its referent but instead a representation of what that referent is and the world in which he or she operates.¹⁴⁶ This shift, “the Greek Revolution,” long recognized and essential to the rise of naturalism, is in part a move from the ontology of the object as potential container of its referent, as a potentially active player in a divine or magic sense within the real world, to the epistemology of the image as commenting on the real world. It includes the fascinating effect of images commenting on the workings of images—and especially on the making, stealing, and cultivation of cult images, which are

usually stylized as archaic by contrast with the Classical style of the representation of people. This fundamental development of ancient Greek art in the move to mimesis, and the long continuity of archaic-type nonnaturalistic images (both aniconic and nonmimetic) alongside naturalism made for a deep play of visual theology and commentarial exegesis entirely performed through images themselves.¹⁴⁷ This is largely a world of experience not subjected to theorization, but it is significant that the new status of the image under the regime of naturalism—both aesthetically and conceptually—gave rise to Plato's worries about mimesis.¹⁴⁸ By the Hellenistic and Roman periods, in the creative free play of literary epigram, epideictic rhetoric, and fictional prose—especially in that class of texts we call *ekphrastic*—these questions were subject to a remarkable degree of implicit (though playful and fictionalizing) interpretation, but hardly to systematic philosophizing.¹⁴⁹ Since the image itself was not fully theorized, it was adapted to specifically Stoic epistemologies about how one might know the world through the ways images impact on the senses and on the imagination.¹⁵⁰

If we fast forward to the Reformation, we find the third great moment when the image appeared as a central issue, bringing with it the trauma of Catholic idolatry for Protestant thinkers and solidifying as the bedrock of traditional religion for Catholics, in forms justified and extended after the Counter-Reformation. Either the image was, for Protestants, a wholly degenerate and idolatrous misconception of how to approach God,¹⁵¹ or it was, for Roman Catholics, a key traditional and long-sanctioned means for accessing the divine.¹⁵² One of the interesting side effects of the Protestant attack on the real presence of Christian images was the triumph of text over image in the German (Protestant) tradition of writing about art, which ultimately became the discipline of art history.¹⁵³ Again, for all the fundamental concerns about idolatry, the real issue, as it was in Classical Greece and in Byzantium, is epistemological—that is, a question of how to access the real (as seen in sacred terms) through its representations, and whether one can appropriately do so through images.

Between these two great moments in the culture of the image in the West stand the developments of Byzantine iconoclasm in relation to the theoretics of the making and the worshiping of icons. The Iconoclastic period brought the final conceptual theorization of the image in the Greco-Roman tradition (and in the Greek philosophical terminology inherited from Plato) cast in the then dominant philosophical structures of Byzantine theology and especially Christology. Above all, it generated the developed and theorized version of the shift from ontology to epistemology already implicit in naturalism's ability to comment on how our world works and to ask what our images are. But, notably in the works of John of Damascus, composed in the 730s or 740s, it brilliantly used epistemology (that is, the place of the image within the divine economy as a means for knowing God and opening a route of access to him) to justify, indeed, to establish theoretically on sound theological grounds, the image's ontology as icon—as container, through an identity of person with the referent represented, of a divine presence, while still being no more than matter, the matter sanctified

by the Incarnation. This theory, systematically tested by the iconoclasts at the Council of Hieria in 754 CE and ultimately upheld in the later resistance to Hieria, was to serve as the basis for a medieval view of the image as fully equal with Scripture and any other articulation of the holy and as a dominant constituent of the sacred economy of both the Byzantine and the Western Middle Ages. And precisely this high standing and this understanding of the image would attract the opprobrium of northern Europe's iconoclasts in the sixteenth century.¹⁵⁴

I have attempted to reposition Byzantine iconoclasm into a *longue durée* analysis as a discursive strategy, both better to understand its historical nexus of causation (which is in my view very deep and long: effectively no less than a considered revision of the entire Classical tradition's relations with images) and to show the special importance of what the difficult arguments of eighth- and ninth-century theologians were actually doing in relation to the longer history of how images have been conceived in the West.

Let me end by returning to the question of historical explanation. Our understanding of iconoclasm suffers less from a crisis of overexplanation than from an impasse in our assumptions about what history should be. The range of evidence is fissile, fragmentary, highly rhetorical, whether as apology or polemic. For those wedded to a realist view of the task of history, and that includes most of those who have devoted attention to the topic, finding the fire for which the various wisps of smoke must be evidence has been the principal aim. Yet after an extraordinary amount of scholarship, we remain pretty unclear about what, if anything, happened around the breaking of images in the Iconoclastic era and about what its causes (whether proximate or remote) actually were. However, if one explores the evidence we have as *discourse*, that is, as the visual and literary production of a society's self-reflections about how it related to itself and its God in a time of crisis in the face of the threat of Islam and the loss of great swaths of territory in the east and south,¹⁵⁵ at a time when the great fissure within Byzantine culture between antiquity and the Middle Ages took place,¹⁵⁶ then the issues are less about what really may or may not have taken place (which we will never know) than about how perceived problems and changes were articulated, invented, and mythologized. In this sense, it matters little whether or not there really was a Chalke Christ for Leo III to destroy, but it matters much that such an image—and specifically the image of Christ (as opposed to the Virgin and Child or a saint) should have been invented or deemed necessary for the job of having been destroyed. That is, for the modern historian, what iconoclasm provokes—and part of its perennial interest—is an examination of what we think we are doing in writing history at all.

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Notes

I have been working on this theme on and off for the last twenty-five years. Robin Cormack supervised my master's thesis at the Courtauld Institute on Byzantine iconoclasm in 1985–86, and I should like to dedicate this piece to him, as a small token of the many things I have learned from him both as a student and later as a colleague. It has been a signal aspect of my career as a Classicist to have spent much time with Byzantinists. That part of my doctoral work spent in Rome was in the close company of Charles Barber, companion on many a trip and interlocutor in many a conversation; and that part spent at the Warburg Institute was enlivened by the presence of Liz James and Ruth Webb. I have been fortunate to have worked as a teacher and researcher at the Courtauld with Robin Cormack and with John Lowden, in Chicago with Rob Nelson and Walter Kaegi, in Corpus Christi College with James Howard-Johnston and Mark Whittow: I am grateful to all of them for conversations and stimulation in this field over a long period. This particular paper originates as a response to a day on Iconoclasm in Corpus organized by Neil McLynn and me, with Leslie Brubaker, Barry Flood, and John Haldon, sponsored generously by Paul Pheby. Versions have subsequently been given in Basel, University of California, Los Angeles, Cornell, Chicago, and the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. I especially thank Averil Cameron, Simon Ditchfield, Barry Flood, Garth Fowden, Milette Gaifman, James Howard-Johnston, Tom Mathews, and Rob Nelson for their comments on and critiques of a first draft, as well as Karen Lang and two very helpful anonymous reviewers for *The Art Bulletin*.

Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine.

1. Peter Brown, "A Dark-Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *English Historical Review* 88 (1973): 1–34, at 3; cf. Averil Cameron, "The Language of Images: The Rise of Icons and Christian Representation," in *The Church and the Arts*, ed. Diane Wood, *Studies in Church History*, vol. 28 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 1–42, at 1: "Byzantine Iconoclasm, a subject which, we may feel, has been done to death. . . ."
2. On this issue see Ernest Gellner, *Plough, Sword and Book* (London: Collins Hamill, 1988), 42–53, 77–79; see also Cameron, "The Language of Images," 41–42: "The Iconoclastic movement in Byzantium is a perfect illustration of how history proceeds by multiple factors, all of which must be given their due."
3. See David Freedberg, "The Structure of Byzantine and European Iconoclasm," in *Iconoclasm*, ed. Anthony Bryer and Judith Herrin (Birmingham: Center for Byzantine Studies, 1977), 165–77.
4. See Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 5.
5. See Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 11.
6. Notably, this is the approach of Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era, c. 680–850: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), who take the word to refer to a period "between late antiquity (or the early Byzantine period, depending on one's view) and the medieval world" (773).
7. The point is well made by Marie-José Mondzain, *Image, Icon, Economy: The Byzantine Origins of the Contemporary Imaginary* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 1–2. So, for instance, Brown, "A Dark-Age Crisis," 5, emphasizes the holy—"The Iconoclast Controversy was a debate on the position of the holy in Byzantine society"—but turns out to imply centrifugal tendencies, local and individual attachments, and the loyalty of cities (18–24); and Patrick Henry, "What Was the Iconoclastic Controversy About?" *Church History* 45 (1976): 16–31, suggests the debate was about "the meaning of the incarnation for history, about the definition and interpretation of Christian worship, and about conflicting claims to the title of the city of God" (21). For brief discussion of the question, see Leslie Brubaker, "On the Margins of Byzantine Iconoclasm," in *Byzantina-Metabyzantina: La périphérie dans le temps et l'espace*, ed. Paolo Odorico, *Dossiers Byzantines*, vol. 2 (Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2003), 107–17, esp. 108–9.
8. One might divide historical interpretations of Byzantine iconoclasm between those that take a broad approach to its causes over a long period and those focused rather more narrowly on events in the seventh and eighth centuries. For the first group, the first source tracing the story from the early church, the last four from much earlier antiquity, as I would, see Ernest Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954): 84–150; Norman Baynes, "Idolatry and the Early Church," in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (London: Athlone Press, 1960), 116–43; Moshe Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea* (New York: New York University Press, 1992); Alain Besançon, *The Forbidden Image: An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 11–146; or Jan Bremmer, "Iconoclast, Iconoclastic and Iconoclasm: Notes towards a Genealogy," *Church History and Religious Culture* 88 (2008): 1–17. For the second group, see Leslie Brubaker, "Icons before Iconoclasm?" *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo* 45 (1998): 1215–54; and Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era*, 50–66, 774–82. For an overview, see Robin Cormack, "Art and Iconoclasm," in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys, John Haldon, and Cormack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 751–57, esp. 753–54.
9. Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images," 128–29; and André Grabar, *L'icône byzantine: Dossier archéologique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1957), 77–91, both argue for a date after about 550 CE for the rise of the cult of icons. Brown, "A Dark-Age Crisis," 10–11, goes for the "sixth and seventh centuries"; Averil Cameron, "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium," *Past and Present* 84 (1979): 3–35, emphasizes the late sixth century (cf. Cameron, "The Language of Images," 4–15, esp. 4: "It is mainly during the later sixth century and seventh century that the veneration of icons seems to have taken off"); John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 405–24, focuses on developments in the seventh century; and T. Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 31, claims, "A consensus so broad that it requires no elaboration holds that icons spread tremendously in the sixth and seventh centuries"—but one might worry about consensus in any academic matter, since it often speaks of what appeals to collective contemporary ideology within the academy rather than historical actuality.
10. See Brubaker, "Icons before Iconoclasm?" 1216–17, for the rise of the holy portrait after 600.
11. *Ibid.*, 1253: "There is little evidence for a 'cult of sacred images' in pre-Iconoclast Byzantium. The textual and the material evidence agrees that sacred portraits existed, but there is little indication that these images received special veneration in any consistent fashion before the late seventh century. . . ."; and see Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era*, 62–63, for about 680. This position follows arguments by Paul Speck, *Ich bin's nicht, Kaiser Konstantin ist es gewesen: Die Legenden vom Einfluss des Teufels, des Juden und des Moslem auf den Ikonoklasmus*, Poikila Byzantina, vol. 10 (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1990); and Marie-France Auzépy, "Manifestations de la propagande en faveur de l'Orthodoxie," in *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?* ed. Leslie Brubaker (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 1998), 85–99.
12. Brubaker, "Icons before Iconoclasm?" 1254: "What we might legitimately call a cult of images did not lead to Iconoclasm; it was generated by the discourse of the debate about Iconoclasm itself."
13. For an acute study of iconophile florilegia in the context of the anthropological tradition of Byzantine Orthodoxy, see Alexander Alexakis, *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and Its Archetype* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996), esp. 1–42 on florilegia in general, and 92–233 on varieties of iconophile anthologies, including those in John of Damascus and the Second Council of Nicaea.
14. This did not prevent parties from using the accusation of selective quotation against their opponents. As the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicaea nicely pronounced in 787: "A characteristic of heretics is to present statements in fragmented form"; in Giovan-Domenico Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 53 vols. (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1961), vol. 13, 301E; and Daniel Sahas, *Icon and Logos* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 125, the source of all my translations from Mansi. On forgery and florilegia, see Leslie Brubaker, "Byzantine Art in the Ninth Century: Theory, Practice and Culture," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 13 (1989): 23–83, esp. 52–56.
15. For some thoughtful and playful accounts of various ancient and early medieval encyclopedic and anthological projects, see Trevor Murphy, *Pliny the Elder's "Natural History": The Empire in the Encyclopaedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); John Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Erik Gunderson, *Nox Philologiae: Aulus Gellius and the Fantasy of the Roman Library* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).
16. Because this essay focuses on issues of representation and presence, it cannot venture into the wider thematics of violence, fanaticism, and so forth, which have come to dominate the more recent literature on iconoclasm generally, and especially that of the modern era. Important recent discussions of the theme include Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997); Alexander Demandt, *Vandalismus: Gewalt gegen Kultur* (Berlin: Siedler, 1997); Besançon, *The Forbidden Image*; Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, eds., *Iconoclasm: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art* (Karlsruhe: ZKM; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002); Anne McClanan and Jeffrey Johnson, eds.,

- Negating the Image: Case Studies in Iconoclasm* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005); and Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay, eds., *Iconoclasm: Contested Objects, Contested Terms* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2007).
17. For discussion of the question of real presence, see David Freedberg, *The Power of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 27–40; and Robert Maniura and Rupert Shepherd, eds., *Presence: The Inherence of the Prototype within Images and Other Objects* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2006), is a good collection but striking in having no paper on Byzantium.
 18. See Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea*, 23–91, tracing themes of the animation of the image, objections to images, and theories of resemblance in pre-Christian antiquity; Christopher Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses: Guardian Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), on varieties of talismanic and apotropaic images in ancient Greece; Jaś Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 11–48, 225–52; and Joannis Mylonopoulos, ed., *Divine Images and Human Imaginations in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), for a recent collection of essays.
 19. For some issues around real presence and epiphany in ancient religious art, see Richard Gordon, “The Real and the Imaginary: Production and Religion in the Graeco-Roman World,” *Art History* 2 (1979): 5–34; Elsner, *Roman Eyes*, 29–48; Millette Gaifman, “Visualized Rituals and Dedicatory Inscriptions on Votive Offerings to the Nymphs,” *Opuscula* 1 (2008): 85–103; Emma Aston, *Mixanthropoi: Animal-Human Hybrid Deities in Greek Religion*, Kernos suppl. 25 (Liège: Centre International d’Étude de la Religion Grecque Antique, 2011), 312–37, on the problem of representing the divine and facilitating divine presence; and Verity J. Platt, *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1–211, for images within a culture of epiphany. For further on the ontological slippage between statues and what they represent in Greco-Roman antiquity, see Clifford Ando, *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 41–42; and A. Hunt, “Priapus as a Wooden God: Confronting Manufacture and Destruction,” *Cambridge Classical Journal* 57 (2011): 29–54, esp. 31–33, 48–51.
 20. Particularly illuminating for discussion of Plato’s *Republic* is Myles Burnyeat, “Culture and Society in Plato’s *Republic*,” *Tanner Lectures for Human Values* 20 (1999): 217–324, and available as a pdf at <http://www.tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/atoz.html>. On Neoplatonism, see Mark Edwards, “Pagan and Christian Monotheism in the Age of Constantine,” in *Approaching Late Antiquity*, ed. Simon Swain and Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 211–34, esp. 219–20, on the fragments of Porphyry’s *De statu*s as a polemical riposte to Christian anti-idolism; and more generally, Algis Uzdavinys, “Animation of Statues in Ancient Civilizations and Neoplatonism,” in *Late Antique Epistemology: Other Ways to Truth*, ed. Panayiota Vassilopoulou and Stephen Clark (Basingstoke, U.K.: Macmillan, 2009), 118–40.
 21. Excellent discussions include Catherine Osborne, “The Repudiation of Representation in Plato’s *Republic* and Its Repercussions,” *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 33 (1987): 53–73, esp. 53–55, 67–72, on the church fathers and iconoclasm; Stephen Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), esp. 334–40, on John of Damascus’s use of this material; and Ando, *The Matter of the Gods*, 27–41, for the tradition of worrying about images between Plato and Augustine. For a careful account of the philosophical and theological issues in the history of pre-Christian Greek and earlier Christian thought, see Kenneth Parry, *Depicting the Word: Byzantine Iconophile Thought of the Eighth and Ninth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 22–63, 89–98; also Besançon, *The Forbidden Image*, 14–62.
 22. For some discussions of these problems in medieval art, see William Loerke, “Real Presence in Early Christian Art,” in *Monasticism and the Arts*, ed. Timothy Verdon (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1984), 29–52; Herbert L. Kessler, “Real Absence: Early Medieval Art and the Metamorphosis of Vision,” in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo*, 2 vols. (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 1998), vol. 2, 1157–211; Charles Barber, *Figure and Likeness: On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 121, for “directed absence”; Bissera V. Pentcheva, “The Performative Icon,” *Art Bulletin* 88 (December 2006): 631–55, passim (“present absence,” 639).
 23. For some discussion of pre-Christian iconoclastic polemics in relation to ancient cult images (*xoana*), see Alice Donohue, *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture* (Atlanta: Scholas Press, 1988), 85–103, 121–37.
 24. For a brief survey of the precedents for Roman imperial *damnatio memoriae*, see E. Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 12–20.
 25. Harriet Flower, *The Art of Forgetting: Disgrace and Oblivion in Roman Political Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 64–65, for the case of D. Junius Silanus in 140 BCE.
 26. *Ibid.*, 81–85, for the cases of L. Appuleius Saturninus in 99 BCE and Sextus Titus in 63 BCE.
 27. *Ibid.*, 88–95 on the era of Sulla, 116–21 on Octavian’s decision not to seek erasure for Antony’s statues after Actium, by contrast with the total excision of the poet and prefect of Egypt, Cornelius Gallus, after his fall in 27 or 26 BCE (125–29).
 28. See *ibid.*, 148–49 on Gaius, 199–228 on the complicated case of Nero, 235–62 on Domitian and the “limits of disgrace.” On the Severans, see Harriet Flower, “Les Sévères et l’image de la mémoire: L’arc du Forum Boarium à Rome,” in *Un discours en images de la condamnation de mémoire*, ed. Stéphane Benoist and Anne Daguet-Gagey (Metz: Centre Régional Universitaire Lorrain d’Histoire, 2008). For the continuing story into late antiquity, see especially Charles Hedrick, *History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 98–101. On the principate in particular, see Thomas Pekáry, *Das römische Kaiserbildnis in Staat, Kult und Gesellschaft*, *Das römische Herrscherbild*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Mann Verlag, 1985), 134–42; and the outstanding catalog and discussion of Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation*.
 29. On *damnatio*, see especially Hedrick, *History and Silence*, xi–xix, 89–130. The classic account is Friedrich Vittinghoff, *Der Staatsfeind in der römischen Kaiserzeit: Untersuchungen zur “damnatio memoriae”* (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1936).
 30. See especially H. Blanck, *Wiederverwendung alter Statuen als Ehrendenkmäler bei Griechen und Römern* (Rome: Bretschneider, 1969); Erik Varner, ed., *From Caligula to Constantine: Tyranny and Transformation in Roman Portraiture* (Atlanta: Michael G. Carlos Museum, 2000); and Peter Stewart, *Statues in Roman Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 54–56.
 31. On issues of discourse in relation to *damnatio memoriae*, see the two excellent collected volumes by Stéphane Benoist and Anne Daguet-Gagey, eds., *Mémoire et histoire: Les procédures de condamnation dans l’Antiquité romaine* (Metz: Centre Régional Universitaire Lorrain d’Histoire, 2007); and *idem*, *Un discours en images*. Specifically on image, iconoclasm, and discourse, see Peter Stewart, “The Destruction of Statues in Late Antiquity,” in *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, ed. R. Miles (London: Routledge, 1999), 159–89; Stewart, *Statues in Roman Society*, 267–83; Jaś Elsner, “Iconoclasm and the Preservation of Memory,” in *Monuments and Memory: Made and Unmade*, ed. Robert Nelson and Margaret Olin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 209–31; Valerie Huet, “Images et *damnatio memoriae*,” *Cahiers Glotz* 15 (2004): 237–53; Stéphane Benoist, “Le pouvoir et ses représentations, en jeu de la mémoire,” in Benoist and Daguet-Gagey, *Un discours en images*, 25–39; Erik Varner, “Memory Sanctions, Identity Politics and Altered Portraits,” in *ibid.*, 129–52; Caroline Vout, “The Art of *Damnatio Memoriae*,” in *ibid.*, 153–72; Valerie Huet, “Spolia in re, spolia in se et *damnatio memoriae*: Les statues et les empereurs julio-claudiens chez Suétone, ou de véritables jeux de têtes,” in *ibid.*, 173–211; and Lauren Hackworth Petersen, “The Presence of *Damnatio Memoriae* in Roman Art,” *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 30 (2011): 1–8. For specific accounts of particular objects, see Marianne Bergmann and Paul Zanker, “‘*Damnatio Memoriae*’: Umgearbeitete Nero- und Domitianporträts; Zur Ikonographie der flavischen Kaiser und des Nerva,” and H. Jucker, “Iulisch-Claudische Kaiser- und Prinzenporträts als ‘Palimpseste,’” *Jahrbuch des deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 96 (1981): 317–412, and 236–316; and John Pollini, “*Damnatio Memoriae* in Stone: Two Portraits of Nero Recut to Vespasian in American Museums,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 88 (1984): 547–55.
 32. See Hedrick, *History and Silence*, 108–11.
 33. Key items include Edward J. Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (London: Macmillan, 1930); Brown, “A Dark-Age Crisis”; Bryer and Herrin, *Iconoclasm*; Henry, “What Was the Iconoclastic Controversy About?”; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (c. 680–850): The Sources: An Annotated Survey* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2001); Barber, *Figure and Likeness*; and Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era*. Cormack, “Art and Iconoclasm,” offers a useful and up-to-date summary.
 34. Among the key texts on this (themselves repeatedly cited by iconophiles in defense of the icons, although technically they describe the relations of the emperor with his portrait) are Athanasius, *Third Discourse against the Arians*, in *Patrologia cursus completus: Series graeca* (hereafter, *PG*), ed. J.-P. Migne, 161 vols. (Paris: Migne, 1857–66), vol. 26, col. 332B: “He who venerates the image, venerates the emperor represented in it”; Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 17.44, in *PG*, vol. 32, col. 149C: “For the imperial image too is called the emperor, and yet there are not two emperors: neither is the power cut asunder nor the glory divided . . . since the honor shown to the image is transmitted to the prototype”; Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 65.8.10, in *Epiphanius III*, ed. Karl Holl (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985), 12: “For the emperors

- are not two emperors through having an image but the emperor and his image." See, for example, Kenneth Setton, *Christian Attitudes to the Emperor in the Fourth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 196–211; and Ambrosios Giakalis, *Images of the Divine: The Theology of Icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 34–36.
35. See Robert Payne Smith, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1860), 135–36; and Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 133.
 36. See Grabar, *L'iconoclasm byzantine*, 48, 55–56; and Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 141. On Philippicus, see Julia Herrin, "Philipikos the Gentle," in *From Rome to Constantinople: Studies in Honour of Averil Cameron*, ed. Hagit Amirav and B. ter Haar Romeny (Louvain: Peeters, 2007), 251–62.
 37. See, for example, Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images," 90–92, 122–25; or Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 102–14.
 38. For examples of Classical iconoclasm in the material record, see R. Ross Holloway, "The Mutilation of Statuary in Classical Greece," in *Miscellanea Mediterranea* (Providence, R.I.: Center for Old World Archaeology and Art, 2000), 77–82; and Nurten Sevinç et al., "A New Painted Graeco-Persian Sarcophagus from Çan," *Studia Troica* 11 (2001): 383–420, esp. 394–95. My thanks to Richard Neer for alerting me to this literature.
 39. The details are complicated. Philomelus orchestrated the robbery of the sanctuary in order to pay the mercenaries who were to fight on behalf of the Phocians against the forces of the Amphictyonic League, led latterly by Philip of Macedon. The outcome of the battles was ultimately comprehensive defeat for the Phocians and their allies, as well as the deaths of the Phocian generals. The Delphic act of iconoclasm, a replay of the shameful treatment of the corpses of Onomarchus and Philomelus, was both an act of vengeance against their depredations of the sanctuary and a political gesture of consonance with Philip, the new de facto master of Greece. For discussion, see Pierre Ellinger, *La légende nationale phocidienne*, Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique, suppl. 27 (Athens: École Française d'Athènes; Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1993), 326–32.
 40. See Émile Bourget, *Les comptes du IVe siècle*, Fouilles de Delphes, vol. 3, fasc. 5 (Paris: De Boccard, 1932), 107, no. 23, "Comptes de Naopes," lines 41–47; and Georges Roux, "Les comptes du IVe siècle et la reconstruction du temple d'Apollon à Delphes," *Revue Archéologique*, 1966, 245–96, esp. 272–73. My thanks to John Ma for this reference and discussion.
 41. On the deep complications of Jewish "aniconism" in late antiquity and its relations to the rise of Jewish art, see Steven Fine, *Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 69–81, 95–97, 110–23; and Lee Levine, "Figural Art in Ancient Judaism," *Ars Judaica* 1 (2005): 9–26. For the medieval and modern historiography of Jewish aniconism, see Kalman Bland, *The Artless Jew* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). On questions of iconoclasm in late antique Judaism, see Steven Fine, "Iconoclasm and the Art of Late Antique Palestinian Synagogues," in *From Dura to Sepphoris*, ed. L. Levine and Zeev Weiss (Portsmouth, R.I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2000), 183–94; and Annabel Wharton, "Erasure: Eliminating the Space of Late Antique Judaism," in *ibid.*, 195–214. For the intriguing suggestion that attitudes to image worship in Rabbinic Judaism ventriloquize those in the hegemonic Christian culture, to the extent of tracing a rising trajectory in the cult of images toward the Iconoclastic period, see Rachel Neis, "Embracing Icons: The Face of Jacob on the Throne of God," *Images* 1 (2007): 36–54, esp. 47–54.
 42. This is effectively a Protestant idealization, which saw early Christianity as a pure and aniconic religion, close to an ideally aniconic Judaism, later to be corrupted by various forms of idolatrous and paganizing accretions (to be identified with what became Roman Catholicism). Of course, the real issue here is an internal Protestant-Catholic argument about German culture projected back onto its Christian ancestry. For an acute discussion of the inevitable Protestant and Catholic apologetics in relation to the study of the early church, see Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); and for the art history of this period, see Jaś Elsner, "Archaeologies and Agendas: Jewish and Early Christian Art in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Roman Studies* 83 (2003): 114–28.
 43. See especially Ernst von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder: Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1899), chap. 2; Hugo Koch, *Die altchristliche Bilderfrage nach den literarischen Quellen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1917); W. Elliger, *Die Stellung der alten Christen zu den Bildern in den ersten vier Jahrhunderten (nach den Angaben der zeitgenössischen kirchlichen Schriftsteller)* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1930); *idem*, *Zur Entstehung und frühen Entwicklung der altchristlichen Bildkunst* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1934); and Ernest Bevan, *Holy Images: An Inquiry into Idolatry and Image-Worship in Ancient Paganism and in Christianity* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1940). This position, established as a Protestant ideal on the basis of a (selective) series of texts, was accepted by a generation of art historians such as Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images," 88–89; and Theodore Klauser in a series of articles under the general title "Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der christlichen Kunst," published in the 1950s and 1960s in vols. 1–10 of the *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*. See the discussion by Helmut Feld, *De Ikonoklasmus des Westens* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), 2–6; and Paul Corby Finney, *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 7–10.
 44. Notably, by Mary Charles Murray, "Art and the Early Church," *Journal of Theological Studies* 28 (1977): 305–45; Sister Charles Murray, *Rebirth and Afterlife: A Study of the Transmutation of Some Pagan Imagery in Early Christian Funerary Art* (Oxford: BAR, 1981); and Finney, *The Invisible God*.
 45. Arguably, the pattern of their attitudes parallels those of the rabbis in relation to the visual arts, which included the active toleration of images within late antique Judaism. See Fine, *Art and Judaism*, 82–123.
 46. Strong versions, in addition to those cited in n. 44 above, include Margaret Miles, *Image as Insight* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 43–48; Robin Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art* (London: Routledge, 2000), 8–31; and Andrew Louth, *St John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 194–96.
 47. The relevant texts are in Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 16–18, 41–43.
 48. As argued in relation to Eusebius by Murray, *Rebirth and Afterlife*, 25–30. The iconophiles in the eighth century did not need to resort to accusations of forgery in this case: Eusebius's Arianism disqualified his views on the grounds of heresy (Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova*, vol. 13, 316A; and Sahas, *Icon and Logos*, 135). The case for Euphrosinus's opposition to images being "fictitious and inauthentic," "spurious, and written by someone using Euphrosinus' name, as has often happened," was already made by John of Damascus in his *Orations on the Divine Images* 1.25, 2.18, in, for example, Louth, *St John Damascene*, 202, 206. John was followed by the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787 (in Mansi, vol. 13, 292E–296E; and Sahas, 117–20). Likewise, many of the texts adduced by iconophiles (such as the florilegia collected by John of Damascus at the end of each of his *Orations on the Divine Images*) are open to similar accusations as either wholly fictitious or at least elaborations: for the case of Nilus of Sinai, see Hans Georg Thümmel, "Neilos von Ancyra und die Bilder," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 71 (1978): 10–21; and Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 18. The major modern advocate of the theory of interpolation and rewriting across the testimonia is Paul Speck: see the various items referred to by Barber, *Figure and Likeness*, 145 n. 4 (which, for the sake of brevity, I will not list here). Skepticism like Speck's (which in my view is in danger of overstating the case for doubt in several cases) is strongly influential on Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era*, for example, 45–50, 94, 208–10, 772, 775. For doubts about following Speck too closely, see Beat Brenk, *The Apsē, the Image and the Icon* (Wiesbaden: Reichart, 2010), 96–97; and Averil Cameron, "The Anxiety of Images: Meanings and Material Objects," in *Images of the Byzantine World: Visions, Messages and Meanings; Studies Presented to Leslie Brubaker*, ed. Angeliki Lymberopoulou (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2011), 47–56, esp. 49.
 49. The case for Eusebius's letter being genuine has now been made with force: see Stephen Gero, "The True Image of Christ: Eusebius' Letter to Constantia Reconsidered," *Journal of Theological Studies* 32 (1981): 460–70; it has been accepted (contrary to her earlier position) by Mary Charles Murray, "Le problème de l'icônophobie et les premiers siècles chrétiens," in *Nicée II, 787–1987: Douze siècles d'images religieuses*, ed. François Boespflug and Nicolas Lossky (Paris: Cerf, 1987), 39–50, esp. 44–49; Hans Georg Thümmel, "Eusebios' Brief an Kaiserin Konstantia," *Klio* 66 (1984): 210–22; and Claudia Sode and Paul Speck, "Ikonoklasmus vor der Zeit? Der Brief des Eusebios von Kaisersaia an Kaiserin Konstantia," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 54 (2004): 113–34, with serious doubts about reconstituting anything that might resemble the original text.
 50. This is broadly the position elaborated by Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 10–45.
 51. On image as Scripture among the Manichaeans, see Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, "On the Nature of Manichaean Art," in *Studies in Manichaean Literature and Art*, by Manfred Heuser and Klimkeit (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 270–90, esp. 270–75. The key texts include *Kephalaion* 92 (234.24–236.6), in Iain Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 241–42; and *Kephalaion* 151 (371.25–30), in Gardner and Samuel Lieu, *Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 266.

52. Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6.24–38, discusses the diagrams said to have been used by the Ophite Gnostics.
53. For the text, see *Acts of John* 26–29, in Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2 (London: Lutterworth, 1964), 220–21. For discussions, see J. Breckenridge, “Apocrypha of Early Christian Portraiture,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 67 (1974): 101–9; Siri Sande, “The Icon and Its Origins in Greco-Roman Portraiture,” in *Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium*, ed. Lennart Ryden and Jan Rosenqvist (Stockholm: Swedish Research Institute, 1993), 75–84, esp. 77–78; Thomas Mathews, “The Emperor and the Icon,” *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Atrium Historiam Pertinentia* 15 (2001): 163–77, esp. 167; and idem, *The Clash of Gods*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 178. On early icons and apocryphal texts, see now P. Dilley, “Christian Icon Practice in Apocryphal Literature: Consecration and the Conversion of Synagogues into Churches,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 23 (2010): 285–302.
54. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.23.4, 1.25.6, in Mathews, *The Clash of Gods*, 177–78; and Bremmer, “Iconoclast, Iconoclastic and Iconoclasm,” 6.
55. The largest category of our surviving gold glasses (about 50 percent of the 278 whose iconography can be distinguished) are portraits of Christ, the apostles, saints, and orants: for illuminating discussion, see Lucy Grig, “Portraits, Pontiffs and the Christianization of Fourth Century Rome,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 72 (2004): 203–301, esp. 205–6, with Table 1 and 215–30. Discussions of the relation of icons to portraiture include André Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 60–86; Robin Jensen, *Face to Face: Portraits of the Divine in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005); and Karen Marsengill, “Portraits and Icons: Between Reality and Holiness in Byzantium” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2010).
56. See Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon*, 66–71, for the use of images in private veneration of the Virgin in the fourth century, 66–68 on gold glasses.
57. On the roots of icons in ancient portraiture, see, for example, Siri Sande, “Pagan *pinakes* and Christian Icons: Continuity or Parallelism,” *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Atrium Historiam Pertinentia* 18 (2003): 81–100, esp. 98–99; and Jensen, *Face to Face*, 35–68 on pre-Christian culture, 131–99 for portraits of Christ and the saints.
58. See Marguerite Rassart-Debergh, “De l’icône païenne à l’icône chrétienne,” *Le Monde Copte* 18 (1990): 39–70; Mathews, “The Emperor and the Icon,” for an initial list; and Reiner Sörries, *Das Malibu-Triptychon* (Dettelbach: Roll, 2003). V. Rondot is currently creating a catalogue raisonné, I gather.
59. Brown, “A Dark-Age Crisis,” 10; his line is broadly followed by most discussions since, such as those cited in nn. 8–11 above, even where the dates given to the rise of the cult of icons may differ.
60. A rare voice against the idea that image veneration was “a sudden innovation in the sixth century (or even the fourth)” is Andrew Louth, *Greek East and Latin West: The Church AD 681–1071* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2007), 43–46, at 45. If the so-called *Dialogue of the Monk and Recluse Moschos* belongs to the second third of the fifth century, as its most recent editor has argued, then that is significant textual support for an Orthodox cult of icons well before the sixth century. See Alexander Alexakis, “The *Dialogue of the Monk and Recluse Moschos Concerning the Holy Icons*: An Early Iconophile Text,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52 (1998): 187–224, esp. 209–10 on the date, and 210–16 on iconophile arguments.
61. Idolatry is a vast field, of course. See, for example, *L’idolâtrie*, *Rencontres de l’École du Louvre* (Paris: Documentation Française, 1990); specifically on icons, Anthony Eastmond, “Between Icon and Idol: The Uncertainty of Imperial Images,” in *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium: Studies Presented to Robin Cormack*, ed. Eastmond and Liz James (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2003), 73–85.
62. For an interesting and subtle account of the relations of Early Christian apologetics with the image culture of the Greco-Roman environment, see Laura Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second-Century Church amid the Spaces of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). But this book is oddly reticent about idols or issues of idolatry, arguably underplaying the polemical counterpart to the culture of apology.
63. See Frank Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization, c. 370–529*, 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993–94), vol. 1, 207–22 on Gaza, also vol. 2, 12–15; Eberhard Sauer, *The Archaeology of Religious Hatred in the Roman and Early Medieval World* (Stroud, 2003); the papers collected by Johannes Hahn, Stephen Emmel, and Ulrich Gotter, eds., *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), esp. the essay by David Frankfurter and the two by Hahn; the papers collected by Elise Friedland, Sharon Herbert, and Yaron Eliav, eds., *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East* (Louvain: Peeters, 2008), esp. those by Frank Trombley, David Frankfurter, and John Pollini; and R. R. R. Smith, “Defacing the Gods at Aphrodisias,” in *Historical and Religious Memory in the Ancient World*, ed. Beale Dignas and Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 283–326 (I am very grateful to Bert Smith for letting me see this in advance of publication). Most work has been on the East, but see Rachel Kousser, “A Sacred Landscape: The Creation, Maintenance and Destruction of Religious Monuments in Roman Germany,” *Res* 57, no. 8 (2010): 120–39.
64. For a history of the late antique cramming of Constantinople with earlier statuary, see Sarah Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), with catalog, discussion, and bibliography. For the interesting evidence of the fourth-century life of Saint Abercius using a number of much earlier epigraphic monuments in Hierapolis in Phrygia to create the image of a Christian culture of cherishing the ancient past, see Peter Thonemann, “Abercius of Hierapolis: Christianization and Social Memory in Late Antique Asia Minor,” in Dignas and Smith, *Historical and Religious Memory*, 257–82 (my thanks to Peter Thonemann for letting me see this in advance of publication).
65. See, for example, Cyril Mango, “Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): 55–75; Helen Saradi-Mendelovici, “Christian Attitudes to Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): 47–61; and Liz James, “‘Pray Not to Fall into Temptation and Be on Your Guard’: Pagan Statues in Christian Constantinople,” *Gesta* 35 (1996): 12–20.
66. For iconoclasm, see John Pollini, “Christian Desecration and Mutilation of the Parthenon,” *Athenische Mitteilungen* 122 (2007): 207–28; for affection, see Anthony Kaldellis, *The Christian Parthenon: Classicism and Pilgrimage in Byzantine Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). For an overview of the range of Christian responses to pagan statuary in the East, see Ine Jacobs, “Production to Destruction? Pagan and Mythological Statuary in Asia Minor,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 114 (2010): 267–303.
67. For the letter, see Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 157–58; with Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 260–63.
68. For discussion of the image conflict over Monotheletism between Pope Martin I (r. 649–53) and Emperor Constans (r. 641–68), see G. Rushworth, “The Church of Santa Maria Antiqua,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 1 (1902): 1–123, esp. 68–73; Per Jonas Nordhagen, “S. Maria Antiqua: The Frescoes of the Seventh Century,” *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Atrium Historiam Pertinentia* 8 (1978): 89–142, esp. 97–100; and Beat Brenk, “Papal Patronage in a Greek Church in Rome,” in *Santa Maria Antiqua al Foro Romano: Centi anni dopo*, ed. John Osborne, Rasmus Brandt, and Giuseppe Morganti (Rome: Campisano, 2004), 67–81, esp. 77–79. For nuanced visual resistance by Pope Sergius I (r. 687–701) to the 82nd Canon of the Quinisext Council of 692, which banned the use of the image of the lamb for Christ, see on Saint Peter’s *Liber pontificalis* 86.11, in G. Bordi, “L’Agnus Dei, i quattro simboli degli evangelisti e i ventiquattro seniors nel mosaico della facciata di San Pietro in Vaticano,” in *La pittura medievale a Roma*, vol. 1, ed. Maria Andaloro, *L’orizzonte tardoantico e le nuove immagini* (Milan: Jaca, 2006), 416–18; Andrew Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2007), 222–25; and Paolo Liverani, “St Peter’s: Leo the Great and the Leprosy of Constantine,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 76 (2008): 155–72, esp. 161–64. For the uses of images by Pope John VII (r. 705–7) at S. Maria Antiqua, see Per Jonas Nordhagen, “The Frescoes of John VII (AD 705–707) in S. Maria Antiqua in Rome,” *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Atrium Historiam Pertinentia* 3 (1968): 41–54, 75–78, 84, 97; Leslie Brubaker, “100 Years of Solitude: S. Maria Antiqua and the History of Byzantine Art History,” in Osborne et al., 41–49, esp. 44–45; with historical context in James Breckenridge, “Evidence for the Nature of Relations between Pope John VII and the Byzantine Emperor Justinian II,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 65 (1972): 364–74; and Jean-Marie Sansterre, “Jean VII (701–707): Idéologie pontificale et réalisme politique,” in *Rayonnement grec: Hommages à Charles Delvoye*, ed. Lydie Hadermann-Misguich and Georges Raepsaet (Brussels: Éditions de l’Université de Bruxelles, 1982), 377–88.
69. Grabar, *L’iconoclasme byzantine*, 67–74; James Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1959), 66–77; and Robin Cormack, *Writing in Gold* (London: George Philip, 1985), 96–106. The more recent literature on the Umayyads is more nuanced in seeing a multiplicity of influences on the Arab coinage (not least in relation to the conquest of Jerusalem), but preserves the sense of an iconographic and partly polemical dialogue with the Christians: see N. Jamil, “Caliph and Qutb: Poetry as a Source for Interpreting the Transformation of the Byzantine Cross on Steps on Umayyad Coinage,” in *Bayt al-Maqdis: Jerusalem and Early Islam*, ed. Jeremy Johns, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, vol. 9, pt. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 11–58, esp. 45–55; Julian Raby, “*In Vitro Veritas*: Glass Pilgrim Vessels from Seventh-Century Jerusa-

- lem," in *ibid.*, 111–90, esp. 119–24, 147–48, 182; Luke Treadwell, "Mihrab and 'Anaza or 'Sacrum and Spear': A Reconsideration of an Early Marwanid Silver Drachm," *Muqarnas* 22 (2005): 1–28, esp. 17, 19–21; and Robert Hoyland, "Writing the Biography of the Prophet Muhammad," *History Compass* 5 (2007): 581–607, esp. 593–96. Generally on Islam and iconoclasm in this period, see Leslie Barnard, *The Graeco-Roman and Oriental Background of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 10–33; and Oleg Grabar, "Islam and Iconoclasm," in Bryer and Herrin, *Iconoclasm*, 45–52.
70. In an Iraqi variant, a type that appropriated the Christian orans iconography was also produced under 'Abd al-Malik's half brother, Bishr ibn Marwan, in the same period. See Luke Treadwell, "The 'Orans' Drachms of Bishr ibn Marwan and the Figural Coinage of the Early Marwanids," in Johns, *Bayt al-Maqdis*, 223–70.
71. I am grateful to Finbarr Barry Flood for pointing this out to me.
72. On Umar II, see Nikita Elisseeff, *La description de Damas d'Ibn Asakir* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1959), 66 (section 44 of Ibn Asakir's text). I am most grateful to Finbarr Barry Flood for tipping me off on this topic and giving me the reference. On Yazid II's edict, see, for example, Aleksandre Vasiliev, "The Iconoclastic Edict of the Caliph Yazid II, AD 721," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9, no. 10 (1956): 23–47; A. Grabar, *L'iconoclasm byzantine*, 105–9; G. R. D. King, "Islam, Iconoclasm, and the Declaration of Doctrine," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 48 (1985): 267–77; Sidney Griffith, "Images, Islam and Christian Icons: A Moment in the Christian/Muslim Encounter in Early Islamic Times," in *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam VIIe–VIIIe siècles*, ed. Pierre Canivet and Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1992), 121–38; Robert Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 180–219, for a full archaeological and contextual discussion, 215–17 on the edict; Garth Fowden, "Late Antique Art in Syria and Its Umayyad Evolutions," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 17 (2004): 282–304, esp. 294, 300–301; Glen Bowersock, *Mosaics as History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 91–111; and M. Guidetto, "L'editto di Yazid II: Immagini e identità religiosa nel Bilad al-Sham dell' VIII secolo," in *L'VIII secolo: Un secolo inquieto; Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Cividale del Friuli 4–7 dicembre 2008*, ed. Valentino Pace (Friuli: Comune di Cividale di Friuli, 2010), 69–79. On the specific issue of (Christian) iconoclasm at the church of St. Stephen in Umm-al-Rasas, see, for example, Susanna Ognibene, *Umm-al-Rasas: La chiesa di Santo Stefano ed il "problema iconofobico"* (Rome: Bretschneider, 2002), esp. 97–153.
73. For example, O. Grabar, "Islam and Iconoclasm," 46.
74. See Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome*.
75. I use the word "economy" deliberately; it is the key patristic and Byzantine term for the divine dispensation, and not least God's management of the created world, including man's relations with God and the relations of human beings with each other. See especially Mondzain, *Image, Icon, Economy*, 18–66, for a semantic discussion of the concept in Greek and Byzantine culture, and 69–170 on the "iconic economy."
76. This is the main topic of Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, who has transformed the level of discussion on the Carolingian aspects of the problem.
77. Strikingly, Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era*, offer almost no discussion of theology as such, in a monumental volume of more than nine hundred pages.
78. This is a vast topic. See, for example, Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 37–90; Joan M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 9–29; and Henry Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 50–70.
79. θεὸν οὐδενὶ εἰκόναι φησὶν· διόπερ αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἐκμαθεῖν ἐξ εἰκόνας δύναται
80. For example, Paul Alexander, "An Ascetic Sect of Iconoclasts in Seventh Century Armenia," in *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.*, ed. Kurt Weitzmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 151–60.
81. For a brief but comprehensive resumé with bibliography, see Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 20–26, including texts known only from the iconophile excerpts of the Second Council of Nicaea of 787.
82. For text and discussion, see Paul Alexander, "Hypatius of Ephesus: A Note on Image Worship in the Sixth Century," *Harvard Theological Review* 45 (1952): 178–84; also Gunter Lange, *Bild und Wort: Die katechetische Funktion des Bildes in der griechischen Theologie des sechsten bis neunten Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1969), 44–60; Stephen Gero, "Hypatius of Ephesus on the Cult of Images," in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith*, ed. Jacob Neusner (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 208–16; and Hans Georg Thümmel, *Die Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bildlehre: Texte und Untersuchungen zur Zeit vor dem Bilderstreit* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1992), 103–6.
83. For the text, see Vincent Déroche, "L'Apologie contre les Juifs de Léontios de Néapolis," *Travaux et Mémoires* 12 (1994): 45–104; with Norman Baynes, "The Icons before Iconoclasm," in Baynes, *Byzantine Studies*, 226–39, esp. 97–98; Lange, *Bild und Wort*, 621–76; Thümmel, *Die Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bildlehre*, 127–36, 233–36; and Barber, *Figure and Likeness*, 17–24.
84. See Sirapie Der Nersessian, "Une apologie des images du septième siècle," in *Études Byzantines et Arméniennes* (Louvain: Orientaliste, 1973), vol. 1, 379–403, esp. 379–88, for a French translation. Discussions include *idem*, "Image Worship in Armenia and Its Opponents," in *ibid.*, 405–15; and Thomas Mathews, "Vrt'anes K'ert'ogh and the Early Theology of Images," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 31 (2008–9): 101–26.
85. For Speck's repeated assaults on Leontius and the defense of the text by Déroche, see the list in Barber, *Figure and Likeness*, 146 n. 12; for dating and reattributing the Armenian defense, see P. Schmidt, "Gab es einen armenischen Ikonoklasmus? Rekonstruktion eines Dokuments der Kaukasisch-Armenischen Theologiegeschichte," in *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794*, ed. Rainer Berndt, pt. 2 (Mainz: Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft für Mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 1997), 947–64.
86. See Lawrence Duggan, "Was Art Really the Book of the Illiterate?" *Word and Image* 5 (1989): 227–51; Celia Chazelle, "Pictures, Books and the Illiterate: Pope Gregory I's Letters to Serenus of Marseilles," *Word and Image* 6 (1990): 138–53; and Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 42–43.
87. See especially Barber, *Figure and Likeness*, 40–54, on the importance of Canon 82; and Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 26–27. For Canon 82 as a response to the theological disputes of the seventh century, see Cameron, "The Language of Images," 38–39.
88. See George Nedungatt and Michael Featherstone, eds., *The Council in Trullo Revisited* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1995), 155, 162–64, 180–81.
89. See Cyril Mango, *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen: Kommission hos Munkegaard, 1959), 113, 170–74.
90. See A. Grabar, *L'iconoclasm byzantine*, 130–42; Mango, *The Brazen House*, 108–48; Anatole Frolov, "Le Christ de la Chalécé," *Byzantion* 33 (1963): 107–20; and Stephen Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III* (Louvain, 1973), 95, 212–17.
91. The key discussion is Marie-France Auzépy, "La destruction de l'icône du Christ de la Chalécé par Léon III: Propagande ou réalité?" *Byzantion* 60 (1990): 445–92, which reviews the documentary evidence in detail; also Leslie Brubaker, "The Chalke Gate, the Construction of the Past and the Trier Ivory," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999): 258–85; and Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era*, 128–35. The strongest independent evidence for the existence of the Chalke Christ before Leo III and therefore for his demolition of it is the reference in the *Liber pontificalis*, in relation to the pontificate of Zacharias (r. 741–52), to the erection of a portico and tower at the Lateran with "a figure of the Savior before the doors [*figuram Salvatoris ante fores*];" see Louis Duchesne, ed., *Liber pontificalis*, vol. 1 (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1955), 432. This looks very like an iconophile riposte to Leo's act of iconoclasm—"a silent rebuke of Constantinople's religious position." See the discussion of John Haldon and Brian Ward-Perkins, "Evidence from Rome for the Image of Christ at the Chalke Gate," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999): 286–96, esp. 288, 295. Despite what is now the prevailing view, some still accept the Chalke Christ and its demolition, for example, Bissera V. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 63.
92. On Irene's "restoration" of the image, see Mango, *The Brazen House*, 121–22.
93. On Leo V's iconoclasm of the Chalke Christ, see *ibid.*, 122.
94. The iconoclasts' image of a cross at the Chalke Gate is attested by a group of poems, one of which appears to have been its inscription. However, it is not clear whether the epigrams relate to a cross set up by Leo III and Constantine before the Second Council of Nicaea or one set up by Leo V after he removed Irene's icon of Christ. See *ibid.*, 118–19, 122; and Gero, "Hypatius of Ephesus," 113–26.
95. Mango, *The Brazen House*, 125–32.
96. On Leo III and iconoclasm in general, see Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, 69–155.
97. On the *Ecloga*, see Ludwig Burgmann, *Ecloga: Das Gesetzbuch Leons III und Konstantinos' V* (Frankfurt: Löwenklau-Gesellschaft, 1983); with

- Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era: The Sources*, 286–91.
98. Pace the claims of Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm*, 97–103; Brubaker, “On the Margins,” 109–11, reviews the evidence trenchantly. Generic and hyperbolic references aside, we have only five acts of destruction described with any specificity in the texts and one more attested archaeologically. This evidence touches on only Constantinople and its immediate environs (Nicaea). See also Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, 199–212.
 99. On *acheiropoietia*, see Dobschütz, *Christusbilder*; Eva Kuryluk, *Veronica and Her Cloth* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 28–33; Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 47–77; Herbert Kessler and Gerhard Wolf, eds., *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1998), esp. the essays by Hans Belting, Averil Cameron, J. Trilling, and Wolf; and Gerhard Wolf, *Schleier und Spiegel: Traditionen des Christusbildes und die Bildkonzepte der Renaissance* (Munich: Fink, 2002), 16–33.
 100. See Louth, *St John Damascene*, 3–8, for details. The case that at least in part John was writing against iconophobic attitudes among local Palestinian Christians living under the caliphate has been made by Sidney Griffith, “John of Damascus and the Church of Syria in the Umayyad Era: The Intellectual and Cultural Milieu of Orthodox Christians in the World of Islam,” *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 11 (2008): 1–32.
 101. See Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era: The Sources*, 248; and Louth, *St John Damascene*, 208. Paul Speck, *Artabados, der rechtgläubige Vorkämpfer des göttlichen Lehren* (Bonn: Habelt, 1981), 179–243, characteristically goes for a different view and places the three orations after the Ecumenical Council of 754. Note that no one has doubted that the order in which we refer to them (from 1 to 3) reflects the actual order of writing.
 102. For the text, see Bonifatius Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, vol. 3, *Contra imaginum calumniatores orationes tres* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975). I use (with adaptations) the translations of David Anderson, in *On the Divine Images* by Saint John of Damascus (Westwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1980); and Andrew Louth, in *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, by Saint John of Damascus (Westwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003). For discussion, see Christophe von Schönborn, *L’icône de Christ* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1976), 191–200; Hans Georg Thümmel, *Bilderlehre und Bilderstreit: Arbeiten zur Auseinandersetzung über die Ikone und ihre Begründung vornehmlich im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Augustinianus Verlag, 1991), 55–63; Parry, *Depicting the Word*; Louth, *St John Damascene*, 193–222; Barber, *Figure and Likeness*, 70–77; and Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 66–71.
 103. Note that the term *proskynesis* is applicable to both forms of veneration, whereas *latreia* is for God alone. See Thümmel, *Bilderlehre und Bilderstreit*, 101–14; Parry, *Depicting the Word*, 166–70; and Louth, *St John Damascene*, 214–25.
 104. For the development of John’s theology of matter among the later iconophile theologians, see Kenneth Parry, “Theodore Studites and the Patriarch Nicephorus on Image-Making as a Christian Imperative,” *Byzantium* 59 (1989): 164–83, esp. 169–71.
 105. See Henry, “What Was the Iconoclastic Controversy About?” 25–26, who rightly sees that John moved the debate from questions of idolatry to “whether any material aids were permissible in worship”; also Marie-France Auzépy, “L’iconodoulie: Défense de l’image ou de la devotion à l’image?” in Boespflug and Lossky, *Nicée II*, 157–66.
 106. Thomas Noble, “John Damascene and the History of the Iconoclastic Controversy,” in *Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Noble and John Contreni (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1987), 95–116, esp. 101–7; and Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 91–93.
 107. On the image of Christ, see, for example, Martin Büchsel, “Das Christusporträt am Scheideweg des Ikonoklastenstreits im 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts,” *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 25 (1998): 7–52; and idem, *Die Entstehung des Christusporträts* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2003). On the importance of inscriptions in relation to images of Christ, see Karen Boston, “The Power of Inscriptions and the Trouble with Texts,” in Eastmond and James, *Icon and Word*, 35–57, esp. 37–46.
 108. See Parry, *Depicting the Word*, 168.
 109. I think this view is excessively inflected by Protestant assumptions, and as a historical explanation it is simplistically monocausal. But see, for example, Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, 112–24.
 110. See, for example, David Gwynn, “From Iconoclasm to Arianism: The Construction of Christian Tradition in the Iconoclast Controversy,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 47 (2007): 225–51.
 111. For the *horos* of Hierieia, contained in and refuted by the acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 787 (is it correctly, fully, or fairly reported there?), see Herman Hennephof, *Textus byzantinos ad Iconomachiam pertinentes* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 61–78; Stephen Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Constantine V* (Louvain: Corpucco, 1977), 68–94, which conveniently has the Greek text as well as an English translation; and Torsten Krannich, Christophe Schubert, and Claudia Sode, eds., *Die Ikonoklastische Synode von Hierieia 754* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002). Discussions include Milton Anastos, “The Ethical Theory of Images Formulated by the Iconoclasts in 754 and 815,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954): 153–60; idem, “The Argument for Iconoclasm as Presented by the Iconoclastic Council of 754,” in Weitzmann, *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies*, 177–88; Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Constantine V*, 68–110; Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 94–99; and Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, 189–97.
 112. At 213A the *horos* has Lucifer lead man into “worshiping the creature rather than the Creator [παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα προσκυνεῖν ὑποθεμένους],” something directly associated with idolatry at 221D. This is a reversal of John of Damascus’s *Oratio* 1.4, “I do not adore the creation rather than the Creator [οὐ προσκυνῶ τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα].” Idolatry on both these lines is implicitly worship of creation.
 113. The text is in Hennephof, *Textus byzantinos*, 52–57 with discussions by, for example, Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Constantine V*, 37–52; and Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, 179–82. For the influence of the *Peuseis* on the *horos* of Hierieia, see Gero, 41–43, 96; Hans Georg Thümmel, *Die Konzilien zur Bilderfrage im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005), 65–68; and Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 94–95.
 114. On the Christology of the *horos*, see Schönborn, *L’icône de Christ*, 170–78; Krannich et al., *Die Ikonoklastische Synode*, 12–15, and on its relations with John of Damascus, 26–27; and Giakalis, *Images of the Divine*, 93–101.
 115. On circumscription and uncircumscribability, see Parry, *Depicting the Word*, 97–113.
 116. As implied by the commentary on this passage in the acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (256C), which has a touch of self-righteous bluster about how this is “rhetorical” and a false declaration.
 117. On the Eucharist in iconoclast thought, see Stephen Gero, “The Eucharistic Doctrine of the Byzantine Iconoclasts and Its Sources,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 68 (1975): 4–22; and Parry, *Depicting the Word*, 178–90.
 118. The worries of the iconoclast Council of St. Sophia in 815 about the images of saints, and the attempt there (so far as we can trust our exiguous sources, themselves excerpts from Patriarch Nicephorus’s refutation of this council’s deliberations) to justify the rejection of icons of holy personages, perhaps hint that the Council of 815 saw Hierieia as having somewhat fudged this issue. See (rather obscurely) Paul J. Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 44–45.
 119. The evidence of iconoclasm conducted on images of the Virgin and Child—notably, the apse mosaic at the Church of the Koimesis at Nicaea—indicates that the image of the Christ Child was no less significant than that of the mature Jesus. See, for example, Charles Barber, “The Koimesis Church, Nicaea: The Limits of Representation on the Eve of Iconoclasm,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 41 (1991): 43–60; and idem, “Theotokos and Logos: The Interpretation and Re-interpretation of the Sanctuary Program of the Koimesis Church, Nicaea,” in *Images of the Mother of God*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 51–59. Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, 206, rightly point out that the Virgin and Child is not the only possible option for what the iconoclast image of a cross replaced in this church.
 120. I find the translation offered by Sahas, *Icon and Logos*, 149–50, rather garbled, so I have supplemented it with the versions of Philip Schaff, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf214.xvi.x.html>; and Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm*, 87.
 121. Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm*, 107, reads this as meaning that there was plenty of iconoclastic activity, which this ruling attempts to limit, but that is by no means the only or most obvious interpretation.
 122. See Parry, *Depicting the Word*, 193–95.
 123. On the ecumenical status of the Second Council of Nicaea, see Marie-France Auzépy, *L’hagiographie et l’iconoclisme byzantin* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 1999), 211–28; and Thümmel, *Die Konzilien zur Bilderfrage*, 194–95; generally on Nicaea II, see Thümmel, 87–213; and Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, 260–76.
 124. See Schönborn, *L’icône de Christ*, 144–48; Gervais Dumeige, “L’image du Christ, Verbe de Dieu,” *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum* 20 (1988): 258–67; Auzépy, *L’hagiographie et l’iconoclisme*, 242–56; and Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 105–8.
 125. Vittorio Fazzo, “Il concilio di Nicaea nella storia Cristiana ed I rapporti

- fra Roma e Bizanzio,” in *Cultura e società nell'Italia medievale: Studi per Paolo Brezzi* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1988), 345–60, esp. 347–57; and Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 101.
126. At length on the *horos* of 787 in relation to images, see Johannes Uphus, *Der Horos des Zweiten Konzils von Nikäa 787* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004), 202–337.
127. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova*, vol. 13, 377DE.
128. The problem is philological. Does *horizomen* (we ordain) plus the infinitive carry the sense of permission (icons may be set up) or the sense of obligation (icons should be set up)? Among recent versions, Sahas, *Icon and Logos*, 179 (used by Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 101–2) is permissive, while Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus*, 21; Schönborn, *L'icône de Christ*, 143; and Joseph Munitiz (in Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 506) are prescriptive, as is the recent unpublished version by Thomas Mathews, which I use here with his permission (I am persuaded by his argument on the issue, which is still unpublished, and I am most grateful for his discussion of the topic with me). The Greek and Latin versions (with a French translation) are conveniently available in Marie-France Auzépy, “‘Horos’ du concile Nicée II,” in Boespflug and Lossky, *Nicée II*, 32–35; her French version oddly makes the infinitive an indicative, representing a current state of affairs with no emphasis on either permission or obligation. For recent discussion, see Uphus, *Der Horos des Zweiten Konzils*, 202–3.
129. See Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, 160–70; and Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, 366–452.
130. On the Council of 815, see Paul Alexander, “The Iconoclastic Council of St Sophia (815) and Its Definition (*Horos*),” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 7 (1953): 35–66; with the counterarguments of Anastos, “The Ethical Theory of Images”; and further discussion in Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus*, 137–40; also Thümmel, *Die Konzilien zur Bilderfrage*, 230–45; Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, 245–50; and Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era*, 372–76. The most recent text is Jeffrey Featherstone, *Nicephori patriarchae constantinopolitani refutatio et eversio definitionis synodalis anni 815* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 337–47.
131. Fragment 9, in Alexander, “The Iconoclastic Council of St Sophia,” 59 (also in Featherstone, *Nicephori patriarchae constantinopolitani*, 337, as no. 34²), trans. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 169.
132. Fragments 14, 16, in Alexander, “The Iconoclastic Council of St Sophia,” 59–60 (Featherstone, *Nicephori patriarchae constantinopolitani*, 338, as no. 66¹), trans. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 169.
133. Fragment 15 in Alexander, “The Iconoclastic Council of St Sophia,” 60 (Featherstone, *Nicephori patriarchae constantinopolitani*, 338, as nos. 69¹, 70²), trans. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 169, with adaptations.
134. Fragment 16 in Alexander, “The Iconoclastic Council of St Sophia,” 60 (Featherstone, *Nicephori patriarchae constantinopolitani*, 338, as no. 71³).
135. For the letter, see *Monumenta germaniae historica, Leges*, sec. 3, *Concilia*, vol. 2, pt. 2, *Concilia aeri Karolini* (Hanover: Hahn, 1908), 475–80, trans. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 157–58. Interestingly, this version of iconoclasm—the moving, not the breaking, of images—had been suggested to Nicephorus by Leo V in 814 but rejected by the patriarch. See Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, 165; and Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus*, 128.
136. Interestingly, Theodore of Studion, *Epistola* 1.17, approves of precisely this last use of images as godparents; see Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 174.
137. See Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours East and West* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1986), 276; idem, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 52–54; Thomas Pott, *La réforme liturgique byzantine: Étude du phénomène de l'évolution non-spontanée de la liturgie byzantine* (Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche, 2000), 110–13; and Alexander Rentel, “Byzantine and Slavic Orthodoxy,” in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, ed. Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen Westerfield Tucker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 254–306, esp. 262–63.
138. Since one of the principal liturgical poets of Mar Saba was John of Damascus (see Louth, *St John Damascene*, 252–82) and the major liturgical reformer was Theodore of Studion, it is striking that liturgical transformation and the defense of icons went together so closely.
139. See Anna Kartsonis, *Anastasis: The Making of an Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 126–86; Jaś Elsner, “Image and Iconoclasm in Byzantium,” *Art History* 11 (1988): 471–91, esp. 475–77, 482–85; Gilbert Dagron, *Décrire et peindre: Essai sur le portrait iconique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2007), esp. 31–63, for iconoclasm, the iconophilic response, and their effects; Charles Barber, *Contesting the Logic of Painting: Art and Understanding in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), for conceptual attitudes to images in the wake of iconoclasm.
140. Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 415, but following suggestions already in John of Damascus 2.61, 66; with Parry, *Depicting the Word*, 25. On image and prototype in general, see *ibid.*, 22–33.
141. Of course, this did not prevent *post-eventum* iconophile apologists from attacking the iconoclasts precisely as attempting to damage the prototype (see Parry, *Depicting the Word*, 33, on Nicephorus)—as in the famous images preserved in the ninth-century marginal Psalters. See Kathleen Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). But this is polemic: no Byzantine iconoclast would have claimed to be attacking Christ.
142. Osborne, “The Repudiation of Representation,” 68–70; and Parry, *Depicting the Word*, 70–80.
143. Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 18.45.
144. Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, 782–87 also conclude that Byzantine iconoclasm was about representation. However, their concern is not with a conceptual issue in the theory of images but with what they characterize as “social” representation (“how we display, present or project ourselves, to ourselves and others,” 783) and “cultural” representation (“how authors and artisans present themselves, or, usually, others, to an audience. This type of representation is governed by what is usually called genre,” 783). They argue that theology is “largely beside the point” (783) and that it “followed along and either codified changes in social practice or attempted to limit them” (784). They claim further that theologians “justified or codified existing realities” (784). As is obvious from my argument, I think this excessively emphasizes realism as a historical extrapolation from rhetorical and philosophically inclined sources (which is an act of faith on the part of the historian), and I also think that art historically, it underplays the long conceptual tradition on the nature of the image’s relation to the “presence” of its prototype, which the debates in the period of iconoclasm effectively resolved. But their social and cultural point in general is certainly valid, even if we may worry that it is too functionalist, and we may want to add that theological thinking also created new realities as well as justifying and codifying existing ones.
145. The principal modern theorist of this theme in Greek antiquity is Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Figures, idoles, masques* (Paris: Julliard, 1990), 31–40; and idem, *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 151–63 (esp. 152–53), 168; with the outstanding discussion of Richard Neer, “Jean-Pierre Vernant and the History of the Image,” *Arethusa* 43 (2010): 181–96; also the critique of Philip Hardie, *Ovid’s Poetics of Illusion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 90–91, 191–93. Note that scholars of ancient Greece have been much more hesitant to ascribe assumptions of real presence even to archaic Greek images than have, for example, scholars of ancient Egypt; see Jan Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), 40–47, esp. “The gods do not ‘dwell’ on earth . . . they ‘install’ themselves in their images” (43) or “the statue is not the image of the deity’s body, but the body itself” (46, in italics in the original). For some discussion of real presence in relation to Greek religious images, see Waldemar Deonna, “L’image incomplète ou mutilée,” *Revue des Études Anciennes* 32 (1930): 321–32, esp. 324, 326, and on iconoclasm, 328–30; Burkhard Gladigow, “Präsenz der Bilder—Präsenz der Götter: Kultbilder und Bilder der Götter in der griechischen Religion,” *Visible Religion* 4–5 (1985–86): 114–33; and Tanja Scheer, *Die Gottheit und ihr Bild: Untersuchungen zur Funktion griechischer Kultbilder in Religion und Politik* (Munich: Beck, 2000), 44–129.
146. Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals*, 152, 164–85; Neer, “Jean-Pierre Vernant,” 183–85; and Jaś Elsner, “Reflections on the ‘Greek Revolution’ in Art: From Changes in Viewing to the Transformation of Subjectivity,” in *Rethinking Revolutions through Ancient Greece*, ed. Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 68–95, esp. 77–86 on the effect of this for viewing.
147. For visual theology in Greek art, see, for example, Robin Osborne, *The History Written on the Classical Greek Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 185–215 (on “godsodies”); Millette Gaifman, *Aniconism in Greek Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming), chap. 6; and idem, “The Absent Figure of the Present God: Aniconic Monuments on Greek Vases,” in *Epiphany: Envisioning the Divine in the Ancient World*, ed. Verity Platt and Georgia Petridou (forthcoming).
148. On Plato, see, for example, Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals*, 164–85; Christopher Janaway, *Images of Excellence: Plato’s Critique of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 110–26, 170–73; Burnyeat, “Culture and Society in Plato’s Republic,” 292–305; and Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 124–47.
149. There is a very rich literature on this set of issues now. One might

begin with the work of Michael Squire, for example, "Making Myron's Cow Moo? Ecphrastic Epigram and the Poetics of Simulation," *American Journal of Philology* 131 (2010): 589–634; and idem, *The Iliad in a Nutshell: Visualizing Epic on the Tabulae Iliacae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 303–70.

150. Many ramifications of this theme are powerfully discussed in Verity Platt, "Making an Impression: Replication and the Ontology of the Graeco-Roman Seal Stone," *Art History* 29 (2006): 233–57; and idem, *Facing the Gods*, 170–332.
151. There is a major literature on this theme. See, for example, John Phillips, *The Reformation of Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); Carl Christensen, *Art and the Reformation in Germany* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1979), 23–35; Carlos Eire, *War against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 62–219; Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 378–428; Feld, *Die Ikonoklasmus des Westens*, 118–92; Lee Palmer Wandel, *Voracious Idols and Violent Hands: Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg and Basel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Norbert Schnitzler, *Ikonoklasmus—Bildersturm: Theologischer Bilderstreit und ikonoklastisches Handeln während des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Fink, 1976); Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image*, 83–136; and Tara Hamling, *Decorating the "Godly" Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 38–65.
152. By contrast with Protestant theory and practice, the Catholic apologetics for images has been distinctly less discussed. See, for example, Giuseppe Scavizzi, *Arte e architettura sacra: Cronache e documenti sulla controversia tra riformatori e cattolici (1500–1550)* (Reggio: Cam del Libro, 1982), 236–63; Paolo Prodi, *Ricerca sulla teoria delle arti figurative nella Riforma Cattolica* (Bologna: I Nuovi Alpi Editoriale, 1984); Feld, *Die Ikonoklasmus des Westens*, 193–215; and, at length, Christian Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie im Zeitalter von Gegenreformation und Barock* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann Verlag, 1997). On the Counter-Reformation and the cult of Mary, see Brigit Heal, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 148–282. For a superb case study of (Roman Catholic) wonder-working images in Genoa and its environs from the Renaissance to modernity, see Jane Garnett and Gerald Rosser, *Spectacular Miracles: Transforming Images in Italy 1500–2000* (forthcoming) (I am most grateful to the authors for affording me the chance to read this book in manuscript).
153. See especially Michael Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Art History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 15–89; specifically on the reformed image, see Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image*.
154. For an acute discussion of how the post-Lutheran Reformation and the Protestant tradition of art history dismantled the equality of image and Scripture (of art and word) that was established by the iconophile tradition in response to Byzantine iconoclasm, see Squire, *Image and Text*, 15–89.
155. The issues are well summarized by Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era*, 777–79.
156. See the remarks of C. Wickham, "Conclusions" in Lymberopoulou, *Images of the Byzantine World*, 231–39, esp. 238–39.