

to have better pictures made of the remains of Potidaean walls and the remains of the Potidaean treasury at Delphi.

It would be unfair if I concluded the presentation of this book with the latter remarks. I ought to add that most of its weakness is due to the nature of the material the author had to work with as well as to the lack of evidence. This is clearly seen in chapters where safer and more plentiful evidence offers itself to the author, as for example in the historical chapters. In these, there is clear judgement, objectivity, and knowledge of the subject and Dr. Alexander presents a lucid report of the facts, expressing opinions that are often correct and to the point.

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Kurt Weitzmann, *Geistige Grundlagen und Wesen der Mazedonischen Renaissance* (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Nordrhein - Westfalen. Geisteswissenschaften, Heft 107), Westdeutscher Verlag, Köln und Opladen. S. 55, Abbildungen 51, Farbtafeln 5.

There is no need for me to present the author of this study. Kurt Weitzmann has been well known for many years to those who are interested in Byzantine Archaeology. His studies on Byzantine minor arts and especially on illuminated manuscripts have established him as an authority for both the specialist and the interested layman. His thorough knowledge of the problems in Byzantine painting enables him to offer safe and responsible answers based on attested sources and accurate dating of the illuminated manuscripts. His work on the origin and dating of the frescoes at the Lombard town, Castelseprio (*The fresco cycle of S. Maria di Castelseprio*, Princeton, 1951), which still are two of the major problems in Byzantine painting, is an example of this. Despite the objections raised by some scholars (M. Shapiro, *Art Bulletin*, 34, 1952, 148 foll.; G. R. Ceccelli, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 45, 1952, 97 - 104), Weitzmann's conclusions are, at least so far, the most satisfying and persuasive of all. Hence they have been accepted as correct, either in part or as a whole (A. Grabar, *Les Fresques de Castelseprio*, *Gazette des Beaux - Arts*, 37, 1950, 107 - 114; P. Lemerle, Milan et Castelseprio "Orient ou Rome," *Byzantion*, XXII, 1952, 188 - 199). The book we are presenting here treats the same problem of Byzantine painting and its accurate dating, both in the monumental art and in the illuminated manuscripts.

Kurt Weitzmann himself states in his short preface that the problem he is dealing with is the one nearest to his heart: it is the relation between classical tradition and Byzantine art. The author does not confine himself to a stylistic analysis, but goes beyond this as he attempts to give an answer to the more general problem of cultural history, the history of ideas, in the era he has selected for study and which he calls the "Macedonian Renaissance." Although I am not

sure this term is a happy one, at least as far as the word "Renaissance" is concerned, I am going to use it since the writer does, so that there may be no confusion.

Weitzmann, as in his other works (e.g. "Das klassische Erbe in der Kunst Konstantinopels," *Alte und Neue Kunst, Wiener Kunsthissenschaftliche Blätter*, III, 1954, Heft 2, 41 ff.), does not see the flourishing and revival of the classical element in art as a peculiar and unprecedented phenomenon of the Macedonian Renaissance. He realizes instead that there was a close relationship between the classical times and Byzantium ever since the late antiquity, and he notes two currents, in both art and letters, running parallel through the ages (cf. above, p. 45 ff.; p. 47 ff). That is why he says in his book (p. 11), "... My continual preoccupation with problems of the Byzantine Renaissance has led me to the conclusion that the painter of that time was conscious of the ancient models, if not always, at least in many cases, and derived from them with great care not only his morphological but also his representational elements." The classical heritage means century old experience for the Byzantine artist who does not confine himself to mere copying but makes use of what interests him, as is seen especially in the miniatures of cod. Par. Gr. 139 (p. 12).

Weitzmann goes on to challenge R. Morey's theory according to which there has not been a Byzantine Renaissance and that cod. Par. Gr. 139 is but a solitary example. He asks: (p. 14 f.) Is this really a chance phenomenon? Did the unknown Byzantine artist only wish to make use of a few Old Testament pictures that had classical elements in them, and thus do we merely have the idiosyncrasy of a solitary artist looking back on ancient art? Or is this illuminated manuscript the expression of a tendency occurring against the strong and wide background where ancient art and classical literature are interwoven, just as they were in the cultural life of the 9th and 10th centuries? He gives a clear answer to this question on the basis of the literary movement that was resumed when Caesar Vardas established a University in Konstantinople in 863 (in his book there is a printing mistake, p. 15, where 963 is mentioned instead of 863). Then he stresses the importance of the personality of Photius and his contribution to the revival of classical letters. He characterizes this period as "that phase of activity when ancient texts were being collected." Then, referring to the *Bibliotheca* of Apollodorus which was included in Photius *Myriovivlos*, he correlates the archetype of the *Bibliotheca* which he thinks was illustrated, with many mythological pictures on manuscripts or on objects of the minor arts in the 10th and 11th centuries. The Byzantines did not copy mechanically, but with understanding. In the Latin West similar scenes were being painted at that time, but this was accidental and, furthermore, they were imitations of Byzantine practice without the understanding of what the pictures contained.

The author notes a second phase in literature: the period of

Arethas, one of Photius' disciples who carried on his work. Weitzmann characterizes this second period as one of textual consolidation. During that time, along with collecting ancient texts, scholars also tried to rehabilitate and emend the texts in the codices.

The oldest MS of the Iliad, for example, cod. Venetus A (Marc. Gr. 454) also belongs to Arethas's scriptorium and philological workshop which he himself presided over. Of course this codex is not illustrated, but when in the 10th and 11th centuries illustrated MSS such as Oppian's *Kynegetica* (Marc. Gr. 479) have a representation from the 19th Book of the Iliad, where the talking horse Xanthos warns Achilles against his taking part in the battle; or an ivory box (Musée de Cluny) has a representation from the 11th Book of the Iliad, where Hector forces Diomedes to withdraw; then it is certain that illustrated manuscripts of the Iliad must have been in circulation during that time and they must have been used as models for the illustration of manuscripts or objects with no relevance to Iliad whatsoever.

However, it was not only the illustrations from the Iliad or from some other themes that served as sources for the Byzantines to draw upon, but also the illustrated manuscripts of Euripides' tragedies, heroic epics, bucolic poetry or the Romance of Alexander were used as models for the illustration of post-Byzantine manuscripts (p. 22).

This dissemination of illustrated ancient texts was further intensified during the last phase of the Byzantine Renaissance which Weitzmann characterizes as the phase of spreading, when the Patriarchal Academy was substituted by the imperial Court with Konstantinus VII Porphyrogenetus as its head.

Then the author mentions many more illuminated manuscripts, as for example the *Tactica* (cod. Vat. Gr. 1164), the *Geoponica* (cod. Laur. Plut. LIX, 32) the *Hippiatrica* (cod. Berol. Phil. 1538) etc.; all of which can be taken back to classical models, and he goes on to another kind of decoration, the portraits of the Evangelists, whether they are represented in front of buildings or against a neutral background. Weitzmann brings up a large number of parallel examples from classical art to prove that the former were influenced by statues of poets placed before theater façades (p. 26), and the latter, by statues of philosophers, e.g. the miniature painter of Stavronikita 45, who painting the Evangelist Mathew had in mind the Epicurus type of the Palazzo Margherita in Rome (p. 30).

The author is also especially concerned with personifications in miniatures not only of the 10th and 11th centuries, but also of the later ones, a question he examines in the beginning of his book on the occasion of cod. Paris. Gr. 139, and he reaches these conclusions: the models of these representations do not come from pre-iconoclastic models; there was a Christian core that was fond of the classics and took over certain elements, directly from antiquity. The origin of recurring ancient representational elements, such as personifications, architectural pieces, etc., ought to be looked for in the tradition of ancient texts which

was continued through the consistent copying of ancient miniatures. The unexpected turning up of scenes from the Iliad, from the Tragedies of Euripides and other texts of ancient literature can be explained through this tradition (p. 33).

Weitzmann goes on to discuss the influence or rather the use made of the classical element in purely religious representations of the New Testament, analysing certain of them, e.g. the Crucifixion, the Pietà, the Descent into Hades, the Bath, the Nativity scene, etc., and establishing parallels with ancient scenes (Adam: river god; Pietà: mourning scene with Aktaeon; Resurrection: scene of Hercules and Cerberus; Bath: bath of the boy Dionysus). He concludes that the Byzantine painter did not limit himself to the form of the scenes but took over elements of content too and identified them with one another (p. 37 ff.)

The Macedonian Renaissance with the background and origin it had, was not only continued into the 9th and 10th centuries but also later, just as the revival of classical studies which was started with Photius and Arethas was continued in later centuries. Michael Psellus, Anna Komnena, Joannes Tzetzes, Maximus Planoudes, Theodorus Metochites and finally Plethon, are but a few names that tell of a continuous tradition of humanistic studies in Byzantium.

After a certain faint rection in the 11th and 12th centuries, which had no real impact, there was some innovation in the art of the 13th century which was founded on the art of the 10th century and only in few cases looked for models in the classics.

Ancient Greek art influences the West at that time *via* the Crusaders' states in Syria and Palestine and even *via* the temporary Latin state of Konstantinople (1204-1263) thus contributing to the Italian Renaissance and the development of art in Western Europe.

These are the main lines of this excellent book in which Weitzmann summarizes the results of his long and detailed studies and explains once more the basic ideas which he himself has introduced into the study of Byzantine Art.

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Donald M. Nicol, *Meteora, the Rock Monasteries of Thessaly*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1963. 210 pp., 15 plates.

In a monograph that will be indispensable for Meteora studies Nicol very modestly disclaims all thought of having written "a definitive work." In the nature of things his book cannot be a great book — but it is certainly a very good one.

Like all of us others who have first stared at and afterwards climbed up the Rock of Varlaam, Nicol is fascinated by the uniqueness of the whole scene. Meteora can be exactly paralleled by no other place in the world. The monasteries "are among the strangest monuments to the religious aspirations of mankind."