NARTHEX MOSAIC OF ST. SOPHIA, ISTANBUL A NEW APPROACH

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The Narthex Mosaic of St. Sophia, Istanbul, represents a composition consists of Christ enthroned, an emperor crouching in proskynisis at his feet, and the Virgin and an archangel in medallions. Most scholars have identified the figure of the emperor as Leo VI, who was active in the late 9th-early 10th century. The author surmises the execution of the mosaic was not long after the recovery of the icon in 843 after the iconoclasm when the activity of the mosaic workshops was not fully developed, observing the unique technique of this panel, such as coating of the tesserae with pigments. As the background of the execution of the Narthex Mosaic, the author suggests the circumstances around the recovery of the icon. According to *Theophanes Continuatus*, Theodora, wife of the late Theophilus, the last iconoclastic emperor, testified at the council in 843 that his husband had repented of his mistake of his iconoclastic doctrine on his deathbed and succeeded in exempting him from the accusation as an anathema. In the Byzantine times, the composition of the figures must have reminded spectators of Theophilus' repentance, the position of Theodora as an intercessor, and the innocent position of Michael III, her son and an infant emperor after Theophilus.

Keywords: Byzantine art, Istanbul, Iconoclasm, mosaic, emperor

I. Narthex Mosaic of St. Sophia

The central door from the narthex to the nave of St. Sophia at Istanbul used to have a unique function (figs. 1, 2). It was used only when Byzantine emperors officially entered this church to attend rituals. In the lunette over this imperial door a mosaic panel remains (fig. 3).

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, St. Sophia was converted to a mosque, and the mosaics of Christian subjects were all covered with plaster. During the modernization of the Republic of Turkey in the 20th century, St. Sophia became a museum with no religious function. The Byzantine Institute,

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under the direction of Th. Whittemore, cleaned the mosaic in 1931-32 to make it visible¹. Ever since, it is no exaggeration to say that the narthex mosaic has been one of the most disputed Byzantine art works.

It is evident that the narthex mosaic was not executed together with the mosaics of the cross in other lunettes in the narthex, which likely date from the time of the original construction of the church in the reign of Justinian I. Only the mosaic in the lunette over the imperial door was replaced with the present one, though its date is not clear. The composition, at first glance, does not seem so complicated. In the center, Christ is seated on the throne, blessing with his raised right hand and suspending a codex on his knee with his left hand. The inscription in the codex reads “+Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν. Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου (Peace to you. I am the light of the world).” At the feet of Christ, a man wearing a crown and chlamys is crouching in the pose of proskynesis. This man with a nimbus is an emperor. In the medallion above the emperor, a woman in maphorion is depicted. She looks like the Virgin, though an inscription is not added. She holds out her hands to Christ, as she does in the composition of Deesis. In the other medallion to the left of Christ, there is an archangel or an angel. No inscription is attached, and he cannot be identified. The angel does not look at Christ in the center, but looks slightly outside.

Various opinions have been proposed to identify the emperor and interpret the meaning of this composition. Nevertheless, no consensus has been established as yet.

II. Previous Hypotheses

It is not the purpose of this paper to examine all the hypotheses concerning the narthex mosaic as none of them is directly related my hypothesis. However, at least two major studies should be mentioned to know the outline of the discussion.

Whittemore, who cleaned the whitewash over the mosaic, identified the emperor depicted as Leo VI, comparing the portrait with those of coins and an ivory relief now in Berlin. He thought the composition represented the emperor being blessed by Christ, accompanied by the Virgin and the Archangel Gabriel².

N. Oikonomides disagreed with Whittemore's interpretation. He thought that this is not the scene of the blessing, but rather the humiliation of the emperor. Leo VI married four times, offending the ecclesiastical law. It caused serious conflict between the emperor and the church, and the conflict was resolved only after the emperor repented his sin of polygamy on his deathbed in

912. Oikonomides proposed that the narthex mosaic was executed by the church, commemorating the victory of the church over the imperial power and not by the emperor himself as donor³.

Most other hypotheses identify the emperor in the mosaic as Leo VI. This is primarily because it is difficult to find another candidate. It is reasonable to think that the narthex mosaic can be roughly dated from the 9th to the 10th century. Needless to say, it could not be made during the iconoclasm. The last iconoclast emperor Theophilus died in 842, and the iconoclasm came to an end in 843. His son Michael III was still an infant when he was raised to sole emperor. He spent almost all the years of his reign under the regency of his mother Theodora and being supported by his uncle Bardas and his co-emperor Basil I. He was murdered by Basil I before he became 30 years old. The physiognomy of the mosaic does not that of a youth. It is also difficult to find the reason that Michael III would make this mosaic.

Some scholars think that the mosaic portrait may represent Basil I, who succeeded to the throne after the death of Michael III. Basil I gave a speech in the Eighth Council in 869 and said that he would be willing to throw himself away before the God, regardless of his purple and crown⁴. This speech may be connected with the execution of the mosaic. However, others argue that it is strange that the mosaic portrait is not recorded in *Vita Basilii*, in which Constantine VII wrote to praise his grandfather's achievements⁵.

The next emperor is the previously mentioned Leo VI. He was succeeded by his younger brother Alexander whose portrait remains in the north gallery of the same edifice (fig. 4). But the two portraits are quite different from each other, and it seems unreasonable to date the narthex mosaic after Alexander's portrait⁶.

These examinations eliminated the possibilities of emperors other than Leo VI. However, even if the portrait does represent Leo VI, the reason and the process of the execution must be properly explained. There is, I dare say, no satisfactory explanation concerning the identification of the emperor and the interpretation of the composition.

III. Observations of Style and Technique

When I examine the style and the technique of the narthex mosaic, I have to doubt the identification of the narthex portrait as Leo VI. As I mentioned, the mosaic portrait of Alexander exists in the same church. He gained power after the death of his elder brother Leo VI, but died 13 months after his accession to sole emperor. Therefore, it is evident that Alexander's portrait was executed

during his short reign, 912-13.

There is great difference between the portrait of the narthex emperor and that of Alexander. The image of Alexander is naturally proportioned, while the other has a small head, long arms and large hands (fig. 5). The outlines of his back and legs are complicated and the mass of his body is not realistic. Alexander has a handsome face. The eyes and the nose of the narthex emperor are unbalanced, and his face looks like a caricature. It seems peculiar to explain such great differences as the result of the different mosaic workshops in charge of them. The depiction of the narthex emperor should be regarded as primitive and unsophisticated in technique. The same primitive characteristics are also found in the other figures of the narthex mosaic. The face of the Virgin is very badly modeled and looks distorted (fig. 6).

Another difference is the technique of the mosaic. In the Alexander panel the tesserae are set into the bed densely and side by side in the whole surface of the panel. On the contrary, in the narthex mosaic, gold and silver tesserae in the background are put in horizontal rows with wide spaces between each other. This way of setting the tesserae is not found in other mosaics remaining in St. Sophia.

A second characteristic of the narthex mosaic is that the mosaic used to be painted. Whittemore does not refer to this matter, but E. Hawkins' more careful observation revealed it⁷. According to Hawkins, in the part of the throne and cushion of Christ, the emperor's buskins and so on, the tesserae coated with red pigment are set into the bed, and parts of the surface of the completed mosaic were painted. Today the pigment has almost disappeared, and the mosaic looks as if it was discolored.

Hawkins remarks that the extensive use of the coated tesserae is the result of "a spirit of improvisation⁸." This spirit of improvisation, I think, was yielded by necessity. What I surmise is that the supply of the tesserae was insufficient when the narthex mosaic was executed. The rows of the tesserae with spaces may suggest that the gold and silver tesserae were not sufficient. The coated tesserae must have been the device used when the mosaicists could not obtain the necessary color. As this expert of Constantinopolitan mosaics pointed out, the use of the coated tesserae is not unique in Byzantine mosaics but "There can be no doubt that red, a primary color which dominates many compositions, presented a problem to the artists of Constantinople working in mosaic⁹." Byzantine emperors in this period, for instance, were in red buskins. Therefore, when they represented an emperor, red tesserae were indispensable. Despite this practice, they still could not obtain them as they needed.

It seems very unusual that the supply of the tesserae was not enough when they made a mosaic panel in such an important place as the imperial door of St. Sophia. But it can only be explained if we surmise that the narthex mosaic was executed shortly after the end of the iconoclasm and when the mosaic workshops were not fully functioning. Some documents suggest that the supply of the tesserae was not sufficient in the period after the restoration of the icon. C. Mango supposes the execution of mosaics was not resumed quickly after the end of the iconoclasm because of the supply of the tesserae was not sufficient, on the basis of the passages of *Patria Constantinopoleos*, which tells how Basil I took away marble revetments and mosaic tesserae from many churches for the construction of Nea Ecclesia¹⁰.

Thus I would like to propose the earlier date for the narthex mosaic of St. Sophia, that is, not long after the end of Iconoclasm. The awkward representation of human bodies also suggests the decline of the technique of mosaics after the lapse of more than one hundred years. At the same time, the narthex mosaic must have been executed by any means in spite of the technical difficulty. It seems that there was a specific reason for executing the mosaic in this place and not waiting until the time was ripe. Why must it have been made then?

IV. Mosaics in St. Sophia

Before contemplating more about the occasion, the process and the intention concerning the narthex mosaic, I would like to examine other mosaics of the ninth and the tenth centuries in St. Sophia.

(1) Apse Mosaic

The apse mosaic of St. Sophia is generally thought to be the first monumental work after the end of iconoclasm (fig. 7). The Virgin and the Child are enthroned in the center, flanked by two archangels (the one on the left has almost vanished). There is an inscription around them, on the ridge of the semi-dome of the apse. Only a few letters at the beginning and the end of the inscription remain. But E. M. Antoniadis discovered a phrase that coincides with the remaining parts of the apse inscription from the 10th century *Palanina Anthology* in Heidelberg. The inscription can be reconstructed as “Ας οἱ πλάνοι καθεῖλον ἐνθάδ’ εἰκόνας ἁνακτες ἐστήλωσαν εὐσεβεις πάλιν (The pious emperors recovered the images that the heresies had thrown away from here)¹¹.”

On the other hand, Photius, who was the Patriarch of Constantinople, gave

a sermon from the ambo of St. Sophia on the Holy Saturday before Easter¹². This sermon praised the completion of a holy image of the Virgin and the Child in the presence of two emperors, and thought to be given when the apse mosaic of this church was completed. The sermon was given on March 29 of 867, because only on that day Photius was in the position of Patriarch and two emperors, namely Michael III and Basil I, existed.

Apart from the interesting conjecture of the dating of the apse mosaic, I would like to pay attention to the relationship between the emperors and the patriarch when the mosaic was executed. The church must have been in charge of the planning and execution of the mosaic, and the ritual was presided over by the patriarch. This is not surprising at all, because St. Sophia was the patriarchal church, not a palace church. At the same time, the inscription around the apse mosaic and Photius' sermon commemorate the emperors by referring to their contribution. It suggests that the mosaic was made at the expense of the imperial side.

(2) Nave Mosaics

In the north and south walls of the nave of St. Sophia, there are seven spaces each for mosaic figures, of which only three remain today (fig. 8). When the Fossati brothers once cleaned the plaster in 1847-49 during the restoration work of the edifice at the request of Ottoman sultan, more figures were visible and identified¹³. At the time of the research of the Fossati brothers, fragments of inscriptions also remained. S. G. Mercati reconstructed the lost inscriptions by finding the whole sentences recorded in a Byzantine manuscript¹⁴. The inscriptions presumably commemorate the donation of Basil I for the restoration of the damages sustained after an earthquake in 869.

(3) Mosaics in the Room above The Southwest Vestibule

There are remains of mosaics in a bad state of preservation in a room above the southwest vestibule and ramp (fig. 9). This room had been a connection between the west gallery of St. Sophia and the neighboring Patriarch's Palace, now lost. In the wall and the vault, Deesis and figures of saints are represented¹⁵. Characteristic is the portrait of Constantine. Constantine the Great is usually depicted as a beardless man, as he is represented in the mosaic over the southwest vestibule to the narthex (now it is used as the exit). But here, Constantine has a black beard, and looks like a Macedonian emperor. R. Cormack supposes that the adoption of this physiognomy may have been for the commemoration of Constantine, the first son and co-emperor of Basil I¹⁶.

There is no document or inscription that suggest the process of the execution of these mosaics. But considering the location of the room, we can easily suppose that the emperor donated the expense of the execution of the mosaic to the church, and the church rewarded the donation by commemorating the beloved son of Basil I. The mosaic may date shortly after Constantine's premature death.

The examinations above suggest the relationship between the imperial court and the church: the mosaics are executed at the expense of the emperors, and the church commemorates the emperors' contribution. The Byzantine emperors and the patriarchs were not always friendly. But the mosaics were made only when the harmonious relationship between them was established. It is also notable that no inscription clearly recorded the name of the emperor. They may have intended not to specify the single emperor but to depict him as the ideal emperor. Needless to say, people at that time must have known well who was mentioned in the mosaics.

V. Restoration of Icon

After these investigations of the process of the execution of the 9th century mosaics in St. Sophia, I would like to go on discussing the narthex mosaic again. I already proposed the possibility that the narthex mosaic was executed not long after the termination of the iconoclasm and during the time when the activity of making mosaics was not fully developed yet. So, in what process was the narthex mosaic was executed?

Looking back at the history of Iconoclasm, in 726 Leo III ordered the abolishment of the icon of Christ from the Chalke Gate of the Great Palace. It is regarded as the beginning of the Iconoclasm. At the Council of Hieria in 754 the veneration of the icon was officially condemned. At the Council of Nicaea in 787, however, the restoration of the icon was decided. In 815, Leo V again adopted the iconoclastic resolution of the Council of Hieria. The succeeding emperors, Michael II and Theophilus also had iconoclastic policy.

Theophilus died on January 20, 842 in Constantinople¹⁷. His son Michael III had been raised to co-emperor, but he was two or three years old then. Theodora, the empress of the late Theophilus became the regent, and she was further supported by Theoktistos and Manuel according to Theophilus' will. The former was a high official of the court and the latter was Theodora's uncle and a magister. We can hardly believe the description of the documents of this period, because the extant documents all try to justify the survivors of the great change

of Christian dogma. It must be taken into our consideration, but according to the documents, the force of the iconoclasts was declining toward the end of the reign of Theophilus. Even Theodora and their daughters, disobeying Theophilus' doctrine, venerated icons.

After the death of Theophilus, Theoktistos tried to push ahead with the restoration of the icon. But Theodora was not immediately persuaded. She was reluctant because she was afraid that the late emperor would be anathematized if the restoration of the icon would be decided. However, everything made progress in favor of the restoration of the icon.

In early March of 843 the Council met in Constantinople. The last iconoclast Patriarch John was disposed, and iconodule Methodius was appointed to this position. The Council confirmed the decrees of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 787.

VI. Theophilus and Theodora

Theodora was present to the Council, and suddenly pleaded to the assembly that as a matter of fact her husband Theophilus repented the mistake of his iconoclastic doctrine on his deathbed¹⁸. According to her, Theophilus asked her to bring an icon to the bed, and kissed it. The new Patriarch Methodius and the present metropolitans accepted her testimony, prayed for the late emperor Theophilus, and agreed not to add his name to the list of the anathema. Thus the issue of Theophilus, the most delicate problem, was solved peacefully, and the restoration of the icon was officially celebrated on the eleventh of March.

J. B. Bury comments that the story of Theodora's speech "has little claim to credit¹⁹." Concerning the historical fact he is probably correct, but this story must have been spread in public. But an even more sentimental story remains. I would like to quote the translation by C. Mango: "The empress Theodora, we are told, entreated the Patriarch Methodius to grant forgiveness to her late husband, and to this end public prayers were held. The empress herself fasted and prayed assiduously and while in this state of contrition she had a vision on Friday on the first week of Lent (i.e., March 9, 843). She saw herself standing in the Forum, by Constantine's column, and a band of men walking noisily down the street, carrying various instruments of torture. They were dragging Theophilus naked, his arms tied behind his back. Theodora recognized her husband and followed the procession weeping bitter tears. When they had come to the Chalke, she saw a man, awesome of aspect, sitting on a throne in front of the holy image of Our Lord Jesus Christ and, falling at his feet, she begged for Theophilus to be spared. Thereupon, the awesome man uttered these words; "O

woman, great is thy faith, and also the prayers and imploration of my priest, I forgive thy husband Theophilus.” So Theophilus was set free and handed over to Theodora, who at this point awoke²⁰.”

VII. Background of the Execution of the Narthex Mosaic.

I would like to propose that the story of Theophilus’ repentance was the background of the execution of the narthex mosaic of St. Sophia. The mosaic can be interpreted as the scene representing Christ as he forgives the late emperor Theophilus’ sin of the iconoclasm.

The only original inscription is that in the codex held by Christ (“ΙC ΧC” beside him is a later insertion). It reads “Peace to you. I am the light of the world,” as I mentioned above. These two phrases are taken from the different chapters of the New Testaments. The phrase “I am the light of the world” is often found with the figure of Christ, but according to Oikonomides, no extant Byzantine art adopted the combination of these phrases²¹. “Peace to you” appears in the episode of Incredulity of Thomas²², and “I am the light of the world” in that of the Woman taken in Adultery²³. These two episodes share the subject of Christ forgiving people while admonishing their mistakes. Here in the narthex mosaic the meaning of the combination of the two phrases is clear. Christ forgives the repenting Theophilus regardless of his sin of his iconoclastic doctrine in the past.

The Virgin is venerated as the intercessor to Christ in the composition of Deesis. Therefore, it is natural that the woman in the medallion looks like the Virgin. But to those who knew the story of Theophilus’ repentance, the woman in the medallion could have been a double-image of the Virgin and Theodora, because the latter played the role of intercessor of Theophilus at the Council.

If the woman could be interpreted as Theodora, the angel in the right medallion may have been easily accepted as the double-image of Archangel Michael and Michael III. The angel was not involved in the composition of the intercession. It may have emphasized the innocence of Michael III, an infant emperor who was free of the sin of the iconoclastic controversy²⁴.

Theodora would have been willing to donate the expense of the mosaic, as the new mosaic could show the repentance of Theophilus, the important role of herself as an intercessor and the innocent position of Michael III to the public. And needless to say, for the supporters of the icons in the church and the imperial court, the execution of the mosaic was a great advantage as the manifesto of the restoration of the icon. The narthex mosaic was executed, as other mosaics in St. Sophia, upon the harmony between the court and the

church. The whole design from the plea of Theodora at the Council to the execution of the narthex mosaic, I would like to suppose, was drawn by Methodius and Theoktistos.

VIII. Dating of the Narthex Mosaic

As the conclusion of the consideration above, I would like to propose the earlier dating of the narthex mosaic than the hypotheses generally accepted. I think it was executed between shortly after 843 and 856 when Michael III deprived Theodora of her power, though I have no evidence to specify the dating more rigidly.

I am ready for disagreement that my dating is too early. I know it has been often said that they did not represent holy images shortly after the end of Iconoclasm²⁵. Scholars have thought that it was difficult to raise holy images in official places because iconoclastic forces could still not be neglected.

The icon of Christ in the Chalke Gate, however, was raised between 843 and 847²⁶. Patriarch Methodius wrote an epigram to the Chalke Icon. He praised Theodora and her children, who raised the icon again there, as the protectors of the Christian faith. The Chalke Icon dates before Methodius' death on 14 June 847²⁷.

The image of Christ was also revived on coins shortly after the end of Iconoclasm. The earliest coin with the image of Christ is the solidus issued by Michael III and Theodora (fig. 10). The coin can also be dated to the early period of the regency of Theodora, from 843 to 856, because Michael III is represented as a child smaller than Theodora²⁸.

It seems unreasonable to me to attribute the delay of the restoration of holy images to the opposition of the iconoclastic forces, because the restoration was carried out on the two most representative media of the emperor's religious policy. I think that the organization of the mosaic workshops could not recover quickly and there were few experienced mosaicists, as I mentioned before referring to the hypothesis of Mango. During the Iconoclasm, mosaics of the Cross and decorative motifs were executed. But the mosaic workshops do not seem to have been active during these one hundred years. Especially in the representation of the human figures, the tradition must have been broken. It must have been the reason for the delay of the execution of mosaics after the restoration of the icon.

Concerning the extant works of the ninth century, scholars are inclined to establish a chronology as follows: In the narthex mosaic Christ is seated in a lyre-backed throne. The lyre-backed throne appears repeatedly on the coins

after Basil I and in the mosaic in the room above the southwest vestibule in St. Sophia. The prototype of this throne is thought to be another mosaic that was especially venerated by the emperors, namely that in Chrysotriclinos in the Great Palace²⁹. But full explanation of this chronology is impossible because Chrysotriclinos is lost. On the other hand, some scholars find it difficult to date the apse mosaic of St. Sophia, which is so much more sophisticated and of higher quality, to 876 and the more awkward narthex mosaic to the end of the ninth to the beginning of the tenth century. In order to solve this contradiction, Oikonomides tries to date the apse mosaic to the eighth century³⁰, and Beckwith assumes almost all the figures were restored in the fourteenth century³¹. But these attempts have not been generally accepted.

I would like to propose another chronological hypothesis. Soon after 843 the icon of a standing Christ was raised at the Chalke Gate of the Great Palace. The narthex mosaic of St. Sophia was also executed in mid-ninth century. These two images became two representatives of the icon of Christ of this period. The image of Christ on the coin of Theodora and Michael III must have been the revival of that of Justinian II before the Iconoclasm. But the Christ on a lyre-backed throne on the coin of Basil I may have been derived from the narthex mosaic of St. Sophia. The seal of Patriarch Methodius represents a standing figure of Christ, which may have been related to the Chalke Icon. The next Patriarch Ignatius, however, adopted both the standing figure and the seated figure of Christ³². The patriarch may have used the two major images of the capital in his seal.

As for the mosaics, in the period soon after the end of the Iconoclasm the execution of the mosaics of large scale including human figures was difficult. For this reason, the narthex mosaic of St. Sophia is not only of poor quality but also small in dimension, in spite of the fact that it is located in the most important place in the Byzantine Empire next only to the apse of the same church. In the 850s the mosaics of larger scale began to be executed. Michael III decorated Chrysotriclinos of the Great Palace with mosaics including the figures of Christ and saints³³. In other cities, the mosaic of the Virgin and the Child in the apse of Koimesis Church in Nicaea and the Ascension in the dome of St. Sophia in Thessaloniki were executed between 848 and 880, though their exact dating is still disputed³⁴. The awkward representation of human figures in these works also can be explained in the same way as the narthex mosaic.

Returning to Constantinople, the mosaics in the Theotokos Church of Pharos in the Great Palace and Hodegon Monastery were completed by 864³⁵. After 876 Agii Sergios kai Bacchos was restored³⁶. During the mosaic execution

of these monuments, the mosaic workshops were organized and became active again, and the technique must have made rapid progress. The sophisticated mosaic of the Virgin and the Child in the apse of St. Sophia was executed in this period of the development, while the narthex mosaic of the same church should be dated to the earlier period.

Notes

¹ Thomas Whittemore, *The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul. Preliminary Report on the First Year's Work, 1931-1932. The Mosaics of the Narthex*, Oxford, 1933.

² Whittemore, *op. cit.*, 18; Whittemore, "Mosaics of Aya Sophia," *Actes du IVe Congrès International des Études Byzantine*, Sophia, 1936, 202-06. His interpretation is supported by A. Grabar, R. Cormack and so on. A. Grabar, *L'iconoclasme Byzantine*, Paris, 1957, 250ff.; R. Cormack, "The Emperor at St. Sophia: Viewer and Viewed," *Byzance et les images*, Paris, 1994, 225-253, esp. 245ff.

³ Nicholas Oikonomides, "Leo VI and the Narthex Mosaic of Saint Sophia," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 30 (1976), 151-172.

⁴ Oikonomides, "Narthex Mosaic," 160; J. Shcarf, "Der Kaiser in Proskynese. Bemerkungen zur Deutung des Kaisarmosaiks in Narthex der Hagia Sophia von Konstantinopel," *Festschrift P. E. Schramm zu seinem siebzigsten Geburtstag*, I, Wiesbaden, 1965, 27-35.

⁵ Oikonomides, *op. cit.*, 159.

⁶ Paul Underwood and Earnest Hawkins, "The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul. The Portrait of the Emperor Alexander. A Report on Work Done by the Byzantine Institute in 1959 and 1960," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 15 (1961), 187ff.

⁷ E. Hawkins, "Further Observations on the Narthex Mosaic in St. Sophia in Istanbul," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 22 (1968), 151-174.

⁸ Hawkins, *op. cit.*, 166.

⁹ Hawkins, *op. cit.*, 164f.

¹⁰ Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453. Source and Documents*, Toronto, 1986, 181.

¹¹ E. M. Antoniadis, *Ἐκφράσεις τῆς Ἀγίας Σοφίας*, III, Athens, 1909, 29ff.

¹² C. Mango ed., *The Homilies of Photius. Patriarch of Constantinople*, Harvard University Press, 1958, 286ff.

¹³ C. Mango, *The mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul*, Washington, D.C., 1962, 48ff.

¹⁴ S. G. Mercati, "Sulle iscrizioni de Santa Sofia," *Bessarione*, XXVI (1922), 206ff.; Mango, *The Mosaics of St. Sophia*, 63ff.

¹⁵ R. Cormack and E. Hawkins, "The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul: The Rooms above the Southwest Vestibule and Ramp," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 31 (1977), 175ff.

¹⁶ Cormack and Hawkins, *op. cit.*, 241.

¹⁷ For the historical description I owe much to E. J. Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, London, 1930 and J. B. Bury, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire. From the Fall of Irene to the Accession of Basil I (A.D. 802-867)*, London, 1912.

¹⁸ I. Bekker ed., *Theophanes Continuatus*, Bonn, 1838, 152ff.; Martin, *op. cit.*, 214f.

¹⁹ Bury, *op. cit.*, 148.

²⁰ C. Mango, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople*, Copenhagen, 1959, 131ff.; W. Regel, *Analecta byzantino-russica*, St. Petersburg, 1891, 33ff.; Bury, *op. cit.*, 149.

²¹ Oikonomides, "Leo VI and the Narthex Mosaic," 153, 171.

²² John 20:24-.

- ²³ John 8:1-.
- ²⁴ J. Lowden suggests the possibility that the angel is related to Michael III, though he has different interpretation from mine. J. Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, London, 1997, 190.
- ²⁵ Sirarpie Der Nersessian, "Le décor des églises du IX^e siècle," *Actes du VI^e congrès international d'études Byzantines*, Tome II, Paris, 1951, 315-320.
- ²⁶ C. Mango, *The Brazen House*, 126ff.; Grabar, *L'iconoscasme byzantin*, 131.
- ²⁷ At the time of the restoration of icon in 843, Theodora raised the icon of a full-length standing Christ at the Chalke Gate. Lazarus, who was once purged by Theophilus is reported to have executed the Chalke Icon. Mango, *The Brazen House*, 126f.
- ²⁸ P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, Washington, D.C., 1973, 456. Grierson thinks that the coin was issued soon after 843.
- ²⁹ A. Cutler, *Transfigurations. Studies in the Dynamics of Byzantine Iconography*, University Park, Pennsylvania and London, 1975, 5ff.
- ³⁰ Oikonomides, "Some Remarks on the Apse Mosaic of St. Sophia," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 39 (1985), 111ff.
- ³¹ J. Beckwith, *The Art of Constantinople. An Introduction to Byzantine Art 330-1453*, London, 1961, 145, note III, 15.
- ³² G. Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol.1, Bern, 1984, 4ff.
- ³³ H. Beckby ed., *Anathologia graeca*, München, 1957-58, I, 106.
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- ³⁶ Mango, *The Brazen House*, 130.

Source of illustration

- Fig. 1. St. Sophia, Istanbul (Photograph: author).
- Fig. 2. Imperial door, St. Sophia (author).
- Fig. 3. Mosaic over the imperial door, narthex of St. Sophia (*Sekai Bijutsu Daizenshu*, vol. 6, *Bizantin Bijutsu, Shogakkan*, 1997).
- Fig. 4. Mosaic portrait of Alexander (*Meiga e no tabi*, Vol.3, *Tenshi ga egaita*, Kodansha, 1993).
- Fig. 5. Narthex mosaic. Detail. Emperor (Thomas Whittemore, *The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul. Preliminary Report on the First Year's Work, 1931-1932. The Mosaics of the Narthex* (Oxford, 1933).
- Fig. 6. Narthex mosaic. Detail. The Virgin (Whittemore, *op. cit.*).
- Fig. 7. Apse mosaic, St. Sophia (author).
- Fig. 8. Nave mosaic, St. Sophia (author).
- Fig. 9. Mosaics in the Room above The Southwest Vestibule, St. Sophia (R. Cormack and E. Hawkins, "The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul: The Rooms above the Southwest Vestibule and Ramp," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 31, 1977).
- Fig. 10. Coin of Michael III and Theodora (P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, Washington, D.C., 1973).

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