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Comparison and Contrast of Eastern and Western Christian Civilizations, 325-1669, through an Examination of two Contemporary Fourteenth Century Representations in the Mariological Cycle

by

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FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES

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Abstract

This paper will examine the similarities and differences between Eastern and Western Christian civilizations, 325-1669, through the examination of two contemporary early fourteenth century interpretations of an episode in the infancy and betrothal narratives of the Mariological cycle. It will use the whole images and details of Giotto's *The Betrothal of the Virgin* in the Arena Chapel and *The Virgin is Entrusted to Joseph* in the narthex of Chora Church as lenses to reveal certain characteristics of Eastern and Western societies and the differences between them.

Abbreviations

GL: Golden Legend
MC: Meditations on the Life of Christ
PJ  Protoevangelium of James
PM  Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew
I. INTRODUCTION

The subject of the betrothal, or entrustment, of the Virgin was executed at two venues in the early fourteenth century, one in the Byzantine Empire and the other in Medieval Western Europe. In the West it was presented as a fresco by Giotto in the Arena Chapel at Padua (1303-1305), while in the East it was produced as a mosaic by unknown artists in the inner narthex of the church at Chora Monastery, Constantinople (1316-1321), now known as Kariye Camii. The contrasts and comparisons between these works are windows to the similarities and differences between the two prominent Christian civilizations in history. They also offer an understanding of their mutual interactivity and of each as they stood alone.

In the early fourteenth century Byzantium and Western Europe were treading solidly on different paths. In art the results of the Iconoclastic Controversy had limited subjects and media from six hundred years before, while artistic horizons in the West had grown to the edge of a new era; religious differences had dogged church relations from well before the Great Schism of 1054 and influenced the Union of Churches movement in the late thirteenth century. The latter was also involved, among other difficulties, in the Eastern Emperor’s attempted enlistment of help from the West in confronting the onslaught of the Turks, a task colored by memories of the disastrous sack of Constantinople in 1204; Byzantine literature had not moved much past the great hymnographers of the sixth century, while the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries witnessed the writing of new and revolutionary Western writers, among them Dante, and Petrarch. This paper examines comparisons and contrasts of the East and West by examining the two images and their details closely to determine key underlying factors that led to differences and changes in direction. The dates of the period examined were not chosen arbitrarily. Christian hegemony in both East and West began at
the Council of Nicaea in 325. The Byzantine Empire fell in 1453, but Post-Byzantine Crete did not fall until 1669. The late seventeenth century also marked the decline of religious art in the West. Since between these years most art was religious, I have used the terms West primarily to refer to the Roman Catholic faith of Western Medieval Europe, and East for the Orthodoxy of the Byzantine Empire. This last term is used to avoid confusion in rattling back and forth between ‘Byzantine’ and ‘Late Roman.’ The reality is that the people in the Empire, to the end, called themselves ‘Roman.’

The arts are usually last in the exposition of a chronological era or unit in the study of history, but the role of visual art in the development in the history of Christendom should not be minimized. From the struggle of the early church with the Old Testament prohibition against images to the Council of Trent and beyond, art often participated in crucial events, some of them religious and political turning points, and its visible presence provides insight into the times. The advance of Christian religious art was probably inevitable from the very beginning, despite initial reticence to produce it. Ambivalence toward the second commandment presented itself almost immediately in biblical narrative, as the Jews sculpted two gold cherubim for the Ark of the Covenant (Revised Standard Version, Ex. 37. 7-9) upon previous instruction from God through Moses (Ex. 25. 18-20). Not long after the turn of the millennium and the advance of Christianity, the belief in acheiropoeteia, art ‘not made by human hands,’ became accepted from early legends of its formation and existence. Copies of other pieces of mystical art were painted, usually portable icons, and they acquired their own protective powers. Eastern Church Father St. Basil the Great defined the veneration of Christian saints through painted images as honor accorded to them through the prototype, not a worship of the image itself. Nevertheless, excesses of devotion to acheiropoeteia, certain
icons and the relics of saints led to the atmosphere that produced iconoclasm. The size and scale of numerous works of pagan art posed a challenge to the early Church, as competition for souls emerged as critical, particularly in the fourth and fifth centuries. Complicating this was the fact that artists were forced to affect the classical techniques and styles used by their pagan adversaries. Artists found a way to benefit from this, however, by lifting ancient pre-Christian themes and putting them to their own uses, for example, Christ as the Good Shepherd. In architecture Emperors and popes contributed to ambitious building projects (also based on classical models), and their decorations in response to the pagan challenge.

But icons are freestanding pieces that are symbolic of a particular saint, or a scene separated from their place in part of a narrative program, and it is in the narrative element where art made its most important mark. Paulinus of Nola advised his worshippers to “look at all of the pictures” (qtd. in Elsner, 249). At the center of this was The Word, The Incarnation, revealed truth in the Old and New Testaments. On the outskirts of this center were later ancillary works, apocryphal and otherwise. However, the four gospels do not tell exactly the same stories about Christ, containing separate incidents not common to all, and differing accounts of the same event. Presented with a catacomb wall, a sarcophagus, or a manuscript of the gospels, what was an artist to include in a program, and how should he have interpreted it? A textual solution presented itself in the Second century in Tatian’s Diatessaron, a version of the gospels that combined Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in a continuous narrative; but this risked the specter of Holy Writ subjected to human editing, and it fell out of favor, last used in Syria in the fifth century (Livingstone, 171). Nevertheless, the influence on art was immense, particularly in church painting where no cycle depicts only one gospel. Key scenes in the life of Christ had to be included or omitted, and a selective
approach to the Tatianic alternative was the only one available to the artist. The Annunciation to Mary (Lk. 1. 21-38), Adoration of the Magi (Matt. 2. 1-23) and Washing of the Feet (John 13. 4-16) are important episodes, but each of them was written but once in different gospels. In manuscript illumination page by page illustration of the text was impossible without being excessively repetitive, and choices made under Tatian’s formula resulted in the Annunciation and Nativity placed at the beginning of Matthew with the Passion pushed into John at the end.

The selections, and by inference, omissions, were not made by the artist but by the programmer, in most cases surely a male member of the clergy, with a keen eye toward the art’s patron, dedicatory properties, theological direction and local context. For illuminated manuscripts, mostly kept in monasteries, churches and royal treasuries, these decisions were important, but were a part of works tailored for, and seen by, a limited audience. On the other hand, for cycles in church decoration the audience was much wider and the message more applicable to the population at large. The rank and file did not have manuscripts at home next to hoe and plough. Along with activities connected to the church, the liturgy and its calendar, which included the Great Feasts, fresco and mosaic cycles were the primary visual exposure people had to order their moral and spiritual lives. Gregory the Great recognized this when he asserted that paintings were ‘books’ for the vast illiterate majority of the Christian populace. The paintings were reminders of the correct path toward the soul’s salvation—reminder is the key word here, for they were part of continuous education with a core curriculum that was repeated week after week, month after month, year after year for hundreds of years (Duggan, 235). Believers, the young, old and newly converted, were no doubt guided regularly by the priest through the cycles: the pictures were not left for leisurely viewing of
the kind we are used to today. The programmer and his artist thus had a great responsibility
to get it right, both for their church and for their community, whether it was in Rome,
Constantinople or in the provinces and realms outside the scope of these capitals.

The addition of scenes and cycles from extra-biblical texts, although not initially a
dividing point between East and West, became an indication of differences over time.
Commentaries by separate sets of Church Fathers, their theologies, and the heresies they
faced, reflected a gradual divergence, especially after the fall of the Western Roman Empire
to the Goths in 476. Ecclesiastical and political conflict became exacerbated. By the
fourteenth century Eastern and Western Christendom had become two definitively disparate
and conflicting societies, and their art reflected this. Specifically, the selection of episodes
from the Christian apocrypha and other sources graphically illustrated their diverging
outlooks. The chosen images of this paper are particularly germane to this separation for
several reasons. They provide a sort of level playing field for examining the two, because so
much art was lost, especially in the East.

The pictures were completed less than twenty years apart and therefore existed as
contemporary works. They escaped heavy damage and defacement, true also for most of their
complete programs. Both are versions of the same scene, not as routinely included as are
other episodes, in differing interpretations of the Mariological cycle. Both versions are
variations of an event that is on the berm of religious text, above which are the gospels and
below which are the Christian Apocrypha, and later, contemporary, books. The betrothal is
established as fact in Matthew (1. 18-19) and Luke (1: 26-27), but the actual scene is only
described in later texts. Finally, this scene, *The Betrothal of the Virgin, Entrustment* in the
East, is part and parcel of central questions at the heart of Christianity, the divine and human
nature of Christ, the role of the Virgin, and indeed, the role of all women; her connection, human and cosmic, to her Son; and her importance to the Church as a whole.

The compositions and several of their details indicate fundamental differences between Byzantium and the Medieval West in artistic, religious, literary and philosophical aspects, and the larger sectors of secular society, political social, and economic. As a starting point for each chapter relevant to these subjects (with the exception of Chapter I, which deals directly with the art and its art historical elements), I have keyed details that lead to expositions of these differences, before, during and after the early fourteenth century. The chapters are also prefaced with time capsules that begin with the year of Giotto's first brush stroke and end with the placement of the last tessera at Chora.

If even a few East-West conflicts and differences had been resolved, Constantinople might not have fallen in 1453. We have witnessed, within the past two hundred years, the release from that initial ‘captivity’ of Eastern Orthodoxy in the early eighteenth century in Greece and parts of the Balkans. In the late twentieth century Eastern Orthodoxy in Russia and the former countries behind the Iron Curtain has re-emerged. But the peoples of the Balkans and Eastern Europe have long memories. In the first year of the new millenium Pope John Paul II embarked on a pilgrimage retracing a portion of Paul's historic missions. Upon reaching the Greek capital on his first stop he was reminded by the Archbishop of Athens about the injustice of the Fourth Crusade: the passage of almost eight hundred years had not managed to erase bad memories and lingering resentment. Anything that sheds light on these residual feelings and on the roots of the history of the Christian East can only help us to better understand it now, and by association, a refreshed understanding of the West.
II. THE IMAGES: THEIR MEANING AND PRODUCTION

In 1303 work on the frescoes began in the Arena Chapel. In 1321 the mosaics in the Chora Monastery church narthex and the frescoes in the Paraklesion were completed (decoration of the naos, finished at the same time, is mostly lost).

In the East, besides Chora, other important works executed were the mosaics of St. Mary Pammakaristos at Constantinople, the unfinished mosaics of Holy Apostles Church at Thessaloniki, and the wall paintings of the Anastasis Church at Veria, by Kalliergis. In the West, The Maesta altarpiece, Siena Cathedral, by Duccio, was completed and in the north, the Queen Mary Psalter and the Bishop’s throne at Exeter. A sculpture of The Madonna and Child with Two Deacons was executed for the altar of the Arena Chapel by Giovanni Pisano, at the same time as Giotto’s frescoes.

An initial examination of the artistic elements and commissions of the Betrothal of the Virgin and Entrustment of the Virgin is the first step that allows further analysis of the similarities and differences of Eastern and Western civilizations, both in art itself and the other cultural aspects that comprised the society as a whole. The Betrothal in the Arena Chapel was part of a commission supplied by Enrico Scrovegni, a wealthy businessman and financier of Padua. For the Chora Monastery and the Entrustment, the commission came from Theodore Metochites, first minister and logothete (treasurer) to the emperor in Constantinople. The Arena Chapel was dedicated to the Virgin. It was a private architectural and decoration project that was conceived by Scrovegni to house his tomb, and to further his earthly and spiritual advancement (Kohl, 182). He probably felt, too, that his reputation would be enhanced by hiring the most renowned painter in Italy, Giotto di Bondone (1266-1337). The Chora church was a pre-existing structure built in the eleventh century, but in need of significant repair before any decoration could have been considered; and for Metochites his earthly pursuits of wealth and status at the court of the emperor seems to have been his foremost concerns, but with a sort of insurance in faith involving earthly and heavenly exchange: emperor grants imperial favor to Metochites, Metochites donates church
to Christ. (Nelson, 67). We have neither names nor dates attached to the artists. The church was dedicated to Christ, but the monastery was dedicated to the Virgin (Ousterhout, 14).

Both the fresco at Padua and the mosaic in Constantinople are versions of the same episode that is either partially or wholly taken from the *Protoevangelium of James*, an apocryphal text written toward the end of the second century. Each is part of extended Mariological programs that include four scenes from the betrothal narrative. The basic plot of the *Protoevangelium* is as follows: the priest of the temple at Jerusalem calls on all available single men to come, with one to be chosen as the young Mary’s mate. They are to bring their own individual rods, a sign from God being expected from them to determine the correct man. A dove flies from above and alights on the rod of a reluctant Joseph (PJ, 60). Below, by means of further comparison and contrast, are the physical descriptions of both works.

The *Entrustment* and *Betrothal* share certain basic characteristics. Cutaway presentations of the temple imply interior and exterior setting. A priest presides over the event. Mary and Joseph are both nimbed. Joseph’s rod flowers. Roughly the same number of suitors is present, shown in a crowd and in perspective. All figures are clothed at least from neck to ankle. The viewer’s eye is led from left to right with the important characters located at or near the center. However, there are many more contrasts that separate these works. The following section details these differences, taking each composition from left to right.

1. *Betrothal of the Virgin* (Fig. 1), fresco. The suitors appear agitated, one breaks his rod on his knee, while another grasps his own and speaks to another suitor. The foremost suitor in a light blue cloak raises his hand behind Joseph. They are young, clean-shaven, well clothed and wear shoes. A stationary Joseph in partial profile, dressed in blue and gold, wears sandals. He holds the flowering rod topped with a lily and a white dove, still partly on wing.
He presents a ring with his right hand toward Mary’s outstretched right index finger. The bearded priest is dressed in a red tunic over a white mantle and is not nimbed, nor does he wear a head covering. He holds the right wrists of Joseph and Mary together to join them in the giving of the ring. The Virgin’s profile is closer to three-quarters than Joseph’s, and her height approximates his. She is dressed in white with one red shoe visible at bottom. Her hands and hair are exposed, and she wears a coronet on her head. She appears serious but demure with a slight air of contentment. The altar of the temple is not visible, and the rendered architectural structures are the truncated apse and aisles. A bearded scribe dressed in a green robe stands behind and to the right of the Virgin, looking quite contrite. Three attending women stand at far right, well clothed and with hands variously comported. Above the action are blue sky on the left and the temple on the right, featuring the dome and its blue interior looming over the betrothal.

2. The Virgin Entrusted to Joseph (Fig. 2), mosaic. The altar and ciborium are visible on the left, the suitors’ rods ordered neatly on the front half of the altar. The priest presides on the step of the altar over all other participants except Joseph with whom he is equal in height. He is nimbed and dressed in gold vestments and wears head cover and shoes. His left hand is placed on the Virgin’s head while his right gives the flowering rod to Joseph. A cloth canopy hung from altar to door is suspended over the central characters of the priest, Virgin and Joseph. Only the Virgin’s face is visible beneath a dark blue head cover and full-length robe. She is half the size of Joseph and appears as a child with a somber expression. A bearded Joseph steps forward to receive the flowering rod with his right hand. The left hand mirrors the position of the priest’s as if to replace it in the next instant. He and the suitors behind him are well but simply clothed, and all are barefoot. The suitors, also bearded, look
serious, but no more so than Joseph. The entry structure at rear right appears to have a
curtained doorway into the temple and a side doorway to the exterior, confirmed by the small
tree at the far right and the raised division of upper and lower walls in the background. An
inscription on the gold of the upper temple wall proclaims the title in Greek.

ICONOGRAPHY AND CONTEXT IN PROGRAMS

The contrasts above aid the viewer in identifying the figures and placing them within
context of the narrative, including shorter units of programs within the larger program.
Comprehending these is necessary for understanding the meanings of one scene and
connecting it to all of them.

The entrustment mosaic is located in the inner narthex in the west lunette of the bay to
the immediate left of the entry bay to the naos (Map 1, no. 27). The entrustment bay and the
adjacent north dome and entry bay are decorated in a modified Mariological program with
anomalies, roughly adhering to a wraparound pattern (Lavin, 7) (Map 1, nos. 14-30). It
begins with Joachim's Offering Rejected and ends with Joseph Reproaching the Virgin. The
mosaic episodes are not presented in equal dimensions due to their distribution on the
pendentives, lunettes, arches and bays that comprise the architectural design of the narthex.

Within the larger program is a four scene mini-program made up of, in order,
Zacharias Praying before the Rods of the Suitors, The Virgin Entrusted to Joseph, Joseph
Taking the Virgin to His House, and, after an interruption by The Annunciation to the Virgin
at the Well, Joseph Taking Leave of the Virgin (Map 1, nos. 26-28, 30) The program follows,
more or less faithfully, the relevant action in The Protoevangelium of James, an apocryphal
text probably written in the late second century. The narrative identifies Zacharias as the
priest, an individual who seems to be a conflation by James of two characters by that name,
one in Matthew (23. 25), a figure of Old Testament typology, and the other, father of John
the Baptist, who inhabits the first chapter of Luke (Elliott 51). Eleven rods lie above the altar (not mentioned in the text) while Zacharias gives the twelfth to Joseph. Joseph and the suitors behind him appear to be the same advanced age, because the *Protoevangelium* states that Zacharias called all the ‘widowers’ from the countryside to contest for the Virgin’s hand (PJ, 60).

Though we know that the program is all about Mary, Joseph seems to be the main character in this mosaic: his gestures are the most animated of all the figures and his outstretched right hand is at the center of the scene. The object of his reach is a flowering rod that points in his direction. The tree behind him on the far right is a symbol of the tree of Jesse, confirming his descent from the House of David (issues relating to the flowering rod and the tree are discussed in Chapter IV). Furthermore, after this, his initial appearance, he occupies six out of the next seven episodes, and is central to at least three of them, including his *Dream* (Map 1 no. 31), the first in Christ’s infancy narrative in the north bay of the outer narthex. But the anomalies of the *Annunciation at the Well* (Map 1, No. 29), and *Joseph Reproaching the Virgin* (Map 1 No. 30) have already inserted the beginning of the *Protoevangelium* birth narrative in the inner narthex.

Giotto’s narrative arrangement is quite different. The betrothal fresco is found on the north wall of the nave, on the top tier of four (Map 2, no. 11). The program adheres to the wraparound pattern for three tiers, integrating the Mariological program with Christ’s nativity, childhood, ministry and passion cycles, beginning with *Joachim Cast out of the Temple* and ending with the *Pentecost*. All frescoes in the overall program are of the same dimensions except for three scenes on the arch (Map 2 nos. 13a, 13b, 14, 26). The fourth and
bottom tier consists of a grisaille and dado fresco program exhibiting personifications of seven Vices on the north wall and seven Virtues on the south.

In the uninterrupted betrothal mini-program the Betrothal of the Virgin is placed third, after Presentation of the Rods and Joseph and the Suitors at the Temple, and before The Virgin Returns to Nazareth (Map 2 nos. 9-12). The apocryphal text that the complete program most adheres to is The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew (Bellinati, 52), probably written in the late eighth or early ninth century, although the earliest extant manuscript is from the eleventh century (Elliott 86). Pseudo-Matthew includes the skeleton of the Protoevangelium account, but adds, changes, and embellishes several details in the complete program. The most notable iconographic change in the Betrothal is the figure of the presiding priest, un-nimbed in the fresco, identified in the Pseudo-Matthew as Abiathar (PM, 88). The most notable addition is of the green-clad Reuben the Scribe. The internal logic of the program leaves no doubt as to their identities. For Abiathar, although he is first mentioned in the text as a priest who offered gifts to Mary in order to urge her to wed his son, he is the same priest Giotto has shown in the Presentation of the Virgin (the priest is unnamed in Pseudo-Matthew), Presentation of the Rods, and Joseph and the Suitors at the Temple. He is also quite similar to the red-clad scribe who conducts a blessing in Joachim Cast Out of the Temple. He is shown for the most part as an emotionally neutral figure, carrying out his priestly duties as outlined by Pseudo-Matthew. Not so Ruben the Scribe, who angrily expels Joachim from the temple, seems irritated to see Joseph across the plane of the painting in Presentation of the Rods, and then appears as wrinkled-forehead contrite in the Betrothal. Both the Protoevangelium and Pseudo-Matthew have Ruben expelling Joachim, but neither include him in the latter two episodes (PJ, 57). The addition of three attending women on the
far right are perhaps symbolic of the seven virgins mentioned as accompanying Mary after betrothal in both the *Pseudo-Matthew* and *The Golden Legend*, a thirteenth century text by the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine (PM, 89; GL 153). There are clearly seven attending women at the left of the following fresco, *The Virgin Returns to Nazareth*. This last scene in the betrothal mini-program is told only by Jacobus and is confirmed, briefly, by another late thirteenth century Franciscan text, *Meditations on the Life of Christ* (MC, 14). *The Golden Legend* is also the only text of the four referred to predict and recount the flowering of Joseph’s rod. The dove, standard symbol for the Holy Spirit, inhabits three of the accounts (and an implied confirmation of Jacobus exists in the *Meditations*; see Chap. III), while the white flower at the apex of the flowering rod is the artist’s addition. Both the youth and the agitation of the suitors are not mentioned in *Pseudo Matthew* or *The Golden Legend*.

All of the frescoes of the top tier of the north wall (Map 2 nos. 7-12) move the viewer’s eye inexorably from left to right toward *The Annunciation* on the arch (Map 2 nos. 13 a-b) due to the consistent placing of the architectural element on the right of all the frescoes, and the left to right gestures by the bulk of the figures. In the *Betrothal* particularly the architecture provides two centers to the image. Joseph occupies the center of the fresco while the Virgin, her head on the same level with his, occupies the geometric center of the temple, just beneath the dome. This has the effect of a handoff of character centrality from Joseph to Mary (Discussions on the giving of the ring are in Chapters II and III). In fact this is the only scene where Joseph is in center, and the composition makes him share it with the Virgin, who, in the next scene, marches triumphantly toward her *Annunciation* (Map, nos. 13a,b) on the arch. In the two previous scenes that stage his election he is barely visible on
the far right as the reluctant suitor. After the Betrothal Joseph appears only as an adjunct to
the Virgin, never as the focus of an apocryphal or gospel episode (Map 2 nos. 15-18, 20).

Two absences from the Betrothal that were present in the two previous scenes are significant. The first is the altar, present in both the Presentation of the Rods and Joseph and
the Suitors at the Temple. The second is the hand of God at the base of the dome’s interior in
the latter. Neither is mentioned in the texts, but the combination of both, plus the cutaway
interpretation of the temple puts us inside. The Golden Legend says that a voice came from
the “Holies”, the temple’s inner sanctum, so the hand must represent God’s voice. (GL, 153).
By being pre-conditioned the viewer visually assumes that the altar of the temple is behind
the characters in the Betrothal, placing the scene inside the temple, and that the dove, lily,
and flowering rod are logical results of the hand of God.

FURTHER ELEMENTS AND SYNTHESIS

The differences in the iconography and context above lead directly to the separate
approaches to art executed by Eastern and Western Christian civilizations. It is clear from the
above analysis that the Arena Chapel programmer envisaged a uniting of several different
texts in the fresco program, while the programmer for the Chora narthex leaned toward a
more singular and traditional presentation of one text as exemplified by the Entrustment.
However, also evident is a further departure in the Betrothal by artist and programmer to edit
and embellish with creative additions of their own, figures and actions included in none of
the apocryphal texts that describe this scene. Three specific details from above are theirs
alone, again from left to right: the visible agitation of the suitors, the giving of the ring, and
the presence of Ruben at the ceremony. Each will be referred to below in greater detail, but,
suffice it to say here that, purely from the final result, nothing close to this artistic license is
present in the Entrustment. The vividness with which the emotions of the suitors are shown
in particular must have been the artist’s garnish. This unique hand was attached to a name, Giotto, in a period when individual artists were acquiring personal fame and reputation for their work. Some names were known in the East as well, but were associated more with regions and their structures rather than artists of wide renown throughout the land (Cormack, 197).

The marriage of architecture, still the queen of the arts in the West, and its interior decoration in the Arena Chapel seems to have been a well-designed plan from the beginning. Dimensions of the chapel itself conformed to the biblical dimensions of Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 6. 2-3), a box-like structure with mostly straight walls and flat surfaces. Giotto could plan mathematically every fresco framed in a single format of standard size. It is not clear whether Giotto himself was the architect, but scholarly consensus is that the chapel was designed to be painted (Radke, 79). In the East the greatest structures had been erected centuries before, and the later tendency was towards building strong, modestly sized churches in the provinces, renovating old ones, both to be decorated on the inside. (Mango, 108) The mosaic artists in Chora were given an extremely difficult space in which to execute an extensive program, and it must be said, they did brilliantly. The problem for them was that the architecture dictated the compositional space, distribution of figures and the position of each episode for most of the programs, admittedly, though, not as much for the Entrustment. It did however, allow them to assign to it importance in the mini program, as it occupies the full space of one of the two lunettes: in the other Joseph Taking Leave of the Virgin must share with Joseph Reproaches the Virgin. With the standardization of fresco size and careful planning with an eye on the programming of the frescoes, Giotto was able to do the opposite, have the figures define the space, composition and action (Radke, 85). In fairness to the
Chora artists, the purpose of their narthex was different from that of the Arena Chapel nave, which contains a larger and much more ambitious program. In the *Entrustment* composition the perspectives of the altar and the doorway are skewed individually and at odds with each other. Giotto’s perspective, on the other hand, looks to be quite natural in the *Betrothal*, a scene into which we as viewers could walk realistically and naturally enter. The temple acts as a non-fictive witness in both compositions and is more consistent in monumental stature as it frames the narrative from the presentation to the betrothal.

This staunch and silent ‘witness’ highlights the drama of the moment and the difference in the emotional aspects of the two works. The *Entrustment* portrayal is a more static presentation in time: Zacharias gives the rod to Joseph and the expressions of the characters are keyed to the instant of entrustment. It is possible to view the *Betrothal* this way, but there is an awful lot going on at the same time both in actions and emotion. It is really a continuous representation, from the vivid behavioral display by the suitors to the action of the betrothal itself. And all of it happens before the Old Testament backdrop of the temple. This will also be dealt with below.

In terms of style it is important to note the comparative completion dates of the two works with the Arena Chapel first and Chora second. Much emphasis has been put on the question of whether one style influenced the other, whether there was mutual influence, or whether there was any influence at all. The word “renaissance” has been bandied about as well: was there a Paleologan Renaissance? If so, did it influence the Italian version? Although Giotto was an Italian Gothic artist, was his work the first step toward the Italian Renaissance and, was he influenced by Byzantine artists in Italy at the time (Vassiliev, 712-13)? It is clear that some Byzantine elements exist in Giotto’s work, but equally clear that he
took bold innovative steps to release his art from the Byzantine style. If the Chora artists indeed saw the Arena Chapel frescoes, then it is also clear, that though their style is marginally different from before the Latin Empire, they harbored a strong desire to bolster and confirm traditional methods and ideas, and no wish to emulate Giotto.

But there is the point, the wish to cement the tradition and style of the past was something deeply ingrained in the Byzantine psyche. Works of art, icons and murals, personal and public, meant something quite different to them than to the people of the West. Naturalistic representation was not a goal, in fact it was preferred that the figure be less realistic, less earthly and more heavenly, more spiritual. The gold ‘background’ in so many icons was not regarded as background at all but seen as a representation of heaven itself. Viewer and painting were considered as occupying the same visual field and the believed action of the icon looking at the viewer was just as important as the other way around. The goal of the painter was to capture the spirit of the figures painted to the benefit of beholder and subject. The painter, subject and viewer were all participants in a joint act of veneration (Ouspensky, 39; Icons, 16).

Just how far back such traditions stretched was demonstrated in *The Painter’s Manual of Dionysios of Fourna*. Though a work by a monk born in the late seventeenth century from central Greece, it nevertheless is thought to represent guidelines for painting each subject, scene and saint in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, some originating one thousand years before his time (Hetherington, 1). Support for this comes first from his dedicatory statement to the Virgin and her link to the most important artist’s legend linked to her: the belief that the evangelist Luke, inspired by God, was the painter of her portrait. The famed Virgin
Hodegitria icon was said to have been his work, and stored at Chora, one of the many legends that surrounded the Virgin as protector of Constantinople (Mango, 22).

Dionysios provides further spiritual background for his craft in his introduction to preliminary instructions for painters. He quotes Basil the Great’s reference to the prototype and goes back to the first acheiropoetic legend from the second century, claiming that Jesus Christ was the first, the original, artist by imprinting his image on the mandylion for King Abgar of Edessa. He then proceeds to outline the correct way to paint each subject (Dionysios, 4). The standards for them were created separately over varying periods of time before Dionysios, and were not strictly mandated; but the formats were followed fairly closely, and have endured, as a visit to any recently decorated Greek Orthodox church will indicate.

An early example of how one particular subject evolved, and began to do so as early as the sixth century, is the image of the Transfiguration. Omitted in the top tier of programs in Sant’ Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, consistent with the Gothic Arian view emphasizing Christ’s human nature, the subject exploded with a vengeance in mid century in the apse mosaic in nearby Sant’ Apollinare en Classe. Really a program in itself, it presented an allegorical Transfiguration that symbolized Christ as a cross and the disciples as sheep, while at the same time prefiguring the Crucifixion, Resurrection and the Parousia (Simsen, 46). It did not, however, establish a prototype that would be followed by other artists. Instead, that role would be filled by the apse mosaic at the Church of the Transfiguration at St. Catherine’s Monastery at Mount Sinai (Andreopoulos, 127). With minor adjustments this composition is essentially the same for Orthodox icons and wall paintings that are reproduced today: a glowing Christ in a mandorla flanked by Elijah on the left and Moses on
the right at the top, with the inner core of disciples, Peter, James and John, in various poses of awe-struck reaction at the bottom (Fig. 3).

The first ecclesiastical edict to apply directly to art may have been brought on by representations like the one in the apse of Classe. So much Byzantine art was lost in the seventh century such confirmation is difficult, but toward the end of this dark age, in 692, The Quintisext Council, held in Constantinople forged many ecclesiastical decrees, plus another which mandated that Christ, if depicted in a religious representation, must be shown in His human form: no more symbolic crosses, lambs, or the like (Trullo). The Sinai Transfiguration did not contravene the decree, and it occupied a location remote enough to have been out of the reach of a second edict, this one from an emperor, Leo III: the iconoclastic era was launched and lasted, on and off, for the next one hundred twenty-five years. After iconoclasm was lifted in 843, it has been asserted that a gradual standardization of images followed in icons and church programs (Cormack, 163). A factor that probably influenced this was the tenth century formulation of the cycle of the Great Feasts, first appearing on iconstasis beams (Weitzmann, 14). Except for the additions of pronounced mountainous terrain and the disciples’ ascent and descent, Dionysios’ directions for painting the Transfiguration fundamentally conform to the image described above (Dionysius, 35).

Further discussion of the Sinai image in connection with the Virgin follows below in Chapter IV.

On the first page Dionysios dedicates his manual to the Virgin, and he devoted many of his instructions to painting her image. For the entrustment the title is, *Joseph taking the Mother of God from the Holy of Holies*, and reads as follows: “The temple, with the prophet Zacharias inside, blessing. Behind him the other priests point out the Virgin to each other,
and in front of them Joseph takes the child by the hand; behind him are the other men” (Dionysius, 50). The identification of the presiding priest as Zacharias is an indication that the painter adhered to the ancient tradition established by the Protoevangelium.

Nothing of this orientation directed toward religious art existed during the Western Middle Ages. Giotto seems to have followed convention in his betrothal scene, as it does have predecessors, for instance, in the Gospels of Otto III. But, since there was no cohesive state ruled by one emperor, political and cultural entities divided themselves from each other into feudal regions and fiefs, and the art reflected this. There were illuminated manuscripts from Britain, French churches decorated with stained glass, and frescoes in Italy. None of these were produced exclusively by one locality but, though the Pope was a unifying religious influence, his problem lay more in educating his flock and keeping it in order than in drawing up a code for artists. Even the early Christian trend away from statuary slowly gave way, witnessed by the elaborate exterior adornment of Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals. Gregory the Great had encouraged the use of images as education for the masses in 601, so almost from the first there was nothing to stand in their way (Duggan, 37).

In fact the West actively opposed the proposed art legislation of the East, though not on the basis of direct argument. The pope did not sign the final decrees of the Quintisext Council of 692 because he felt that the Council had been convened without his consultation and approval (Kelly, 83). Thus Western artists were not restrained as to the production of symbolic images. After the Seventh Ecumenical Council, held in Nicaea in 787, and which comprehensively backed the veneration and production of religious images, a translation glitch from the final Greek to the Latin text caused confusion between Pope Hadrian and Charlemagne. Their eventual political rapprochement resulted in condemnation of the
Council’s decrees (Kelly, 96-7). In reality it was a moot point: the west had had no corresponding problem with iconoclasm, and the production of images was neither slowed nor stopped.

The Virgin’s representation, always popular, continued to be so during and after the fourteenth century in the West. But the flat spiritualist Byzantine mode was giving way to a return to classical modeling, realistic depiction and environmental perspective. She began to appear in houses with contemporary settings as in Virgin and Child by Petrus Christus. By the Renaissance she occupied an ecological paradise in Leonardo’s Madonna of Rocks. Saints, their acts and martyrdoms were moved outside, too: St. George and the Dragon struggle in front of a medieval townscape next to the sea in Rogier Van Der Weyden’s painting (Stokstad, 335). Approximately a century after the completion of the Arena Chapel, the Master of Flemale executed a Betrothal that followed contemporary visual trends, and seems quite divorced from standard apocryphal tradition (Murray, 181).

The realistic portrayals of religious scenes, coupled with advancing Western economic power, wealth, and classical scholarship led to secular commissions and thus to secular art. Scenes based in mythology, at first rationalized by Christian allegorical justifications by the artists were commissioned by kings, aristocrats, and wealthy businessman, who also enjoyed likenesses of themselves and families reproduced in portraits. Popes Julius II and Leo X underestimated the rising influence of prominent masters and contributed unwittingly to a visual humanistic syncretism with which they did not openly sanction, and this in the Roman center of Western Christendom. Plato and Aristotle, among other ancient Greek philosophers, were painted by Raphael into the stanzas of the papal apartments, and the alternating images of sibyls and prophets by Michelangelo on the Sistine Ceiling were a blending of pagan
Greco-Roman mythology with Old Testament typology (the Cumaean Sibyl, virgin in Roman myth, is in immediate proximity to the Creation of Eve).

But the Church was no longer chief customer, and, with the iconoclast tendencies of some Protestant movements energized by the Reformation in the sixteenth century, it felt compelled to decree the first western guidelines for religious visual expression at the Council of Trent (1545-63). The council was conceived as an affirmation of the seventh Ecumenical Council of 787, and reference was made to the preservation of ‘tradition’ to support the production and veneration of religious images without making a clear statement of context (Tanner, 138, Vol. II). The vagueness extended into recommendations on how religious scenes should be painted with the looming threat to the artist of facing the Inquisition. The futility of this action was soon apparent in the trial of Veronese in 1573. He had executed The Last Supper in the refectory of a monastery outside of Venice, and upon completion, the monks complained loudly that he had painted an inappropriately elaborate and debauched interpretation of Christ’s last meal. In his defense Veronese spoke as a simple artist with no theological or heretical axes to grind, stumping the inquisitors. However, thinking that some sort of reprimand should be administered lest they look impotent, the inquisitors ordered the title changed and certain figures removed: Veronese changed the title to Feast in the House of Levi but never altered the original surface of the painting (Paolo; Hartt, 621-22).

Such a scenario was unthinkable in regard to Paleologan and Post-Byzantine art, the latter of which had been influenced by Italy, particularly from Venice. Ritzos, Kloundas and Damaskinos were among artists from the Venetian occupied territory of Crete, and some of them migrated to Italy to study and paint (Constandoudakis, 85-7). The most famous of them, El Greco, resided in Italy before moving permanently to Spain. Perhaps the most prolific of
those who stayed was the monk Theophanes Strelitzes, the Cretan (c.1485-1553), who executed numerous frescoes in the monastic communities on Mount Athos and Meteora. Approximately thirty years before Veronese’s trial, Theophanes painted the walls of the refectory at the Grand Lavra, the foremost monastery on Mount Athos. The top tier of frescoes is devoted to the early life of the Theotokos. The program is a standard adaptation of the account in the Protoevangelium, and includes an Entrustment (Yannias, 272, 320). The Cretan school continued until the late seventeenth century when the island fell to the Turks in 1669. At this time the fashion and market for religious art had petered out in the West, while not long afterwards in the East, Dionysios wrote his painter’s manual.
III. THE WORLD OF THE MIND GROWS AND SHRINKS

East: The language of writers and scholars was formal Greek, so there were no original works produced in the vernacular. There was no great master author or masterpieces produced, but learning and scholarship were highly respected and promulgated by Andronicus. There was secular writing, but it fell more into the categories of commentary, history and autobiography. When it came to philosophical subjects these writers walked gingerly on the outskirts of controversial classical ideas, such as Platonism and the concepts Aristotle, for fear of being labeled heretics and losing their positions: they may be referred to more as learned encyclopedists than literary authors. Metochites is regarded as the period’s greatest scholar and perhaps its best writer (Vassiliev, 703).

West: In 1321 Dante completed The Divine Comedy, writing it in vernacular Italian instead of Latin, a major turning point in Western literary tradition. His work also exhibited the ideological and political struggles of the period, combining spirituality, classical ideas, and earthly realism. Enrico Scrovegni’s father appears in cameo as an occupant of the Inferno, suggesting that Dante was acquainted with Padua and may have visited the Arena Chapel (qtd. in Stubblebine, 108). At the time Padua was renowned as a university town, noted for its scientific scholarship.

A comparison of Eastern and Western literary traditions presents dilemmas that make it almost impossible to avoid moving straight to their contrasting elements. Both had roots in pre-Christian classical and late antique Greco-Roman culture, but exhibited far different approaches in manifesting those roots. Likewise they handled differently the common bond they had to the Christian Word. Theology was pursued vigorously by both cultures, but in the area of philosophy an open question remains as to whether a Byzantine branch even existed (Ierodiakonou, 1). The chronology of each literary history is filled with gaps and overlaps at separate junctures, gray beginnings, and in the case of the Byzantines, a definitive end. Two divisions of the written language, the formal language of state, scholar and author, and the indigenous vernacular dialects of the people for most of the Middle Age were tilted toward the formal. The same is true of the division between secular and religious writing, the balance weighted heavily toward the religious.

The identity of the languages is the most important element in the equation of contrast in literary tradition. The verb in the inscription (Fig.4), ‘The Virgin Entrusted to Joseph’ in
the Chora scene can be translated into western European languages in various ways as ‘given’ or ‘entrusted,’ but the most important fact is that it is written in Greek. Constantine I moved the capital city from Rome to Constantinople, but Latin remained the language of the empire and of the West. It was, however, acknowledged that Greek was the lingua franca of the people in the Eastern region, which included Greece, Asia Minor, the Balkans, Egypt and the near East. The Old Testament had been translated into the Greek Septuagint before Christ, and the New Testament had been written entirely in Greek. The Eastern Church Fathers spoke and wrote Greek. The most authoritative texts of the first seven councils of the church, regarded by eastern and western churches as ecumenical, are the Greek (Tanner, 4, Vol. 1). The pagan classical texts of the great philosophers and playwrights were studied in the School of Athens until Justinian closed it in the early sixth century. One genre that was conceived in pre Christian classical Greece and lasted well into the Byzantine Empire was the epigram, at first a short elegiac expressions that broadened to incorporate witty and acerbic comments on life. Authors, secular and clerical, wrote a large body of epigrams. One of the first of the Fathers of the Church, Gregory of Nazianzus, picked up his pen more than once to express himself in this poetic form, some of them dedicated to the passing of his good friend, his fellow Father, Basil the Great (Gregory).

The extension of the pagan classical is something that threads through much of Byzantine literature, particularly the epic romance. The most notable in this genre are the *Alexander Romance* and *Digenes Akrites*. The former is a mostly fictional biography of Alexander the Great that underwent additions, embellishments and changes during a period of several centuries. Among the fantastic elements of the epic are monsters, mutants, and a diving bell. Initially claimed to have been written by Alexander’s biographer, Callisthenes,
an unknown author, dubbed ‘Pseudo Callisthenes,’ writing at some time between the third centuries BC and AD, has been accorded responsibility for the first text. More than one passage was devoted to Alexander’s horse, Alexander is characterized as stronger than Bellerophon and his horse stronger than Pegasus (Greek, 154). The tenth century *Digenes Akrites*, was an epic of the ‘border’, a legend that chronicled the exploits of a horseback knight in eastern Asia Minor, and it also made the same mythological reference (Greek, 152). However, in about the seventh century a recension of the Alexander Romance added Christian elements to the story (e.g., Philip II is buried rather than burned: Greek, 164). *Digenes Akrites* had been a Christian epic from the beginning. Alexander was regarded as similar to the ideal Old Testament king in the mold of David and Digenes was the heroic soldier who fought for empire and Christ. The political element is obvious, especially in the case of Alexander, who could be equated, hopefully, to the emperor. At least one commission of a fourteenth century illuminated manuscript of the Alexander Romance, probably ordered by Alexios III Comnenoi of the empire of Trebizond, appears to support this proposition (Trahoulias intro, 33). The most complete extant Byzantine manuscript, containing greatest number of undamaged illustrations, the choices of the programmer emphasized the horse and military conquest. In reality this was a wish that could be fulfilled only on paper, and a case for using literature as propaganda. Trebizond, autonomous but connected to the Byzantines in culture, was a small ‘empire’ on the northeast coast of Asia Minor, that in the fourteenth century was constantly threatened by the Turks. However, lacking military strength of Alexandrian proportions, it outlasted Constantinople through shrewd diplomatic negotiation with the Turks south of the Pontic Alps that protected its thriving Black Sea trade (Haldon
125-127). Its weakness resembled that of the Byzantines, and it fell to the Turks, too, shortly after 1453.

In the Byzantine literary tradition there do exist pockets of secular poetry, but Christian writing, plus Christianizing influence and editing of earlier works, as in the *Alexander Romance*, were much more numerous than the secular. Byzantine literary history is long, encompassing a period of over one thousand years, but its success was slight in producing original genres or great authors. The one exception is purely Christian in content, the hymnography of the sixth century (Trypanis, liii) The hymnographers elevated a Syrian genre, the kontakion, a sermon in verse accompanied by music, to its highest qualitative level. Romanos Melodos, its greatest practitioner, was probably a Syrian of Jewish origin who served as a deacon in Beirut before going to Constantinople. Later made a saint, his legend claims that he was divinely endowed with the gift of writing kontakia. It is said that his first and greatest, *On the Nativity*, was the result of a dream in which the Virgin gave him a scroll that he swallowed. Upon awaking he went straight to the church and chanted the Kontakia (Maas, xvi). It is therefore similar to a literary equivalent of acheiropoetia, miraculously inspired and humbly delivered by somebody who thought of himself as a heavenly instrument rather than as a writer devoted to individual expression. Credit for writing the *Akathistos Hymn* was believed to be to Romanos, but it is now attributed to an unknown author. Its greatness is attested by the fact that it entered the liturgy, sung every year during Lent. It acquires even greater significance when one reads the first line of a later seventh century dedication by Patriarch Sergius, “To you, Mother of God, champion and leader, I, your city [Constantinople], delivered from sufferings, ascribe the prize of victory and my
thanks” (Trypanis, 374) The Virgin was thus not only protector of the capital through icon, but through sermon, verse, music and liturgy as well.

On the Nativity and the Akathistos Hymn are devoted to the Virgin. Romanos takes the Nativity narrative through the Adoration of the Magi, and ends with Mary’s prophecy that her son will be savior of the world. The last words of the kontakion are the words of the refrain that inhabits the kontakion, “...little child, God of all time (Trypanis, 392)” The Akathistos Hymn begins with the Annunciation and also proceeds through the visit of the Magi, but the narrative is truncated and is followed by verses praising the Virgin, coupling theological description and discourse on her importance as Theotokos or “God-bearer.” Both writers refer to the preservation of her virginity after birth, proof of which had been expanded into a narrative by the Protoevangelium. However, the Akathistos makes the refrain on the end of twelve thirteen-line hail Maries, “hail, wedded maiden and Virgin.” The repeated use of “wedded” instead of “entrusted” or “betrothed” emphatically affirms her eternal purity. It acquires even greater significance when one reads the first line of a later seventh century preface by Patriarch Sergius, “To you, Mother of God, champion and leader, I, your city [Constantinople], delivered from sufferings, ascribe the prize of victory and my thanks.” The Virgin was thus not only protector of the capital through icon, but through sermon, verse, music and liturgy as well (Trypanis, 392).

Classical tradition was not completely absent in these two poems, but it was involved in combining form and argument rather than supplying content. Another classical literary device, rhetoric, influenced narratives represented in art. The science of rhetoric for use and study in speaking and writing was highly valued and esteemed in Byzantium. Michael Psellos, eleventh century scholar and statesman, whose career resembled that of Metochites,
regarded rhetoric as the equal of philosophy (Maguire, 4). Four of the rhetorical techniques, description, hyperbole, antithesis and lament seemed to have influenced certain works and programs. In the thirteenth century frescoes of St. Clement at Ochrid, the entrustment is coupled with the Annunciation at the Well in the lower tier (Fig. 5). The Virgin does not look up at Joseph as at Chora, her bowing head and facial expression suggesting sorrow. In the unusual Annunciation at the Well, she is supported by two women to keep her from fainting. This mirrors the large Lamentation in the tier above where the position of her head is exactly the same, and where she is also being supported to prevent her from swooning. The antithesis of what might be considered promising beginnings on the bottom and the tragic outcome on the top are colored by the atmosphere of lament in both compositions, and suggests that from the very beginning she knew she was going to lose her son. This feeling of lament probably reflected the reality of the period when death and suffering were common occurrences, accenting the antithesis of initial hopes dashed by tragedy (Maguire 105-6). In Chora the mosaic cycle of the Slaughter of the Innocents (Map 1, 38-41) best exemplifies the use of rhetorical devices. Called the most extensive depiction of the episode in Byzantine art, it is expanded to encompass four mosaics where it might have only been one, hyperbolically describing and intensifying the violence. The experience of the shrinking empire by contemporary military defeat surely had something to do with these disturbing images in a holy place of worship (Nelson, 75).

Entry into the area of Byzantine philosophy is more difficult, but is facilitated somewhat by the same approach of stressing the mechanics of form, organization and argument. Still, the main stress is on the theological, not philosophical. Pseudo-Dionysios combined Platonic and Christian thinking organizing his structure of the universe (Evans,
In these areas the best author was John of Damascus, the eighth century iconodule theologian. Structuring his arguments along logical lines he persuasively supported veneration of icons in three treatises and posthumously contributed greatly to the demise of iconoclasm. He backed his convictions by cogently referring to quotes from previous work, most notably by the Church Fathers, in his florilegia, or bibliography (Treatises, 117). In the text of *Summa Theologica* Thomas Aquinas makes frequent references to his work. But matters of philosophy were dominated by theology. The ancients were read and admired but not emulated. Status in literary society was gained by being able to exhibit knowledge of the classics and complex scientific subjects and discuss them in style, and the erudite Metochites was surely a seasoned practitioner (Sevcenko, 21, 23).

The attitude toward innovation and change in literature was different in the West. Let us look at a detail of the *Betrothal* to lead us to it (Fig. 6; MC, 40). A close-up of the giving of the ring, it is not taken from a written passage, but it leads us to a visual convention that may have come from one of the key Western apocryphal texts, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*. The textual treatment of the betrothal is perfunctory, but the illustration in one of the fourteenth century texts includes, in the rendering of the scene, most elements of Giotto’s painting, omitting only the visible irritation of the suitors (Fig. 7). A new variation is that the dove is nimbed. The inscription reads, “Joseph as he marries Mary” (MC, 305). The Arena Chapel *Betrothal* and this illustration validate each other as a visual convention that parallels the readiness to accept contemporary texts into holy tradition.

The author of the Franciscan Meditations directed his spiritual instruction to a nun in the order of the Poor Clares, but in the *Betrothal* there is implicit validation of the *Golden Legend*, written by a Dominican (MC, 14). Jacobus blended Bible, New Testament
apocrypha, and the lives of saints into the liturgical calendar, and thus it is not a linear
narrative that tackles the Christian history from beginning to end. He introduced many
biographies of the saints with skewed, and now disdained, etymologies of their names (Ryan,
xvii). But his efforts were sincere, and were new in his age. He was trying to apply logical,
scientific, and philosophical solutions to join earthly reality with his faith, just as his fellow
Dominican, Thomas Aquinas, was doing in Paris. Aquinas and the Franciscan Bonaventure,
the most prominent of the scholastics who wrestled with the philosophical questions of their
time, were thirteenth century contemporaries of Jacobus, along with, it is supposed, the
author of the Meditations. Aquinas, Bonaventure, and Jacobus were all later canonized. If he
had been known the same honor probably would have been conferred on the Meditations
writer, although for a period of time it was thought, incorrectly, that Bonaventure was its
creator (Ragusa, xxi).

But neither of these are particularly remarkable works—they are known more for their
influence on art than for their literary value. Countless images sprung from the accounts of
Jacobus: we have already encountered one in the Arena Chapel, The Virgin Returns to
Nazareth. The Meditations gave us the image of the infant John the Baptist with the Holy
Family. Their Mariological passages were largely founded in the Pseudo-Matthew, written
much later than the Protoevangelium. As we have witnessed, even at that early date there
seemed to be a Western propensity for editorial intervention. Perhaps the most famous of its
additions to iconography is of the ox and the ass to the Nativity, because of the later
symbolism ascribed to them as representing the Gentiles and the Jews (Elliott, 85) The most
important common denominator to all save the Protoevangelium was the Latin language.
So what do we really have as quality Western literature from 300 to 1200? Jerome’s monumental achievement of translating the Old Testament from the original Hebrew and the New Testament from the Greek to produce the Latin Vulgate was commendable; but if we are to include the religious writing of Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory the Great, who together with Jerome make up the Western Church Fathers, then we would have to consider the massive production of the much more numerous Eastern Fathers, like Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great, the list goes on. Besides mystery and morality plays, also religious productions, we have the oral tradition that gave us *Beowulf, Song of Roland, The Cid, and Carmina Burana*, but with the exception of *Beowulf* (tenth century) they did not hit paper until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. And were these chivalrous epics so much better literature than their Eastern counterpart, *Digenes Akrites*? For the balance of the period before the thirteenth century the Byzantine literary output looks positively brilliant in comparison to that of the Western Middle Ages. However, three out of the four epics listed above exhibited a new characteristic that was to foretell the future, they were recorded in the vernacular, *Beowulf* in Old English and *The Cid* in Spanish. Unlike in the East, there was no Latin equivalent to the common Greek of the people, so as the vernaculars rose, so Latin faded as a literary language.

All of these epics shared another interesting similarity, they were primarily secular in content. The use of various vernacular languages in a secular context in the late Middle Ages leads to the truth of why comparison of Eastern and Western literature is difficult: as the east was winding down, the West was just beginning. The key author who personified this reversal of form was a direct contemporary of Theodore Metochites: Dante Aligieri. After he published *The Divine Comedy*, everything opened up to the Western writer, the vernacular,
the secular, personal expression, the classics, mythology, love poetry, politics, irony and more. For the reader it meant reading to learn and enjoy. Religious didactic was never lacking in his work, but now the literate readers, and there were many more of them than before Dante, could also learn, understand and rejoice in their own languages.

To go back to the Chora inscriptions and the ultimate contrast: the Entrustment is not the only entitled scene; every mosaic in the narthexes and every fresco in the Parakklesion bears an inscription, and for those that are damaged or lost, we must assume that they had them, too. The Word, the Incarnation, was felt to be a necessary addition to the composition as an indispensable spiritual element contributing to the viewer’s experience: a reminder that although you are venerating or learning from a prototype, the image carries its spirit into the figures and into your life. It was as if to say, “Here is the title. Here is the picture whose narrative is taken from the Word. This is how you should understand it. The most important thing is happening below: the liturgy. Listen. Learn. Believe. Follow.” In the case of Chora the audience was predominantly literate, but it wouldn’t have mattered to the illiterate whether the liturgy was being performed or not: the word was meant to be recited, read out loud, and there would have been somebody there to interpret. Most frescoes in today’s Greek churches still have some kind of accompanying inscription, even if only to name the saint who is sole occupant of the icon that is transmitting his or her spirit. So in the East the writer and artist were not really meant to create as individuals, because anything that came from their pen or brush was God’s work.

Giotto felt no need to underscore his work with inscriptions. As for his literary contemporary, Dante’s own devout faith imbued his work, but did so on a deeply personal level. It was effective communication without strict theological supervision and the
ecclesiastical superstructure. An educational analogy might suffice. Eastern authors taught in the classroom, Dante in independent study.

The sad end of the Byzantine Empire virtually closed down its literary tradition. There were some interesting Cretan plays, such as *The Sacrifice of Abraham* (Bakker, 1-3), and poems in the Post Byzantine period, but they carried links to the colonial Venetian society that ruled the island. The period between 1300 and its fall in 1669 highlights the change in literary fortunes of East and West, as the latter produced such giants as Boccacio, Petrarch, Rabelais, Cervantes, Montaigne, and Shakespeare.
IV. PONTIFFS AND KINGS VERSUS EMPERORS AND PATRIARCHS

**East:** Although Andronicus had rescinded the Union of Churches agreement in the first year of his reign in 1282, the main anti-union party, the zealots, were not satisfied and continued to agitate for strict Orthodox practices and independence of church from state. The zealots and monks gradually gained the upper hand over the secular clergy, and often came into conflict with the emperor, but even high church officials such as Patriarch Athanasius I of Constantinople (1289-92, 1303-1309) regularly criticized the immoral excesses of the state and behavior of members of the royal family. He was the first of the powerful Hesychast patriarchs to ascend that throne in the fourteenth century. Monasteries grew and prospered: this period marked the beginning of the golden age of monasticism. Andronicus instituted ecclesiastical reform in re-drawing the boundaries of the eparchies, some of them far beyond the borders of the empire, for instance in Russia and Lithuania (Vassiliev, 664-65). In 1216 the young Gregory Palamas entered the monastic community of Mt. Athos, beginning a successful career as model ascetic and theologian.

**West:** Difficulties between the papacy and the mendicant orders, the Dominican and Franciscan dominated these years. The most acute of these problems were the Franciscan Spirituals, who had split from the moderates in the order, insisting on absolute poverty and no ownership of property. Boniface's bull had previously placed restrictions on them from preaching and hearing confession, later repealed by the Dominican Pope Benedict XI (1303-04). Clement attempted a compromise, but some Spirituals did not comply, and four of them were executed by the Inquisition under Pope John (1316-1334) in 1318. John later inflamed the whole order by declaring the Franciscan assertion that Christ and His apostles owned nothing as heresy (Kelly, 14). Franciscan preaching in Padua had been reinforced by the presence of St. Anthony, a Franciscan friar who was a contemporary of St. Francis, but the city by any definition existed as moderate in this regard.

**The Virgin East:** As protector of the city of Constantinople and spiritual intercessor to the people, the Virgin underwent no debate or change in status, her tradition, as important as ever, having been set in previous centuries. The mosaics at Chora were an affirmation of this tradition.

**West:** The Dominicans and, especially, the Franciscans had advanced the human and spiritual position of the Virgin in the thirteenth century. St. Francis had not only established an order of male monks, but a women's order through St. Clare. Although originally devoted to an imitation of Christ like their male counterparts, over time the Poor Clares became more associated with the pure example of the Virgin. From the fourteenth century on an accelerated elevation of the Virgin gained momentum, resulting in hundreds of new painted images, as well as commentaries, prayer books and psalters devoted to her.

Christianity was the primary bond that held East and West together, but, paradoxically, was the main reason they were driven apart. Topographical reality that placed emperor and pope at opposite ends of the Mediterranean was bound to lead to difficulties. Imperial opinion at the beginning was that the emperor in Constantinople should attend to
secular tasks, first and foremost the security of the empire, while the Church attended to matters spiritual and to the organization of its clergy. However, from the beginning the emperor was invested with religious responsibility: chosen by God, he had a holy obligation to protect Christendom, and his armies now marched beneath a Christian labarum (Ostrogorsky 31). The emperor, not the pope, convened the first seven ecumenical councils, consisting of bishops from all parts of the empire. They were organized to deal with complex issues relating to ecclesiology, theology, and heresy. But even the authoritative and unifying emperor Constantine the Great, who called the first council at Nicaea in 325, could not control the results. Though a milestone in establishing the foundation of Christian theology, it did not fulfill his desire to have a single unified Christianity in the empire. The problem that caused Constantine to convene his bishops in Nicaea was the Arian heresy, and the council, under the leadership of Archbishop Athanasius of Alexandria, dealt with it by anathematizing Arius. This was expected to end the matter, but it did not. Arianism continued to have adherents for two hundred years, and negative residual effects, some of them political, lasted until the end of the seventh century, paving the way for more theological difficulties. (Evans, 84).

In fact, after this initial incident most, if not all, emperors were to find that both theological and ecclesiastical issues were too often spilling into the political arena. One might have expected a better result from the promising start of a powerful but tolerant Roman emperor, the first to throw his weight behind Christianity. Constantine’s most literate subjects had gathered in Nicaea to help make his empire a better place in which to live and worship. Ironically, a simple question is the answer, where was the pope? Sylvester I begged health and age as excuses for not attending (Kelly, 27-8), but his absence set an unfortunate
precedent. At the first seven church councils, convened between 325 and 787, still considered as ecumenical in Catholicism and Orthodoxy, not one pope attended. The unfortunate result: council decrees that forged theological consensus were routinely marred by ecclesiastical divisions, and over time contributed to the separation of Eastern and Western Churches. Comprehending theology and ecclesiology is hard enough when examining them on their own, but understanding a mixture involving two differing cultures is harder still. Here an attempt will be made to do so, utilizing our early fourteenth century paintings from Constantinople and Padua.

Figure 8 is a detail from the *Entrustment* showing the three major figures in the scene, the priest Zacharias, the Virgin and Joseph. All of them compete for visual attention with the flowering rod, which, except for the priest’s hand, is featured boldly by the gold of the temple wall. The artist has appeared to have made it the central image. The reasons for this pose a textual dilemma, but it can be explained by Byzantine theology and its history.

The dilemma is that the flowering of Joseph’s rod does not appear in the text of the *Protoevangelium*. The only one of our primary sources in which it appears is the *Golden Legend* (GL, 153). Coupled with the aforementioned absence of a dove, it would seem that the program does not adhere solely to the *Protoevangelium*, throwing this assertion into doubt. However, both the flowering rod and the dove’s omission have precedent in St. Clement’s at Ochrid (Fig. 9). In addition an illustration in the twelfth century homilies of James Kokkinobaphos indicates that the Byzantine tradition was not uniform. The *Protoevangelium* states that the dove emerges from the rod and then perches on Joseph’s head. The illumination is a continuous representation, faithful to the text, that shows the dove hovering directly over a barren rod, and another dove on Joseph’s head (Fig. 10).
The non-textual image of the eleven rods on the altar in the *Entrustment* now emerges as part of the solution to this conundrum. As Zacharias prays in the previous mosaic, he does so before an altar that holds twelve, one of which buds. Here is another detail at odds with the *Protoevangelium* which states that the dove flies from the rod after Zacharias gives it to him. The narrative of the rods, however, is not the programmer’s choice to diverge from the text nor the artist’s whimsical addition. Rather, it refers to the Old Testament, where God instructs Moses to follow exactly the same process for choosing a priest who will stop the people from “murmuring” against Him (Num. 17. 16-24). The number of the rods carried the symbolism of the twelve tribes of Israel. The flowering rod fell to Aaron, brother of Moses. God then instructed Moses to place it in the Ark of the Covenant. Old Testament symbolism is thus neatly balanced in the composition, the eleven rods on the altar on the left, the tree of Jesse, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1 (Nelson, 59) on the right, and the flowering rod in the center. The tree biblically validates the genealogy of Joseph in Matthew and Luke as a descendent of the House of David and one of the twelve tribes. Following this line of thought, the position of the flowering rod, a symbol of one of the tribes, hangs over the Virgin, indicating adherence to the first two sections of the *Protoevangelium* that assign implicit recognition of her father Joachim as descended from the twelve tribes, and thus assigning to her a holy lineage as well.

But we leave this scene only having understood its symbolism then we miss its typology, which contains its theological essence. Christian typology regarded Aaron as a type of Christ because of his divinely appointed priestly position in the context of the Old Law (Livingstone, 1), but in this case it would appear that it is the flowering rod that represents Christ. Hebrews 9.4 repeats that the rod was placed in the Ark, and in typological context this
suggests that the tablets of the law and the flowering rod are types of Christ as the Incarnation. The absence of the dove emphasizes the rod as exclusive representative in the history of the second person of the Trinity.

Furthermore, the fact that it was placed in the Ark of the Covenant is relevant because the Ark was seen as a type of the Virgin, bearer of the Incarnation as the Theotokos who bore Christ (Esbroek, 63-8). The function and orientation of Joseph’s hands in the picture are now clear: with the left he reaches for the Virgin, and with the right he reaches for Christ. In making the flowering rod the central focus with its loaded symbolism, the artist shrewdly circumvented the Council of Trullo and represented Christ in non-human form.

The shifting of importance from the Virgin, within her own cycle, to Christ, is consistent with the way the Byzantines defined theology as strictly the study of God, or more aptly, the knowledge of God (Russell, 267; Theology). The Nicaean definition consisted of a god in three persons and one substance, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The third ecumenical council of Ephesus in 431 was convened in response to Patriarch Nestorius’ demotion of the Virgin to “Christokos” from “Theotokos,” (Chadwick, 192) an assertion that was reversed and confirmed her indispensable position in the history of the Son; but the primary focus of the Council was still Christological. The implication of a separation of the human and divine natures of Christ struck many as too close to Arianism, the heresy that was still clinging to the belief that Christ had only one nature and that was human. Nestorianism took root in Syria and points east but was no longer an effective challenger to the Nicaean Creed.

Unfortunately, it had caused a pendulum swing in the opposite direction and produced the Monophysite heresy that held there existed but one divine nature in Christ. The problem of Monophysitism dominated the proceedings of the next three ecumenical councils, but it lost
momentum in the seventh century and remained only in Armenia and parts of Egypt. However, it did not leave without heavily influencing the course of Eastern Orthodox belief, especially as it applied to monasticism.

The fourth century Desert Fathers were the first ascetics to remove themselves from society to pursue the life of prayer and contemplation and cultivate some of the core practices of monastic Christianity. At some point in the next two centuries the hesychasm was introduced in some monastic communities, prayer that, practiced in quiet solitude, facilitated contemplation and communion with God. Together with the idea of theosis, it became perhaps the strongest instrument of monastic practice and belief. Athanasius first described theosis as the deification of man through the incarnation of God, and that Christ became man that we might become divine. Accordingly, the prayer of the hesychasm runs thus: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me.” The caveat that was well understood is that there is an infinite gap between man and God, and that one did not become God, but became like and in union with God. (hesychasm).

The monastery of St. Catherine’s in Sinai was an important center for the hesychasm and its spread in Orthodox monasticism. It was commissioned and built by Justinian toward the end of his reign in the second half of the sixth century. The later eighth century dedication to St. Catherine superseded that of Justinian who, before its dedication to the Theotokos and the Burning Bush (Collins, 96), dedicated it to the Transfiguration of Christ. *The Transfiguration* mosaic in the apse of the church (Fig. 3) has already been briefly detailed in Chapter II, but the importance here is in the content and significance of the gospel accounts. Recorded in the three synoptic gospels, it is the only other theophany besides the Baptism that occurs before the Passion. Though the mosaic in the apse of Sant’ Apollinare en
Classe did not become the prototypical model for the event, the universal symbolism it exhibited, from the Garden to the Second Coming, was reinforced by succeeding Fathers and theologians. The Transfiguration was the only direct experience of God’s glory to human beings, in this case to Peter, James and John. The most important visual tradition that the Sinai mosaic began was its depiction of light emanating from a mandorla surrounding Christ, an interpretation of its power that threw the disciples to the ground. In texts this light was described as “uncreated,” a manifestation of God that humans are unequipped to experience and understand. The monastic’s encounter with this light through contemplation and hesychastic prayer was conceived as a spiritual ascent that channels the ascent to Sinai by Moses and the disciples’ ascent up Mt. Thabor (Andreopoulos, 194).

The unique combination of Sinai’s location, theological emphasis on Christ, the Transfiguration and Old Testament typology connected to the Virgin led to a solid foundation of faith and image that was to underpin one of the kerygmatic foundations of the Eastern Church. A triangle with the Christ at its apex with Moses and the Virgin at the corners below founded a strong basis for faith and prayer. Moses experienced the blinding light of the Burning Bush on Mount Sinai, and a chapel devoted to it was built and has inspired pilgrimage (Nelson, Sinai: 8, 145). The light is typologically connected to the uncreated light of Christ and to the Virgin, who bore the light in her womb and was not consumed. We have already seen the Ark of the Covenant as a type of the Virgin bearing the New Covenant. On the other side are Moses, who delivered the Old Law, and Elijah: the latter represents the prophets and a type of Christ who was likewise fed by a bird in the wilderness and later was swept up into heaven by fire (Livingstone, 192). Both of them are present in the Transfiguration in their respective roles.
The scheme is most relevant to our discussion in the matter of the Virgin’s typology, for two of the frescoes in the Parakklesion of Chora are devoted to the Burning Bush and the Ark of the Covenant. A medallion of the Virgin is barely visible in the bush of Moses and the Burning Bush; adjacent is the Bearing of the Ark of the Covenant (Fig. 11). Figure 12 is from St. Clement’s in Ochrid and much more graphic in the depiction of the Virgin in the Burning Bush. The concept of the Virgin as a holy vessel of the Incarnation led to the natural extension of her as a symbol of the Church as a whole, thus ‘Mother Church.’ The image in the apse of the Parakklesion is not that of the Transfiguration but the Anastasis (Fig. 13), the Eastern Resurrection image known as the Harrowing of Hell in the West. It has been shown, however, that its core compositional structure of Christ at the center, holy figures of Old and New Testaments at the top left and right, and humans on the bottom, is based on that of the Transfiguration, designed many years before the Anastasis (Andreopoulos 161-66).

The Sinaitic Transfiguration-Virgin-Old Testament axis served as a platform for the advance of Eastern monasticism and perhaps its most revered practice, the hesychasm. The hesychastic controversy of the mid-fourteenth century was a matter of theological degree, not of heresy. Gregory Palamas was accused of hyperintensifying the hesychasm to the point where it challenged the tenets of apophatic theology, the Orthodox definition of what God is not: that is, unavailable to human comprehension by reason or the earthly senses: God can only be known through prayer (hesychasm). Sinai also came to symbolize the concept of the “holy mountain,” so that when the community of Mount Athos was founded and settled, that is exactly the name it acquired in Greek, “Agios Oros.” The Transfiguration occurred on a mountain. The holy moments of Moses were experienced on the mountains. Elijah ascended to heaven from a mountain, and he is still the only Old Testament figure to whom Orthodox
churches are dedicated: all of them crown the tops of mountains or high hills. However, when the monks of Mt. Athos had to choose a patron protector, it was the Virgin.

Nevertheless, Mary is a figure of reduced stature in the Chora Entrustment, and her size is universally adhered to in Byzantine representations of this scene. They always showed Mary as being ‘given’ or ‘entrusted’ to Joseph as in the inscription, and in the Protoevangelium she is referred to as his ‘ward.’ (PJ, 61). In other words, they never interpreted the scene as a betrothal or a marriage between two adult figures, and they could support this by pointing to the text (Lafontaine-Dosogne, 186). This implies theologically that the importance of the Virgin, while indispensable as Mother Church and mediatrix, is supportive, but secondary to Christ.

The contrast with detail of the Betrothal in the Arena Chapel is blatantly obvious (Fig. 14). Mary has grown since her Presentation and appears as a young woman whose height approaches that of Joseph. (She is also adult size in the Meditations illustration). As mentioned in Chapter I the figure of the Virgin is featured, enhanced in contrast to Joseph by the fact that he and his halo are a bit lost before the background wall of the temple. The presence of the dove and the flowering rod adhere to the supporting texts. It is not clear if the white flower is a lily, but if so it would not be out of place: it was a symbol of purity. The giving of the ring with a priest presiding and facilitating the act with both hands gives the impression that this is not just a betrothal but a marriage, as the fresco is often entitled.

The red shoe that peeks out from the Virgin’s gown at the bottom of the painting suggests royalty. Red and purple were the colors of royalty in the Middle Ages. The red tunic of Abiathar might thus hint at his royalty, but he is not nimbed, seeming to identify him only as a necessary figure of authority to conduct the proceedings (We will return to the colors of
both the priest’s and the scribe’s clothing below). In contrast, connection of royal red to the Virgin is in line with a detail that appears exclusively in Pseudo-Matthew’s account of the Skein of Purple Wool, an episode also recorded in the Protoevangelium, shown in the Chora program, but not pictured in the Arena Chapel. After the betrothal Mary casts lots with six other virgins to determine who should weave which colors for a veil to be hung in the temple. The purple and scarlet fall to the Virgin and “...the others were jealous and called her in sport ‘Regina Virginum’. An angel rebuked them and said it was a true prophecy” (PM, 89).

Giotto’s addition of the coronet that the Virgin wears adds to her royal aura.

The Western image of Maria Regina as a variety of image began to appear earlier than the Pseudo Matthew in Italian painting, as opposed to the East where it does not appear at all (Pace, 425). The next upward step for the Virgin’s image was that to the Coronation of the Virgin. Not a biblical episode, it does have textual support in the Golden Legend (GL, Vol. II, 84-5). The establishment of her as a queen figure might have come indirectly from Romans 5:14 and 1 Corinthians 15:14 where Paul preaches that Christ is the new Adam. Together with the concept of God, and thus Christ, as a king, the Virgin was understood as a queen by virtue of being determined the new Eve. The concept of the New Eve was popular in the Western Middle Ages and additional typological reference to the Old Testament, but its roots lay in the Eastern patristic tradition. (Meyendorff, 147). A succeeding step upward came with her Assumption plus her assignation as bride of Christ, queenship and brideship now met (Rubin, 306). Another view of the Betrothal opens up: as a prefiguration of her role as Mother Church, bride of Christ; not marrying Joseph but Christ Himself. Images such as The Marriage of the Virgin by Michael Pacher (1435-1498) present this scene, not the betrothal of Mary to Joseph.
This brings us to two contrasts with the East, the Western idea of theology, and the connection of the theologian to his subject. Theology in the West involved the study not just of God, but of the entire kingdom of God and all creatures within it in space and time. This brought in the realm of humanity's relation to God, its redemption through Christ, and the prospect that something new and revealed that had not been seen before. The theologian became a sort of scientist, searching and identifying divine truths by faith-inspired reason (Livingstone, 583). Thomas Aquinas became the foremost practitioner of this 'science', but it was Augustine that set the theological tone for the Western High Middle Ages.

The typology of the Virgin as the New Eve prompts a discussion about what is perhaps Augustine's most important concept, original sin. He posited that while every man and woman is sinful, this universal sinfulness is overlaid by the original sin of Adam and Eve. Humanity thus bears both personal and cosmic burdens. The only release is by the grace of God, which cannot be earned solely by a life of good works, nor by waiting for it by living a careless, sinful life and expecting its grant. One must try to live a clean Christian life, but the ultimate decision on redemption is up to God. This placed everybody into one of two groups, the elect and the damned (Augustine, 569-75). These can be seen clearly in Giotto's Last Judgement on the rear wall of the Arena Chapel. The elect appear from the left center to left bottom. The figure of the Virgin is the most prominent to appear in this section. On the bottom right are the damned, suffering in a wilderness of atrocity presided over by Satan as monster.

There are hints in the Marian-Christological program, however, that grace can be bestowed in the worst of sinful circumstance if guilt is recognized and repentance given. The reverse is also true, that a sinful life will lead to condemnation after death. The indicator in
this case is the use of color in the interior logic of the program that determines the visual message. In Chapter II it was noted in identifying the iconography of the *Betrothal* that clothing color aided in identifying the Hebrew Abiathar and Ruben, the first a priest, the second a scribe. If the viewer looks below and to the right in the second tier there will be found in the image of *The Cleansing of the Temple*, two figures conspire, squeezed into the far right of the frame. One is wearing green and the other red. At this point we do not know who they represent, but we are do know that we are out of the apocrypha and into the New Testament. The next fresco in the program, on the left of the arch, is *The Pact of Judas* (Fig. 15). We now know that they are the chief priests to whom Judas went to betray Christ. Their identities are made clear in Christ before Caiaphas, the priest in red is Annas and the one in green is Caiaphas. If we are to follow the logic of color only, then we would we be forced to admit that Ruben’s expression of guilt may be a falsehood, because the inheritor of the green is Caiaphas, the most disagreeable character in the narrative. First he gestures disdainfully with his thumb toward Judas as he speaks to another priest in the *Pact*, then he tears his clothes as he condemns *Christ in Christ before Caiaphas* (Fig. 16) The same breast-bearing gesture of tearing his shirt is found in the figure of *Wrath* in the bottom tier of the Seven Vices (Fig. 17), and we remember that it was the wrath of Ruben that started everything to begin with. Ruben-Caiaphas is destined to be a member of the Augustine’s damned, sinful behavior and Jewish recalcitrance paving the way. The only time this combination character is pacified is in the presence of the Virgin in the *Betrothal*. The image of Augustine himself bears witness at the bottom of the third tier, not far from the *Pact of Judas* on the adjacent arch (Map 2, No. a-1).
Toward the middle of this narrative another color path appears that looks dire at first but expresses restrained hope at its conclusion. Judas enters the narrative in an orange cloak in the *Pact* and wears it through *The Last Supper* and *The Washing of the Feet* to the *Betrayal*. In the first and the last of these scenes his cloak is the most eye-catching part of the paintings, clearly equating the color with his identity and his sins. Then something interesting happens. In Acts 1:21-26 Judas is replaced by Matthias. Giotto places him in the fresco of the Pentecost at the far right—in an orange robe. The artist goes on to dress him in orange as part of the row of disciples on the far right of The Last Judgement. With such a stark association of the orange with evil previously in the program, the subsequent appearance on Matthias might indicate that there could be at least a hint of forgiveness for Judas. If there is such hope for a repentant Judas, then anyone with a repentant heart and determination to change course and lead a good life might have a chance to receive the grace of God and escape Augustine’s hell (Czarnecki, 45).

The tenor of the color program runs parallel to the meaning of the program as a whole, the story of Christ, who entered and left His human life for all humanity’s Redemption. The person to whom this would have had the most meaning was the patron, Enrico Scrovegni. He was a usurer, making a fine living off of lending money at interest, a sinful activity to the church and a generally disliked profession. Constructing and decorating the Arena Chapel, then dedicating it to the Virgin of Charity was his way of repenting and affording himself the chance of his salvation being mediated by her. There is evidence that he wished the chapel to be a burial chapel for himself, dedicated to the Mother of God. (Kohl, 182) Visual support is provided by the reappearance of the figure of the Virgin at the bottom of *The Last*
Judgement, receiving a representation of the chapel from a kneeling Enrico Scrovegni (Fig. 18).

A heightened enhancement of the Virgin’s role in Catholicism was begun by Bernard of Clairvaux in the twelfth century and intensified by the mendicant orders in the thirteenth, in particular by the Franciscans. He is quoted often in *Meditations on the Life of Christ* (MC, 2). In contrast to the monks in the East, who had been limited in traveling outside the monastery by Justinian law, the friars of St. Francis, in an imitation of Christ, carried His message and the mediating role of the Virgin outside the walls to as many people as possible. Since monasteries and cities harbored most of the literate they became centers for scholarship and education. The increased scholarly theological interest in the dogmas of the Assumption, the bodily ascent of the Virgin to heaven after death, and the Immaculate Conception gained momentum. The former was all but accepted in the West, but the latter, though generally accepted, is still in dispute. The Eastern Church seemed to have generally accepted the Assumption, but paintings of the Dormition do not explicitly delineate a bodily ascent. A good example is one of the few remaining mosaics in the naos of the Chora. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception, that the Virgin was eternally preserved from original sin was rejected by Orthodoxy. Original sin itself was accepted legally by the Church but almost unanimously rejected by Byzantine theologians. The latter claimed that sin is a personal act and not an act of nature, therefore humans have not inherited guilt from Adam (Meyendorff, 143-44).

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

There is no room here for adequately covering the hundreds of canons, decrees and laws that flowed out of both Eastern and Western Churches. After brief descriptions of their
respective internal dynamics this section will concentrate on those key incidents where interaction and conflict arose between them and led to their separation.

The cities of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem were the four great patriarchates of the East, superseded in the whole of Christendom only by Rome. The first seven councils were held in the East, Constantinople I, II and III, Nicaea I and II, Ephesus and Chalcedon. The great heresies of the East, Arianism, Nestorianism, and Monophysitism, plus iconoclasm and hierarchical squabbles between the patriarchates dominated the proceedings, but there were many useful disciplinary canons that held the church and monastic organization together for more than one thousand years. After the seventh council at Nicaea in 787 several councils of Constantinople were convened, considered as ecumenical only by the Orthodox Church. However, church and state were mostly symbiotic, and Orthodoxy was one of the staunchest pillars of the Byzantine Empire that helped it last for over a thousand years. During the dark age of the seventh century, the cities of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem were lost to the Arabs leaving Constantinople as primary see. But the system was not strictly hierarchical as in Rome. The patriarch was first among equals and all churches large or small were considered part of the body of Christ (Voulgaris, 549-57).

In the West the pope in Rome was considered divine leader of Christianity and Christian believers on the basis of Petrine theory, derived from divine appointment of the apostle Peter by Christ as leader of the Church. However, the fall of the empire in the west left a political power vacuum that turned the pope into a secular leader as well. Consequently, the papacy was often sucked into the medieval maw of corruption, nepotism and struggles of succession, all affecting ecclesiastical and political stability. Except for
Arianism, the West was not affected by the great heresies of the East, but it had its own, the most serious being the Albigensians, for which the papacy first established the Inquisition. Strong hierarchical organization from pope to priest gave great power over the people of feudal medieval Europe in tending to their faith and spiritual lives.

The Great Schism of 1054 is remembered as the key event in the split between the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches, but the division actually started much earlier. This has been said before, but without an assembled chronology of events. Here follows this author’s list of crucial ecclesiastical actions and events that caused the churches to drift apart.

325. Pope Sylvester I does not attend the first ecumenical council at Nicaea (see above).

381. The second of the ecumenical councils is held in Constantinople. It reconfirms the Nicene Creed and declares Constantinople as the second see in Christendom. Pope Damasus I does not attend and refuses to approve the canons, first because they were not brought to the knowledge of the apostolic see, and second because his position was not subject to decisions of the councils. If there was to be a council, he should call it. He is the first pope to aggressively promote papal primacy.

451. The fourth ecumenical council at Chalcedon enhances and re-approves the Nicene Creed and declares Constantinople as the second see in Canon 28. In the absence of Pope Leo, who had not approved the convening of the council, the papal legates reject Canon 28, but send the canons to Rome. Leo signs all of the canons except Canon 28, which asserts equality of Constantinople with Rome. He was another pope who strenuously asserted papal primacy.

445-54. Unable to squeeze agreement from a vascillating papacy on the complex affair of the Three Chapters, effectively the tail end of the Nestorian controversy, Emperor Justinian I has Pope Vigilius arrested in Rome, and after a lengthy stay in Sicily, brings him to Constantinople where he stays under house arrest for nine years. During this time the fifth ecumenical council is convened in Constantinople when Justinian thought he would hear what he wanted: the pope’s condemnation of the Nestorian writings. The pope refuses to attend the council in 553 and renews his defense due to pressure from Western clergy, then recants and is allowed to return to a hostile flock. He never returns to Rome and dies in Sicily.

692 Pope Sergius refuses to sign the decrees of the Council at Trullo because the council was called without his approval.
787. The seventh ecumenical Council at Nicaea condemns iconoclasm. Pope Hadrian I signs but Charlemagne rejects it due to faulty translation from Greek to Latin (see Chapter II). The West does not give its final approval until 880.

858-880. Patriarch Ignatios is forced to resign due to political pressure and is replaced by Photios. Ignatios, still wanting his throne back enlists help from Pope Nicholas I who sees in the conflict of the two patriarchs an opportunity to meddle in the affairs of Constantinople. A rift opens up between the two cities and Emperor Basil I calls the Council of 869-870 where Photios was deposed in order to restore relations with Rome. This is referred to in the East as the Photian Schism. The Council of 879-80 in Constantinople reinstates Photios and excludes papal jurisdiction over the Byzantine church. This decision is written into Orthodox canon law and in the East the council is recognized as being ecumenical.

1054, The Great Schism. Pope Leo IX sends Cardinal Humbert to Constantinople to try and smooth out differences the churches have in southern Italy. A complete breakdown in communication between Humbert and Patriarch Michael Cerularius leads to mutual excommunication of the churches at the altar of Hagia Sophia (Evans, 90-95).

1274. At the council of Lyon Emperor Michael VIII and Pope Gregory X affects a religio-political tradeoff whereby the Byzantines agree to ecclesiastical submission to the papacy in exchange for prevention of Charles of Anjou’s plans to attack Constantinople. The Union of Churches forces the Byzantines to accept papal primacy, purgatory and the filoque. The agreement was extremely unpopular in Constantinople and was revoked in 1285, its political purpose having been obviated by the revolt of the Sicilian Vespers against Charles of Anjou.

1438-39. The Council of Ferrara-Florence aims for the same kind of goals as in Lyon, but this time the foreign threat is coming from the Turks and the Pope wants another crusade. A rather flabby agreement that establishes a second Union of Churches under the same conditions for the Byzantines comes under pressure when the Crusade fails miserably at Varna. The Union is revoked by the Byzantine church shortly after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 (Chalcedon, Constantinople, Ephesus, Ferrara-Florence, Lyon, Nicaea, Trullo).

The final two councils above indicate that even though there were minor theological issues and temporary agreement to Unite, the major flashpoint of most of the councils was papal primacy.

Let us briefly look back at the details of the Betrothal and the Entrustment to further understand the above. Abiathar cuts a rather sanguine image as he joins the hands of Joseph and Mary. He is not nimbed, his status reduced in comparison to the two main characters. In
the *Entrustment* Zacharias is much more authoritative as he pushes the rod toward Joseph and rests a paternalistic hand on the head of Mary. He is nimbed, and for the moment is in control. If we look at Abiathar as a metaphor, not as Catholic iconographic type, for the pope and Zacharias, not as an Orthodox iconographic type, for the patriarch, then the title of this chapter becomes clear. It describes an inverse power ratio over the period between 325-1669. In the West, as the popes became weaker, kings became stronger. In the East patriarchs did not exactly grow strong, but, unlike the emperors, they survived. After 1453 the emperors disappeared altogether. Only the Church, and her patriarchs, remained.

As we look at the figures of the Virgin, the matter of accessibility, physical to the viewer, spiritual to the faithful, arises. The child in the *Entrustment* is not the focus of the composition, her only eye-catching characteristic the deep blue of her clothes. The mosaic is part of a program that is tucked into an inner narthex, away from the general flow of attendance and liturgy. A concrete decision must me made to see it. In Giotto’s *Betrothal*, however, her image is in plain sight to the to the viewer. The scene’s resemblance to a marriage ceremony makes it easier to identify with an ideal, a visual empathy, for women especially, whereas the scene in the *Entrustment* does not. The compositional isolation of her head and nimbus makes spiritual identification easier as well. In the late fifteenth century the format was set for the rosary. It was a repetitive prayer that combined daily devotion with meditations on the Passion and consisted of one hundred fifty hail Maries organized in groups of ten. One of the hail Maries is to the *Coronation of the Virgin*, joining *Maria Regina* with the approachable human mediatrix to communicate with God, available for everybody’s personal worship (Rubin, 332). In contrast, the repetitive hesychastic prayer is to Christ, practiced only by an elite group of male monks. However, Roman Catholicism and
Orthodoxy both maintained the male ecclesiastical hierarchy of bishop, priest, deacon: no women were ordained until the seventeenth century in some Protestant denominations (Livingstone, 643).
V. THE SCALES OF EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION

**East:** Andronicus II the Elder (1282-1328) sat as Byzantine emperor for the duration of this period over territory that had been drastically reduced by struggles with the Latin Empire (1204-61). Although Serbs were to cause problems in the Balkans later in the century, the primary foreign threat was the rise of the Ottoman Turks: Byzantine troops barely held on to their cities in northwest Asia Minor at the beginning of his reign. The danger was enough for the emperor to call on the aid of Catalan mercenaries, but, after initial, brutal, success against the Ottomans, their continuing extortionate demands in return for services became impossible to meet. Disgruntled and angry, they crossed the Hellespont and continued their brutality while occupying Gallipoli, attacking Thrace and Macedonia, sacking Mount Athos, and eventually conquering and settling the Duchy of Athens. For most of the populace these were just more catastrophes visited upon them by the West. Intrapalace conflict between the emperor and his grandson, the future Andronicus III, took seed.

The weakness of the empire also presented itself by the large amount of abandoned and ruined buildings in the capital that had displayed the greatness of the past. Agriculture, previously a sound foundation for the existence of Byzantium, was in serious decline, as small landholders and farmers became increasingly impoverished by the wealthy and the noble. Foreign trade, largely under the control of Venice and Genoa, was on balance more beneficial to the Italian merchants. The Byzantine state continued down its road to bankruptcy and probably only escaped complete dissolution due to massive internal problems in the Islamic world (Ostrogorsky, 478-498).

**West:** Since Medieval Europe was not defined by central state control, and there were no serious external threats, the period was dominated by conflicts between states and between these states and the papacy (effectively a secular state run by a semi-secular ruler). In gearing up for the coming Hundred Years War, both France and England needed to increase their revenues to pay their armies, and they settled on taxing the clergy, causing the pope to object strenuously. After a series of failed diplomatic exchanges, in 1303 Pope Boniface VIII prepared a bull of excommunication for Philip the Fair, but the French king imprisoned Boniface outside of Rome before he could enact the bull. Though his detention only lasted 24 hours, and he was never deposed, the pope’s spirit was broken and he died soon after release. The next pope was Italian, but he lasted only a year, upon which Clement V (1305-1314), a Frenchman, mounted the throne and moved from Rome to Avignon. Thus began the ‘Babylonian Captivity’, and a run of a half dozen French popes, that lasted until 1378. The papacy was now under effective control of the French monarchy. One of the first important acts of this symbiosis was to dissolve the Templars, more of a response to the Knights’ growing wealth and political power than to a perceived heresy. The Holy Roman Emperor, Henry VII, official ruler of half of Italy, traveled over the Alps to hear other complaints of papal intrusion on the peninsula, but he was forced to return home quickly to attend to his quarreling German principalities. In fact much of northern Italy escaped turmoil, and its fiercely independent cities, such as Padua, prospered from a developing financial sector, the cloth trade with the Low Countries (in which the Italians began to compete with their own manufacturing), and the Eastern trade, which extended beyond Byzantium to destinations on the central Asian silk road. This gave rise to a new merchant class whose prosperity was not largely shared by the rest of the continent, but the trend was continent wide: the northern
Hanseatic League conducted very successful trade in the Baltic and with Orthodox Novgorod (McEvedy 81-85).

The contrast of a unified Byzantine State ruled by an Emperor and a fractious, feudal, medieval Europe ruled by everybody and nobody is the central feature of political, social and economic conditions in East and West. The scope and frequency of foreign existential threats was different for each as well, with the Byzantines bearing the brunt of assault. We have seen that religious issues overlapped to affect contact between the two civilizations, but the political conflicts had their own fierce energy, often affected by the desire of a new unity that would have re-birthed the success of the late Roman Empire. Economic factors such as access to valuable commodities, agricultural products and the trade routes to obtain them became more critical as political diversity increased.

The system of a single emperor ruling a hierarchical and aristocratic state structure that covered a large territory, inherited from Rome, was assumed to have been the only way to conduct policy. The relevant detail of the Entrustment shows Joseph receiving the rod in front of the suitors. If we temporarily abandon the iconography it appears that what we are viewing is one man standing before a group as its leader. Though they are barefoot in respect to the House of the Lord, their beards and clothes dignify them as elders. Now if we use Joseph as a metaphor for the emperor, he is reaching for the rod of Christ to accept the apostolic leadership of and responsibility for securing Christendom; and the men behind him are members of the Twelve Tribes, genealogical aristocrats.

The aristocracy, urban, rural and military, was essential in ruling Byzantium. Many of them were in Constantinople, but during good times the essential instruments of state flowed out of the city, stable government, the rule of law and regional security. There was societal cohesion that supported the emperor and military victories that were celebrated by
processions in the capital were similarly celebrated in the provinces. In bad times, when the empire was under pressure and losing territory, the Constantinople became crowded with ambitions, egos and competition for dynastic ascendance and social advancement. Emperors were assassinated, maimed and exiled. Resentment broke into social unrest. The late Paleologan era was such a time. A further look at the Chora gives us insight into the wealthy aristocracy who dominated the state and the economy and also provides a closer look at one its members, patron of the monastery, Theodore Metochites.

Entering from the main door on the West in which our purpose is to pass straight to the naos, one is immediately confronted by the Christ Pantocrator (Fig. 20) over the entrance door to the inner narthex. If we wish to look up slightly we can see the Miracle at Cana and the Miracle of the Loaves and the Fishes. Passing through the door we see over the entrance to the narthex, Theodore Metochites giving the church to Christ (Fig. 21). Peter and Paul flank the door below. Again casting our gaze upward, without excessive craning of the neck, we see the Presentation of the Virgin. As we enter the naos we see the two standing figures on either side of the apse, Christ on the left and Virgin and child on the right. These mosaics are two of the three in the naos that escaped destruction. It is probable that there existed a Theotokos in the apse and another Pantocrator in the dome.

The visual message in this succession of image is an expression of power. First the viewer sees Christ, ruler of the world and performer of miracles in his earthly life. Next in sight is Theodore Metochites giving the church to Christ, ruler of the world, divinely supported by His apostles. Metochites presents the church to Christ just as the Virgin was presented to God in the temple (This would explain why the Presentation scene is out of sequence in the Mariological narrative.). The figure of Christ is central in the deesis, but the
eye cannot help gravitating to the image of Metochites kneeling in his fancy robe, wearing an elaborate white hat, and sporting a wide, thick beard. There is no doubt who is responsible for the miracle of the church and divine and salvific moments experienced inside.

Theodore Metochites was chief minister and logothete to Emperor Andronicus II, and a political climber who had allied himself by marriage to the royal family. The library and the decoration of the church at Chora Monastery were to be monuments to his secular immortality and to curry favor and acquire more influence at the imperial court by impressing the emperor. Chora was also conceived as an ostentatious display of his great wealth to peers in his social class, high state officials, patriarchs, and bishops. There were not many poor viewers invited to Chora. As to riches, he was never satisfied with what he had: he always wanted more. As a prime minister and treasurer to a weak emperor, he was an extremely powerful figure who consistently used his power to acquire more wealth inappropriately. Metochites’ major sin was selling imperial offices to the poor, a practice that in retrospect was probably responsible for the increased social unrest that helped bring him and his emperor down. The mosaic of the Enrollment, the scene of Joseph and Mary paying their taxes, is not a common inclusion in church programs. Compared to the ensuing Massacre of the Innocents the scene is tranquil, an official process being recorded. The collection of taxes in the empire, though administered efficiently through an effective infrastructure, was not so sanguine on the ground: tax collectors were hated as repressive extortionists and crooks. The mosaic scene seems to be propaganda to promote the image of a kinder, gentler Byzantine tax collection centered on the benign Roman official seated in his chair, wearing a similar hat to Metochites in the deesis mosaic. This seems to validate the idea that Metochites used visual representation that glorified and covered up the shaky
contemporary political and social cohesion as one of the few weapons available to counter internal and external threats (Nelson, 77).

Throughout its history the Byzantine Empire was constantly faced with external threats, and the early fourteenth century was no exception, but in most crises they were up to the task of competent defense under able generals and effective governance. There is no room here to list or describe all of these threats, but one crucial period demonstrates the extent of foreign invasion that they faced and their success in fending them off. (Map 3) represents Europe from the seventh to ninth centuries from a short history of Byzantium. It is not an inaccurate map, but look at the white empty field of France and notice the crossed swords symbol for battle that accompanies the only word in the space, Tours. Now look at the same symbol that accompanies Constantinople and see that the swords are not as easily discernible on a busier part of the map. In fact, as the inset shoes, three battle symbols should be there. In 626 Constantinople was attacked jointly by the Avars and Persians, thanks largely, as always, to a strong system of siege walls on land, naval superiority, and an extensive cistern system for water storage that allowed the Byzantines to exhaust the invaders. This was especially true for the second siege, the first by the Arabs in the late seventh century that lasted for four years. After their second failure in 717, they gave up the idea of attacking Europe through the Balkans or by sea. Though they had inflicted the first naval defeat ever on the Byzantine navy in 655, the Arabs had lost their fleet to a storm after their first unsuccessful siege of Constantinople in 678. They took the only land route available to them, across North Africa and through Spain. Over- extended and out of their element they were defeated by the Franks at Tours in 732. All the hard work had been done by the Byzantines, but the Franks still seem to receive most of the credit for saving Western
Civilization. The Empire's military successes protected the fragmented political entities of the medieval West and allowed them the luxury of relative peace from external threats, save for the occasional incursion by central Asian horsemen. By 1453 the West was much stronger and able to fend for itself, but they were leaderless, incompetent, and uninterested in saving the Eastern empire that had protected them.

In the seventh century emperors began to reorganize the military into themes, tying service to the land. These themes, or districts as we might call them, were apportioned and boundaries were drawn. The idea was to give the defense forces incentive to fight for their land. Reason to be loyal to their emperor. The system worked well for over three hundred years and solidified the most strategic Byzantine asset, Asia Minor. It declined when the military aristocracy became too privileged and ambitious, and the army became increasingly unable to counter the threat on land from the Seljuk Turks. Thereafter the Empire became too reliant on foreign mercenaries who were of limited loyalty and reliability.

In the fourteenth century the major advances in the West were more economic than political, which the detail of the Betrothal can help us to understand (Fig. 22). Once again Joseph stands before a group of men that stand behind him, but he does not look the leader. The suitors are young and rambunctious, and one of them has stepped forward, breaking the unity of the crowd. Joseph wears sandals, but the suitors are well shod and finely clothed. They are clustered together, but the figures that are fully visible display a definite individuality, unlike the suitors in the Entrustment. They very well could be considered a metaphor for feudal fiefs, German principalities, or Italian cities. However, another association comes to mind: a group of economically successful states who are disappointed to lose a trading agreement. Map 4 shows towns and trade routes at mid-fourteenth century.
The cluster of cities shown in northern Italy were the most prosperous in their time (note that Padua is one of them). Genoa and Venice fought for naval primacy and trading rights with Byzantium and other states. They established several colonies in the Byzantine East, Central Asia and the Middle East. The results of success in the cloth trade can be seen in the clothes worn by the figures in the *Betrothal*. The geographical position at the center of the Mediterranean gave the Italians strategic access to other important areas, especially North Africa with which they traded for gold. This supported a large banking sector, and their coins became standard currency throughout Europe (McEvedy, 88). Of course one result of the expanding banking sector was the appearance of successful moneylenders, of which Enrico Scrovegni was one. The proposition that he built the chapel to aide his spiritual health and salvation was covered in the previous chapter, but an equally good reason is that he, like Metochites, wanted a monument to himself in this life as a sign of his wealth and status. Hiring the finest painter in Italy was not enough, He also contracted Giovanni Pisano, probably the finest sculptor of the time, to execute a *Madonna and Child with Two Deacons* on the altar (Map 2, M). However, unlike his Byzantine counterpart he was an independent businessman who did not confine the majority of the congregation to the rich and powerful. At the very least the doors were open to the general public on feast days.

The new wealth advanced social conventions that governed behavior. The most desired mode of behavior was of calm restraint to be practiced in the expression of human emotion. This is seen in the Arena Chapel program where Giotto has generally shown the central characters of Christ and Mary as calm except for situations where righteous emoting is justified. The Virgin *Christ and the Doctors* and Christ in the *Cleansing of the Temple* are two examples. Conversely, antagonists do not demonstrate restraint as we saw in Chapter III
with Caiaphas. The suitors do not either as they exhibit a mixture of wrath and envy. The case of the foremost suitor in the blue robe is somewhat different. It has been posited that he is raising his hand to slap Joseph on the back in contemporary Italian congratulation for getting married, but surely this can also be taken as sarcastic, and that if the suitor were to go through with it in the next instant it might feel to Joseph as more than a slap. The idea of Joseph, a major Christian character, being ridiculed by the suitors in this scene is testimony to Giotto’s wit, along with certain social trends, including in this case, ageism (Ladis 221-238). The audience would have judged their behavior as rude and unrestrained, but they were men, and Giotto’s frescoes exhibited an exemplary model in the Virgin on how to behave.

The success of the existence of a civilization is, unfortunately, tied to the success of its military, formed by soldiers who live in it, not from foreign mercenaries as in Paleologan Byzantium. The only time they came together was for the Crusades, endeavors that eventually ended in failure. But the kingdoms and states in the West evolved and grew under the umbrella of each of their separate defense capabilities, except for the temporary setback of the plague, into viable cultures that expanded outward in every area for hundreds of years. Social custom, economic development and politics all found their paths in numerous western medieval European cultures. In the Byzantine sphere, from 1300 to 1453 the state apparatus began to slow down until most of it just stopped. Trade in the Aegean and the Black Sea did not stop, but the Italians had controlled the balance for three centuries, and now the Turks were astride the trade routes. A post Byzantine culture in Crete and some of the Aegean islands lasted until 1669. The Turks did not dismantle Orthodox Church organization, so many social customs were preserved, but the lack of an army to defend meant that any sort of an Eastern political culture no longer existed.
VI. CONCLUSION

The contrasts between Eastern and Western Civilizations between 325 and 1669 return us to a basic comparison. The key lies in the word ‘Christendom.’ Though both maintained varied beliefs about Christ, there was enough commonality for several centuries that kept them from making war on each other. The turning point came in 1204 and the ensuing Latin Empire that lasted until 1261, after which Byzantium was permanently crippled. The Orthodox Church cultivated and grew artistic and literary achievement before being forced inward and facing the responsibility of preserving Byzantine religious culture and even some secular culture in monastic libraries. They also preserved much of the legacy of antiquity, manuscripts of the classics that underpinned so much of Eastern thought, literature and government. The centuries old system of church organization that allows each see a certain measure of autonomy, and regards the ecumenical patriarch in Constantinople as the leader who is first among equals, has as its political parallel the democracy of Athens in the fifth century BC. Thus the major sticking point that halts a Christian ecumenical unification of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches is not theological, but ecclesiastical, the age-old dispute over papal primacy.

It should be remembered that Western European monasteries were also recording and preserving behind their walls, but it was in the Dark Ages when the primary activities consisted of subsistence farming and horse-back knights dressed in metal suits killing each other. After this miserable period was over the West, all sectors of society were up and running, accelerating to produce a rich culture that continues today, and the monasteries became centers for education. The acceleration was enhanced at several points by the discovery of the secular classics that Christian monastics preserved.
What is quite interesting is how, after release of one of the territories under Turkish rule, Greece, responded to its freedom in 1821 after almost four hundred years. A revolutionary movement had been growing in the eighteenth century through contacts with Western Europe, but it is remarkable that after independence Greek writers and artists bounded into the Western cultural trends of the times, neo-Classicism and romanticism. This art and literary revival continued full force into the twentieth century and gave us well-known and respected Greek artists. The literary achievement was even greater, producing the Nobel prize-winning poets Cavafy, Seferis and Elytis, plus one of the finest novelists of the century, Kazantzakis.

What is more interesting, however, is the continuing role of the Virgin in both the East and the West after 1453. In the East the focus of Orthodoxy moved north to Russia, who now called itself ‘The Third Rome.’ Since the middle of the fourteenth century it had supported a brilliant artistic movement in religious art with The Transfiguration, and especially the Virgin as its popular subjects. Her traditional images in the Byzantine tradition, such as the Hodegitria and Eleousa, were continued in icon painting. Even as the Muslim empire of the Turks replaced the Byzantine, the Virgin's tradition was not overtly destroyed. In the naos of Chora, images of the Theotokos and the Dormition were not removed. Outside of Ephesus a shrine and a reconstructed house are maintained at the place were she is alleged to have died. Several respectful passages devoted to her in the Koran are displayed, and there is an outdoor canopy for Christian services to be held (House, 68-70).

The continuation of the Western tradition was carried to Latin America, where veneration of the Virgin became quite strong, and took Christian art full circle with the Mexican acheiropoetic image of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Over time the doctrine of the
Immaculate Conception gained definition in 1854, but did not become dogma. Still, there was conjecture that the late Pope John Paul II had considered a total elevation of the Virgin to join the Trinity to form a Quadrinity.

The difference in the titles of the two paintings treated in this paper perhaps best describe her position in both Eastern and Western Christian civilizations from 325 to 1669 and beyond. The East entrusted themselves to the Virgin, while the West was betrothed to her. For the East her protection was not enough, while in the West veneration of her image’ almost more as a goddess than protectress, expanded geometrically and was spread everywhere by Spain, the first of the worldwide European Empires.
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APPENDIX
1. Joachim Cast out of the Temple
2. Joachim among the Shepherds
3. The Annunciation to Anne
4. The Sacrifice of Joachim
5. The Dream of Joachim
6. The meeting at the Golden Gate
7. The Birth of the Virgin
8. The presentation of the Virgin
9. Presentation of the Rods
10. Joseph and the Suitors at the Temple
11. Betrothal of the Virgin
12. The Virgin Returns to Nazareth
13a. The Annunciation: Gabriel
13b. The Annunciation: the Virgin
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15. The Nativity
16. Adoration of the Magi
17. Presentation of Jesus at the Temple
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19. Massacre of the Innocents
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32. The Road to Calvary
33. The Crucifixion
34. The Deposition and Lamentation
35. The Resurrection/Noli mi tangere
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37. Pentecost

A. God the Father/Summoning of Gabriel
  a1. Choirs
  b. Madonna and Two Deacons
     by Giovanni Pisano
  c1. cleric bearing the chapel
d. The Damned
e. The Elect
B. The Last Judgement
  C. Enrico Scrovegni
  c1. cleric bearing the chapel
d. The Damned
e. The Elect
F1. Matthew, Gregory the Great
F2. Luke, Jerome
F3. Mark, Ambrose
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O. Old Testament Scenes
P. Paul
p. Peter

MAP I. Map of the Arena Chapel, Padua.
Note: Rear Wall (B, C, c1, d, e) is represented in reverse.