

to detect the author's mind and hand in guiding the narrative through the tumultuous events of the late eleventh century, offering at times his thoughts and opinions on events and individuals. As noted by McGeer, '[Skylitzes] asserts that its value lies in his critical reading of earlier chronicles and histories, his selection and abridgement of their contents, and the distillation of his sources into essentials, "a history pure and simple" purged of the glorification, censure, or credulity that in his view distorted so many of the works he consulted' (p. 4). This might explain why the *Continuation* is only a fifth of the length of Attaleiates' *History*: Skylitzes saw it as his purpose to re-package and eliminate unnecessary sections of aggrandisement or harsh opinions on the part of the original authors.

One of the most welcome features of this new edition is the concordance (pp. 193–197) that cross-references the historical episodes recorded by *Skylitzes Continuatus* with Attaleiates and Zonaras: this is extremely useful for students and scholars wishing to undertake comparative analysis of these extraordinary times. Also of considerable value are the introduction and detailed accompanying notes, which illuminate and inform the reader with nuanced explanations and prosopographical information. In the introduction, McGeer offers a detailed summary of the events of the late eleventh century, highlighting areas that may have affected the interpretations of the primary authors themselves, especially the Doukoi- Komnenoi rivalry following the abdication of Isaac I Komnenos in 1057. The inclusion of images and a discussion of imperial seals draws attention to an often-overlooked form of evidence, sigillography; this, coupled with the prosopographical index (by John Nesbitt) for reference, helps the reader to contextualise the various characters by providing and explaining their ranks and titles.

The translation of *Skylitzes Continuatus* into English will greatly aid readers interested in the Byzantine world of the eleventh century but unable to read it in the original Greek. This work of McGeer and Nesbitt deserves high praise for stripping away the curtain of inaccessibility, allowing scholars of all levels the chance to study this formative time in Byzantine history.

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Catherine Vanderheyde, *La Sculpture byzantine du IXe au XVe siècle: contexte – mise en œuvre – décors*. Paris: Éditions A. & J. Picard, 2020. Pp. 364, 193 figs.
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Sculpture has for long been the Cinderella of Byzantine art, pushed aside by her sister arts, the splendour of mosaics and enamels, and the polychromy of panel paintings, manuscript illuminations, and frescoes. Now, however, Catherine Vanderheyde has

begun the task of returning sculpture to its rightful place in Byzantine art history, even restoring some of its original colour in a beautifully illustrated survey primarily devoted to carvings in the post-iconoclastic period, from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries.

As the author acknowledges in her conclusion, a history of Byzantine sculpture is a challenging undertaking. The material is widely scattered, throughout the Balkans, Italy, and Turkey, not to mention the Ukraine, Armenia, and Georgia, often hard of access, and fragmentary in condition. The dating is difficult, since many pieces are now out of their original contexts, and inscriptions rare. In addition, there are relatively few Byzantine texts that bear on sculpture, whereas there are many passages in ekphraseis, poetry, and saints' lives relevant to mosaics, metalwork, and painting.

V. has an unrivalled knowledge of her subject, the result of many years of research and publication. She has conceived of her book as an up-to-date 'guide', the first comprehensive survey of the field since the two volumes published by André Grabar in 1963 and 1976 (*Sculptures byzantines de Constantinople, IVe-Xe siècle*, and *Sculptures byzantines du Moyen Âge II (XIe-XIVe siècle)*), which readers will still need to consult for more detailed study of individual works. She covers all media of Byzantine sculpture, including stone, plaster, wood, and even ceramic, but, apart from a few comparative references, not small-scale carvings in gems and ivory. High and low relief carvings are discussed, as well as stone cut in the *champlevé* technique, inlaid with coloured stones, glass, and mastic. The text considers the application of relief sculpture to architectural elements, such as portals, capitals, and cornices, as well as tomb sculpture and liturgical furniture, including sanctuary screens, parapets, ciboria, ambos, and icon frames. V. also discusses sacred portrait icons carved in low relief, and considers their close relationship to painted images. The book is generously provided with excellent photographs, mostly in colour and many taken by the author.

Following a brief introduction containing reviews of the historiography and the historical background, V. devotes the first of part of the book to a chronological survey of Byzantine sculpture. Here she describes the general abandonment of sculpture in the round in favour of low relief carving, raising the issue of the reluctance of the Byzantines to represent their saints in the same manner as the pagans had portrayed their gods. Among other phenomena, she notes influences from metalwork and Islamic art, and the introduction of Latin motifs during the Palaiologan period, including heraldic elements. The book's second section begins with evidence for patronage, followed by a very useful account of the methods and organization of production. Using texts and inscriptions, the author introduces the various terms used to designate the workmen and describes their grouping into workshops. She examines the different materials used by the sculptors, together with their sources, whether from reuse or quarrying, which declined during the middle ages. She gives a very useful account of the tools employed by the sculptors, as well as the distinct techniques of carving that resulted from their use. The third section of the book is devoted primarily

to iconography, including crosses of various kinds, animals, sacred portrait icons, portrayals of emperors and empresses, and finally profane subjects such as mythological characters, musicians and dancers. V. also discusses medieval variants of ancient capitals, such as the melon, basket and Corinthian types, as well as the apotropaic or in some cases symbolic significance of many of the motifs.

As is inevitable in the case of a relatively short survey of a large and complex field, each individual reader may think of one or more additions to the examples that the author has chosen to present. For instance, among the categories of carvings that the book does not consider are those that ornamented gardens, and especially fountains. This is one class of sculpture that was described in some detail by texts, even if relatively few carvings survive that can indisputably be connected with actual gardens or parks.¹

Any survey of Byzantine sculpture is faced by the problem of definition, since the boundaries of the field are fuzzy. For example, should a carving be considered Byzantine if it is in a church in Greece, even if its sculptor was in all likelihood Italian (as in the Parigoritissa at Arta, pp. 68, 265, figs. 31, 178)? Conversely, how should we describe a carving attributed to a Byzantine artist, but working in Italy (see the Crucifixion icon in the Museo Civico of Venice, p. 259, fig. 173)? Many of the sculptures described in this book lie in liminal areas, where artistic identities blended in ways that are hard to disentangle. Nowhere is this more evident than in the corpus of sculptures presently immured in San Marco in Venice. V. suggests that the monumental Deesis on the south wall of the church was executed by a Venetian sculptor in the 13th or 14th century (pp. 254–5), whereas Otto Demus had claimed that it was carved in the 11th century and only brought from Constantinople to Venice after 1204. Even more controversial are the two roundels framing carvings of Byzantine emperors, now preserved at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Campo Angaran at Venice. Many have described these as imports from Byzantium, but V. sees the Dumbarton Oaks relief as ‘une main-d’oeuvre d’origine vénitienne’ (pp. 268–9), following Elisabeth Piltz, who drew attention to mistakes in the rendering of the imperial costume.² Recent studies of the ‘Byzantine’ reliefs attached to the south wall of the treasury of San Marco, which appeared too late for inclusion in this book, have shown that they were extensively recarved by Venetian sculptors, and even in some cases created anew.³ The inclusion of such works in the canon suggests that ‘Byzantine sculpture’ was not an entity confined to the boundaries of the Byzantine empire, but,

1 M. L. Dolezal and M. Mavroudi, ‘Theodore Hyrtakenos’ Description of the Garden of St. Anna and the Ekphrasis of Gardens’, in A. Littlewood, H. Maguire, and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (ed.), *Byzantine Garden Culture* (Washington, D.C., 2002), 105–58.

2 ‘Middle Byzantine court costume’, in H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829–1204* (Washington, D.C., 1997), 39–51, esp. 41, fig. 5

3 M. Agazzi, ‘Questioni marciane: architettura e scultura’, in E. Vio (ed.), *San Marco: la basilica di Venezia* (Venice, 2019), vol. 1, 91–109, esp. 103–5, and H. Maguire, ‘The South Façade of the Treasury of San Marco’, *ibid.*, 123–9.

rather, a common vocabulary of formal characteristics and iconographies that could be produced in a variety of places by a variety of hands for a variety of purposes.

Such speculations are among many that follow from this rich introduction to a fascinating and complex field. The author is to be congratulated for producing a readable and coherent account of Byzantine sculpture, which is at the same time well informed, judicious, and illuminating.

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Στέφανος Κακλαμάνης, *Η Κρητική ποίηση στα χρόνια της Αναγέννησης (14^{ος} – 17^{ος} αί.)*, 3 volumes, Athens: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Έθνικης Τραπέζης, 2019–20.
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Stephanos Kaklamanis' book is devoted to one of the least read periods of Greek literature. David Holton edited a magisterial survey, and earlier Linos Politis, Stylianos Alexiou and Nikos Panagiotakis contributed outstanding work, but, much of the poetry written in Crete between the fourteenth century and the seventeenth is scattered in many specialized editions and therefore inaccessible to a broader readership. This is a crying shame: these are some of the most interesting poems in Greek. K's ambition is to provide a comprehensive guide through the maze, and to offer a generous anthology to boot. He succeeds admirably.

These three volumes, weighing in at 1791 pages, might turn the less dedicated readers weak at the knees. Notwithstanding, the book is an irresistibly good read. The first volume is a skilled and accessible analysis of the phases that gradually led up to the superb peak of the seventeenth century with Kornaros and Chortatsis; their historical background; the gradual weaning from Byzantium and embrace of the Venetian world view; the reception of Cretan literature in other Greek lands, notably the Ionian islands where Greek Romanticism and Dionysios Solomos later emerged. In a dazzling scholarly performance, K. delves into unknown archives, edits texts afresh and raises fascinating issues.

A good example is his definition of the field. Conventionally, we dub it 'the Cretan Renaissance'; although it has been mind-bogglingly difficult so far to identify the characteristics that constitute, respectively, the "Renaissance" and the "Middle Ages". Proponents of the former believe that they have discovered markers, such as *joie de vivre* and secularity, exclusive to their period, while medievalists insist that none of these were unknown to the Middle Ages. As Brian Stock puts it, 'The Renaissance invented the Middle Ages in order to define itself.'

The slippage has made for significant muddle in Greek Studies. Influential Hellenists such as G.P. Savidis have casually assigned to 'early modernity' qualities and genres