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Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki

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Abstract

This thesis intends to explore the various forms the representations of Saint Demetrios took, in Thessaloniki and throughout Byzantium. The study of the image of Saint Demetrios is an endeavour of considerable length, consisting of numerous aspects. A constant issue running throughout the body of the project is the function of Saint Demetrios as patron Saint of Thessaloniki and his ever present protective image.

The first paper of the thesis will focus on the transformation of the Saint's image from courtly figure to military warrior. Links between the main text concerning Saint Demetrios, The Miracles, and the artefacts will be made and the transformation of his image will be observed on a multitude of media.

The second paper focuses on the portable culture associated with the Saint; the functions and forms of these objects are analysed and the underlying factors which gave rise to this phenomenon are examined. The extensive body of wood panel portable icons depicting Saint Demetrios has been deliberately avoided, in order for attention to be focused on the more unusual objects associated with the Saint's portable culture.

The study of Byzantine sacred art can only be incomplete when the theological issues connected to it are not taken into consideration. Relevant theological issues alluded to throughout the dissertation, include, individual identity of the Saints and veneration of the prototype, contributing factors for the determination of a true copy, classification and grouping of Saints according to their 'area of expertise' and hierarchy and the spiritual language of Byzantine sacred art.

15.500 words

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According to legend, Saint Demetrios was born into an upper-class Christian family, in Thessaloniki, at the end of the 3rd century. He received an extensive education and was a high achiever in military exercises. He preached the Word of God, even after he had been appointed to a high military office of the Roman Empire. He was martyred during the Diokletian Purges at the start of the 4th century, by being lanced to death in the underpassages of the abandoned Roman baths.

In the 5th century, the Eparch Leondios built the first church devoted to the Saint and since that time, Thessaloniki has been the centre of veneration of Saint Demetrios.

Saint Demetrios developed into the patron Saint of Thessaloniki and eventually, into one of the Holy Warriors who were believed to be the defenders of the Byzantine Empire.

Surviving depictions of Saint Demetrios, in a multitude of media, point to the fact that his image did not remain static, but evolved in time. The Saint's image transformed from timid yet powerful courtly civil servant and martyr to energetic holy warrior.

The early images of Saint Demetrios portray him as a civil servant, a Prefect Consul, complete with orarion and tavlion, the drapery in which he is repeatedly depicted on the mosaics of his church in Thessaloniki. These mosaics played an important role in establishing in people's minds the presence of the Saint within the city and the sense of security this presence gave them. Confidence in the powers of Saint Demetrios was built up substantially through these visual aids, which recorded his miracles and served as evidence of his influence on the lives of the citizens of Thessaloniki. Robin Cormack states that, "his image was manufactured through pictorial means using traditional artistic conventions. It was a construction of society, not a historical likeness"¹; evidence of which may be found upon examination and comparison of contemporaneous mosaics situated within other churches.

Two thirds of the mosaics in the basilica dedicated to Saint Demetrios, in Thessaloniki, the city of which he is patron Saint,² were created before the refurbishment in approximately 620 A.D.³ and can be dated to the middle of the 5th century.⁴ The mosaic of *Saint Demetrios with Two Children* (Fig.1) on the west narrow side of the north



Fig 1 - Mosaic of Saint Demetrios with Two Children, Byzantine, 7th century, in situ Basilica of Saint Demetrios, Thessaloniki.

aisle of his basilica, depicts him standing in front of what appears to be his ciborium, with his arms in the orans position, with gold gilded hands, facing the viewer. He is wearing a white and gold tunic, a cloak and a square piece of blue cloth, a tavlion, which was the badge of high rank in the army or at court.⁵ Two children are proceeding towards him, one of which is accompanied by an adult.^{6/7} The scenery behind the adult depicts a column with an antique pot at the top and a garden with stylised vegetation, framed by a window. The Saint's drapery is associated with his aristocratic roots; he was born into a upper-class family with senatorial status.⁸ This drapery is almost identical to that displayed on the 6th century mosaic of **The Entrance of Bishop Maximianus with Justinian**, (Latin, 584, mosaic panel, Church of San Vitale, Ravenna) (Fig.2), worn by the members of court. These figures wear long tunics and cloaks, clasped with a gold fibula at the right shoulder revealing an emblema, in the same fashion Saint Demetrios. They also wear the tavlion, in brown. Xyngopoulos specifies that Saint Demetrios wore brown and blue tavlia in his depictions, referring to these pieces of drapery as "the usual garments".⁹ Even the footwear worn by the courtiers is identical to that of Saint Demetrios. This mosaic of Saint Demetrios also has features in common with the Rotunda (Church of Saint George)¹⁰ mosaics in Thessaloniki. Converted into a Christian church in the middle of the 5th century, the vast dome was divided into several registers of mosaics which encircled a central medallion of Christ. These figures are works of great craftsmanship and the handling of the coloured glass tesserae used in their production aimed at a very realistic kind of portrayal. It might have seemed to the viewers on the floor that the Saints high above them were almost alive in a heavenly realm of golden churches and palaces.¹¹ The mosaics in the Saint Demetrios basilica must have had a similar effect, according to the statement of the

Archbishop of Thessaloniki Eustathios: “We look upon your church, martyr Demetrios, as another paradise ” (“Ὡς παράδεισον βλέπομεν ἄλλον τὸν ναὸν σου, μάρτυς Δημήτριε.”)¹² The mosaic of **Saint Demetrios with Two Children** may have given a heavenly impression with its bright golds, blues and greens, its rich hellenistic landscape and its intricate workmanship. The scenery in the background, depicting a garden that seems too stylised and too perfect to be of this world, gives great depth to the



Fig 2 - The Entrance of Bishop Maximianus with Justinian, (Latin, 584, mosaic panel, Church of San Vitale, Ravenna)

mosaic and may be reminiscent of the Garden of Eden or Heaven.

Comparison between the Rotunda mosaics and those of the south aisle panel of Saint Demetrios shows that either the latter was a copy of the former or that the Saint's portrait type was invented according to the same principles. Saints Leo and Philemon,

(Fig.3) for example, have the same pose, style of drapery, facial features and expression as Saint Demetrios. In fact, the same iconography can be found on a number of other 6th century objects, such as on a small

Ivory

Pix with the Martyrdom of Saint Menas (Byzantine, 6th century, Alexandria, ivory, British Museum, London, M&LA 79,12-20,1) (Fig.4); contemporaneous to the creation of the mosaics, it depicts Saint Menas, in a pose, drapery and architectural



Fig 3 - Saints Leo and Philemon, Byzantine, 5th century, mosaic panel, in situ Rotunda, Thessaloniki

setting identical to those shown on the Saint Demetrios mosaic. Saint Menas stands under an arched fixture with spiralling columns, in the orans position, clad in a chlamys and tavlion.¹³

The Saints in the Rotunda as well as Saint Demetrios, fall into ideal generalised saintly types with no individual identifying characteristics. “The artists of the mosaics in both churches transformed standard heroic portrait types of Late Antique art into ideal Christian Saints.”¹⁴ Therefore it becomes obvious that the image of Saint Demetrios was constructed through pictorial means and was an invention of art rather than of history.¹⁵ This however is not a negative finding, nor does it mean that the Saint did not exist historically. It is the image of the Saint that has been constructed, not his existence. Maguire states that, “The literary embellishments of sermons and hymns in turn nourished the imaginations of Byzantine artists, and fundamentally affected the iconography and even the style and arrangement of their work.”¹⁶ Absorbing elements from the descriptions in sermons and hymns is very similar to absorbing elements from a tradition in art; they both serve to enrich the image of the Saint and therefore the visual stimulation of the viewer.

There is evidence of the existence of 7th century icons depicting Saint Demetrios wearing a cloak and tavlion.

Even though none of the icons survive, comments in the texts of the Miracles¹⁷ refer to icons of Saint Demetrios from that time. In text VIII of the



Fig 4 - Ivory Pix with the Martyrdom of Saint Menas (Byzantine, 6th century, Alexandria, ivory, British Museum, London (M&LA 79,12-20,1))

first book of
Miracles, the Saint
 walks on water in
 front of a ship and
 directs it towards
 Thessaloniki, where
 the city's population
 was dying of famine.
 The garment he was
 wearing, according
 to the text was



Fig 5 - The Harbaville Triptych (Byzantine, mid-11th century, Constantinople, ivory, Musee du Louvre, Paris, (OA 3247))

“identical to the one
 in the icon”¹⁸; this would have depicted the full-length figure of the Saint,
 clad in the attire of a prefect consul¹⁹, as he is depicted on the walls of the
 basilica.

In later centuries, after iconoclasm, the depiction of this image was to
 be transferred to a variety of fabrics and types of objects, used both for
 public display and veneration, as well as private devotion.

The Harbaville Triptych (Byzantine, mid-11th century,
 Constantinople, ivory, Musee du Louvre, Paris, OA 3247) (Fig.5) depicts
 Saint Demetrios wearing courtier's costume - a chlamys with a tavlion at
 the chest, very similar to the one worn in the basilica mosaic. It is
 interesting to note that the military Saints on this ivory, who are not
 connected to the court are depicted in military attire on the top register, on
 either side of the Deesis. The lower register of the right wing depicts Saints
 George and Demetrios, both in courtly costume. Even though one would
 normally date this iconography of Saint Demetrios earlier, it is important
 to remember that, as an exception to the rule, “the chlamys was seen in



Fig 6 - Relief of Saint Demetrios (Byzantine, 12th century, serpentine, in situ in the wall of the Northwest corner of the apse of the Catholic monastery Xiropotamos, Mount Athos, Greece)

are related to the imperial court”.²⁰ There is a wonderful **Relief of Saint Demetrios** (Byzantine, 12th century, serpentine, in situ in the wall of the Northwest corner of the apse of the Catholic monastery Xiropotamos, Mount Athos, Greece), (Fig.6) depicting the Saint in a long tunic and chlamys, holding a cross in his right hand.

In the **Harbaville Triptych** the Saint's left hand is displayed in a praying gesture, whereas in the serpentine relief it is hidden under the drapery. The covered hand is a sign of respect towards the divine and is frequently found in Byzantine art, especially in images of figures holding the Book of Gospels, the Evangelion. The lower register of the Harbaville Triptych depicts Saint John the Theologian and Saint Paul, holding the Evangelion, in the aforementioned manner. Of the four Saints in the lower registers of the wings, three have covered hands and one, Saint Demetrios, raises his in prayer. On **The Triptych Icon with the Deesis and Saints** (Byzantine, 10th-11th century, Constantinople, ivory, partially painted and gilded at a later date, Museo Sacro della Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican City, no.



Fig 6 - Relief of Saint Demetrios (Byzantine, 12th century, serpentine, in situ in the wall of the Northwest corner of the apse of the Catholic monastery Xiropotamos, Mount Athos, Greece); detail

2441) (Fig.7) the same motif is presented, with three Saints in the lower registers of the wings covering their left hands and one Saint displaying it, although not in a gesture of prayer.

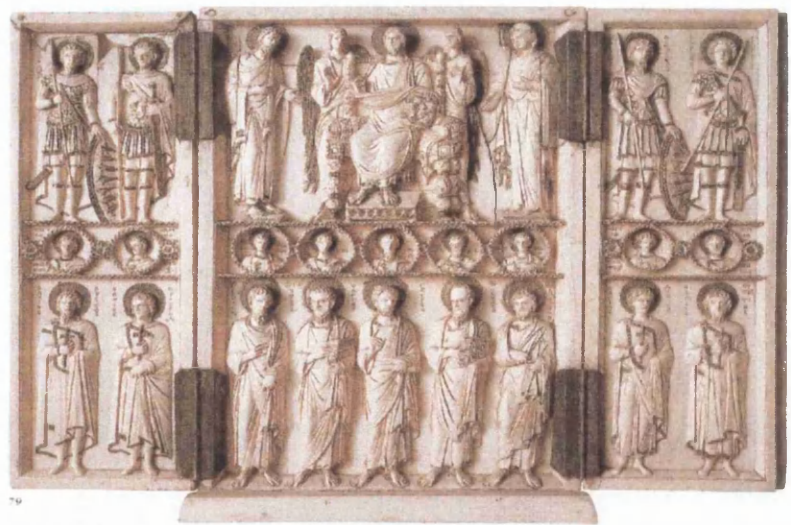


Fig 7 - Triptych Icon with the Deesis and Saints (Byzantine, 10th-11th century, Constantinople, ivory, partially painted and gilded at a later date, Museo Sacro della Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican City (2441))

An object which compares in style to those of the Romanos Group (such as the **Harbaville Triptych**), is a steatite **Icon with the Hetoimasia and Four Saints** (Byzantine, late 10th-early 11th century, Constantinople, steatite, Musee du Louvre, Paris, OA 11152) (Fig.8). The icon is divided into two registers; the upper register depicting the Hetoimasia and the lower showing four



Fig 8 - Icon with the Hetoimasia and Four Saints (Byzantine, late 10th-early 11th century, Constantinople, steatite, Musee du Louvre, Paris, (OA 11152))

martyrs. Here Saint Demetrios is grouped with fellow military Saints Theodore, George and Prokopios, who are all wearing courtly garments and holding a cross as a symbol of their martyrdom. This object also belongs to the 10th-11th century and judging from its small size, its iconography and the fact that several similar icons have been found in the remains of private homes, it was most likely intended for private devotion. ²¹There is an inscription between the two registers

which states that the four Saints depicted have earned a place in Heaven.

The iconography of the Hetoimasia encourages the worshipper to contemplate the Second Coming of Christ and to prepare his/her soul. The Saints' images, along with the inscription, invite the viewer to follow their example. In this case we have an inscription conveying the same message as the imagery. "Theology in imagery.", writes Michael Quenot, "The icon expresses through colours what the Gospel proclaims in words". "The icon expresses what Orthodoxy is, and like the Word of God, it transmits the Tradition of the Church."²³ The words of the Gospels and the Hymns and various other Christian texts and the images which portrayed the same messages, would have been deeply enmeshed in the believer's life. Therefore any image connected to religious life and its texts would have been immediately recognisable and its message deciphered and understood. The powerful image of the Hetoimasia itself would have been enough to invoke feelings of concern for one's spiritual condition; in combination with the cross-bearing Saints, this icon would have functioned as a 'sobering up' call for those who had strayed from the Christian path.

It is not uncommon for Saint Demetrios to be depicted in the company of Saints Prokopios, Theodore and George. On a silver gilt **Staurotheke** (Byzantine, 975-1025, Constantinople, silver gilt with enamel, and gems over wood, Procuratoria di San Marco, Venice (Santuario 75))



Fig 9 - Staurotheke (Byzantine, 975-1025, Constantinople, silver gilt with enamel, and gems over wood, Procuratoria di San Marco, Venice (Santuario 75))

wood, Procuratoria di San Marco, Venice, Santuario 75) (Fig.9), the aforementioned Saints are depicted together, along with Saints Eustathios, Niketas and Nicholas. This staurotheke, the design of which calls to mind that of Byzantine ivory caskets, also carries the images of the patron Saints of letters, Saint Gregory Nazianzinos, Saint Basil the Great and Saint John Chrysostom.

Each figure in the kaleidoscope of Saints, had a specific power, an area of ‘expertise’ within which



Fig 10 - Triptych with the Virgin Hodegetria and Saints (Byzantine, second half of 10th century, Constantinople, Ivory with traces of polychromy, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (71.158)).

s/he was believed to function on behalf of the worshipper. This quality was usually determined by an important feature of the Saint’s life; Saints Gregory Nazianzinos, Basil the Great and John Chrysostom were men of letters during their life-times, therefore became patron Saints of that area of life after they were canonised. It is a common feature of Byzantine art for Saints of the same ‘expertise’ to be depicted together, as if to enhance the strength of their powers and the result prayed for.

Saint Demetrios is depicted in the same style drapery on the **Triptych with the Virgin Hodegetria and Saints** (Byzantine, second half of 10th century, Constantinople, Ivory with traces of polychromy, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, no. 71.158) (Fig.10). Saint Demetrios is dressed in a long mantle clasped by a fibula at the right shoulder; his left hand is concealed under the drapery, as a sign of respect to the holy figure to his left. His right hand is raised to his chest as if he is about to bow to the Virgin. Saint Demetrios and Saint George (on the opposite wing) are both military Saints which have been depicted in civic attire. This triptych belongs to the early images of the Saint, dating to the 10th century. The

Virgin at the centre of the triptych is of monumental scale, spilling over the canopy within which she is framed; the Saints, on the other hand, are of a smaller, more modest scale and composure.

Saint Demetrios was by the 10th century intensely venerated in Thessaloniki and throughout the empire ²⁴; it is however important to keep in mind that he was venerated as an agent of God and not independently of him. Papadopoulos quotes from book I of the Miracles that “the Christians offered worship towards God and honour to the martyr”. ²⁵ The hierarchy of the Holy figures culminated in God, second to whom was the Virgin, followed by Saints and Prophets and Angels. As in antiquity, the higher a figure was in importance, the bigger the image depicted, comparatively to the remaining figures in the composition. Going back to the above triptych; the Virgin is the most Holy of images, therefore she is depicted in a much grander style and size than the accompanying Saints.

A similar image of Saint Demetrios may be found on objects of other

media and a variety of techniques. Saint

Demetrios wears civic attire on an

Enkolpion with Saint Demetrios and Saint Nestor (Byzantine, ca.1000, Constantinople, silver gilt with cloisonne enamel on gold, Domschatz, Halberstadt, Germany, no.16a) (Fig.11).

The configuration of the cloisonnes and the simple colour scheme tell us that it belongs to the early phase in stylistic and technical enamel evolution. ²⁶ This charming little

artefact depicts Saint Demetrios on the obverse, in cloisonne enamel; he is



Fig 11 - Enkolpion with Saint Demetrios and Saint Nestor (Byzantine, ca.1000, Constantinople, silver gilt with cloisonne enamel on gold, Domschatz, Halberstadt, Germany (16a))

presented as a youthful,
beardless, princely martyr,
clad in a long tunic, a chlamys
and slippers, his right hand
clutching a cross, his left hand
raised in prayer. The reverse
shows Saint Nestor in a similar
pose and attire. The interior of
the enkolpion contains two sets

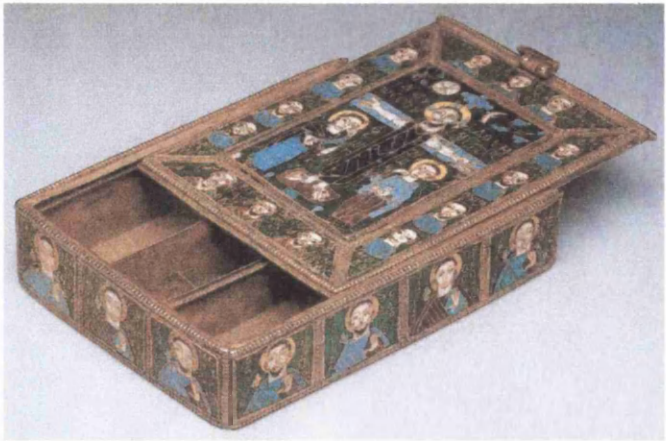


Fig 12 - Fieschi Morgan Staurotheke (Byzantine, early 9th century, Constantinople, silver gilt, gold, cloisonné enamel and niello, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (17.190.7715a,b))

of doors, which open to reveal a tiny bust of Saint Nestor and a cavity designed to contain the blood and myrrh of Saint Demetrios.²⁷ The image of Saint Demetrios on this artefact predates all other images of the Saint in this medium, along with the **Fieschi Morgan Staurotheke** (Byzantine, early 9th century, Constantinople, silver gilt, gold, cloisonné enamel and niello, Metropolitan Museum, New York, no.17.190.7715a,b)²⁸ (Fig.12).



Fig 13 - Icon with Saint Demetrios, (Byzantine, first half of 11th century, Constantinople, gold and cloisonné enamel, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin (27.21))

The Fieschi Morgan Staurotheke images are created in the older enamelling technique of Vollschmeltz with a translucent green background, whereas the enkolpion is manufactured in the newer Senckschmeltz technique, which leaves the field free of cloisonnes.²⁹ It is interesting to note that the **Enkolpion with Saint Demetrios and Saint Nestor** carries a depiction of the earliest inverted heart motif representations.³⁰

The same inverted-heart motif is also used on the richly decorated drapery of the Saint

on an **Icon with Saint Demetrios** , (Byzantine, first half of 11th century, Constantinople, gold and cloisonne enamel, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin, no. 27.21) (Fig.13) which is slightly later than the aforementioned enkolpion. It is dated to the first half of the 11th century and consists of cloisonne enamel on gold. Even though the colour scheme and drapery is very close to those on the enkolpion, the figure of the Saint on the icon comes across as imposing and dramatic, in contrast to the Saint's modest presence on the reliquary. The Saint's hands are stretched out in prayer and he stands on a decorated dais, his presence taking up most of the surface of the plaque.

As illustrated above, the courtly image of Saint Demetrios continued to be depicted on a variety of media, even well into the 11th century; the military aspect of the martyr, however, had by this time become more prominent,³¹ the majority of artefacts displaying Saint Demetrios in military attire. This change came about as a result of the combination of two important factors. The Second Council of Nicea wrote in the Acts: "The image resembles the prototype not with regard to essence, but only with regard to the name and to the position of the members which can be characterised".³² Recognition became essential in order for the worshipper to venerate the prototype; "post-iconoclastic artists, developed a standard system for clearly identifying the Saints by means of category and in many cases also portrait type".³³ Saint Demetrios was an important Saint, especially in Thessaloniki, therefore his image needed to be permanently established and consistent, in order for its veneration to comply with the Acts of the Council of Nicea.

The image of Saint Demetrios as warrior had already been mentally established through the texts of the Miracles, therefore a transition within visual art from civil servant to military figure materialised smoothly. A

text in the Miracles refers to Saint Demetrios as, “the first chosen protector of the city (Thessaloniki) and of all the land, who fights with all the ardour of his soul to defend her”. ³⁴ Another writes, “...with obvious energy he (Saint Demetrios) appeared in the form of a soldier, between two towers and striking with his spear the first man (enemy) who set his right foot on the wall he pushed him away dead...”. ³⁵

Situated at the northern frontier of the empire, Thessaloniki did not enjoy the sense of security the more central areas did, such as Asia Minor. From the 6th century onwards, Thessaloniki’s longest period of stability and piece was a century; otherwise, the city was constantly under siege, threat, or actually conquered by a multitude of enemies, sometimes simultaneously. The Slavs, usually Bulgarians, the Avars, the Normans, the Arabs, the Latins and the Turks were amongst Thessaloniki’s adversaries. A text in the Miracles writes, “...their hearing was used to the sound of war and started to recognise the signs of barbarian shouts.”. ³⁶ With such intense insecurity as a permanent factor of life, it is not surprising that the image preferred for the patron Saint of this city was one of military appearance.

According to Henry Maguire, within art it was important to stress the differences between monks who had achieved saintly status and military Saints. Monks were usually depicted as “motionless, freshless and pale”, whereas military saints “were expected to be vigorous and restless, with healthy red complexions”. ³⁷ The Byzantine poet, Manuel Philes, writes of a painted image of Saint George:

*“The restless man at arms, courageous against enemies
sports a red bloom on his cheeks.
For to be absolutely pale before battle
is a mark of unmanliness, not manliness.”*³⁸

This poem can easily be applied to a number of images of Saint

Demetrios, where he is depicted with a robust body, voluminous hair and a healthy glow about him, especially in objects carrying his image clad in military apparel. A 12th century wall-painting of **Saints George and Demetrios**, (Byzantine, 1160-1180, wall-painting in situ at the church of Saint Nikolas of Kasnitzi, Kastoria, Greece) (Fig.14) depicts Saints George and Demetrios clad in a chlamys fastened above the right shoulder with a



Fig 14 - Saints George and Demetrios, (Byzantine, 1160-1180, wall-painting in situ at the church of Saint Nikolas of Kasnitzi, Kastoria, Greece)

fibula and swept back over their shoulders and cuirass, with their right hands holding a spear and their left, resting on a shield. Even though their swords are still in their sheaths, they are prominently displayed hanging at the left hip of each Saint. Movement is conveyed through the slightly differing yet

symmetrical poses of the two figures and the windswept chlamii. The display of arms and the particularly rosy cheeks would suggest that these two nimbed warriors are ready to for battle.

The military image of Saint Demetrios did not come into being suddenly in the 11th century; objects depicting the Holy warrior did exist, but were not consistent prior to this time. One such artefact may be an **Icon with Saint Demetrios** (Byzantine, ca.1000, ivory, Metropolitan Museum, New York, no. 1970.324.3) (Cat.1), carved in a box-like frame. It may however be the case, that this icon should be dated later, precisely because it depicts the Saint in military apparel. He wears a chlamys,

pteryges and cuirass, holds a spear (now broken) in his left hand and a shield in his right. Even though the figure is set within a deep frame, he comes across as monumental. His halo spills into the frame of the icon and his whole presence is one of overwhelming power. It has been suggested that this ivory depicts Saint Demetrios in a somewhat clumsy stance, detracting from the potency of the image.³⁹ Details in the carving such as the eyebrows and the forehead, which come together in a frown, are powerful and



Cat1 - Icon with Saint Demetrios (Byzantine, ca.1000, ivory, Metropolitan Museum, New York (1970.324.3))

commanding and follow suit with the strong movement detected in the Saint's right arm and the flow of the drapery. The composition may not be the result of unique craftsmanship, but the message it radiates is direct and intense. The image is extremely stylised, cut in high relief with deep undercutting in some areas, such as the arms. The Saint's decisive pose, along with the above features, add to the dramatic effect of this little icon. There is a gap between his feet, where a clamp would have been placed, in order for the object to be mounted as part of the procession during the Saint's feast day.⁴⁰ The Saint's compelling facial expression had a number of different functions in this case; it served to remind the citizens of Thessaloniki that they had a fearless warrior on their side, always ready to defend his city against its enemies, as he had in the past, as written in the texts. A strict expression is also evocative of the Final Judgment and its severity, as well as the forthcoming punishment if they were to be disrespectful to the Saint.⁴¹Text 11 in the first book of Miracles has it that an



Cat.2 - Reliquary of Saint Demetrios in the Shape of his Ciborion, (Byzantine, 1059-1067, silver gilt, State Historical and Cultural Museum of "Moscow Kremlin", Moscow (MZ.1148)); Front

MZ.1148) (Cat.2). The iconography of the military Saints on the reliquary corresponds almost identically to that of the **Ivory Icon**. The Saints are depicted on the door of the reliquary wearing the chlamys and cuirass and each holding a spear in their right hands. Saint Loupos' left hand rests on a shield. **The Reliquary of Saint Demetrios in the Shape of his Larnax**, (Byzantine, 11th century, silver gilt, Great Lavra on Mount Athos)⁴³, created to go inside this reliquary is now kept at Mount Athos. It was intended to hold the blood and the myrrh of Saint Demetrios, which was famed to have miraculous capacities.⁴⁴

From the inscription on the **Ciborion-Reliquary** one knows that the patron of

official of Thessaloniki made a derogatory comment about the Saint and was punished by falling ill for a year and suffering horribly, until he dragged himself to the Saint's basilica and begged for his forgiveness.⁴²

Saints Nestor and Loupos are clad in the above military apparel, on a small silver gilt **Reliquary of Saint Demetrios in the Shape of his Ciborion**, (Byzantine, 1059-1067, silver gilt, State Historical and Cultural Museum of "Moscow Kremlin", Moscow,



Cat.2 - Reliquary of Saint Demetrios in the Shape of his Ciborion, (Byzantine, 1059-1067, silver gilt, State Historical and Cultural Museum of "Moscow Kremlin", Moscow (MZ.1148)); Back

this object was an official named John Autoreiano. ²⁷ The Emperor Constantine Doukas was of ill-health; the patron may have presented this gift to the Emperor, in the hope or belief that the relics it contained would heal the emperor's illness.

This little **Ciborion-Reliquary** gives rise to the issue of true copies; a Byzantine's concept of what constituted a true copy was very different to the modern view. An object did not need to be identical to the original in order to be classed as a true copy, as long as it included certain important features from the original that were enough to recall the latter. Evoking the original made the object a true copy and hence it assumed some of the powers of the former. ⁴⁵In comparison to the ciborion described in the Miracles ⁴⁶and the one which currently stands in the church of Saint Demetrios in Thessaloniki, (Fig.15) the reliquary is not an exact copy, an

immediately noticeable difference being the two additional sides of the latter. This did not however preclude the object from being considered a true copy of the original, as well as possibly claiming some of the original's powers. In this case, as a gift to one of ill-health, it would have had "double-healing" powers; those of the reliquary as an object and of its contents of Saint Demetrios' blood and myrrh.

A large-scale example of the above phenomenon would be the basilica



Fig 15 - Ciborion of Saint Demetrios, 20th century, marble, in situ in Church of Saint Demetrios, Thessaloniki.

of Saint Demetrios in the North African city of Thenai. ⁴⁷ As the final text in book II of the Miracles records, ⁴⁸ bishop Kyprianos was saved by Saint Demetrios from Slavic captivity; upon returning to his city, he built a replica of the Saint's basilica, including a full-size copy of the ciborion. The oil from this church's lamps was said to heal scorpion bites ⁴⁹; the power of the visual replica is so strong that it reproduces even the miraculous



Fig 16 - Icon of Saint Demetrios, (Byzantine, 11th century, steatite, with silver frame,Treasury of the Kremlin, Moscow)

properties of its prototype. ⁵⁰

One more iconographical type of the military image of Saint Demetrios exists, which has not yet been examined. This iconography would fit into P. Lemerle's second category of images of the Saint, where Saint Demetrios is "standing or seated or mounted on a white horse. His clothing includes a white chlamys thrown over his shoulder in the force of action. This

way he looks like a military official. He does not carry weapons, but by striking them with his wand he succeeds to push away the enemy.”. ⁵¹

Lemerle makes the distinction between images where the Saint appears as a military official and those where he is depicted as a soldier; the latter iconography coming into popularity from c.1000 onwards, without completely wiping out the former. ⁵²There is a miniature **Icon of Saint Demetrios** , (Byzantine, 11th century, steatite, with silver frame,Treasury of the Kremlin, Moscow) (Fig.16) which partly fits in with Lemerle's categorisation. It depicts the Saint in military attire, mounted on a white horse, with his chlamys floating behind him in the wind- features which evoke Lemerle's second type. The figure does however also wear a soldier's



Fig 17- Icon of Saint Demetrios Mounted, late 16th-early 17th century, egg tempera on gesso on wood panel, Museum of Antiviotissa, Corfu, Greece

cuirass and brandishes a sword, thereby not clearly belonging to any one of the designated classes. The iconography described by Lemerle, complete with all identifiable features, does survive, but is more commonly evident in artefacts created in the 16th and 17th centuries .

(Figs 17 / 18) The image of Saint Demetrios may be viewed as a construction of the society it served.

Representations of the Saint evolved according to the perceptions and needs of

Byzantine society, especially within Thessaloniki, and in line with the Christian Orthodox Church and its dogma. Pre-iconoclasm saw the consolidation of the Saint as an important presence in Byzantine religious life. Post-iconoclasm the image of Saint Demetrios was solidified.

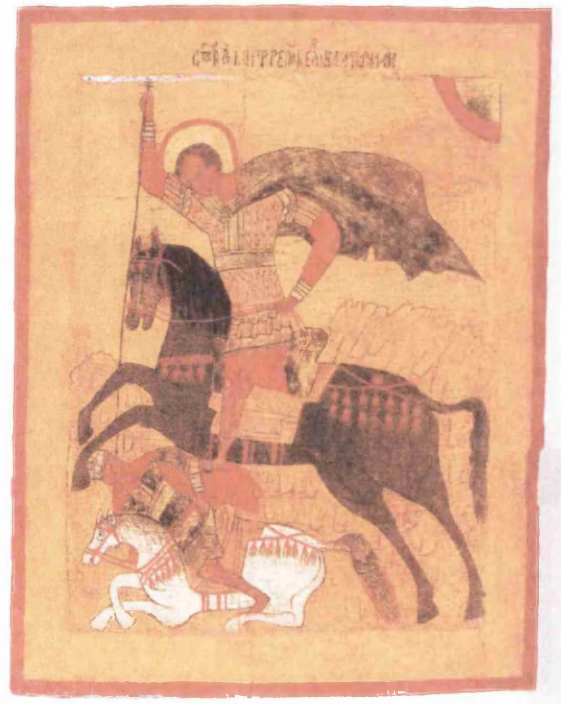


Fig 18 - Icon of Saint Demetrios Mounted, 17th century, egg tempera on gesso on wood panel, Laographic Museum, Tsierepovitch.

References

1 Cormack, R. S., Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Icons, London, 1985, p. 86.

2 / 3 Five-aisle basilica dedicated to Saint Demetrios built by the prefect of the Ylliricum Leontius in the 5th century. In the beginning of the 7th century, the basilica was damaged by fire and was restored at circa 620. In 904, when the Saracen pirates captured Thessaloniki, the Saint's silver chest (ciborium) was destroyed. The basilica was plundered by the Normans when they captured the city in 118 and converted into a mosque from 1492 to 1912, when the city fell to the Turks. Only five years after the city's liberation, in 1917, the great fire of Thessaloniki destroyed the basilica. Restoration began in 1918, was disrupted and resumed and was finally coming to completion in 1949.

4 Xyngopoulos, A., The Mosaics of Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 1969, p. 12.

5 Xyngopoulos, A., The Mosaics of Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki, op. cit., page 13.

6 The adult is usually described as a woman, but the lack of a veil must mean that the figure is male. All female figures in the mosaics of Saint Demetrios are veiled.

7 Tradition has it that all children dedicated to the Saint and named after him, enjoy his special protection. When a child was born on a Saint's day, the newborn would take that name. If there were birth complications, the child would immediately be dedicated to a Saint, preferably to the patron Saint of the city, in order to acquire special assistance from that Saint. As miracle VI, of Book II, of the Miracles illustrates, when the bishop Kyprianos searched round Thessaloniki to find a soldier called Demetrios, he was informed that there was a large number of soldiers under that name in the city.

8 The official position of senate existed at this time, but carried little political weight. It seems to have been more of an honorary decoration.

9 Xyngopoulos, A., The Mosaics of Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki, op. cit., p.15.

10 Large circular building, originally constructed in early 4th century by Roman emperor Galerius as a mausoleum, a purpose it never served. In the 5th century, it was converted into the Christian church and devoted to Saint George, an apse was added on the east side and the dome was decorated with Christian mosaics.

11 Cormack, R. S., Writing in Gold, op. cit., p. 85.

12 Xyngopoulos, A., The Mosaics of Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki, op. cit., p. 14.

13 Buckton, D., Byzantium; Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture, London, 1994, page 74. The comparison between the iconography of the pyxis and a mosaic in the 'Maria cycle' from the basilica of Saint Demetrios is made. Cormack, R., Writing in Gold, London, 1985, fig.29, is referred to.

14 Cormack, R. S., Writing in Gold, op. cit., p. 86.

15 Cormack, R. S., Writing in Gold, op. cit., p. 86.

16 Maguire, H., Art and Eloquence in Byzantium, Princeton, 1994, page 3.

17 The Miracles consist of two books within which a number of miracles attributed to Saint Demetrios are recorded. Book I, was put together by an archbishop of Thessaloniki, in the first years of the reign of Heraclios (610-641). Details about the author of Book II are not known, but he was presumably a churchman from Thessaloniki and wrote at the end of the 7th century. Some of his accounts seem to be derived from Book I; Book II on the other hand also pulls from earlier writings, such as the sermons of archbishop Eusebios, predecessor of John. It is from the Miracles that we derive much information and detail about the lifestyle and trials and tribulations of the citizens of Thessaloniki during the difficult period of the 6th and 7th centuries. The modern Greek translation which has been referred to for the purposes of this thesis is : Αγίου Δημητρίου Θαυματα. Οι Συλλογες Αρχιεπισκοπου Ιωαννου ναι Ανωνυμου. Ο Βιο s. Τα Θαυματα και η Θεσσαλονικη του Αγίου Δημητρίου, edited by Bakirtzis, X. and translated by Sideri, A., Athens, 1997.

18 Miracles, Book II, Miracle VIII, Saint Demetrios saves the citizens from starvation, after the Avar and Slav siege of 587. The comment "identical to the one in the icon" shows that the particular iconography was widespread throughout Greece by the 7th century. The boat was at the island of Chios when the Saint came to the captain.

19 Prefect Concul: high office

20 Kalavrezou I., ed. Evans H.C. and Wixom D.W., The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843-1261, New York, 1997, page 134.

21 Pevny O.Z., The Glory of Byzantium, op. cit., p. 156.

22 Inscription on band between registers: ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚ ΜΑΡΤ ΘΕΣΠΙΣΜΑΤ / ΑΝΑΦΑΝΕΝΤΕΣ ΕΚ ΠΕΡΑΤ ΤΕΤΤΑΡ / ΕΤΟΜΟΤΑΤΟ ΠΡΟ ΤΑ Τ ΚΛΗΡΟΥΧ / ΒΡΑΒΕΙΑ ΤΥΓΧΑΝΟΥ ΣΙΝ ΟΙ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΛΑΤ, The stratelatai, having appeared from the four ends [of the earth] as witnesses to the divine pronouncements, are most ready to be awarded a [place in heaven]

23 Quenot, M., The Icon: Window on the Kingdom, New York, 1996, page 12. For further reading on icons: Ouspensky L., Theology of the Icon, volumes I and II, New York, 1992; Ouspensky L. and Lossky V., The Meaning of Icons, New York, 1999.

24 Papadopoulos, A. M., Ο Άγιος Δημήτριος εισ την Ελληνικην και Βουλγαρικην Παραδοσιν, Thessaloniki, 1971, page 91.

25 Papadopoulos, A. M., Ο Άγιος Δημήτριος εισ την Ελληνικην και Βουλγαρικην Παραδοσιν, op. cit., p. 55.

26 Wixom W.D., The Glory of Byzantium, op. cit., p. 161

27 According to the story of Saint Demetrios, his servant Loupos healed people by agent of the blood-drenched cloak and ring he had taken from the scene of the Saint's martyrdom. As for the myrrh, there are various different accounts of its existence, one of which is by Angiolello degli Giovanni Maria, a soldier who was held in Thessaloniki in 1470. He writes in his diary, "Here also we have the body of Saint Dominico (Saint Demetrios) and from his tomb seeps an oily liquid, which is prescribed for many illnesses" ; source: Ταμπακη Σ., Η Θεσσαλονικη στις Περιγραφες των Περιηγητων. 12ος-19ος αιωνος. Λατρευτικα Μνημεια, Θεσσαλονικη, 1998, κειμενο 6. (Tabaki S., Thessaloniki in the Descriptions of Travellers: 12th-19th century. Votive Memorials, Thessaloniki, 1998, text 6.)

in the Descriptions of Travellers; 12th-19th century, Votive Memorials, Thessaloniki, 1998, text 6.)

Earth from the martyrion of the Saint was also known to have miraculous properties. The above source includes the account of English ethnographer, Abbot G.F., in the year 1900 (text 68); "The grateful imam [keeper] allows them [visitors to the Saint's tomb] to carry away from the shrine a handful of earth, which is supposed to be endowed with miraculous virtues for the cure of diseases."

Miracle V, from Book II of the Miracles, refers to the request by Justinian A' (527-565) for a part of Saint Demetrios' body to protect him in battle. The Saint did not allow for this, according to the text, and earth from the tomb area was sent to the emperor, who welcomed it as if it were part of the Saint. ("...κι εκείνος το δέχτηκε με μεγάλη χαρά σαν να είχε δεχτεί το ίδιο το σώμα του μαρτυρούσ.")

28 Wixom W.D., The Glory of Byzantium, op. cit., p. 161.

29 Vollschmelz technique involved covering the metal of the surface completely with cloisonné of enamel, with translucent green enamel used for the background. The inscriptions were created by making letters out of gold strips and setting them on edge in the enamel of the background. This technique was employed at the end of Iconoclasm to about mid-10th century, which is when Senkschmelz came in. Senkschmelz involved leaving the background free of cloisons; the enamel figure would be silhouetted against the metal of the plaque. This technique gave way to Vollschmelz, but with an opaque background this time, the latter being picked up during the 12th and 13th centuries.

Sources referred to: Buckton D., 'All that glistens...Byzantine enamel on copper', Θυμιαμα Στη Μνημη Της Δασκαρίνας Μπουρα, Athena, 1994, pages 47-8; Buckton D., Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections, London, 1994, page 18.; Buckton D., 'Chinese whispers: The premature birth of the typical Byzantine enamel', Byzantine East, Latin West: Art Historical Studies in Honour of Kurt Weitzmann, New Jersey, 1995, page 595.

30 Wixom W.D., The Glory of Byzantium, op. cit., p. 161.

31 Katsarelis D.G., The Glory of Byzantium, op. cit., p. 178.

32 Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, XIII, col. 244 B. trans. in Sahas, D.J., Icon and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm, Toronto, 1977, page 77.

33 Maguire, Henry The Icons of Their Bodies; Saints and their Images in Byzantium, Princeton, 1996, page 142.

34 (Miracles) Αγίου Δημητρίου Θαυμάτα. Οι Συλλογές Αρχιεπισκόπου Ιωαννου και Αγωνυμου. Ο Βίος. Τα Θαυμάτα και η Θεσσαλονικη του Αγίου Δημητρίου. edited by Bakirtzis, X. and translated by Sideri, A., Athens, 1997, page 83.

35 (Miracles) Αγίου Δημητρίου Θαυμάτα. op. cit., p. 187.

36 (Miracles) Αγίου Δημητρίου Θαυμάτα. op. cit., p.175.

37 Maguire, Henry The Icons of Their Bodies; Saints and their Images in Byzantium, Princeton, 1996, page 76. (freshless, is the word used Maguire)

38 Miller, E., Manuelis Philae carmina, I, Paris, 1855, page 133; Manuel Phileas was commissioned by Theodore Comnenos, younger son of emperor Michael VIII to write poetry about icons.

39 Cutler, A., Late Antique and Byzantine Ivory Carving, Hampshire, UK, 1998, page 645.

40 The processional function of icons has left its mark on other exant icons, such as the Double-Sided Icon with the Virgin Hegedetria (obverse) and the Man of Sorrows (reverse) (Byzantine, second half of 12th century, tempera on wood, Byzantine Museum, Kastoria, Greece (457))

41 Cormack, R. S., Writing in Gold op. cit., p. 93: "The role of icons is more complex than that of the texts for they are at once more concrete and more ambiguous. Their greater ambiguity is also a source of power over the observer."

42 (Miracles) Αγίου Δημητρίου Θαυμάτα. op. cit., p. 161.

43 There is a very interesting issue here. Ioli Kalavrezou in The Glory of Byzantium, page 78, refers to a Reliquary of Saint Demetrios in the shape of his Larnax which has been discussed by Andre Grabar, places it in the Great Lavra Monastery at Mount Athos and dates at the same time as the Reliquary of Saint Demetrios in the shape of his ciborion, at the 11th century. Bakirtzis, in Αγίου Δημητρίου Θαύματα, page 498, dates the Reliquary of Saint Demetrios in the shape of his Larnax at the 12th century and places it in the Monastery of Vatopedi, in Mount Athos. If one agrees that the two objects were made at the same time, to function as a get-well gift for emperor Doucas then a dating at the 11th century would be necessary, because he reigned at 1059-1067.

44 Please refer to §17.

45 Kalavrezou I., The Glory of Byzantium, op. cit., p. 78.

46 Miracles, Text X, of Book I; contains very detailed description of the ciborion.

47 Cormack, R. S., Writing in Gold, op. cit., p. 73; Thenai is now the port of Henchir Tina in Tunisia, opposite the island of Cercina

48 Miracles, text VI of Book II; story described in detail.

49 When Saint Demetrios was held prisoner, a scorpion approached him. He prayed and did the sign of the cross over it and it died immediately. The miraculous properties of the oil of Thenai are therefore directly related to the story of the Saint.

50 Cormack, R. S., Writing in Gold, op. cit., p. 74.

51 / 52 Lemerle P., "Note sur les plus anciennes representations de Saint Demetrius", Δελτιον Της Χριστιανικης Αρχαιολογικης Εταιριας (Periodical of the Christian Archeological Association), period IV, 10, Athena, 1981, pages 1-10 and 40-42.

By the 11th century the image of Saint Demetrios was deeply ingrained in the lives of the citizens of Thessaloniki and had in fact, gained enormous popularity throughout Byzantium and beyond. A text from the 12th century satirical dialogue, 'Timarion', describes the enormous influx of people from all over the empire into Thessaloniki, during the Demetria, the week of Saint Demetrios' festive celebrations. ¹

"The Demetria are a feast much as the Panathinea in Athens and the Panionia among the Milesians. The flow to it not only the indigenous and local throng, but from all sides all possible of the Hellenes everywhere, of the nearby dwelling Mysians and of all nations up to the Danube and Scythia, of Campanians, Italians, Iberians, Lucitanians, and Celts from beyond the Alps. And the ocean sands send, in short, suppliants and spectators to the martyr. So great is his glory in Europe." ²

It is interesting to note that the text compares the Demetria, which are relatively recent festivities, to long-standing ancient Greek events of the calibre of the Panathinea. Widespread popularity of Saint Demetrios was fuelled by the culture of portable sacred objects and in turn, gave rise to the use of even more portable items depicting the Saint's image or containing his relics.

The Saint was solidly established in people's minds as a protector; a passage in the Miracles vividly describes the sentiments of the citizens of Thessaloniki towards the Saint.

"...not even a real father took care of his children as much as the ever-merciful, emulator of God and philanthropist martyr (Demetrios)..." ³ He was perceived as a father figure, looking over his children, protecting them in times of strife. As a father takes care of his family as a whole, but simultaneously has a personal relationship with each child, Saint Demetrios was perceived as holy warrior defending Thessaloniki and the

Empire, but also safeguard of each individual who prayed for his protection.

The personal relationship factor contributed towards the popularity of portable sacred objects. One may be partly correct in comparing this phenomenon to the modern habit of carrying the picture of one's loved one on one's person at all times; however, Byzantine portable culture consisted of numerous layers of contributing factors and meanings and was deeply spiritual. Cavarnos writes: "All the works of Byzantine art...are aids for understanding and remembering the word of God."⁴ One of the functions of

a portable sacred piece of art was to remind the Christian of his duties. A portable image was constant visual evidence of the patron's devotion to the Saint. It was proof of his/her personal effort to honour the Saint and gave the bearer the assurance of being constantly protected. The worshipper could pray to Saint Demetrios and venerate him through his image at any time. Portable reliquaries which actually contained blood, myrrh or earth associated with the Saint took the sense of personal protection

one step further. It had to do with actually being in constant contact with the saint's relics, as if to ensure constant connection with the protective source. The idea that the blood and myrrh of Saint Demetrios had healing properties meant that the wearer was protected from illness as well as in battle.

Portable objects bearing the image of Saint Demetrios took on a variety of forms, fabrics and techniques. Issues such as recognition of the



Cat.5 - Icon with Three Military Saints, (Byzantine, 12th century, Constantinople, steatite with traces of gilding and blue paint, Natsional'nyi Zapovidnyk "Khersones Tavriis'kyi", Sevastopil', Ukraine, no.84/36 445)

Saint and grouping with holy figures of the same 'category' continue to apply within the portable culture.

The combination of a group of full-length military Saints being blessed by a hovering bust figure of Christ was a popular motif amongst portable objects associated with Saint Demetrios. The **Icon with Three Military Saints**, (Byzantine, 12th century, Constantinople, steatite with traces of gilding and blue paint, Natsional'nyi Zapovidnyk "Khersones Tavriis'kyi", Sevastopil', Ukraine, no.84/36 445) (cat.5) depicts three holy warriors, each dressed in a chlamys pinned at the right shoulder and a cuirass. Their left hands rest on individual shields and in their right hands, Saint George in the centre and Saint Theodore Stratelates hold a long lance each and Saint Demetrios raises a sword to his chest. The bust of Christ hovers above them and blesses them with both hands. Pevny, O.Z. mentions that "The three military Saints, that decorate the panel, although not identified by inscriptions, are easily recognisable by their facial features."⁵



Fig 19 - Icon with Three Military Saints Blessed by Christ (Byzantine, 12th century, excavated from palace area of Caravee, steatite, Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Veliko Turnovo, Boulgaria, no.10)

This statement highlights the element of recognition as an important part of experiencing the image of a Saint. ⁶The Seventh Ecumenical Council formulations clearly state: "The honour rendered to the image goes to its prototype, and the person who venerates an icon venerates the person represented on it." ⁷ Therefore the image needed to be

clear and consist of facial features, attributes and pose characteristic to the specific Saint. Worshippers were expected to be alert to the visual signs that distinguished one sacred portrait from another and to tell the important Saints apart from each other, even without the aid of inscriptions.⁸ Pre-iconoclasm, the images of the Saints were not clear and specific; however post-iconoclasm, sacred images were regulated more closely⁹ resulting in clear portrait types and the recognition of a specific Saint.

A number of steatite icons survive which carry the above iconography; one being the tiny icon kept in Bulgaria, only 6cm in height. The **Icon with Three Military Saints Blessed by Christ** (Byzantine, 12th century, excavated from palace area of Caravee, steatite, Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria, no.10) (fig.19), has broken off almost diagonally, with almost half the lower left area missing. It is however still clear that the iconography on this



Cat.6 - Cameo with Saint George and Saint Demetrios Blessed by Christ , (Byzantine, 11th-12th century, Constantinople, (mount: 16th century, France), sardonyx, Biblioteque Nationale de France, France, Babelon-342)

little icon is identical to the aforementioned **Icon with Three Military Saints** from Khersones, in a slightly more simplified version. This icon is inscribed, but the fact that the inscription takes into consideration the missing portion of the plaque, shows that the inscription was added after the object was damaged.

An exquisite example of the above iconography is a tricolour sardonyx cameo of the 11th-12th century, depicting Saints George and

Demetrios being blessed by Christ. **Cameo with Saint George and Saint Demetrios Blessed by Christ** , (Byzantine, 11th-12th century, Constantinople, (mount: 16th century, France), sardonyx, Biblioteque Nationale de France, France, Babelon-342) (Cat.6). The cameo shows both Saints full-length, with their left hands resting on a shields, dressed in military attire; each wears a chlamys which is pulled back to reveal a cuirass. Saint George raises a sword in his right hand and Saint Demetrios holds a lance in left hand. Both haloed Saints have incised indicative inscriptions and the half-figure of Christ floats above them, blessing the pair. The display of weapons and the cuirass gives the image a dramatic feel, as if the two figures are ready to go into battle. Their pose, which is slightly turned towards each other, reminiscent of the 12th century **Wall-painting of Saints George and Demetrios** in the church of Saint Nikolas of Kasnitzi in Greece and the message of movement it conveys (Fig.4).“The military aspects of the two martyrs, who were often depicted together during the Middle Byzantine period, became more prominent from the 11th century on.”¹⁰ This object would have been worn as an amulet and combined the protective powers of both Saints, enhanced by the blessing of God.

There is a similar piece, the **Gennadios Cameo**, (Byzantine, 11th-12th century, Constantinople, sardonyx, now the centrepiece for the enkolpion of Gennadios, the



Cat.4 - Icon with the Military Saints George, Theodore and Demetrios, (Byzantine, late 11th-early 12th century, Constantinople, egg tempera over gesso on wood, The State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, no.I-83)

metropolitan of Serres, Treasury of the Great Lavra, Mount Athos, Greece) which depicts Saint Theodore Stratelates and Saint Theodore Teron, blessed by the Christ above. In this cameo both Saints hold lances. The popularity of this composition may reflect the effort of the Byzantine state to reassess its military power, which in the second half of the 11th century was rapidly fading. " Indeed the popularity of the image of Saint Demetrios as a soldier on the majority of enkolpia, koutrouvia and portable icons may signify the personal insecurity the citizens of Thessaloniki felt during this time. From the 6th century onwards, the city knew little peace and security, due to her outpost position and the constant danger from the Slavs, Avars, Normans and other enemies who desired to possess her. The exquisite workmanship of the **Cameo with Saint George and Saint Demetrios Blessed by Christ** is indicative of a patron who was a member of the Byzantine nobility, possibly a military person.

Other than giving the bearer of the portable sacred object a sense of enhanced security, the depiction of Saint Demetrios in the company of other military Saints may have been a tradition stemming from a reference in the Miracles to other military Saints joining Demetrios on the walls of Thessaloniki, in order to defend the city from its raging enemies. ¹² A

portable **Icon with the Military Saints George, Theodore and Demetrios**, (Byzantine, late 11th-early 12th century, Constantinople, egg tempera over gesso on wood, The State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, no.I-83) (Cat.4), serves as another example of a team of Saints. The icon depicts all three Saints in military attire; Saints George and Theodore each hold a lance in their right hands and rest their left hands on a shield. Saint Demetrios raises a sword to his right shoulder with his right hand and holds the scabbard with the other. It is interesting to note that the inscription does not specify which Saint Theodore (Stratelates or Teron) is depicted.

Distinguishing features were that Stratelates (General) was depicted with a rounder, more mature face than Teron (Recruit), indicating a slightly older man. Another indicative detail was that Stratelates was always shown with longer hair than Teron, which covered his ears, as opposed to Teron's short hair which revealed at least one ear. The above details may seem trivial to the modern viewer, but they were maintained with remarkable consistency from the 11th to the 15th century. ¹³The subtle



Fig.20(a)- Mosaic of Saint Theodore the Recruit, Byzantine, 12th century, Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, Greece.

observed on the 12th century frescoes and mosaics on the walls of Hosios Loukas, Katholikon. Greece. ¹⁴(Fig.20) The issue of identity is again touched upon; it was of utmost importance to get all the details correct in the depiction of Saint Theodore, as with every Saint, in order for the worshipper to confidently recognise the Saint and venerate him, through the image.

A complicating factor, is the unusual restoration process the icon underwent, which actually included “scrapping away the wrinkles”, in order to make the Saints look younger. ¹⁵ Saints George and Demetrios were always depicted as young men, therefore the only one that could have had wrinkles on the original depiction is Saint Theodore. Considering the evidence, it may be concluded



Fig.20(b)- Fresco of Saint Theodore the General, Byzantine, 12th century, Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, Greece.

that the figure at the centre of the composition is Saint Theodore Stratelates.

The portable icon culture produced some exquisite pieces of art in mosaic. Two portable mosaics depicting Saint Demetrios survive, which bear witness to the enormous amount of care and expense lavished on these devotional objects. Otto Demus separates portable mosaics into two groups; one group ranges from 34cm by 23cm to 95cm by 62cm and the other, from 10cm by 6cm to 26cm by 18cm. ¹⁶ He

suggests that the larger panels were intended for public display, whereas the smaller mosaics were intended to be carried and for private devotion. According to Demus, portable mosaics were “nothing but mosaic reproductions of painted icons and were regarded, treated and used exactly like large-scale icons in painting. ^{17/18}

The **Icon of Saint Demetrios**, (Byzantine, second half of the 12th century, miniature mosaic, Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai) (Fig.21), measures 19x15cm fitting comfortably into the group of miniature mosaics. It depicts a bust of Saint Demetrios wearing a chlamys tied at the chest and swept back over his shoulders to reveal his cuirass. He holds a lance in his right hand and holds the top of his sword with his other hand. The mosaic was produced using earth-toned tesserae, consisting of



Fig.21 - Icon of Saint Demetrios, (Byzantine, second half of the 12th century, miniature mosaic, Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai)

reds, browns, yellows and creams; this gives the icon a particularly warm feel. The Saint glances towards the side, visually symbolising his protection over the bearer of the icon. The facial features are clearly defined and combine to give a watchful, powerful, yet warm, expression. The combination of exquisite workmanship, warm colours and precise shading, gives this miniature mosaic an aura that seems to enchant the viewer. The technique in which the miniature is executed is reminiscent of that applied to wall-mosaics; even though the object is small, its style is quite monumental, apart from the fragile delicacy of the elongated face and the narrow shoulders. ¹⁹ The miniature mosaic is missing its frame; by observing

extant miniature mosaics one may conclude that the frame would have probably been made of chased silver and or have contained devotional programmes. **The Crucifixion**

Miniature Mosaic of Vatopedi , (Byzantine, second half 12th century, miniature mosaic, Staatliche Museen, Berlin) frame is decorated with a complete cycle of twelve church festivals. The **Icon of Saint Anna and the Virgin** ,

(Byzantine, late 13th - early 14th century, miniature mosaic, Vatopedi Monastery, Mount Athos)

presents a full devotional programme, with busts and full figures of saints and with the Hetoimasia worshipped by angels. An example of what a

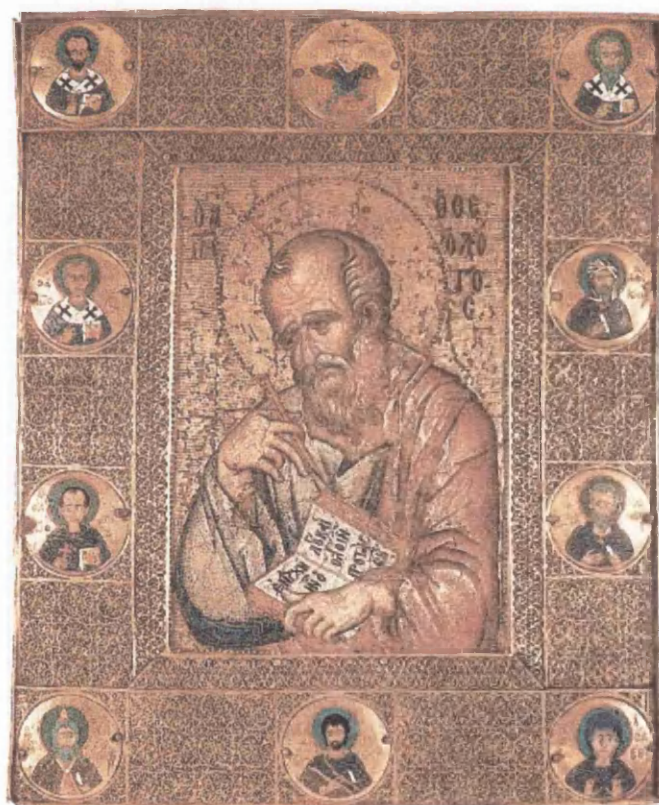


Fig.22 - Icon of Saint the John the Theologian (Byzantine, 13th century, miniature mosaic, Treasury of the Great Lavra Monastery, Mount Athos, Greece).

miniature mosaic complete with frame would have looked like may be found at Mount Athos; **Icon of Saint the John the Theologian** (Byzantine, 13th century, miniature mosaic, Treasury of the Great Lavra Monastery, Mount Athos, Greece) (Fig.22). This miniature depicts the half-figure of the Saint holding a codex and a quill, which are appropriate to his status as patron Saint of Letters. The intricate vegetal tendril and scroll decoration of the exquisite gold frame holds ten medallions depicting the Hetoimasia, Saints and the Virgin and



Cat.11 - Icon of Saint Demetrios , (Byzantine, 14th century, Thessaloniki, miniature mosaic, Museo Civico, Sassofero, Italy)

bears witness to the truly breath-taking craftsmanship achieved by Byzantine artists. Demus refers to the poems written by Markos Eugenikos and Manuel Phileas: "...the wording of these descriptions is a strong indication that the miniature mosaic icons were considered as precious gifts and used mainly for private worship."²⁰ The other miniature mosaic **Icon of Saint Demetrios** , (Byzantine, 14th century, Thessaloniki, miniature mosaic, Museo Civico, Sassofero, Italy) (Cat.11), depicts the Saint, full-length, clad in military attire, carrying a shield depicting a lion, in his left hand, while resting his right hand on a spear. This icon has a silver frame decorated with the emblems of the Palaeologi, possibly connecting the artefact with Emperor Michael VIII or Andronicus II.²¹ The frame also carries a number of inscriptions and has an opening at the top which used to carry a gold ampulla (koutrouvion),²² replaced by a lead flask in recent times. This piece was definitely an imperial commission and had been the

subject of description by the court poet Markos Eugenikos.²³ It had nine rubies encased in gold along the sides of the mosaic, which have also been removed.²⁴

A.A.Vasiliev claims that the mosaic was produced in Thessaloniki for a member of the Palaeologan dynasty.²⁵ In contrast, Maria Theohari, states that the stylistic and technical features of this artefact are such that it could not have been created anywhere other than Constantinople²⁶.

Wherever manufactured, miniature mosaics were more than likely of imperial patronage or made as gifts for the Emperor; a suggestion actually supported by the representations themselves. Saints George, Theodore, Demetrios and Michael, all holy warriors and special protectors of the empire, were of the most popular themes chosen for miniature mosaics.²⁷ In addition, the costliness of the materials, namely the tesserae and frames, as well as the complexity of the applied techniques, makes these items immensely valuable; another factor pointing to imperial patronage.

Indeed this miniature is exquisite; the tiny tesserae (a millimetre or even smaller)²⁸, set into wax or resin on a wood base, consists of semi-precious stones, gold and silver and enamel paste. The tesserae are set so close together that even the interstices are scarcely visible.²⁹ This mosaic compares closely to the **Miniature mosaic of the Annunciation**, (Byzantine, 14th century, Constantinople, miniature mosaic, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, no:7231-1860.) (Fig.23); details such as the identical chequered halos and ground tiling, the almost matching modelling of the



Fig.23 - Miniature mosaic of the Annunciation, (Byzantine, 14th century, Constantinople, miniature mosaic, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, no:7231-1860.);

drapery on Saint Demetrios and the Archangel, the gold tesserae background and the way the faces are modelled, point to manufacture in the same workshop.

Even though a number of surviving portable icons are of a high material value due to their exquisite workmanship or expensive fabric, it must be stressed that the majority of these items would not

have been elaborate or expensive. Objects such as ivories, miniature mosaics and expensive enkolpia would have been imperial commissions or been the result of the patronage from a military official or member of nobility. The general public would also carry images of Saint Demetrios for protection against harm. John Geometres, a poet of the 10th century, wrote a poem to accompany an image of the Saint:

*"The chief of Thessaloniki stands here armed.
But he conquers without arms; how can that be when he takes up arms:
It is not by conquering with arms that the martyr was chief of wisdom.
But defending with both, scatter envy to the winds!"*

By virtue of his martyrdom, Saint Demetrios could conquer the danger of envy and his image would be enough to convey this power.

Such an object is the **Bronze Icon of Saint Demetrios** (Byzantine, 14th century, Thessaloniki, bronze, The Rotunda Archeological Collection , Thessaloniki) (Cat.10), an unpublished bronze plaque with the bust of the Saint. Measuring to 3cm by 3cm, this tiny object depicts the Saint in military attire, holding a spear in his right hand and a shield in his left.



Cat.10 - Bronze Icon of Saint Demetrios (Byzantine, 14th century, Thessaloniki, bronze, The Rotunda Archeological Collection , Thessaloniki)

This tiny, inexpensive, very basic artefact was believed to offer the bearer the protection s/he needed against evil; as long as the image of Saint Demetrios was depicted it was almost as good as having the actual presence of the Saint himself.

Another small-scale image of Saint Demetrios on metalwork, is the fingernail-sized enamel plaque in Dumbarton Oaks;

Enamel Plaque of Saint Demetrios , (Byzantine, 11th century, enamel on gold,

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C., no. 57.9). This tiny artefact could have been part of a piece of jewellery or existed unmounted, in the same way the **Bronze Icon of Saint Demetrios** did.

The same function was served by a small **Glass Cameo of Saint Demetrios** , (Byzantine, 11th-12th centuries, Thessaloniki, translucent green moulded glass, British Museum, London, M&LA 70,11-26,16) (Cat.12). The half-figure of the Saint is equipped with a spear and a round shield depicting a cross in a circle and has a dotted nimbus. These little glass cameos must have been very popular with the citizens of Thessaloniki; the British Museum alone has another three pieces from the same mould.

The debate surrounding these glass cameos is whether they were manufactured in imitation of precious-stone cameos, or whether their production was an independent industry. Buckton suggests that they are likely to have been made in imitation of cameos carved from precious or semi-precious



Cat.12 - Glass Cameo of Saint Demetrios , (Byzantine, 11th-12th centuries, Thessaloniki, translucent green moulded glass, British Museum, London, M&LA 70,11-26,16)



Cat.14 - Comnenan Coin (Byzantine, 1222-30, Thessaloniki, silver trach, British Museum, London, CM 1904,5-11,406 BMC VI)

stones,³² whereas

Georgopoulos suggests that, although originally they were thought to be imitations, these cameos seem to form a category of their own.³³



Cat.13 - Palaeologan Coin, (Byzantine, 1391-1423, Constantinople, copper tornese, British Museum, London, CM BMC 14)

The minting of coinage

falls into a category befitting objects that were of a valuable material but also easily disseminated throughout the classes. Coins from Thessaloniki dated 13th to 14th centuries placed Byzantine Emperors alongside, in turn, directly associating them, with Saint Demetrios. The basis for such connections can be found in places such as San Vitale, where Justinian and his royal entourage are situated in a holy setting (Fig.2). Emperor Theodore Angelus Comnenus Ducas (1222-30) minted a series of nomisma,

Comnenan Coin (Byzantine, 1222-30, Thessaloniki, silver trach, British Museum, London, CM 1904,5-11,406 BMC VI) (Cat.14), placing himself next to and facing Saint Demetrios.³⁴ They both hold a long cross, ornamented with an O, ., and Δ. The Emperor Theodore is shown dressed in typical Byzantine regalia. He is bearded and wears a crown, tunic and star embossed sash. The haloed Saint's dress, as opposed to the Emperor's, is in preparation for battle. He wears a cuirass, a long cloak and brandishes a sword and shield.

The Emperor Manuel II Palaeologos (1391-1423) minted coins during his reign, **Palaeologan Coin**, (Byzantine, 1391-1423, Constantinople, copper tornese, British Museum, London, CM BMC 14) (Cat.13) depicting himself on horseback, led by Saint Demetrios, also mounted.³⁵ By this time the Saint was firmly established as both patron Saint of Thessaloniki and

holy defender of the empire, therefore it was only reasonable that despite the Emperor's rank in society, he would always follow behind and be protected by the holy majesty of Saint Demetrios. By creating a currency connecting the Emperor to the Saint, transactions using this coinage had imperial backing in addition to spiritual protection. The coins also serve as an inadvertent souvenir from the city's patron Saint.



Cat.3 - Enkolpion Reliquary of Saint George / Saint Demetrios, (Byzantine, 12th-13th century, Thessaloniki, gold and cloisonné enamel, British Museum, London, M&LA 1926.4-9.1)

One step closer to having constant contact with the Saint, was to carry his relics on one's person. Reliquaries in the form of pendants came in a variety of sizes, materials and shapes. One of the most exquisite surviving pieces is the **Enkolpion Reliquary of Saint George / Saint Demetrios**, (Byzantine, 12th-13th century, Thessaloniki, gold and cloisonné enamel, British Museum, London, M&LA 1926.4-9.1) (Cat.3). The enkolpion comprises an annular gold cover beneath which, on a hinged rectangular flap, is an image of the saint asleep, lying within a ciborium. Under the flap the face of the medallion carries a similar image of the saint, in repoussé gold, that shows him lying in what appears to be his sarcophagus. On the back of the enkolpion, a bust-length figure of Saint George in military attire, holding a raised sword in his right hand and its scabbard in his left. Running along the border of the back and the sides of the pendant are two iambic verses referring to Saint Demetrios, the content of which show that the verse actually started on the missing cover. The inscription on the side

of the enkolpion writes: “Being anointed by your blood and your myrrh.” On the border: “He supplicates you to be his fervent guardian in battles”. The inscription suggests that the man who commissioned it was a military official who sought the protection of Saint Demetrios and Saint George in battle. The verses imply that the enkolpion was originally created to contain the miraculous blood and myrrh that seeped from the tomb of Saint Demetrios. The existence of inscription and the close iconographic similarities of the ciborion depicted in the pendant and the Saint’s actual tomb in the basilica of Saint Demetrios, indicate that the missing medallion must have depicted the latter and that the enkolpion was created in Thessaloniki to carry his relics.

A gold enkolpion in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, **Enkolpion Reliquary of Saint Demetrios** , (Byzantine, 13th-14th century, Thessaloniki, gold and cloisonne enamel, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C., no. 53.20) (Cat.7) emulates the one in the British Museum and dates to the same time.

On the obverse it depicts a bust of Saint Demetrios in identical pose to the latter executed in the Senkschmelz technique, encircled by an inscription. Slight differences between the two, include



Cat.7 - Enkolpion Reliquary of Saint Demetrios, (Byzantine, 13th-14th century, Thessaloniki, gold and cloisonne enamel, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C., no. 53.20)



Fig.24 - Double-sided enamelled copper medallion of Saint George and Saint Theodore, (Byzantine, 12th or 13th century, East Mediterranean, enamel on copper, British Museum, London, M&LA 1906,11-31)



Fig.25 - Medallions from an Icon Frame, (Byzantine, 11th-12th century, Constantinople, gold with cloisonné enamel, The Metropolitan Museum, New York, no. 17.190.670-78)

Saint Demetrios holding a lance in his right hand in the **Dumbarton Oaks Enkolpion**, instead of a sword, the colours of enamel applied and the detailing. On the reverse Saints Sergios and Bacchus are represented full-length holding martyrs' crosses. The combination of Saints recalls their grouping in the basilica of Saint Demetrios in Thessaloniki.

Both the Dumbarton Oaks and the British Museum enkolpia are made with gold. But by the 13th century, translucency was generally replaced with opaque enamels, therefore the need for a gold base was no longer a requirement. Copper was increasingly used by this time; it could be mercury gilded and the lesser quality metal would not show through the glass. A **Double-sided enamelled copper medallion of Saint George and Saint Theodore**, (Byzantine, 12th or 13th century, East Mediterranean, enamel on copper, British Museum, London, M&LA 1906,11-31) (Fig.24) displayed in the British Museum, exemplifies mercury gilding; its colours are dull and have lost their jewel-like



Fig.26 - Nativity Mosaic (Byzantine, 11th century, mosaic, Church of the Dormition, Daphni, Greece)

quality.

The **British Museum Enkolpion** has translucent green enamelling in the saint's halo and in a rossette punctuating the inscription around the edge of the reliquary, through which the metal can be viewed. The metal is also visible at the edges of the cloisons and the wider bands which articulate the pattern in enamel. Therefore, with such limited areas of the metal exposed, the use of gold on this object could be construed as a luxury.



Cat.8 - Pilgrim's Ampulla ,
(Byzantine, 13th century,
Thessaloniki, lead, Museum of
Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece)

Both Saint George in the **British Museum Enkolpion** and Saint Demetrios on the **Dumbarton Oaks Enkolpion** look towards the right, as if to indicate the existence of the Saint(s) on the other side. It seems that this may have been the practice within medallion iconography. Looking at the medallions from a Byzantine icon frame of the 11th -12th century, **Medallions from an Icon Frame**, (Byzantine, 11th-12th century, Constantinople, gold with cloisonne enamel, The Metropolitan Museum, New York, no. 17.190.670-78) (Fig.25), one finds that all the figures are looking towards the side. The same eye movement may be observed in other media, such as the Virgin's glance in the nativity scene of Daphni mosaic, **Nativity Mosaic** (Byzantine, 11th century, mosaic, Church of the Dormition, Daphni, Greece) (Fig.26). This characteristic eye movement seems to indicate that the depicted figure is safeguarding the viewer or the owner of the object, protecting him from evil.



Cat.9 - Pilgrim's Ampulla ,
(Byzantine, 13th century,
Thessaloniki, lead, Archeological
Collection, Kavala, Greece, no. B30/
15-20-80, Eph. of Byz. Art)

Another type of portable object which

created the sense of 'constant connection' with the Saint were the koutrouvia. These were small ampullae, usually constructed of lead, which held myrrh from the Saint's tomb. They were worn by pilgrims to his tomb and acted as amulets, in a similar fashion to the enkolpia. A **Pilgrim's Ampulla** ,



Fig.27 - Pilgrim flask with Soldier Saints and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre , (Byzantine, 12th or 13th century, Holy Land, lead-alloy, British Museum, London, M&LA 76,12-14,18)

(Byzantine, 13th century, Thessaloniki, lead, Archeological Collection, Kavala, Greece, no. B30/ 15-20-80, Eph. of Byz. Art) (Cat.9), depicts Saint Demetrios clad in soldier's garb on one side and on the other, shows a female figure in a Deesis pose, who could be the Virgin or Saint Theodora of Thessaloniki. The pose is typical of depictions of the Virgin, but Saint Theodora's tomb was in the crypt of the basilica of Saint Demetrios and was thought at one point to be the one from which the myrrh actually seeped. Ignace de Smolensk, a Russian monk visiting Thessaloniki, described Saint Theodora in his diary ³⁶ as "μυροβλυτιδα", which means 'she from whom myrrh seeps'. ³⁷ "Μυροβλυτης" is the name traditionally given to Saint Demetrios, due to his miraculous myrrh. The above diary entry was written in the 14th century and the ampulla was manufactured in the 13th century; therefore one could suggest that it was intended to contain myrrh from the tomb of Saint Theodora. There is another similar, if slightly larger, **Pilgrim's Ampulla** , (Byzantine, 13th century, Thessaloniki, lead, Museum of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece) (Cat.8) which has the image of Saint Demetrios holding a lance in his right hand and wearing a chlamys tied at his chest, on one side. On the other side there survives only the inscription: H A [ΓΙΑ] – ΘΕΟΔΩΡ [Α], Saint

Theodora.³⁸ A third koutrouvion, **Pilgrim's Ampulla**, (Byzantine, 13th century, Thessaloniki, lead, Collection of Numismatic Museum of Athens, Athens, Greece), depicts Saint Demetrios in civil attire, wearing a mantle tied at the chest and raising his right to his chest in a Deesis pose. On the reverse there is a depiction of Saint Theodora holding a cross in her right hand and raising her left in the Deesis pose. The majority of koutrouvia depict a combination of both Saints; this could be in order to guarantee the bearer protection by both Saints. It could also be an expression of their connection, in view of their communal burial area.

Pilgrim's ampullae were not a phenomenon found in Thessaloniki alone; their use was widespread, especially in areas of heavy pilgrimage. The **Pilgrim flask with Soldier Saints and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre**, (Byzantine, 12th or 13th century, Holy Land, lead-alloy, British Museum, London, M&LA 76,12-14,18) (Fig.27) is an example of an ampulla manufactured and sold in the Holy Land. The two military Saints depicted may be Saints Demetrios and George, probably the two most popular at this time; they could however be Saints Nestor or Prokopios or any other number of holy warriors. The 12th-13th century date of this object is indicated by the chain-mail garments and particularly, the kite-shaped shields, which show a date after 1100 and place the ampulla in the context of the Crusades.

In Byzantium religion played an integral part in every day living; no boundaries separated secular and religious life. In Thessaloniki, his feast day was celebrated with great splendour, his image mass produced on a monumental scale and figure venerated intensely and by all. The strong connection between the city and the Saint produced a large repertoire of portable objects associated with him and bears witness to the powerful personal relationship Orthodox Christians had with him.

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1 - Icon with Saint Demetrios

Byzantine

second half of 10th century

Ivory

19.6 x 12.2 x 1 cm (73/4 x 43/4 x 3/8 in.)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cloisters Collection.(1970.324.3)



INSCRIPTION: On either side of the head: Ο Α
ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ (Saint Demetrios)

PROVENANCE: Formerly in the collections of the comte de Bastard, Paris and Ernst Kofler, Lucerne.

LITERATURE: Lenormant 1839, pt.2, pl.XXXVII;
Horster 1957, pp. 33-51; Schnitzler et al. 1964,
no. 57; Frazer 1990; Cutler 1994, pp. 117f., figs.
126, 130; New York, 1997, p.134-35, no. 81.

EXHIBITION: Leningrad (Saint Petersburg) 1990, no. 12; New York 1997.

An ivory icon with Saint Demetrios carved in high relief within a deep frame. The nimbed figure wears a chlamys fastened at his right shoulder swept back over the shoulders, protruding from under his left arm and looped over his left wrist. He wears a pteryges and a leather strip skirt, over a short tunic and has a sash loosely tied around his chest. The figure carries a spear (now broken) in his right hand and rests his left hand on an oval shield. A scabbard decorated with geometric shapes hangs at his right hip, adding to the military splendour of this powerful image.

According to Kazdan, the militarisation of the Saints is a phenomenon of the second half of the 11th century. ¹ Indeed, most images of Saint Demetrios in military attire date to after this period; therefore a date of c.1000 for this ivory may be too early. In addition, F. J. Cotsonis in his research on the iconography on byzantine seals found that, in the 10th-11th centuries, the frequency with which Saint Demetrios was shown armed on seals was 16%, whereas in the 11th century it was 73% ².

This icon is one of the few ivory ex-votos from the Middle-Byzantine period. It is highly stylised and carved in high relief, with some areas deeply undercut, such as under the arms. The four holes in the corners are evidence of mounting, whereas the gap between the figure's feet shows that the artefact was mounted at the top of a pole during processions, most probably during the festivities on his Saint's day, the 26th of October.

^{1/2}. Cutler, A., Late Antique and Byzantine Ivory Carving, Hampshire, UK, 1998, p. 654

2 - Reliquary of Saint Demetrios

Byzantine

1059-1067

Silver gilt

H: 15cm (57/8 in.), DIAM: 11.5cm (41/2 in.)

State Historical and Cultural Museum
"Moscow Kremlin", Moscow, Russian
Federation, (MZ. 1148)



INSCRIBED: On the panel with Saints : Ο Α ΝΕΣΤΩΡ (Saint Nestor), Ο Α ΛΟΥΠΙΟΣ (Saint Loupos); on the panel with the imperial couple: ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙ ΕΝ ΧΩ ΘΩ ΠΙΣΤΟ C ΒΑCΙΑ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤ ΡΩΜΕ Ο ΔΟΥΚΑ C (Constantine Doukas in Christ the Lord pious Empress and Emperor of the Romans), + ΕΥΔΟΚΙΑ ΕΝ ΧΩ ΤΩ ΘΩ ΜΓ ΒΑ CΙ ΡΩΜΕΩΝ (Eudokia in Christ the Lord great Empress of the Romans); on the side panels: + ΣΑΦΗ C ΠΕΦΥΚΑ ΤΟΥ ΚΙΒΩΡΙΟΥ ΤΥΠΟΣ / ΤΟΥ ΛΟΓΧΟΝΥΚΤΟΥ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΟ C ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ / ΕΧΩ ΔΕ ΧΡΙ CΤΟΝ ΕΚΤΟC ΕCΤΗΛΩΜΕΝΟΝ / CΤΕΦΟΝΤΑ Χ ΕΡCΙ ΤΗΝ ΚΑΛΗΝ Ε ΥΝΟΡΙΔΑ / Ο Δ ΑΥ ΜΕ ΤΕΥΞΑ C ΙΩΑΝΝΗ C ΕΚ ΓΕΝΟΥ C / ΑΥΤΟΡΕΙΑΝΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΤΥΧΗΝ ΜΥ CΤΟΓΡΑΦΟC (I am a true image of the ciborion of the lance-pierced martyr Demetrios. On the outside I have Christ inscribed [represented], who with his hands crowns the fair couple. He who made me anew is John of the family of the Autoreianoi, by profession mystographos.)

LITERATURE: A. Grabar 1950, pp. 3-28; Bank 1977, p.308; Bakirtzis, 1997, p. 497, pl. 1; New York, 1997,

EXHIBITION :New York 1997.

An eight-sided portable reliquary in the shape of Saint Demetrios' ciborion. The unequal sides of the reliquary are separated by columns supporting open arches which have stylised acanthus leaves in their spandrels. The arches frame oil lamps supported by tall bases and support an eight-sided conical roof, which culminated in a cross, now lost. Saints Nestor and Loupos identified by inscriptions, are depicted on the doors of the object, clad in military attire, complete with chlamys and cuirass. On the opposite wide side, Emperor Constantine X Doukas and his wife, Eudokia Makremvolitissa, as identified by inscriptions, are crowned by a bust figure of Christ.

The two remaining wide sides carry a continuous inscription in lines of twelve-syllabic verse, stating that the object is a true copy of the ciborion of Saint Demetrios, that the patron was John Autoreianos one of high office and that on its exterior Christ crowns a couple. The above sides are separated by four narrower sides and are decorated with a vine and palmette motif in low relief.

The interior of the ciborion reliquary conceals a small rectangular silver box, reminiscent of the empty larnax inside the original ciborion, which would have contained the blood and myrrh of Saint Demetrios. The original little larnax, separated from the ciborion, is now in Mount Athos.

The Emperor Constantine had given his wife an important role in public affairs, due to his ill-health; this is why she is depicted holding the orb and given the title "Great Empress of the Romans" on the ciborion reliquary. The inscription and depictions on the artefact may point to the fact that the object was an offering to the emperor by John Autoreianos as a get-well gift.

Hammering and repouse' have been employed for the manufacture of this charming object; the vine and palmette motif on the four narrow sides could have been created by moulding, but the irregular appearance of these ornamented areas is evidence of intricate manual craftsmanship. The technique, design and medium of this reliquary combine to what must have been a prize object to its owner.

3 - Enkolpion Reliquary of Saint Demetrios and Saint George

Byzantine
12th-13th century
Thessaloniki
gold and cloisonne enamel
Diam. 37,5 mm, thickness 10.5 mm

British Museum, London. (M & LA 1926. 4- 9.1)

INSCRIBED: To the right of Saint George: Ο ΑΓΕΩΡ / ΓΗΟ C (Saint George)
On the border: ΑΙΤΕΙ CΕ ΘΕΡΜΟΝ ΦΡΟΥΡΟ ΕΝ ΜΑΧΑΙ C ΕΧΕΙΝ (He supplicates you to be his fervent guardian in battles)
On the side: ΑΙΜΑΤΙ ΤΩ CΩ ΚΑΙ ΜΥΡΩ ΚΕΧΡΙCΜΕΝΟΝ (Being anointed by your blood and myrrh.) 18th century inscription: "St. Kethevan the Queen's relic. cross:true'



PROVENANCE: Engraved on the annular bezel is a mid-18th century Georgian inscription suggesting that the reliquary once contained a fragment of the True Cross which belonged or had belonged to Saint Kethevan, a Georgian queen martyred by Shah Abbas I in 1624. The reliquary was bought by the British Museum in 1926.

LITERATURE: Dalton, O.M., 'An enamelled gold reliquary', *Recueil d'études, dédiées à la mémoire de Kondakov, N.P.*, Prague, 1926, pp. 275-7, pl. XXX and 'An enamelled gold reliquary of the twelfth century', *British Museum Quarterly*, I 1926-7, pp. 33-5, pl. XVI; Grabar, A., 'Quelques reliquaires de Saint Demetrios et le martyrium du saint à Salonique', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5, 1950, pp.3-28 and 'Un nouveau reliquaire de Saint Demetrios', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8, 1954, pp. 307-13, reviewed by Alexander, P.J. in *Speculum* 31, 1956, p370; Ross, 1965, p. 111; Wessel, 1967, no. 63; RBK II, 1971 (s.v. 'Email'), cols. 126-7; Gauthier, M.M., 'Les routes de la foi: reliques et reliquaires de Jerusalem à Compostelle', Paris [Fribourg], 1983, pp. 40-4, no.19; Cormack 1985, p. 64, fig. 19; Tait, 1986, no. 504; Buckton, 1994, pp. 185-6, no. 200.

EXHIBITION: British Antique Dealers' Association Golden Jubilee Exhibition, London Victoria and Albert Museum, 1968, no.186; Jewellery, 1976, no.360; Byzantium, Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture, London, 1994, no.200.

This exquisite little reliquary comprises an annular gold cover with an 18th century Georgian inscription. Beneath this cover, on a hinged rectangular flap, is an image of the Saint lying within a ciborium, dressed in his mantle, eyes closed and hands crossed over his chest. A lamp hangs over him from the centre of the arch. Under the flap, the face of the medallion carries a similar image of the Saint, in repose' this time, that shows him lying in what appears to be his sarcophagus.

On the back of the enkolpion, a bust-length figure of Saint George is depicted, in military attire, holding a raised sword in his right hand and its scabbard in his left. His name is inscribed in Greek in red enamel letters against the white opaque enamel background.

Running along the border of the back and the sides of the pendant are two iambic verses referring to Saint Demetrios, the content of which show that the verse actually started on the missing cover.

The verses imply that the enkolpion was originally created to contain the miraculous blood and myrrh that seeped from the tomb of Saint Demetrios.

The existence of this verse and the close iconographic similarities of the ciborium in the pendant and the Saint's actual tomb in the church of Saint Demetrios in Thessaloniki, indicate that the missing medallion must have depicted the latter and that the enkolpion was created to carry his relics. These would also indicate that the enkolpion was manufactured in Thessaloniki, the city of which Demetrios was the patron Saint.

The technique in which the enkolpion has been enamelled provides a good indication of its date of manufacture. ¹ Vollschemelz was the first stage and involved covering the metal of the surface completely with cloisonné of enamel, with translucent green enamel used for the background. The inscriptions were created by making letters out of gold strips and setting them on edge in the enamel of the background. This technique was employed at the end of Iconoclasm to about mid-10th century. The medallions on the **Votive Crown of the Emperor Leo VI** (Byzantine, 9th-10th century, metalwork with cloisonné enamel and pearl decoration, Tesoro San Marco, Italy, no. 886-912) are examples of such workmanship. From the middle of the 10th century, Sakschemelz came into fashion. This technique involved leaving the background free of cloisonné; the enamel figure was silhouetted against the metal of the plaque. The earliest securely dated Sakschemelz is that on the **Limburg Staurotheke** (Byzantine, 968-985, hammered gilt metal, enamels and gems on a wooden core, Diocesan Museum, Limburg na er Lahn). In the 12th century, this technique gave way to Vollschemelz, but with an opaque background this time. Inscriptions were fully enamelled, comprising characters fashioned from gold strip bent to conform to the outline of the letter. The opaque enamel which filled the letters contrasted with the enamel background; white characters against a dark blue ground were very popular.

The **Enkolpion Reliquary of Saint Demetrios and Saint George** belongs to this period. The area around the Saint is white with red enamelled letter, while the inscription around the edge of the medallion consists of white characters against a dark blue ground.

3 - Enkolpion Reliquary of Saint Demetrios and Saint George - Notes

¹ Buckton D., 'All that glistens...Byzantine enamel on copper', Θυμιαμα Στη Μνημη Της Λασκαρινας Μπουρα, Athena, 1994, pages 47-8

Idem, Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections, London, 1994, page 18.

Idem, 'Chinese whispers: The premature birth of the typical Byzantine enamel', Byzantine East. Latin West: Art Historical Studies in Honour of Kurt Weitzmann, New Jersey, 1995, page 595.

4 - Icon with the Military Saints George, Theodore and Demetrios

Byzantine
late 11th- early 12th century
Constantinople
egg tempera over gesso on wood
28.5 X 36 X 2.3 cm (11 1/4 X 14
1/8 X 7/8 in.)

The State Hermitage, Saint
Petersburg, Russian Federation
(I-183)



INSCRIBED: Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ [ΓΕ]ΩΡΓΙΟΣ
(Saint George) Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ[Θ]ΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ (Saint Theodore)
Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟ C (Saint Demetrios)

PROVENANCE: Brought from Mount Athos to Saint Petersburg by Peter
Sevast'ianov in 1860.

LITERATURE: Prokhorov, 1879, p.50, no. 11; Likhachev, N., 1898 and 1902,
p. 13; Sychev, 1916, p. 8; Smirnov, 1928, p.27; Kondakov, 1931, vol. 3, p.
101; Lazarev, 1947-48, vol. 1, p. 126, vol. 2, pl. 204; Lazarev, 1967, pp.
205, 258; Bank, 1977, no.242; Moscow, 1977, vol. 2, no. 471, p. 28; Bank,
1985, no.240; Lazarev, 1986, p. 98; Golubev, 1988, pp. 262-64; New York,
1997, pp. 123-24, no. 69.

EXHIBITION: The Glory of Byzantium, New York, 1997, no. 69.

A portable icon depicting Saints George, Theodore and Demetrios, each clad in a short tunic, cuirass and chlamys which is fastened at the right shoulder with a rosette shaped broach. Saints George and Theodore each rest their right hands on a spears and left hands on shields. Saint Demetrios raises a sword to his right shoulder with his right hand and with the other holds the scabbard.

This icon has undergone a considerable amount of restoration during the Middle ages, the extent of which are referred to in an enlightening verse from the poem 'On the Icon of Three Warriors Restored by Andronikos Kamateros', "Wanting the warriors features to appear younger, I scrape away the wrinkles of old age from their representations" ¹ Certain details were damaged in the course of the repairs and the gesso around the edges and the outer rim was completely replaced. The last Late Byzantine restoration, left the icon with a turquoise blue background and white inscriptions, which led scholars to compare it with frescoes of 1199 from the Spasa na Nereditse Church (Church of the Saviour), near Novgorod and assign it to a provincial school.

The artefact was brought to its present state by the Hermitage restoration in 1964. ² Microscopic examination has revealed traces of intricate painting of a very high standard. The technique applied to this icon was of exceptional craftsmanship, rendering the faces with such skill, that they seemed to glow in a divine light. Indeed, the whole object would have given the impression of being self illuminated.

This little icon belongs to the culture of portable objects and would have most likely been carried by a military person to secure protection in battle.

¹ (Cod. Marc. gr. 524) in: The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era; A.D. 843-1261, ed. Evans, H. C. and Wixom, W. D., New York, 1997, p.122

² Piatnitsky, Y., The Glory of Byzantium, op. cit. p. 122.

5 - Icon with Three Military Saints

Byzantine

12th century

Constantinople

Steatite, with traces of gilding on figures and ornament

17.5 X 13.4 X 0.7 cm (6 7/8 X 5 1/4 X 3/8 in.)

Natsional'nyi Zapovindyk "Khersones Tavriis'kyi", Sevastopil', Ukraine (84/36445)

PROVENANCE: Excavated in the northern part of Khersones in 1956.

LITERATURE: Belov, 1960, pp. 257-63; Bank, 1964, pp. 13-21; Bank, 1967, p. 237, pl. 1; Bank, "Steatites", 1970, pp. 367-68; Weitzmann, 1972, pp. 95-6, 98; Darkevich, 1975, pp. 212, 214, 283-84, fig. 344; Bank, 1977, pp. 296-97, no. 147; Moscow, 1977, vol.2, no. 616, p. 114; Bank, Prikladnoe, 1978, pp. 98-99, pl. 82; Bank, 1981, pp. 112-13; Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, Byzantine Icons, 1985, pp. 38-40, 65, 111-13, no. 21; Moscow, 1991, p. 84; New York, 1997, pp. 300-1, no. 203.

EXHIBITION: Moscow, 1977, vol. 2, p. 11, no. 616, ; Moscow, 1991, p. 84, no. 83; New York, 1997, p. 300, no. 203.



An icon depicting Saints Theodore Stratelates, George and Demetrios, each in military attire and nimbed with an ornamented halo. There were probably inscriptions in golden letters identifying the figures, but they have been lost; however, the lack of inscriptions does not prohibit the viewer from identifying the figures. ¹ Saint Theodore on the left is recognisable by his long pointed beard; he wears a short tunic, with a lamellar cuirass and a mail skirt. His chlamys is fastened at the right shoulder and swept over, falling in soft folds over his left shoulder. With his right hand he holds a spear; his left hand seems to be resting on a kite-shaped shield resting on its point next to him, but the missing fragments obscure the image. Saint George in the centre can be recognised by his broad face and curly hair covering his ears, ² in contrast to Saint Demetrios' locks which reveal both ears. His chlamys is treated in the same fashion as Saint Theodore's, revealing his cuirass "which is probably made of boiled leather or horn. ³ Over his short tunic he wears a leather strip skirt and around his waist he wears the officer's sash descended from Roman military dress. His right hand holds the top of his lance and left rests on a kite-shaped shield in the same manner Saint Theodore's and Saint Demetrios' left hands do.

Saint Demetrios wears a mail coat which stops at mid-thigh level over a short tunic, his chlamys clasped at the right, swept back over the right shoulder and folded over his left shoulder in an unusual manner. With his right hand he raises a long, double-edged sword which rests on his right shoulder.

The three holy warriors are framed in an apse decorated with a running palmette design, with spiralling columns supported by pine cone-like bases and with capitals in a bird motif. The spandrels of the arch contain a medallion each with a bust of an angel in three-quarter view. A bust of Christ with a tripartite nimbus floats above Saint George, blessing the Saints.

This steatite icon was put together from thirty-nine fragments; several missing pieces have been filled with stucco. The largest sections restored are in the left spandrel above the head of the figure on the left, and at the lower legs and feet of the Saints in the middle and on the right. Various chips are missing along the cracks. Surprisingly, despite all the damage, the plaque retains all its original borders and the surface is in good condition; none of the faces have been disfigured.

This is one of the largest and finest examples of its kind. Almost a millennium after its manufacture, this icon preserves the exquisite craftsmanship that went into its creation, even though there are obvious signs of exposure to fire. The composition is executed in low relief; the warm curved features of the faces contrast with the crisp carving of the military attire and the sharp detailed incisions on the cuirasses, which are characteristic of the 12th century. ⁴ The accomplished workmanship combined with the high cost of steatite material point to noble patronage.

¹ Kalavrezou- Maxeiner, *Byzantine Icons in Steatite*, Wien, 1985, p. 112.

² Kalavrezou- Maxeiner, *Byzantine Icons*, op. cit., p. 111.

³ J. F. Faldon, *Some Aspects of Byzantine Military Technology from the Sixth to the Tenth Centuries*, *BMGS* 1, 1975, p.34; T. Kolias, *Die Schutz Waffen der byzantinischen Armee. Eine realienkundliche Untersuchung der schrift Quellen*. Dissertation, Vienna, 1980, pp.38-63

⁴ Kalavrezou- Maxeiner, *Byzantine Icons*, op. cit., p. 112.

6 - Cameo with Saint Demetrios and Saints George Blessed by Christ

Byzantine
11th-12th century (mount: 16th
century, France)
Constantinople
sardonyx in three layers (brown, blue
and red); enamelled gold mount
6.7 X 5.2X 0.7cm (2 5/8 X 2 X 1/4
in)

Bibliothèque Nationale de
France, Cabinet des médailles, Paris,
France. (Babelon 342)

INSCRIBED: IC XC (Jesus Christ), O
ΑΓ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟ C (Saint George), O ΑΓ
ΔΙΜΗΤΡΙΟ C (Saint Demetrios).

LITERATURE: Babelon, 1897, p. 190;
Lavriotes, 1988, p. 71.

EXHIBITION: Paris, Byzance, 1992, no. 193; New York, 1997, no. 132.



A Byzantine, oval, three layered sardonyx cameo, mounted on a 16th century gold and enamel mount, depicting Saints George and Demetrios being blessed by Christ. Saint George raises a sword to his right shoulder with his right hand whereas Saint Demetrios touches the top of a lance with his right hand; each figure rests his left hand on a kite-shaped shield. A bust of Christ with a tripartite nimbus hovers above the two, blessing them with both hands. This composition became popular in the 11th century, evidence of which are the surviving objects depicting this iconography, in a variety of media.

"The exquisite workmanship of this piece -which according to Ernst Babelon combines in its composition the iconography of the Middle Ages with that of antiquity and the time of Constantine- indicates that it was probably commissioned by a member of the Byzantine nobility, possibly of the military class."¹

The cameo would have either functioned as an amulet for its patron, combining the protective powers of the two holy warriors and the figure of Christ, possibly in a combat situation or been part of a larger religious object.

¹ Katsarelis, D.G., The Glory of Byzantium, op. cit. p. 178.

7 - Enkolpion Reliquary of Saint Demetrios

Byzantine,
13th-14th century,
Thessaloniki,
gold and cloisonne enamel,
Diam. 2.8cm (1 1/8 in), thickness 6cm (1/4 in.)
Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D. C. (53.20)

INSCRIBED: On either side of Saint's portrait, Ο Α ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ (Saint Demetrios); encircling the portrait and the side of the reliquary, + ΣΕΠΤΟΝ ΔΟΧΕΙΟΝ ΑΙΜΑΤΟΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ / ΣΥΝ ΜΥΡΩ ΦΕΡΕΙ ΠΙΣΤΗΣ Η ΤΟΥ ΣΕΡΓΙΟΥ / ΑΙΤΕΙ ΣΕ ΚΑΙ ΖΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΘΑΝΩΝ ΡΥΣΤΗΝ ΕΧΕΙΝ / ΣΥΝ ΤΟΙΣ ΔΥΟ ΚΙΝ ΜΑΡΤΥΣΙ ΚΑΙ ΑΘΛΟΦΟΡ[ΟΙ]Σ (The faith of Sergios carries [wears] the venerable container with the blood and myrrh of Saint Demetrios. He asks to have you as protector both in life and in death together with the two victorious martyrs.).



LITERATURE: Grabar, A., "Nouveau Reliquaire", 1954, pp. 305-13; Alexander, 1956, pp. 369-70; Ross, 1965, pp.111-12, no. 160; New York, 1997, p. 168, no. 117.

EXHIBITION: New York, 1997, no. 117.

A round gold and enamel pendant reliquary, depicting Saint Demetrios on the obverse and Saint Bacchos and Sergios on the reverse; both medallions are executed in the Senkschmeltz technique. The bust of Saint Demetrios is clad in military attire, wears a chlamys, holds a lance in his right hand and a sword-handle in his left. The nimbed figure's name is inscribed on either side of his image and an inscription, both encircled by an inscription executed in Vollschrneltz, running all the way around the periphery of the surface.

The obverse depicts the full-length nimbed figures of Saints Bacchus and Sergius, both draped in mantles, each holding a martyr's cross in their right hands and raising their left hands in prayer. On the obverse of this surface, within the interior of the pendant, there are two flaps decorated with beaded wire, which conceal a reclining figure of Saint Demetrios in his ciborium. This little figure, executed in repouse, is very similar to that concealed in the **Enkolpion Reliquary of Saint Demetrios and Saint George** (Byzantine, 12th-13th century, Thessaloniki, gold and cloisonne enamel, British Museum, London. (M & LA 1926. 4- 9.1)) in the British Museum and dates to the same time. There is also an inscription in Vollschrneltz, which runs along the edge of the pendant.

This enkolpion combines both enamelling techniques popular within Byzantium and illuminates the fact that one did not completely replace the other throughout the changes trends. Repouse', hammering and granulation have also been applied during the manufacture of this artefact, making it an example of competent and imaginative workmanship.

8 - Pilgrim's Ampulla

Byzantine
13th century
Thessaloniki
lead

height: 7cm, diam. 5cm

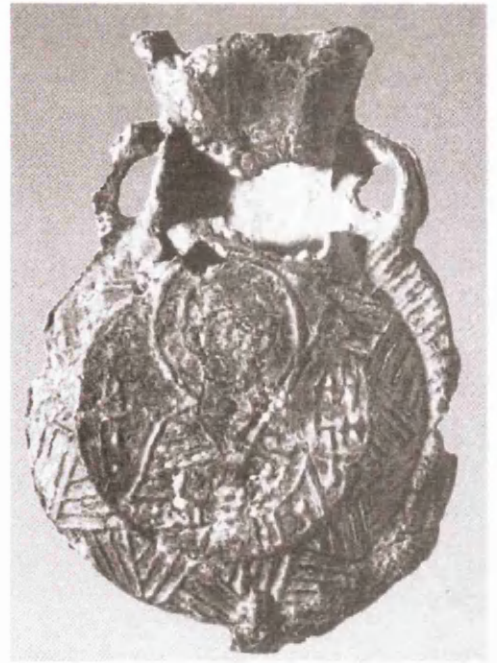
Archeological Collection of Museum of
Thessaloniki, Greece

INSCRIBED: Either side of Saint, O ΑΓΙΟC
ΔΗΜΗΤΡ[ΙΟ C] (Saint Demetrios), H A[ΓΙΑ]
ΘΕΟΔΩΡ[A] (Saint Theodora).

PROVENANCE: Excavated at Anastasioupolis -
Peritheorion in Thrace.

LITERATURE: Bakirtzis, 1981, pp. 523-28;
publication of Greek Ministry of Culture,
1986, pp. 30-31.

EXHIBITION: Thessaloniki, 1986, no. 117-2.



A pilgrim's lead ampulla, round and flattened out, with two small handles applied from the neck to the shoulder of the flask; depicts Saint Demetrios in military attire, holding a lance and wearing a chlamys tied at the shoulder, with inscription, on the obverse. On the reverse there survives an inscription which reads, Saint Theodora. The surface of the neck facing this side has two pairs of printed lines which form an X and an abstract floral design. The design on these flasks was produced by stamping the object into a stone mould.

Ampulla's such as this contained myrrh from the ciborium of Saint Demetrios and were given to pilgrims to the tomb and to soldiers as amulets. The function of these flasks originated in the Holy Land during the Early Christian period; they would contain blessed oil or earth from there and other places of pilgrimage and were called eulogies (blessings).¹

In Thessaloniki these ampullas were called koutrouvia.

¹ C. Metzger, Les ampoules a eulogie de Musee du Luvre, Paris, 1981.

9 - Pilgrim's Ampulla one in glory

Byzantine

13th century

Thessaloniki

lead

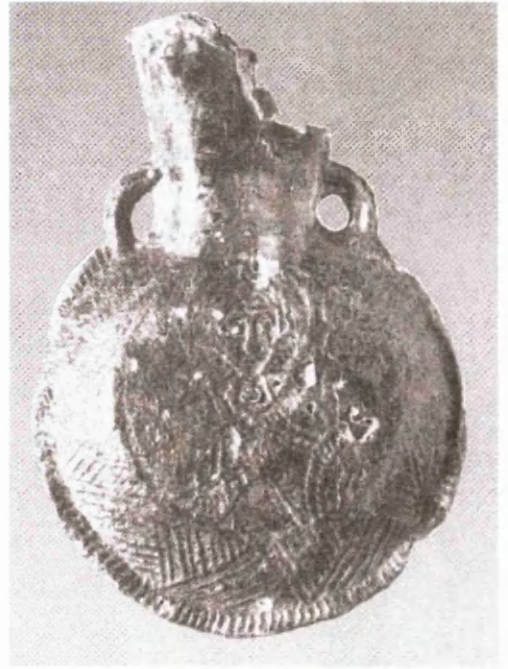
height: 5.5cm, diam. 4cm

Archeological Collection, Kavala, Greece
(B30/ 15-20-80)

PROVENANCE: Excavated at Gratsianou
(present-day Gratini), Western Thrace.

LITERATURE: Bakirtzis, 1981, pp. 523-28;
Bakirtzis, "Ampullae", 1990; publication of
Greek Ministry of Culture, 1986, pp. 30-31.

EXHIBITION: Thessaloniki, 1986, no. 117-
3; New York, 1997,



A pilgrim's ampulla depicting Saint Demetrios wearing a chlamys fastened at the shoulder, holding a lance in his right hand, a round shield in his left hand. On the obverse there is a depiction of a female Saint in the Deesis pose; she is either the Virgin or Saint Theodora.

These koutrouvia held the myrrh of Saint Demetrios and were believed to protect the bearer from evil. Every Saint in the Christian Orthodox religion had a gift, a function, which was particular to that specific Saint; when a worshipper had a related need, s/he would pray to this Saint in order to be helped in the specific area. Saint Demetrios was the patron Saint of Thessaloniki; he was protection for the citizens of that city. Carrying his myrrh on one's person, meant carrying his protection with one.

10 - Bronze Miniature Icon of Saint Demetrios

Byzantine,
14th century,
Thessaloniki,
bronze,
3cm by 3cm,

The Rotonda Archeological
Collection , Thessaloniki (BA 21)

INSCRIBED: Ο ΑΓΙΟΥ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ

LITERATURE: publication of Greek
Ministry of Culture 1986, pp. 88-
89, pl. 24/7.

EXHIBITION: Θεσσαλονίκη, Ιστορία
και Τέχνη , Thessaloniki, 1986.



A square bronze icon depicting the bust of Saint Demetrios. The figure is clad in military attire, holds a spear in his right hand and a round shield in the other. The head, face and visible hand of the Saint are in high relief, whereas the rest of the decoration is either in low relief or incised. Three circular grooves have been incised into the metal to create the Saint's nimbus, on either side of which reads the inscription of his name.

This tiny icon was created by hot bronze being poured into a mould. Hammering and incising would have been applied to bring the image to its finished state. There are no holes or markings on this tiny icon, as evidence of suspension or mounting on a larger religious object. It would have functioned as an amulet for its patron, most probably a soldier asking for Saint Demetrios' protection on combat.

The Rotonda Archeological Collection includes a similar item; **A Bronze Miniature Icon of Saint Nicholas**, (Byzantine, 11th century, bronze, The Rotonda Archeological Collection, Thessaloniki, BA 2), which is slightly larger, at 11 X 9 cm. This little icon has a more complex iconography, depicting a full-length Saint Nicholas, flanked by busts of Christ and the Virgin, with a small figure of the donor at his feet. The frame is wide with scroll vegetal tendrils inhabited by medallions containing the two Archangels in the top corners and Saints in the rest.

11 - Icon of Saint Demetrios

Byzantine,
14th century,
Thessaloniki,
miniature mosaic,
17 X 14 cm (inc. silver frame: 24 X
16.5 cm)

Museo Civico, Sassofero, Italy

INSCRIBED: in mosaic, Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ
ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ (Saint Demetrios); on right
side of silver frame, ΑΥΤΗ Η ΣΤΑΜΝΟΣ
ΦΕΡΕΙ ΜΥΡΟΝ ΑΓΙΟΝ ΕΚ ΤΟΥ ΦΡΕΑΤΟΣ
ΑΝΤΛΗΣΑΣ ΕΝΩΤΟ ΣΩΜΑ ΤΟΥ
ΜΥΡΟΒΛΥΤΟΥ ΘΕΙΟΝ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΤΟΥΤΟ
ΑΝΑΒΛΥΖΟΝ ΚΕΙΤΑΙ ΕΚΤΕΛΩΝ ΙΑΥΜΑΣΙΑ
ΑΠΑΝΗ ΤΗ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΙΣ ΠΙΣΤΟΙΣ
(this container holds holy myrrh from
the well from which the body of the
myrovlytis holy Demetrios was pulled
up, the body which seeps (myrrh) lays
executing healing the whole world and
the believers)



A miniature mosaic depicting the full-length figure of Saint Demetrios in military attire. He wears a short tunic, under a leather strap skirt, a cuirass and a sash. His chlamys is hardly visible at the shoulders, having been swept back, the rich folds of the drapery showing at the height of his legs. The figure holds the top of a lance with his right hand and a kite-shaped shield with the depiction of a lion in his left hand. He has a chequered halo and stands on an elaborate tiled floor. The background of the image is made up of plain gold tesserae, with inscriptions in the star-shaped emblemata on either side of the Saint's head.

The military attire worn by Saint Demetrios is indicative of its date. From the 13th century, and especially in the Palaeologan period, military dress becomes fanciful and the relationship between the parts less coherent.¹ This miniature is closely related to the miniature mosaic of the Annunciation (Byzantine, 14th century, Constantinople, miniature mosaic, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no: 7231-1860.); details such as the identical chequered haloes and ground tiling, the almost identical modelling of the drapery on Saint Demetrios and the Archangel, the gold tesserae background and the way the faces are modelled, could point to manufacture in the same workshop.

¹ Kalavrezou- Maxeiner, Byzantine Icons in Steatite, Wien, 1985, p. 112.

12 - Glass Cameo of Saint

Demetrios

Byzantine,
11th-12th centuries,
Thessaloniki,
translucent blue-green moulded glass,
30 X 26 mm

British Museum, London, (M&LA 70,11-26,16).

INSCRIBED: O AΓΙOC ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟ C (Saint Demetrios)

PROVIDENCE: Given to the British Museum by Lord Stanley of Alderley in 1870.

LITERATURE: Wentzel, 1957, no.37;
Buckton, 1981, fig. 8b (captioned 8c);
Buckton, 1994, p.190, no. 204(b).

EXHIBITED: Venetian Glass, 1979, A (h); Byzantium, London, 1994.



An oval blue-green moulded glass cameo depicting a half-figure of Saint Demetrios with dotted nimbus and military apparel. He wears a mail cuirass, with leather strip combat skirt, arm armour and a chlamys clasped below the neck and wept back over the shoulders. He holds in his right hand a lance which is placed in the diagonal from his right shoulder to his left hip. A circular shield decorated with a cross conceals his left hand and the inscription is placed on either side of the figure.

More than 180 medallions of glass or glass paste with inscriptions in Greek or Latin are known. The entire body of medallions seems to have been produced from sixty moulds. All but two have specifically Christian iconography, mostly depicting individual Saints. ¹

Three other glass cameos produced from the same mould are kept in the British Museum and further examples are in Athens, Berlin, Bologna, Mount Athos, Hamburg, Kikko (Cyprus), Naples, Nicosia, Oxford, Parma, Toronto and Washington, D.C. ²

¹ Georgopoulos, M., Glory of Byzantium, op. cit. p.499

² Buckton, D., Byzantium, London, 1994, p. 190.

13 -Palaeologan Coin

Byzantine
1391-1423
Constantinople
copper tornese
diam. 1cm

British Museum, London,
(CM BMC 14)

INSCRIBED: on reverse,
Π.Α. (P.A.: Palaeologan
monogram) ¹



circular inscription, + ΠΑΝΟ..[ΔΕC]ΠΙΟΤ / IC

PROVENANCE: H. P. Borrel sale, 1852, lot 1109.

LITERATURE: Thomsen Catalogue, no.822, Andronicus II; Berliner Blatter, I, p.154, Andronicus II and Michael IX; British Museum Byzantine Coin Catalogue, 1911, p.638, pl. LXXVII/3-AE

A copper tornese coin depicting on the right semicircle of the obverse, emperor Manuel II Palaeologos (1391-1423), mounted on a horse, holding a sceptre in his right hand. At his side rides Saint Demetrios, nimbate, raising a labarum with his right hand. The reverse of the coin depicts the monogram of the Palaeologi, within a circle, in large characters; with another inscription running along the exterior of the circle, in reduced characters.

By the time the Palaeologi reigned, Saint Demetrios was solidly established as not only the patron Saint of Thessaloniki, but also as one of the holy defenders of the empire.

¹ Van Milligan, Byz. Constantinople (Walls) p.113

14 - Comnenan Coin

Byzantine
1222-1230
Thessaloniki
silver trach
diam. 2cm 60mm.

British Museum, London, (CM
1904,5-11,406 BMC VI)



INSCRIPTION: obverse, ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ; ΟΛΓΗΣ [ΔΗΜ]
reverse,
IX XC
E N OY
[M] M[A] H

PROVENANCE: H.P. Borrell sale, 1852, lot 1111.

LITERATURE: British Museum Byzantine Coin Catalogue, 1911, p. 194, pl.
XXVI/3- AE.

Obverse: Christ enthroned, nimbate, wearing pallium and colobion,
holding the Evangelion

Reverse: Full-length, bearded Emperor Theodore Angelous Comnenos
Ducas, wearing crown, tunic and star embossed sash. Standing nimbed figure
of Saint Demetrios, wearing cuirass and chlamys, holding a drawn sword and
shield. A long staff, tipped with an encircled cross is held by both figures and
stands between them.

The size of the coin and the preserved relief of the image, double-
struck, allows for the figures to be identified; the body of the object is in
average condition.

Catalogue Illustrations

1

Icon with Saint Demetrios, Byzantine, second half of 10th century, Ivory, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cloisters Collection.(1970.324.3)

2

Reliquary of Saint Demetrios, Byzantine, 1059-1067, Silver gilt, State Historical and Cultural Museum "Moscow Kremlin", Moscow, Russian Federation, (MZ. 1148)

3

Enkolpion Reliquary of Saint Demetrios and Saint George, Byzantine, 12th-13th century, Thessaloniki, gold and cloisonne enamel, British Museum, London. (M & LA 1926. 4- 9.1)

4

Icon with the Military Saints George, Theodore and Demetrios, Byzantine, late 11th- early 12th century, Constantinople, egg tempera over gesso on wood, The State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation (I-183)

5

Icon with Three Military Saints, Byzantine, 12th century, Constantinople, Steatite, with traces of gilding on figures and ornament, Natsional'nyi Zapovindyk "Khersones Tavriis'kyi", Sevastopol', Ukraine (84/36445)

6

Cameo with Saint Demetrios and Saints George Blessed by Christ, Byzantine, 11th-12th century (mount: 16th century, France), Constantinople, sardonyx in three layers (brown, blue and red); enamelled gold mount, Biblioteque Nationale de France, Cabinet des medailles, Paris, France. (Babelon 342)

7

Enkolpion Reliquary of Saint Demetrios, Byzantine, 13th-14th century, Thessaloniki, gold and cloisonne enamel, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D. C. (53.20)

8

Pilgrim's Ampulla, Byzantine, 13th century, Thessaloniki, lead, Archeological Collection of Museum of Thessaloniki, Greece

9

Pilgrim's Ampulla one in glory, Byzantine, 13th century, Thessaloniki, lead,,Archeological Collection, Kavala, Greece (B30/ 15-20-80)

10

Bronze Miniature Icon of Saint Demetrios, Byzantine, 14th century, Thessaloniki, bronze, The Rotonda Archeological Collection , Thessaloniki (BA 21)

11

Icon of Saint Demetrios, Byzantine, 14th century, Thessaloniki, miniature mosaic, Museo Civico, Sassofero, Italy.

12

Glass Cameo of Saint Demetrios, Byzantine, 11th-12th centuries, Thessaloniki, translucent blue-green moulded glass, British Museum, London, (M&LA 70,11-26,16).

13

Palaeologan Coin , Byzantine, 1391-1423, Constantinople, copper tornese, British Museum, London, (CM BMC 14)

14

Comnenan Coin, Byzantine, 1222-1230, Thessaloniki, silver trach, British Museum, London, (CM 1904,5-11,406 BMC VI)

Glossary

ampulla: vessel used by pilgrims to carry sanctified oil, water, earth, myrrh, etc. from a holy site

chlamys: (Gr.:mantle); cloak fastened at the right shoulder to leave the right arm free or in the front; first a short military garment but by the 6th century longer; a standard element of Byzantine court costume

ciborion: canopy with a domed or pyramidal roof resting on four or six columns; also a vessel for holding the Eucharistic bread

cloisonné enamel: (Fr.:partitioned); divided by metal strips set on edge (cloisons) to hold enamel

colobion: sleeveless or short-sleeved tunic, the garment worn by Christ in early representations of the Crucifixion

cuirass: armour for the torso, leather or metal

Deesis: (Gr.:entreaty); word used in Medieval Byzantium for a representation of Christ flanked by the figures of the Virgin and Saint John the Baptist, who are turned towards him with gestures of intercession; since the 19th century, the conventional designation of this image

ex-voto: votive offering

Evangelion : Book of Gospels

Eparch: title of several officials, the most important being the Eparch of the City, the Governor of Constantinople

enkolpion: (Gr.:on the breast); reliquary with a sacred image, worn at the breast

fibula: fastener or clasp, especially for securing a cloak

gesso: gypsum or chalk bound with size or fish-glue as a ground on which to paint

hellenistic: referring to the Eastern Mediterranean world between the time of Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) and the Roman conquest of the region (late 2nd-1st century BC)

Hetoimasia: (Gr.: preparation); iconography of throne awaiting Christ for the Second Coming

icon: (Gr.:image); any image of a sacred personage; the term is used today most often to indicate a representation on a portable panel

Iconoclasm: religious movement of the 8th and 9th centuries in the Eastern Empire, which denied the holiness of religious images and rejected their veneration; the periods 730-87 and 814-43, when the veneration of images was officially banned and icons were destroyed

koutrouvion: small ampulla or flask (term used mostly in Thessaloniki)

labarum: military standard, cruciform from the time of Constantine; also a monogram denoting Christ or Christianity, usually the chi-rho

Myrovlytis : (Gr: he from whom myrrh seeps); title of Saint Demetrios

niello: black material, usually silver sulphide, used as a decorative inlay, especially on silver

nimbus: halo

nomisma: (Gr.:coin)

orans: (Lat.:praying); Early Christian posture of prayer, standing and with arms out-stretched, used rarely in the Middle Byzantine period except for certain images of the Virgin

orarion: narrow white silk stole worn by a deacon while officiating

pallium: wide cloak worn by Roman men; wide scarf worn by western Bishops

prefect: title of authority, governor (ie. Praetorian Prefect, Prefect Concul)

pteryges: apron-like armour of leather or metal

pyxis: (Gr.:box); in mediaeval Greek, generic term for a small box;
conventional designation for a cylindrical ivory box made from elephant tusk

repousse'': relief produced by hammering metal from the back

staurotheke: (Gr.:cross chest); reliquary made to contain a fragment of
the True Cross

tavlion / tablion: one of a pair of rectangular or trapezoidal embroidered
panels sewn at right angles to the edges of a chlamys

tempera: binding medium for powdered pigment (egg tempera: when egg
included in preparation)

tessera: cube from which mosaics are made

triptych: three panels of wood, ivory, metal etc. joined laterally usually by
hinges, the side-panels normally folding over and concealing the centrepiece

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