

Constantinople as Center and Crossroad

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Disturbed Orders

*Architectural representations in Saint Mary Peribleptos as seen by Ruy González de Clavijo**

MABI ANGAR

Among the lost mosaics of Constantinople, some Palaiologan portraits in the Monastery of Saint Mary Peribleptos (Gr. Μονή τῆς Θεοτόκου τῆς Περιβλέπτου, Turk. Sulu Manastır, Armen. Surp Kevork)¹ and the Pammakaristos Monastery (Gr. Μονή τῆς Θεοτόκου τῆς Παμμακαρίστου, Turk. Fethiye Camii)² have attracted scholarly attention. Descriptions and pictorial representations by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century visitors triggered attempts to identify the Late Byzantine emperors, their wives, and children depicted within the Pammakaristos Church, and on the outer walls of the main church (*katholikon*) of the Peribleptos Monastery.³

* I thank Cecilia Olovsson and Johan Mårtelius for inviting me to their inspiring conference *Symbolic Aspects of Architecture: Late Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman Perspectives*, held 5–6 November 2015 at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, where I gave a preliminary version of this paper. I thank Ingela Nilsson and Olof Heilo for including this paper in the present volume and for their helpful suggestions, as well as Olof Heilo and Kaspar Witlake for their red drawings. I am grateful to Anne Dunlop, Nikolas Jaspert, Paul Magdalino, Peter Schreiner and Cristina Stancioiu for their interest in this paper and valuable comments. All mistakes are mine.

¹ On the Peribleptos Monastery, see W. Müller-Wiener, “Sulu Manastır,” in *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbul* (Tübingen 1977), 200–2; H. Béberian, “Le monastère byzantine de Peribleptos dit Soulou Manastır siège de patriarchat arménien de Constantinople,” in *REArm* 5 (1968), 145–49; C. Mango, “The Monastery of St. Mary Peribleptos (Sulu Manastır) at Constantinople Revisited,” in *REArm* 23 (1992), 473–93; F. Özgümüş, “Peribleptos Manastırı (Sulu Manastır),” in *Sanat Tarihi Arastırmaları Dergisi* 14 (1997/98), 21–32 (in English as “Peribleptos [‘Sulu’] Monastery in Istanbul,” in *BZ* 93 [2000], 508–20); K. Dark, “The Byzantine Church and Monastery of St. Mary Peribleptos in Istanbul,” in *Burlington Magazine* 141 (1999), 656–64; Ö. Dalgıç & T. F. Mathews, “A New Interpretation of the Church of Peribleptos and its Place in Middle Byzantine Architecture,” in A. Ödekan et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the First International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, Istanbul 2007* (Istanbul 2010), 424–31. On the substructions, see Özgümüş, “Peribleptos Monastery,” 512–14. On the sculptural embellishment, see Mango, *Peribleptos Revisited*, 474; A. Effenberger, “Die Relieffikonen der Theotokos und des Erzengels Michael im Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Berlin,” *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 48 (2006), 9–45. On the relics, see G. P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington D.C. 1984), 276–83.

² On the Pammakaristos Monastery, see A. van Millingen, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople: Their History and Architecture* (London 1912), 138–63. W. Müller-Wiener, “Fethiye Camii,” in *Bildlexikon*, 132–35; H. Belting et al., *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul* (Washington D.C. 1978).

³ P. Schreiner, “Eine unbekannte Beschreibung der Pammakaristos-Kirche (Fethiye Camii) und weitere Texte zur Topographie Konstantinopels,” in *DOP* 25 (1971), 217–48; J. Osborne, “New Evidence for a Lost Portrait of the Family of Michael VIII Palaiologos,” in *Thesaurismata* 23 (1993), 9–13; R. H.

In contrast to these Palaiologan portraits, an image inside the Peribleptos Church believed to be a donor mosaic of the eleventh century has remained scarcely studied.⁴ We only know of this image thanks to a description in a late medieval travel account known as *Embajada a Tamorlán*. Between 1403 and 1406 the author of the account, Ruy González de Clavijo, chamberlain and chief ambassador to Henry III, King of Castile and León (r. 1390–1406), led an embassy to the court of Timur in Samarkand and back to the Iberian Peninsula.⁵ The mission was part of diplomatic exchanges between Timur and Henry III, the latter making observation in regards to potential initiatives against the Ottomans with Timur's help.⁶ The Mongol-Turkic ruler was increasingly perceived by Western powers as a negotiating partner after his victory over Beyazit I at the Battle of Ankara (July, 1402) which called to a halt the yearlong Ottoman siege of Constantinople.⁷

The Mongol empire under Timur is the main focus of the *Embajada*, but two chapters are dedicated to Constantinople and Pera, where the Castilian embassy stayed for five months.⁸ While Clavijo's description structurally resembles traditional pilgrim accounts which enumerate one shrine after another, praising the Byzantine capital as a relic hoard,⁹ the pages dedicated to the Byzantine capital, and to the Genoese settlement on the other side of the Golden Horn, deserve closer

W. Stichel, "“Vergessene Kaiserportraits” spätbyzantinischer Kaiser. Zwei frühpalaiologische Familienbildnisse im Peribleptos- und Pammakaristoskloster zu Konstantinopel," *MSBK* 1 (1998), 75–103; A. G. Guidobaldi, "La perduta decorazione del monastero della *Theotokos Peribleptos* a Costantinopoli e un ritratto di Papa Clemente nel codice Vat. Lat. 5407 della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana," in *Studi in Memoria di Patrizia Angiolini Martinelli a cura di Silvia Pasi* (Bologna 2005), 169–89.

⁴ C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire. Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs 1972), 217–18; *The Art of the Byzantine Empire* volume was republished several times; the latest edition being from 2000. For Clavijo, see B. Forbes Manz/M. L. Dunaway, "Clavijo, Ruy González de," in *Encyclopedia Iranica* (<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/clavijo-ruy-gonzalez-de-d>) (last visited 2018-10-01).

⁵ There are several editions and translations into modern languages of Clavijo's *Embajada a Tamorlán* printed in Sevilla for the first time by Gonzalo Argote de Molina in 1582. All original passages cited here are from *Embajada a Tamorlán. Estudio y Edición de un Manuscrito del Siglo XV por Francisco López Estrada* (Madrid 1999²). The English translation on the Peribleptos image proper is my own. All other passages are cited from: *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403–1406. Ruy Gonzáles de Clavijo* (tr. G. Le Strange) (Kilkerran 2009). See also the German tr. *Clavijos Reise nach Samarkand 1403–1406. Aus dem Altkaistilischen übersetzt und mit einer Einleitung und Erläuterungen versehen von Uta Lindgren* (Munich 1993). For the transmission history of the text and references to further translations into various modern languages, see Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 53–57. For narratological aspects see, F. López Estrada, "Procedimientos narrativos en la Embajada a Tamorlán," in *El Crotalón* 1 (1984), 129–46.

⁶ B. Liu, "Re-Orienting Medieval Spanish Travel Narratives," in *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 52 (2005/06), 19–30, at 20–25.

⁷ N. Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Latins and the Ottomans: Politics and Society in the Late Empire* (Cambridge 2009), 149–72; Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 25–27. See also J.-P. Rubiés, "Late Medieval Ambassadors and the Practice of Cross-Cultural Encounters 1250–1450," in P. J. Brummett (ed.), *The Book of Travels: Genre, Ethnology, and Pilgrimage 1250–1700* (Leiden 2009), 37–112.

⁸ The Castilians tried to continue their trip to Trapezunt on 13 November 1403, but heavy winter storms forced them to return to Pera, where the group remained until spring 1304, cf. Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 156–57; Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 67–77. For the itinerary, see F. López Estrada, "La relation de l'ambassade d'Henri III au Grand Tamerlan," in *Études des Lettres* (1992/93), 5–28, at 14–15.

⁹ Van der Vin, *Travellers to Greece and Constantinople* vol. 1, 18–19; K. N. Ciggaar, *Western Travellers to Constantinople: The West and Byzantium, 962–1204: Cultural and Political Relations* (Leiden 1996); M. Angold, "The Decline of Byzantium Seen Through the Eyes of Western Travellers," in R. Macrides (ed.), *Travel in the Byzantine World* (Aldershot 2002), 213–32; S. Mergiali-Sahas, "An Ultimate Wealth for Inauspicious Times: Holy Relics in Rescue of Manuel II Paleologus' Reign," in *Byzantion* 76 (2006), 264–75, at 265.

attention and contextualization within the broader narrative.¹⁰ The many reflections in Clavijo's account about recent military encounters and the politically unstable situation in the Eastern Mediterranean around 1400 with Latins, Byzantines, Turks, and other stakeholders reveal a rather programmatic agenda. Clavijo's remarks demonstrate to what extent Constantinople and Pera were understood as an entangled Byzantine-Latin entity within otherwise predominantly Turkish territories. Located at the easternmost end of the Mediterranean basin, the imperial city with its faded (but soon to be revitalized) glory and the bustling Genoese outpost are treated by Clavijo as an intrinsic part of the Western hemisphere from whose westernmost end the Castilian embassy originated (Fig. 1).¹¹ The account oscillates between satisfying curiosity about the East, and Timur's court and realm in particular, and advertising for 'supranational' initiatives against the Muslim Turks—the new adversary with whom the Byzantines and other Christians in the Eastern Mediterranean (e.g. Latin Orders, Armenians, Georgians, Nestorians) were more familiar than Westerners like Clavijo.¹²

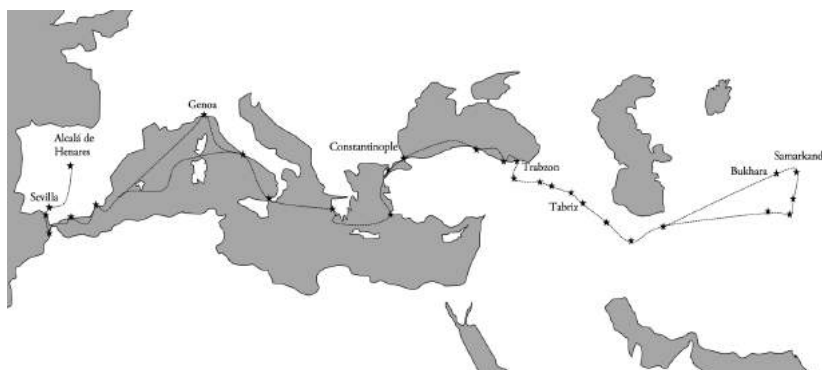


Fig. 1. Itinerary of the Castilian embassy. Map: Olof Heilo after López Estrada.

With regard to the donor portrait at the Peribleptos Church, however, Clavijo's account in the *Embajada* is striking in its detailed description of a ubiquitous composition: thirty architectural models, each one identifiable by an accompanying Greek inscription, were represented below the Virgin Mary. This description suggests an abrupt departure from conventional Byzantine donor iconography.¹³ Instead, this type of imagery—donors displayed in combination with abbreviated architectural depictions of endowed properties such as fortresses,

¹⁰ That Clavijo "passes no judgement for good or for ill on the Greeks" [...] because the purpose of his journey lay thousands of miles to the east", cannot be confirmed; Angold, *Decline of Byzantium*, 221.

¹¹ One may ask whether a statement such as "[...] Constantinople is similar to Seville, while Pera is like Triana [the suburb of Seville on the west bank of the Guadalquivir] with the port and ships lying between the two." (cited after Clavijo, *Embassy* [tr. Le Strange], 64) conveyed more than mere topographic observation. For mental mapping strategies linking e.g. the Iberian Peninsula to China by alluding to their common latitudinal position, see Liu, *Re-Orienting Medieval Spanish Travel Narratives*, 52.

¹² P. Zumthor, "The Medieval Travel Narrative," tr. C. Peebles, in *New Literary History* 25/4 (1994), 809–24. See also J. Pryor, *Geography, Technology, and War: Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649–1571* (Cambridge 1992), 165–92 (ch. 'The Turks').

¹³ Mango, *Peribleptos Revisited*, 475; See also A. Cutler & A. M. Talbot, "Peribleptos Monastery," in *ODB*, vol. 3, 1629 "[...] representations of 30 castles and towns in the monastery's domain.," A. Kazhdan, "Clavijo, Ruy González de," in *ODB*, vol. 1, 469: "[...] at whose entrance were represented 30 castles and towns allegedly granted to the church by an emperor Romanos; privileges listing the rights of the church to these castles and confirmed by wax and lead seals were displayed nearby."

walled cities, city gates or towers—appears often in monastic contexts in the West. As such, the Peribleptos image requires attention, all the more so as this was one of the imperial monastic foundations occupied by a Latin religious order, namely by Venetian Benedictines from San Giorgio Maggiore, for some time during the Latin Empire (1204–61).¹⁴ The relevant passage in Clavijo's description of the Peribleptos Monastery reads as follows:

And then, at the entrance of the body of the church, on the left-hand side, are represented many images, among them is an image of St. Mary. And next to her is an image of an emperor, and on the other side, an image of an empress. And at the feet of the image of St. Mary thirty cities and castles were represented with the inscribed names of each of them in Greek. And they said that these cities and castles belonged to the territory of this church, that they were given by an emperor, and the one who had given them had been named Romanos, and that he was entombed at the feet of the aforementioned image. There were some parchment documents attached, sealed with seals of wax and lead and they say that these were the privileges that the church received over the mentioned cities and castles.¹⁵

This description invites a discussion about types and possible meanings of abbreviated city representations in monastic contexts in Byzantium, and comparatively in the Latin West. As I see it, Clavijo's report is above all a testimony to the shifting powers and borders, and to concurrent conflicts over disputed estates as Byzantine territories were reorganized following the Latin Conquest of Constantinople in April 1204 and within the larger context of Ottoman expansion. Familiar with the experience of the Iberian Peninsula's century-long Reconquista, Clavijo must have known and recognized the mechanisms of shifting territories and changes of ownership also at work in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The founder of the Peribleptos Monastery, Romanos III Argyros (1028–34), ascended the throne in 1028 by marrying Zoë Porphyrogeneta (1028–50).¹⁶ Prior to the Peribleptos project Romanos had donated substantial amounts of

¹⁴ R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Les églises et monastères* (Paris 1969), III, 218; N. Tsougarakis, *The Latin Religious Orders in Medieval Greece, 1204–1500* (Turnhout 2012), 82–83. Already in the twelfth century, San Giorgio Maggiore had possessions in the Venetian quarter on the Golden Horn, see R.-J. Lilie, *Handel und Politik zwischen dem byzantinischen Reich und den italienischen Kommunen Venedig, Pisa und Genua in der Epoche der Komnenen und der Angeloi (1081–1204)* (Amsterdam 1984), 236.

¹⁵ Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 120–21: "E luego a la entrada del cuerpo del la iglesia, a la mano esquierda, están muchas imágenes figuradas, entre las cuales está una imagen de santa María. A par d'ella está de la una parte una imagen de emperador e, a la otra parte, otra imagen de emperatriz; e a los pies de la imagen de santa María, estaban figurados trenta castillos e ciudad's, escriptos los nombres de cada uno d'ellos en griego. E estas dichas ciudades e castillos dixieron que solían ser del señorío de aquella iglesia, que las oviera dado un emperador, e que la dotó, que oviera nombre Romano, e que allí yazía enterrado a los pies de aquella imagen; e que estaban colgados unos privilejos de cuero, sellados con sellos de cera e plomo, que dezían que eran los dichos privilejos que aquella iglesia oviera de las dichas ciudades e castillos." English tr. by the author, cf. Mango, *Sources and Documents*, 217. I thank Martin Becker for kindly discussing the passage with me.

¹⁶ On Romanos III Argyros, see *PmbZ*, no. 26835, 602–4. An extensive source for Romanos and his engagement with the Peribleptos Monastery is Book III (and the beginning of Book IV) of the *Chronographia* by Michael Psellos. See now *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia. Band 1: Einleitung und Text, Band 2: Textkritischer Kommentar und Indices*, ed. D. R. Reinsch (Berlin & Boston 2014). For a Greek-German edition, see *Michael Psellos. Leben der byzantinischen Kaiser (976–1025) Chronographia. Griechisch-deutsch. Eingeleitet, herausgegeben, übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen von D. R. Reinsch* (Berlin & Boston 2015), 120–73. See also Skylitzes, *Synopsis* (Thurn), 384, 8, 15–19, who is very brief about the Peribleptos project, cf. n. 28.

money plus an annual income of 80 gold pounds to the Great Church.¹⁷ Only large endowments would have justified having one's portrait within Hagia Sophia—and indeed, the well-known Zoë and Constantine mosaic panel in the south gallery was originally probably a representation of Zoë with her first husband Romanos (Fig. 2).¹⁸



Fig. 2. Empress Zoë and emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (originally probably Romanos III Argyros). Photo by Wikimedia Commons user Mirabella, licensed according to the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.

But are we dealing with a genuine eleventh-century Byzantine iconography in the Peribleptos Monastery at all? Or can we possibly assume that the particular donor composition was commissioned during the Benedictine phase of the Peribleptos, thus sometime during the Latin Empire? Or, was it more likely accomplished after 1261 as argued by Sophia Kalopissi-Verti?¹⁹ Bearing in mind the transcultural character of the *Romania* from the thirteenth century onwards, and in particular the presence of Latin religious orders in the Eastern Mediterranean in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade, one may ask whether the inclusion of architectural

¹⁷ I. Kalavrezou, "Irregular Marriages in the Eleventh Century and the Zoe and Constantine Mosaic in Hagia Sophia," in A. E. Laiou & D. Simon (eds.), *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth-Twelfth Centuries* (Washington D.C. 1992), 241–59, 246; Skylitzes, *Synopsis* (Thurn), 375, I, 49–54; Skylitzes, *Synopsis* (tr. Wortley), 354, chap. 18, I.

¹⁸ M. Restle, *Istanbul. Bursa-Edirne-Iznik. Baudenkmäler und Museen* (Stuttgart 1976), 274; N. Oikonomides, "The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in St. Sophia," in *REB* 36 (1978), 219–32; On the right of donors to be buried within their foundation, see J. P. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire* (Washington D.C. 1987), 155. The Great Church never served as a burial place for imperial family members; the execution of the surviving imperial portraits must be seen in the context of extensive endowments that guaranteed commemoration.

¹⁹ S. Kalopissi-Verti, "Εγγαφα σε επιγραφές ναών χρυσόβουλλα-εκκλησιαστικές πράξεις-βρέβια-δωρεές-διαθήκες," in *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* 24 (2003), 79–88, 79, n. 1.

models as part of the donor image of the Peribleptos may be better understood as a merger of a Western monastic and an otherwise conventional Byzantine donor composition.²⁰ Details in Clavijo's description arouse indeed suspicion. While he initially conveys a spatial correlation between the donor image and the donor allegedly interred below the image, Clavijo later describes Romanos's sarcophagus "at the head of the church" where he found it stripped of his precious metal panelling by marauding crusaders.²¹ Furthermore, the reference to legal documents that had been ostensibly hung onto the walls of the church by the actual Greek community to underline the rightfulness of the claims, contribute to the ambiguous situation.

Having his Castilian audience in mind when compiling facts and fiction about foreign cultures,²² Clavijo could be sure to catch his readers' attention by referring to this detail due to their distinct familiarity with iconic architectural imagery. The *castillo* (fortress, castle) had been a well-established and virtually omnipresent symbol in medieval Castile from the middle of the twelfth century onwards, especially used also in funerary contexts of royal family members in Las Huelgas, the Cistercian monastery in Burgos that served as burial site of the Castilian kings.²³ Questions regarding the overall architectural design of the Peribleptos Church, as well the donor image's medium (mosaic or painting), its exact location within the church building and its sponsorship and date must remain open.²⁴ To be sure, Clavijo's account is as valuable as other testimonies by foreign visitors to Constantinople, as long as we do not expect them to substitute the fragmented material evidence of Byzantine monuments.²⁵

One consequence of frequent changes in the leadership of imperial monasteries on the one hand, and territorial shifts which affected large areas of formerly Byzantine territories on the other, was the ultimate or intermediate loss of immovable monastic property to various parties.²⁶ The new Latin dominance in formerly

²⁰ On the transmission of architectural knowledge in thirteenth-century Morea, see H. E. Grossmann, "On Memory, Transmission and the Practice of Building in the Crusader Mediterranean," in H. E. Grossmann & A. Walker (eds.), *Mechanisms of Exchange: Transmission in Medieval Art and Architecture of Europe and the Mediterranean, 1000-1500* (Leiden & Boston 2013), 183–219. For wall paintings, see S. Kalopissi-Verti, "Monumental Art in the Lordship of Athens and Thebes under Frankish and Catalan Rule (1212–1388)," in N. Tsougarakis & P. Lock (eds.), *A Companion to Latin Greece* (Leiden & Boston 2015), 369–417.

²¹ One would assume an arcosolium in the narthex comparable to the spatial organisation of the tombs in the narthexes of the Chora Monastery, whereas the 'head of the church' seems to refer to the eastern end of the building; R. Ousterhout, *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul* (Washington D.C. 1987). See also U. Weißbrod, "Hier liegt der Knecht Gottes..." *Gräber in byzantinischen Kirchen und ihr Dekor (11. bis 15. Jahrhundert)* (Wiesbaden 2003); Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 121: "[...] en el cabo de la iglesia, a la mano esquierda, estava una grand sepultura de piedra de jaspe colorado, e allí jazía el dicho emperador Romano."

²² Zumthor, *The Medieval Narrative*; B. Liu, *Re-Orienting Medieval Spanish Travel Narratives*, 21; P. E. Mason, "The Embajada a Tamorlán: Self-Reference and the Question of Authorship," in *Neophilologus* 78 (1994), 79–87, at. 79.

²³ Cat. *Vestiduras Ricas. El monasterio de las Huelgas y su época 1170–1340 (exh. March 16th to June 19th 2005 / Palacio Real de Madrid)* (Madrid 2005).

²⁴ The donor image in question was either located in the north part of a narthex, or in the north bay of the west aisle depending on what Clavijo meant by "entrance of the body of the church" (...a la entrada del cuerpo de la iglesia, Clavijo, *Embajada* [López Estrada], 120).

²⁵ R. Macrides, "Constantinople: The Crusaders' Gaze," in Macrides (ed.), *Travel in the Byzantine World* (Birmingham 2000) 193–212.

²⁶ The new order of the broader landscape as negotiated in the *Partitio terrarum imperii Romanie* was signed by the Crusader elites in October 1204; see F. Van Tricht, *The Latin Renovatio of Byzantium: The Empire of Constantinople (1204–1228)* (Leiden & Boston 2011), 41–53.

Byzantine territories as established in the early stages of the thirteenth century did not only generate a Latin Empire in Constantinople and Byzantine courts in exile for almost sixty years, but also numerous smaller principalities and spheres of influence with often blurred and changing borders. These shifts fostered conflicts, while the Ottoman expansion in the course of the fourteenth century further affected the territorially vague situation.²⁷ The passage in Clavijo's account can be thus seen as a vivid record of the long lasting consequences and problems caused by the ongoing disruptions of established geospatial orders in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Before discussing comparable iconographies, a note on one of the primary functions of the Peribleptos Monastery may be allowed. If we believe Psellos's characterization in the *Chronographia*, Romanos was a mercurial character obsessed with his building project on which he spent far too much money and efforts, boldly competing with Solomon and Justinian.²⁸ According to this biased narrative, the size and elaborate design of the new foundation resulted from miscalculation and indecision in aesthetic matters on the emperor's side.²⁹ More recently, Örgü Dalgıç and Thomas Mathews underlined the importance of the innovative architectural design of the Peribleptos (cf. Fig. 3) as a prototype for various later projects,³⁰ while Paul Magdalino convincingly pointed to the trend to found monasteries by a number of emperors prior to Romanos III and his successors.³¹ Thus, Romanos's ambitious commission of the Peribleptos Monastery fits perfectly within this relatively new tradition. One remembers that the Church of the Holy Apostles, the traditional sepulchral church of the Byzantine emperors hitherto, was utterly overcrowded and could not accommodate further sarcophagi when Romanos ascended the throne. In 1028, Constantine VIII (1025–28), his predecessor, was the last emperor to be buried there.³² The urgent necessity to create a suitable new imperial burial place by 1028 might have contributed to the unprecedented grandeur and speedy completion of the Peribleptos complex.³³

²⁷ Van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio*; Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between Latins and Ottomans*, 18–38; G. Prinzing, *Die Bedeutung Bulgariens und Serbiens in den Jahren 1204–1219 im Zusammenhang mit der Entstehung und Entwicklung der byzantinischen Teilstaaten nach der Einnahme Konstantinopels in Folge des 4. Kreuzzugs* (Munich 1972).

²⁸ Psellos, *Chronographia* (Reinsch), III, 14, 142. According to Skylitzes the “emperor Romanos purchased the estate of Triakontaphyllos and transformed it into a monastery dedicated in the name of Our Sovereign Lady the Mother of God. No expense was spared but the subjects were sorely oppressed as they were obliged to convey the stones and other building materials.” Quoted from Skylitzes, *Synopsis* (tr. Wortley), 362–63; Skylitzes, *Synopsis* (Thurn), 384, 8, 15–19.

²⁹ Psellos, *Chronographia* (Reinsch), III, 14–15, 142–149. See also R. Ousterhout, *Master Builders of Byzantium* (Princeton 1999), 88.

³⁰ Mango, *Peribleptos Revisited*; D. Kuban, *Istanbul: An Urban History* (Istanbul 1996), 151; Dark, *St. Mary Peribleptos*, 656; Dalgıç & Mathews, *Church of Peribleptos*, 424–31.

³¹ P. Magdalino, “Medieval Constantinople,” in *Studies on the History and Topography of Byzantine Constantinople* (Aldershot 2007), no. I, 1–111, at 72.

³² Zoë's marriage to Romanos is commonly understood as a continuation of the Macedonian dynasty, but according to Psellos it was Romanos' intention to establish a new dynasty and era when ascending the throne (unrealistic as it may have been given Zoë's advanced age), Psellos, *Chronographia* (Reinsch), III, 1, 120: οὗτος τοίνυν ὁ Ῥωμανὸς, ὥσπερ ἀρχὴν περιόδου τὴν ἡγεμονίαν οἰηθεὶς, ἐπειδὴ ἐς τὸν πενθερόν Κωνσταντῖνον τὸ βασιλεῖον γένος ἀπετελεύτησεν, ἐκ Βασιλείου τοῦ Μακεδόνος ἡργμένον, εἰς μέλλουσιν ἀπέβλεπε γενεάν. When Romanos died in April 1034 (following a drowning incident in the imperial bath; Zoë's role in this remains obscure), his corpse was transferred to his new foundation for burial, cf. Psellos, *Chronographia* (Reinsch), IV, 5, 172. See also P. Grierson, “The Tombs and Obits of the Byzantine Emperors (337–1042),” in *DOP* 16 (1962), 3–60, 59; N. Asutay-Effenberger & A. Effenberger, *Die Porphyrsarkophage der oströmischen Kaiser. Versuch einer Bestandserfassung, Zeitbestimmung und Zuordnung* (Wiesbaden 2006), 10.

³³ According to Magdalino, the Peribleptos Monastery's unique feature is the lack of charitable institutions otherwise common for newly founded monastic complexes of the tenth to twelfth centuries,

Architectural representations in early Byzantine donation contexts

Since the Peribleptos Church has not survived, the depicted endowments by Romanos remain nameless, the more so as the monastery's *typikon*, which normally would have listed all donated properties, is also lost. However, monastic communities maintained a good record of the various grants of mobile and immobile possessions endowed to their institution, since foundation charters containing such endowments were read aloud at regular intervals to the monastic community.³⁴ Churches and monasteries could only function in the long run if the supply of goods was secured, salaries of clerics and other staff were paid, and buildings were maintained regularly. Right after the Council of Chalcedon in 451, and with more emphasis in 537, canons were issued stipulating that property once endowed to a monastery had to remain irrevocable and untouchable.³⁵ Monasteries greatly benefited from such privileges and soon became wealthy landowners in Byzantium, while at the same time, legal conflicts about property issues emerged more often³⁶ just as forged documents.³⁷

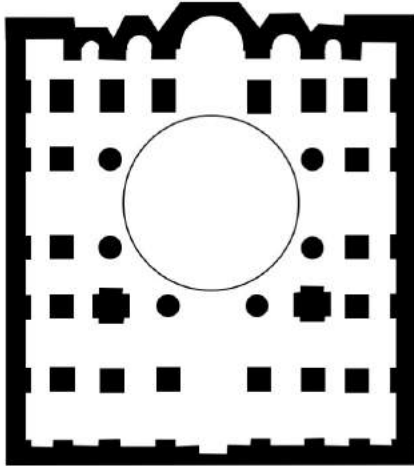


Fig. 3. Ground plan of the Peribleptos church. Olof Heilo after Dalgiç and Mathews, *Church of Peribleptos* p. 431 (Fig. 15).

see P. Magdalino, "The Endowment of the Monastery of Christ Pantokrator," in F. Lauritzen (ed.), *Costantinopoli e Venezia. Le fondazioni bizantine e la Scuola Grande di San Marco* (Venice, forthcoming) 1–13, 4. Yahya of Antioch might have confused imperial monasteries when stating that the Peribleptos Monastery had a hospital and a guest house, see Skylitzes, *Synopsis* (tr. Wortley), 362, n. 49.

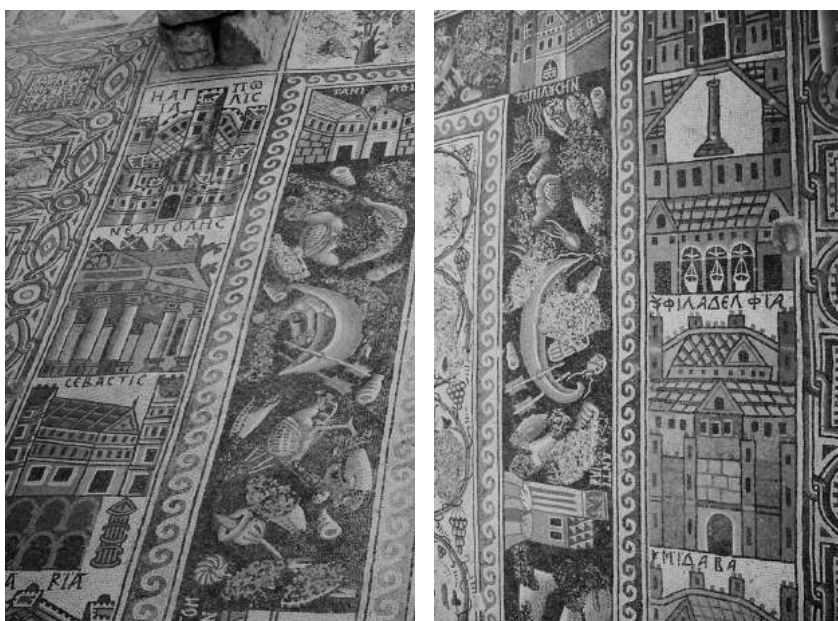
³⁴ It was common practice to list possessions in the *typikon*, amongst other immobile property conferred to the monastery by the patron, see e.g. the eleventh century-rule of Michael Attaleiates for the Constantinopolitan Monastery of Christ Panoiktirmon. See J. Thomas & A. Constantinides-Hero (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents. A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments* (5 vols.) (Washington D.C. 2000), I, xiii, 360 (hereafter: *BMFD*).

³⁵ Thomas, *Private Foundations*, 37, 57; P. Charanis, "The Monastic Properties and the State in the Byzantine Empire," in *DOP* 4 (1948), 51–118, at 65–67; P. Baumann, *Spätantike Stifter im Heiligen Land. Darstellungen und Inschriften auf Bodenmosaiken in Kirchen, Synagogen und Privathäusern* (Wiesbaden 1999), 13–28.

³⁶ From the eleventh century onwards further instability was caused due to new measures such as the *charistike dorea* (ktetorial rights obtained by an individual for obliging oneself to beautify and renovate ruinous monasteries), see E. Papagianni, "Legal Institutions and Practice in Matters of Monastic Property," in A. Laiou (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium* (3 vols.) (Washington D.C. 2002), III, 1059–1069, 1063.

³⁷ F. Dölger & J. Karayannopoulos, *Byzantinische Urkundenlehre. Erster Abschnitt. Die Kaiserurkunden* (Munich 1968), 134–37.

The architectural representations of the Peribleptos composition are unique compared to other Middle Byzantine donor portraits, but we know of an earlier textile example in the capital and several floor mosaics in Jordan that might serve as iconographic comparanda. In his famous *ekphrasis* delivered on the occasion of the re-dedication of Hagia Sophia in 563, Paulos Silentiarios mentions a *peplos* with figurative representations. One side was decorated with Christ flanked by Peter and Paul in the center, while the border consisted of alternating scenes from the Life of Christ and architectural images of churches and hospitals, pious foundations by Justinian and Theodora. The imperial couple, flanking Virgin Mary, and Christ, respectively, was represented on another side of the altar cloth.³⁸ If the *peplos* still existed in the early eleventh century, Romanos—being a former *oikonomos* of Hagia Sophia—would certainly have had access to it, or at least to inventories that might have described the precious item.³⁹



Figs. 4–5. Umm al-Rasas, Jordan. Photos by Björn Andersson, Wikimedia Commons.

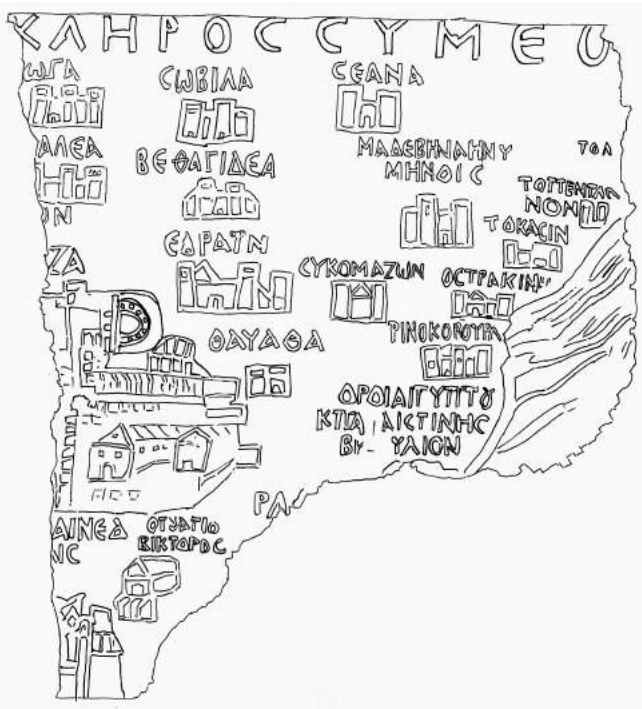
Floor mosaics in churches in Jordan provide further interesting prototypes. Indeed, the thirty estates at the Peribleptos could have been modelled on the architectural portraits of cities inscribed with their names represented on floor mosaics in various churches dating from the sixth to the eighth century.⁴⁰ Examples can be found in the Church of the Acropolis in Ma'in built in 719/20, where Transjordanian cities, represented by “dismembered and recomposed” church building

³⁸ M. L. Fobelli, *Un tempio per Giustiniano. Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli e la Descrizione di Paolo Silenziario. Presentazione di Maria Andaloro Viella* (Rome 2005), 80–85 (755–805) with Italian tr., 158–60. S. Schrenk, “Die topographischen Friese auf den Behangfragmenten mit Danielszene und Petruszene in Berlin,” in *JBAChr* 34 (2002), 72–83, at 80–81; The passage by Paulos Silentiarios is ambiguous, it seems nevertheless that he talks about one altar cloth consisting of five surfaces of which several bore figural decoration, see P. Speck, “Die Εὑδότης. Literarische Quellen zur Bekleidung des Altars in der byzantinischen Kirche,” in *JÖB* 15 (1966), 323–75, at 331–33.

³⁹ See *PmbZ*, no. 26835, 602.

⁴⁰ M. Piccirillo, *The Mosaics of Jordan* (Amman 1993), 26–37, with further color plates.

elements such as “cupolas, facades, sloping or vaulted roofs, apses, and areas annexed to churches” are set in alternation with trees in a framing bordure, and the Church of St. Stephen in Umm al-Rasas (Kastron Mefaa) preserves a border occupied by framed architectural portraits of cities in an outer zone and architectural portraits combined with Nilotic scenes in an inner zone (Figs. 4–5).⁴¹



Figs. 6–7. The Madaba mosaic, Jordan, with Jerusalem (photo above by Olof Heilo) and nearby sites (detail left, drawing by Kaspar Witlake after Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 90).

⁴¹ Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 35.

Altogether, the floor mosaics in Jordan bear a wide range of architectural representations—some schematized, others with characteristic urban features, and almost all of them accompanied by toponyms allowing immediate identification.⁴² Some are embedded in landscapes such as the singular Madaba Map, which is a special case (Figs. 6–7),⁴³ others remain in a framing border zone surrounding the main motif in the center. The specific meaning of the city vignettes in churches erected under Muslim rule, remains obscure,⁴⁴ yet for the purpose of imagining the Peribleptos donor image within genuine Byzantine iconographic traditions, it suffices to point to their existence.⁴⁵ While an exact reconstruction of the Peribleptos composition eludes us, we can assume that the 30 estates were rendered as stylized, indistinctive city models.⁴⁶

One could also think of painted foundation charters as part of donor compositions in important Serbian monasteries like Studenica, Žiça or Gračanica, dating from the twelfth to the early fourteenth centuries.⁴⁷ But these examples, comparable as they might appear, do not employ architectural representations other than the conventional church model in the hands of the donor. As noted by Cyril Mango, an interesting parallel, though again without any architectural representations, can be found in Late Byzantine Mistras, in the *katholikon* of the

⁴² See N. Duval, “Essai sur la signification des vignettes topographiques,” in M. Piccirillo & E. Alliata (eds.), *The Madaba Map Centenary 1897–1997. Travelling through the Byzantine Umayyad Period, Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Amman, 7–9 April 1997* (Jerusalem 1999), 134–46; N. Duval, “Représentations d’églises sur mosaïques,” in *Revue du Louvre* 22 (1972), 441–48; Baumann, *Spätantike Stifter*, 153–54, stresses the topic character of the architectural representations.

⁴³ On the Madaba Map, see M. Piccirillo & E. Alliata, *Madaba Map Centenary*; A. Tishby (ed.), *Holy Land in Maps* (Jerusalem 2001), 66–69. A map-like rendition would make sense if the estates were all in a contiguous area, which was sometimes the case: The estates Attaleiates granted to his foundation in Constantinople were all located in Thrace; the immobile properties of Kosmosoteira were all concentrated in the area of the Maritza delta, see K. Smyrlis, “The Management of Monastic Estates: The Evidence of the Typika,” in *DOP* 56 (2003), 245–61, esp. 247, n. 6.

⁴⁴ The framing city vignettes in churches of Jordan have been interpreted as representations of networking (monophysite) cities or political city alliances, see Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan*, 28; P. Baumann, *Spätantike Stifter*, 169, interprets the city representations in the Church of St. Stephen as a visualization of an “Idealzustand der Vergangenheit.”

⁴⁵ Most of the surviving *typika* of Middle Byzantine monasteries imply that monastic property was often scattered and not in a coherent region. For the possessions of the Pantokrator Monastery, founded in 1136, see Magdalino, *Endowment*. See also K. Smyrlis, *La Fortune des grands monastères byzantins (fin du Xe-milieu du XIVe siècle)* (Paris 2006), 99–104, 127–132. *Typika* of the Lips Monastery and other monasteries in the Byzantine capital mention endowments distributed all over Thrace, Macedonia, Asia Minor and Constantinople, see *BMFD*, III, 1254–1286. This is also the case for the Monastery of the Mother of God Petritzonissa in Backovo, founded by Gregorios Pakourianos in 1083. According to the *typikon*, the estates were located in Philippoupolis (Plovdiv), but also as distant as in the theme Armeniakon, see *BMFD*, II, 555.

⁴⁶ J. Deckers, “Tradition und Adaption. Bemerkungen zur Darstellung der christlichen Stadt,” in *Römische Mitteilungen* 95 (1998), 303–82; I. Ehrensperger-Katz, “Les représentations de villes fortifiées dans l’art paléochrétien et leurs derives byzantines,” in *Cahiers Archéologiques* 19 (1969), 1–27. See also E. Neubauer, “Stadtbild und Stadtkonzeption in der byzantinischen Kunst,” in Matschke (ed.), *Die byzantinische Stadt*, 115–124; H. G. Saradi, “Space in Byzantine Thought,” in S. Curcic and E. Hadjityrphos, *Architecture as Icon* (Princeton 2010), 73–111.

⁴⁷ The foundation charter of Studenica was written (or rather painted) on the wall of the church, cf. Sv. Sava, *Sabrana dela* (ed. T. Jovanović) (Belgrade 1998), 51–52. In Žiça, built around 1220, the content of two documents was written on the walls of the portico, see B. Živković, *Žiça crteži fresaka* (Belgrade 1985), 38–41; D. Sindik, *Jedna ili dve žičke povelje?* Istorijski časopis knj. XIV–XV (Belgrade 1963–65), 309–15. For Gračanica completed in 1321, see B. Živković, *Gračanička povelja* (Belgrade 1992); B. Todić, *Gračanica* (Belgrade 1988), fig. 5. I thank Čedomila Marinković for the bibliographic references. See also Kalopissi-Verti, “Ἐγγαφα σε ἐπιγραφές ναῶν.”

wealthiest monastery in the Morea, the Brontochion.⁴⁸ Abbot Pachomios felt compelled to emphasize the possessions endowed to the monastery by Andronikos II between 1312 and 1320, by literally painting them onto the walls of the southern side room of the narthex. This endowment consisting of domains, villages, dependent churches, vineyards, olive groves and mills was confirmed by three chrysobulls, signed by Andronikos II, and a fourth one issued in November 1318 by Michael IX, who was then co-emperor.⁴⁹

It is difficult to assess what precisely prompted Clavijo to differentiate between *ciudades* and *castillos*. Are these terms used because two different types of architectural representations were discernible at the Peribleptos? Do they reflect terms used by the Greek monks or do they apply to fiscal terminology in medieval Castile?⁵⁰ The reference to documents written on *cuero* (translated by Le Strange as steel,⁵¹ and more convincingly as leather [parchment] by Mango⁵²) “sealed with seals in lead and wax” that allegedly approved the privileges received by the monastery “over the aforesaid cities and castles” is also problematic, as one would traditionally expect chrysobulls.⁵³ Furthermore, Clavijo does not specify who approved the original endowments. Is the mention of wax and lead seals a further reference to the impoverished state of Byzantium or are we possibly dealing with documents issued by other parties, for example the Patriarch? The usage of lead seals would imply the latter.⁵⁴ Whether Byzantine privileges and sealing customs concerning the approval of monastic property were comparable to practices in Castile, whether Clavijo’s readership could understand such seemingly random details, and how reliable Clavijo’s observations actually are, remain open questions. Similar practices in both realms, however, would reinforce the notion of a shared “language of power” as postulated by Robert Ousterhout for Western, Byzantine, and Muslim elites in regards to medieval heraldry.⁵⁵

Visual strategies of claiming monastic property by Benedictines and Cistercians

It is striking that the closest parallels to specific details of the Peribleptos image can be found in Europe, where Benedictines and Cistercians often recorded their donation history also visually, in addition to common textual records such as

⁴⁸ Smyrlis, *Fortune*, 38.

⁴⁹ Mango, *Peribleptos Revisited*, 475. See also Kalopissi-Verti, “Εργαφα σε επιγραφές ναών,” 80; M. Chatzidakis, *Mystras: The Medieval City and the Castle. A Complete Guide to the Churches, Palaces and the Castle* (Athens 1999), 47–48.

⁵⁰ P. Magdalino, *Endowment*, 7; see also J. Irmscher, “Κάστρον,” in Matschke (ed.), *Die byzantinische Stadt*, 93–98.

⁵¹ Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 121; Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 40.

⁵² Mango, *Sources and Documents*, 217.

⁵³ Quoted from Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 40. I thank Andreas Müller for kindly sharing information.

⁵⁴ F. Dölger, *Aus den Schatzkammern des Heiligen Berges. 115 Urkunden und 50 Urkundensiegel aus 10 Jahrhunderten. Textband* (Munich 1948), 218, 316–19 (Goldsiegel) (Kaisersiegel), 319–22 (Bleisiegel).

⁵⁵ R. Ousterhout, “Byzantium between East and West and the Origins of Heraldry,” in C. Hourihane (ed.), *Byzantine Art: Recent Studies in Honor of Lois Drewer* (Tempe 2009), 153–70. See also E. R. Hoffman, “Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century,” in *Art History* 24/1 (2001), 17–50.

charters.⁵⁶ In some cases, claims on donated estates under dispute were underlined by exactly this kind of iconography: architectural models accompanied by their names as symbols of specific estates (villages, fortified towns) combined with images of the donors and the receiving institution.

An interesting example is San Clemente a Cesauria, a Benedictine abbey in the province of Pescara founded in the second half of the ninth century. A bronze door, commissioned around 1200 under Abbot Johel presents 36 squares with high relief depictions of stylized fortresses (Fig. 8). The uniform fortresses on the door wings, only individualized by accompanying Latin inscriptions, represent estates donated of the monastery. Their presence on the door can be understood as a sophisticated record of a long and complex endowment history. Markus Späth concluded that the depicted fortresses did not represent actual claims raised by San Clemente. Instead, they collectively serve as a commemorative device rather than a legally motivated concept of recording the monastery's immovable possessions. The iconic representation of privileges of the monastery was thus an ostentatious display of properties (elsewhere listed in a cartulary which would also mention potential disputes and successful reclaims) and power—to the community and also to the outside world.⁵⁷



Fig. 8. Bronze door, detail. San Clemente a Cesauria, Province of Pescara, twelfth Century. Photo by Marcus Späth, from M. Späth, *San Clemente a Cesauria*, 338, reproduced with permission from the author.

Further Benedictine examples from 1200 onwards appear in and around Trier.⁵⁸ As elaborately discussed by Christine Sauer, the three so called *libri aurei* from

⁵⁶ M. Späth, *Verflechtung von Erinnerung. Bildproduktion und Geschichtsschreibung im Kloster San Clemente a Casauria während des 12. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin 2007), 231–58, esp. 241.

⁵⁷ Späth, *San Clemente a Cesauria*, 253–59.

⁵⁸ C. Sauer, *Fundatio und Memoria. Stifter und Klostergründer im Bild 1100–1350* (Göttingen 1993), 214–326.

Echternach, Prüm, and St. Maximin in Trier are preciously bound manuscripts that combine commemorative aspects of the founders and later benefactors with the history of the foundations and their privileges and properties. This can be stated in terms of the content of the books and also in terms of the iconographic program of the covers.⁵⁹ Furthermore, a staurotheke from the Benedictine Abbey Sankt Matthias and a triptych-staurotheke from the likewise Benedictine Abbey of Mettlach bear interesting pictorial solutions for the act of commemorating individual donations of immobile property (figs. 9–10).

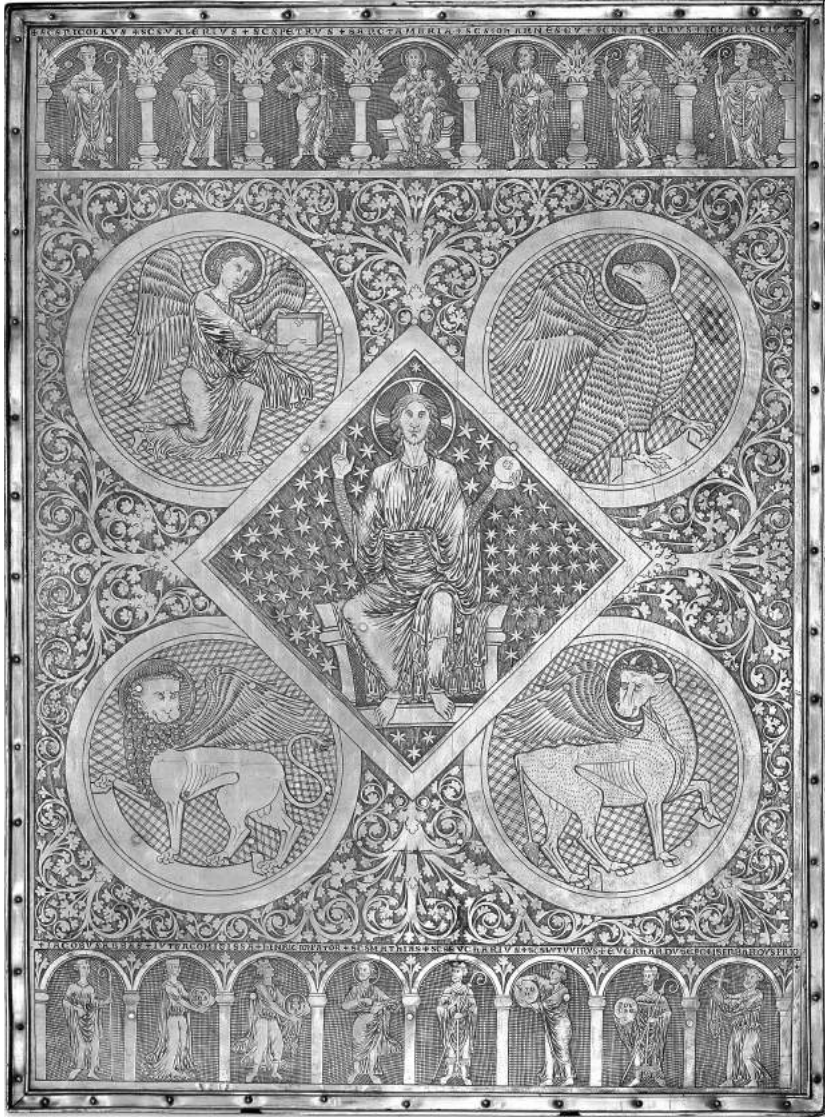


Fig. 9. Backside of the St. Matthias Staurotheke displaying founders with their endowments, Trier, ca. 1220. © Abtei Sankt Matthias Trier. Photo by Rita Heyen.

⁵⁹ "Ein solcher Codex sollte 'als Hauptbuch für Streitfälle in höchster Instanz' jederzeit zur Verfügung stehen und als *exemplar evidens* eingesetzt werden können." Quoted from Sauer, *Fundatio et Memoria*, 298.

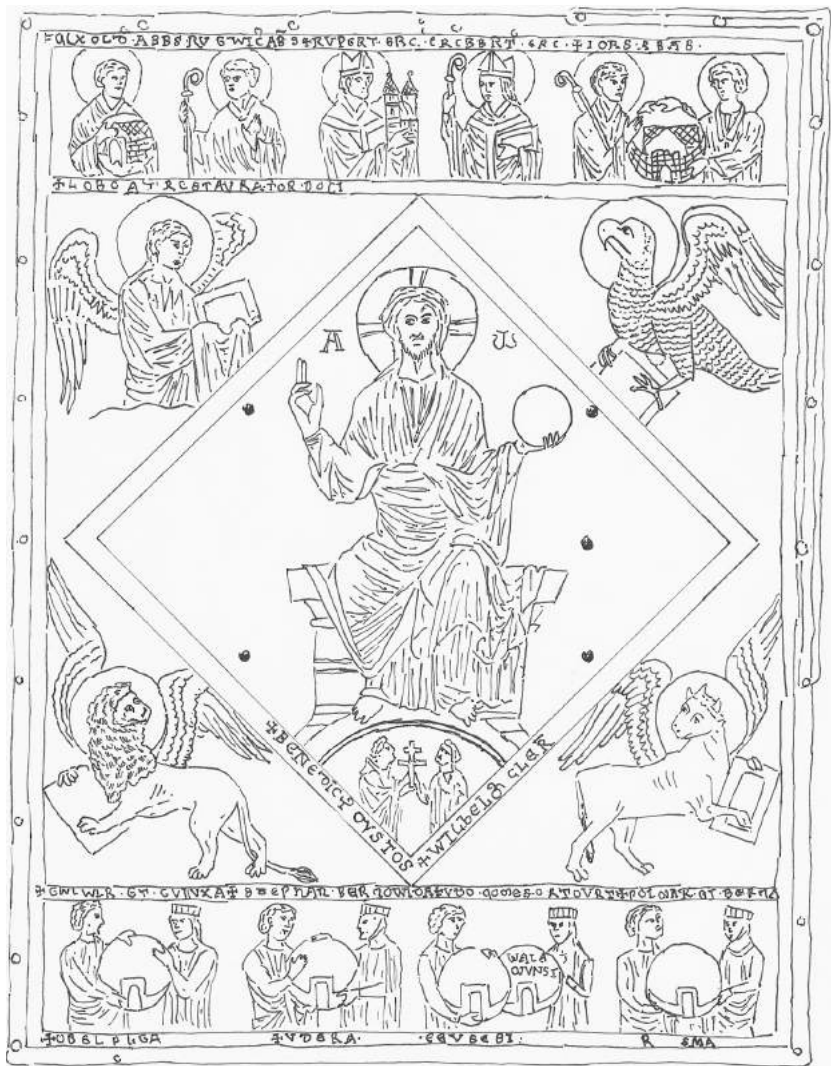
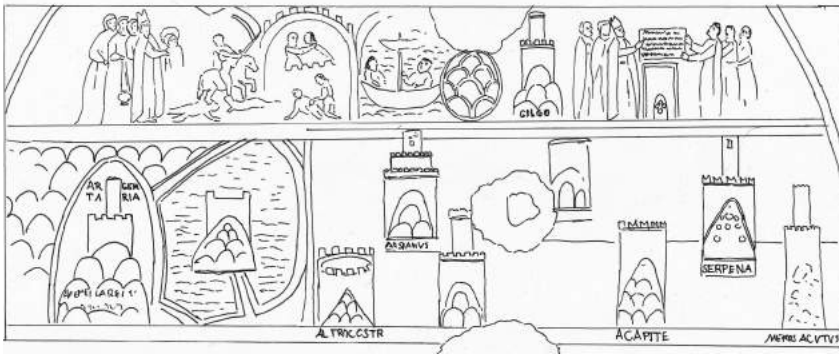


Fig. 10. Backside of the Mettlach Staurotheke displaying founders with their endowments, Trier, ca. 1220. Drawing by Kaspar Witlake after Sauer, *Fundatio et Memoria*, fig. 68.

The huge staurotheke from Sankt Matthias measuring 73 x 56 cm was executed by a local goldsmith's workshop sometime in the first half of the thirteenth century to house a fragment of the True Cross which had been donated to the monastery by Heinrich of Ulmen, a prolific participant in the Fourth Crusade, best known as the carrier of the famous tenth century Limburg Staurotheke, now in the Limburg Cathedral.⁶⁰ The general stylistic concept of the Mettlach Staurotheke is closely connected to the Limburg Staurotheke, which was donated to Stuben in 1208, and also served as a prototype for the later reliquary in St. Matthias. For our purpose, interesting details can be found on the rear side of the reliquaries. While the center is occupied by Christ enthroned and flanked by the four symbols of the Evangelists set in medallions, the composition is framed in both cases by two

⁶⁰ On Heinrich of Ulmen, see H. A. Klein, *Byzanz, der Westen und das 'wahre' Kreuz. Die Geschichte einer Reliquie und ihrer künstlerischen Fassung in Byzanz und im Abendland* (Wiesbaden 2004).

horizontal stripes with donors holding endowments in the form of medallions that bear either the name of a village or an abbreviated representation of it.⁶¹ The donation history of the two institutions was commemorated by adding individual benefactors of the past to newly-made objects of considerable value for the monastic community and its status. In both cases the depicted donors, high-ranking figures of the past closely associated with Mettlach and St. Matthias proudly hold their endowments.⁶²



Figs. 11, 12. The fresco decoration of the southwest lunette of the gate house – the so-called *Arco di Carlo Magno* – of the Monastery of Tre Fontane, Rome, 12th century. Current state (photo by the author) and as depicted by A. Eclissi in: *Barb. lat. 4402, fol. 37r, Biblioteca Vaticana Apostolica, Rome* (drawing by Kaspar Witlake after Lloyd, Santi Vincenzo e Anastasio, 306).

By contrast, the Monastery of Santi Vincenzo e Anastasio (Tre Fontane) in Rome, a foundation of Cilician monks, which became a Cistercian institution in 1140, is a good example of employing architectural ideograms in various media in the context of disputed property claims.⁶³ When the abbey's claim to twelve fortified towns in Tuscany, allegedly donated to the monastery by Charlemagne in 807 according to a (most likely forged) twelfth-century document, aroused protest by the neighboring community of San Paolo fuori le Mura, various measures were

⁶¹ Klein, *Das „wahre“ Kreuz*, 254–61. Sauer, *Fundatio und Memoria*, 304: “[...] tragen Scheiben vor sich her, die durch eingezeichnete Tore und durch eine Inschrift als stellvertretende Bildformel für Grundbesitzübertragungen ausgewiesen werden.”

⁶² Sauer, *Fundatio und Memoria*, 305, 311.

⁶³ On the history of *Tre Fontane* see E. Parlato & S. Romano, *Romanik in Rom und Latium* (Würzburg 1995), 177–80; On the so-called Arch of Charlemagne, see N. Bernacchio, *L'Abbazia delle Tre Fontane* (Rome 2007), 31–36; J. B. Lloyd, “The medieval murals in the Cistercian abbey of Santi Vincenzo e Anastasio ad Aquas Salvas at Tre Fontane, Rome, in their architectural settings,” in *Papers of the British School in Rome* 65 (1997), 289–317.

undertaken to underline these claims by visual means. The towns, represented as twelve fortresses, were incised on a now lost twelfth-century silver reliquary of St. Anastasios the Persian of which we know from a seventeenth-century record.⁶⁴ The immovable property was also depicted in the portico known as *Arco di Carlo Magno*. These paintings in the portico of Santi Vincenzo e Anastasio, dating from the first third of the thirteenth century, are still visible today despite some damage; a series of watercolors by Antonio Eclissi made in the 1630s elucidate some of the lost details (Figs. 11–12).⁶⁵ Here too, the endowment was recorded as architectural representations combining crenelated towers with hills and ponds representing the estates. Next to the Siege of Ansedonia-scene there was a donation scene with Pope Leo III and Charlemagne on one side and the monks of Tre Fontane on the other jointly holding a plaque which lists the conquered Maremma towns.

Spanish eyes? Architectural imagery in Castile

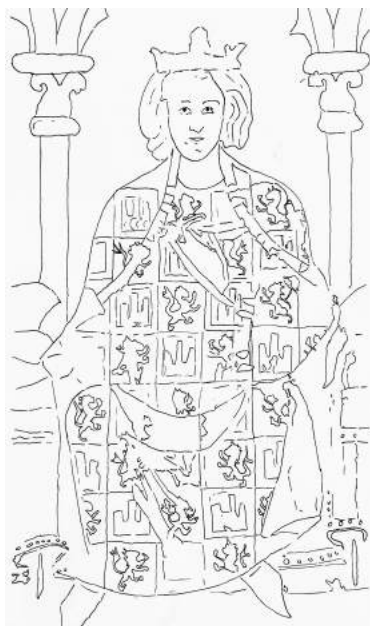


Fig. 13. Alfonso X, from the Book of Games. Drawing by Kaspar Witlake after Cat. Vestiduras Richas 145.

It is intriguing to understand Clavijo's interest in architecture and, above all, his sensitivity to architectural imagery in the framework of a presumed overall familiarity with abbreviated architectural representations due to the abundant use of the *castillo* within his home culture.⁶⁶ Generally, as recently discussed by Nikos Kontogiannis in terms of coinage, the triple-towered castle had become a widely used ideogram during the medieval period in Western Europe, and so it likely impacted corresponding iconographies of Late Byzantine coinage.⁶⁷ For the visual self-perception and identity of medieval Castile, the eponymous castle was especially fundamental. In various media the kingdom of Castile employed an emblematic representation of a fortress as an intrinsic element of its royal imagery. The stylized architectural motif consisting of a square crenelated substructure pierced by an arched gate in the center with two flanking window openings and a second level with three rising towers was virtually omnipresent.

Earliest textile examples can be linked to Alfonso VIII (1158–1214), founder of the Castilian dynasty.⁶⁸ From approximately 1217 onwards the Casti-

⁶⁴ C. Viricillo-Franklin, *The Latin Dossier of Anastasius the Persian. Hagiographic Translations and Transformations* (Toronto 2004), 22.

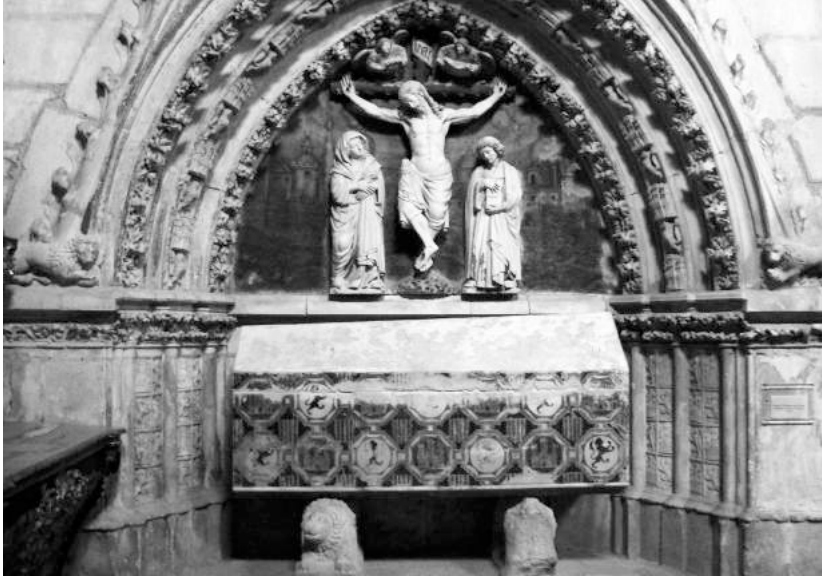
⁶⁵ Lloyd, *Santi Vincenzo e Anastasio*, 302–8.

⁶⁶ See Stone's introduction, in Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), xiv.

⁶⁷ Kontogiannis, *Translatio imagines*.

⁶⁸ K. Böse, "Cultures Re-Shaped: Textiles from the Castilian Royal Tombs in Santa María del las Huelgas in Burgos," in K. Dimitrova & M. Goehring (eds.), *Dressing the Part: Textiles as Propaganda in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout 2014), 95–105. Kontogiannis, *Translatio imagines*, 734 (castle motif on Castilian coinage from the reign of Alfonso VIII).

lian coat of arms consisted of a stylized fortress and now, in addition, a lion rampant—representing the kingdom of León, which was unified with Castile in the same year. The royal garments of the Castilian rulers henceforward bore the coat of arms with both emblems as can be seen in a widely-known representation of the enthroned Alfonso X in the *Book of Games* dating to 1283 (Fig. 13).⁶⁹



Figs. 14–15. The sarcophaguses of Don Fernando de la Cerda and Don Alfonso de la Cerda, Monasterio de las Huelgas, Burgos. Photo by Flickr user ElCaminodeSantiago092006, Wikimedia commons, licensed under the terms of cc-by-sa-2.0.

⁶⁹ Böse, *Cultures Re-Shaped*, 9; see also Cat. *Vestiduras Ricas* no. 3, 144–145. The *castillo* also appeared on tombs of the members of the royal dynasty in Las Huelgas and was also used as ornament of figurative wooden sculptures, see Cat. *Vestiduras Ricas*, 30, fig. 10; 63, fig. 24; 66, fig. 27 (Fernando de la Cerda).

More importantly in our context, the *castillo* also appears on royal sarcophagi in the famous Cistercian nunnery Santa María la Real de Las Huelgas in Burgos, the burial site of the Castilian royalty (Figs. 14–15). Clavijo must have expected a general familiarity among his readership with royal endowments and the problem of donated estates under dispute, in part due to property issues related to the Reconquista in the Iberian Peninsula. The donation of property to churches and monasteries for the purpose of posthumous commemoration was a widespread habit among Castilian elites from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. For the royal family it was one of the first noble duties to donate property to religious foundations or to fund one's own monastery.⁷⁰ Furthermore, crusading missions and newly founded orders of knights, such as the Santiago Order, enjoyed generous royal support; Castilian monarchs gladly employed orders of knights, such as the armed forces in the Reconquista. A miniature in a thirteenth-century cartulary of the Order of Santiago displays Alfonso VIII and his wife Eleonor as donors: Uclés, a successfully reconquered fortified town that was given to the newly founded order in 1174, is represented as a fortress with three towers flanked by the master of the Santiago Order and a priest (Fig. 16). The legally binding aspect of the assignment of property is represented most elaborately by the laces of a royal seal as connecting link between the two parties.⁷¹



Fig. 16. Alfonso VIII and Queen Eleonor transferring ownership of Uclés to the Master of the Santiago Order, fol. 1. Drawing by Kaspar Witlake after Wikimedia Commons.

These iconographic comparisons invite bifold observations. A great deal of abbreviated architectural representations existed in the Byzantine realm, particularly in churches and therefore in connection with pious donations.⁷² One could consequently argue that the *Peribleptos* iconography was part of a genuinely Byzantine visual culture that made ample use of architectural representations for

⁷⁰ See ch. "Heavenly Concerns: Charity and Salvation," in F. Ruiz, *From Heaven to Earth. The Reordering of Castilian Society, 1150–1350* (Princeton 2004), 110–32.

⁷¹ A. Forey, "Die Ritterorden 1120 bis 1312," in J. Riley-Smith (ed.), *Illustrierte Geschichte der Kreuzzüge* (Frankfurt am Main 1999), 217–50, here 217–18.

⁷² See S. Ćurčić and E. Hadjityrphonos, *Architecture as Icon*.

differently accentuated purposes. Embedded within a pristine Byzantine tradition, the Peribleptos composition known only through Clavijo's observation could then very well be a donor image from the first third of the eleventh century employing city and fortress representations as symbols of endowments—the Early Byzantine examples discussed above provide a variety of iconographic models. Given the immense losses of Byzantine monuments, an accordingly lacunar body of iconographic evidence should not come as a surprise.⁷³ If the donor image would have been commissioned after 1261—for example by Michael VIII who immediately after re-conquering the capital started to restore selected monuments, among them the Peribleptos Monastery⁷⁴—one would still speak of, and treat the image as a Byzantine composition. Yet, these reductive classifications appear inadequate given the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional landscape of Constantinople and formerly Byzantine territories that were heavily trodden by Western groups who brought their own traditions and concepts, as well as a distinct visual vocabulary. Monks and laymen of different Latin religious orders were active in Constantinople before, during, and after the Latin Empire, though the range and impact of their activities, and especially their role as commissioners of art and architecture remain obscure due to patchy evidence. To the fragmented St. Francis cycle discovered in the late 1960s in the Monastery of the Theotokos Kyriotissa (Kalenderhane Camii)⁷⁵ one can now add more recently found frescoes with Latin inscriptions in the former Dominican convent (Arap Camii), also executed sometime during the Latin Empire.⁷⁶ Comparable original Benedictine works from San Giorgio Maggiore, are not known hitherto, but we do know that the Benedictines were in charge of St. Mary Peribleptos and other monasteries in Constantinople, as a consequence of Latin rule (cf. Fig. 17).⁷⁷ According to Tsougarakis, the Benedictines of San Giorgio Maggiore benefited from the increasingly dominant role of the Venetians in the East since the twelfth century. Less interested in the evangelical mission than the Mendicants, one of their main aims was to administer monastic estates profitably. Inside and outside of Constantinople they managed to increase “their property through a series of donations.”⁷⁸ The circumstances are not clear, but at a certain point they also acquired the Peribleptos Monastery, presumably from the Latin emperors of Constantinople.⁷⁹ It is impossible to state how long this specific

⁷³ Dalgıç & Mathews, *Church of Peribleptos*, 431.

⁷⁴ A. M. Talbot, “The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII,” in *DOP* 47 (1993), 243–61. See also V. Kidonopoulos, *Bauten in Konstantinopel 1204–1328* (Wiesbaden 1994), 92–93. Andronikos II could also be taken into consideration as a potential commissioner, see Stichel, *Vegessene Kaiserportraits*, 82–83; Guidobaldi, *Perduta Decorazione*, 179.

⁷⁵ C. L. Striker & Y. D. Kuban (eds.), *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Buildings, their History, Architecture, and Decoration. Final Reports on the Archaeological Exploration and Restauration at Kalenderhane Camii 1966–1978* (Mainz 1997), 128–42, figs. 70–87.

⁷⁶ S. Westphalen, “Die Dominikanerkirche der Genuesen von Pera (Arap Camii). Griechische Maler – Lateinische Auftraggeber,” in U. Wulff-Rheidt & F. Pirson (eds.), *Austausch und Inspiration. Kulturkontakt als Impuls architektonischer Innovation*, (Mainz 2008), 276–91; H. Çetinkaya, “Arap Camii in Istanbul: Its Architecture and Frescoes,” in *Anatolia Antiqua* 18 (2010), 169–188.

⁷⁷ On the activities of the Venetian monks in the Greek-Latin east, see M. Koumanoudi, *Οι Βενεδικτινοί στην Ελληνολατινική Ανατολή. Η περίπτωση της μονής του Αγίου Γεωργίου Μείζονος Βενετίας (11ος-15ος αι.)* (Athens & Venice 2011).

⁷⁸ Tsougarakis, *Latin Religious Orders*, 81–85.

⁷⁹ Koumanoudi deduces from information about the translation of the relics of St. Paul the Theban from Constantinople to Venice that the monastery came under Benedictine rule sometime between 1206 and 1240, Koumanoudi, *Βενεδικτινοί*, 134, 268. Tsougarakis, *Latin Religious Orders*, 81–85; C. Gasparis, “Land and Landowners in the Greek Territories under Latin Dominion, 13th–14th Centuries,” in Tsougarakis & Lock (eds.), *Latin Greece*, 73–113, 74: “The fate of monastic property

Latin monastic group was holding this particular foundation and what its main intentions were,⁸⁰ but “the Benedictines of San Giorgio seem to have seen their possessions in the East as assets, to be exchanged with more valuable or useful ones, rather than as integral parts of their spiritual mission.”⁸¹ Did the Benedictines of San Giorgio possibly alienate properties of the Peribleptos, maybe for a third party, such as the Venetians or the Latin emperors? Or were they in charge of either claiming lands without any legal basis, or re-claiming already lost or disputed properties? Is it conceivable in this context that they commissioned an ‘original donor image’ in retrospect—a traditional Byzantine donor composition enriched by a ‘Western’ detail of thirty architectural icons representing the donated estates? It is generally hard to imagine artistic commissions in view of a financially troubled Latin Empire (1204–61); with more ease one would agree with Kalopissi-Verti and presume a Late Byzantine commission.

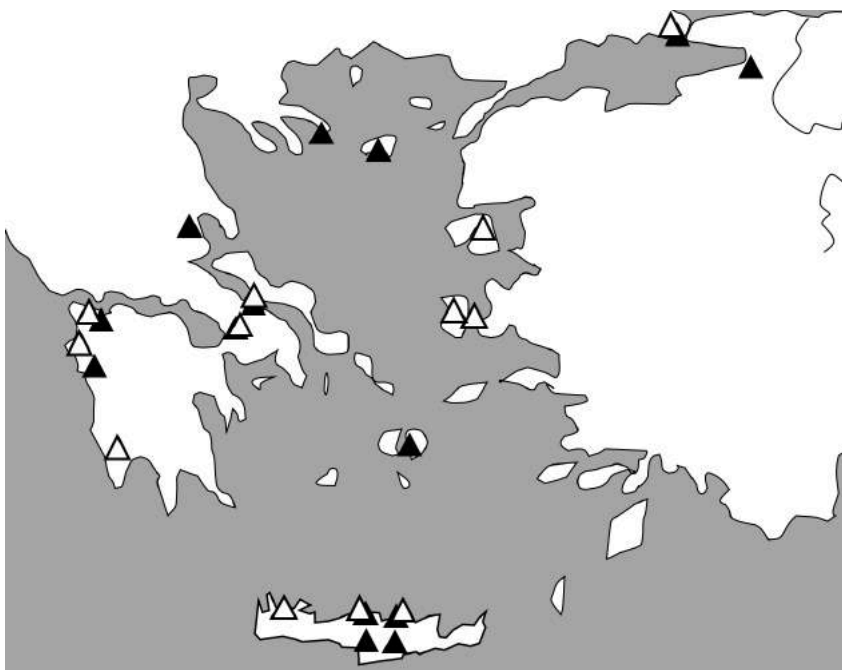


Fig. 17. Benedictine and Cluniac houses (black triangles), Dominican convents (white triangles) within the Latin Empire. Map by Olof Heilo after Mike Shand (*Tsougarakis, Latin Religious Orders*, 79, 168).

Constantinople and Pera in Clavijo's report

If we finally take a closer look at the pages of the *Embajada* dedicated to Constantinople and Pera, some aspects seem especially remarkable. Clavijo and his companions had to stay five entire months on the Bosphorus—from 24 October

was similar, though here the status formerly enjoyed by the monasteries was crucial in deciding who would now control them: imperial monasteries came under the control of the state, patriarchal ones came under the control of the Latin Patriarch of Constantinople [...].”

⁸⁰ According to Venetian traditions, relics of St. Paul of Thebes were sent from the Peribleptos to Venice in 1240, see Tsougarakis, *Latin Religious Orders*, 82; Comte P. Riant, *Exuviae Sacrae Constantinopolitanae. Préface de Jannic Durand* (2 vols.) (Paris 2004), II, 263.

⁸¹ Tsougarakis, *Latin Religious Orders*, 85.

1403 to 20 March 1404.⁸² Yet, the description of Constantinople is organized like traditional pilgrim accounts, which list Constantinople's mundane and spiritual must-see monuments that could be visited within a couple of days. In fact, Clavijo and his party spent only their first week on the Golden Horn in this manner.⁸³ Clavijo's report differs from earlier and contemporary pilgrim accounts by a certain degree of sobriety and accuracy explained by circulating Humanist ideas to which Clavijo was open.⁸⁴ Furthermore, Clavijo's much-appreciated distance, was the result of a professional attitude befitting an ambassador according to Michael Angold.⁸⁵ The first part of the *Embajada* is indeed full of details which reveal the author's access to actual geo-political, strategic information by using Genoese ships and relying on a well-working network of various stakeholders in the Aegean islands, and finally in Constantinople and Pera. Many seemingly *en passant* references in his account can be understood as rooted in knowledge available only through intensive contacts with various groups in the Eastern Mediterranean. As a whole, the references fit well with the overall scope of Clavijo's account: to mobilize against the Muslim Turks who are described as a potential threat to Christians based in the East, and to invoke empathy and identification with the future of Constantinople. As he travels onwards from Rhodes, Clavijo's account will be punctuated by statements about territories now in Turkish hands—thus danger zones to be avoided by Christian ships—and references to Turkish attacks of various kinds.⁸⁶ Later on, populated Turkish areas are contrasted with depopulated Greek areas; references to destroyed churches are frequent.⁸⁷ And references to high-ranking military leaders in their struggle against Turkish raids are warning examples for the untrustworthiness of the Turks.⁸⁸ Accordingly, a description of the sixth-century equestrian statue of Justinian standing by Hagia Sophia serves to recall the glorious days of the Byzantines, when the emperor and founder of the Great Church fought the 'Turks' of the past.⁸⁹ The Byzantine capital at the edge of Europe—understood as a Christian stronghold under attack that enjoys a respite thanks to Timur's recent victory over *el Turco* (Beyazit)—is now, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, more than ever viewed as belonging to the Western hemisphere: due to the Latin appropriation and reorganisation of the broader region in the context of the Fourth Crusade, and the reinforcement of Latin presence and power along with the Byzantine re-conquest of Constantinople in 1261 which enabled Genoese, but also Venetian, Catalan, and other Western groups to rise thanks to favourable trade privileges.

⁸² See above, n. 8.

⁸³ "[...] los dichos embajadores enviaron dezir al Emperador en como ellos avían en voluntad de ver e mirar aquella ciudat; otrosí de ver las sus reliquias e iglesias que en ella avía; e que le pedían por merced que ge lo mandase mostrar." Quoted from Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 117; Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 37–38. Manuel II provided horses and sent his Genoese relative, Ilario Doria, and further imperial household members to accompany the Castilians on their sightseeing tour. Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 114–117.

⁸⁴ Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), xiv (Introduction).

⁸⁵ Angold, *Decline of Byzantium*, 220–21.

⁸⁶ Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 101, 102, 103, 113; Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 22, 23, 24, 36. See also Pryor, *Geography*, 165–73.

⁸⁷ Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 150–51; Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 69–70.

⁸⁸ Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 107–8, 149; Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 28–29, 68. The incorporation of such kind of news —maltreatment of Christians, depopulation due to Turkish raids—is also discernible in Cristoforo Buondelmonti's *Liber insularum Archipelagi*, see M. Balard, "Buondelmonti and the Holy War," in R. Gertwagen & E. Jeffreys (eds.), *Shipping, Trade and Crusade in the Medieval Mediterranean: Studies in Honour of John Pryor* (Farnham 2012), 278–84 (eBook).

⁸⁹ Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 129; Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 47.

Aware of the debates about the *errores Graecorum* to which Clavijo refers, he nevertheless explicitly stresses that the Greeks are a very pious people providing information about their liturgy, the various fasting periods and further details of Orthodox belief and practice.⁹⁰ Other instances show his overall sympathy with the Orthodox Greeks. Clavijo's perspective clearly stresses similarities rather than differences with the Byzantines, while it is unambiguous in the description of the Turks who are consistently unreliable and vicious. In this, Clavijo's account differs from other Western reports that sometimes have a disparaging undertone when it comes to the contemporary Byzantines and their "ill-fated city" (Buondelmonti) or rank Byzantines behind Turks (Bertrandon de la Broquière).⁹¹

Further details in Clavijo's account can be read as indirect pleas for uniting the two Christian Churches. The description of the precious Passion relics in the Monastery of St. John of Petra culminates in joint veneration by Clavijo and his companions together with Byzantines who rushed to the shrine when they learned about the relic display on the occasion of the embassy's visit.⁹² The sovereign of the Byzantines is described as a pious man who was just returning from Mass when the first meeting with the Castilians was due, and significantly as the father of three little children, in the manner of other Christian rulers.⁹³ Manuel II was a well-known figure at various European courts, where he tried to promote a joint initiative against the Ottomans (1399–1402).⁹⁴ He is furthermore described as procurator of the Passion Relics in Constantinople.⁹⁵ Clavijo's mentioning of the missing finger of the hand relic of St. Anne in the Monastery of St. Francis in Pera—allegedly cut off by Manuel to keep it among his private relics—sounds like an accusation in the first place, but contemporaneous readers probably also understood such behaviour as a sign of Manuel's love for God and the saints. It is furthermore presented as a case of compensatory justice for in the same passage Clavijo mentions efforts of the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople to recover relics that had been taken away by Latin crusaders.⁹⁶ Finally, to make sure that the main menace to be feared in the area are doubtlessly the Turks, he refers to the tomb of Philipp of Artois in St. Francis, a French count who was imprisoned by Beyazit in the Battle of Nikopolis. Likewise the tomb of the Lord of Truxi in St. Paul underlines Beyazit's treacherous nature, as the Sultan poisoned him and some other captured French knights, despite having already received ransom money.⁹⁷

⁹⁰ Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 165, 167 ("gente muy devota"); Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 87, 89.

⁹¹ Cristoforo Buondelmonti, *Liber insularum Archipelagi*. Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf Ms. G 13. Faksimile, ed. I Siebert at el. (Wiesbaden 2005); *Le Voyage d'Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière premier écuyer trenchant et conseiller de Philippe le Bon, duc de Bourgogne (1432–1433)*, ed. Ch. Schefer (Paris 1892). See also Angold, *Decline of Byzantium*.

⁹² Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 138; Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 59.

⁹³ Comparable to Henry III of Castile and León.

⁹⁴ He was also recognized as a generous distributor of relics, also in the Iberian Peninsula, see Mergiali-Sahas, *Holy Relics*, 264–75; C. Marinesco, "Du nouveau sur les relations de Manuel II Paléologue (1391–1425) avec Espagne," in *Studi bizantini e neoellenici* 7 (1953), 435–36.

⁹⁵ Comparable to Louis IX of France.

⁹⁶ P. J. Geary, *Furta Sacra, Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton 1978); Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 148; Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 67. On the afterlife of the relics from the churches in Pera, see R. Quirini-Poplawski, "Stormy Adventures of the Relics of Pera," in D. Quirini-Poplawski & Ł. Burkiewicz (eds.), *Sacrum w mieście. Wymiar religijny, kulturalny i społeczny I Średniowiecze i uczesna epoka nowożytna* (Cracow 2016), 63–81, at 70–71.

⁹⁷ Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 149 with n. 153: "En el monesterio de sant Pablo jazía el señor de Truxin e otros cavalleros que'l turco fezo matar con yervas, e después que los ovo rendido e rescivido el precio d'ellos." According to López Estrada, the Lord of Truxin can be identified with a companion

Clavijo's Dominican connection

A hitherto unaddressed group among the incoming Latin orders mentioned so far are the Dominicans. One of the most active Latin religious order in the Eastern Mediterranean, they were heavily committed to missionary work and the reunification of the two Churches on the one hand, and to advance a rich culture of writing theological and dogmatic treatises on the other.⁹⁸ The Dominicans established themselves on the Bosphorus from the 1230s onwards (cf. Fig. 17). After being expelled from Constantinople in 1261, they were closely associated with the convent of San Domenico in Pera, also known as St. Paul.⁹⁹ The church and headquarters of the Dominican convent was turned into a mosque around 1475 and is known today as Arap Camii.¹⁰⁰ It is represented most eminently in several versions of Cristoforo Buondelmonti's so-called Map of Constantinople and Pera (Fig. 18).¹⁰¹ More recently, Nicholas Melvani stressed the important role of the Dominicans in Pera towards facilitating a dialogue between Greeks and Latins with the Union of the Churches as an ultimate goal.¹⁰² Claudine Delacroix-Besnier discussed in depth the relationship between Dominicans and the Churches of the East as well as the impact of polemic writings by Dominican authors based in Constantinople, Pera, and also in Caffa.¹⁰³ Among Clavijo's fellow diplomats was a Dominican friar and theologian by the name of Alfonso Paéz de Santa María. While half a century ago Sebastián Cirac Estopañan suggested that we identify Paéz rather than Clavijo as the author of the *Embajada*,¹⁰⁴ the question of authorship has been decided in favour of Clavijo.¹⁰⁵ However, based on a more comprehensive reading of the two chapters on Constantinople and Pera, it seems relevant to take Paéz's, or more generally a Dominican impact on the diplomatic mission and Clavijo's messages into consideration. Clavijo does not specify where exactly in Pera the Castilian ambassadors with the learned friar amongst them were based, but to presume St. Paul (as the Dominican convent St. Dominic in Pera is referred to by Clavijo) or one of the other Dominican establishments in Pera as a

of Marchal Boucicault by the name of Jean de Torsay who died in 1399; Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 68.

Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 68, 320.

⁹⁸ Tsougarakis, *Latin Religious Orders*, 169–211.

⁹⁹ C. Delacroix-Besnier, *Les Dominicains et la chrétienté grecque aux XIVe et XVe siècles* (Rome 1997), 8–11.

¹⁰⁰ N. Melvani, "Dominicans in Byzantium and Byzantine Dominicans: Religious Dialog and Cultural Interaction," in Monge & Pedone (eds.), *Domenicani a Costantinopoli*, 33–50, at 38; Tsougarakis, *Latin Religious Orders*, 186–89.

¹⁰¹ Cristoforo Buondelmonti was a Florentine Dominican priest, author and traveler, see C. Barsanti, "Il Panorama di Cristoforo Buondelmonti e le chiese latine di Costantinopoli," in Monge & Pedone (eds.), *Domenicani a Costantinopoli*, 51–67. I thank Claudio Monge for kindly sharing the articles by Barsanti and Melvani prior to publication.

¹⁰² Melvani, *Dominicans in Byzantium*. See also E. Mitsiou, "Die Netzwerke einer kulturellen Begegnung: byzantinische und lateinische Klöster in Konstantinopel im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert," in K. Oschema et al. (eds.), *Abrahams Erbe. Konkurrenz, Konflikt und Koexistenz der Religionen im europäischen Mittelalter* (Berlin 2015).

¹⁰³ Delacroix-Besnier, *Dominicans*, 201–71.

¹⁰⁴ S. Cirac Estopañan, "Tres monasterios de Constantinopla visitados por Españoles en el año 1403," in *REB* 19 (1961), 358–81, 365. See also Clavijo, *Embajada* (López Estrada), 38: "Fray Alfonso Páez de Santa María puede ser, pues, otro candidato para la autoría de la obra o, al menos, para que esta sea algo más que un estricto documento cancilleresco."

¹⁰⁵ López Estrada considers Clavijo as main author, see "La 'Embajada a Tamorlán' Castellana come Libro de Relación entre Occidente y Oriente en la Edad Media," in A. Temini (ed.), *Mélanges María Soledad Carrasco Urgoiti* (2 vols.) (Zaghouan 1999), I, 73–80; Mason, *Embajada a Tamorlán*.

host institution is probably not unlikely in view of the larger framework of the diplomatic contacts between Castile and Timur's realm, the activities of Dominicans in the Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions, and Alfonso Paéz de Santa María's participation in the embassy.¹⁰⁶ Close ties and contacts to the Dominicans (and also to the Franciscans being the other major Latin religious group) in Pera would explain Clavijo's apparent access to a wide range of ecclesiastic information ranging from theoretical and doctrinaire questions to liturgical details, litigation, gossip and stereotypes. The talkativeness of the Latin and Greek monks at the various shrines of Constantinople and Pera that Clavijo and his companions visited might have had something to do with the constellation of the visiting group.¹⁰⁷

Due to the lack of material evidence we will continue to trawl accounts like Clavijo's *Embajada* for information on specific monuments of Byzantine Constantinople, while hoping at the same time that new relevant textual and material evidence will come to light. In the case of the Peribleptos Monastery the scarce evidence does not allow us to solve the questions initially posed, but the discussion of the donor composition within the broader framework of Clavijo's account has triggered new questions related to a very entangled geopolitical and cultural space where clear-cut categorizations and classifications mostly fail.¹⁰⁸ A closer look at Clavijo's description of Constantinople demonstrates that Genoese Pera was conceived as a connecting limb between the Western Mediterranean on the one side, and Constantinople and what lied further east- and northwards on the other; the notion of Genoese Pera as a center and crossroad,¹⁰⁹ and in the words of Delacroix-Besnier as a trampoline for Westerners on their way further to the East,¹¹⁰ can be very well comprehended.

It remains difficult to understand how informed or clueless, how attentive or distracted, how impartial or biased a privileged visitor like Clavijo was. How much did he remember correctly when he ultimately put together his account years after the trip? And what in the *Embajada* might be ascribed to manipulations by later copyists, printers, and editors? How were such texts perceived and understood in their time, after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, and what can we further extract from them today? Comparative approaches might reveal congruencies and deviations of accounts like those of Clavijo and others that were based on real and imagined travels in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. To examine in broader interdisciplinary enquiries how such primarily descriptive texts worked, how programmatic they were and to what extent they served as carriers of theological and political thought and propaganda in the guise of entertaining

¹⁰⁶ Clavijo, *Embassy* (tr. Le Strange), 36; Clavijo, *Embajada* (ed. López Estrada), 114. On the Dominican Monastery of St. Catherine, see Janin, *Églises et Monastères*, 586–587. One might also assume the existence of smaller Dominican institutions and the mission-oriented Society of Pilgrim Brothers for Christ, see Tsougarakis, *Latin Religious Orders*, 172–73; Delacroix-Besnier, *Dominicains*, 19–21. See also J. Schiel, *Mongolensturm und Fall Konstantinopels. Dominikanische Erzählungen in diachronen Vergleich* (Berlin 2011).

¹⁰⁷ The main guide of the Castilians during their first week in Constantinople was the Genoese Ilario Doria who belonged to one of the influential families in Pera with close ties to the Convent of St. Paul (St. Dominic). Various members of this family were buried within the Dominican convent as surviving tomb stones attest, see Melvani, *Dominicans in Byzantium*, 44. On the family relation between Manuel II and Ilario Doria, see T. Ganchou, "Ilario Doria, Le gambros génois de Manuel II Palaiologos: beau-frère ou gendre?" in *REB* 66 (2008), 71–94.

¹⁰⁸ See H. E. Grossmann & A. Walker, "Introduction," in Grossmann & Walker (eds.), *Mechanisms of Exchange*, 1–16, esp. 15.

¹⁰⁹ The notion of Pera as a Western hub is fully acknowledged for later periods, cf. A. Millas, *Pera: The Crossroads of Constantinople* (Athens 2001).

¹¹⁰ Delacroix-Besnier, *Dominicains*, 10; Schiel, *Mongolensturm und Fall Konstantinopels*, 157.

