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KARIN KRAUSE, Divine Inspiration in Byzantium. Notions of Authenticity in Art and Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. xvii + 443 pp. – ISBN 978-1-108-83099-7 (€ 112.90).

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The volume under review is the second monograph by KRAUSE, who holds the post of Associate Professor of Byzantine Art and Religious Culture at the University of Chicago. Following an overview of how divine inspiration was viewed and portrayed in the literature and art of Graeco-Roman antiquity, KRAUSE traces how the notion of divine inspiration both remained a cultural constant and underwent great changes throughout the centuries-long history of the Byzantine Empire as it was used to betoken truth and authenticity in cultural and religious discourse.

The book is divided into seven chapters, followed by a brief epilogue, bibliography, and indices. Two focuses predominate, which allow for a conceptual division into two larger parts (though this is not made explicit in the table of contents). The first four chapters form one thematic portion. Chapter 1 discusses the heritage of imagery in Christian iconography as it relates to divine inspiration. KRAUSE argues that while Byzantine culture—like the Graeco-Roman one preceding it in the Mediterranean—continued to believe in divine inspiration in terms of texts and artistic works, it broke with its pagan predecessor; in particular, pre-Iconoclastic Christian images of divine inspiration are argued to be markedly different, especially in how the divinely inspired text in question is depicted as being accurately documented as such, with such images coming to be understood as "warrantors of doctrinal authenticity and authority"[1]. Chapter 2 looks beyond the era of "Iconoclasm" (a term not problematised at all by KRAUSE)[2] to examine how new pictorial motifs were combined with portrayals of divine inspiration, notably in the increasing importance of Gospel books and depictions of the four evangelists. Moving beyond inspiration in the Scriptures themselves, Chapter 3 argues that the prominence of church fathers and their interpretive activity only comes to the fore in the visual arts after Iconoclasm

1. KRAUSE 2022, p. 31.

2. For a critical look at "Iconoclasm"/iconomachy, see for instance LESLIE BRUBAKER – JOHN F. HALDON, Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680–850: A History, Cambridge 2011.

as guarantors of truth and authority, something seen especially in the works of John Chrysostom and Gregory of Nazianzus, in copies of which miniatures of the saints are presented and analysed. Chapter 4 follows the thread of divine inspiration further, looking at how divine inspiration becomes envisaged and artistically deployed outside purely ecclesiastical circles, with a special look at instances of imperial divine inspiration, especially under the Komnēnian rulers of the eleventh century.

The second thematic portion of the volume moves beyond the large-scale tracing of divine inspiration and its appearance and appropriation across Byzantine history and culture to examine such inspiration in concrete objects of religious art. Chapter 5 explores texts and visual evidence that considered icons to be "inspired art" in the Middle Byzantine period, with analysis of John of Damascus' important iconophile treatises and Photios' ninth-century *ekphrasis* of the apse mosaic of the Theotokos in Hagia Sophia. In doing so, KRAUSE claims that the major theological issues surrounding icons remained unresolved in the period, despite the official termination of Iconoclasm in 843. Chapter 6 focuses on one object in particular: the icon-relic of the Mandylion, believed to bear the image of Christ's own face, which was brought from Edessa to Constantinople in 945 at the command of Emperor Constantine Porphyrogennētos. In her analysis of contemporary Middle Byzantine narrative and theological sources, KRAUSE argues that despite the language used in these texts, the Mandylion "almost certainly did not bear a portrait of Christ's human features" but "represented a most authentic icon of ontological resemblance" of the divine Son as the "radiance" (ἀπαύγασμα) of God the Father[3]. The importance of this theological resemblance is then examined in the final Chapter 7, which explores the copies made of the Mandylion—both miraculous ones transferred onto ceramic tiles via contact with the original as well as later artistic/iconographic reproductions—whereby KRAUSE goes beyond image and inspiration to analyse the material components here (textile/loom, clay/earth) and the theological resonances these have with understanding the Mandylion and its copies as divinely inspired signs of the divine incarnation.

This extensive monograph is the fruit of years of meticulous research and examination of a multitude of images and texts spanning from the Classical era up into the Middle Byzantine period. Fortunately for the reader, and fitting for such an art-historical study, the volume includes numerous images

3. KRAUSE 2022, p. 319.

of the miniatures, icons, and manuscript illuminations posited convincingly by KRAUSE to undergird her argumentation. While the vast majority of the images are only in black-and-white (17 full colour reproductions are included near the beginning), this does not pose a problem in the work, since the images are used to demonstrate primarily divine inspiration via wording or figures in the images, rather than relying upon colour or pigment analysis.

Two instances of figural interpretation seem a bit overreaching in ascribing lively movement to figures and faces in very small miniature portraits,[4] and one instance of an odd interpretation of a Gospel passage initial illumination appears,[5] but otherwise the analysis of the imagery is concise and convincing. In her analysis of the Mandylion, KRAUSE is careful to trace the history of the icon-object from its Syrian origins in Edessa to Constantinople and does a close reading of the *Narratio* ascribed to Constantine VII and of two theological texts, Gregory the Referendary's sermon given on the occasion of the translation in 945 and a "teaching" homily (διδασκαλία) by Constantine Stilbēs at the end of the twelfth century. The latter two in particular are important and hitherto oft overlooked sources, and I was glad to see them included in the analysis. However, given KRAUSE's claim in the introduction that the Mandylion comes to be regarded as the definitive protective relic or palladium in the city after its translation thither,[6] and that "no other material object ever venerated in Byzantium was as important for the empire's self-perception and religious identity as the Mandylion",[7] it is surprising that the liturgical texts for the feast of the translation of

4. The first instance is a small portrait within a miniature in a copy of John of Damascus' *Sacra Parallela* (BNF MS 923, f. 328v, here p. 236); the second is a representation of the Mandylion in the famous Madrid Skylitzēs manuscript (Madrid MS Vitr. gr. 26–2, f. 131r, here p. 297). However, the latter text is not necessarily a direct product of Byzantium and needs to be used carefully as a source in this context, given the Norman anti-Byzantine political environment in which it was produced; cf. ELENA N. BOECK, Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses, Cambridge 2015.

5. In question here is a miniature above the start of the Gospel of John in MS Dionysiou 588, f. 266r, in KRAUSE 2022, p. 117. KRAUSE writes that "[t]he title page in the Athos codex…emphasises that the manuscript preserves the [Gospel] message exactly as it was conveyed to John by God" (ibid., p. 116), yet the text in the open Gospel book in the miniature does not give any Gospel text—unlike the helpful image from the same manuscript, f. 225v, mentioned on ibid., p. 115—but instead a generic title, "[the] holy gospel according to John" (εὐαγγέλιον ἅγιον τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην).

6. Ibid., p. 18.

7. Ibid., p. 34.

the Mandylion (celebrated on August 16), which would have had much wider circulation amongst the Byzantine populace as opposed to the sacred relic itself, are not studied here and are mentioned only in passing in a footnote.[8] An additional *desideratum* in the monograph is treatment of the notion of divine inspiration after 1200; although the first sentence of the book promises a "sustained examination of conceptions of divine inspiration in the literature and visual arts of Byzantium (c. 330–1453)",[9] the examination only seems to be sustained to the cusp of the Fourth Crusade and the loss of the Mandylion in 1204 in the sack of Constantinople. How was divine inspiration perceived and communicated in the texts and art of Palaiologan rulers after Byzantine restoration to the throne in 1261 until the ultimate fall of the city in 1453? The reader is left unable to answer this question.

Nevertheless, the monograph is an important contribution to our understanding of inspiration as concept and cultural/religious touchstone in the early and Middle Byzantine periods. Even were there not competent analysis throughout the volume—which abounds, in fact—the book is a worthy addition to any Byzantine Studies library, not least on account of the many image plates and references to manuscript illuminations and miniatures, the great fruit of KRAUSE's many years of diligent reading and research. Finally, the careful examining of inspiration as a *topos* in Byzantine art, literature, and theology in KRAUSE's volume can serve as a launchpad for other scholars at present and in the future in the continued study of "Byzantium beyond Byzantium" and the potential adoptions and adaptations of this conceptual and artistic vocabulary around divine inspiration in cultures influenced by the Byzantine worldview (the Armenian, Georgian, Slavic, Syriac, Arab, and Ottoman worlds, to name a few).

Keywords

Byzantine art; inspiration

8. The liturgical hymns for this feast from the edition prepared by VENANCE GRUMEL are mentioned in passing in ibid., p. 309, n. 171. In fact, there are two sets of hymns for the feast which are rich both in theological detail vis-à-vis the Mandylion and in political importance given the conflict over how the divine status of the icon-relic was interpreted. A full study and concomitant English translation of these texts is available in: CHRISTOPHER SPRECHER, Emperor and God: Passion Relics and the Divinisation of Byzantine Rulers, 944–1204, Heidelberg (forthcoming) (see Chapter 2 there on the Mandylion).

9. KRAUSE 2022, p. 1.