

ELENA N. BOECK, *The Bronze Horseman of Justinian in Constantinople. The Cross-Cultural Biography of a Mediterranean Monument*. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press 2021. xxviii, 452 pp. – ISBN 978-1-107-19727-5 (£ 90.00; € 137.93; \$ 122.09; Kindle £ 72.00).

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Around the year 543, Justinian I set up a bronze statue of himself solemnly mounted on a horse, wearing a cuirass, holding a cross-topped orb in his left hand and stretching forth his right arm. The statue, facing east, surmounted a masonry column of great height that was built for this purpose on a stepped pedestal in the Augusteon, the spacious courtyard to the immediate south of Hagia Sophia, with the shaft of the column sheathed in bronze. Numerous literary sources (including Greek, Arabian, Slavic, Armenian, Western) report on the monument; the oldest source to mention it is Procopius's *Buildings*, and the *Chronicle* of John Malalas mentions it, too. Additionally, it is shown in a number of miniatures and an icon. The effigy was demolished by the Ottomans soon after 1453, and the bronze scrap from the statue was melted down some decades later in their cannon foundry.

ELENA N. BOECK has now published a treatise concerning that lost monument. The book is composed of an introduction, a postscript, approximately seventy-five pictures and maps, a bibliography, an index, and a total of seventeen chapters divided into ninety-five subchapters. Thus, with more than one hundred ten first- and second-level headings—such as ‘Horse as *Historia*, Byzantium as Allegory,’ ‘Decoding the Message,’ ‘Envisioning a Timeless Tsar’grad,’ and ‘Shadowy Past and Menacing Future’—the reader is provided with a bewildering table of contents that is written, like the rest of the book, in an ornate diction and at times uses a vocabulary that is customarily seen in publications related to esoteric thought (e.g., words from the ‘magic’ and ‘talisman’ word families occur dozens of times).

At 450 densely printed pages, the book looks hugely impressive. On the one hand, usually arrays of expert scholars are required to address comparable issues—such as the Justinianic church of the Holy Apostles, which also was demolished soon after 1453 (MULLETT – OUSTERHOUT 2020),

or the change in reception of the Arch of Titus in the past two millennia (FINE 2021). On the other hand, the ambitious scope, presupposing the single author's profound familiarity with and receptiveness to scholarship in several fields, bears the risk of one-sidedness. In the case of the book under review, this risk has proven quite consequential.

The title ('*The Bronze Horseman of Justinian in Constantinople*') does not accurately indicate the task the book takes up; this task is primarily implied by the subtitle ('*The Cross-Cultural Biography of a Mediterranean Monument*'), in which the author adheres to and reflects on "the global turn in scholarship" (pp. 4–7). At an introductory stage, the broader epistemological position of the invoked turn may well promise to add value. However, in occasionally applying the term 'globalism' to global studies, BOECK confounds the two in an umbrella notion of their multifaceted subject. In any case, she sees in global studies (among other issues) the pursuit of a new great "beyond established epistemological frameworks" (pp. 4–5). This can be read as a demand to break with the wealth of existing scholarship, or at least instill distrust of it a priori. It also contrasts with BOECK's own insistent announcements of her intention to proceed analytically (pp. 5; 7–9). In any case, what follows does not converge on systemic, global studies-related determinants. For example, little attempt is made to link Justinian's horseman with the astonishingly long chain of later equestrian statues of powerful persons as disparate as Genghis Khan, Louis XIV, George Washington, and even members of the family that dictatorially rules North Korea (on this chain see VAN TILBURG 2017). As for the term 'Mediterranean' present in the subtitle (and often in the text), the book leaves the reader to wonder what is supposed to have given a monument that was installed hundreds of miles from the Mediterranean basin a distinctly Mediterranean identity, in terms of either geography or interactions. To provide an analogy, structures and imperial images such as the Column of Constantine in Constantinople or the equestrian statues of Marcus Aurelius in Rome and Regisole in Pavia can hardly be contextualized within the Mediterranean, and so it is with the horseman of Justinian.

Scholars had "undervalued the monument's agency and remarkable longevity," BOECK states (p. i), but she analyzed no fewer than eighteen types of sources "to provide an engrossing and pioneering biography" of it. The statement that the monument has been undervalued needs to be taken *cum grano salis* in view of, e.g., considerable contributions to its study by RUDOLF STICHEL in the last forty years, or HERBERT HUNGER's key paper on Justinian and his remarks on the horseman as an apt expression

of imperial conception and self-perception (HUNGER 1965, disregarded by BOECK).

BOECK extols Justinian's horseman with superlative attributes. She makes use of a height "of over 50 m" and a size of the equestrian statue of 7.5 m; she states that "Justinian's triumphal column was the tallest freestanding column of the premodern world and was crowned with arguably the largest metal equestrian sculpture created anywhere in the world before 1699", repeating these statements verbatim, in part, or in spirit more frequently than necessary for the reader to understand them, and she derives from them a global significance of the monument. However, a book recurrently referring to the monument's enormous size should provide either a determination of it or a founded statement about the impossibility to work it out precisely, given that the written sources partially contradict each other on this point and mention suspiciously round numbers. The monument certainly was colossal and impressive; whether column, statue, or both taken together made it the largest in the world is not the most appropriate benchmark to evaluate its importance. Moreover, the dimensional superiority that BOECK assumes and overemphasizes is in itself based on an error of fact: in Constantinople, the column of Arcadius, with the statue of this emperor on top, was approximately 6 m taller (cf., e.g., LAVAN 2020, pp. 88–89). Be that as it may, methodologically sound estimates of the total height of the column of Justinian vary by as much as 30 to 50 m with a preference for 30–40 m for the column and triple life-size for the statue (e.g., STICHEL 1982, p. 13; LAVAN 2020, l.c.; vol. 2, p. 467). BOECK's preferences for this or that estimate, particularly those that do not go hand-in-hand with her own calculations nor take into account the parameters of the construction, do not change the fact that the uncertainty about the monument's size is far from settled.

BOECK sees in the horseman a repurposed monument, a statue of an earlier Theodosian emperor in reuse (pp. 57–73 and passim). In line with her reasoning, this implies that the supposedly largest metal equestrian statue in the world existed in Constantinople for over a century before Justinian but neither the *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* in the middle of the 5th century nor some other source cared to note anything about it; this seems rather improbable. In addition, if someone regards the horseman as an appropriated object, it makes little sense to project onto it as many specifics of Justinian's propaganda as BOECK does (pp. 38–65 and passim). Again, the question of whether the bronze was original or adapted, cannot be answered definitively.

The main written source for both the column and the equestrian statue is a description by Procopius in his work *Buildings* (I. 2. 5–12). BOECK states that the passage “deserves both a greater consideration and a historiographic rehabilitation”,’ as the *Buildings* as a whole are “a neglected source” in comparison with Procopius’s other works. These statements are hardly reconcilable with the sheer number of recent related high-level publications and ongoing research projects on the *Buildings*. An annotated translation of the work from 2011 provides several hundreds of titles in a bibliography and over one hundred references to the description of Justinian’s column (ROQUES 2011, pp. 436–445 and pp. 113–117, respectively. BOECK disregards the book).

“I argue that the deeper narrative reveals strong elements of ... safe criticism”,’ “I argue that in the *Buildings* Prokopios ... subtly and consistently interweaves criticism of Justinian”,’ and “I argue that in *Buildings* Prokopios operates on two narrative levels”,’ writes BOECK and she fills more than two dozen pages with making her case (pp. 72–97). Nonetheless, a substantial part of the endeavor seems superfluous. Procopius’s duplicitous literary strategy, as applied both generally and especially in the *Buildings*, was elucidated in detail by BERTHOLD RUBIN in the middle of the 20th century (RUBIN 1957; 1960, pp. 173–226) and is now common scholarly knowledge. BOECK quotes RUBIN’s publications trivially (p. 90, n. 95), disregarding their core point on Procopius’s duplicity.

BOECK considers that it would be “reasonable to assume that the architectural team, which was involved in the construction of Hagia Sophia would have also been involved in the construction of the great column” (p. 53). And it does indeed look plausible that know-how gained during the construction of, say, the pillars and buttresses of Justinian’s Great Church was incorporated into the construction of Justinian’s column. However, Anthemios and Isidore, the brilliant minds who architecturally conceived of the construction of Hagia Sophia, were in all likelihood both dead when the column was built. Had they not been dead at the time and had they served as master-builders for the column, Procopius would certainly have mentioned it, just as he did in other instances of their work beyond Hagia Sophia. If we had to guess who among Justinian’s master-builders known by name might have created the column, we should first consider the most skillful Chryses of Alexandria, whom Justinian had chosen to construct the walls and the dam of Daras. In connection with the *Buildings*, we also have a characteristic example of BOECK’s random use of specific evidence in the written sources. She writes that Procopius uses “the noun *hyperbolē*

(in its valence of ‘superiority’) ... twice for Hagia Sophia and once for the column” and sees in this use “ambiguous valences” since she also peculiarly enough assumes that Procopius had a distaste for huge structures (pp. 81–82). For this, she misquotes the *Buildings* three times in succession. In all three cited cases, *hyperbolē* has the simple, technical meaning of ‘top’, referring, respectively, to the upper parts of the eastern apse of Hagia Sophia (‘ἡ δὲ τοῦ ἔργου τούτου ὑπερβολὴ ἐς σφαίρας τεταρτημόριον ἀποκέκριται.’ I. 1. 33), the major piers of that church (‘τὰ μὲν ἄκρα ... ἐν τῇ ὑπερβολῇ ἠρήρυσται τῶν λόφων τούτων.’ I. 1. 39), and the stepped pedestal on which the column stood (‘ἐν δὲ τῇ τῶν λίθων ὑπερβολῇ κίων ἐπανέστηκεν ...’ I. 2. 2). This is also how the passages are understood in all other translations and commentaries.

The reader faces a different approach to using written sources in the case of the *Chronicle of Morea*, a 14th-century narrative that passionately defends the Fourth Crusade and the conquest of Byzantium. In each of its five full versions (one in Old French, one in Aragonese, and three metrical in Greek), the work describes the execution of the last Greek Emperor Alexios V Mourtzouphlos by the crusaders after the capture of Constantinople (§§ 58–59, § 51, and vv. 871–902, respectively). He was thrown from the top of an astounding, massive, high column that stood quite close to Hagia Sophia (‘un pillier moult grant qui est encores devant l’eglise de Saint Sophie’; ‘πλησίον ὀμπρὸς εἰς τὴν Ἁγίαν Σοφίαν / ἔστηκεν κίωνιν φοβερόν, μέγα, ψηλὸν ὑπάρχει’); it is evident that this was the column of Justinian. In addition, the Aragonese version purports that ever since the execution, the column had been named after Mourtzouphlos (‘la qual colona entro al dia de oy se clama la colona de Marzoflo’). Whether historically accurate in all particulars or not, the reference to the execution is noteworthy as part of a political constitutive myth aiming to legitimize the transfer of power from the Byzantine emperors to the crusaders. BOECK writes that the reference to the column “appears in some variants of the *Chronicle of Morea*” (p. 401 with n. 76, ‘variants’ here probably standing for the versions of the *Chronicle* and ‘some’ contradicting the fact that all five full versions explicitly refer to the column) but does not comment on the execution, its high symbolic value, and the choice of Justinian’s column as a stage. We will return to this in due course.

Symeon Logothetes (130, 40) recounts a restoration of a part that had fallen from the statue’s headdress at the beginning of the 9th century: a roofer threw a projectile attached to a rope from the tiles of Hagia Sophia to the statue; the projectile was stuck into the column (‘τοῦ βέλους παγέντος

ἐκεῖσε’), and the roofer went onto the rope and fit the repaired part into place. BOECK’s admiration for this “ingenious solution to what had been an irresolvable problem” is unbounded; the roofer was an “ingenious craftsman” who “possessed astonishing skills: a remarkably skillful bow shot, acrobatic ability”; behind the logistics of the repair work, BOECK sees both the emperor and the patriarch, as the brother of the patriarch was married to a sister of the empress (pp. 122–136).

Certainly, a skillful Bowman shooting from the roof of Hagia Sophia could hit the horseman, but it would be physically impossible for his projectile to pull a cable strong enough to hold a man carrying both a heavy metal object and the tools required for the restoration. However, even if we assume that such a projectile could be docked into Justinian’s column, the cable would form a downward curve that, when nearing the column, would become almost vertical under the weight of the man and thus practically not viable. Scholars have recognized the inconsistencies in Symeon’s account and attempted to make the best out of it by assuming the use of either a thrower capable of launching a bolt at a distant target or a shot with an arrow that flew through the legs of the horse, fell to the other side, and made it possible to pull a rope (cf. ANTONIADES 1907, p. 57; BOECK entirely disregards the problem and the scholarly discussion on it). However, both assumptions are untenable. For one thing, there is no evidence for the existence of such a powerful bolt-thrower at the time, but even if one had existed and hit the target, the bolt would not dock into the column but instead either bounce off the metal surface or seriously damage the masonry. For another thing, shooting an arrow that would pull a rope to the other side of the column would be (in purely theoretical terms) an appropriate solution, but for this purpose, though, nobody would have to climb to the roof of Hagia Sophia and then perform a skywalk; it would have sufficed to shoot the arrow from the ground. It is fairly obvious that Symeon’s account merely reflects the sort of low-level local legends that tourist guides usually tell. Likewise, the involvement of the patriarch in the restoration of a secular public monument and the provision of Hagia Sophia for acrobatics due to third-degree matrimonial ties, as BOECK assumes, are rather random.

But where exactly (or approximately) in the Augusteion was the column located? BOECK disregards the question and the entirety of scholarly contributions to the answer (from ANTONIADES 1907, p. 57, down to BARDILL 2008, p. 415 and *passim*). She also pontifically dismisses an article on the issue by the Turkish archaeologist FIRAT DÜZGÜNER (2005), by claiming that he was “drawing inferences from unrelated archeological evidence”

(p. 24, n. 64). In reality, DÜZGÜNER drew definitely relevant inferences from excavations in the area of the Augusteion and the adjacent Chalke Gate, as well as from the formation of the soil there.

In a chapter titled ‘The Horseman Becomes Heraclius: crusading Narratives of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries’ (pp. 169–195), BOECK posits that after 1204 the crusaders exempted the horseman from being either melted down for its metal or stolen because they had “transformed the rider’s identity and remade him into Emperor Heraclius, who had become the great hero of the Crusading movement” (p. 169). As her main evidence, she uses the romance *Eracle* by Gautier d’Arras († c. 1185) and the account of the Fourth Crusade by the knight Robert de Clari, calling both works ‘underappreciated.’ It is true that over the centuries the horseman had repeatedly been misidentified and that in Medieval Western Europe Heraclios was considered as a forerunner of the crusades or even as the first crusader. Nonetheless, the connection with the Fourth Crusade is unfounded; no 13th-century Western author of an account of it has ever associated the sack of the city in 1204 with Heraclios. This applies to those who aimed to provide justification for the turn against Constantinople and, particularly, to those who mention the horseman, including: Geoffroy de Villehardouin and Gunther of Pairis, whose reports on the horseman BOECK ignores. It also applies to Robert de Clari, who explicitly writes that it was the Greeks who said that the horseman was the emperor Heraclios (‘Et disoient li Griu que chou estoit Eracles li empereres.’ ch. 86). BOECK’s claim that de Clari would “definitively identify the great Constantinopolitan horseman as Heraclius” (p. 179 and *passim*) is contrary to the facts. From de Clari’s testimony, it also follows that Gautier d’Arras’s reference to the statue as Heraclios most likely reflected a popular misidentification on site by the Greeks.

Here, we can again touch upon the question of why BOECK did not analyze the execution of Alexios V by the crusaders as the Chronicle of Morea describes it—that is, by throwing him to his death from the top of the column of Justinian—in conjunction with further well-known evidence concerning the column, that contradicts her theory. Let us limit ourselves to three cases:

I. In 1431 Isidore, the later Metropolitan of Kiev and Cardinal, purportedly had a symbolically significant dream in Constantinople. Noticing from afar that the rider was falling from Justinian’s column (‘... τὴν Ἰουστινιάνειον στήλην ... ἥτις ἔμπροσθεν τῆς ἀγίας του Θεοῦ Ἰσταται Σοφίας ...’), he ran to

the place. As he reached it, the horseman had already remounted, but fell again, this time together with the horse. Horse and rider were separated when they crashed, but both remained intact and stood upright (MERCATI 1931, pp. 522–523; STICHEL 1982, p. 106). Here, Isidore’s description of the dream breaks off.

II. The 15th-century Greek manuscript Rome, Collegio Greco, gr. 04 contains a rough depiction of Hagia Sophia and the column on f. 118v–119r. The depiction was added to the text of the well-known anecdote of Justinian’s attempt to exterminate the legendary chief builder Ignatios (VITTI 1986, table XXIV; STICHEL 1988, p. 131; ISÉPY 2017, p. 47).

III. Giovanni Maria Angiolello (1451–1525), an educated Venetian traveler and long-time attendant at the Ottoman court, believed that the statue had depicted Saint Augustine and that the monument was demolished by Mehmed II because of its talismanic property (STICHEL 1982, p. 107; GUÉRIN DALLE MESE 1985, p. 99; RABY 1987, p. 307 and passim; BARRY 2010, 13 n. 7).

These three sources—none of them taken into consideration by BOECK—assert the opposite of the supposed transformation of the horseman into Heraclios in the Western imagination and the readiness of supposed Byzantine interlocutors (p. 195) to bow to this. This is also the case in the aforementioned testimony in the *Chronicle of Morea*. For one thing, neither the author of the *Chronicle of Morea* (a dedicated Crusade propagandist) nor Giovanni Angiolello make a reference to Heraclios in the passages they dedicate to Justinian’s column. For another thing, the 15th-century Greek sources (Isidore and the manuscript Rome, Collegio Greco, gr. 04) explicitly relate the horseman to Justinian. Thus, both the assumed role of Justinian’s misidentified equestrian statue as an incentive for the crusaders and the supposed adoption of such views by Greeks, on which BOECK attempts to found her theory, prove counterfactual.

A drawing in the fifteenth-century Manuscript 35 of the Budapest University Library (fig. 1; BOECK, unlike all other publications, calls the manuscript ‘Cod. Ital. 3’ without providing reasons) is regarded as the primary pictorial source on the horseman.



Fig. 1. Budapest, University Library, Ms. 35, f. 144v

The drawing was first traced in the middle of the 19th century, and the view that it represents the horseman remains canonical, with a single notable exception: American archaeologist and art historian PHYLLIS WILLIAMS LEHMANN suggested in 1959 that it most probably had its origins in some unattested gold medallion depicting emperor Theodosius I (WILLIAMS LEHMANN 1959 I). A key component in that view—the lost medallion—is hypothetical, but this does not affect the rest of the strong evidence provided by LEHMANN criticizing the possibility that the drawing depicts Justinian’s horseman. BOECK mentions LEHMANN’s publication but completely disregards this evidence. To unravel the complex issue here would go far beyond a book review; instead, let us take four cases of discrepancy between factual details in descriptions of the horseman on the one hand and the drawing on the other hand. Each instance suffices on its own to preclude any possibility that the drawing might depict the horseman:

I. In the drawing, the horse’s rear legs stand diagonally apart, performing a gait. Procopius explicitly describes them as being held close together (‘τοὺς ὀπισθίους [πόδας] ζυνάγει’).

II. In the drawing, the tail of the horse hangs down vertically, parallel to the legs and at a certain distance from them. According to the ekphrasis of the Augusteion by Pachymeres (13th/14th century), the tail does not hang as usually, but first rises and then comes down along the legs to the ground (‘οὐ κατὰ τρόπον κειμένη, ἀλλ’ οἷον ἀνεγηγερμένη τὸ πρῶτον, εἶτα καθιεμένη παρὰ πόδας ἐς γῆν’).

III. In the drawing, the rider is dressed in strap sandals that clearly do not cover his heels or toes. According to Procopius, the rider was wearing boots of leather (‘ἀρβύλας’).

IV. In the drawing, the rider’s upper right arm is extended to his side, and the right forearm with the hand are raised vertically upwards. Procopius writes that the horseman stretched forth his right arm toward the rising sun, with fingers spread (‘προτεινόμενος δὲ χεῖρα τὴν δεξιάν ἐς τὰ πρὸς ἀνίσχοντα ἥλιον καὶ τοὺς δακτύλους διαπετάσας ...’).

BOECK states that “depending on the angle of viewing, the right hand can appear as either stretched forward or as raised up (this variation appears in descriptions of the monument)” (p. 90). However, such a refraction in the air, at a distance of a few tens of meters, is a physical impossibility. Moreover, the reference to descriptions supposedly mentioning a ‘raised hand’ (probably meaning ‘raised forearm’) of the horseman is undefined. Two further ekphraseis that are written by eyewitnesses—one by Constantine of Rhodes (10th century) and the above-mentioned one by Pachymeres—can serve as additional evidence for the accuracy of Procopius’s description. Constantine refers to the horseman as stretching out his arm (‘τὴν χεῖρ’ ἐπεκτείνοντα,’ l. 45), and Pachymeres repeats that the extended right arm signifies a warning given to the enemies on the horizon (‘ἔοικε δεικνύειν ὁ θατέραν ἐκτετακῶς ... ᾧ θαρρῶν ἀπειλεῖται.’ JORDAN-RUWE 1995, p. 235). What is more, in stretching forwards his right arm, the horseman expressed the standard greeting gesture (*adlocutio*) of the Roman emperors (STICHEL 1988, p. 134) as we know it from widely famous sculptures, such as the Augustus of Prima Porta and the above mentioned equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius. In this regard, Justinian’s horseman was conventional. Further irresolvable conflicts arise between what trustworthy written sources describe about the horseman and what the drawing shows. However, BOECK limits herself to inappositely characterizing the content of LEHMANN’S contribution as part of a “spirited discussion of the monument’s origins” (p. 57, footnote 96), thereby sidestepping the problems. The fact is that the drawing in the Budapest manuscript, an image on which BOECK essentially constructs her theories about the monument, does not represent the horseman.

The guiding question, or the impetus for studying the horseman, BOECK writes, was “deceptively simple ... why is Justinian’s column represented in a fourteenth-century Bulgarian manuscript?” (p. xvii). This refers to the illustrated codex Vatic. sl. 2, which contains a Bulgarian translation

of Constantine Manasses's *Chronological Synopsis*. The manuscript was created for the Bulgarian Emperor Ivan Alexander (1331–1371). At the end of the chronicle's section dedicated to Justinian, on f. 109v, a miniature depicts the construction of Hagia Sophia (fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Vatic. sl. 2, f. 109v

On the left side, Justinian sits on a throne in front of a palatial building; he discretely raises his forearms to two persons in long robes with head-dresses, who hold an object in their hands (barely visible in the miniature) as they present it to him. On the right, Hagia Sophia is depicted as a hexagonal church carrying a tall dome. A workman with a load on his back is climbing up a movable wooden ladder on the left side of the church, while on the right side, another workman with a load on his back is visible. In the center of the picture are a pillar and Justinian's column (the juxtaposition is an artistically insignificant prochronism with regard to the dates of completion of both the church and the column, in 532 and 543/544, respectively). BOECK takes over a low-quality reproduction of the miniature [fig. 13.1 (a), p. 299] from a book of 1927, in which the details she comments on are scarcely discernible. She writes that the miniature reveals “the power that the horseman exercised” upon Ivan Alexander, stating that in the miniature the column occupies “the central visual space and pride of place.” She sees the “heroic horseman” raising both arms in the air, as well as a significant impact of the *Narrative on the Construction of Hagia Sophia* on the composition of the miniature. She assumes that the figure standing in front of Justinian is Theodora and identifies the other standing figure with “her [i.e., Theodora's] companion” Ignatios, the legendary builder of Hagia Sophia, who is mentioned only in the *Narrative*. Finally, she asserts that the Manasses text had never been illustrated in Byzantium. This is all written in flowery, stilted language in a subchapter titled ‘Conceptualizing Empire in the Mind's Eye.’

The column and the pillar by no means are the pictorial focal point of the miniature; rather, they stand furthest from the viewer and serve as ancillary inner lateral frames to the key elements—on the left, Justinian and the two persons standing in front of him, and on the right, the construction of Hagia Sophia. The layout of the illustration is determined by two clear diagonals that run from the middle of the bottom of the (virtual) rectangular frame along the figure of Justinian on the left and along the ladder and the church on the right, respectively. The column and the pillar also help to avoid an empty background. BOECK's statement that “the central visual space and pride of place is ... reserved for an extratextual monument – the tall column ...”, as well as the label of ‘the heroic horseman’ she attaches to the clumsily drawn image of the rider, are counterfactual.

BOECK's unfounded identification of the figure standing in front of Justinian as Theodora and the other standing figure as the legendary master builder Ignatios also distorts the facts. An image of Theodora turning her back on Justinian, standing close to a master builder who has a beard and thus cannot be a eunuch, holding a device with him, almost touching his hands with hers, having the same body height as him—and, thus, being equal to him in the pictorial order of importance—would be an art-historical impossibility. BOECK rightly calls attention to the fact that in the miniature the (supposed) Ignatios is wearing a turban, so it is all the more astonishing that she does not write a single word about the clearly visible headgear worn by the (supposed) Theodora—a Phrygian cap; of course, it would be unreasonable to suggest that a figure wearing such a cap might represent a Byzantine empress, let alone Theodora. By way of comparison, Eudokia, the wife of Theodosius II and the only empress depicted in a miniature in *Vatic. sl. 2 (f. 96v)*, is fitted in a distinctive imperial garment and wears a crown on her head. What is more, BOECK's implicit claim that in the miniature empress Theodora is wearing a tunic identical to the tunic worn by a man seems all the stranger with respect to iconography. Since they wear identical tunics, the two persons are of the same sex, and since one of them has a beard, both must be men.

The turban and the Phrygian cap must be seen in combination with each other and also in the given iconographic context; to do so is not complicated. What we actually see against the background of the construction of Hagia Sophia are two men wearing indistinguishable sets of clothes, standing in front of the enthroned Justinian, and presenting to him an object that the emperor readily accepts; one of them is wearing a Phrygian cap, and the other a turban (this being a prochronism for the 6th century). The persons

must be associated with each other in the construction. The headgears can only be badges of origin; the turban and the Phrygian cap show that the men wearing them are from two different locations in Asia. Two persons acting in the context of the construction of the Great Church, coming from two different locations in Asia, and presenting an object to Justinian, can only be Anthemios of Tralleis and Isidore of Miletus, and the object can only be a model of Hagia Sophia.

The miniatures of Vatic. sl. 2 form two groups. One group exclusively comprises scenes related to the history of the Bulgarian Empire that, in terms of iconography, were either entirely conceived or partially adapted by Bulgarian illustrators in the court of Ivan Alexander. The second, larger group comprises reproductions from a Greek model. None other than AUGUST HEISENBERG provided definitive evidence of this, building on earlier scholarship and scrutinizing the layout of the manuscript, the clothing and headgear of the depicted rulers, the legends of the miniatures, the respective historical backgrounds, and many other aspects (HEISENBERG 1928). Ever since, major advances have been made in the research on Vatic. sl. 2. Consequently, there is absolute scholarly consensus that the miniature showing the construction of Hagia Sophia belongs to the group of reproductions (e.g., DUJČEV 1964; DŽUROVA et al. 2007). BOECK disregards this consensus and does not even mention Heisenberg's contribution. Andrej Bogoljubskij—in 1157 prince of Vladimir, Rostov, and Suzdal, as well as Grand Prince (1169–1174) of Vladimir-Suzdal (BOECK calls him 'Prince of Vladimir:' p. 387, n. 12)—had attempted to gain church independence and to found a second metropolitan see besides Kiev. In the process, he supported the cult of Saint Mary's Veil and established the Pokrov Feast (Покровъ, meaning veil, protection, and intercession). In parallel, an icon type of the same name was composed and made for the patron of Bogoljubskij's realm (BELTING-IHM 1976, pp. 59–60; ONASCH 1993, 315; 1996, 35). Several components of the icon were Byzantine, but the composition was genuinely local (VORONIN 1965; BELTING-IHM 1976, pp. 59–60; ONASCH 1993; LOURIÉ 2011–2012) and went along with the vita of Saint Andrew the Fool († 936). The vita tells that, while Constantinople was under siege by enemies, the saint and his disciple Epiphanius saw in a vision that Saint Mary, accompanied by Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Theologian and surrounded by angels and saints in the Blachernae church, held her veil over those praying to her for protection and thus saved the city. An impressive version of the icon—a painting from the 16th century, now in the Mikhailovsky Palace of the State Russian Museum in

Saint Petersburg—shows the vision (fig. 3).



Fig. 3. The Intercession of the Mother of God, Icon, Novgorod, 16th c.
The Russian Museum, inv. num. ДРЖ 2142

Against the background of the Blachernae church, the scene is divided into zones. At the bottom are depicted Patriarch Tarasios with clerics, Emperor Leo VI with the empress and members of the court, and Saint Andrew the Fool with Epiphanius; in the center among them is Romanos the Melodist, who, according to tradition, served as a cleric in the Blachernae church, holding a scroll. In the middle zone are depicted Saint Mary as *orans* and groups of saints. Basil the Great, John Chrysostomos, and Gregory the Theologian form one of the groups. In the upper zone, the enthroned Christ is depicted. Two flying angels extend Saint Mary's veil. At the upper left corner of the icon, the horseman of Justinian is depicted.

BOECK (p. 382) sees in the icon an epitome of “decades of Russian thought about a world without Byzantium”. This is hard to conceive, if taken literally: an icon depicting Leo VI, Tarasios, Andrew the Fool and his vision

in the Blachernae church, Romanos the Melodist, and Justinian's horseman can hardly be related to 'a world without Byzantium.' Additionally, BOECK states that the icon "comes to terms with the end of Byzantium". This contradicts both the 'world without Byzantium'-statement and the existence of several examples of the icon type that are much older than 1453 (cf., e.g., BELTING-IHM 1976, p. 60; FLIER 2017). Again, BOECK states that "the icon is notable for its extraordinary visualization of Justinian's bronze horseman", who "presides" over it, and "draws extraordinary attention to the column". This is contrary to the facts: the horseman is, pictorially, a small detail. BOECK also states that the Feast of the Intercession "was a political bridge between Byzantium and the lands of Rus'. It was simultaneously Byzantine and Russian". In reality, the feast was unknown to the Byzantines.

BOECK states that the scroll held by Romanos reads "Today the Virgin gives birth to him who is Beyond all Being [*Deva dnes presushchestvennago razhdaet*]" and that this "is the opening line of the exceptionally important kontakion ... in celebration of the Nativity" (p. 391). This raises the question of what a stanza from a kontakion on the Nativity might have to do with the Intercession. The answer is: nothing! Moreover, the first line of the scroll does not read as BOECK states (nor does it read 'Дева днесь Пребогатого раждает, Today the Virgin gives birth to the Most Praiseworthy One,' as IRINA SHALINA writes: SHALINA 2005, p. 355); unlike other depictions of Romanos, the scroll that he holds in the Pokrov icons contains either the preamble of the Akathist 'Избранной от всех родов, Unto the Chosen Among All Humans' (cf., e.g., LAZAREV 1977, pl. IV1) or, in the majority of cases, the stanza 'Дева днесь предстоит в Церкви, The Virgin Today Stands in the Church'—i.e., the relevant Slavonic hymn for the Feast of the Intercession.

BOECK also states that the icon "is enigmatic and unique"; actually, it is neither. All subjects and figures in the icon are identifiable, and the evolution of the iconographic type has been traced through numerous exemplars to as far back as the early thirteenth century. The icon in question was created during the transition between the Novgorod and the Moscow schools of iconography and is epigonic. It was masterfully painted (in the technical sense) at the beginning of the 16th century, after the conquest of Novgorod by Muscovy in the 1470s, to satisfy the fine taste of the emergent Moscow boyars. Scenes that take place inside the Blachernae church are shown as taking place with the church in the background (OUSPENSKY – LOSSKY 1989, p. 40; p. 47; VILIBAKHOVA 1994, p. 188). However,

the icon was boldly composed, overcrowded, and—due to the complicated architectural background—fragmented (LAZAREV 1976, pp. 41–42; 1977, pp. 43–48; ONASCH 1977, pp. 10–12; cf. SHALINA 2010, pp. 111–113). As an authority in the field elegantly put it, the icon “does not lack a certain poster-like flatness” (ONASCH 1977, p. 11).

Particularly distracting is that BOECK past all empirical evidence renames the icon ‘Eternal Tsar’grad’ and attempts to undervalue its real name (‘Покров Пресвятой Богородицы, The Intercession of the Blessed Theotokos’) by calling it ‘conventional.’ Nonetheless, the real name is centrally inscribed, in large solemn letters of brilliant scarlet, at the top of the icon. Almost all other Pokrov exemplars, starting with the oldest depiction in 1233, also carry such an inscription (cf., e.g., FLIER 2017, pp. 94–95, and plates 2; 4; 6; 9; JUSOV 2008).

In the chapter in question, BOECK offers some references to the classical treatise on the iconography of Saint Mary by NIKODIM KONDAKOV (KONDAKOV 1915) and a few other studies, in all cases under insignificant aspects. However, neither Kondakov nor any other scholar has ever expressed views that would be compatible with her ‘Eternal Tsar’grad’-speculations. Furthermore, BOECK neglects studies that shed light on the political and social backgrounds of the Pokrov cult and iconography and their role in ecclesiastical organization (e.g., MEDVEDEVA 1947; LAZAREV 1955; ID. 1976; ONASCH 1996). She also either disregards pioneering work on the interconnections between cults of Saint Mary as protector in both Middle and Eastern Europe (e.g., BELTING-IHM 1976, p. 59; GĘBAROWICZ 1986) or references it somewhat but disregards its core content (e.g., FLIER 2017). Thus, her above-mentioned appeal to the ‘global turn in scholarship’ proves to be mere lip service.

BOECK concludes that in the icon “visional Constantinople gives way to a visionary, timeless Orthodox ideal.” This is plucked out of thin air: neither is orthodoxy the subject of the icon, nor is there such thing as a ‘visionary, timeless Orthodox ideal.’ The language used by the heads of the Russian State and the Russian Church to justify the war in Ukraine in 2022/2023 shows this quite clearly, and things were not significantly different during the pre-modern period. With regard to terms, timelessness contradicts confession, while the expression ‘visionary ideal’ is tautological. A similar is the ‘Eternal Tsar’grad’-assumption (which, incidentally, gives the impression of shallowly imitating the *‘urbs aeterna’*); imperial eternity conceptually contradicts the ethnicity implied in the neologism’s

Slavic component. In actuality, the Pokrov Icon merely focuses on the Intercession; as NIKODIM KONDAKOV rightly put it, it shows the Friday miracle in the Blachernae church and Saint Andrew the Fool's vision therein (“... представляют намъ одновременно и *обычно* (на пятницу) чудо Влахернскаго храма, и видѣніе Андрея Юродиваго въ собственномъ смыслѣ слова ...”); KONDAKOV 1915, p. 96). The icon is liturgically marked by means of the representations of Romanos the Melodist as well as the purported authors of the Divine Liturgies: Basil the Great, John Chrysostomos, and Gregory the Theologian. In this way, Romanos along with Saint Andrew the Fool and Epiphanius, serves as marker for the Blachernae church. The horseman simply serves as a casual landmark for Constantinople. This is proved by the fact that only the example in question shows the horseman, while earlier examples of the Novgorod type (e.g.: LIČHAČEV 1906, no 236; ONASCH 1963, table 21 and pp. 353–354; cf. FLIER 2017, p. 91) do not show Romanos.

Furthermore, БОЕЦК attempts to enhance the Eternal Tsar's grad-assumption to an icon type and also apply it to the famous 16th-century icon ‘О тебе радуется, In Thee Rejoiceth’ (fig. 4).



Fig. 4. In Thee Rejoiceth, Icon, Novgorod (?), 16th c. The Russian Museum, inv. num. ДРЖ 2137

This icon represents, from the top-down rimmed with circles, the celestial sphere with angels, nature symbolized by plants on a white background, a temple, and in the focal point Saint Mary enthroned, holding Christ sited in her lap, and surrounded by angels (cf. SOSNOVCEVA 2010). On the ground level, saints, nuns, monks, dignitaries of the church and (Byzantine) state, and other believers are assembled in two levels; among them, Saint John of Damascus (clearly identifiable by the turban he is carrying) stands out, looking up to Saint Mary, holding a scroll in his left hand, and stretching out his right arm, apparently begging for the scroll—or, rather, the hymn written on it—to be accepted. BOECK states out of hand that “the dominant feature of the image” isn’t Saint Mary with the Christ Child in the central circle, but the church in the background (an art-historically bizarre concept:

a Marian icon dominated by the background, not by Saint Mary in an aureole in the center of it), that the icon “is based on the hymn by St. John of Damascus” who is holding “an unfurled scroll of his text”, and that the text is a stanza on the Nativity “attributed to John of Damascus” (p. 397). However, ВОЕСК’s reference to a Nativity hymn contradicts the facts: the icon has nothing to do either with the Nativity or with some Nativity hymn of John of Damascus. The scroll, expectedly, contains the stanza О тебе радуется (In Thee Rejoiceth); in the icon, the first three lines clearly read ‘w те/бе рад/уется’ (fig. 4a).



Fig. 4a. The Scroll Held by John of Damascus
(Detail of fig. 4)

The text of the hymn celebrates (virtually line by line) what the icon illustrates, circle-by-circle and zone-by-zone: angels, nature, people of all walks of life, perpetual virgins, believers glorifying Saint Mary in the church, and, in its very focus—as a counterpart to the crown of the hymn in the penultimate line—Saint Mary with the Christ Child in her lap and Saint Mary’s body as a throne of Christ:

О тебе радуется, благодатная, всякая тварь,
ангельский собор и человеческий род,
о священный храм и раю словесный, девственная похвало,
из неяже Бог воплотися и младенец бысть, прежде век сый Бог наш,
ложесна бо твоя престол сотвори и чрево твое пространнее небес содела.
О тебе радуется, благодатная, всякая тварь. Слава тебе.

All of creation in thee rejoiceth, o full of grace:

The angel corps and the race of men,

O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, the glory of virgins.

Of thee God was embodied in flesh and given birth as a child, He, who is God beyond time.

He made thy body into a throne, and thy womb more spacious than the heavens.

All of creation in thee rejoiceth, o full of grace. Glory be to thee.

Nonetheless the question remains as to what connects John of Damascus with the stanza on the scroll; this can easily be answered.

The stanza is a *magnificat* upon Saint Mary; both the Greek original (Ἐπὶ σοὶ χαίρει) and its Old Russian translation О тебе радуется are transmitted as parts of the liturgy of Saint Basil (cf., e.g., ORLOV 1909, p. 214; <https://bit.ly/3yN8q4D>). However, the stanza was also adopted into the *Oktoich*, of which the Greek original was generally regarded as a creation of John of Damascus. The prevalence of the Oktoich among Greek and Slavonic liturgical books, its traditional attribution to John of Damascus, and the latter's authority have connected him with the *magnificat* О тебе радуется. Being overcrowded with dignitaries and lacking a Byzantine original, the icon of the same name—like the Pokrov exemplar suggestive of the late Novgorodian school—was probably conceived to, among other purposes, underline the importance of the higher clergy in the lands of the Rus' (LAZAREV 1955, pp. 516–530 and passim; ONASCH 1963, pp. 389–390. BOECK disregards these studies).

BOECK finally leaves aside Justinian's horseman and assumes that around 1492, some undefined “pious Russians” knew “the dark and vivid prophecy of St. Andrew the Fool” regarding the destruction of Constantinople, and she draws from this the conclusion that the two icons (Pokrov and In Thee Rejoiceth), “embrace the eventual promise of the hereafter as a gloriously architectural and reassuring vision” (pp. 397–398). Whatever meaning these words might carry, and whatever an ‘eventual promise’ might be, it is not apparent how dark prophecies could be connected with gloriousness. Additionally, it certainly puzzles the reader why a chapter titled ‘Constantinople in Slavonic Imagination of the Fourteenth-Fifteenth Centuries’ concentrates on Pokrov and In Thee Rejoiceth, two 16th-century icons.

The miniatures showing the Justinianic monument mostly depict the rider in an ungainly manner, stretching his whole arm back or to the side or raising his right forearm. Occasionally, they even depict the horse and the horseman's face in profile but the latter's upper body en face (e.g., supra, fig. 1), letting him look “to all intents and purposes like a mounted traffic policeman”, as one scholar put it (MAJESKA 1984, p. 240 n. 18). This

humorous remark can even be applied to the otherwise meticulously drawn image in the manuscript in Budapest (*supra*, fig. 1) and to a representation of the horseman painted by a modern artist for BOECK's book (fig. 11, p. 3). All the same, the clumsy depictions in the miniatures were not drawn from the monument; proof of this is the fact that they all show the column divided into drums with a smooth surface, although after 1204, when the crusaders had pulled off the copper that covered it, the shaft showed bands of baked brick regularly alternating with courses of light stone. Additionally, the fact that the crusaders removed the copper from the shaft but did not pull down the horseman does not prove that they spared the latter due to some special status or identification as Heraclios, as BOECK assumes (p. 184); rather, the reason was that it would be hard for an expeditionary force and perilous for workers to pull down the well-anchored statue. Be that as it may, the connection between the horseman and 1204 stands on shaky ground.

A particular accumulation of factual errors, arbitrary posits, and variously distorting references to previous scholarship occurs in a chapter titled 'The Bronze Horseman and a Dark Hour for Humanity' (pp. 155–168). The chapter deals with a miniature on f. 26 of codex Vatic. gr. 751, which shows Hagia Sophia on the left and, on the right, Job sitting naked on a dung-heap and scratching the pus away (fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Vatic. gr. 751, f. 26

Behind Hagia Sophia rise Justinian's column, another column to its right

with no sculpture on it, and the city wall. BOECK states that the “miniature appears in an illustrated version of the Book of Job ... that was most likely created around 1200”,’ as ANNEMARIE WEYL-CARR had suggested “on paleographic grounds”,’ and that “S. Papadaki-Oekland deserves great credit for bringing this image to the attention of scholars” in an article that was published in 1990. According to BOECK, the Old Testament Book of Job in Byzantium “remains one of the less studied ones”.’ She goes on to say that the painter “paid close attention to the iconography of the horseman” (as if depictions of the monument from the time before 1200 were known) and that “the image is unique”,’ among other reasons because “it creates a powerful dialogue between Job and the city he is situated outside of and clearly estranged from”.’ She concludes that the manuscript “situated Justinian’s monument in an exceptionally dark and foreboding context” (as if the horseman were not situated in the background of the church) and the creator of the manuscript either “was very prescient in forecasting Job-like tribulations for Constantinople”,’ if it were created before 1204, or “he was operating with hindsight at some point after the Crusader capture of Constantinople in 1204”.’ Strangely enough, she disregards the presence in the miniature of a column to the right of the column of Justinian, although she underlines the corresponding presence of a second column as “a prominent pillar” in the Vatican Manasses illustration (p. 310). Let us consider the individual points she makes in view of the facts.

The manuscript is no illustrated version of the Book of Job, but rather an illustrated catena on the work. The relevant text section (the Old Testament verse recounting that Job sat on a dung-heap just outside of town and used a potsherd to scratch the pus away since there was so much of it: LXX Job 2, 8, on f. 25v) is followed by approximately two hundred times as much commentary text—i.e., segments of exegetical works by various early authors. Miniature, Old Testament verse, and commentary are bound into a visible union that can only be addressed by analyzing and interpreting the relationships between them; by completely ignoring the commentary, BOECK misses the point a priori.

In actuality, WEYL-CARR dated the manuscript to the years around 1200 “or later”.’ Moreover, in contrast to BOECK’s assertion, WEYL-CARR ignored paleography (and codicology, too). In other words, there is no reason to assign the manuscript to c. 1200. Occasional majuscule letters and *Fettaugenschrift*-elements, dark black ink, poor quality of red ink in the lemmas and rubrics, and dense lettering clearly indicate a considerably

later date—that is, the late 13th or 14th century. This is how the manuscript is officially dated (DEVREESE 1950, p. 266, disregarded by BOECK).

As to her next point, RUDOLF STICHEL had already referred to the miniature in 1986, before PAPADAKI-OEKLAND (STICHEL 1988, p. 131, disregarded by BOECK).

Stating that the Book of Job and its reception in Byzantium have not been properly studied distorts the facts with regard to the edition of the Book of Job by Joseph Ziegler for the Septuaginta-Unternehmen, the monumental edition of the Byzantine catenas on the book by URSULA and DIETER HAGEDORN that consists of four volumes (1994–2004), numerous accompanying publications, and the art historical treatise on the iconography of Job by PAUL HUBER (1986). BOECK disregards all these publications.

Projecting a ‘dialogue’ between Job and Constantinople in the miniature is counterfactual (the term ‘dialogue’ is used copiously by BOECK, often as a hollow phrase; in one case, even a ‘domed dialogue’ is mooted: p. 346). Job simply is sitting on the dung-heap and scratching the pus away; which city he is sitting outside of, is, from both the iconological and textual point of views, unimportant.

Any Job context is, of course, ‘dark and foreboding,’ but the miniature is not concerned about Constantinople; rather, it illustrates the main points of interest in the commentaries—i.e., why Job was sitting outside the town, and how his suffering typologically prefigured the Passion. A small selection of claims in the commentaries includes: having become unsociable, he preferred to try to appease God in solitude (‘... ἀκοινωνήτος ὦν τοῖς πολλοῖς, μᾶλλον δὲ βαρὺς ἅπασι νομιζόμενος κακ τούτου τὴν καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπήσας δίαίταν πρὸ τῆς πόλεως ἐπὶ τῆς κοπρίας ἐκάθητο ἐξιλεούμενος τὸν θεόν,’ commentator Apollonios: f. 26); his appearance was hard for his relatives to bear (‘... τὸ ἐπὶ κοπρίας ἔξω καθεῖσθαι τῆς πόλεως πολλὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐμήνυε τὴν βαρύτητα· ὡς γὰρ μηκέτι τῶν πολιτῶν, ἤτοι τῶν συγγενῶν, φερόντων τοῦ πάθους τὴν θεὰν ἐξῆλθε τῆς πόλεως ὁ τοῦ κόσμου ἀλλότριος,’ commentator Polychronios: f. 27v; cf. HAGEDORN 1994, vol. 1, 256, *apparatus fontium* to no. 197); his suffering points to the Passion of Christ outside the city gates, according to Hebr. 13, 12 (‘... ἀλλὰ προφητικῶς τὸν ἔξω τῆς πύλης παθόντα Χριστὸν ἡμῖν προμηνύει καθὼς γέγραπται διὸ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἵνα ἀγίαση διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος τὸν λαόν, ἔξω τῆς πύλης ἔπαθεν,’ commentator Polychronios: f. 27v). BOECK’s assumption of a connection between the miniature in the catena of Job and the events of 1204 (let alone the assumption of a painter forecasting Con-

stantinople's fate) both disregards and contradicts the facts.

RUDOLF STICHEL and STELLA PAPADAKI-OEKLAND have clearly articulated the reasons for the presence of Hagia Sophia and the column in the miniatures in *Vatic. sl. 2* and *Vatic. gr. 751*. In the miniature of the Slavic manuscript (*supra*, fig. 2), the rider is a clarifying element for the uncharacteristically depicted church (STICHEL 1988, pp. 130–131). In the miniature of the catena on the Book of Job, the church is commonplace in Byzantine depictions of cities (PAPADAKI-OEKLAND 1990, p. 64), while the rider is an adopted ornament, one which migrated from other depictions (STICHEL 1988, p. 131); proof of this includes the numerous miniatures in several illustrated catenas that show Job sitting on a dung-heap on the one side and architectural work (including city walls and churches) on the other side (e.g., HUBER 1986, fig. 75; 76; 77; 79; 212; PAPADAKI-OEKLAND 2009, fig. 115; 119; 120; 123; 125; 126 and *passim*), as well as significant correspondences between the miniatures, such as the second column without a sculpture on it and the graceless way in which the horseman is drawn. The untenability of BOECK's assumption of a connection between the miniature in the catena of Job and the events of 1204 also derives from the existence of at least three dozens of not illuminated manuscripts that transmit the same version of the catena on Job as *Vatic. gr. 751* (cf. HAGEDORN 1994, vol. 1, p. 334).

Drawing on GILBERT DAGRON, BOECK says that in the 9th-century mosaic above the Emperor Gate of Hagia Sophia (fig. 6), the figure on the left that makes obeisance to Christ in Majesty “is not meant to represent a particular emperor, it represents the timeless relationship between the imperial institution and divine authority”.



Fig. 6. Mosaic Above the Emperor Gate, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

Thus, she attributes concept features to Byzantine art. Furthermore, ascribing abstract representation of emperorship to a medieval (let alone Byzantine) depiction of a person that would represent emperorship is an unparalleled, unsound postulation, particularly for a devotional mosaic in Hagia Sophia. The assumption is also untenable at the elementary level of image analysis. In the mosaic, the emperor is depicted in a side view, but his face is depicted in three-quarters profile to the viewer; this is meant to emphasize his facial features. Therefore, the mosaic shows an individual emperor—specifically Leo VI. BOECK overlooks the ingenious investigative analysis by ANDREAS SCHMINCK, who has shown that a) the depicted Emperor is Leo VI and b) Patriarch Photios had the mosaic originally designed to also show himself on the right, but Leo amended the draft after he became senior emperor in 886/887 and immediately dismissed the patriarch's inclusion (SCHMINCK 1985, pp. 215–220).

Cambridge University Press purportedly lays claim to the pursuit of 'research at the highest levels of excellence.' However, BOECK's book has neither been reviewed (at least not reliably) by specialists in the various topics it touches on nor carefully proofread. Furthermore, the publisher has not ensured consistent quality for the illustrations.

If the book had been adequately curated, factual flaws would have been avoided. For example, the statement that the Rus' Primary Chronicle "famously credited an encounter with Hagia Sophia as central in the subsequent Rus' conversion to Orthodoxy" (p. 304) contains two crucial errors: the Rus' converted to Christianity—but not to Orthodoxy—some seventy

years before the East-West Schism; and the Primary Chronicle does not mention Hagia Sophia in this context. The expression “Translation of the key to the comprehensive prognostication” (p. 368) can hardly be used as the title of a work, as a key is never translated. Instead, it is the translation of the work titled ‘Key to the comprehensive prognosticon (Miftāḥ al-jafr al-jāmi).’

Many faults occur in quotations from passages that are in languages written in Latin-scripts using diacritics or in transliterated quotations. These faults occasionally raise doubts as to whether what is quoted has been thoroughly consulted. To cite but some cases: There are approximately half a dozen errors in the quotation of FIRAT DÜZGÜNER’s article from 2005, in the form “‘İstanbul Sultanahmette Bizansın Ünlü Bakırkapısı ve Iustinianus Sütunu,” Mimarist 3 ...’ (p. 24, n. 63); the correct quotation would be “‘İstanbul Sultanahmet’te Bizans’ın Ünlü Bakır Kapı’sı ve Iustinianus Sütunu,” *mimar.ist* 17’ The French phrase ‘propagande impériale du IVe au VIe siècle’ is reproduced as ‘propaganda impériale du IVe au VIe siècle’ (p. 50, n. 68). Greek is occasionally Romanized as if it were Russian, and thus ‘Μιχαήλ’ is rendered ‘Mikhail’ (p. 179). The title of OLGA BELOBROVA’s article “Статуя византийского императора Юстиниана в древнерусских письменных источниках и иконографии” is both truncated and not correctly Romanized as “‘Statuiia vizantiiskogo imperatora Iustiniana v drevnerusskikh pis’mennykh istochnikakh”” (p. 427). GÜNTER PRINZING’s seminal study on Justinian (PRINZING 1986) is quoted in four different ways, all of them lacking orthographic accuracy. In 1988, DMITRI LIKHACHOV provided the preface for a volume on Manasses (DUJČEV ET AL. 1988), as is made clear on the cover page (‘Введение Д. С. Лихачева’), but ВОЕСК refers to him as the editor of the volume (p. 298, n. 21). The person ВОЕСК calls ‘Al-Herewy’ (p. 306, quoting an article where the person is named ‘el Herewy,’ and index) is identical to the person she elsewhere calls first ‘Al-Hawari’ (p. 123, n. 5, and index), and then ‘al-Hawari’ (p. 148, n. 47), and whose name was actually al-Harawi (scholarly transliteration: al-Harawī).

The book would have benefitted from careful proofreading. An attentive proofreader would have replaced ‘artium’ for ‘atrium;’ hyphenated the Latin accusative singular ‘histo-riam’ instead of ‘histor-iam;’ replaced ‘Byzantion’ for ‘Byzantion Byzantion;’ replaced ‘Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls’ for ‘Bildlexicon zur Topographie Istanbuls;’ and replaced ‘Wolfgang Müller-Wiener’ for ‘Wolfgang Müller-Wiener.’ Note that all these errors occur on one single page of the book (p. xx).

Jan-Louis van Dieten, the commendable editor of Nicetas Choniates, was an individual scholar, not ‘(eds.)’ (p. 422). The consecutive statements, ‘Papadaki-Oekland identified the building as Hagia Sophia’ and ‘Papadaki-Oekland did not discuss or identify the domed structure as Hagia Sophia’ contradict each other (p. 161, n. 32 and 33, respectively). There is no point in abbreviating ‘Diēgēsis peri tēs Hagias Sophias’ as “Narrative on the Construction of Hagia Sophia” (p. xx) and yet using both forms only once (p. 148). No explanation is provided for the abbreviations ‘EHB’ (p. 259, n. 79; what the author means is vol. 2 of *The Economic History of Byzantium*) or ‘Filov, *Les miniatures*’ (p. xiii; 299). Inventory numbers of icons appear as multiform as ‘inv. num. ДРЖ 2142’ (p. xv; 385), ‘ГРМ ДРЖ 2142 Лих. III-235’ (p. 383, n. 2), and ‘ИНВ. ДРЖ 2137’ (p. xv; 395). Ihor Ševčenko’s article “Notes on Stephen, the Novgorodian Pilgrim to Constantinople in the XIV Century” is quoted in three different ways (p. 305 n. 47, 306, n. 71, 312 n. 75) but not included in the bibliography; MARTINA JORDAN-RUWE’s treatise ‘*Das Säulenmonument*’ (JORDAN-RUWE 1995) is also quoted in three different ways, with one even omitting the main component of the title (‘*Das Säulenmonument*’: p. 24 n. 63) and one using the misnomer ‘Aufstellungantiker’ (p. 44 n. 34).

On examination, the Index frequently proves unreliable. Anthemios of Tralleis appears in the text (p. 50), but not in the Index; Nicetas Choniates is quoted several times in several different ways in the book, but does not appear in the Index. Isidore of Miletus and Isidore the Younger each appear in the text once (p. 50 and 53, respectively), and Cardinal Isidore appears twice (p. 318, n. 7, and 341), yet the Index contains one single pointer to one single mention of the cardinal (p. 447). The travelers Zosima and Stephen of Novgorod appear multiple times in the text and have pointers in the Index, while the travelers Alexander the Clerk and Ignatios of Smolensk appear in the text but not in the Index. The list could be extended almost ad nauseam.

By and large, the illustrations in the volume are of poor quality, and quite a few of them are superfluous. For example, the re-erection of the monolithic Vatican obelisk in 1586 has hardly anything in common with the construction of Justinian’s masonry column, yet БОЕЦК reprints as fig. 2.6 (p. 70) the well-known engraving by Niccola Zabaglia from 1743 (which shows the re-erection) in a quality that evokes outputs produced by low-cost printers. The only contribution this reprint has is to boost the book’s length; this is also the case in the double reprinting of a disfigured 16th-century Ottoman drawing of the horseman in an 11.5 x 11 cm frame and then, supposedly

as further detail, in a 13 x 18 cm frame (fig. 16.2; 16, 1, p. 369 and 367, respectively). Particularly problematic is the use of illustrations in which the details are hardly discernible on which BOECK builds remarkably untenable assumptions, such as those about the miniatures in the catena on Job (fig. 7.3, p. 165) and the Vatican Manasses manuscript (fig. 13.1 a, p. 299), as well as the Pokrov Icon (fig. 17.1, p. 385)—to mention only three. For the book's front cover, BOECK has selected a cutout (not labeled as such) of a brightly colored miniature in codex Matritensis reservado 36, f. 84r, showing Constantinople from a bird's-eye view. In the miniature, Hagia Sophia has elongated arch windows, and on its left stands the column of Justinian. Several round and rectangular defense towers and all other buildings of the city are topped with red, slightly concave, and steeply pitched roofs that rise to peaks. The miniature is related to numerous vedutas of the city, and given that it only uses features of Western Europe's medieval architecture, it can hardly claim exactitude. BOECK assigns it to the *Notitia dignitatum* (p. 285). The manuscript indeed contains this notitia, but the miniature has nothing to do with it; in actuality, it is fittingly set at the beginning of the text of the *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*.

The preceding remarks have given only some representative examples of the shortcomings of the book: inadequate understanding of the source material, disregard for or distortion of testimonies, arbitrarily claimed resemblances between monuments, inadequate credits to or disregard of scholarly publications that are not consistent with the author's assumptions, unfounded assignment of an all-determining authority over complex issues to single scholarly works, belittling of scholarly works, righting the wrongs of others, overlong extraneous reports, lack of critical thinking, opinionated judgements, and a partiality for uncovering deeper meanings that everybody else has supposedly missed. Concluding her article in 1959, PHYLLIS WILLIAMS LEHMANN referred to parts of the discussion about Justinian's horseman as a 'comedy of errors' (WILLIAMS LEHMANN 1959 I, p. 57). The phrase, less polemical than it might seem at first, is an allusion to Shakespeare's early comedy of the same name; LEHMANN was pointing to mistaken identities. BOECK's outlandish book contributes nothing to reducing the number of earlier errors associated with the horseman, instead including a plethora of new misidentifications.

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Keywords

Constantinople; Justinian; column of Justinian; architecture in the age of Justinian