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The Man in the Street: Some problems of gender and identity in Byzantine material culture

(with plate 7)

The links between gender, identity and material culture are perhaps not immediately obvious, but in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, “everyday life” is defined as “ordinary human activity and comprises diet and costume, behaviour and superstitions, entertainment, housing and furniture”, all aspects of material culture¹. The Man in the Street is the individual whose “ordinary human activity” and material culture are addressed; but who is this individual? When we talk of Byzantine material culture, who are the Byzantines we mean?

Everyday life, ordinary human activity, is a tricky topic in Byzantium². The sources are limited and problematic; written or visual, their focus tends to lie with the extraordinary, that worthy of record. The same is true of the Man in the Street, the generic Byzantine. A great deal is known about emperors, generals, patriarchs, abbots, the aristocracy and those who left the records, but the “average Byzantine” is an elusive figure who flits peripherally through histories and hagiographies, letters and legal documents, and who might be pictured on the edge of battle or lurking cheering in the corner of the Hippodrome. In such pictorial examples, an additional problem is that costumes, gestures and attitudes of figures, above all in sacred scenes, appear conventional. Should these figures be taken as “merely” conventional? Do peripheral details in urban and rural scenes reflect contemporary circumstances or artistic convention? This issue of the “conventional” and how to decipher it is what this paper takes as its focus, through a specific case-study which looks very literally at depictions of the Man in the Street: the portrayal of eunuchs and the question of whether they are shown as men, or as something else.

The term “man in the street” derives from Alexander Kazhdan’s *homo byzantinus*, discussed in his and Giles Constable’s *People and power in Byzantium* (Washington, DC 1982). Kazhdan claimed that *homo byzantinus* was a generic title, just the average Byzantine, male or female, and stated that “No-one will deny that *homo byzantinus*, like people of all times, had two legs, needed food, married, and raised children”. As Dion Smythe pointed out, this definition ruled out monks, nuns, bishops and the childless as possible examples of Byzantine man, despite their importance within Byzantine society³. Kazhdan asked “did a particular kind of Byzantine man exist?” His answer, as his chapter headings indicate, was an essentially materialistic survey: the material environment of *homo byzantinus*; Byzantine life and behaviour; *homo byzantinus* before God; *homo byzantinus* in the history of literature and art. He suggested that to find *homo byzantinus*, scholars should examine geography, the economy, taxes, diet, crafts, the difference between “rich” and “poor”. At the end of this, we should know what made Byzantine man different from those around him, what made him unique.

Kazhdan’s *homo byzantinus* is very much a product of Kazhdan’s own time and culture, with its emphasis on economics, taxes and the proletariat. Kazhdan may tell us the difference between “rich” and “poor”, but he does not tell us what the Byzantines laughed at, what made them weep, what they wanted from life, what gave them a sense of well-being. Indeed, for Kazhdan, the typical *homo byzantinus* appears to have been Kekaumenos, the man obsessed with the dangers of life, from rioting crowds and deceitful friends to falling rocks and poisonous mushrooms⁴. How far this is the average Byzantine man is debatable. What *People and*

¹ ODB ed. A. KAZHDAN et al. Oxford 1991.

² See C. MANGO, Daily life in Byzantium. *JÖB* 31/1 (1981) 337–53 and MANGO’s, Addendum to the report on everyday life. *JÖB* 32/1 (1982) 252–7.

³ The Kazhdan quotation is from KAZHDAN – CONSTABLE, *People and Power* 22. SMYTHE’s response in D. C. SMYTHE, In denial: same-sex desire in Byzantium, in: *Desire and denial in Byzantium*, ed. L. JAMES (SPBS Publications 6). Aldershot 1999, 140.

⁴ See KAZHDAN – CONSTABLE, *People and Power* 97–8.

Power also makes clear, as Charles Barber has already pointed out, is that Kazhdan's *homo byzantinus* is in fact *vir byzantinus*, the Byzantine male⁵. *Homo byzantinus* sustains the idea that men are the "natural" embodiment of Byzantine society. Kazhdan gave Byzantine women a separate one page section of their own and described them as shadowy figures, perhaps as shadowy then as we find the Byzantine man on the street now⁶. *Femina byzantina* had to wait ten years for Judith Herrin, in a paper written for Kazhdan's Dumbarton Oaks festschrift volume, published in 1992⁷. Thus, for Kazhdan, the Man on the Street was exactly that: the male Byzantine.

Kazhdan's focus lay with written texts and in this paper, we want to shift the ground to see what evidence one particular visual source might offer for the man in the street. One very common reserve used by scholars for images of "daily life in Byzantium" is the manuscript of the *Histories* of John Skylitzes in Madrid, the so-called *Madrid Skylitzes* (Bib.Nac.Vitr. 26–2)⁸. This twelfth century manuscript is the only illustrated Byzantine historical chronicle that survives to us. It deals with the period 811–1057 and contains 574 images with, on average, two to a page. It is, in the words of the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, "a prime source for our visualisation of imperial ceremony, weaponry and transportation by land and sea"⁹. Thus it serves as a veritable gold-mine for those looking for details of Byzantine material culture. Images from the *Madrid Skylitzes* have been used to illustrate a whole variety of scenes of "daily life". For example, "Conversation among men", is the label given to fol. 144a showing the generals John Tzimiskes and Romanos Kurkuas handing a letter to Nikephoros Phokas, which appears as an illustration in Paul Veyne's *A History of Private Life*. The words, "the artist as the servant of religion, charged with decorating the parts of churches not covered in mosaic also makes portraits of saints or of the Virgin and Child on portable panels for private use" are used to describe fol. 50b in Michel Kaplan's introductory book, *Tout l'or de Byzance*. But more specifically this folio shows the iconodule monk and icon painter Lazaros sitting in the Church of John the Baptist by the Black Sea painting an icon of John the Baptist in a storyline of his persecution and exile¹⁰.

Despite its use by modern scholars in the context of everyday life in Byzantium, the manuscript was almost certainly copied and illuminated in Norman Sicily and its relationship to life in Byzantium is problematic to say the least¹¹. How far these are images made by Byzantines is very unclear; how far the miniatures reflect actual life in the Empire rather than Sicilian perceptions of that life, or even a translation of that life into something recognisable to Norman Sicilian perceptions is even less obvious¹². Should we see the images as representing Byzantium in the twelfth century or as a part of a foreign, fantastical world translated into familiar terms for a Norman Sicilian elite audience which had not known and would not know Constantinople? A discussion of the veracity and accuracy, or otherwise, of the images of the *Madrid Skylitzes* has barely begun. How true is it, for example, to say that the armour shown in the manuscript, depicting soldiers between the ninth and eleventh centuries, accurately replicates the armour worn by Byzantine soldiers at these different periods, rather than showing twelfth century (Sicilian) armour?¹³ The coronation of Leo V, as co-emperor, by Michael I, is an image sometimes taken to "show" what the ceremony of "raising on a shield" looked like,

⁵ C. BARBER, *Homo byzantinus?* In: *Women, men and eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium*, ed. L. JAMES. London – New York 1997, 185–99, esp. 185–6

⁶ KAZHDAN – CONSTABLE, *People and power* 112–3 (making one full page; also glancing references on 20, 63, 72, 73).

⁷ J. HERRIN, "Femina byzantina": the Council of Trullo on women. *DOP* 46 (1992) 97–105.

⁸ Facsimile: Joannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum, codex Matritensis graecus vitr. 26–2, scientific consultant A. TSELIKAS. Athens 2000.

⁹ *ODB*, s.v. Skylitzes, John.

¹⁰ The icon depicted in fol. 50b is of the Virgin and Child, although the text states that it was of John the Baptist. M. KAPLAN, *Tout l'or de Byzance*. Paris 1991, 119, fol. 144 a has been captioned "Conversation among men" in E. PATLAGEAN, *Byzantium in the tenth and eleventh centuries*, in: *A history of private life vol.1*, ed. P. VEYNE. Harvard 1987, 614.

¹¹ On the Sicilian origin of the manuscript, see N. WILSON, *The Madrid Skylitzes. Scrittura e Civiltà* 2 (1979) 103–63 and I. ŠEVČENKO, *The Madrid manuscript of the chronicle of Skylitzes in light of its new dating*, in: *Byzanz und der Westen*, ed. I. HUTTER (*Öst. Akad. Wiss., Sb. phil.-hist.-Kl.* 432). Vienna 1984, 117–34.

¹² See the discussion in B. K. BJØRNHOLT, *The use and portrayal of spectacle in the Madrid Skylitzes (Bib.Nac.vitr.26–2)*. (unpublished PhD Thesis) Belfast 2002, esp. ch. 2.

¹³ A. BRUHN-HOFFMEYER, *Military equipment in the Byzantine manuscript of Scylitzes in the Bibliotheca Nacional in Madrid. Gladius* 5 (1966) 1–160.

but can this really be the case?¹⁴ This scene, fol. 10^v, depicts an event of 813, some 300 years before Skylitzes wrote.

Furthermore, in the quest for daily life, what is shown, time and again, in the *Madrid Skylitzes*, is the elite. There are, for example, about 275 images depicting emperors, and about 45 depicting empresses. There is perhaps one image that depicts the man in the street. The text to fol. 155^v (fig. 1) describes the emperor Basil I riding to the Church of the Holy Apostles on a Feast Day when he encounters some citizens in the street¹⁵. They are described as pious and decent, but, because of the recent drop in the price of grain, they are depressed and not dressed for the occasion. In the image accompanying the text, these figures have been depicted in short tunics in sombre colours with similar coloured hats, and are bare-foot. The text contrasts these citizens with those accompanying the emperor, who are described as courtiers suitably dressed up for the Feast. These figures have been depicted in long colourful tunics and chlamydes, and with white and red hats. The image and the text present a perception of the proper dress for an official occasion, something that forms a recurrent theme throughout the manuscript. For the purpose at hand, the image also gives an impression of how ordinary “pious and decent” citizens going about their business should be depicted, although we have to keep in mind the specific point of despair made in the text, which may well account for the unusual lack of footwear of the figures. It is from scenes such as this, where we are told of the presence of “ordinary citizens”, that we can perhaps begin to piece together an image of the Man in the Street. However, there is another issue which concerns us here, and that is the question of gender: how do we, as the modern audience, identify the Man in the Street as opposed to the Woman? In other words, what are the codes for depicting gender in Byzantine images? Here we have space only to consider one, a symbol of gender that seems relatively unambiguous: the beard¹⁶. Does possession of a beard make a depicted figure unambiguously that of a man?

Fol. 55b (fig. 2) and 55^a (fig. 3) illustrate part of the victory celebrations in 838. One of the Arab prisoners of war showed off his skills in horsemanship in the Hippodrome (fol. 55a). A Byzantine general was unimpressed by this, and challenged the Arab to a jousting match which the Byzantine, naturally, won (fol. 55^a). Although two different artists may be responsible for the two images, the Byzantine is recognisably depicted with a beard in both pictures. However, he is identified by both the text and the caption to the image, as the general Theodore Krateros, who served under the emperor Theophilos, and who is described in several written sources as a eunuch. The issue here is that it is part of received wisdom that, in Byzantine art, eunuchs are always shown beardless, or, put another way, that beardlessness is a defining characteristic of images of eunuchs¹⁷. In the imperial panels in San Vitale in Ravenna, the two male attendants of the empress Theodora are frequently identified as eunuchs thanks to their lack of beards¹⁸. In Hagia Sophia in the tympanum mosaics, the eunuch Patriarch Ignatios is shown beardless and in the tenth century Leo Bible (Cod. Vat. Gr.1), the donor, Leo the Sakellarios, chose to have himself portrayed offering his bible to the Virgin with a smooth face and grey hair falling down his back (fol. 2^v). Here, Leo is identified as a eunuch because his titles, given behind him on the wall, record him as *Leo the patrikios, praepositos and sakkelarios presenting the bible to the most holy mother of God*. These were titles reserved to eunuchs, and so the combination of title and image together are taken to “prove” Leo was a eunuch¹⁹.

¹⁴ In *Raising on a shield in Byzantine iconography*. *REB* 33 (1975) 133–76, Christopher WALTER remarks on the validity of the iconographical theme as reflection of contemporary practice of the ceremony, concluding that it is ‘difficult to assess’, 173. For a different perception of the identity of the figures in the image see V. TSAMAKDA, *The illustrated Chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes in Madrid*. Leiden 2002, 43–6.

¹⁵ *Synopsis Historion*, ed. J. THURN (*CFHB* 5). Berlin 1973, 277–8, 48–58.

¹⁶ For a preliminary discussion of the gender significance of beards in Byzantium, see M. P. VINSON, *Gender and politics in the post-Iconoclastic period; the Lives of Antony the Younger, the Empress Theodora and the Patriarch Ignatios*. *Byz* 68 (1998) 469–515, esp. 510. We are grateful to Martha VINSON for this reference and for stimulating discussions about material culture.

¹⁷ C. L. DUMITRESCU, *Quelques remarques en marge du Coislin 79: les trois eunuques*. *Byz* 57 (1987) 32–45. Also see VINSON, *Gender and politics*, n.114.

¹⁸ See for example, I. ANDREESCU-TREADGOLD – W. TREADGOLD, *Procopius and the imperial panels of San Vitale*. *Art Bulletin* 79 (1997) 708–23, 708.

¹⁹ See, for example, I. SPATHARAKIS, *The portrait in Byzantine illuminated manuscripts*. Leiden 1976, esp 7–14; *The Glory of Byzantium*. Exhibition Catalogue, eds. H. EVANS – W. WIXOM. New York 1997, Cat. No. 42, 88–90, esp. 90: “Leo’s beardless face and grey hair identify him as a eunuch”.

How, then, should we understand the bearded eunuch in the *Madrid Skylitzes*? Is he best explained as a rendition by a Sicilian artist, ignoring or unaware of Byzantine conventions, (in which case it adds to the debate about the usefulness or otherwise of the *Madrid Skylitzes* as a source for Byzantine material culture), or is it that the beard is there to emphasise the manliness of the general; that the war-like actions of the figure override the portrayal of him as a eunuch? A figure performing an heroic deed, a masculine action, must be shown as a man with masculine characteristics.

Psychologists have suggested that when looking at a person, we identify five gender clues to define sex²⁰. These clues or secondary sexual characteristics involve attributes such as physique, hairstyle, including facial hair, clothing, shoes, and the activity they are involved in. Thus, a bearded figure in shorts chasing a round ball is identified unhesitatingly as male, and a beardless figure with flowing locks as female. Long-haired footballers and drag queens can present a problem. Further, in twenty-first century Western culture, figures are actually deemed to be male unless proven otherwise. Such an attitude may well have also been the case in Byzantium, which has been defined as a misogynist society where women's roles were heavily constricted²¹. Whilst what is true for us need not also have been true for them, nevertheless, we would like to apply this idea of gender clues to Byzantium, as it offers a methodology for challenging some of our own implicit assumptions about Byzantine gender codes. For example, in the mosaic of the empress Theodora from the apse of San Vitale in Ravenna, twenty-first century Byzantinists view the image unhesitatingly as that of a female. If, however, we pause for long enough to ask how we know it is female, then contradictions appear. First, the figure wears modified male dress²², second, it carries male attributes in the form of the communion chalice, third, it is located in a male space, in the apse of a church, fourth, it is a figure taller than those around it. In other words, although the figure is female (by the crown, the positioning opposite Justinian we know it "must" be Theodora), it is not unambiguously feminine, but bears some masculine characteristics, suggesting a more fluid gendering of roles²³. In the case of images of figures such as angels and young male saints, the reverse argument is apparent. Both bear indications of what we might see as feminine gender characteristics²⁴. Images such as these raise issues about the way in which genders were defined in Byzantium and hint at a fluidity in the depiction of sex, a potential playing of gender roles, as, in a very different context, Judith Butler has suggested²⁵.

In this context, the ambivalences about the depiction and description of Theodore Krateros raise interesting questions about the definition of men and masculinity in Byzantium. His facial hair and his actions – he is astride a horse and holds a spear – identify him as male, yet written sources identify him as a eunuch. It begs the question: what sex were eunuchs in Byzantium? Kathryn Ringrose, in particular, has engaged with the notion of Byzantine eunuchs as a third sex. She suggests that secular and ecclesiastical views differed on this point. The secular perception was that eunuchs did indeed form a distinct third sex, whilst the ecclesiastical view 'undermined the distinct engendering of eunuchs', and asserted that 'eunuchs are neither a third sex nor a third gender; they are simply men'²⁶. In this context, it is perhaps unsurprising to find a eunuch looking like a man. Is he perhaps given masculine traits and gender clues because the action he is performing is such a masculine action, a masculine virtue?

²⁰ See M. THOMPSON – W. MCKELLEN, *Gender: an ethnomethodology*. London 1972. Our thanks to Julia Stevenson for this reference.

²¹ See, from an increasing literature, the groundwork of A. LAIOU, *The role of women in Byzantine society*. *JÖB* 31/1 (1981) 233–60, and EADEM, *Addendum to the report on the role of women in Byzantine society*. *JÖB* 32/1 (1982) 98–103; J. HERRIN, *In search of Byzantine women*, in: *Images of women in antiquity*, eds. A. CAMERON – A. KUHR. London 1983, 167–89; C. GALATARIOTOU, *Holy women and witches: aspects of Byzantine conceptions of gender*. *BMGS* 9 (1984/5) 55–96; L. GARLAND, *The life and ideology of Byzantine women*. *Byz* 58 (1988) 361–93.

²² Our thanks to Hero GRANGER-TAYLOR who pointed this out to us.

²³ For a discussion of why this might be the case and the ambiguous gender definition of empresses, see L. JAMES, *Empresses and power in early Byzantium*. London 2001.

²⁴ See the analysis of H. MAGUIRE, *The icons of their bodies. Saints and their images in Byzantium*. Princeton 1996.

²⁵ J. BUTLER, *Gender trouble*. New York 1990.

²⁶ See K. RINGROSE, *Living in the shadows: eunuchs and gender in Byzantium*, in: *Third sex, third gender*, ed. G. HERDT. New York 1994, 85–109 and 507–18, and EADEM, *Passing the test of sanctity: denial of sexuality and involuntary castration*, in: *Desire and Denial* (as n. 3), 123–38. Also on eunuchs, see the important work of S. TOUGHER, *Byzantine Eunuchs: An Overview*, with special reference to their creation and origin, in: *Women, men and eunuchs* (as n. 5), 168–84.

In this context of beards marking men and lack of beards marking out eunuchs, even the image of Leo in the *Leo Bible* presents some problems. It contrasts with the image on the second frontispiece, fol. 3, which shows a standing St Nicholas with two crouching figures at his feet. From the accompanying inscription, these are identified as the abbot Makarios on Nicholas' right, and Constantine, the *protospatharios* and brother of Leo, founder of the monastery, on the other side. Despite his title of *protospatharios*, which was one usually held by eunuchs, Constantine, it is argued is not a eunuch, because he has a full beard²⁷. In this instance, the argument becomes a trifle self-serving; if one figure with eunuch titles is a eunuch because beardless and the other with eunuch titles is not because he has a beard, the foundations for this premise need some deeper examination. As the example of Constantine shows, a job-title is not sufficient in itself to prove that someone was a eunuch, and as the example of Theodore Krateros shows, beards do not necessarily make "real men".

The portrayal of Krateros is not unique in the *Madrid Skylitzes*. Other figures we know from written texts to have been eunuchs are shown here with beards. A depiction of John the Orphanotrophos being blinded together with his uncle Michael V (fol. 221) shows a eunuch with a beard. The eunuch Stephen Pergamos (fol. 224^vb) bringing back the head of Maniakes to the emperor Constantine Monomachos is bearded. There are also several depictions of patriarch Ignatios, bearded throughout (fol. 76, for example). In this instance, a different set of criteria are apparent. All patriarchs in the manuscript are shown bearded, suggesting that, in this case, beards form a part of the visual code for depicting patriarchs, and that the primary reference for Ignatios in this example is for his status as patriarch, not as eunuch. In contrast, in Hagia Sophia, patriarch Ignatios was depicted as beardless because here, this was an important visual sign to identify him individually in the company of other depictions of patriarchs and church fathers.

In fact, there are no visual signs in the *Madrid Skylitzes* that tell the viewer that a certain figure was a eunuch. In this manuscript, eunuchs look like any other man. This can be no clearer when we consider the case of patriarch Methodios, mentioned earlier. In fol. 66b (fig. 4) in the Madrid manuscript, Methodios is depicted exposing his mutilated genitalia to prove his incapability of having seduced a woman. The patriarch is bearded, but this is perhaps not the most important point that this image and indeed the story makes. Methodios was forced to demonstrate that he was a eunuch in the only certain way: by exposing his withered parts²⁸. If the entire judicial and ecclesiastical establishment in Constantinople could not tell that he was a eunuch from his face alone, perhaps we should not rely on this method without more positive evidence.

Indeed, to return to Ringrose's distinctions between the secular definition of eunuchs as a distinct third sex, and the ecclesiastical view that eunuchs were "simply men", what we see is that in a religious context, Leo and Ignatios are beardless and thus distinct; in a secular context, Krateros and Ignatios are bearded. So how does one identify a eunuch when there is such ambivalence, when even at the time, the only certain means was to get the individual to reveal his genitalia? It was not only identifying men which presented problems. Byzantium was a society where women transvestite saints were accused of fathering children and virgins could give birth²⁹. We find examples of women mistaken for men or for eunuchs, of eunuchs mistaken for men, but, significantly, never of men mistaken for women or for eunuchs.

The problem here is that it is not clear what makes the Man on the Street recognisable as a man rather than a eunuch or a woman. It is not clear what characteristics define "masculine" and "feminine" in Byzantium: "men" and "women" are easier labels. Rigid distinctions between men and women – and eunuchs – are actually fluid, though with the proviso that "man" is the norm. Men, women and eunuchs all appear to us set against the ideal stereotype labelled "man". It is possible to identify men who act like men and those who did not, women who acted like women and women who "became like men". Where male and female might be biologically determined, identity can be seen as fabricated rather than essential; each physical body can be the site for a number of different gender roles or codes. A female visionary may have powers over a lay-

²⁷ See SPATHARAKIS, Portrait 11.

²⁸ Judith Herrin suggested in this instance that Methodios was depicted as bearded since he became a eunuch in later life and through an accident rather than by castration in childhood or youth, and so this was an accurate depiction of his bodily characteristics. However, such a subtle interpretation on the part of the artist stands in contradiction to the main evidence in the *Madrid Skylitzes* that men are generally depicted with beards whether they were eunuchs or not.

²⁹ See for example, J. ANSON, The female transvestite in early monasticism: the origin and development of a motif. *Viator* 5 (1974) 1–32.

man that as a nun she does not possess in relation to her father-confessor; an imperial woman can be both powerful and powerless, depending upon the role she plays and the men to whom she relates³⁰. Similarly, Theodore Krateros is a eunuch but in the story told and depicted in *Skylitzes*, his actions are those of an heroic defender of Byzantium, outmatching the barbarian Arab. Riding a horse and wielding a spear successfully, he is a hero and, judging from *Digenis Akrites*, heroes in Byzantium were always real men. In this way, his beard marks him as possessing the ultimate qualities of manliness.

Therefore, a beard may be a definition of manliness, rather than a sign of “a man”. To conclude, we want to look, briefly, at what such “manliness” might have meant in Byzantium. *Andreia* is one term, which appears regularly, generally translated as “manly” or “manly spirit”. Charles Barber has indicated how the image of emperor Basil II in the *Psalter of Basil* (Cod. Marc. Gr. 2, 17, fol. 3^r) is a very male image: the warrior emperor surrounded by warrior saints, with grovelling men below and Christ above, with crown and spear supported by angels³¹. This is, perhaps, the very image of a man demonstrating the attributes of courage. We can link this with Michael Psellos’ account of Basil, in which he describes how Basil changed from leading a dissolute life, to becoming a man of great energy, rejecting all that was effeminate (*to abron*), and developing a fixity of purpose. Elsewhere, Psellos uses *andreia* as a way of measuring imperial performance. Constantine IX lacked the *andreia* of Alexander, the two Caesars, Pyrrhus and other warriors, but he had other qualities and although Psellos cannot cite Constantine’s bravery in battle, he uses the example of that emperor riding through the streets of Constantinople whilst in mortal pain from his illness, as an example of *andreia*³². Women demonstrating bravery are naturally masculine³³. Crudely, *andreia*, the quality of manliness that distinguished a man from a woman, the quality that the man in the street, but not his wife, possessed, simply by existing as male, appears to relate to courage and, specifically, to a courage linked to warfare which, of course, was something Byzantine ideology absolutely barred women from. It is perhaps in this context we should consider beards and beardlessness and so find it less surprising that Theodore Krateros, demonstrating manliness, is shown bearded, as a “real” man.

A final twist, however, is provided by a lamp or perfume burner in the shape of a domed building in the Treasury of San Marco, dated to the twelfth century, and possibly southern Italian. On the left door of the building, a beardless figure is pictured, wearing a helmet, short tunic, breastplate and cloak, and holding a spear and shield. The figure is labelled ANΔPIAA, translated by the Catalogue as “courage”³⁴. On the right door, a figure in tunic and long skirt, touching its forehead with its right index finger, is labelled Η ΦΡΟΝΕCIC, translated as “intelligence”. This is, clearly, a female figure but the gender of ANΔPIAA is less clear: as a personification of a feminine noun, ἀνδρεία, the figure should be female and is beardless, and possibly long-haired, yet appears to have no breasts and is armoured. Is this a female personification of that most male of qualities, ἀνδρεία, or is it a beardless man depicting courage?³⁵ Whatever the answer, it underlines something of the apparent ambiguities in the use of gender codes in Byzantium.

The concept of “the Man in the Street” carries many inherent problems. Class, religion, ethnic origin also have their own codes for identity which are only gradually being unpacked. The qualities of the generic Byzantine and how s/he was depicted are still unclear, as are the Byzantines’ own definitions of “masculine” and “feminine”. What we seem to have are images of men and women which share elements both of the generic and of the specific; the Man in the Street remains elusive.

³⁰ See VINSON, Gender and politics, esp. 487–90, for this sort of shifting of gender roles and codes in literature.

³¹ BARBER, Homo byzantinus?

³² Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, ed. E. RENAULD, II. Paris, 1926–1928 (repr. 1967) vi, 129–30.

³³ As is the case with Maximo the Amazon in *Digenis Akrites*.

³⁴ The Treasury of San Marco Venice. Exhibition Catalogue. Milan 1984, Cat.No. 33, pp. 237–43.

³⁵ On these themes, see further, E. STAFFORD, *Worshipping virtues. Personifications and the divine in ancient Greece*. Swansea 2000.