This article presents the political function of the Holy Face of Edessa, one of the most important relics in the Christian world: how it was exploited for imperial legitimacy.

In August 944 the Image of Edessa was brought into Constantinople as the fruits of Romanus I's campaign against the Muslims in Syria. The adventus ceremony of the holy image was performed solemnly so that it might miraculously heal the old Emperor of his illness. Romanus I, a usurper, also hoped that the relics would purify his usurpation of the crown from Constantine VII of the Macedonian dynasty.

In December 944, however, Romanus was forced to abdicate and brought into a monastery. Returning to the throne, Constantine VII also used the holy image as a demonstration of his legitimacy. Under his direction the court intellectuals rewrote the history of the acquisition and the adventus ceremony of the holy image: they insisted that the image celebrated Constantine VII.

The most important point to be noted in this article is that the Narratio de imagine Edessena, a history of the Image of Edessa composed at the court of Constantine VII, repeatedly emphasized the image's protection of the city of Constantinople. The special emphasis on the Capital City formed a part of the Macedonian dynastic propaganda that the dynasty was related to Constantine the Great, the founder of Constantinople. The Image of Edessa was hence closely involved in the dynastic politics of the Byzantine Empire as a palladium of Constantinople.

Keywords: Constantinople, relics, imperial legitimacy, the Image of Edessa, Constantine VII.

I. The Image of Edessa

As the Byzantine emperors and priests showed great zeal for collection, a great number of relics were housed in the churches and monasteries in Constantinople. Although when the relics were brought into the City, a
magnificent *adventus* ceremony was to be held, we have few records of their reception in the Byzantine historiography. An exception is the Image of Edessa, the True Likeness of Christ "not made by human hands," famous for the King Abgar legend. Not a few Byzantine authors, secular and religious, mention the splendid reception organized as an imperial triumph: two contemporary chronicles, several later chronicles, and religious documents. Some Arab historians as well put the event on record. It is reasonable to suppose that the chroniclers’ exceptional reference to the arrival ceremony is due to its significance for the Empire.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the political function of the Image: how its arrival was exploited for imperial legitimacy. The Byzantine as well as Arab authors are in agreement on the core of the ceremony: the Image arrived at Constantinople on August 15, 944, and was dedicated to the Pharos Chapel in the Palace the next day. As for individual facts, however, there are several contradictory statements among them; the contradictions are largely due to the various viewpoints of the authors. It is essential, therefore, to distinguish historical facts from political or religious discourses, before turning to the main task.

II. The arrival of the Image: Historical facts

First of all, we have to examine the chronicles of Symeon Logothetes and Theophanes Continuatus, which were compiled just after the event, in the second reign of Constantine VII (945-959), and thus have been regarded as most important and reliable. The relation of the two chronicles is too involved a subject to be treated here in detail. As their accounts of the arrival of the Image are almost one and the same, here we would like to quote the passage of Symeon Logothetes, who seems to compile his chronicle a little earlier.

"When the city of Edessa, where the Christ’s holy Image has been preserved, was surrounded by the Roman army and put in a critical situation, the people of the city sent an envoy to the emperor Romanos proposing that if the siege was raised they would surrender the Christ’s holy Image. In exchange for that favor, they asked for release of noble captives and an imperial *chrysobull* guaranteeing that the Roman army would never plunder the region. That was put into practice. When the Holy Image [or *mandelion*] reached the vicinity of Constantinople, the *patrikios* and *parakoimomenos* Theophanes received it at the river Sagar [Sangaros] with brilliant [torchlight, suitable] honor and
chanting hymns. On August 15 the Image entered the City with him; the emperor (Romanos I), who was then in Blachernae, prostrated himself and worshiped it then and there. The next day the Image was brought into the outside of the Golden Gate. The two sons of the emperor, Stephen and Constantine, and his son-in-law Constantine, with the patriarch Theophylaktos, received it with suitable honor; all the senators led it with magnificent candle-lights and brought into St. Sophia on foot. After worshiping it in the church, they brought it into the Palace."

As is well known, the last part of Byzantine chronicles, though a contemporary record, is not completely primary and reliable. In order to make sure of historical facts we have to differentiate between original sources and editors' alterations. Unfortunately, as for Symeon Logothete's description of the arrival ceremony, we cannot easily tell the original records from his personal accounts; for the parallel passages of Theophanes Continuatus are almost literally identical. In order to disentangle his editorial works, we have to compare the text with Arabic historical records.

To our regret, however, most Arab historians are not interested in the arrival ceremony in Constantinople but in the consultation with the Caliph Muttaqi and a wise judgment by the vizier Ali Ibn-Ibsa. Nevertheless, Yahya-ibn-Sa'id and Michael the Syrian, who exceptionally pay much attention to the situation of the Byzantine Empire, may provide some helpful suggestions. The passage of Yahya's History, which is more detailed, reads as follows:

In the year 311 (A. D. 942/43) the Greek army arrived at Amida and took a large number of inhabitants as prisoners; then they captured Arzen and, having devastated the greater part of the region, approached Nisibis. They also demanded that the inhabitants of Edessa should deliver the Holy Image to them. . . . (Consultation with the Caliph Muttaqi, discussions among his counselors, and the final decision to hand over the Image to the Byzantines). . . They (the Byzantines) arrived at Constantinople on Tuesday August 15. Stephen and his brothers, the patriarch Theophylaktos and Constantine, that is the sons of the Roman emperor [the sons of the emperor Romanos], went to the Golden Gate in order to proceed before the Image. All the imperial dignitaries led it with a large number of candles. The Image was brought into St. Sophia and then into the Palace. The event took
place in the twenty-fourth regnal year of old Romanos with Constantine the son of Leon (A. D. 944).6

Yahya's report of the arrival ceremony corresponds with that of the Byzantine chronicles: the Image arrived at Constantinople on August 15; the next day it was brought into the City through the Golden Gate, proceeded along the street to St. Sophia, and eventually was deposited in the imperial Palace. As the date shows, Yahya depends on a Byzantine chronicle; there is no originality in his description. But the Arab historians, including Michael the Syrian, not only provide detailed information on the Arab countermeasures but also rewrite the passages of the Byzantine chronicles from their own viewpoints. In this case we should pay attention to the following two differences. First, while the Byzantine chroniclers tell that the people of Edessa proposed to deliver the Image, the Arabic historical works specify Romanos I's or the Byzantines' demand for the Image. Secondly, Constantine VII is not mentioned in the Arabic texts.

Yahya introduces the delivery of the Image after mentioning the campaign of the Byzantine army under John Kurkuas and tells us that it was the Byzantine side that demanded the delivery of the Image. Although Michael the Syrian, based on Byzantine sources, says that the people of Edessa offered the surrender, he also tells that Romanos I sent the army to Edessa in order to acquire the Image. The chronological and causal description of the Arab historians throws light on the editorial works of the Byzantine chroniclers.

Neither Symeon Logothetes nor Theophanes Continuatus mentions the demand of the Byzantine Emperor; they refer only to the surrender of the Image by the people of Edessa, which is obviously nothing but a result of the Byzantine military actions. The chroniclers probably knew the demand of Romanos I and perhaps checked the duplicate copy of the imperial document. Their omission is one of the editorial methods Byzantine chroniclers often used: "intentional silence." We should read between the lines: their intention of making the distinguished achievement of Romanos I vague by suppressing his demand.

Compared with Arabic historical records, we become aware of another artifice of the Byzantine chroniclers; they describe the acquisition of the Image and the general Kurkuas's campaign separately. In other words, they do not compile the two records into one story using the editorial techniques, "cast forward" or "cast back", to explain the causal relationship between them, but just refer to the Byzantine army in the first sentence of the passage.8 As a result, it is not specifically pointed out that Romanos I was striving to acquire the
Let us now turn to the second difference: omission of the name of Constantine VII. Naturally Arab historians express less interest in Byzantine emperors than Byzantine chroniclers do: Michael the Syrian’s arrival report is very short, and Yahya does not mention Romanos I’s worship of the Image at the church of St. Mary at Blachernae. Even in view of that, however, we should not overlook that there is no reference to Constantine VII in Yahya’s detailed description. Taking it into consideration that Yahya mentions the emperors other than Constantine VII, we can give two possible reasons for his silence: he mistakenly identifies two Constantines, Romanos’s son and son-in-law, in the Byzantine sources as one and the same person or, judging that Constantine VII did not play an important role in the arrival ceremony, he omits his name intentionally. As his last sentence of the passage quoted above shows, he knows that Constantine VII is not a son of Romanos I; consequently, the first hypothesis does not hold good. We can conclude that Yahya’s silence is not due to his misunderstanding about Byzantine emperors but to the judgment that Constantine VII did not play an important part in the acquisition of the Image, although, to our regret, we cannot specify the grounds for his inference.

We shall now devote a little space to examining the later Byzantine chronicles. We have some secondary chronicles which describe the arrival of the Image: Pseudo-Symeon (= Symeon Magistros), Skylitzes, Zonaras and so forth. The passage of those chronicles on the arrival of the Image is based on Symeon Logothetes or Theophanes Continuatus; needless to say, they are of no value as a historical source. For there is no independent information in those chronicles except for an episode of the holy monk Sergios mentioned by Pseudo-Symeon, which we will discuss later. We should notice, however, that aside from Pseudo-Symeon, who almost duplicates the chronicle of Symeon Logothetes, the secondary chronicles refer no more to Constantine VII than the Arabic historical works do. In other words, reference to Constantine VII is restricted to the chronicles compiled during his reign.

Let us now leave chronicles and turn to religious documents. The most detailed record is the so-called Narratio de imagine Edessena, composed to commemorate the arrival of the Image in Constantinople. Its title and preface tell that the author is Constantine VII himself; in the light of recent studies, however, he commissioned one of his court intellectuals to compose it. The Narratio tells us the complex of the Abgar legend, the Persian siege of Edessa in 544, the delivery of the Image to the Byzantines, its transfer to Constantinople, and the arrival ceremony in the City. Its description of the arrival ceremony is
much more detailed than that of the chronicles; some modern historians, including Patlagean, examine it as a primary source of information\textsuperscript{10}. There are two other religious documents mentioning the arrival of the Image: an entry for August 16 of the *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* and a homily for the translation of the Image written by Gregory, an archdeacon of St. Sophia. The former, composed at the court of Constantine VII as well, is a shortened version of the *Narratio*; the latter is full of Biblical quotations and hardly interested in the historical facts. It is only the *Narratio*, therefore, that is worth examining more closely.

There are some disagreements between the *Narratio* and the chronicles as to the process of the arrival ceremony. According to the *Narratio\textsuperscript{11}*, the Image reached Constantinople in the late evening of August 15, 944, and was deposited in the church of St. Mary at Blachernae; the emperors hailed it with reverent adoration. So far the *Narratio* agrees with the chronicles except for the number of emperors. On the same night, the *Narratio* proceeds, they took it aboard the royal ship and reached the Imperial Palace; it was dedicated to the Pharos Chapel. The next day the young emperors and the patriarch took the Image down to the sea, placed it on the royal galley, and cruised along close to the sea walls so that it might protect the City. Then landing outside the west wall of the city, they entered the City through the Golden Gate. After entering the City, the course mentioned by the *Narratio* agrees with that of the chronicles again: procession along the main street, ceremony in St. Sophia, and eventually the dedication to the Pharos Chapel in the Palace.

The information of the *Narratio* about the ceremony is quite unnatural: the night cruise from Blachernae to the Palace on August 15 and the dedication ceremonies twice performed at the Pharos Chapel. We cannot regard them as historical facts, because neither the chronicles nor the *Synaxarium* mention such complicated processes\textsuperscript{12}. We can say with fair certainty that the two voyages of the Image are fictitious; they are no more historical facts than the miraculous stories in the *Narratio* are. By means of the miraculous stories, as we shall see later in Chapter IV, it features Constantine VII as a pious emperor. Another feature is, as Patlagean has put it\textsuperscript{13}, Constantinople; the *Narratio* declares repeatedly that the City is to be protected by the Image. It is more interested in divine protection than historical facts. Thus, the *Narratio* is a politico-religious document written in a historical style including not a few miraculous stories and concluding with an invocation to God. However, it tells us how history was rewritten; we shall analyze it in detail from that viewpoint in Chapter IV.

As a result of examining the sources relevant to the Image, the following
conclusions are obtained about the acquisition and arrival of the Image. The arrival ceremony was carried out as described in the chronicles of Symeon Logothetes and Theophanes Continuatus; we should not rely upon the Narratio's information. Nevertheless, it must be noted that although neither of the chroniclers gives specific information, it was Romanos I who contributed to acquiring the Image. In addition to the Arab historians, even the Narratio and the Synaxarium, in which Constantine VII is featured, tell that Romanos I positively engaged in acquiring the Image. He was the first person to worship it. However, he did not participate in the procession of the next day. In the ceremony without the senior emperor, his sons, not Constantine VII, played the leading role. In spite of the report of the Narratio, Constantine VII played second fiddle to the ceremony at most.

In the following chapter we will analyze the political situation in the last days of Romanos I to clarify the relations between Romanos I, his sons and Constantine VII in regard to the Image.

III. The Image of Edessa and Romanos I Lekapenos: Purification of the usurpation

For an investigation of the relations between Romanos I and the Image of Edessa, it is necessary to go back to 867, when Basil the Macedonian killed the emperor Michael III and usurped the throne. The new emperor Basil I needed to establish his legitimacy. With respect to this, we should pay attention to his policy of making a connection with Constantine the Great. Basil I emulated him intentionally: he renovated a great number of churches and monasteries in Constantinople and compelled the Jews to convert into Christianity. Already the council of 869 called him “New Constantine.” More noteworthy is the change of imperial graveyards. Byzantine emperors since Constantine the Great had been buried in the mausoleum attached to the Church of the Holy Apostles. After Justinian I built a new mausoleum in the Holy Apostles, however, emperors came to be buried in it; the mausoleum of Constantine the Great became out of use. It is Basil I who revived it; the emperors of the Macedonian dynasty were to be put to rest in the same mausoleum as Constantine the Great.

Owing to those policies the Macedonian dynasty came to be gradually regarded as legitimate. Surprisingly, however, when its legitimacy seemed to be established, a parvenu usurped the throne. It was the droungarios of the imperial fleet, Romanos Lekapenos. In 919 he took control of the Palace and swore an oath in the Pharos Chapel to respect the legitimate emperor
Constantine VII. Then he married his daughter Helene to Constantine. He was crowned first as junior emperor by his son-in-law, Constantine VII; soon he took precedence over Constantine VII and eventually became senior emperor. Christopher Lekapenos, his eldest son, was crowned in 921 and other sons, Stephen and Constantine, were also crowned in 924. Christopher was even nominated as the heir to the throne. Needless to say, Romanos violated the oath.

Although Romanos usurped the throne from the Macedonian dynasty, unlike Basil I who murdered Michael III, he kept Constantine VII on the throne. The Myrelaion monastery, which Romanos established as a family cemetery in Constantinople soon after the accession, shows his delicate relations with the Macedonian dynasty. For, as mentioned above, the emperors since Basil I have been buried in the mausoleum of Constantine the Great in the Church of the Holy Apostles. Romanos I could not take the place of the legitimate Macedonian dynasty.

Romanos I contributed to the development of the Empire in both internal and external affairs; we may regard him as a forerunner of the Byzantine Golden Age. In the 940s, the last days of his reign, however, the Empire was in temporary chaos. The chroniclers record such events as a fatal accident in the Hippodrome and an appearance of Siamese twins, regarding them as omens of his downfall: on December 20, 944, four months after the arrival of the Image, the old emperor was seized on the orders of his sons and banished to the Island of Prote.

In June 941, Constantinople came under a surprise attack by a Russian fleet; the Russians made a landing on the Bithynian coast and devastated the City’s Asian suburbs until their ships were finally destroyed by Greek Fire in a sea battle led by the parakoimomenos Theophanes in September. When the Russians were preparing a second attack against Constantinople in the autumn of 943, the Byzantines managed to come to an agreement with them by means of a large donation.

Romanos I was about seventy in 940; as his health worsened, the royal succession became a serious problem. The eldest son Christopher, whom he had appointed as heir to the throne, died in 931 and was buried in the Myrelaion monastery. There were three co-emperors left, his two sons and the son-in-law Constantine VII. To our regret, we have no definite information on Romanos’s idea for succession because the chronicles compiled after his fall may have disguised the facts. We shall now look more carefully into the successor problem.

Theophanes Continuatus enumerates a series of charitable works by
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Romanos I: remission of the unpaid taxes of poor citizens, construction of a lodging house for newcomers to the City, and donations to the Myrelaion monastery and Imperial troops. However, since parallel reports are lacking in the chronicle of Symeon Logothetes, it is not evident whether all of these charitable works were carried out simultaneously at this time or whether the chronicler has put them together in the last year of Romanos's reign. Zonaras tells us that the emperor's motive for the acts of charity was repentance for the usurpation. He seems to presume that Romanos I intended to return the throne to Constantine VII at the end of the reign, though we cannot identify the grounds for his presumption.

In Symeon Logothetes's report on the arrival of the Image, as we have seen, Constantine VII is mentioned after the two sons of Romanos I. The chronicle of Theophanes Continuatus, compiled at the court of Constantine VII, enumerates the co-emperors' names in the same order, while the Narratio and the Synaxarium do not specify the co-emperors but describe collectively "the young emperors." From those remarks it is clear that in August 944, the first co-emperor was not Constantine VII but Stephen the elder son of Romanos; if Constantine had been the first co-emperor, he would have held the first rank in the arrival ceremony and his name would be mentioned before the brothers-in-law. To put it in another way, the reason why the Narratio and the Synaxarium use the inexact words "the young emperors" is that Constantine VII, their protagonist, did not actually play an important part in the ceremony.

In December 944, however, Stephen and his younger brother Constantine forced their father into a monastery, which tells us that between August and December Romanos I changed the first co-emperor, the crown prince, from Stephen to Constantine VII, or at least planned the change. Before we draw any conclusions as to the successor problem, two more points must be clarified: the dismissal of the general John Kurkuas and Romanos I's will.

In the first place we shall inquire into the dismissal. As a reward for Kurkuas's victory, the emperor thought of making a marriage between Kurkuas's daughter and his grandson Romanos. But "the emperors", to quote Symeon Logothetes and Theophanes Continuatus, resisted the plan and finally Kurkuas was replaced by Pantherios, a member of the Lekapenos family. As for the event, our chroniclers are deeply confused. The Leon Grammatikos manuscript, the most important version of the chronicle of Symeon Logothetes, has some lacunae in the text. On the other hand, Theophanes Continuatus divides the story into chapters 40 and 43, inserting another long episode between them; his editorial works are so clumsy that the same sentence is repeated in chapters 40
and 43. In addition, although both chronicles specify the grandson Romanos as the son of Constantine, Romanos's younger son, the Slavic version of the Symeon Logothetes chronicle identifies this Romanos with Romanos II, Constantine VII's son.

The texts relevant to the dismissal of Kurkuas are quite problematic, but we can safely come to the following conclusion. The partner of the daughter of Kurkuas, we must suppose, was Romanos II, because a little later the chroniclers tell of his engagement to an illegitimate daughter of the King of Italy. Thus, although we cannot determine the exact date because of the editorial work of "casting forward", it is reasonable to suppose that the old emperor reached a decision to make Constantine VII the heir to the throne and to put him under the guardianship of his most competent and faithful general. "The emperors", however, opposed this prospect and insisted that Romanos not only abandon the marriage but also dismiss Kurkuas. Based on the fact that Kurkuas was replaced by a member of the Lekapenos family, we can say with fair certainty that the opposing "emperors" were his sons; they seemed to be envious of Kurkuas and especially of Constantine VII.

Let us now turn to the other problem, Romanos I's will, which is mentioned only by Theophanes Continuatus. It is useful to quote the passage:

"The emperor Romanos, very old and weak, determined the imperial affairs in his will. In the year 6453 from the Creation (A.D. 943/44) he nominated in his will Constantine Porphyrogennetos as the first emperor and his sons as the second and third. He also makes it clear that if they cause harm to the first emperor, they will immediately lose the throne."

This passage is put shortly after the arrival of the Image and just before the downfall of Romanos I. If the date given by Theophanes Continuatus is correct, Romanos made a final decision on the imperial succession in August 944. However, we have some textual problems. First of all, Symeon Logothetes does not mention the will at all, and most of the manuscripts of Theophanes Continuatus also lack those sentences. In addition, the text itself has some unnatural descriptions: exceptional mention of the World Year and repetition of "in his will". It should also be noticed that although "his sons" indicates the sons of Constantine VII grammatically, the young sons cannot have caused harm to their father; we should interpret them as "Romanos's own sons". In short, we should not have blind faith in the passage from Theophanes Continuatus; most likely it is a later insertion.

Nevertheless, it would be fallacious to assume that the will is a forgery. As
we have discussed a little earlier, Romanos I changed the heir to the throne from Stephen to Constantine VII between the arrival ceremony in August 944, and his downfall in December. The will corresponds to our conclusion; it must be genuine, although owing to the clumsy editorial work the words “in his will” are repeated, and “his sons” point to other people than the original text indicated. It seems that a copyist of Theophanes Continuatus summarized the original will dated 6453 and inserted it in the chronicle. He probably wanted to show that Romanos I intended to make Constantine VII heir to the throne; we cannot say whether the copyist aimed at forgiving Romanos for the usurpation or insisting on the legitimacy of Constantine VII. It may be worth pointing out, in passing, that Pseudo-Symeon, though almost duplicating Symeon Logothetes’s narrative, borrows the passage of the will from Theophanes Continuatus; he concludes that the will led to the coup d’etat of Romanos’s sons, which must reflect the historical facts.31

We are now able to propose an answer to the question of how the Image was related to Romanos I’s policy and downfall. In the last years of his reign Romanos came to repent the violation of his oath and usurpation of the throne. He seems to have intended to return the throne to the legitimate Macedonian dynasty. When he nominated the general Kurkuas as a protector for the literatus emperor Constantine VII and intended to marry the general’s daughter to the emperor’s son, however, his sons were opposed and finally discharged the general. As the nomination of the new general shows, they came to take control of the government as their father’s health was getting worse.

Worried by illness and confronted with the troubles over the succession, the old emperor left their settlement up to a miracle of the Holy Image of Edessa, which was the greatest achievement of his military activities. At that moment, the Image was no longer for him a symbol of conquest but a herald of miraculous cure and purification of the perfidious accession. When it reached Constantinople, he worshiped it first of all. But the Image did not perform a miracle; he could not attend the procession the next day. He was deeply disappointed and, believing that nothing could forgive his sins but complete repentance, made the last will and testament: Constantine VII be nominated as the first emperor and crown prince. Aware of the testament, the sons made a decision to dethrone their father.

IV. Constantine VII and the Image of Edessa: Legitimatization of the throne

Stephen and Constantine, Romanos’s sons, fearful of passing the throne to
Constantine VII, dethroned their father and exiled him to the Island of Prote on December 20, 944. They wanted to remove Constantine VII as well, but had to give up the idea because at the news of Romanos's exile a mob gathered before the Palace, demanding to be shown Constantine VII. This episode, mentioned by Liutprand of Cremona\(^{32}\), tells the loyalty of the citizens to the Macedonian dynasty; it is probably for the same reason that Romanos I once allowed Constantine to remain on the throne.

For more than 40 days the three co-emperors were watching for a chance to outwit one another. On January 27, 945, Romanos's sons were arrested by order of Constantine VII and sent to the monastery where their father had been exiled. Thus, Constantine VII returned to being sole emperor after an interval of twenty-four years. His throne, however, was unstable because supporters of the Lekapenos family, the \textit{parakoimomenos} Theophanes included, still remained and laid plots against him\(^ {33}\). It was necessary for Constantine VII to demonstrate his legitimacy.

The legitimatization of the throne was tried in various ways. To begin with, we should pay attention to the fact that it is in this age that the illustriousness of ancestry came to be held in high respect. Although a custom to call emperors' children "Porphyrogennetos" existed already in the early Byzantine period, Constantine VII was the first emperor to use it as an imperial title\(^ {34}\). We have several silver coins with the epithet issued between 945 and 959. He seems to have used it to discriminate between his legitimate Macedonian dynasty and the upstart Lekapenos family.

History was also used to legitimize the throne. The chronicle of Theophanes Continuatus, composed by either Constantine VII himself or under his direction, attempts to legitimize the Macedonian dynasty: Michael III as a tyrant in Book IV and Basil the Macedonian as blessed by God in Book V. In Book VI, as we have seen, the chronicler suggests that Constantine VII is the legitimate emperor.

The connections with Constantine the Great, which Basil I had introduced to justify the usurpation, developed into a statement of blood relationship. It was going around so widely that in his \textit{Antapodosis} Liutprand introduced an opinion prevalent in Constantinople that Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos was a descendant of Constantine the Great. This is the first time since the fourth century that a Byzantine emperor claimed to be related by blood to the founder of the Empire. The formal relation of the Macedonian dynasty with Constantine the Great was completed in the age of Constantine VII\(^ {35}\).

In addition, the Image also was used to disseminate the idea of Constantine
VII as the pious and legitimate emperor. Because Weiztmann and Patlagean have already brought that to light, we hope to make clear in this paper how the history is rewritten in each of the types of texts, and why Constantinople is emphasized in the Narratio.

In the first place, the contemporary chronicles. As we have seen in Chapter II, the chronicles of Symeon Logothetes and Theophanes Continuatus try to make it vague through editorial works that the acquisition of the Image was an achievement of Romanos I. But these editorial works have limitations; however eagerly the chroniclers want to emphasize the role of Constantine VII in the arrival ceremony, they cannot alter the original texts arbitrarily. They have no choice but to tell that Romanos I worshiped the Image first of all and to mention Constantine VII after Romanos's two sons.

In case of the secondary chronicles, editorial works can be a little more flexible. As mentioned above, the later chronicles are of no value as to historical facts of the arrival of the Image, because their passages are based on Symeon Logothetes or Theophanes Continuatus. Pseudo-Symeon, however, has a piece of original information independent of the contemporary chronicles: "When all of them looked at the holy Image of the Son of God, the sons of the emperor said they could not see but the face, while the son-in-law Constantine told that he could recognize the eyes and ears." The episode is a fiction or, to put it more precisely, a piece of dynastic propaganda about the Image's testimony of Constantine VII's legitimacy. The propaganda seemed to be carried out on a large scale, for we have a similar episode in the Vita of Paul the Younger of Latros. Pseudo-Symeon, a pro-Macedonian historian, inserts the fictitious episode into his chronicle. It is, as likely as not, due to his moral obligation as a historian that he does not put it in the proper place, the paragraph of the Image's arrival, but in that of the monk Sergios.

Let us leave the chronicles and turn to the religious documents. The Narratio, written by Constantine VII or someone close to him soon after the transfer of the Image, celebrates him by connecting him with the arrival of the Image, which the chroniclers cannot completely do. The author of the Narratio appropriates the acquisition of the Image, the achievement of Romanos I, for the legitimatization of Constantine VII by means of insertion of miracles and invocations into the original arrival record. In addition, he rewrites the history in order to allot an important part in the ceremony to Constantine VII. The three following examples will suffice to show his editorial methods.

(1) Insertion of a miraculous story. While the Image lodged at the monastery of Eusebios in the Optimaton theme, a possessed man saw it and
cried, "Thou, Constantine Porphyrogennetos, take your realm!", and was immediately healed. Needless to say, this episode, mentioned in the Synaxarium as well, asserts the legitimacy of Constantine VII; the man does not beg his salvation from God but from the emperor himself. We also should notice that the emperor is called Porphyrogennetos.

(2) Invocation to God. The Narratio is closed with a series of invocations to God, some of which are as follows: "Oh, Holy Image of the Image of unchanging Father! ... Save and guard our pious and merciful emperor who celebrates the memory of your arrival splendidly! Save and guard the man whom you raised to his father's and grandfather's throne! Protect his offspring through generations and let their rule last for ever!" It is Constantine VII who celebrates the memory of the arrival of the Image. Although he is not called Porphyrogennetos in this invocation, the author insists on the lineage of the Macedonian dynasty.

(3) Rewriting the history. The Narratio's author attempts to make the role of Romanos I vague and emphasize that of Constantine VII as much as possible without contradicting the chronicles. For example, while the chroniclers give an account of "the emperor (Romanos) ... worshiped the Image then and there", he changes the word of "emperor" into a plurality. There is no doubt about his intention of adding Constantine to the participants. On the other hand, he deliberately emphasizes Romanos's absence from the ceremony on 16 August and, what is more, calls him not Romanos but "the old man." Finally, he calls the participants in the procession "the young emperors" in order to suppress the fact that the Romanos's sons took precedence over Constantine VII.

Thus, the Narratio aims at directing the readers' attention to Constantine VII. On the other hand, as mentioned above, another main character in the Narratio is Constantinople itself. Compared with the chronicle of Symeon Logothetes, to be sure, the most striking feature of the Narratio is its constant reference to the City. The following are typical examples. (1) The title tells that the subject of the work is how the holy Image was translated from Edessa "to this most blessed queen of cities Constantinople." (2) In Chapter I the author insists that relics should be brought together into the City; the Image should be translated in order to protect it. (3) The miraculously healed man at the monastery of Eusebios also cries, "Constantinople, take the glory and joy!" (4) As for the arrival ceremony the Narratio alone mentions the Image's voyage around the City for its protection. (5) According to the Narratio other procedures of the arrival ceremony, such as the procession from the Golden Gate to St. Sophia and the dedication to the Pharos Chapel in the Palace, are also for
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the safety of Constantinople. (6) In the closing invocation to God we find a phrase "Keep the queen of the cities impregnable" as well as supplications for Constantine VII and his descendants.

The voyage is not mentioned in other historical sources; it is a fiction probably bearing the Russian attack in 941 in mind. Thus, according to the Narratio, the miraculous power of the Image is for protection of the Imperial City rather than healing. Then, what does its emphasis on Constantinople mean? Pseudo-Symeon gives us a helpful suggestion. As mentioned above, he inserts the episode that Constantine VII alone could recognize the features of Christ. On the other hand, he slightly rewrites Symeon Logothetes’s passage on the procession of the Image: the addition of the word "laos" to the participants. In this case "laos" means the populace of the City. If we take it into consideration that the mass of people stood by Constantine VII on the occasion of the coup d’etat in December 944, Pseudo-Symeon’s reference to the populace of the City must be also for the purpose of legitimizing Constantine VII. The same may be said, no doubt, of the repeated references to Constantinople in the Narratio. That brings us to the final point: Constantinople and the legitimacy of the Macedonian dynasty.

Basil I’s large-scale construction works in Constantinople were related to the legitimization of his throne; "New Constantine" should glorify the City named after Constantine the Great. Basil succeeded in both restoration of the City and legitimization of his throne; that is the reason why Theophanes Continuatus enumerates his construction works in great detail. This policy was succeeded by his heirs and it became a tradition of the Macedonian dynasty to regard Constantinople as a cardinal factor in its legitimacy. Detailed records concerning Constantinople, as P. Magdalino put it, are concentrated in the first half of the tenth century and many of them are related to the emperors, especially Constantine VII: Book of the City Prefect, On Ceremonies, Ekphrasis of Constantine the Rhodian, Typikon of the Great Church, and Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. Those works show us that the Macedonian dynasty was deeply interested in Constantinople.

It is a part of the traditional policy of the Macedonian dynasty that when the composer of the Narratio tries to divert the Image to the purpose of insisting on Constantine VII’s legitimacy, he also celebrates the relations between the Emperor and Constantinople. The Emperor embellishes Constantinople and, on the other hand, it glorifies him; in other words, the Emperor now became unified with Constantinople. The idea of this special relation of the Emperor and Constantinople, founded by the Macedonian dynasty, has the following
significance in Byzantine history. From the seventh through eighth centuries the provincial themes played the leading role in the imperial politics; the central government could control the themes only after the suppression of the rebellion of Thomas the Slav, the last large-scale provincial rebellion, in the 820s. It is under the Macedonian dynasty that centralization of the Empire culminated; the Emperor in Constantinople was the focus of the Empire not in name only but actually. We can interpret the Narratio's statement that all relics must be collected in Constantinople as a declaration of the special status of Constantinople from a religious point of view.

V. Aftermath

Although the arrival ceremony was put on record, once deposited in the Pharos Chapel, the Image faded into oblivion; Byzantine historians give it no more than a cursory mention. Leon the Deacon tells that Nikephoros II Phokas, entering Edessa in 968, acquired the holy Image of Christ on a tile. However, he introduces another version of the Abgar legend: the divine Image was supernaturally copied on a tile from the cloth, and Thaddaios, who brought the Christ's Image and letter to King Abgar, took back the original cloth. The important point to note is that we have no information on the Image translated to Constantinople in 944. Similarly, in the passage of the general George Maniakes's occupation of Edessa in 1032, Skylitzes does not mention the Image formerly preserved in the city but only the letter of Christ attached to it.

The main reason for the scarcity of records is that the relics in the Palace were not open to the public. Neither Leon the Deacon nor Skylitzes, however, can be ignorant of the translation of the Image. Obviously, there is another reason for their silence; we should recall the editorial method of Byzantine historians, "intentional silence." Direct mentions of the Image, to the best of our knowledge, are only two: the delivery to the rebellious aristocrat Constantine Dalassenos as surety in 1034 and the procession through the City praying for rain in 1037. We should not overlook that in either case the Image did not function: Dalassenos was soon arrested and it did not rain.

What does their disregard for, or cool attitude to, the Image mean? We have to pay attention to their political standpoints: in his History Leon speaks highly of Nikephoros II who, like Romanos I, usurped the throne of the Macedonian dynasty for a while; Skylitzes compiles the chronicle after the expiration of the dynasty. Although the Image was one of the major relics of Christendom, it was involved too closely in the emperor Constantine VII and the Macedonian dynasty for the later historians to treat it. This supposition can be
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applied to the silence of the later chroniclers on Constantine VII in the passages of the arrival ceremony.

There is one more reason we must not ignore. Almost at the same time as the arrival of the Image, the Icon of the Virgin Mary also came to fame as a palladium of Constantinople; the well-known episode of the Marian Icon during the Avar siege in 626 is not a historical fact but a fiction established in the later tenth century51. It is worth noting that John I Tzimiskes (969-976), another usurper, staged a triumphal entry into Constantinople with the Marian Icon52. To discuss the Marian Icon as a whole is, to our regret, beyond the scope of this paper.

As its relationship to the ruling emperor changed, the Image faded away from the imperial politics; accordingly references to it became rare. Even if historians stopped mentioning it, however, we cannot say that it was out of circulation. Weitzmann regards the Icon of King Abgar in the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai as a reproduction of the original icon made in a workshop controlled by Constantine VII53. His remarks suggest that faith in the Image was popular among the people. The fuller study of its circulation also lies outside of this paper.

Notes

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4 Leon Grammatikos, Chronographia, 325-326. Variae lectiones of Theophanes Continuatus appear in square brackets: Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia, 432. My supplements are given parenthetically; we should notice that “the emperor” means Romanos I in the context of Symeon Logothetes.


6 Yahya-ibn-Sa’id, 730-732. Square brackets are V. R. Rozen’s Russian translation: V. R. Rozen, op. cit., 396. Rozen is fully justified in translating “the emperor Romanos”; see note 4 above.

7 Michel le Syrian, vol. 3, 123.


9 Patlagean, op. cit., 26-28; Baliska-Witakowska, op. cit., 112.

10 Patlagean, op. cit., 24-25.

11 Narratio, col.449-452.

12 Synaxarium, col.900-901.

13 Patlagean, op. cit., 33-35.

14 Narratio, col.444-445; Synaxarium, col.899. At the same time, the Narratio insists that the people of Edessa rejected Romanos’s demand.


20 Leon Grammatikos, Chronographia, 325 and Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia, 431-432 (the accident in the Hippodrome); Leon Grammatikos, Chronographia, 326-327 and Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia, 433 (the Siamese twins).


22 The intitulatio of the chrysobull dated August 934, though a copy of the 12th century, shows that Romanos did not change the order of the co-emperors after Christopher’s death: “Romanos (I), Constantine (VII), Stephen and Constantine.” Cf. Actes de Protaton (= Archiv de
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l’Athos, 7), ed., D. Papachryssanthou, Paris, 1975, no.3; The Russian Primary Chronicle, annus mundi 6453. We have, however, no definite information that Constantine VII was nominated the heir to the throne.

23 Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia, 429-430. Dölger presumes that some of the charitable works were undertaken in ca. 928: F. Dölger, P. Wirth, Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches, vol.1., München-Berlin, 1924-., no.617-619.

24 Zonaras, Epitomae Historiarum, 478-479.
25 Narratio, col.449; Synaxarium, col.900.
26 Leon Grammatikos, Chronographia, 324-325; as for the complete text of Symeon Logothetes, see Georgios Continuatus, Chronographia, ed., I. Bekker, Bonn, 1838, 916-917.

27 Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia, 426 and 429.


30 Symeon Magister, Chronographia, 752.

33 Leon Grammatikos, Chronographia, 330; Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia, 440-441.

36 Symeon Magister, Chronographia, 750; Runciman, as well as Cameron, mistakes the source of this episode as the chronicle of Theophanes Continuatus. On the editorial work of Pseudo-Symeon, see Inoue, op. cit., 37 and 61.


38 Narratio, col. 448-449; the Synaxarium also mentions the episode: Synaxarium, col. 900.
39 Narratio, col. 452-453.
40 Ibid., col. 449: “The emperors went forward and, prostrating, kissed it respectfully”; “The old man was left at home on account of illness”; “The priests and the young emperors went down to the sea with psalms and hymns. . . .”
41 Ibid., col. 423-424.
42 Ibid., 448.
43 Ibid., 453.
44 Symeon Magister, Chronographia, 749.

According to Skylitzes, it is in Hierapolis that Nikephoros II found the image on a tile: Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, 271.


On the oath to Dalassenos, *ibid.*, 394; on the praying for rain, *ibid.*, 400.


Weitzmann, op. cit., 184.