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Presbeia Theotokou: An Introduction

The idea behind the collection of essays in this volume is to bring into focus one main aspect of the Marian cult – the invocations of Mary – across the Byzantine Empire, in the period we are used to calling Early Byzantine. The collection will throw light on the regional and local traditions which unfolded within the developing cult in the Christian *Ecumene*, up to about the end of Iconoclasm (843). It is agreed that regional diversity was an inherent element of the cult of Mary; the cult neither developed nor was established at the same time and in the same manner throughout the empire, although doctrinal teaching on the Virgin and the Theotokos had the same biblical and conciliar basis.¹ On these grounds, in this volume fourteen contributors, representing expertise in early Christian, Late-Antique and Byzantine Studies, exemplify the role that Mary came to play in the religious life and culture of various regions, cities and towns: Palestine, Egypt, Constantinople, Syria, Antioch, Armenia, Durrës, Rome, Italy, and North Africa. The sources – objects, texts and documents – are examined from the vantage points of archaeology, art history, papyrology, sigillography, patristics, religious studies and theology.

The traces of Mary's intercessory role in Byzantine history are copious and – as we know – do not disappear at the historical turning-point of 1453; *Deesis* / “Mary interceding together with John the Baptist” is still as recurrent a motif in iconography as the invocation of the Mother of God is incessant in Byzantine / Orthodox liturgy. It is not clear when the Virgin Theotokos occupied the position of the principal intercessor in the orthodox hierarchy of sanctity.² In any case, her divine motherhood justified belief in her intercessory capacity, exceeding the powers of the other saints (apostles, martyrs, virgins, etc.).³ In the controversy over the icons (715–787 and 813–843) Mary's figure became omnipresent and at the end of Iconoclasm she appeared as *the* intercessor of the empire. By then the veneration of Mary had taken the shape of a highly sophisticated cult,⁴ recognizable as part of religious and political institutions, material culture and social practices. The formative process had lasted for centuries and to all appearances it is difficult to grasp the full extent of the phenomenon.

In her introduction to the recent volume, *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium*, Averil Cameron speaks about “the sheer capaciousness of the theme of the Theotokos” that yields “the space for so many excellent new studies”.⁵ Seen from another angle, this capaciousness eventuates in a fragmentary picture of the development of the cult. Mary “can be, and has been, all things to everyone”, which is why it is “hard to arrive at convincing general theories”, as Cameron says.⁶ Nevertheless, by examining various trends – like the tendency towards ap-

¹ Mary as the Virgin (παρθένος) is based on Septuaginta (Isa 7,14) and the Gospels (Mt 1,23 and Lk 1,27). The reading of Isa 7,14 by Christians caused a bitter controversy of long duration with Jews, with ongoing impact on their mutual distrust. Concerning its significance for “Mentalitätsgeschichte in Byzanz”, consult A. Külzer, *Disputationes graecae contra Iudaeos. Untersuchungen zur byzantinischen antijüdischen Dialogliteratur und ihrem Judenbild. Byzantinisches Archiv* 18. Stuttgart–Leipzig 1999, esp. 261–262. There is no specific dogma of the Theotokos. The Council of Ephesus (431), while interpreting the second letter of Cyril of Alexandria to Nestorius as orthodox and conforming to the creed of Nicaea (325), agreed with Cyril's arguments for giving Mary the title of Theotokos. Cf. L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn. The Medieval Mediterranean* 35. Leiden–Boston–Cologne 2001, 57–58.

² Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon seem to suggest that it did not happen before Iconoclasm. Cf. *Idem, Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680–850: A History*. Cambridge u. a. 2011, 32.

³ E.g., Basil of Seleucia (d. after 458), *Hom.* 39, PG 85.448B: Εἴδετε πηλίκον δι' αὐτῆς ἐπράχθη μυστήριον, πᾶσαν ὑπερβαῖνον καὶ γλωτταν καὶ ἔννοιαν. Τίς οὖν οὐκ θαυμάσειε τὴν μεγάλην τῆς Θεοτόκου δύναμιν· καὶ ὅσον ὑπερανέχει τοὺς ὅσους τιμῶμεν ἁγίους; – Know what a great mystery has been worked through her, which surpasses every tongue and mind. Who then could not marvel at the great power of the Theotokos and how much she excels those we greatly honour as saints?

⁴ On the usage of the term ‘cult’, cf. A. Cameron, Introduction, in: M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*. Aldershot u. a. 2005, xxix.

⁵ L. Brubaker – M. B. Cunningham (eds.), *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium. Texts and Images. Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies* 11. Aldershot u. a. 2011, 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*

pealing to Mary as intercessor – it is possible to create a more coherent picture of her cult. It has to be stressed, however, that our volume does not aim at synthesizing “the diverse materials into a coherent narrative”, which in any case would be also absolutely impossible.⁷ Hence, an interpretation of the tendency towards Mary’s intercessory capacity that drove and contributed to the establishment of her Byzantine cult will remain a task for further studies. We are happy to be able to present multiple evidence of this important trend from the early Byzantine period.

It must be added that this trend is important not only for the study of Byzantines’ religious life. It is crucial also for the study of the early Byzantine society, whose striking feature – in comparison with the world we are living in – was a strict social order, based on law and status consciousness. Under such circumstances the significance of intercession – the action of interceding or pleading on behalf of another or a party in trouble – is unquestionable as a means of settling for problems. Already long before CE, in Mesopotamia, the cradle of western civilization, the practice of interceding with kings and divinities was developed into sophisticated rituals.⁸ It seems evident that in the ancient world the quality that primarily was expected from intercessors was social appropriateness. This held for both religious and ethnic communities. Understandably, in order to have at least in theory any possibility of exerting influence, intercessors had to have access to the authority – a deity, ruler or judge. Thus, in view of a successful outcome of the intercessory act, status, social position and proximity to authority qualified certain members of society to be intercessors. Thus the notion of the proper social order must have been implicit in the practice of interceding. This pattern acquired a new feature as Christian “heroes of faith” – apostles, martyrs, ascetics, etc. – were accepted as intercessors without having been qualified by social status. Yet the hierarchical structure of the holy intercessors, who were commemorated in liturgy, betrays the fact that ranking was relevant. Since the significance of social status was never ignored in the Christian Roman Empire, it can be assumed that an implicit preoccupation was always associated also with Mary’s place in this hierarchy – even in representations that do not explicitly ask her to intercede. The intercessory acts executed by means of prayer formulae need no interpretation but images are problematic if there are no traditions connecting the pictorial representations with intercessions. As for the extent of latent preoccupation in such representations, it is a figure whose approximation from case to case must be left for experts who are able to plumb their material by means of contextual analysis and comparison, as several papers of this collection show.

The Greek title of the volume, *Presbeia Theotokou*, suggests the doctrinal background that cannot be overlooked when discussing Mary’s role as intercessor. The word *Theotokos*, literally “the one who gives birth to God”, is charged with christology; it is associated with the Nestorian controversy, the Council of Ephesus of 431, the conciliation of the Cyrillian and the Antiochian parties by the *Formula Unionis* in 433, and the “victory of the Theotokos”.⁹ Ephesus seemingly represents a turning-point in the public and official veneration of Mary, the triumphal arch of the basilica Santa Maria Maggiore (by its modern name) in Rome being an illustrious piece of evidence for the atmosphere of the time.¹⁰ Much of the volume is devoted to the mariology of miaphysite traditions, although a comparison with the mariological material from Chalcedonian Palestine, Constantinople and Rome, may give the impression that Mary’s position as intercessor did not receive as much attention in anti-Chalcedonian churches. Undoubtedly this is a question requiring proper theological consideration, for with regard to Mary’s intercessory position no difference can be discerned between the christologies of the opposing parties. In any case, judging from the rhetoric of contemporary homilies and hymnography,¹¹ the epithet *Theotokos* called forth feelings of awe, demanding correct *ekphrasis*. We “hear” that from the sublime tune in which Byzantine preachers invoked the figure of Mary. Hence it may be concluded that this characteristically Byzantine tone resounded also in private prayers to Mary to intercede with God.

⁷ On the unavoidable methodological problematic concerning the study of the cult of Mary as well as the study of pilgrimage, see J. Elsner, *Piety and Passion: Contest and Consensus in the Audiences for Early Christian Pilgrimage*, in: J. Elsner – I. Rutherford (eds.), *Pilgrimage in Graeco Roman & Early Christian Antiquity. Seeing the Gods*. Oxford 2005, 411–434, loc.cit. 421.

⁸ Vide O. Michel – Th. Klauser, *Gebet II (Fürbitte)*. *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 9 (1976) 1–36, 3–5.

⁹ Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary* 50–62, 85–101, 113–114.

¹⁰ G. A. Wellen, *Theotokos. Eine ikonographische Abhandlung über das Gottesmutterbild in frühchristlicher Zeit*. Utrecht–Antwerpen 1960, 93–131, esp. 97.

¹¹ The Akathistos Hymn is practically the only preserved work of hymnography reflecting the christological issue of the period.

As for the word *presbeia*,¹² the standard translation in Christian usage of this term is “intercession”, which is a special form of prayer. While one speaks in an ordinary petitionary prayer only on behalf of oneself, in an intercessory prayer the needs of others are brought before God. As in a homily of Chrysostom, the word is found innumerable times in homilies and liturgical prayers: “... we ourselves will also be able to enjoy more liberty of speech and be deemed worthy of God’s most abundant philanthropy, in this present life as well as on the future day of horror, through the prayers and intercessions (*euchais and presbeiais*) of those acceptable to God ...”¹³ Here intercessors are called “those acceptable to God”. Perhaps Chrysostom had especially martyrs in mind, for in his time religious life was centred on martyrs.¹⁴ The impression that devotion to Mary was “overshadowed by the enthusiastic cult of the martyrs for the first three centuries at any rate”, seems to explain the practically non-existent evidence of prayers addressed to Mary from that time.¹⁵ Yet, so far we know too little of the seminal phase of the cult of Mary – especially of its regional conditions and developments – to be able to say whether Mary’s intercessory role really was affected by the enthusiasm for martyrs.

Judging from its occurrences in all kinds of sources the word *presbeia* in Byzantine understanding was in the first place associated with embassies and advocacy. From ancient times onwards it is predominantly met with in texts referring to a body of ambassadors sent for negotiations.¹⁶ Accordingly, the Patristic Greek Lexicon informs us that in Christian contexts *presbeia* is used for the work of Christians as God’s or Christ’s ambassadors and for special commissions performed in the service of the Church. The request or entreaty presented by a *presbeia* was also called *presbeia*. The highly valued status that ancient cultures assigned to the elder or eldest male members of a clan, family and society is revealed by the words “rank” and “dignity”, which are rendered as the basic meanings for the patristic notion of *presbeia*.¹⁷ Altogether, it seems that we should be aware that, for Byzantines, the native Greek speakers, the formula “through/by means of the intercessory prayers of ...” (*presbeiais* ...) implied intercessors’ status and, hence, role in society.¹⁸ How these things stood in relation to the role of Mary as intercessor is a question left to be answered by future studies of the cult of Mary.

Although the veneration of Mary within the Church was “universal”, her cult evolved in the conditions that a particular place or region offered. Peter Brown, speaking about the making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD, aptly says that, “Each Christian region had a landscape of its own”.¹⁹ Without doubt this holds also for the late-antique Eastern Roman Empire. Over the span of the five centuries with which this volume is concerned, the empire turned into a thoroughly Christian society and at the end of Iconoclasm the figure of Mary is found as the intercessor of the entire empire. Why and how this development took place is a question that challenges not only the study of the Byzantine cult of Mary but the study of Byzantine society in general. Our volume will be a contribution to the search for an explanation. The glimpses of different “landscapes” in Byzantine territory show first of all the cultural contexts where Mary’s intercessory role manifested itself. The selected regions cover a great part but not all of the territory that was under East Roman or Byzantine rule from the 4th to the 9th century. While places associated with Mary through the Gospels and legendary stories about her and her “relics” developed into Marian pilgrimage centres, vast areas show no particular traces of the cult of Mary,²⁰ though it is clear that Mary as the mother of Jesus was known to all Christianity.

¹² See H. G. Liddell – R. Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, with a revised supplement. Oxford 1996, 1461f. s. v. *πρεσβεία*, ἡ. The basic meaning is *age, seniority, the state or right of the elder*.

¹³ Joannes Chrysostomus, *Homilia IX in Genesin*, PG 53, col. 81: (Οὕτω γὰρ καὶ ὁ μακάριος προφήτης Δαυὶδ διδάσκει λέγων· Ἐκκλινον ἀπὸ κακοῦ, καὶ ποιήσον ἀγαθόν. Ἄν οὕτω τὰ καθ’ ἑαυτοῦ οἰκονομῶμεν, καὶ μετὰ τῆς ἀποχῆς τῶν βρωμάτων καὶ τὴν ἀποχὴν τῆς κακίας ἐπιδειξώμεθα,) **δυνησόμεθα καὶ αὐτοὶ πλείονος ἀπολαῦσαι τῆς παρρησίας, καὶ δαψιλεστέρας ἀξιοθῆναι τῆς παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίας, καὶ ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ, καὶ ἐν τῇ μελλούσῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ τῇ φοβερᾷ, εὐχαῖς καὶ πρεσβείαις τῶν εὐαρεστησάντων αὐτῷ...**

¹⁴ V. M. Limberis, *Architects of Piety. The Cappadocian Fathers and the Cult of the Martyrs*. Oxford 2011.

¹⁵ J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*. London 1989, 491.

¹⁶ TLG search on *πρεσβεία*. See also Liddell – Scott. Today the word appears around the world at the entrances of the Embassies of Greece: ΠΡΕΣΒΕΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ.

¹⁷ Cf. G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford 1995, 1128 s. v.

¹⁸ Of course, not only the etymology of this Greek word, but the idea itself – that an influential party is sought for to intercede on behalf of someone in trouble – implies a social context, irrespective of the language used.

¹⁹ P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle. Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD*. Princeton, NJ–Oxford 2012, xxii.

²⁰ It is quite possible that future studies and reinterpretations can change this view.

We will begin to consider the evidence of Mary's intercessory role in Palestine where the historical Mary lived. Then we turn to Egypt and from there we go to Constantinople. Syria, including Antioch, Armenia and Dyrrachium in Albania represent the East, while Rome, Italy and North Africa belong to the West. In addition, a paper on seals with non-regional approach is included in the collection.

The crucial problem that long afflicted research on the early cult of Mary can be attributed to the disparagement of ancient apocryphal sources by past generations of scholars.²¹ The situation changed with the recognition of the historical value of the textual material that had been useless for theological studies, oriented to the doctrinal teaching of the early church Fathers. In this respect the case of the ancient Dormition apocrypha, preserved in late-antique Palestine, from which Stephen Shoemaker draws his conclusions, is quite illuminating. There is no doubt that the *Transitus Mariae* literature reflects the earliest devotion to Mary and that the Dormition apocrypha, issuing from the oldest traditions, disclose the existence of marian intercession and even a marian cult in the region of Palestine well before the Council of Ephesus.

Shoemaker's study of this extremely problematic material, which – alas! – is practically inaccessible to “those uninitiated”, has already resulted in new knowledge of the evolution of these narrative traditions.²² Now, as we are informed that “it was most likely belief in Mary's intercession that first gave rise to the early Christian accounts of Mary's miraculous departure from this world and her apocalyptic journey into the next”,²³ – and not the other way round – of necessity the question of the historicity behind the traditions keeps cropping up. In this regard an observation by Shoemaker is particularly important: some of the very earliest evidence for marian devotion and intercession is found in early Christian communities in late-antique Palestine. It is of course not surprising that in Palestine there were Christian communities, but since the matter concerns the greatest issue of the research on Mary – why her cult ever emerged – the observation is significant. Regarding the “axiom” of the so-called goddess theory,²⁴ we can take it for granted that – since Christianity grew out from Jewish religion – in Christian thought there was no category “goddess”. The absence of female deities or goddesses in Christian religion is often explained in research literature by the church Fathers' patriarchal pattern of thought; although there is no doubt that it was fundamentally an implication of God's command to Israel.²⁵ Whether Christians in ancient Palestine knew goddesses and their cults is beside the point,²⁶ because the followers of Jesus Christ were the only group of people who in general may have had any reason to be interested in the mother of their Master. Marian veneration simply could not start outside Christian circles. Clearly, finding in Palestine and Jerusalem a cradle of marian piety requires another explanation than the one offered by the goddess theory. There is still material from this region which has only begun to be explored. The *Jerusalem Georgian Chantbook*, “a tremendous resource”,²⁷ which Shoemaker briefly presents in this chapter, promises to shed new light on the history of marian piety and thus also on Mary's intercessory role in the late-antique Near East.

Rina Avner recalls the fact that Jewish religion and culture knew many intercessors. Her focus is laid on the Kathisma, where – according to the Protoevangelium of James – Mary rested on her way to Bethlehem. In that rural area along the road and near Bethlehem there was also situated the tomb of Rachel, whose veneration as a mother and a successful intercessor had been popular in that area. The author concludes that the cult of the Theotokos at the Kathisma emerged from local veneration of Rachel. In addition her persuasive argument urges a closer examination of the roles of the Old Testament intercessors to find out how much Mary's intercessory role owes to Jewish culture.²⁸

²¹ Cf. J. Baun, *Tales from another Byzantium. Celestial Journey and Local Community in the Medieval Greek Apocrypha*. Cambridge 2007, 3.

²² S. J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption*. Oxford 2002.

²³ Here Shoemaker relies on E. Norelli, *Marie des apocryphes: enquête sur la mère de Jésus dans le christianisme antique*. *Christianismes antiques*. Geneve 2009, 132–136.

²⁴ According to this theory, human need for maternal protection was projected onto Mary as the ancient goddesses lost their position with Christianization. On the so-called goddess-theory, consult L. M. Peltomaa, *Towards the Origins of the History of the Cult of Mary*. *Studia Patristica* 40 (2006) 75–86, esp. 78–80.

²⁵ Christianity cannot be disconnected from the history of Israel, for the salvation of which God uttered his commandments through Moses, cf. Ex 20,1–3; Dt 5,6–7.

²⁶ Cf. F. A. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370–527*, I–II. Leiden–New York–Cologne 1993–1994, esp. I 98ff.

²⁷ A massive collection of liturgical hymns from the fifth to the seventh centuries.

²⁸ Consult, e.g., M. Widmer, *Moses, God, and the Dynamics of Intercessory Prayer. A Study of Exodus 32–34 and Numbers 13–14*. *Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe* 8. Tübingen 2004.

“Egypt”, as researchers engaged with the early cult of Mary very well know, divides scholarly views about the possible influence of the cult of Isis on that of Mary.²⁹ In his exhaustive treatise Arne Effenberger discusses the complex problem of this influence. A relatively large part of the chapter is dedicated to the question of interpreting the iconographic type of *Galaktotrophousa*, whose model is found in the “Isis lactans”. As the *Galaktotrophousa* instances are examined in association with Christian places, e.g., in a monastery’s areas for prayer, several aspects can be singled out: eucharistic, eschatological, ecclesiological and soteriological, depending on the close context. The study shows – though unintentionally – that it was not the ancient form/model, but the context that provides keys for understanding the appearances of the *Galaktotrophousa* in Christian environments. Art-historical evidence of Mary’s intercessory role before the Council of Ephesus is not found in Egypt. The material, however, indicates that well before Ephesus marian piety outside the church was firmly anchored in the private sphere of the people, i.e., to the social milieu of the middle-class town/city-dwellers.

At the same time as religious art in Egypt leaves us exposed to interpretations, in the field of theology the unambiguous position of Cyril of Alexandria conversely enables us to pinpoint the origins of the idea of Mary’s intercessory powers. Fathoming Cyril of Alexandria’s incarnational theology, Antonia Atanassova evinces Cyril’s substantial contribution to the teaching on Mary’s motherhood with the focus on her womb. According to Atanassova, Cyril’s explicit emphasis on Mary’s mediatory role between God and creation was “a definitive theological novelty”. By elucidating the thought in Cyril’s voluminous writings, in which he defended the title *Theotokos* against Nestorius’ christological reasoning in the controversy leading to Ephesus, Atanassova presents the unique Christian roots of the recognition of Mary’s role. In this respect the notion entertained by some scholars that early mariology is “a natural outgrowth of the goddess-cults”, does not hold true.³⁰

However, the theological aspect of Mary’s role is only one side of the coin: the devotional use of the epithet *Theotokos* is the reverse. Theodore de Bruyn reviews the history of this word to illustrate the problematic of examining the cult of Mary in Egyptian Christianity, apparent from the evidence presented here. This chapter on appeals to the intercessions of Mary in Greek liturgical and paraliturgical texts from Egypt focuses on a very specific question: in what form and at what time did appeals to the intercession of Mary in Egypt appear in eucharistic liturgies and individual prayers for healing and protection? A thoroughgoing answer is given, based both on a careful analysis of the Egyptian eucharistic anaphoras, representing recent scholarship, and on the author’s own research into Greek amulets. The answer – brilliantly balanced considerations of the lacunose evidence – renders however only a provisional hypothesis, “with several caveats”, as the author states.

The most plausible supposition, namely that the developed formulae found in fifth-century amulets reflect a practice that was already achieving liturgical expression in the fourth century, leads to silence. De Bruyn’s remark in the beginning of the chapter concerning several elements which become “less certain when they are examined more closely” proves to be true in the end. The famous papyrus P.Ryl. III 470, with the prayer for protection addressed directly to the Theotokos (*Sub tuum praesidium*), is only one example of the typical difficulties involved in the sort of textual and material evidence de Bruyn has been investigating. The possibility exists all the time that previous conceptions of the context are not correct. His conclusion, “recourse to theory is inevitable”, needs no further reasoning – the fact is evident from this study. The question about theory poses, however, a difficult problem.

Cyril Mango’s assessment that Constantinople became “a terrestrial fief” of the Theotokos during the reign of Justinian (527–565)³¹ has incited Leena Mari Peltomaa to pursue the question why it was Mary’s patronage that was sought in particular. The attention that Mary received at that time in theology and imperial matters is important in terms of our topic, the intercessory role of Mary, for in the general consciousness it was the most famous instance of miracles assigned to the Virgin in Byzantine history that catapulted Mary into the position of the protectress of the imperial city – the deliverance of Constantinople from the siege of Constantinople by the Avars and

²⁹ Cf. Peltomaa, *Towards the Origins* 86.

³⁰ Cf. Atanassova’s paper, ref. to St. Benko, *The Virgin Goddess. Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology. Studies in the History of Religion* 59. Leiden–New York–Cologne 1993.

³¹ C. Mango, *Constantinople as Theotokoupolis*, in: M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*. Milan 2000, 17–25.

Persians in 626³² in the reign of Heraclius (610–641).³³ Three contemporary eyewitness documents, arising from different literary genres,³⁴ emphasize that God saved the city from barbarian terror by the intercession of the Theotokos, whereby they bear evidence that Constantinopolitans' belief in Mary's intercessory capacity was firmly established in orthodoxy.³⁵

However, it appears that to a certain degree current research adheres to the thought that marian piety in Constantinople was not based on the same foundations as those on which these rhetorically skilled churchmen of the highest rank put their emphasis.³⁶ Of course, the question is not about theological finesses, though it is relevant to notice that doctrinally the records of the siege do not digress from earlier evidence from Constantinople, viz. the Akathistos hymn from the fifth and the hymnography of Romanos from the sixth century. Fundamentally, the question involves the intellectual basis of human existence: why we are here, from where we are coming and where we are going. The majority of Constantinopolitans of the Justinianic period, we may assume, received Christian answers to these questions along with their mothers' milk.³⁷ Thus they learned that the framework to which meaning of life was related was the message of redemption of the world through Christ – or rather, to put it in the way Byzantines themselves preferred – that meaning of life was related to *oikonomia*, the plan of God. The analysis, which Peltomaa makes on the basis of Romanos' hymnography, indicates that the prerequisite for the idea of Mary's intercessory role was the Byzantine conception of *oikonomia*, in which Mary was given the role of Eve's advocate. The significance of this – thoroughly Christian – idea had fully unfolded in the eschatological atmosphere of the Justinianic period, i.e., long before the siege of 626.

Thus Mary's dominant role as protectress of the imperial city, manifest in the siege sources, was an aspect of her intercessory role which apparently had developed from different vantage points. (This is merely an inference. The topic has not been discussed in research literature.) The richness of ideas connected with Mary's intercessions in the marian corpus from the iconoclast period, which Mary Cunningham presents in this volume, serves as the best evidence that this is the continuous elaboration of an old theme. A certain tendency appears, however, in the eighth–ninth-century marian literature (homiletic, hymnographic, hagiographic), which evokes Cunningham's speculation: "Do we then have two different Virgins, one of whom is important above all for her role in the incarnation of Christ while the other begins to exercise a surprising degree of autonomy and power?"

This is really an important question. E.g., from "autonomy and power" it is often gathered that it is a feature owing more to the ancient goddess tradition in Constantinople than to ingenuous Christian piety and veneration of Mary.³⁸ What interests Cunningham, instead, is finding out whether Mary's images were "successfully incorporated into a composite whole" – an idea which obviously proposes that Byzantine Christians, in their prayers, addressed to Mary as a "whole" human being with different characteristics. If the distinction we are accustomed to

³² J. D. Howard-Johnston, *The Siege of Constantinople in 626*, in: C. Mango – G. Dagron (eds.), *Constantinople and its Hinterland*. Aldershot 1995, 131–142.

³³ W. E. Kaegi, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium*. Cambridge 2003, 122–141.

³⁴ A chronicle: L. Dindorfius, *Chronicon Paschale*, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*. Bonn 1832, 716–726; trans. in: Michael Whitby – Mary Whitby (eds.), *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD. Translated Texts for Historians*. Liverpool 1989; a homily attributed to Theodore Syncellus: L. Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica*. Cracoviae 1900, 298–320; a rhetorical poem of George of Pisidia, in: A. Pertusi, *Bellum Avaricum di Giorgio di Pisidia*. Poemi, vol. 1. Panegirici Epici. *Studia Patristica et Byzantina* 7. Ettal 1959, 176–224. – Brilliant analyses of these sources are to be found in J. Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century*. Oxford 2010, 16ff (George of Pisidia), 45–48 (*Chronicon Paschale*; Howard-Johnston convincingly attributes it to Patriarch Sergius), 146–147 (Theodore Syncellus).

³⁵ "Le document le plus complet" (F. Barišić, *Le siège de Constantinople par les Avars et les Slaves en 626. Byzantion* 24 [1954] 371–395, loc. cit. 375) is the long homily of Syncellus, supplying us with a day-by-day account of the siege. Simultaneously it offers a highly sophisticated explanation of the event in the light of Holy Scripture, revealing a divine "logic" behind the human misfortune. Unfortunately, no detailed scholarly analysis of this document is available. In any case, in this text the victorious role of the Virgin is founded on Christian understanding of the incarnation, i.e., divine economy, and the christological dogma of the Theotokos (see L. M. Peltomaa, *The Role of the Virgin Mary at the Siege of Constantinople in 626. Scrinium* 5 [2009] 284–299, esp. 287–290, 294–295).

³⁶ For example, Bissera Pentcheva, taking at face value the rhetorical models of ancient goddesses for Mary in the battle, appearing in Syncellus and George of Pisidia, but disregarding the explicit Christian contextualization of the siege by the three eyewitnesses, concludes that contemporary perceptions of Mary's role in battle reflect belief in powers which previously were associated with the pagan mother goddesses. See B. V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium*. University Park, PA 2006, 64–66.

³⁷ Infant baptism is a disputed theme of which Wikipedia provides a good overview, see "Baptism". Cf. G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford 1995, 284–288 s. v. βάπτισμα. However, there can be no doubt that by the reign of Justinian children in Christian families had been raised as Christians for many generations, even since Constantine's conversion.

³⁸ Recently Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*.

make between “popular” texts and those “qualified” for the use in church proves to be false, as Cunningham suggests, the literary figure of Mary may appear more coherent. It is worth noting that Mary in her role of the intercessor who has *parrhesia* with Christ in heaven is strikingly evident in the eighth- and ninth-century literary marian corpus of Constantinopolitan provenance.

The chapter, “Ancient Syriac Sources on Mary’s Role as Intercessor”, is a broad treatment of a topic that has never before been highlighted in studies on early Christian texts in Syriac. The bulk of the material Cornelia Horn has chosen for investigation is to a great extent problematic with regard to authenticity and dating. This concerns especially the important Syriac text of the *Transitus Mariae* (the Six Books of the *Transitus Mariae*) and liturgical hymnography (the Syriac Theotokia and the supplications ascribed to Rabbula of Edessa). Nevertheless, Horn presents in detail the literary and liturgical contexts in which ancient Christians’ belief in Mary’s intercessory capacity appeared in the Syriac domain.

Broadly speaking, in the Syriac Christian culture of the ancient Near East the *Transitus Mariae* literature proves to be the most important witness to the early role of Mary as intercessor. Therefore the conspicuous absence of references to Mary’s intercessory role both in the marian poetry of Ephraem the Syrian (d. 373) and in the inauthentic hymns – conflated versions of the originals up to the sixth century – seems difficult to explain. Even so, perhaps we should notice that the ideological framework with which Mary’s intercessory function comes into sight in the Six Books of the *Transitus Mariae* implies an eschatological perspective, which is found, e.g., in Ephraem’s Hymns on Paradise.³⁹

Thanks to Horn’s careful descriptions of the contents of the chosen texts we are able to see a clear difference between Mary’s image as intercessor in the *Transitus Mariae* narratives and in the liturgical texts, where Mary is frequently pictured as intercessor and suppliant. The Dormition tradition renders an image of the real woman Mary, who is there a personality. The liturgical hymnography again, emphasizing her properties, based on well-known biblical and/or doctrinal references used in christological discourse, offers an idealized, to a certain degree incoherent and therefore abstract image of the Virgin. Its “prototype” emerged during the Theotokos controversy and it is the same exalted figure that all christological homilies from the Ephesian period praise. Horn notes: “The ‘Greek tsunami’ of christological controversy that arrived on Syriac Christian shores in the fifth century played an important role in raising the profile of Mary as intercessor.”

Pauline Allen’s study, based on the set of 125 homilies of Severus, the patriarch of Antioch (512–518), requires us to correct our notion of Antioch as a mariological “terra dura”. Her argument rests on the contextualization of these homilies by reference to the author’s hymns, where Mary appears explicitly as the “vehicle of intercession”. It is remarkable that Allen questions a whole tradition of patristic scholarship with its emphasis on the “negative” influence of John Chrysostom on Antiochian mariology. The introduction of the great mariological feasts, the Annunciation and Dormition, and the large-scale building programmes in honour of the Theotokos, which took place in the region of Antioch later in the sixth century, are already seen as “prefigured” in Severus’ composite picture of the Theotokos. With regard to research on the cult of Mary, a revaluation of all kinds of evidence for the veneration of Mary within Antiochian territory up to this period appears as a *desideratum*.

The reason by which Allen explains Mary’s appearance as the “vehicle of intercession” in Severus’ hymns is as follows: “The genre of hymnography lent itself more than the homily to an affective and more immediate approach to the Theotokos”. Although the observation may refer to Severus alone, it is important in general, because it suggests emotionality, which was the instrument of promoting cult. Here we have to state that emotions is a theme whose investigation in Byzantine studies remains “underdeveloped” – in favour of belief in “facts”.⁴⁰ However, it is clear that the cult of Mary did not develop in an unemotional soil. We could say that preachers like Severus cultivated that soil but that it was not their creation.⁴¹ As a matter of fact, the veneration of Mary – the prerequisite of a cult – is manifest already in the New Testament.⁴² So far we have no methodological tools for

³⁹ Cf. S. J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary’s Dormition and Assumption*. Oxford 2002, 179–204, esp. 189–191.

⁴⁰ See M. Hinterberger, *Emotions in Byzantium* in: L. James (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium*. Chichester 2010, 123–134, esp. 124. Hinterberger provides an illuminating historical perspective to the question of Byzantine emotionality. An insightful reading of texts that evoke emotions, see N. Tsironis, *Emotion and the Senses in Marian Homilies of the Middle-Byzantine Period* in: L. Brubaker – M. B. Cunningham (eds.), *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium. Texts and Images*. Aldershot 2011, 179–196.

⁴¹ M. B. Cunningham – P. Allen (eds.), *Preacher and Audience. Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics. A New History of the Sermon* 1. Leiden–Boston–Cologne 1998.

⁴² Esp. Lk 1,42–45.

approaching the question of emotions as the driving force behind the rising cult. Yet it must have been there – something that Byzantines felt and realized.

The last four chapters in this volume represent art-historical studies. The evidence of the intercessory role of Mary comes from the southern Caucasus – Armenia and Georgia, from modern Durrës in Albania, and from Rome, Italy and North Africa, i.e., from the West in contrast to the East, and from a corpus of seals which cannot be located. With this art-historical material we encounter the early Byzantine past that not words but ideas convey in visual form.

The body of unique and impressive cross monuments, the funeral stelae of Armenian local princes or rulers, is scattered across the southern Caucasus. These monuments allow Annegret Plontke-Lüning and Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan to argue that Mary's intercessory role was acknowledged by Armenian aristocratic families in the 6th–8th centuries. Their interpretation of the stelae's message, related to the intercessory function of Mary, relies on the rich corpus of Armenian hymns on the Theotokos, whose terminology reflects unambiguously the christology of the Akathistos.⁴³ Against this framework, these works put into words the noble lords' tidings on the cross monuments: the hope of defeating their own death by Christ's triumphant symbol. The famous monument of Odzun in northern Armenia shows an artistic programme with biblical scenes of the life of the Virgin. According to the authors, the stele conveys the idea that the founders wanted to secure Mary's support at the *parousia*.

Dyrrachium, a city on the coast of Albania, is known for the mosaics decorating a Christian funeral chapel in the bowels of an ancient Roman amphitheater. The dating of those mosaics is of special interest to researchers on the cult of Mary, because they show a comprehensive artistic programme, two figures of Mary included. We are happy to present in this book the first study to our knowledge of the chapel of Dyrrachium devoted to the significance and meaning of its entire artistic programme. Galina Fingarova's exciting study demonstrates that the mosaic panels are to be dated to the sixth or seventh century. From her analysis it turns out that the ideological aspects – christology, worldview and social order – related to Mary's intercessory function can be found on the walls of this funeral chapel. Here we have a revealing example of early Byzantine ideas concerning the passing from this world to the other.

Whereas the funeral chapel of Dyrrachium is a compact research object, making an integrated interpretation possible, the "corpus" which Henry Maguire investigates is found in most heterogeneous contexts, objects and surfaces in the medieval West, in the regions of Rome, Italy and North Africa. Accordingly, his first concern is: what is an intercessory image and how can it be recognized? It is exciting that Maguire's focus is not on the form of the pictorial types that would clearly imply the idea of intercession. Instead, he examines what is by far the most common iconography in the sixth century, the frontal representations of the Virgin and Child, which are polyvalent in their meanings. According to him, "these images could function as doctrinal statements, demonstrating the humanity of Christ; as amulets, providing protection to patrons, wearers, or viewers; or as an expression of intercession. On some occasions it appears that the work of art could assume more than one of these roles at the same time". Maguire's search for the idea of intercession brings forth two types of images of the Virgin in the early medieval West. The frontal images, "potentially intercessionary", preceded the explicitly intercessionary images, like the type of the orant Virgin, which did not appear in the apses of Roman churches until the middle of the seventh century. Seen from the angle of art-historical morphology and chronology, the evidence is indisputable. However, from an ideological point of view, as the pilgrims' flasks with the orant type predate the large-scale representations, the question of an idea, which may have been in circulation for ages, arises by itself. In the light of Maguire's assertion, "the desire of the viewer preceded the artist's response", this seems logical.

Seals, the research object of Alexandra-Kyriaki Wassiliou-Seibt, differ from the other art-historical material presented here because we do not need to ask whether they express the idea of Mary's intercession or not. Some of the other material, even when it is not manifestly intercessory, could be construed as implying an intercessory role, but a seal, an object of lead with Mary's image, which was once fastened to a document, was unambiguously understood as a warrant of Mary's mediation. This starting-point, however, does not make Byzantine lead seals easier as objects of research. Due to the state of research in this field the problems are not only connected with the systems of classification used in dating but also with the interpretation of databases, for only a portion of the

⁴³ See p. 2.

estimated 80,000 lead seals worldwide is published.⁴⁴ Here we meet with a surprising statistical fact: patriarchal seals featuring the Theotokos do not really appear until after Iconoclasm, whereas Byzantine imperial seals are found across the empire.

As already indicated above, recently Peter Brown made the important statement that “each Christian Region had a landscape of its own”.⁴⁵ The contributions contained in this volume clearly demonstrate this statement; they give evidence of it from the different temporal and, perhaps more important, historically conditioned access to Christianity in general, and to the position of Mary within this in particular, in the individual regions of the late Roman and Byzantine Empires. The readers of this volume can test this very well on the basis of the individual contributions which deal with the Near East and Egypt, the Caucasus and the Balkans, the imperial capital Constantinople, as well as Italy and North Africa.

Our volume is to be understood as a contribution to understanding the emerging and slowly developing cult of Mary, of the maturing presentation of the intercessory role of Mary, venerated as the Mother of God; naturally it does not intend to pose all the questions or, what would be even more presumptuous, to offer solutions to all questions. Hence it is understandable that it is not feasible to handle all landscapes and geographical regions of the Byzantine Empire.

For example, Asia Minor, one of the central regions of Byzantium, a core territory in the terminology of Johannes Koder,⁴⁶ does not have a contribution of its own in this volume. This was consciously done, for the tremendous peninsula in itself does not present a homogeneous space in which the theological and spiritual development could have been framed uniformly, but as a mirror of the imperial territory it is fragmented into different small landscapes which have completely different characteristics.⁴⁷ For example, for a long time Lydia remained entrapped within the world of pagan ideas, while the neighbouring province of Asia to its West had experienced a deeper Christianisation in a much earlier period, possibly because of its clearly higher level of urbanisation in contrast to its Eastern neighbour, which was characterised by its rustic villages.⁴⁸

But even in the province of Asia there is no uniform picture: one need only recall the well-known fact that the bishop John of Ephesus (c. 507–588) undertook many thousands of conversions, as well as founding 24 churches and 4 monasteries in the hinterland of Tralleis (modern Aydın) in the mountain chain of the Messōgis (Aydınlar dağları) alone – which made the obviously Christianised province of Asia a significant missionary territory for the bishop. This happened in the context of the measures taken to Christianise, which between 542 and 567 were implemented in Western Asia Minor and resulted in the conversion of allegedly 80,000 people, the erection of 98

⁴⁴ J. Cotsonis, The Contribution of Byzantine lead seals to the study of the cult of the saints (sixth–twelfth century). *Byzantion* 75 (2005) 383–497, esp. 385; on the intercessory role of the Virgin, see pp. 400–404, 489.

⁴⁵ P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle. Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD*. Princeton, NJ–Oxford 2012, xxii (cf. n. 19).

⁴⁶ J. Koder, *Der Lebensraum der Byzantiner. Historisch-geographischer Abriß ihres mittelalterlichen Staates im östlichen Mittelmeerraum. Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber Ergänzungsband 1*. Graz–Cologne–Vienna 1984. Nachdruck mit bibliographischen Nachträgen Vienna 2001, 16, 32–36.

⁴⁷ See S. Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. II. The Rise of the Church*. Oxford 1993 *passim*; A. von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*. Vierte verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage mit elf Karten. Leipzig 1924 (ND. Wiesbaden 1981), 732–785 „Kleinasien“. See also the corresponding chapters in the volumes of *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* (TIB): F. Hild – M. Restle, Kappadokien (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos) TIB 2. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften* 149. Vienna 1981, 112–123; K. Belke, mit Beiträgen von M. Restle, Galatien und Lykaonien. TIB 4. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften* 172. Vienna 1984, 84–92; F. Hild – H. Hellenkemper, Kilikien und Isaurien. TIB 5. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften* 215. I–II. Vienna 1990, I 85–97; K. Belke – N. Mersich, Phrygien und Pisidien. TIB 7. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften* 211. Vienna 1990, 125–138; H. Hellenkemper – F. Hild, Lykien und Pamphylien. TIB 8. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften* 320. I–III. Vienna 2004, I 139–154; K. Belke, Paphlagonien und Honōrias. TIB 9. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften* 249. Vienna 1996, 103–116; K. Belke, Bithynien und Hellēspontos. TIB 13. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften*. Vienna (in preparation); A. Külzer, Lydien. TIB 14. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften*. Vienna (in preparation); A. Külzer, Asia. TIB 17. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften*. Vienna (in preparation).

⁴⁸ A. Külzer, Aspekte der Christianisierung der frühbyzantinischen Provinz Asia, in: W. Ameling (ed.), *Die Christianisierung Kleinasien in der Spätantike. Beiträge der Internationalen Konferenz Köln, 18.–22. März 2013*. Cologne (in press); J. Keil, Asia. *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 1 (1950) 740–749, 744; C. Foss, Lydien. *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 23 (2010) 739–762; H. Ahrweiler, L’histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081–1317). *Travaux et Mémoires* 1 (1965) 1–204, 1f.

churches, 12 monasteries, and the transformation of 7 synagogues into churches.⁴⁹ By the beginning of the fifth century at the latest the provincial capital, Ephesus, distinguished by a Marian church and the site of the Third Ecumenical Council (431), so significant for christology (!), bore completely the stamp of the veneration of St John; the veneration of Mary in contrast clearly receded and in the early sources was not thematically considered at all – the letter of the Emperor Theodosius II (408–450) from 19 November 430 convoking the said council gave as the reason for choosing the site of the assembly its position, favourable for transport, and its superlative infrastructure; however, reference to Mary, which in the context of the planned theme of the council would have been expected, is not to be found.⁵⁰ A sole text from the council fathers, which mentions John the Theologian and Mary together, cannot be adduced because it lacks a verb.⁵¹ Only from the Middle Byzantine period do some Syrian sources like Moses ben Kepha († 903) or Michael the Syrian († 1199) depict a connection between Ephesus and Mary;⁵² the Greek tradition emphasises the presence of the Theotokos in Ephesus really only from the nineteenth century onwards.⁵³ Theologically significant developments with regard to the intercessory role of the Mother of God cannot be discovered from the extant sources at all; finally indeed it must be asked whether the dedication of the Marian church had already existed before the Council or whether it was chosen subsequently in remembrance of the decision that was taken there. The famous and well-known Marian churches in the province of Asia, such as the Lembīōtissa monastery in the Kemalpaşa dağı, a few kilometres to the southeast of the present village of Işıklar, or the monastery of the God-bearer in the mountains of Galēšion, modern Alaman dağı not far from Ephesus, in any case date from the Middle Byzantine period.⁵⁴

There is also little information about the Mother of God and her intercessory role in the other regions of Asia Minor: Phrygia was essentially bound up with the cult of the martyrs and the angels, especially Archangel Michael in Chonai; in Cilicia St Thecla dominated (especially in Meriamlik near Seleucia), in Pontus Sts Theodore, in Euchaïta as well as in Euchaina.⁵⁵ In Bithynia in the mountains of Dindymon (near Cyzicus in the historical landscape of Mysia) during the time of the Emperor Zeno (474/75, 476–491) the temple of Rea, the Mother of the gods, was converted into the church of Mary, the Mother of God,⁵⁶ and in the sixth century in Comana the temple of Artemis and the temple of Iphigenia were converted into Christian churches, without there being any talk at all of their patronage.⁵⁷ More detailed information on the nascent cult of Mary and if necessary her developing intercessory role was leave for further research. A small step in this direction has been taken by the contributions to

⁴⁹ John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*. Syriac text edited and translated by E. W. Brooks. II *PO* 18 (1974) 513–698, 680f. (live 47); *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae ecclesiasticae pars tertia, interpretatus est E. W. Brooks. CSCO* 106, *Script. Syr.* 55. Louvain 1936 (ND Louvain 1964) III 36f. (slightly different numbers); V. Schultze, *Altchristliche Städte und Landschaften*. Bd. II 2 „Kleinasien“. Gütersloh 1926, 128–130.

⁵⁰ *ACO* I 1,3, 31f.; R. Harreither, *Die Synoden von Ephesos. Mitteilungen zur Christlichen Archäologie (MiChA)* 8 (2002) 78–94, 83; A. Pülz, *Von der Göttin zur Gottesmutter? Artemis und Maria*, in: U. Muss (ed.), *Die Archäologie der ephesischen Artemis. Gestalt und Ritual eines Heiligtums*. Vienna 2008, 67–75, 70f.; Idem, *Ephesos als christliches Pilgerzentrum. MiChA* 16 (2010) 71–102, 73; Idem, *Archaeological Evidence of Christian Pilgrimage in Ephesus. Herom* 1 (2012) 225–260, 226.

⁵¹ *ACO* I 1,2,70; A. Pülz, *Ephesos als christliches Pilgerzentrum. MiChA* 16 (2010) 71–102, 73.

⁵² A. Pülz – S. Ladstätter, *Meryemana bei Ephesos. Zur archäologischen Untersuchung des Jahres 2003. Anzeiger der Phil.-Hist. Klasse der ÖAW* 141. Vienna 2006, 71–104, 74f.; A. Pülz, *Von der Göttin zur Gottesmutter? Artemis und Maria* 71; B. F. Deutsch, *Our Lady of Ephesus*. Milwaukee 1965, 41–45.

⁵³ A. Pülz – S. Ladstätter, *Meryemana bei Ephesos* 71–73; A. Pülz, *Archaeological Evidence of Christian Pilgrimage in Ephesus* 226.

⁵⁴ H. Ahrweiler, *L'histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081–1317). Travaux et Mémoires* 1 (1965) 92; *The Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion: an eleventh-century pillar saint. Introduction, translation, and notes by R. P. H. Greenfield. Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation* 3. Washington, D.C. 2000, 12f. and n. 37, 130f., 152f., 351, 368f., and *passim*. Remember also the church of the Theotokos in Elea, 23 kilometres southwest of Pergamum, where St Peter of Atroa started his clerical career in 786: V. Laurent, *La vie merveilleuse de Saint Pierre d'Atroa († 837), éditée, traduite et commentée. Subsida Hagiographica* 29. Brussels 1956, 30, 70–73 (cap. 3).

⁵⁵ C. Foss, *Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor. Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002) 129–151; H. Hellenkemper, *Frühe christliche Wallfahrtsstätten in Kleinasien*, in: *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie*, Bonn 22.–28. September 1991 (= *JbAC*, Ergänzungsband 20). Münster 1995, 259–271; B. Kötting, *Peregrinatio religiosa. Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der alten Kirche*. Münster 1950, 140–160 (Meriamlik), 160–166 (Euchaïta), 166–171 (Chōnai).

⁵⁶ Ioannis Malalae *Chronographia*, ed. I. Thurn. *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 35. Berlin 2000, 54–55; Ioannis Antiocheni *fragmenta ex historia chronica*, ed. U. Roberto. Berlin 2005, 62–65, cap. 26.2; Georgius Cedrenus, *Ioannes Scylitzae ope*, ed. I. Bekker. I. Bonn 1838, 209f. Cf. F. A. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370–527*, II. Leiden–New York–Cologne 1994, 23–24.

⁵⁷ *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia I–II. De bellis libri VIII*, ed. J. Hauriy. Leipzig 1905 (ND. Leipzig 1963) I 17.

the International Conference „Die Christianisierung Kleinasiens in der Spätantike“, held in March 2013 at the University of Cologne, which are being published soon.⁵⁸

At the time of the Council of Ephesus (431), in the Byzantine capital Constantinople there was still no church dedicated to Mary, and also immediately after the council there was conspicuous hesitation in this regard – it was utterly different in Rome, where as early as the time of Pope Sixtus III (432–440) a splendid Marian building, S. Maria Maggiore, was created. Some years ago Cyril Mango rightly emphasised that only a generation later, in the reigns of the Emperors Leo I (457–474) and Zeno, a change of thinking is discernible in Constantinople, which indicates a not inconsiderable continuation of the theological convictions of Nestorius (428–431) in the thought and actions of the inhabitants.⁵⁹ The first church dedicated to the Mother of God which can be proven with certainty is the Theotokou tōn Kyrou (*sic!*), built in the 450s or 460s;⁶⁰ scarcely a century later, however, in the reign of the Emperor Justinian I (527–565), the Theotokos had already risen to be patron saint of the imperial capital. There is nothing in Asia Minor that is comparable to this remarkably swift development.

Let this suffice as an introduction. We wish the readers of this volume much enjoyment and a corresponding gain in knowledge from what the following pages have to offer on the emerging intercessory role of Mary.

⁵⁸ On the bibliography, see above n. 48.

⁵⁹ C. Mango, Constantinople as Theotokoupolis, in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*. Milan 2000, 19, 22.

⁶⁰ R. Janin, *La Géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin I: Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique III: Les Églises et les Monastères*. Paris ²1969, 193–195 and *passim*.

