The idea of mimesis in art theory has been neglected by Byzantine scholars. Reasons for this may lie in the fact that the understanding of the term in Byzantium was very complex and that it changed over time. In the Early Byzantine period and the so-called Macedonian Renaissance, a tendency to use topos, or topographical modelling, which was inherited from ancient Greco-Roman art, can still be observed. Starting in the late tenth century they give way to a more linear style. Simultaneously, a change in the understanding of mimesis in theological writings can also be observed. The aim of this paper is to introduce the problem of a mimetic approach in visual arts as a phenomenon in Byzantine culture.

Keywords: mimesis, Byzantine aesthetics, veracity, simulacrum, affinity, theory of images

The concept of mimesis as a phenomenon in Byzantine civilization has so far been mainly investigated by literary historians. They commonly use the term to refer to such practices as the repetition of style and even content rather than using it in its antique meaning, which is related to the method of depicting nature. In turn, art historians are either focused on the relationship between devotional practices, liturgy and ceremonies, or on Christian motifs depicted in art as a catalyst in ritualised re-enactment of biblical events and other imitative actions, or even as a support in contemplation.

The term was introduced more than twenty years ago by Gary Vikan in his study on pilgrimage art. Vikan demonstrated that influences operated in both directions: while ceremonies such as the Triumphal Entry were modelled after iconography, the imagery on the works of pilgrimage art, such as ampullae, tokens and jewellery, diverges from the Gospel account of the event in favour of a setting known to travellers from their own experience and popular beliefs. His observations were accepted by Glenn Peers and they inspired Elisabeth S. Bolman to analyse the frescoes on the walls of a monk’s cell at the Apa Jeremiah monastery in Saqqara (sixth to eighth century); according to her, they were meant to assist hermits in the process of assimilation to Christ. Monumental paintings were discussed by William Tronzo, who noticed a mimetic correspondence between rituals celebrated within monastic churches (washing of the feet by the abbot, Baptism and the Holy Communion) and scenes chosen to decorate them in the katholika of Hosios Loukas, Nea Moni and Daphni, as well as with the function of the proskynetaria icons. It led him to the conclusion that liturgical ceremonies followed in form the images on the walls that surrounded the space where they took place. In turn, in his

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1 Cf. e.g. H. Hunger, On the Imitation (Mimesis) of Antiquity in Byzantine Literature, DOP 23–24 (1969–1970) 15–38; I. Nilsson, Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure. Narrative Technique and Mimesis in Eumathios Makrembolites’ “Hysmine & Hysminias”, Uppsala 2001; L. Pernot, Mimesis, rhétorique et politique dans l’essai de Théodore Mécithète sur Démosthène et Aelius Aristide, in: Spazio e forme nella letteratura bizantina, ed. A. Garzzy, Napoli 2006, 107–119. Cf. also materials of the philological conference held in Vienna in 2008: Imitatio, aemulatio, variatio: Akten des internationalen wissenschaftlichen Symposions zur byzantinischen Sprache und Literatur (Wien, 22.–25. Oktober 2008), eds. A. Rhoby, E. Schiffer, Wien 2010 (esp. cf. D. R. Reinsch, Der Autor ist tot – es lebe der Leser Zur Neubewertung der imitatio in der byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung, 23–32, for definitions).

2 For the ancient idea of mimesis as the reflection of reality cf., e.g., Plato’s Republic, books III and esp. X (imitations as copies of Platonic ideas): Plato, Republic, I–II, ed. Chr. Emlen-Jones, W. Preddy, Cambridge 2013, 1, 248, 423 sqq; in the context of art, cf. Pliny the Elder, Natural History, XXXV 65–67; cf. Pliny, Natural History, transl. H. Rackham, Cambridge – London 1984, 208–310) on the competitions between Zeuxis and Parrhasius (and ibid. § 68–72, 310–312 on the contour line style of the latter). For the different levels of mimesis in Plato’s writings

3 Cf. e.g. S. Juan-Navarro, The Power of “Mimesis” and the “Mimesis” of Power: Platos Concept of Imitation and His Judgment on the Value of Poetry and the Arts, Studium: Revista de humanidades 13 (2007) 97–108.

4 G. Vikan, Pilgrims in Magi’s Clothing: The Impact of Mimesis on Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art, in: The Blessings of Pilgrimage, ed. R. Ousterhout, Urbana – Chicago 1990, 97–107.

5 E. S. Bolman, Mimesis, Metamorphosis and Representation in Coptic Monastic Cells, Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists 35 (1998) 65–77, pls. 1–7; eadem, Joining the Community of Saints: Monastic Paintings and Ascetic Practice in Early Christian Egypt, in: Shaping Community. The Art and Archaeology of Monasticism, ed. S. McNally, (2001) 41–56; eadem, Depicting the Kingdom of Heaven: Paintings and Monastic Practice in Early Byzantine Egypt, in: Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300–700, ed. R. S. Bagnall, Cambridge, 2007, 408–433 (esp. 414–424).

6 W. Tronzo, Mimesis in Byzantium: Notes toward a History of the Function of the Image, RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics

Classicisation or representation?

Mimesis in Byzantine pictorial arts as a derivative of style

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commentary to the facsimile edition of the Theodore Psalter (Brit. Add. 19352, 1066 A.D.), Charles Barber explained the presence of the image of Theodore the Studite on page 192r in the scene of the investiture of the abbot's stick as a sign of mimetic economy that demanded of subsequent abbots to imitate their great predecessor. Finally, Henry Maguire recently used the term mimesis in his study on literary metaphors taken from the natural world in artistic representations of the Holy Virgin.

There is the impression that the authors of the above-mentioned studies avoid a verbatim definition of mimesis as a stylistic feature in favour of its metaphorical understanding. The term is assumed to designate some mimesis as an immanent feature of an object of art, i.e. as being an element of its style. Such an attitude surprises, especially if we keep in mind that the antique understanding of the word was closely tied to the representation of the object of art, related rather to worshipers’ reception than to the style of a picture. To the best of our knowledge, no attempt has been made to explore mimetic values as an immanent feature of an object of art, i.e. as being an element of its style.

Christian authors did not present a coherent attitude towards the veracity of an image. In his polemics with the Gnostics (Contra haereses II 7,2), Irenaeus of Lyon still referred to the category of similarity in the sense established in antique considerations on aesthetics, though he further noted that it was impossible to depict supernatural beings that had no form by means of figures (II 7,7). A greater degree of skepticism was expressed by Lactantius (Divinarum institutionum Liber II 'De Origen Erroris' 2, 6–10), who deemed depictions justified only in the case when the original object was not present; accordingly, in the case of omnipresent God there is no need for them. A less firm attitude can be observed in Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite’s Neo-Platonist work The Celestial Hierarchy (I 3). According to him the spiritual hierarchy can be imitated by means of material art because this is the only way acceptable for our senses.

Theodore the Studite referred to this opinion in his letter to his uncle, abbot Plato. In his writings, especially those addressed to iconoclasts, he adopted the Iconophile distinction between the essence of being (οὐσία) and its external manifestation (ὑπόσωσις). Due to this, he was able to eliminate the factor of any accidental lack of resemblance, caused by artists’ insufficient skills. In the third chapter of his anti-iconoclast treatise he wrote: Even if we grant that the image does not have the same form as the prototype because of insufficient artistic skill, still our argument would not be invalid. For veneration is given to the image not insofar as it falls short of similarity, but insofar of it resembles its prototype.15

This theoretical shift towards the imitative function of art corresponded to a change in methods used by Christian artists – i.e. the Pictographic Style observed by Ernst H. Gombrich in the early art of the Christian period. Both phenomena seem to be rooted in the belief...
that the imitation of supernatural reality is impossible and that only conventional symbols which bear no pretense of resemblance are valid. However, even symbolic art focused on the transmission of meaning had to rely on visual forms familiar to the audience. The issue was well encapsulated by Hans Belting in his discussion on idealism and realism in late antique funerary portraits: *The study of nature by necessity involves the question of how nature is understood in a given age.* Keeping in mind his words, we will venture into an analysis of the degree and character of imitation and representation in Byzantine art.

A representation of the natural world upon a flat, limited surface of a picture is always a result of a compromise between conventionality and imitation. It is equally determined by the physiology of the human body and external limitations. Due to stereoscopic vision, which allows us to estimate the distance and depth of objects, a picture is perceived as flat and motionless. Limited means of expression, such as line and colour, are available to artists when they want to suggest three-dimensional space. In turn, our eyes' structure, similar to lenses, causes our gaze to focus on one vision plane, while others remain blurred as part of peripheral vision. Due to this fact, a picture that renders sharply all objects, including those that belong to the background, is commonly perceived as artificial. This problem makes us aware that a genuine pictorial effect cannot be achieved by merely reproducing the shapes of individual details. In imitating space, painters have to keep in mind that forms, light and shadow should be used in a way that is accepted and properly understood by viewers. As Ernst Gombrich has shown in his studies on illusion in art, in different periods, the degree of resemblance and conventional forms varied; it was determined by the time, place and artistic milieu. If we agree that artistic convention, which facilitates visual transmission to the beholder, is an important element of style, then we also have to acknowledge the attitude towards the faithful depiction of nature as its component.

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While looking for mimetic tendencies in Byzantine figurative art, at the very outset it seems logical to turn attention towards scientific illustrations of nature, because of their documentary character, which expectedly resulted in the veracity of depictions. As a civilization which heavily relied on normative manuals, Byzantium handed down in the veracity of depictions. As a civilization which heavily relied on normative manuals, Byzantium handed down a significant number of illustrated physical treatises. One of the most famous among them is the luxurious edition of Pedanius Dioscurides’ *De materia medica* (Περὶ ὕλης ἰατριῆς), probably made in the imperial scriptorium at Constantinople around 512; it is now held by the National Library in Vienna (Cod. med. gr. 1). Ac-

Fig. 1. Dioscurides, *De materia medica*, Cod. Vindob. med. gr. 1, Constantinople, ca. 512, fol. 235v, garlic (alium magicum) (after Mazal)

According to the inscription in the inner frame of the dedicatory miniature (fol. 6v), the book was commissioned by the inhabitants of the suburb Honoratia and presented to the *patrikia* Juliana Anicia as a gift for the founding of a church in this district. The main part of the codex consists of Dioscurides’ herbal arranged in the alphabetical order, but at the end, minor supplementary texts were also added: anonymous *Carmen de viribus herbarum* (fols. 388–392), paraphrases of Nicander of Colophon’s texts on snakes, insects and remedies to their venoms: *Therakia* (393r–437v) and the *Alexipharmaca* (438r–459v), both written by Euternios; as well as anonymous paraphrases

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17 H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, Chicago 1994, 98–101, esp. 99.
18 E. Gombrich, *Illusion and Art*, in: *The Essential Gombrich*, 139–160 (= *Illusion in Nature and Art*, eds. R. L. Gregory, E. H. Gombrich, London 1973, 199–207, 225–243), here 152–153.
19 E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, Washington 1977, 3–78.
20 Three facsimile editions of the codex have been published so far: *Dioscurides: Codex Aniciæ Iulianæ picturis illustratus*, nunc *Vindobonensis Med. Graecus I*, ed. M. I. De Karabacek, intr. A. De Pre-
21 The presence of the inscription was noted by A. von Premerstein, *Anicia Juliana im Wiener Diskorides-Kodex*, Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses 24 (1903) 105–124, here 111–113 (von Premerstein also deciphered the text). Cf. also L. Brubaker, *The Vienna Dioskorides and Anicia Juliana*, in: *Byzantine Garden Culture*, eds. A. Littlewood, H. Maguire, J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, Washington 2002, 211–213.
22 Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. De Boor, Leipzig 1885, vol. 1, 157 (reprint Hildesheim – New York 1980) mentions, under the year 512/513, that Juliana founded a church dedicated to the Theotokos in the suburb of Honoratia.
23 *Carminis de viribus herbarum fragmentum*, in: *Die griechischen Dichterfragmente der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. E. Heitsch, vol. 2, Göttingen 1964, 23–38.
of Oppian’s poem on fishing – Halieuktika (fols. 460r–473r) and Dionysius’ Ornithiaka (474r–485v).24

The text De materia medica is accompanied by 383 mostly full-page miniatures of various plants. Generally, they are depicted minutely with proper proportions, colours and accurate modelling based on tonal contrasts. Even an untrained botanist can easily recognise the most popular plants without reading the accompanying texts. However, the question arises whether such a high degree of veracity is a result of sharp observation and the technical skills of sixth-century artists or rather a consequence of the simple reproduction of earlier, antique models. Although the Vienna Dioscurides is the earliest surviving example of this type of book, scholars have no doubt that it followed an earlier tradition of illuminated herbals. Already Charles Singer pointed out that miniatures in Julian’s Anicia codex had been copied from much earlier originals, probably an item of Rhizotomicon attributed to Crateus of Pergamon (121–163 BC)25.

The existence of earlier illustrated texts about plants is confirmed by surviving fragments of papyri with drawings (though they are rather sketchy in nature)26 and references by Pliny and Cassiodorus27. Evidence that earlier patterns were indeed used is also provided by the Vienna Dioscurides. The original text of the treatise was supplemented by notes from the writings of other ancient authors: those of Crateus and Galen. On several pages (fols. 25v, 34r), they are accompanied with smaller miniatures that present variants different from the main illustration, and they were undoubtedly borrowed from the same codices from which the quotations were taken.28 In turn, some full-page miniatures – e.g. papilionaceous flowers on the stems of the garlic plant (moly) on fol. 235v – show unnatural details, probably introduced by a copyist who misinterpreted the model drawing (Fig. 1). Various ap-

24 The text of Dioscurides (on the basis of codex Par. gr. 2179) was published in: Pedani Dioscuridis Anazarbei De materia medica ed. M. Wellmann, vols. 1–3, Berlin 1906–1914 (reprint: Berlin 1958). Cf. also the translations: J. Riddle, Dioscurides on Pharmacy and Medicine, Austin 1985; Pedanius Dioscorides of Anazarbus. De materia medica, transl. L. Y. Beck, Hildesheim – Zürich – New York 2005. Cf. also J. M. Riddle, Byzantine Commentaries on Dioscurides, DOP 38 (1984) 95–102.

25 Ch. Singer, The Herbal in Antiquity and Its Transmission to Later Ages, The Journal of Hellenic Studies 47 (1927) 1–52, here 5–7. His opinion was generally accepted by later scholars: P. Buberl, Die byzantinischen Handschriften. 1, 11–12; idem, Die antiken Grundlagen der Miniaturen des Wiener Dioskuridescodes, Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts 51 (1936) 114–136; Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977, through February 12, 1978, ed. K. Wetzmann, New York 1979, 205–206 (No. 179); R. Raphael, W. Blunt, The Illustrated Herbal, New York 1979, 17; L. Brubaker, The Vienna Dioscorides and Anicia Juliana, 189–214.

26 E.g. the fragment with miniatures of comfrey (Symphytum officinale) and a kind of mullein (Verbascum sp.) on the so-called Johnson papyrus (ca. 400 AD) discovered in Antinoe (Egypt) in 1904 and presently held by the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine (P. 29111), cf. J. C. Anderson, The Fragment of an Herbal, in: Age of Spirituality, 205 (No. 178); Raphael, Blunt, The Illustrated Herbal, 20.

27 Pliny. Natural history, (XXV 4) ed. & transl. W. H. S. Jones, vol. 7, London 1956, 141; Cassiodori senatoris. Institutiones, ed. R. A. B. Mynors, Oxford 1937, vol. 1, I XXXI 2; translation: Cassiodorus Senator. An Introduction to Divine and Human Readings, transl. L. W. Jones, New York 1969, 136.

28 Brubaker, The Vienna Dioscorides and Anicia Juliana, 191–194, figs. 6–8.

Fig. 2. Euteknios, Paraphrase of Nikander’s Theriakia. Cod. Vindeob. med. gr. 1, Constantinople, ca. 512, fol. 411, various kinds of reptiles: gecko (Tarentola mauritanica), Balkan Whip Snake (Hierophis gemonensis), one of Python molurus species and unidentified: elopos, tyffinos, libyos and myotheros (after Mazal)

approaches to realistic details are also evident in subsequent parts of the codex. Carmen de viribus herbarium is illustrated with a single representation of a coral accompanied by an antique personification of the sea. The miniatures that accompany the Theriaka paraphrase are small, schematic and also repetitive. Their details often fail to provide sufficient information for the identification of particular species (Fig. 2). On the other hand, the prose paraphrase of Dionysius' poem is illustrated with twenty-four miniatures of various birds that are so detailed (though rather small) as to allow accurate identification. The two remaining paraphrases have no illustrations at all, but in the text of the Alexipharmaka, the scribe left nine blank spaces, undoubtedly intended for miniatures. The reasons for not filling them remain unknown, but a possible explanation could be that the copyist was unable to find a proper manuscript to serve as a model. These differences indicate that artists, while working on the Vienna Dioscurides, used several codices with illustrations of varying artistic quality and factual accuracy of miniatures.

Therefore, the miniatures of Anicia’s codex cannot be treated as an example of straightforward artistic imitation of nature, but rather as the repetition of ancient pictorial formuale. This observation may be generally extended to other Byzantine illuminated herbals executed in the following centuries. Over time, the style of drawings only slightly changed. An example of fairly high fidelity to an ancient prototype is the early seventh-century Naples Dioscurides (Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale; Ms. Suppl. gr. 29 An attempt to identify various kinds of reptiles depicted in the Vienna manuscript is presented in Z. Kádár, Survivals of Greek Zoological Illuminations in Byzantine Manuscripts, Budapest 1978, 45–46.

30 Brubaker, The Vienna Dioscorides and Anicia Juliana, 200–201.
occur only under the influence of Iconoclasm in manuscripts from the eighth and tenth centuries (Paris Dioscurides, Par. gr. 2179, late eighth century; Morgan Dioscurides, New York, Pierpont Morgan MS M 652, done between 925 and 975).33

The antique light-and-shadow modelling recurs in miniatures in Nicander’s Theriaka and Alexipharmaka (Par. suppl. gr. 247), but its presence cannot be associated with the accuracy of transmission. The Codex was made in Constantinople in the second half of the tenth century. Artists depicted human bodies in a manner that resembles antique reliefs, with muscles suggestively outlined with shadows and accurate proportions, but animals and especially plants were rendered conventionally and without care for details despite the informative function of the book. They are hardly recognizable and can be identified only due to the accompanying inscriptions.34 A similar approach to rendering the human body can also be observed in slightly earlier illuminations in the codex which contains a collection of surgical manuals of Apollonius of Kiton (the commentary to the Hippocratic treatise On Dislocations: Περὶ ἀπείθουν πραγματεῖα) and Soranus of Ephesus’ On Bandages (Περὶ ἐπιδέσμων).35 The manuscript was made for the Constantinopolitan physician Niketas around 900 and until the fourteenth century it remained in the local hospital near the church of Forty Martyrs.36 Scholars generally agree that miniatures depicting various medical treatments, being meant for educational purposes, repeated earlier formulae unknown to us.37 However, in the modelling of figures and in the decorative arcades framing the compositions (Fig. 4), the trained eye of an art historian can discern the influence of what is known in Byzantine culture as the Macedonian Renaissance.38 This revival of ancient traditions influenced both

31 Until the early eighteenth century, the manuscript was held by the Augustine monastery of San Giovanni a Carbonara in Naples. In 1718, the Habsburgs plundered it for the Viennese Court Library. After the conclusion of the peace negotiations after World War I, in 1919, the codex was returned to the Biblioteca Nazionale in Naples. Its date and origin were hypothetically established on the basis of a palaeographic analysis solely (presence of the manuscola biblica typical for the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries and for Western manuscripts) by G. Cavallo, Introduzione, in: Dioscurides Neapolitanus. Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, ms. ex Vindob. gr. 1, Commentario, eds. C. Bertelli, S. Lilla, G. Oronfino, Graz – Rome 1992, 5–6. This opinion was accepted by other scholars: A. Touwaide, Le traité de matière médicale de Dioscoride en Italie depuis la fin de l’empire romain jusqu’aux débuts de l’école de Salerne. Essai de synthèse, PACT – Journal of the European Study Group on Physical, Chemical, Biological and Mathematical Techniques Applied to Archaeology 18 (1992) 275–305, here 283; M. Collins, Medieval Herbals. The Illustrative Traditions, London 2000, 52.

32 S. Lilla, G. Cavallo, G. Orfino, C. Bertelli, Dioscurides, Codex Neapolitanus. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, Ms. ex vind. gr. 1. Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe in Originaformat, Graz – Rome 1988; M. Giancaspro, G. Cavallo, A. Touwaide, Dioscurides De materia medica. Codex Neapolitanus græcus 1 of the National Library of Naples. Facsimile Reproduction of the Manuscript with Introductory Texts, Athens 1999; M. Anichini, Il Dioscoride di Napoli, in: Atti dell’Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche 9 (1956) No. 3–4, 77–104; R. Bianchi Bandinelli, Il Dioscoride Napoletano, Parola del Passato 7 (1956) 48–51; Collins, Medieval Herbals, 51–58; Age of Spirituality, 206–207 (No. 180).

33 Pedani Dioscuridis Anazarbei. De Materia Medica Libri VII. Accedunt Nicandri et Eustenii, Opuscula Medica. Codex Constantinopolitanus saeculo X extratus et picturis illustratus, olim Manuelis Eugenici, Caroli Rinucini Florentini, homae Philippis Angh, nunc inter Thesauros Pierpont Morgan Bibliothecae asseratus, vol. 1–2, Paris 1935; K. Weitzmann, Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination, Chicago 1971, 26, 35–36, 138–139, figs. 9, 15, 114–115; A. van Buren, De Materia Medica of Dioscurides, in: Illustrated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections: An Exhibition in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann, Princeton 1973, 66–69 (with additional bibliography on pp. 66–67); Age of Spirituality, 207–208 (No. 181).

34 Facsimile reprint Theriaku y Alexipharmaka de Nicandro, eds. A. Touwaide, Ch. Förstel, G. Adanoff, Barcelona 1999 (esp. cf. Christian Förstel, Estudio codicológico, 15–58); Weitzmann, Studies, 141–143, figs. 117–119.

35 La Collezione chirurgica di Niceta (Firenze, Biblioteca Medica Laurenziana, Plut. 74.7). Tradizione medica antica a Bisanzio, ed. M. Bernabò et al., Roma 2010; cf. also Weitzmann, Studies, 33–34, 140–141, fig. 116.

36 Codex Niketas was held by the library of the Orphanage of Alexius Komnenos on the Acropolis of Constantinople, and later by that of the Hospital of the Forty Martyrs. Between 1492 and 1495, the Greek scholar John Laskaris purchased it in Crete for Lorenzo de’ Medici. By 1530 it belonged to Giulio de’ Medici (Pope Clement VII), who loaned it back to Laskaris for a proposed and never completed edition of the medical and surgical texts contained in the manuscript. The original Codex Niketas was later acquired by Cardinal Nicolas Rudolfi, and is now held by the Laurentian Library, Florence (Codex LXXIV, 7), see V. Nutton, Nicetas Codex, in: The Classical Tradition, ed. A. Grafton et al., Harvard 2010, 638.

37 S. Lazaris, A propos du Nicandre de Paris (suppl. gr. 247): son illustration et ses modèles, Scriptorium 59.2 (2005) 221–227.

38 The term was first used to refer to the classicization of style by K. Weitzmann, The Joshua Roll: A Work of the Macedonian Renaiss.
literature and figural art (though to a lesser degree) in the second half of the ninth century and lasted for only one hundred years.

A more dramatic change in the approach to representing nature can be observed in the following century, as exemplified by the Athonite Dioscurides Codex from the Great Lavra monastery (Ω 75). The manuscript, initially dated to the eleventh or perhaps twelfth century, was finally identified solely on the ground of a paleographic analysis as a work from the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries. While the text remains related to the Morgan Herbal, its illustrations differ significantly.

Plants are usually lined up in a row at the top of the page in groups of two or three. The painter captured only their essential features without paying attention to shadows and details (Fig. 5). The degree of convention is so high that identification is usually possible only due to inscriptions and the accompanying text. On the contrary, human figures were painted quite effectively and despite a pronounced linearity, light and shadow were used to suggest their volume.

The anticlassical tendencies in eleventh-century painting also determined the artistic expression of another illustrated treatise on the natural world, namely the poem On Hunting (Cynegetica), written by Pseudo-Oppian and dedicated to Emperor Caracalla. Codex Marcianus gr. Z 479, produced in a Constantinopolitan scriptorium around 1060, is the oldest and the only known illustrated Byzantine copy of the text. Nevertheless, the majority of modern scholars agree that the miniatures generally follow a lost antique model, arguing, on the one hand, that the original must have had illuminations because the text would not have been fully understandable without them, and, on the other, that minor discrepancies in narration indicate that the artists relied on an earlier set of images. While the problem of earlier sources will probably remain

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41 Facsimile edition: Tratado de caza y pesca, Oppiano Cynegetica, Valencia 1999; colour illustrations were also published by I. Spatarakis, The Illustrations of the Cynegetica in Venice: Codex Marcianus Graecus Z 139, Leiden 2004. There are two later, post-Byzantine copies of the Venetian manuscript: Par. gr. 2736, written probably in Italy in the mid-sixteenth century, and Par. gr. 2737, written by Angelo Abergikios in Paris between 1535 and 1569.

42 A. W. Byvanck, De Geïllustreerde handschriften van Oppians' Cynegetica, Mededelingen van het Nederlands Historisch Instituut te Rome 5 (1925) 34–64; M. Bonfiori, Le rappresentazioni di caccia del codice Marciano greco 479 – Oppiano, Felix Ravenna 71 (1956) 31–49 (reprint: eadem, Bisanzio e l’Italia, Scritti di archeologia e storia dell’arte, eds. A. G. Guidobaldi, A. Iacobini, Roma 2002, 53–66), here 31, 47–48; K. Weitzmann, Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art, Princeton 1984, 93–96.

43 Spatarakis, The Illustrations of the Cynegetica in Venice, 206–212. It is noteworthy that only I. Furlan, La ilustración de los Cynegetica, in: Tratado de caza y pesca, Oppiano Cynegetica, Valencia 1999, 42–52, et passim, claims that the illustrative cycle was invented for this particular manuscript.
unsolved, it should be noted that the images of nature are not faithful. Anatomic details are shown conventionally and they conform to an overall linearity of style. In turn, the linear style did not affect very precisely depicted details of dress, both male (hunters and soldiers) and female (e.g. Medea’s hat and the dress on fol. 47r, Fig. 6). Both phenomena are in line with the change in eleventh-century painting, already noted by Christopher Walter, who has drawn attention not only to the simplification of modelling but also to the enrichment of iconography, which is not irrelevant for our further discussion.

This mechanism can also be observed in later illuminated manuscripts that contain physical writings: the lost manuscript of Physiologus (Smyrna, Theological School, B 8; eleventh–twelfth centuries) and Hippiatria

44 We omit cases, in which the limited knowledge of an artist caused mistakes; e.g. a hippopotamus depicted as a horse (verbatim ἱππόποταμος = river horse) in Christian Topography (XI 9) by Cosmas Indicopleutes, (Cod. Laur. Plat IX 28, fol. 268v; Cod. sinai. gr. 1186, fol. 202r), see Cosmas Indikopleustes. Topographie chrétienne, ed. W. Wolska-Conus, Paris 1973, 333, figs. 4–5.

45 Spatharakis, The Illustrations of the Cynegetica in Venice, 193–205, fig. 99.

46 Ch. Walter, Expressionism and Hellenism, 286: “For those who concentrate their attention on the survival of Hellenism, the answer is clear. The Macedonian ‘Renaissance’ was a ‘peak’, while the eleventh century was a ‘valley’, a ‘period of estrangement from the classical tradition’. Yet such a proposition is reversible. In terms of iconographical development, the eleventh century was a ‘peak’ and the Macedonian ‘Renaissance’ a ‘valley’.”

47 The codex was destroyed in the Smyrna fire of 1922; however, it had been published before destruction, see J. Strzygowski, Der Bilderkreis des griechischen Physiologus, des Kosmas Indikopleustes und Oktateuch: nach Handschriften der Bibliothek zu Smyrna, Leipzig 1899, 71–110, figs. 1–XXIII, idem, Der illustrierte Physiologus in Smyrna, BZ 10 (1901) 218–222; O. Demus, Bemerkungen zum Physiologus von (Leidensis Vossianus graecus Q 50; mid-fourteenth century and Par. gr. 2244; late fourteenth century). The last example is especially noteworthy because it still follows the mid-Byzantine pattern despite its late date.

It seems that contemporaries were aware of this change. For example, Michael Psellos wrote about it in one of his homilies: That painting proceeds exactly according to the law of art is clear from its use of color, as a wise man has observed. But what is admirable here lies rather in the fact that the icon is full of life and nowhere lacks movement. If one lets one’s eyes rest successively on different parts, one can see them change, grow larger, and move […] Thus the dead man seems to be alive, yet one sees precisely what is dead – the body. To be sure, the elements of such painting can also be found in artless icons, namely […] the impression of life in the color of the blood and the impression of death in the pallor. But there they are imitated from models and copies of copies. Here, however, the impression does not arise from the composition of colors, but from the nearness of living nature, which is not moved by art. One can hardly imagine how the icon could come into being in such a form. As its beauty resides no less in the contrast than in the harmony of the parts and limbs, so the painting shines with such beauty, although it is not a phenomenon of nature.

Smyrna, JÖB 25 (1976) 235–257; figs. 1–20; Spatharakis, The Illustrations of the Cynegetica in Venice, figs. 229, 231–234.

48 A. McCabe, A Byzantine Encyclopaedia of Horse Medicine: The Sources, Compilation, and Transmission of the Hippiatria, Oxford 2007, 32–34, 45–7, figs. 14–19. For the original text see Corpus hippiaticorum Graecorum, eds. E. Oder, C. Hoppe, Leipzig 1924, vol. 1: Hippiatria Berolinensis; 1927, vol. 2: Hippiatria Parisina, Hippiatria Cantabrigiensia, Additamenta Londonensis, Excerpta Lugunensis (reprint Stuttgart 1971).

Fig. 6. Pseudo-Oppian, Cynegetica: Codex marcianus gr. Z 479, Constantinople, ca. 1060, fol. 47r, Medea and scenes of Jealousy (after Spatharakis)
Although this living painting is built up from the skilful composition of such parts, the appearance of life goes beyond such means. The icon lives on the one hand from the fact that it imitates [life] from art, and on the other in that it does not merely copy it but reproduces it in spirit through the influence of grace. What use now is Plato’s comparison of images with shadows? I would not compare this icon with any other painting, even if one were to discover images in the ancient manner or even its archetype. I should no more wish to do so if [painters] of our time or of the recent past depicted such apparitions anew. This icon, I say, resembles exactly the appearance of Christ when he stood facing Pilate and was condemned by him at the desire of the clamoring people [with the words: Ecce homo]. Thus he is shown in a very similar manner in the icon. I shall not, therefore, call into doubt that a higher power guided him.59 While reading these words one should remember that Psellos was one of the most eminent connoisseurs of his epoch, as well as a collector of icons, which – as he personally admitted – he had stolen from various churches and sanctuaries.60

As it has been demonstrated, depictions of the natural world conformed to the general rules of style of an epoch. Yet, due to the unchangeable character of the models, their analysis could hardly reveal whether Byzantine artists worked independently in reproducing external realia, or rather imitated earlier sources. Therefore, additional information may be provided by images of human-made artefacts that were changing with time. They allow us to identify cases when tendencies towards representation of the visible world overpowered the imitative Hellenism in style. In order to render new shapes, it was not necessary to resort to light-and-shadow modelling which results in an illusion of space and depth. A simple contour suggests the shape was less ambiguous than attempts to create an illusion,54 and because of that it was suitable to describe an object. In that sense, in some moments of its history, Byzantine art seemed to be closer to the philosophy of Egyptian hieroglyphs, which were meant to represent and not to imitate. In such a system, an illusionistic resemblance to the model was sacrificed at the altar of clarity and explicitness.

On the other hand, the term mimēsis, understood already by Vikan as the repetition of motifs known to the artist from an environment contemporary to himself, seems to be more accurate in the case of Byzantine art, which focused on the function of a representation rather than on illusionistic imitation. This statement leads us to the conclusion that in order to offer a proper answer to the question formulated in the title of this paper, we should not ask how, but rather what Byzantine artists depicted. To illustrate the phenomenon, we will cite two examples related to military equipment, though it should be borne in mind that the broad area covered by the study of the history of Byzantine dress, including monks’ robes,62 ecclesiastical garbs63 and female dress,64 offers numerous examples.

The first example is the stirrup as a novel motif in Byzantine iconography. This device for horsemen was unknown in antiquity and due to this fact the riding technique was different from that commonly used in the Middle Ages. The Romans used the so-called horned saddle, and they embraced the horse’s neck with their knees. This way of mounting a horse can be seen on numerous antique artefacts, where the position of riders’ legs clearly indicates the lack of stirrups. Stiff metal hoops fastened to leather straps were introduced as late as the fifth century AD in the North Korean kingdom and during the following one hundred years they were transferred by steppe tribes to Europe.65 The earliest examples in Europe appear in

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49 P. Gauthier, Un discours inédit de Michel Psellus sur la Crucifixion. Revue des études byzantines 49 (1991) 5–66, here 65–66 [chapter 63]. Translation after H. Belting, Likeness and Presence: 299–323, 368: ‘The latter are the prototypes, the true antecedents. I shall not, therefore, call into doubt that a higher power guided him.59 While reading these words one should remember that Psellos was one of the most eminent connoisseurs of his epoch, as well as a collector of icons, which – as he personally admitted – he had stolen from various churches and sanctuaries.60

50 Michaelis Pselli, Scripta minora a magno man perart adiut inedita, ed. E. Kurz, F. Dred, vol. 2, Milano 1941, 154 (No. 129).

51 About pairs of oppositions that constitute an expression of style see H. Wolfflin, Principles of Art History. The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art, New York 1932 (and later reprints), 18–35.

52 K. C. Innemée, Ecclesiastical Dress in the Medieval Near East, Leiden – New York – Köln 1996, 90–131.

53 Chi. Walter, Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church, London 1982, 7–34; Woodfin, The Embodied Icon, 5–46 et passim.

54 J. L. Ball, Byzantine Dress: Representations of Secular Dress in Eighth- to Twelfth-Century Painting, New York 2005; M. Meyer, An Obscure Portrait: Imaging Women’s Reality in Byzantine Art, London 2009. For realia represented in Middle and Late Byzantine art cf. also M. G. Parani, Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography 11th–15th Centuries, Leiden 2003.

55 A. D. H. Bivar, The Stirrup and its Origins, Oriental Art 1/2 (1955) 61–65 (here 61–62); idem, Cavalry Equipment and Tactics on the Euphrates Frontier, DOP 26 (1972) 286–287; A. N. Kirpichnikov, Snariachine vsiudu i verhovogo konia na Russ IX–XIII vv., Moskva 1973, 43, 47–48; W. Świętosławski, Strzemienna średniowieczne z ziem Polski, Łódź 1990, 25–28; P. L. Grotsch, Arms and Armour of the Warrior Saints. Tradition and Innovation in Byzantine Iconography (843–1261), Leiden 2010, 380.
pear in sixth-century Avar graves in the territory of modern Hungary.56 In the second half of the same century, the skala, i.e. steps that make mounting on a steed easier, were mentioned for the first time by Emperor Maurice in his Strategicon.57 A depiction of stirrups appears already in an icon from the Sinai Monastery showing St. Mercurius on horseback killing Emperor Julian (Fig. 7). Approximately dated to the ninth century, this is probably the earliest representation of this element in European art.58 After

56 A summary of the discussion on the Avar stirrup: F. Curta, The Early Avar-Age Stirrups, or the Stirrup Controversy Revisited, in: The Other Europe in the Middle Ages, eds. F. Curta, R. Kovalev, Leiden 2007, 297–326, and figs. 2, 5; the author dates their appearance ca. 650 AD; cf. also e.g. W. Świątostawski, Rola Awarów w rozwoziecznieniu w Europie azjatyckich form uzbrojenia, Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Archaeologica 23 (2001) 75–85; I. Bugarski, Ostava iz Srećeva: uzgajje u ranovizantijskom kontekstu, in: Niš i Vizantijska, ed. M. Rakocić, Niš 2007, 251–267 (here 253–254); V. Iovot, Viorižhenieto i snarižhentoto ot bŭlgarskoto srednovekovie (VII–XI vek), Varna 2004, 139–158 mentions early Slavic finds that can be dated to between the eight and eleventh centuries.

57 Das Strategikon des Maurikios, ed. and transl. G. T. Dennis & E. Gamillscheg, Wien 1981, (I 2, II 9) 80, 128.

58 K. Weitzmann (The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, The Icons, vol. I. From the Sixth to the Tenth Century, Princeton 1976, 78–79, No. B 49), points out similarities with ninth- and tenth-century Coptic manuscripts, brings the object into relation with the local school, and based on that suggests that it should be dated to the tenth century. His opinion was accepted by G. Galavars, Early icons at Sinai, in: Sinai. The Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, ed. K. Manafis, Athens 1990, 97, fig. 11 on p. 143, and J. Folda, Crusader Art in the Holy Land, From the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187–1291, Cambridge 2005, note 797 on p. 637. On the contrary, L.-A. Hunt [Christian Art in Greater Syria and Egypt: A Triptych of the Ascension with Military Saints Reattributed, Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean 12 (2000) 1–36; here 22–25] suggested that this object could have been made in the first half of the thirteenth century. However, her arguments are not corroborated by a stylistic comparison with icons reliably dated to that period. Primitive, linear forms and some iconographic details, such as a cross-pointed spear, indicate a rather earlier date, soon after the end of the Iconoclastic controversy. This is in accord with the hypothesis of L. B. MacCoul, Sinai Icon B. 49: Egypt and Iconoclasm, JOII 32/5 (1982), 407–413.

59 Cf. e.g. the Bamberg tapestry (Gunthurtsch) dated to the time of John I Tzimiskes [G. Prinzing, Das Bamberger Gunthurtsch in neuer Sicht, Byzantinoslavica 54 (1993) 218–231; P. Stephenson, The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer, Cambridge 2003, 62–65; Rom und Byzanz. Schatzkammerstücke aus bayerischen Sammlungen, ed. R. Baumstark, München 1998, 206–210] and more traditionally even to the reign of Basil II [A. Grabar, La soie byzantine de l’époque Gunther a la Cathedrale de Bamberg, Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst 7 (1956) 7–26 (reprinted in: idem, L’art de la fin de l’antiquité et du Moyen Age, Paris 1968, vol. 1, 213–227); Grabar erroneously claimed that the use of touphia had been unique to Basil II].

60 C. Cahen, Un traité d’armurerie compose pour Saladin, Bulletin d’Etudes Orientales 12 (1948) 114. For the English translation of the passage see D. Nicolle, Javelins, Cuirie and Coat-of-Plates: An Alternative Line of Development for Hardened Leather Armour, in: A Companion to Medieval Arms and Armour, ed. D. Nicolle, Woodbridge, Suffolk 2002, 204.

61 E.g. in fols. 12r, 87v, 190v, 199r, cf. S. Der Nercessian, L’illustration des psautiers grecs du Moyen-àge, II: L’ombres, Add. 19.352, Paris 1970, fols. 22, 142, 298, 313.

62 E.g. Vat. gr. 747, fols. 173r, 221v, 222v, 223r–v, 224r–v, 225r, 243r, 247v; Vat. gr. 333, fol. 32r, cf. J. Lowden, The Octateuchs. A study

Another example is the so-called kite-shaped shield. This form of protection appeared in Europe probably before the mid-eleventh century. In his late-twelfth-century manual, the Ayyubid military theoretician al-Tarsusi still opposed the kite-shaped shield used by European knights to the Arab rounded turs.60 Depictions of the kite-shaped shield appear in Byzantine art already on the pages of the Theodore Psalter made in 1066 at the Studios scriptorium (Brit. Add. 19352)61 and in early illuminated Octateuchs (Vat. gr. 747; see also Book of Kings, Vat. gr. 333 dated before 1063).62 This type of the period of Iconoclasm, the motif became widespread in Byzantine figurative art and in later periods horsemen were always depicted with stirrups (Fig. 8).59

Fig. 7. St. Mercurius killing emperor Julian Apostate, Coptic icon, Sinai Monastery, ninth century (?), (after Weitzmann)

Fig. 8. Bamberg tapestry (Gunthurtsch), Bamberg, Diocesan Museum, Constantinople, before 971 (after Rom und Byzanz)
shield also became popular in the iconography of warrior saints, where they replaced the traditional rounded or oval form. The meticulously painted shields on the walls of the late Comnenian churches in Nerezi (1164) and Kastoria (St. Nicholas tou Kasnitzi, ca. 1175; Sts. Anargyroi ca. 1192) should be listed among the most spectacular examples. The shield of St. Theodore Teron on the north wall of the naos in the church of St. Panteleimon in Nerezi is a particularly impressive example of drawing inspiration from real military equipment. Its field, which is white with a gilded horizontal band, is filled with a heraldic representation of a lion standing on two back paws (Fig. 9). The same motif appears on a wooden shield dated to ca. 1200 AD, held by the Landesmuseum in Zurich (Fig. 10). The object has been traditionally associated with the Crusader’s milieu and it could have been owned by the fifth Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Conrad of Thuringia (ca. 1206 – 24 July 1240). If so, the artefact would be in fact later in date than the representation; however, it may be assumed that similar shields with this popular heraldic motif also existed in an earlier period and that Byzantine artists could have come in contact with them already at the Westernized court of Manuel I.

Of course, it should be borne in mind that depicting objects known to artists from everyday life does not necessarily mean copying them from nature. It may be supposed that artists rather reconstructed things from...
memory, thereby turning their creations into ideal copies of the Platonic "Supreme Being".

These examples suggest that a closer look at details which at first sight may seem irrelevant can reveal interesting aspects of artists' attitudes towards the real world. Recent developments in the study of Byzantine material culture and archaeology create a new field of comparative research for Byzantine art historians. Along with the long-investigated problem of the reception of antique heritage, the issue of the originality of medieval Greek art and artists' attitudes towards the real world seems to be a promising field for further research. The observations presented in this paper do not exhaust the phenomenon of imitative tendencies in Byzantine art. The custom of placing depictions of marble slabs, curtains or even 'artificial' bricks on the walls of Middle and Late Byzantine churches seems to be interesting and worthy of further exploration. However, the aforementioned topic goes beyond the scope of this paper.66

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66 E.g. decoration of the façade of the church of St. George at Kurbinovo, cf. C. Grozdanov, Kurbinovo and other studies on Prespa frescoes, Skopje 2006, fig. on p. 21. Cf. also E. S. Bolman, Painted Skins: the Illusions and Realities of Architectural Polychromy, Sinai and Egypt, in: Approaching the Holy Mountain. Art and Liturgy at St Catherine’s Monastery in the Sinai, ed. S. J. Gerstel, R. S. Nelson, Turnhout 2010, 119–140, for the problem of the marble imitation on frescoes in Byzantine churches.

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Подражавање класичног или представљање.  
Мимезис у византијској ликовној уметности као дериват стила

Пјотр Л. Готовски

Схватање мимезиса у византијској култури до сада се као предмет истраживања појављивало у филолошким студијама, док је у литератури из области историје уметности и естетике рече разматрано. Некоцина историчара уметности (Пирс, Болман, Тронцо, Краєвски) сматрају мимезис као спољашње сличности (Иришнов, Гул, Вагнер) као дериват стила, али су и остале видове представљања сматрани као основни предуслов поштовања икона.

Таква промена праћена је прихваћањем линеарног, антилуминистичког стила, који је омогућио прецизнији представљање насликаних предмета. Ради бољег разумевања тог процеса потребно је привати у сећање Гомбреховог запажања да је представљање света природе у уметности увек исход компромиса између конвенције и подражавања, а да њихов однос зависи од устаљених норма датог раздобља и културног контекста, у условима у којима су примењена правила појединачног разумевања уметнику и посматрачу.

Преображај фигураативне уметности — од старог хеленистичког стила, у коме уметник тежи стварању илустрованих медицинских приручника. Док рано византијски приручници за лечење биљем, као што

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су Vienna и Naples Dioscurides, а исто тако и њихове копије настале у X веку (Morgan herbal, MS M 652) и други приручници из истог периода (Theriakia, Par. suppl. gr. 274; On Dislocations, Laur. Plut. 74.7), још следе претходнике из прошлости, примећује се да примери из XI века показују драматичну промену у начину представљања стварности. Реч је и даље о текстовима класичних писаца (Athonite Dioscurides, Lavra W 75; Cynegetica, Marc. gr. Z 479; Physiologus, olim Smyr. Theol. B8; Hippiatrica, Leid. Voss. gr. Q 50; Par. gr. 2244), али су минијатуре изведене без жеље за верним приказивањем детаља, због чега су неупотребљиве као извор обавештења. Предмети описани у текстовима приказани су у поједностављеном облику.

Чини се да је такав приступ нашао одраз и у једној од Пселових Проповеди. Упркос традиционалном стилу свог времена, он је говорио о појави живе иконе, која у великој мери подсећа на модел (Христос пред Пилатом).

Да би се објаснило ново схватање мимезиса, чини се да је прикладио сетити се Виканове дефиниције, која даје предност описном задатку уметности у односу на илузионистичко подражавање. За уметнике који су тежили да искажу познавање предмета јасни облици били су значајнији од покушаја стварања илузије. У уметности средњовизантијског и позновизантијског доба постоје многи примери приказивања различитих употребних предмета. У раду су разматрана два примера: узенгије које су Авари донели у Европу у VI веку и које се на иконама представљају од IX века и штит у облику сузе који је ушао у употребу у првој половини XI века и нашао своје место у сликарству већ неколико деценија.