Essence and accident: Byzantine portraiture and Aristotelian philosophy*

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The presentation of portraits of emperors and saints in Byzantine art can be compared to theories of physiognomy and logic put forward by Aristotle and his Byzantine followers. Similar observations have been made about the portal sculptures of High Gothic cathedrals, but although the ordering of images in the two cases reflected similar patterns of thought, the particular forms of the portraits differed in each milieu, responding to a different relationship between images and the faithful in each society.

Much has been written about the physical characteristics of Byzantine portraits, but relatively little about the philosophical background to their style and presentation. The following pages attempt to fill that gap by exploring the concepts of similarity and difference in Byzantine imperial and hagiographical portraiture in relation to Aristotelian theories of physiognomy and logic. The concluding section of the paper attempts to characterize the relationship between Byzantine art and Aristotelian philosophy with the help of a comparison between Byzantine art and the High Gothic art of the West, which has been related to Aristotelian ideas through the impact of scholasticism.

Physiognomic theory and imperial portraiture

A particularly interesting text in regard to Byzantine concepts of imperial portraiture is a late twelfth-century panegyric composed by Michael Choniates in praise of Isaak

Komnenos, where the orator specifically discusses the emperor's appearance in relation to icons, in particular those of David, the model to whom Byzantine rulers were most frequently compared.[1] He says:

> The emperor [that is, Isaak Komneneos] resembles David in almost all characteristics that adorn not only the soul but also the body. It is not possible to set them side by side at the present time, except insofar as one can put forward an icon of David, and by means of the icon briefly demonstrate the identity of the characteristics of the prototypes.[2]

At this point Michael Choniates paraphrases the first axiom from Euclid's *Elements*, which states: 'Things which are equal to the same thing are also equal to one another'.[3] But Choniates gives a different version: 'For it is said that things which are the same as the same thing are also the same as one another'.[4] Thus the Byzantine panegyrist goes beyond the notion of equality to suggest sameness. Choniates goes on to conclude: 'If, then, the emperor may be shown to resemble the icon of David, it is plain that the emperor must be much like David himself in every way.'[5]

In the ensuing discussion, Choniates explores at some length the idea that the sameness of the physical characteristics of Isaak and David also indicates a sameness of spiritual qualities, using biblical quotations to support his postulates:

> But what is the icon of David and where is it set up? It is inscribed upon the sacred tablets of the spirit. For these know how to obtain an impression of the characteristics of both the souls and the bodies of blessed men. But we should consider, how do they outline the bodily beauty of David? For it is said: '… David was ruddy in complexion, with beautiful eyes and good in the sight of the Lord.' (I Samuel 16:12) And again, with the bodily they also show the spiritual [saying]: 'And behold … the man was prudent, and warlike, and wise in speech, and a man of good appearance, and the Lord was with him."'(I Samuel 16:18)[6]

1   H. Maguire, 'The art of comparing in Byzantium', *Art Bulletin* 70 (1988) 88–103, esp. 88–94.
2   Michael Choniates, *Panegyricus Isaacio Angelo post Andronicum Comnenum regno pulsum*, ed. T. L. F. Tafel (Tübingen 1846) 24: Μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ τἆλλα μικροῦ πάντα, ὅσα μὴ ψυχὴν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ σῶμα κοσμοῦσι, τῷ Δαυὶδ ὁ βασιλεὺς προσωμοίωται· ἅπερ καὶ παράλληλα τιθέναι, οὐ τοῦ παρόντος καιροῦ, πλὴν ὅσον τὴν εἰκόνα Δαυὶδ προστήσασθαι, καὶ δι᾽ αὐτῆς ἐν βραχεῖ παραδεῖξαι τὴν τῶν πρωτοτύπων χαρακτήρων ταυτότητα. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the author.
3   Euclid, *Elements*, 1.1, Τὰ τῷ αὐτῷ ἴσα καὶ ἀλλήλοις ἐστὶν ἴσα.
4   Michael Choniates, *Panegyricus Isaacio Angelo*, Τὰ τῷ αὐτῷ γάρ φησι ταῦτὰ καὶ ἀλλήλοις ταῦτά.
5   *Op. cit*., Εἰ γοῦν τῇ εἰκόνι Δαυὶδ ἐμφερὴς ὁ βασιλεὺς παραδειχθείη, δῆλον, ὡς καὶ αὐτῷ Δαυὶδ ὁ βασιλεὺς πάντη προσόμοιος.
6   *Op. cit*., Ἀλλὰ τίς ἡ εἰκὼν Δαυὶδ, καὶ ποῦ ποτε αὕτη ἀνάκειται; Ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς πινακογραφεῖται δέλτοις τοῦ πνεύματος. Αὖται γὰρ τοὺς ψυχικούς ἔτσι δ᾽ ὅτε καὶ τοὺς σωματικοὺς χαρακτῆρας τῶν μακαρίων ἀνδρῶν προσαναμάττεσθαι οἴδασιν. Ἀλλὰ περιαθρητέον, ὅπως τὸ σωματικὸν κάλλος τοῦ Δαυὶδ ὑπέγραψαν. 'Καὶ εἰσήγαγέ' φησι 'τὸν Δαυίδ, καὶ αὐτὸς πυρράκης μετὰ κάλλους ὀφθαλμῶν, καὶ ἀγαθὸς ὁράσει κυρίῳ'. Καὶ πάλιν

Thus Choniates claims that the common physical characteristics of David and the emperor reveal their common spiritual virtues.

The idea expressed by Choniates, that the inner character of the soul is revealed by the external characteristics of the body, had an ancient pedigree in physiognomy, going back to Aristotle himself.[7] In the *Prior Analytics* Aristotle had proposed that: 'It is possible to judge men's character from their physical appearance, if one grants that body and soul change together in all natural affections.'[8] He went on to posit, by way of example, that if the sign of bravery in the class of lions is large extremities, then a brave man would also exhibit this sign.[9] Aristotle's scattered observations on physiognomy were expanded and systematized in pseudo-Aristotle, the name given to two treatises attributed to him.[10]

These treatises, as well as later ones such as the second-century *Physiognomy* by Polemon and the fourth-century *Physiognomy* by Adamantius the Sophist were known and cited by the Byzantines. Thus, when Choniates refers to the 'beautiful eyes' of David, he may be echoing Polemon and Adamantius, who both say that 'shining eyes' reveal a good character.[11] There are also very close parallels between the earlier physiognomic works and an anonymous ekphrasis of the jousts of Manuel I Komnenos, which was composed in 1159, and probably described a painting of the event.[12] The author of the ekphrasis carefully describes the emperor's body from head to feet, explaining how each physical feature expresses inner virtues, which he associates specifically with David.[13] For example, he says that the imperial eyebrows are 'not set diametrically apart from each other', because this feature is 'completely alien to manliness and nobility'.[14] Here he echoes Adamantius, who states that the eyebrows of a manly man are not stretched.[15] When the author of the ekphrasis claims

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σὺν τῷ σωματικῷ καὶ τὸ ψυχικὸν παραφαίνουσι· '… καὶ ἰδοὺ ὁ ἀνὴρ συνετὸς καὶ πολεμιστὴς καὶ σοφὸς ἐν λόγῳ, καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς τῷ εἴδει, καὶ κύριος μετ' αυτοῦ'.

7   On this belief, see K. Marsengill, *Portraits and Icons: Between reality and spirituality in Byzantine art* (Turnhout 2013) 267.

8   Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, 2.27, ed. and tr. J. Henderson (Cambridge, Mass. 1938) 526–7: Τὸ δὲ φυσιογνωμονεῖν δυνατόν ἐστιν εἴ τις δίδωσιν ἅμα μεταβάλλειν τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὅσα φυσικά ἐστι παθήματα.

9   *Op. cit.*, 526–8.

10   S. Swain (ed.), *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam* (Oxford 2007) 14, 56–8.

11   Ὀφθαλμοὶ ὑγροὶ λάμποντες ὡς λιβάδες ἤθη χρηστὰ ἐκφαίνουσιν. Polemon, *Physiognomy*, ed. R. Foerster, *Scriptores physiognomonici Graeci et Latini*, I (Leipzig 1893) lxxvii, II 315; Adamantius the Sophist, *Physiognomy*, ed. and tr. I. Repath, in Swain (ed.), *Seeing the Face*, 498.

12   P. Schreiner, 'Ritterspiele in Byzanz', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 46 (1996) 227–41; L. Jones and H. Maguire, 'A description of the jousts of Manuel I Komnenos', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 26 (2002) 104–48.

13   Schreiner, 'Ritterspiele', 236: Δάκτυλοι καὶ χεῖρες δαυιτικῶς καθωπλισμένοι πρὸς πόλεμον καὶ παράταξιν.

14   *Op. cit.*, Τὰς ὀφρῦς οὐ κατὰ γῆς ἐπικαθημένας ἔχει τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, οὔτ' αὖ ἐκ διαμέτρου διεστηκυίας ἐξ ἑαυτῶν· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀγριωτέρου τρόπου καὶ ἰταμοῦ, τὸ δ' αὖθις τοῦ ἀνδρικοῦ καὶ γενναίου παντελῶς ἠλλοτρίωται.

15   Adamantius, 540.

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that the emperor's chest is 'strong, and truly the chest of a man',[16] he echoes ps.-Aristotle, where we read that 'a large well-articulated chest signifies strength of character, as in males'.[17] Manuel's shoulders are 'broadly constructed, and, while heroic in form, they retain symmetry',[18] while for ps.-Aristotle shoulder blades that are 'broad and set apart, neither too closely nor too loosely knit' indicate a 'courageous man'.[19] Finally, Manuel's arms are 'of good length … rejecting in equal measure lack of flesh and excessive fleshiness, the one as weak, the other as heavy and sluggish'.[20] This description echoes Adamantius, who says that if the arms are long, this 'is a sign of good conduct and strength', and that 'those that are attenuated are unmanly, and those which are very fleshy are ignorant and insensible.'[21]

A very abbreviated version of the description of Manuel I appears in the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene, where, in a verbal portrait of her father, she describes 'the breadth of his shoulders, the strength of his arms, and the development of his chest' as features belonging to a hero.[22] Here again same physical traits as are referenced in the physiognomic texts are mustered in praise of the ideal emperor. The idea that an individual's portrayed characteristics reflect inner virtues is expressed in a fourteenth-century panegyric of Andronikos II by Nikephoros Xanthopoulos. Here too an icon of the prototype is invoked, but the model in this case is Constantine rather than David. Xanthopoulos claims that Andronikos is an exact icon of Constantine, a veritable mirror bringing to light the outward appearances of the prototype's soul.[23]

In sum, ancient physiognomy provided support for the proposition that the physical characteristics that were shared by the emperors and by David and other revered models of imperial rule such as Constantine, indicated shared spiritual virtues. Choniates says that the emperor resembles David in all respects, there being no differences between them. This means that, logically, it would be impossible for imperial portraits to show

16 Schreiner, 'Ritterspiele', 236, Εὐπαγὲς τὸ στέρνον καὶ ὄντως στέρνον ἀνδρός.

17 Swain (ed. and tr.), *Seeing the Face*, 652–3: Ὅσοι δέ τὰ στήθη ἔχουσι μεγάλα καὶ διηρθρωμένα, εὔρωστοι τὰς ψυχάς· ἀναφέρεται ἐπὶ τὸ ἄρρεν.

18 Schreiner, 'Ritterspiele', 236, Τὰ περὶ τοὺς ὤμους εὐρύτερα πέπλασται, καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἡρωικὸν πεπλασμένα τὴν συμμετρίαν οὐκ ἀπηρνήσατο.

19 Swain (ed. and tr.), *Seeing the Face*, 644–5, Ἀνδρείου σημεῖα· … ὠμοπλάται πλατεῖαι καὶ διεστηκυῖαι οὔτε λίαν συνδεδεμέναι οὔτε παντάπασιν ἀπολελυμέναι.

20 Schreiner, 'Ritterspiele', 236, … ὁ βραχίων αὐτου … εὐμήκης … ἐπ' ἴσης τὸ ἄσαρκον παραιτησάμενος καὶ πολύσαρκον ὡς τὸ μὲν ἀσθενές, τὸ δὲ βαρὺ καὶ δυσκίνητον.

21 Adamantius, 524–5, (Περὶ ὠλενῶν καὶ πήχεων …) Ἐὰν ἐπιμήκεις ὦσιν αἱ ὠλέναι … εὐπραξίας καὶ ἰσχύος τὸ σημεῖον· … τὰ γὰρ ἐξίτηλα ἄνανδρα, τὰ δὲ πάνυ σαρκώδη ἀμαθῆ καὶ ἀναίσθητα.

22 Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. D. R. Reinsch and A. Kambylis, I (Berlin 2001) 93–4: Τῶν τε ὤμων ἡ εὐρύτης καὶ τῶν βραχιόνων τὸ στερρὸν καὶ τῶν στέρνων ἡ προβολὴ ἡρoϊκὰ πάντα.

23 Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, *Adlocutio encomiastica ad piissimum et sanctum imperatorem nostrum*, ed. J.-P. Migne CXLV (Paris 1904) col. 589. For a discussion of this text in relation to imperial portraiture, see R. Schroeder, 'From a conqueror to a legitimate heir', in A. O. Lam and R. Schroeder (eds), *The Eloquence of Art. Essays in Honour of Henry Maguire* (Abingdon 2020) 318–35, esp. 324.

Fig. 1. Copper coin of Leo IV and Constantine VI, obverse.
Credit: author

individual characteristics – they all had to resemble the ideal portrait types of David or Constantine, whatever the emperor actually looked like. If we use the Aristotelian terminology of logical definitions, to which we shall turn later, the portraits of the emperors expressed their essence, that is, their Davidic or Constantinian virtues, but not the accidents of their individuality.

This ideology of sameness is reflected in the normative characteristics of imperial portraiture in Byzantine art, particularly in the effigies appearing on coins and seals, which provide the most complete and widely circulated series of ruler portraits that survives from Byzantium.[24] Several scholars have observed that the imperial portraits on medieval coins and seals are highly stylized.[25] Not only are individual emperors similar in their imperial costume, as would be expected, but in addition their facial features tend to show little differentiation, corresponding instead to standardized types. Between the eighth and the twelfth centuries two basic types of imperial portrait predominate (with some exceptions, such as the rare 'portrait' coins and seals from the Macedonian dynasty).[26] The earlier type is exemplified by the two copper coins in Figs 1 and 2. Fig. 1 shows a follis of Leo IV beside his son Constantine VI, which was minted between 776 and 778.[27] His son would have been aged between five and seven

24   Examples of imperial portraiture in media other than coins and seals are sporadic and come from a wide variety of contexts, rendering meaningful comparisons difficult. For imperial portraits in manuscripts, see I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden 1976), and for a recent discussion R. Franses, *Donor Portraits in Byzantine Art: The vicissitudes of contact between human and divine* (Cambridge 2018) 154–67, figs 4.2–4.7.

25   See A. R. Bellinger and P. Grierson (eds), *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, vol. 3, part 1 (Washington, D.C. 1973) 142–5. See also Marsengill, *Portraits and Icons* 208–9; M. C. Carile, 'Imperial icons in Late Antiquity and Byzantium: the iconic image of the emperor between representation and presence', *Ikon, Journal of Iconographic Studies* 9 (2016) 75–98, esp. 77.

26   Discussed with other examples in H. Maguire, 'Earthly and spiritual authority in the imperial image', in K. Mitalaite and A. Vasiliu (eds), *L'icône dans la pensée et dans l'art* (Turnhout 2017) 177–216, esp. 177–181. For the 'portrait' coins and seals from the Macedonian dynasty, see *ibid.*, 179, 185,194–5.

27   Bellinger and Grierson (ed.), *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, 3.1, 331–2, no. 4. pl. 12.

Fig. 2. Copper coin of Michael II and Theophilos, obverse.
Credit: author

Fig. 3. Gold coin of Constantine VII and Romanos II, reverse.
Credit: Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC

at the time. Fig. 2 illustrates a follis portraying Michael II and his son Theophilos, struck between 821 and 829.[28] The portraits on the two coins are extremely similar. The faces are triangular in shape; the older emperor, on the left in each case, has a short beard, the younger one, on the right, has no beard. The hair is worn above the shoulders, and bunches out at the sides. The schematic character of the portraits on the two coins is not due to the lowly material, copper, for the same phenomenon is found in gold. Fig. 3 shows Constantine VII and his son Romanos II, on a coin minted between 945 and 959.[29] The portrait types are virtually the same as those on the eighth and ninth century copper coins.

Beginning in the tenth century, a second imperial portrait type emerges, as stereotyped as the first. It is seen in Fig. 4, illustrating an eleventh-century gold coin of Constantine IX Monomachos dating between 1042 and 1055,[30] and in Fig. 5, on a

28   *Op. cit.*, 3.1, 398, no. 9, pl. 20.
29   *Op. cit.*, 3.1, 144, part 2, 552–3, no. 15, pl. 37
30   *Op. cit.*, 3.2, 744, no. 6, pl. 59.

Fig. 4. Gold coin of Constantine IX, reverse.
Credit: author

Fig. 5. Billon coin of John II, reverse.
Credit: author

twelfth-century billon coin of John II Komnenos dating between 1122 and 1143.[31] In this portrait type the emperor does not have a triangular face, with a pointed chin: the chin is rounded. He has a short striated beard, and his hair is short and not bunched out at the sides. The same two imperial portrait types appear on Byzantine seals. On a seal of Basil I and his son Constantine,[32] the features are similar to those on the coin of Michael II (Figs 2 and 6). On the other hand, the portrait on a seal of Basil II conforms to the second type (Fig. 7).[33] The face is no longer triangular in outline, the chin is rounded, and the hair is short without the bunched-up locks on either side.

The standardization of imperial portraits on coins and seals accords with the postulates of physiognomic theory, namely that unvarying physical characteristics were the expression of perennially desired traits of character exhibited by revered models such as David or Constantine; the stereotyped effigies were in a sense icons of perfection that supplanted the physical particularities of individual emperors. It may

31   *Op. cit.*, 4.1, 265–6, no.10, part 2, pl. 9.
32   J. Nesbitt and N. Oikonomides (ed.), *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, 6 (Washington, D.C. 1999) 84, no. 51.1.
33   *Op. cit.*, 6, 108–9, no. 68.4.

Fig. 6. Seal of Basil I and Constantine, reverse.
Credit: Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC

Fig. 7. Seal of Basil II, reverse.
Credit: Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC

be noted that the two common imperial portrait types that we have described do indeed exhibit features resembling two of the standard portrait types of David in his maturity appearing in post-iconoclastic art. For example, in the depiction of David enthroned as king on the opening folio of the ninth-century Chludov Psalter, he has a triangular face, a short beard, and hair that bunches out at the sides,[34] while in the eleventh-century mosaic of the Anastasis at Hosios Loukas David displays the rounded chin and short striated beard characteristic of the second type of imperial effigy (Fig. 8; compare Figs 4 and 5).[35]

Hagiographical portraiture and Aristotelian logic

Descriptions of the physical appearances of saints in Byzantine literature express an ideology different from that found in verbal portrayals of emperors. Here we find a

34   Moscow, State History Museum, MS. 129D, fol. 1v. M. V. Ščepkina, *Miniatjury Khludovskoi Psaltiri* (Moscow 1977). See also fols. 12r., 74v., 114v., 131v. This portrait type also is used for David in the miniatures of the ninth-century Sacra Parallela in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. gr. 923; K. Weitzmann, *The Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela, Parisinus graecus 923* (Princeton 1979) figs 191 (fol. 95v.), 201 (fol. 162r.), 205 (fol. 63r.).
35   E. Diez and O. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaics in Greece: Hosios Lucas and Daphni* (Cambridge, MA 1931) pl. 14. Compare also, for example, David's portraits at Daphni, *op. cit.*, fig. 55, and at Lagoudera, A. Papageorghiou, Ch. Bakirtzis and Christodoulos Hadjichristodoulou (eds), *The Church of Panagia tou Arakos* (Nicosia 2018) pl. 66a.

Fig. 8. Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, mosaic, Anastasis. Detail of David and Solomon. Credit: Photo by Josephine Powell, photograph courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

tension between particularity, for the purpose of identification of an individual saint, and similarity, for the purpose of encomium. Since saints, unlike most emperors, were venerated in their own right as individuals with special supernatural powers, and thus needed to be recognizable by their supplicants, their differentiation was important, a point to which we shall return in the conclusion.[36] Instances of tension between the two contradictory aims, sameness and distinctness, can be found in the genre of *Eikonismos*, which provided a thumbnail delineation of an individual resembling the brief bodily descriptions that a modern novelist will typically make upon introducing new characters into the narration.[37] A well-known example of *eikonismos* is the group of short descriptions in the ninth or tenth-century history attributed to Oulpios the

36   On the spiritual status of emperors, see G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The imperial office in Byzantium* (Cambridge 2003) 156–7. For the rare exceptions of attempted imperial cults, see *ibid.*, 151–2, 202–4; Maguire, 'Earthly and spiritual authority', 194–5; L. Jones, 'Visual evidence for the mutability of identity in the Middle Byzantine period', in K. Durak and I. Jevtić (eds), *Identity and the Other in Byzantium* (Istanbul 2019) 129–42, esp. 138–42.

37   On the nature and origins of *eikonismos*, see J. Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books: a Study of Byzantine Manuscripts of the Major and Minor Prophets* (University Park, Md. 1988) 51–5, 61–2;

Roman.[38] Oulpios described Adam and the Old Testament prophets, Peter and Paul, various church fathers, and two iconophile patriarchs of Constantinople. The purpose of his descriptions is unclear. It has been said that they did not serve as practical guides for artists,[39] but some of them are remarkably close to the portrait types appearing in art, especially in the case of the church Fathers. For an example, one can compare his account of Gregory of Nazianzos with the portrait of the saint in the Harbaville Triptych, a tenth-century ivory now in the Louvre (Fig. 17).[40] Oulpios says, in part, that the saint had a 'gentle and kindly appearance, although one of his eyes, namely the right one, was rather sullen in appearance, since a scar had contracted it in the corner; beard not long, but fairly thick, bald, white-haired, the tip of his beard having a smoky appearance'.[41] Apart from the colouring, these features, the baldness, the full medium-length beard, and even the contraction of the right eye all can be seen in the ivory.

When he comes to describe the two patriarchs, Oulpios says that they resemble in their appearance older and more venerated church Fathers, but he is at the same time careful to point out the differences. Thus, of Tarasios he says: 'Our father Saint Tarasios was in bodily character similar to Gregory Theologos [of Nazianzos], apart from the latter's grey hair and injured eye, for he was not completely grey'.[42] In the case of these portraits of more recent saints, one can detect a conflict between two different demands: to depict the physical accidents of the individual, and to show the essential qualities of his nature. In order to demonstrate that he shared the spiritual virtues of Gregory of Nazianzos, Tarasios was portrayed as similar to him, but at the same time distinguished as an individual from his model. As noted above, in Byzantium images of saints were, in theory, required to be individually recognizable by those who supplicated them, unlike the portraits of emperors, who were only rarely the objects of cult.

G. Dagron, 'Holy images and likeness', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991) 23–33, esp. 25–8; G. Dagron, *Décrire et peindre: essai sur le portrait iconique* (Paris 2007).

38   M. Chatzidakis, Ἐκ τῶν Ἐλπίου τοῦ Ῥωμαίου', *Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* 14 (1938) 409–14.

39   Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books*, 61–2.

40   *Byzance: L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (exhibition catalogue, Musée du Louvre, Paris 1992) 233–6, no. 149.

41   Chatzidakis, Ἐκ τῶν Ἐλπίου τοῦ Ῥωμαίου', 412: … ἥμερον βλέπων καὶ προσηνές, θάτερον τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, ὃς ἦν δεξιός, στυγνότερος, ὃν καὶ οὐλὴ κατὰ τὸν κανθὸν συνῆγε· τὸν πώγωνα οὐ βαθύς, δασὺς δὲ ἱκανῶς φαλακρός, λευκὸς ταῖς θριξί, τὰ ἄκρα τῆς γενειάδος ὡσπερεὶ κεκαπνισμένα ὑποφαίνων. Tr. Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books*, 52, with modifications. On this passage, see also C. Erismann, 'Venerating likeness: Byzantine iconophile thinkers on Aristotelian relatives and their simultaneity', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 24:3 (2016) 405–25, esp. 421.

42   ; Chatzidakis, Ἐκ τῶν Ἐλπίου τοῦ Ῥωμαίου', 414: Ὁ ἐν ἁγίοις πατὴρ ἡμῶν Ταράσιος κατὰ τὸν σωματικὸν χαρακτῆρα, ὅμοιος ἦν τῷ Θεολόγῳ Γρηγορίῳ, πλὴν τοῦ πολιοῦ καὶ τοῦ ὑπούλου ὀφθαλμοῦ· οὐδὲ γὰρ παντελῶς οὗτος πολιός.

Fig. 9. Seal of Theodotos protospatharios, obverse. St. John the Baptist.
Credit: Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC

In artistic practice, portraiture of the major saints tended to emphasize particularity rather than similarity. If the portraits of the emperors on Byzantine seals can often be seen as abstract and stereotyped, this was not true of the saints, whose sigillographic portraits were highly individualized. An example is provided by a tenth-century seal bearing a fine image of John the Baptist (Fig. 9).[43] The saint has a long face, a long pointed beard, and long locks of hair that flow down his shoulders. There is also a little curled wisp of hair at the center of his forehead. All these features characterized the standard portrait of John the Baptist known in Byzantine art since the sixth century. The same portrait type can be seen, for example, in the representation of the saint in the Harbaville Triptych (Fig. 18).[44] Even the wisp of hair on the forehead is there.

For a contrast with John the Baptist we can turn to George, whose well preserved portrait is displayed on a seal of the eleventh century (Fig. 10).[45] In this case the saint has no beard, and his hair is full and curly. His facial type too can be traced back to the period before iconoclasm, when we find it among the seventh-century mosaics of St Demetrios in Thessaloniki.[46] In the earlier work the saint wears a military cloak, while on the seal his inclusion among the warrior saints is shown by his spear, his shield, and his cuirass. Another military saint who is depicted on seals is Theodore. In the ninth-century specimen illustrated in Fig. 11 one can still recognize the saint's distinctive thick and pointed beard, even though the impression is worn.[47] This portrait type too had precedents in pre-iconoclastic art, as shown by a sixth or seventh century icon of Theodore at Mount Sinai.[48]

As with the soldiers, bishops are distinguished from other classes of saints on the seals by their costumes, in their case by the wearing of stoles. In addition, each

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43   Nesbitt and Oikonomides (eds), *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks*, 1, 5, no. 1.10.
44   *Byzance* 233–6, no. 149.
45   Nesbitt and Oikonomides, *Catalogue*, 1, 9, no. 1.18.
46   Ch. Bakirtzis, E. Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou and Ch. Mavropoulou-Tsioumi, *Mosaics of Thessaloniki, 4th–14th Century* (Athens 2012) 158, figs 36, 39.
47   Nesbitt and Oikonomides, *Catalogue*, 4, 44, no. 16.1.
48   K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai: The icons* (Princeton 1976) 36–7, no. B13, pls. 15, 59.

Fig. 10. Seal of John Komnenos, obverse. St. George.
Credit: Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC

Fig. 11. Seal of Archbishop Euphemianos, obverse. St. Theodore.
Credit: Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC

individual bishop is differentiated form the others by his facial features. St Nicholas, for example, is from the tenth century consistently characterized by short hair and a short, rounded beard,[49] while John Chrysostom has a narrow chin, narrow cheeks and a pointed beard.[50] On the seals, therefore, as in works in other media, the saints are distinguished from each other by their costumes, which divide them into classes such as soldiers with their armour, or bishops with their stoles, and also by their facial portraits, which identify them as individuals such as George or Theodore or Nicholas.[51] On the other hand, as seen above, the emperors appearing on seals are identified as belonging to the class of rulers by their regalia, but, unlike the saints, their facial portraits generally are not individualized.

In coinage, we can observe the same contrast on a rare nomisma of the Emperor Alexander, dated 912 to 913 (Fig. 12).[52] The reverse shows Alexander being crowned

49   Nesbitt and Oikonomides, *Catalogue*, 2, 117, no. 40.17; 2, 174, no. 72.5; 5, 99, no. 42.34.
50   Nesbitt and Oikonomides, *Catalogue*, 2, 156, no. 59.11; 4, 160. Nos. 68.8–9; 5, 97, no. 42.27.
51   For a more comprehensive discussion of hagiographic portraiture in all media of Byzantine art, see
H. Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies: Saints and their images in Byzantium* (Princeton 1996) 5–99.
52   *Byzance*, 401–2, no. 310.

Fig. 12. Gold coin of Alexander, reverse. St. John the Baptist crowning the emperor. Credit: Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC

by John the Baptist, thus making a visual association between the baptism of Christ in the Jordan and the anointing of the emperor. It is noteworthy that in the coin the emperor has the usual schematic features of a triangular face and hair that bunches out at the sides, while John appears with his individual portrait type. The saint has a long face, a long beard, long hair that flows over his shoulder, and a wisp of hair at the top of his forehead. There is no inscription naming John the Baptist, but it is easy to recognize him from his portrait. In the case of the emperor, however, we would have no means of identifying him as an individual were it not for the legend 'Alexander' beside him.

One further aspect of portraiture in Byzantine art should be mentioned, and that is the role played by bodily characteristics such as emaciation or bulkiness. Certain classes of saints, such as monks, and bishops tended to be shown as ascetics, thin and deprived of flesh. Other classes were shown with greater corporality. Apostles and Evangelists, the witnesses to the incarnation, were swathed in bulky antique garments, while soldiers appeared as robust, or in some cases even corpulent, the better to fight.[53]

In sum, in Byzantine hagiographic portraiture, each class of individuals, soldier saints, bishops, and so forth, was distinguished in the first place by the costume, and secondly by the bodily type that was an essential feature of the class. Thus, soldiers wear military attire, may carry armour, and are robust, while bishops wear stoles and are attenuated. In addition, from the sixth century, and increasingly thereafter, the major saints within each class were differentiated by their distinct facial features and hairstyles.

The structure of Byzantine portraiture that has been outlined here with the help of coins and seals can also be described in the terminology of Aristotelian logic. In his

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53   Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies*, 48–99.

Categories and his *On Interpretation*, Aristotle states that if we take the species of man, we can say that the species of man belongs to the genus of animal. Thus it is correct, for example, to say that 'rational animal' is an essential predication of man. Therefore, if we take an individual man such as Socrates, we can make the essential predication 'rational animal' of him also. But, in addition, we can make a non-essential, accidental predication of Socrates, such as that 'Socrates is pale'. This accident, of pallor, may be predicated of other individuals, but it is not common to all men, and thus it is not part of the human essence of Socrates.[54]

Later followers and commentators on Aristotle elaborated upon these basic concepts. Porphyry, in his *Isagoge*, lists five terms, namely genus, species, difference, property, and accident, giving several definitions for each.[55] Genus, for instance, can mean a plurality of several species. An example of a genus would be 'animal'. Species is defined by Porphyry as a subdivision under genus, so that man, for example, is a species of animal. Differences, he says, create the division of genera into species, but any given difference is not necessarily unique to a species. Thus rationality in man is an essential property that makes him a separate species of animal, but gods also are rational. Man is separated from the gods by being mortal. A property, according to Porphyry, is an accident of a species. Some properties he describes as being 'alone, and all, and always',[56] giving as an example neighing for a horse. Apart from horses, no other species neighs. Finally, in his discussion of accidents, Porphyry says that they can be divided into two: separable accidents, such as sleeping, and inseparable accidents, such as blackness for ravens. Inseparable accidents of individuals include being hook-nosed or snub-nosed, having blue eyes, or having a scar from a wound.

In later centuries Byzantine writers echoed the definitions provided by Porphyry. For instance, in his *Dialectica* John of Damascus provides a definition of definition itself. He begins by saying that 'a sound definition has neither a deficiency nor a superfluity of words'. As an example, he proposes that the perfect definition of man would be 'a living being that is mortal and has reason'. He goes on to argue that if one were to add the phrase 'and is a grammarian' to this definition, it would exclude too many realities (that is, categories of men), because not all men are grammarians. On the other hand, if one were to omit the words 'that is mortal', then the definition would include too many categories, for among the beings that have reason one can include the angels as well as men.[57] Thus John of Damascus repeats Aristotle's and Porphyry's arguments, simply substituting angels for gods.

54   On Aristotle's arguments, see J. Lear, *Aristotle: the Desire to Understand* (Cambridge 1988) esp. 265–73.

55   Porphyry, *Isagoge*, ed. A. Busse, *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, IV, 1 (Berlin 1887) 1–13; tr. J. Barnes (Oxford 2006) 3–12.

56   Porphyry, IV, 1, p. 12: Τὸ μόνῳ, καὶ παντὶ, καὶ ἀεί.

57   John of Damascus, *Dialectica*, ed., P. Bonifatius Kotter, I (Berlin 1969) 100–101.

Aristotelian logic continued to be important in the Byzantine educational curriculum, becoming an important weapon in the arsenal of the defenders of images during Iconoclasm.[58] Its survival is exemplified by a handbook dating between the mid-eight and the late ninth century, which is preserved in a manuscript in the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos.[59] This text is deeply indebted to Porphyry's *Isagoge*, both in its concepts and in its vocabulary. The author repeats the five terms defined by Porphyry. Like Porphyry, he gives three meanings for genus, and in his discussion of species, he has this to say: 'Species is predicated of Peter, and Paul, and John.… for they share in their species. Species is what is immediately ranked under genus, for individuals also are ranked under genus, but through the intermediary of the species'.[60] Concerning difference, the medieval handbook borrows from Porphyry's definitions, saying for example: 'Difference is such as rational … for man'.[61] The handbook quotes Porphyry again in its fourth definition of property, which is that: 'this is all, and alone, and always … such as … neighing for a horse',[62] meaning again that only horses will neigh. Finally, in its definition of accident the handbook repeats Porphyry almost word for word, giving as examples of inseparable accidents 'snub-nosed, hook-nosed, and blue eyed'.[63]

Putting all the texts together, we could use a similar system of logical definitions to describe the structure of Byzantine portraiture.[64] Thus, in analysing portraits in Byzantine art, we could describe saints in general as a genus, divided into different species, such as soldiers or bishops. In the artistic portraits we could distinguish differences such as the non-unique essential properties of being bulky in the case of soldiers, or emaciated in the case of bishops. These differences would not be unique to any one species, as Porphyry explains, because monks as well as bishops are emaciated, while apostles as well as soldiers are bulky. Furthermore, we could propose that some essential properties are unique to particular classes of saint, or, in the words of Porphyry and the medieval handbook: 'all, alone, and always … as in the neighing

58   See, especially, P. J. Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople: Ecclesiastical policy and image worship in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford 1958) 189–213; K. Parry, *Depicting the Word: Byzantine iconophile thought in the eighth and ninth centuries* (Leiden 1996) and 'Aristotle and the icon: the use of the *Categories* by Byzantine iconophile writers', in S. Ebbesen (ed.), *Aristotle's Categories in the Byzantine, Arabic and Latin Traditions* (Copenhagen 2013) 35–58; T. Anagnostopoulos, 'Aristotle and Byzantine iconoclasm', *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013) 763–90; Erismann, 'Venerating likeness'.

59   M. Roueché, 'A Middle Byzantine handbook of logic terminology', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 29 (1980) 71–98.

60   *Op. cit*. 90: Εἶδος κατηγορεῖται Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου καὶ Ἰωάννου· …τῷ δὲ εἴδει κοινωνοῦσι. Εἶδός ἐστι τὸ ὑπὸ τὸ γένος ἀμέσως ἀναγόμενον· ἀνάγονται μὲν γὰρ καὶ τὰ ἄτομα ὑπὸ τὸ γένος, ἀλλὰ διαμέσως τῶν εἴδων.

61   *Op. cit*. 91:… διαφορά ἐστιν ὥσπερ τὸ λογικὸν …τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ.

62   *Op. cit*. 92: Τουτέστι παντὶ καὶ μόνῳ καὶ ἀεὶ … ὥσπερ … τὸ χρεμετιστικὸν τῷ ἵππῳ.

63   *Op. cit*. 92: Τὸ συμβεβηκὸς … ἀχώριστον δὲ οἷον τὸ σιμόν, τὸ γρυπόν, τὸ γλαυκόν. Compare, for example, Porphyry, IV, 1, p. 9: Τὸ δὲ γρυπὸν εἶναι, ἢ σιμόν, κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς, καὶ οὐ καθ᾽ αὐτό.

64   On the relationship of the descriptions by Oulpios to Porphyry's explanation of individuality, see also Erismann, 'Venerating likeness,' 421–2.

of a horse'. An example would be stoles, which are unique to bishops. Finally, under accidents, we could include non-essential particularities of individual saints, including the scars and nose shapes referred to in the logical texts, as well as the hairstyles and shapes of beards found in portraits in art. In the case of emperors, we could say that their facial portraits tend to exhibit an essential feature of their class, that is, a sameness with revered models, rather than their non-essential differences.

The relationship of art to philosophy in Byzantium and the medieval West

It can be proposed, therefore, that the logic of the presentation of saints' portraits in Byzantine art was similar to the logic of definitions in philosophy. But how far did the relationship between philosophy and art extend? Was it only a case of two parallel structures, one controlling a sequence of logical definitions, and the other the presentation of images, or were the very forms of the images themselves intertwined with philosophical thought? One way to approach this difficult question is to examine the social contexts of the viewing of portraits, both in Byzantium and in the medieval West, where historians have likewise attempted to relate artistic production to Aristotelian logic. In Byzantium the demands made upon images in daily life played an important role in creating the distinction between icons of saints, which showed individual particularities, and portraits of the emperor, which did not. The portraits of the saints were venerated, and consequently needed to be recognizable in order to establish their identity with their prototypes, but this was not usually the case with emperors.

Through their knowledge of the saints' portraits on their icons, the Byzantines were able to identify individual saints in the painted decorations of churches and panels – visual recognition was particularly important if they could not read the legends written beside the images. One of the many stories that illustrate this expectation is found in a sermon on the Annunciation by Leo, a mid-ninth-century archbishop of Thessaloniki. According to Leo, the Virgin and St Demetrios appeared to a young Jewish woman by night. Since she was not a Christian, she did not recognize the two saints. Afterwards, she went into a baptistery where there were several images, and was able to single out the icons of the two saints she had seen owing, as Leo says, to their 'distinct characteristics'.[65] Unlike the saints, however, most emperors were not the objects of cult. They were not generally expected to work miracles; they were not conceived of as saints.[66] Hence there was no need to represent them on coins and seals as recognizable individuals to whom prayers might be addressed. Rather, the images of emperors expressed their essential qualities through their relationship of similarity with revered prototypes.

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65 διαφόρους χαρακτῆρας. V. Laurent, 'Une homélie inédite de l'archevêque de Thessalonique Léon le Philosophe sur l'Annonciation', *Studi e testi* 232 (1964) 281–302, esp. 301. For other stories of the recognition of individual saints from their icons, see A. Kazhdan and H. Maguire, 'Byzantine hagiographical texts as sources on art', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991) 1–22, esp. 7–8.
66 See note 36, above.

With respect to Western Europe, a key study is Erwin Panofsky's book *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*.[67] In this famous work Panofsky set out to explain High Gothic art and architecture with reference to scholastic thought, including 'the assimilation of Aristotelian logic'. Panofsky claimed that such concepts as 'universals versus particulars naturally were reflected in the representational arts', and that 'the High Gothic statues of Reims and Amiens, Strasbourg and Naumburg … proclaim the victory of Aristotelianism'. He argued that Gothic architects would have had some knowledge of scholastic argumentation, and repeatedly termed the relationship between architecture and scholasticism a 'mental habit', and a 'modus operandi'.[68]

One can take as an illustration of Panofsky's thesis the sculptures of the central west portal of Amiens Cathedral, which were created in the second quarter of the thirteenth century (Fig. 13).[69] Here there is a Last Judgment surrounded by an array of figures divided into classes, or species, which are arranged around the central portrayal of Christ in the tympanum over the door. Thus the saved souls are ordered on the left-hand side of the tympanum and lintel, and the damned souls on the right. Angels in prayer appear in the inner order of voussoirs around the tympanum, then angels holding blessed souls in the second order, martyrs holding palms in the third, confessors in the fourth, Virgins in the fifth, and finally the Elders of the Apocalypse in the outermost order. On the vault over the porch there are two more bands containing figures, the ancestors of Christ filling the inner band, and Old Testament patriarchs occupying the outer one. On the jambs we find statues of the Apostles (Figs 14 and 15), and on the embrasures beneath them personifications of the virtues and the vices. Within some of these classes, the individual members are distinguished by particular details, or accidents. Each of the Elders of the Apocalypse, for example, holds a different musical instrument, while the damned are portrayed according to their sins.

In the case of the statues of the apostles on the jambs, we may note that only three of them are characterized by their portrait types, namely Saints Peter and Paul, who stand closest to the door on each side, and St John, who stands third in the line after Peter on the right. As in Byzantine art, Peter has short curly hair and a curly beard, while Paul is balding and has a somewhat longer beard. St John is shown as a younger man, without a beard. It is not possible to recognize the other apostles by their facial features; for example, there is very similar treatment of the hair and beards of the five apostles behind St. Paul on the left (Fig. 14). On the other hand, we can identify several of the apostles by the attributes that they hold. Thus James, second in the line after Peter on the right jamb of the door, wears a pilgrim's bag under his lowered left hand, which is adorned with shells, the emblem of this saint (Fig. 15). St Andrew,

67   E. Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York 1957).
68   *Op. cit.*, esp. 6, 27.
69   S. Murray, *Notre Dame Cathedral of Amiens: The power of change in Gothic* (Cambridge 1996).

Fig. 13. Amiens Cathedral, central west portal. The Last Judgment.
Credit: author

standing to the left of him, holds the cross on which he was crucified. On the other side of the door, James the Less holds a club, the supposed instrument of his martyrdom (Fig. 14).[70]

In spite of their smaller scale and earlier date, the great Byzantine ivory triptychs of the tenth century provide an instructive comparison with the sculptures at Amiens:

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70   E. Mâle, *Religious Art in France, Thirteenth Century* (London 1913) 309.

Fig. 14. Amiens Cathedral, central west portal. Detail of apostles on left side.
Credit: author

Fig. 15. Amiens Cathedral, central west portal. Detail of apostles on right side.
Credit: author

beneath a surface resemblance, they clearly display the differing attitudes toward sacred portraiture that prevailed in East and West. In the case of the Harbaville Triptych in Paris, for example, the front displays Christ enthroned at the top, surrounded by a gallery of his saints, who appear on the central panel and on each face of the two wings (Fig. 16). The

Fig. 16. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Harbaville Triptych with wings open.
Credit: author

saints on the ivory are divided into classes by their clothing and their attributes. Thus the apostles, wearing the ancient tunic and himation, stand immediately beneath Christ, while on the insides of the wings we find soldiers, either attired in cloaks and holding martyrs' crosses in the lower register, or wearing armor and bearing weapons in the upper register. The bishops occupy the fronts of the wings, four above and two below, dressed in their vestments and holding books (Fig. 17). At Amiens attributes were used to distinguish individual saints, but on the Byzantine ivory the attributes are essential properties common to all members of a class, such as the stoles, which are worn by all of the bishops. On the triptych, as in other Byzantine works of art, it is the facial features that differentiate the individuals.

Although the Byzantine system of hagiographic portraiture was not yet fully developed at the time that the Harbaville Triptych was carved, many of the individuals, as we have seen, are already recognizable by their particular physiognomies. There is John the Baptist, with his shoulder-length hair, long pointed beard, and the two wisps at the top of his forehead (Fig. 18). Among the bishops, we can pick out John Chrysostom, with his domed bald head and his narrow chin, as well as Gregory of Nazianzos, with his bald pate and thick squared off beard (Fig. 17).

Fig. 17. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Harbaville Triptych. Detail of St Gregory of Nazianzios. Credit: author

Fig. 18. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Harbaville Triptych. Detail of St. John the Baptist. Credit: author

St George, with his mop of hair and beardless face, is identifiable among the solders (fig. 16, upper right). We can also see the two Theodores who succeeded the single saint of earlier times, namely Theodore Tyron, or the Recruit, and Theodore Stratelates, or the General, both with copious pointed beards (Fig. 19). These two related characters, in

Fig. 19. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Harbaville Triptych. Detail of SS. Theodore Tyron and Theodore Stratelates.
Credit: author

spite of their general similarity, were consistently distinguished from each other in their detailed characteristics.[71] For example, the coiffure of the general, on the right, was longer, while the recruit's hair was cut shorter, so as to expose his ears. The carver of the ivory has taken particular care to emphasize this particular difference between the two namesakes by enlarging Theodore Tyron's ears, which resemble those of a leprechaun (Fig. 19).

We can speak, therefore, of parallel structures that ordered the images both in High Gothic portals and in Byzantine triptychs; in each case we find different species with essential features in common that are subdivided into particulars, that is, into individuals possessing non-essential accidents, namely attributes at Amiens, and facial features in the triptych. Both in Gothic sculpture and in Byzantine ivories, the system may be compared with Aristotelian logic, the relevance of which was kept alive by scholasticism in the West and by the debates over iconoclasm in the East. But even if the underlying structures were the same in the West and in the East, in each place the

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71   On Theodore's portraits, see L. Mavrodinova, 'Saint Théodore, évolution et particularités de son type iconographique dans la peinture médiévale,' *Bulletin de l'Institut des Arts*, Académie Bulgare des Sciences 13 (1969) 33–52

artistic expression of them took a different form. Some exceptions notwithstanding, in general High Gothic artists did not identify individual members of a class by the accidental features of their faces, preferring to distinguish them through their attributes.[72] Byzantine artists, on the other hand, preferred to differentiate saintly individuals through their physiognomies, and tended to use attributes to express the shared features of the members of a class. The reasons for this contrast between artistic practice in West and East can be found in differing conceptions of the image. As we have seen, for the Byzantines, more than for worshippers in the West, sacred images were the focus of veneration. The individualization of facial features enabled a more personal relationship between the supplicant and the saint. An attribute was more abstract – it was a metonymical sign of someone rather than a portrait. The attribute of a western saint acted as an identifier of the saint and as a reminder of a story. The defined facial appearance of a Byzantine saint, on the other hand, enabled a more intimate confrontation between the viewer and the individual represented. The worshipper could engage with a real presence. However abstract the logic that underlies the structure of Byzantine art, it was this expression of the individual person that gave it social life.

In both eastern and western portraiture the logic behind the presentation of the classes can be described in Aristotelian terms. This observation suggests that academic schools and artistic workshops alike shared in a common culture characterized by similar habits of thought, even though the one arena of expertise may not have had a direct technical knowledge of the other. However, it was the social rather than the intellectual context, and above all the viewer's engagement with the image, that directed the particular forms taken by the portraits. We might say that portraiture in medieval art was based upon need. Even in Byzantium some classes of holy figure played a larger part in individual devotion than others – saints more than prophets, for example – and therefore they were more closely and more consistently defined through their facial features.[73] Emperors, for the most part, were not venerated at all, and hence they did not have worshippers who required them to be defined by individual portraits. For them, it mattered more that their portraits displayed the unchanging essence of virtue associated with revered models such as David and Constantine.

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72   S. Perkinson 'Sculpting identity', in C. Little (ed.) *Set in Stone: The face in medieval sculpture* (exhibition catalogue, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 2006) 120–7, esp. 120–1.
73   On the relative absence of established portrait types for the prophets, see Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books*, 62.