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VERONICA DELLA DORA – CHARALAMBOS DENDRINOS – MARK GUSCIN – DAVID JOHN WILLIAMS (eds.), Sacred Mobilities in Byzantium and Beyond. People, Objects and Relics (The Medieval Mediterranean 140). Leiden: Brill 2025. xiv + 360 pp. – ISBN 978-90-04-70158-8 (€ 150.70)

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The volume under review, as noted in the preface, is the fruit of several papers presented at an international virtual colloquium in June 2021 held under the auspices of the University of London. The editors have gathered and published ten such presentations as individual chapters, complemented at the start by a thematic introduction to the topic of sacred mobilities by one of the editors (della Dora) and concluding with an afterward by noted Patristic scholar and Orthodox theologian Andrew Louth. Each individual chapter ends with a chapter-specific bibliography, but an index of names/terms/locations mentioned throughout the entire volume appears at the very end of the publication (pp. 347–360). In what follows, each chapter shall be reviewed on its own.

Various disciplinary 'turns' have been the focus of various recent publications and conferences in the field of Byzantine Studies: the material turn, the linguistic turn, etc. In the thematic introduction to the volume and its papers ("Introducing Sacred Mobilities", pp. 1–30), one of the editors, VERONICA DELLA DORA, situates the following chapters in the context of the *mobility* turn and how examining the movements of objects and people, especially within the framework of "sacred" mobility (involving relics, clergy, processions, and pilgrimage) can help shed greater light on the phenomenon of movement more generally speaking in the medieval East Roman Empire. This type of work is not utterly new; recent observations and commentary on a wide gamut of Byzantine sources pertaining to mobility of all kinds emerged from the work of CLAUDIA RAPP[1] and her team in Vienna and continues to be one of the main focusses of the current Cluster of Excellence "EurAsian Transformations" hosted by four institutions in Vienna and Innsbruck.[2] As DELLA DORA points out, the

1. Cf. Claudia Rapp et al. (eds.), Mobility and Migration in Byzantium: A Sourcebook, Vienna 2023; available online via open access, accessed 23 March 2026.

2. Cf. the website of the FWF-funded Cluster of Excellence "EurAsian Transformations", https://eurasiantransformations.univie.ac.at/, accessed 23 March 2026.

papers in the current volume seek to address how *sacred* mobility in particular can be understood both in conjunction with and apart from other forms of mobility and spatiality in Byzantium. Key notions such as globalisation, micro-history, and the change in meaning brought about by movement vis-à-vis people and objects are all laid out, as well as the important dimension of performativity and agency addressed by the various studies. Concluding her introduction, DELLA DORA observes that "the rational for the wide temporal and geographical coverage of the present volume is to show continuities and discontinuities in patterns and typologies of mobilities and the reception of Byzantine spiritual culture at different times and in different places" (p. 25). Already here, though, we find a conflation of the terms "Byzantine" and "Orthodox" (i.e., Chalcedonian Orthodox),[3] which ignores some of the religious diversity present in various centuries within the East Roman Empire. None of the chapters in the present volume address any non-Chalcedonian traditions or regions (Armenian, Syriac, Coptic, or Arab-speaking Christian groups), nor of Muslim or Latin Christian populations within the bounds of Byzantium. Inclusion of studies on such groups, especially given the introduction's praise of micro-history and the local historical perspective, is perhaps a missed opportunity in a volume otherwise exhibiting admirable chronological and geographical breadth.

The series of chapters proper begins with a study of the artistic and architectural programme of the monastery church of St Luke of Steiris (Hosios Loukas) by BISSERA V. PENTCHEVA ("The Monastery of Hosios Loukas as a *Bilderfahrzeug* of the Constantinopolitan Liturgy", pp. 31–71). PENTCHEVA posits that the katholikon at Hosios Loukas—in terms of its pictorial programme, the spatial placing of various relics within the church space, and the convergence of St Luke's feast (February 6) with that of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple (February 2)—operates as a kind of 'image-vehicle' or *Bilderfahrzeug* (borrowing from Aby Warburg's coining of the term) to transmit notions of the liturgy of Constantinople and imperial victory at this node in what she terms "hitherto invisible networks linking the distant edges of the empire…with Constantinople" (p. 31). Helpfully, the chapter (like many in the volume) is accompanied by illustrative full-colour images to help visualise the iconography, reliquaries, and spaces under analysis here, something essential for an art-historical study. Not so helpful is the resolution of some of the images as well as

3. A conflation made explicit later in the same paragraph, where mention is made in one breath of "Byzantine and later Orthodox sacred mobilities" (p. 25).

the light play; the reader has the impression from many of the captions that the image is meant to highlight the interplay of light and darkness in the space, but this is not key to the arguments PENTCHEVA is trying to make in the chapter. To this end, a higher resolution and focus on the icons and persons depicted therein would have been more helpful in following (and being convinced by) some of the arguments made on the basis precisely of such imagery. More problematic for the argument, however, are two key points. First, the author posits that the borrowing of texts from the feast of the Presentation for that of St Luke several days later turns "the celebration of Hosios Loukas on 7 February… [into] a *Bilderfahrzeug* transmitting the music and memory of the *Hypapantē*" (p. 40), which feast is said by PENTCHEVA to be "tied to imperial victory and thus amplifies triumphalist ideas as celebrated in Constantinople in the Middle Byzantine period" (p. 42). The borrowing of liturgical texts from the feast of the Presentation[4] is construed as being done purposely to link St Luke and the monastery with the feast, which in turn is construed as being a vehicle for imperial military might and the language of victory. A much simpler explanation, however, is at hand if we look at the field of liturgical studies and seek to understand the texts used in their genesis and application. To wit: in most years (unless the start of the Great Fast should fall very early), the feast of St Luke would fall within the seven days of the afterfeast of the Presentation, and would thus automatically be combined with liturgical materials from the great feast, such that the presence of such hymnography could not be construed as a "conscious" importation of imperial imagery of military triumph.[5] Second, and perhaps more important, is what I believe to be a misunderstanding and misapplication of the term *Bilderfahrzeug* here. In coining the term, Aby Warburg was speaking of how Flemish tapestries hung on the walls of Italian palazzi served to import imagery from a distant land or context and invigorate or transform the new context with that image content. The image itself on the tapestry—the *Bild*—acts as a vehicle—*Fahrzeug*—moving the meaning and content to a new context.[6] PENTCHEVA however wants to understand the entire

4. The author notably only calls this feast by its Greek name in contrast to other feasts mentioned in the text, with no explanation for such idiosyncratic usage. Further instances of the usage of Greek terminology for terms that have regular English equivalents (*thēkē* for "reliquary" or *leipsana* for "relics") and where no philological argument is being made also abound without explanation or clear argumentative purpose.

5. Cf. MOTHER MARY – KALLISTOS WARE, The Festal Menaion. London 1969, pp. 41–44, where a list of all such fore- and afterfeasts in the Byzantine rite are provided.

6. Cf. "Bilderfahrzeug", Lexikon der Filmbegriffe, for a short description and further

katholikon of Hosios Loukas to be a *Bilderfahrzeug*, but in fact, it would seem to be merely the context in which (if her analysis is correct) various iconographic depictions, relics, and performed hymnography would be such "image vehicles" (although speaking of relics and hymnography as *Bilderfahrzeuge* in the same sense as iconography would seem to be going beyond the Warburgian understanding of the term). Other points of the argument are further undermined by some incorrect translations of Greek texts cited (notably, the author mentions on p. 43 that two *prooimia* from a *kontakion* of Rōmanos the Melodist "speak of victory achieved through the Cross as a weapon", whereas there is not a single mention of either 'Cross' or 'weapon(s)' in said texts) and the strangely specific readings of the very generic Greek terms *topos* and *symbolon*.[7] This, combined with language in some parts that reads overly spiritualised, theologised, or emotive for an academic research paper in art history, leaves the reader wondering what basis their truly is for understanding the central claims of the chapter regarding the imagery of Hosios Loukas as serving to project distant imperial might in Constantinople to this fringe region of the empire.

The second chapter is an in-depth analysis by Ekaterine Gedevanishvili of the mobility of iconography and (perhaps also) texts from Greek-speaking Byzantium to Georgia via the example of a remote church façade in the Svaneti region ("Mobility of Text: a Key to Understanding the Murals of the Svip'i Façade Painting", pp. 72–103). Taking as her starting point the interesting juxtaposition of the motif of the Hospitality of Abraham with St Demetrius of Thessaloniki, Gedevanishvili argues that the presence of Demetrius (and other warrior saints) served to connect King Demetre of Georgia (r. 1125–1156) and his reign with the isolated, mountainous region of Svaneti via the king's own patron saint, all while tying into Biblical ideas of kingship and descent which the Bagrat'ioni dynasty sought to find in the Israelite king David and the sacred context of Abraham's hospitality given to the three angels (p. 75), which patristic tradition interpreted as an image of the Triune God (hence the appellation of "Old Testament Trinity" often used by the author here). To support her thesis of

bibliography, accessed 23 March 2026.

7. Pentcheva, pp. 32–33: "The Byzantine cultural understanding of landscape is captured in the term *topos* – a space that vessels the divine and enables the sensorial encounter with it. *Topos* allows for the intersection of human and divine. Its role closely resembles that of *symbolon*, a place of contact of the incommensurate with the measurable." I could not find such specific definitions of *topos* and *symbolon* in any Greek lexicon I consulted.

the mobility of imagery, namely that of the martyr saint from late antique Thessaloniki to the Caucasus, in service of a royal propaganda campaign, GEDEVANISHVILI convincingly shows how the image of Demetrius can be found in several nearby churches in Svaneti, and also with connections not just to the cult of martyrs but to the liturgy as well via the specific placement of images of Demetrius on iconostases or near the sanctuary. Less convincing is her claim that the homilies written by Emperor Leo VI ("the Wise", r. 886–912) on the martyr were also received and spread in Georgia via translations, whose content would have been known. The evidence for this portion of the chapter relies on a single medieval Georgian hagiographical text, the *Life* of St Hilarion the Georgian, which as GEDEVANISHVILI explains, has the Byzantine Emperor Basil I in the early eleventh century asking the Iberian monk to take care of his sons and to teach them Georgian (!), a statement the author quotes from a source.[8] Intrigued by this statement, I managed to find a copy of the source in question and look up the page cited—which, however, presents a summary of the section of the *Life* in question in Modern Georgian and does not provide the Old Georgian text, so the reader cannot be sure (a) that this passage actually says this, or (b) that such an act on the part of Emperor Basil I actually happened or was not instead a projection (by the Georgian author) of an openness to and appreciation of Georgian language and culture (on the part of the emperor) at a time when relations between East Rome and Kartli were impacted by war and the conquest of Georgian territories by the former. While the second part of the chapter concerning the mobility of this text is less convincing, the first part on the iconography is well constructed and supported nicely by the photos of the iconography in question. One glaring problem here though—and alas, throughout the volume's chapters written by non-native English speakers—are the abundance of typos and unidiomatic English expressions, which—given the delay between the conference in 2021 and the publication in 2025, as well as the presence of two native English speakers amidst the editorial board of the volume—should have really been corrected before the book went to press. GEDEVANISHVILI's chapter is also slightly marred by the fact that no real consistent transliteration scheme of Georgian names or terms into Latin script has been followed and was not caught by the editors; in the first five footnotes, one cited author's name appears three different ways (Čičiinadze/Čičinaże/Čičinaze, which

8. P. 89, n. 67, which cites M. DOLAKIDZE's study Ilarion kartvelis cxovrebis ʒveli redakciebi [The old redactions of the Life of Hilarion the Georgian] (Tbilisi 1974), p. 157.

could also be transcribed Č'ič'inaʒe], pp. 72–73, nn. 2–5).[9] Additionally, some Greek and Georgian names are given in usual English equivalents (Theodore, David, George), while others appear in transliterated form (Dēmētrios, Demetre) without any clear reason as to why.

The volume thence moves south from the Caucasus to connections between Mesopotamia and the Byzantine capital in MARK GUSCIN's chapter ("The Translation of the Image of Edessa to Constantinople: Politics, Religion and Dynastic Ambition", pp. 104–128). A scholar noted for his previous research on the Mandylion and its history both before and after its translation to Constantinople,[10] GUSCIN rehearses here the history of the Image of Edessa, said to bear a miraculously formed depiction of the face of Jesus Christ, from the from its legendary origins in the early Christian centuries to its use as pro-image evidence in the eighth-century iconomachic controversy and further to the mid-tenth century and the reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogennētos in AD 944, when (as the author notes) "the translation of the relic was used for a political purpose", namely to consolidate imperial power and move the locus of authority from Emperor Rōmanos Lekapēnos and his biological sons. This short chapter does not so much present new findings or insights into the phenomenon of the Mandylion and its movement from Edessa to the Byzantine capital as it situates the "icon-relic", to borrow HANS BELTING's coinage,[11] within the context of sacred mobility in the volume as a premier example of such activity. While the historical sources are masterfully summarised and analysed by GUSCIN here, I only wish that there might have been reference to, and discussion of, the hymnographic and homiletic texts composed for the occasion of the Mandylion's translation into Constantinople[12] as well as to the scriptural readings selec-

9. No fewer than six (!) different transliteration schemes for Georgian can be found on the French-language Wikipedia article on this topic, none of which is consistently followed in the chapter (accessed 23 March 2026).

10. Cf. MARK GUSCIN, The Image of Edessa (The Medieval Mediterranean 82). Leiden 2009; and IDEM, The Tradition of the Image of Edessa. Newcastle-upon-Tyne 2016.

11. Cf. HANS BELTING, Bild und Kult: Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst. Munich 1990, p. 235.

12. These are translated and discussed at length by me in my doctoral dissertation: CHRISTOPHER SPRECHER, Emperor and God: Passion Relics and the Divinisation of Byzantine Rulers, 944–1204. Heidelberg 2024, esp. pp. 39–53, 59–62 (discussion), 175–195 (translations of hymnography and homiletic teaching).

ted for said commemoration,[13] which also speak of movement in the pre-eminently sacred context of liturgy.

Leaving Middle Byzantium and relics behind for the moment, the book then jumps forward in time to the Late Byzantine period and away to a different kind of movement—namely saints and the mobility involved in their miracles—with the contribution provided by MIHAIL MITREA ("Running to the Saints with the Wings of Faith: Mobility and Legitimacy in Late Byzantine Miracle Collections", pp. 129–175). MITREA pays specific attention to what he terms "instances of imagined mobility" (p. 131), which include both visits of saints in visions or dreams to those who entreat them, as well as visitations in dreams or visions on the part of faithful supplicants to the saint(s) or shrines/relics pertaining to the latter. The chapter is tightly structured, first introducing the topic of such oracular and oneiric mobility, and then focussing on two particular cases—namely, the miracles of Athanasios I, patriarch of Constantinople (1289–1293, 1303–1309) as recorded by Theoktistos the Stoudite; and those of Gregory Palamas, champion of hesychasm and archbishop of Thessaloniki (d. 1357) as recorded by Philotheos Kokkinos. Introducing to the study of these *vitae* the concepts of proxemics (here: meaning the contact and proximity of the saints to their supplicants) and kinesics (here: the body gestures and micro-movements of suppliants that appear in the miracle stories), MITREA convincingly shows how the types of sacred mobility here differ greatly between the two saints. Theoktistos, perhaps in light of the limited cult of Athanasios I, limits movement in the *vita* to Constantinople and its immediate environs, whereas Kokkinos deftly deploys kinesics "to craft for [Palamas] the image of a compassionate, warm, and caring figure" (p. 170) that could be spread and be supplicated throughout the *oikoumenē*, a fact noted in the geographic breadth of the miracle stories. Placed ever so slightly awkwardly in the middle of the chapter is the otherwise extremely helpful table produced by the author of all the miracles appearing in these *vitae*, listed according to person type, location, and miracle type, which will surely be helpful for future studies on Late Byzantine miracle stories.

Movement across time, geography, and now also religious boundaries is discussed in DAVID WILLIAMS's chapter entitled "Memory, Translating

13. Cf. SYSSE GUDRUN ENGBERG, Romanos Lekapenos and the Mandilion of Edessa. In: JANNIC DURAND – BERNARD FLUSIN (eds.), Byzance et les reliques du Christ. XXe Congrès international des Études byzantines, 19–25 août 2001. Table ronde: Les reliques de la Passion (Centre de recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance – Monographies 17). Paris 2004, pp. 129–139.

Sacra, and the Making of Shared Sacred Spaces: Hagia Sophia and the Church of St John in Damascus (5th–17th c.)" (pp. 176–200). Inspired by the work of the Russian art historian ALEXEY LIDOV on "hierotopy",[14] which WILLIAMS describes as "the creative project of sacred space" (p. 176), the author of the chapter examines how narrative texts in particular can be used to shape the memory of a sacred religious place and move a place and its previous sacred status from one faith context to another. Two such examples are examined here: the conversion of Hagia Sophia from a cathedral church into a mosque under Mehmed II in 1453 following the fall of Constantinople; and the transformation of the site of the Basilica of St John the Baptist in Damascus with its shrine and head relic into the Grand Mosque of Damascus under the Umayyad rulers around AD 706. WILLIAMS first presents his readers evidence from the Islamic tradition concerning the use of narrative to "return" (rather than merely convert) spaces sacred to other religious traditions to a holy use in an Islamic context (p. 179), a feature also noted in a Christian vein by Justin Martyr's conception of the *logos spermatikos* (p. 180). In the case of Hagia Sophia, WILLIAMS shows how Shems ed-Din (1389–1459), a companion of Mehmed II, recasts the building of Hagia Sophia under Justinian as being inspired by a vision of the Muslim prophetic figure of al-Kiḍr and explains the stability of the mortar used in the unsupported dome as being due to it actually being a mixture of earth from Mecca, the saliva of the Prophet Mohammed, and the sacred water from the Zamzam Well. In the case of the Grand Mosque of Damascus, the Byzantine stories of the finding of the Forerunner's head are, well, turned on their head by an Islamic retelling of the conquest of the city under Kālid ibn al-Walīd (d. AD 642) and the discovery of a qibla wall set up by the Prophet Hud under the basilica's foundations, thus providing justification for the demolition of the church and the "return" of the site to its original Muslim use. With the minor detraction of some typos and mistakes that made it through to printing, WILLIAMS deftly handles and explains these narrative traditions to the reader and shows how these sacred stories can serve to move entire building sites from one religious tradition to another in post-Byzantine settings.

From the desert of Damascus, the reader is next transported to more insular climes in the contribution by CHRYSOVALANTIS KYRIACOU ("Sacred

14. Cf. inter alia ALEXEY LIDOV, Hierotopy: Spatial Icons and Image Paradigms in Byzantine Culture. Moscow 2009.

Mobilities and Multiple Identities: Early Modern Christians from Cyprus and the Shadow of Byzantium", pp. 201–235). KYRIACOU investigates here sacred mobility in terms of the movement of figures closely linked with the sacred, i.e., church officials, and by means of two such examples—the ethnic Armenian, Greek-speaking Catholic bishop Giulio Stavriano, who travels from Cyprus to Calabria; and the Greek-speaking Orthodox priest of Frankish stock, Antonios Darkes, who travels to the Holy Land—shows how elite figures of late-sixteenth-century Cyprus experienced mobility across religious, linguistic, and cultural spheres. In a masterfully researched chapter complete with translations from early Modern Greek poetry and Italian journal entries, KYRIACOU argues that, at least in the case of the two historical agents studied here, religious mobility is a catalyst for negotiating and prioritising different individual identities while also creating conflicts in identity. Stavriano, despite speaking Greek and being familiar with Byzantine-rite ecclesiastical culture from Cyprus, seeks to eradicate this from the Griko population over which he is made bishop in Calabria; Darkes is an Orthodox priest and able to access elite Orthodox spaces on his Holy Land pilgrimage, but takes umbrage at disparaging comments made by some against the "Franks" on account of his own Frankish heritage and sympathy to the other. While featuring in the chapter (and book) title, the topic of "sacred mobility" per se is less central to the chapter in my reading; while both Stavriano and Darkes are both official church figures *qua* clergy and their movement away from Cyprus is occasioned by religious reasons, the sacredness of such movement does not come under purview here as much as the issues of identity, which creates a slight imbalance in the contribution. Also slightly confusing is the use of the term *Rhōmaios* by KYRIACOU throughout: I sense the author is wanting to avoid the term 'Roman' on account of the multitudinous other meanings that adjective has, but he often seems to treat the term as a synonym for '(Chalcedonian) Orthodox' without further discussion. Nevertheless, the micro-histories of the two figures examined here drive home the point that mobility impacts, changes, and re-orders identity, and KYRIACOU's approach opens up vistas for further research, particularly on other medieval and early modern mobile figures as well as the particular mobilities and identities created on the islands of the Mediterranean both east and west.

Journeying westward from Cyprus to the "spine of Greece" in Epirus, MOLLY GREENE examines sacred mobility through the lens of pilgrims, monastics, and their communities in "Mountain Mobilities: the Monastic Landscape of Pindos" (pp. 236–261). Focussing primarily on documentary ev-

idence from the nineteenth century, GREENE posits that mountainous areas, long thought to be simply backwaters of civilization (particular in the Balkans), and the Evrytania area of the Pindos region in particular, were instead places where monasteries played a critical role in facilitating mobility (p. 242). Records of donations given to various communities, as presented by the author, show at least mobility towards the monasteries of both persons and goods in exchange for prayers and supplications within the Pindos region (p. 246), and an early modern Greek poem in translation by a certain Abbot Grēgorios of the Monastery of the Transfiguration in Vracha—besides being an excellent example of the kinds of source texts that remain to be discovered in such remote places—demonstrates how monasteries could also be the centre of less sacred movement, say, in the case of robbers and bandits also seeking refuge and material support at the expense of Christian monastic hospitality (p. 253). The importance of these sources and of GREENE's analysis here for understanding the interplay of monastic foundations and the rugged, sparsely inhabited terrain of the Pindos in the decades following Greek independence in 1821 is beyond question, and the author's examination of where monastic foundations were made in the region following the Ottoman Conquest (esp. pp. 248–249) is helpful for making connections between monasteries, the phenomenon of movement/mobility, and the givens of geography. GREENE notes that in the region, there is a "very clear relationship between the monasteries and the protection of [trade] routes" (p. 250) and also hints that locations along rivers could also have been occasioned by financial/economic concerns via the possibility of operating mills (ibid.). At the end of this chapter, similar to the previous one centred on Cyprus, the reader wishes only that more insight might have been made into the *sacred* rather than merely the *mobile* here. The author's concluding remarks highlight that "monasticism was an essential institution of Orthodox Christian society" in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires and that "monasteries were ubiquitous on the Pindos mountains" (p. 258): but was sacred mobility ubiquitous here? Is movement to(wards) a monastery, or the founding/localising of a monastic community necessarily "sacred", regardless of the actors involved? And if so—which I would argue is true, and is implied by Greene here in the chapter—are there cycles to this movement? Specific kinds of sacred movement undertaken by clergy/monks/laity/lawless brigands? There is definitely more work than can be done on these sources and this region, something that should encourage new and current researchers.

We remain in the Balkans (and roughly the same time period) in the next

chapter by MARIA LITINA, entitled "Sacred Mobilities and the *Metochia* of the Holy Sepulchre in the Balkans (1845–1900)" (pp. 262–292). In one of the volume's lengthiest chapters, LITINA describes in detail the network of monastic dependencies or 'outposts' (Gk *metochia*) of the monastic brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre (itself a part of the [Greek] Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem) in Constantinople and throughout the Balkan Peninsula and their activities. At the outset, the author claims that these *metochia* were not only loci for political influence and the collecting of information for the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, but also "enabled the mobility of people, sacred objects and money over an extended geographical area… [which was] essential for the survival of the Patriarchate" at the time (pp. 262–263). The chapter, drawing heavily on primary sources in early modern Greek from various church and civil archives, outlines the network as a whole stretching from Constantinople to Sarajevo, with several subsidiary network hubs in between (a small map being provided on p. 274). LITINA is perhaps a bit heavy on description and light on analysis here. We learn of the extensive (and specific) amounts of money transferred between these sites, Constantinople, and the Holy Sepulchre via specific fundraising trips (called *taxidia* or *zēteiai* in the sources), as well as the less-than-sacred nature of some of the financial transactions in the case of certain monks who mismanaged the funds. For anyone working on economic history of the Balkans in this period, *metochia* as a church-specific institution, or interactions between the Jerusalem and Constantinople patriarchates in the nineteenth century, this article should be required reading, and much to her credit, LITINA is generous and clear in footnoting her sources. However, here as in the preceding chapters, a link to the "sacred" seems a bit tenuous, or at least taken for granted in the context. The author notes in the conclusion that her research has shown that "sacred mobilities, such as those of travelling monks and pilgrims, and ecclesiastical and spiritual networks…[were] an important element…in the political and economic life of local communities, peoples and nations" (p. 287). But is any kind of movement on the part of a monk or pilgrim necessarily sacred? Is fundraising "sacred" when done by clergy? The assumptions of "sacred mobility" without the "sacred" being unpacked do not seem to be addressed here and elsewhere in the volume, something that would have been desirable given the theoretical introduction to the book (and ostensibly to the conference from which these chapters have emerged).

Following the thematic trail of the *metochia* back to Jerusalem, the next chapter written by REHAV (BUNI) RUBIN is entitled "Sacred Topogra-

phies and Travelling Memorabilia: the *Proskynētaria* of the Holy Land" (pp. 293–315). While mentioning the important historical precedents of mementoes and relics being brought back home from the Holy Land by late antique pilgrims and relevant research on this (p. 293), RUBIN focusses here on specifically Orthodox pilgrims and pilgrimage from the mid-sixteenth century onwards (p. 294) and particularly on *proskynētaria* (either small booklets with illustrated descriptions of the Holy Land, or else large Holy Land icons painted on rolled-up canvas) which could be obtained by pilgrims and taken home with them after their journey to Jerusalem and other holy places in Palestine. The author clearly states his thesis at the outset: namely, that these objects serve as loci and foci for several layers of mobility involving both the objects themselves as well as a virtual movement of the Holy Land itself through their veneration and depiction back home with the pilgrims via these self-same *proskynētaria* (p. 295). Given the focus of the research here on a specific type of object, the reader is pleased to find several full-colour photographs in this chapter as well that highlight the features RUBIN comments on and analyses in his discussion of the pilgrimage mementoes. Key to his argument is that more than merely being descriptions or depictions of some kind of 'neutral' Holy Land, the narratives of the text ignore Catholic and Muslim sites, presenting a wholly 'Orthodox' Holy Land to the Orthodox pilgrims and their at-homes audiences (pp. 298–299). The same is true, as RUBIN ascertains, for the variant of the *proskynētaria* that depict the entire Holy Land, or in some cases merely the Holy City of Jerusalem: "As in the case of the booklets, by disregarding anything that was not Orthodox, the icons presented a conceptual image of a strictly Orthodox devotional cityscape" (p. 309). Another interesting find, borne out in his comparative study of texts and image programmes across various representative *proskynētaria*, is the determination of Mar Saba in the Judaean wilderness as a place of production for the items, and in his concluding remarks, RUBIN notes how via these mementoes, the sacredness of the Holy Land is translated from the abstract to the materially experiential, and from a pluralist religious landscape to a specifically and exclusively Orthodox Christian one, via the production and dissemination of the booklets and canvas icons (p. 312). Here again, further research remains (as the author himself notes), and the reader would be curious to see if similarly curated "sacred mobility" objects for other Christian churches and/or Jewish/Muslim communities also exist.

Movement not of church images, but of items within a specific church, is the focus of the final main chapter of the volume by CHRISTOS AN-

TONIOS KAKALIS, entitled "Assembling a *Limen*: the Biography of an Iconostasis" (pp. 316–338). Here, KAKALIS, a lecturer in architecture, posits the changing iconostasis (and changing locations thereof in different buildings) of the Orthodox Community of St Andrew in Edinburgh in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as a threshold or *limen*, which by nature of its being an intermediary between spaces enables and promotes sacred mobility in the community. Much like PENTCHEVA in the first proper chapter of the volume, KAKALIS seems to understand *topos* in a restricted way with regard to the icon-screen or *templon*, "through the inhabitation of which the congregation opens up to the possibility of interacting with what is happening behind it" (p. 325). Photographs of different iterations of the community's iconostasis across time and space help illustrate the points the author is making (although no dates are provided, which would have been helpful) (pp. 328, 330), although the thrust of the argument is that successive accretions of icons from different parishioners, hailing from different ethno-cultural backgrounds, leads to "St Andrew's iconostasis [being] a meeting point and materialization of the mobile life trajectories of different generations of parishioners", and that "[t]hrough its liturgical use, people co-exist in the same place, dealing with their (often forced) mobility and displacement through the common practice of faith…" (p. 335). This is KAKALIS's interpretation, but the evidence—pictorially, from the quite seemingly small icons scattered over a mostly bare iconostasis; and documentarily, from the lack of textual evidence and reliance on a few oral interviews—seems rather to provide only a few personal views from people in the community directly involved in the building and decorating of the iconostasis. To go from this limited evidence to claims that what is essentially a barrier to the sanctuary serves rather to involve people in the church with the events at the altar via movement and to be an active *topos* of memory and sacred mobility for all seems, alas, to stretch mobility to a breaking point. A more tightly structured investigation into the mobility of the iconostasis itself, both in terms of location and form (since it ended up being completely rebuilt in 2003, one of the few historical occasions documented in great detail via the fascinating journal of the [also fascinatingly, at the time non-Orthodox] carpenter [pp. 329–331]) could have more securely tied into the theme of "sacred mobility" while allowing for the "mobility" of memory in terms of parishioners' engagements with the sacred space—not to mention the possibility of unreliability of such memory, a topic not broached here despite the reliance on oral interviews—to

highlight and contrast with the physical and documentary evidence for the church and its *sacra*.

The volume concludes with a postscript by ANDREW LOUTH ("Sacred Mobilities: An Afterword", pp. 339–346), in which I found many of my own questions to have been pondered already by this renowned Orthodox theologian and writer after his reading of the volume's contributions. LOUTH notes that when it comes to "sacred mobility", we in our own time and place can fall into "the trap of thinking that our modern notions of space and time are much the same as those that held sway among the ancients" (p. 339). Taking recourse to Plato and his *Timaeus*, he reminds us that for the ancient world (or at least its philosophers), space was not something static, but deeply dynamic: "It is not just that in which things move, but that in which everything *becomes*" (p. 341, italics original). Furthermore, this movement is said to be something that marks all of ordered creation in the *kosmos*, which leads to thinking on space and time in terms of "the *quality* of time" (p. 343) investigated. Reading this, I found that this point in particular did not find mention in the present volume: namely, how movement interacts qualitatively with time; or to put it other Greek words, how (or if) sacred movement interacts with chronological time (*chronos*) differently than it does with time that is perceived or experienced as being an "appointed" or "opportune" moment (*kairos*). In a Byzantine (liturgical) context, one hears before the proclamation of the Gospel pericope the proclamation, "at that (appointed) time" (*en ekeinō tō kairō*), suggesting that the narrative movement of what is about to be heard is situated not at some random point in space and time, but is something planned/intended/significant, happening at just the right time. To that end, such a paper focusing on sacred movement through time, or movement through sacred time, from a liturgical perspective would have been a welcome addition to this tome. LOUTH correctly notes in his closing remarks that "this book is not just about mobilities, but *sacred* mobilities" (p. 344), involving persons, objects, and places held to be sacred or touching on the sacred. As opposed, say, to "secular space", LOUTH posits that "[i]t is sacred space that discloses truth" (p. 345); I might add a corollary that as opposed to ordinary movement in ordinary chronological time, sacred movement and the revelation of appointed, indeed sacred or "kairotic" time can allow that truth to unfold across the barriers of geography, time, religion, and matter.

The volume, expansive in scope, is coherent without being exhaustive; there is much more than can be said and researched on all aspects of time

and space, mobility sacred and otherwise, as all the chapters here have evinced. All noted typographical and linguistic issues aside, the ensemble of authors and editors can be congratulated on assembling such a volume that furthers the needed discussions on the topic of sacred mobility in general with connected to the Byzantine world, all while unearthing textual, artistic, architectural, and liturgical sources that help us gain a greater glimpse into this phenomenon and perhaps understand our own time, space, and mobility via the lens of the sacred.

Keywords

Byzantium; Cyprus; Georgia; mobility; iconography