



Theologizing or Indulging Desire: Bathers in the *Sacra Parallela* (Paris, BnF, gr. 923)

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The *Sacra Parallela* is a theological and ascetic florilegium of biblical (OT and NT) and patristic citations related to a now-lost model entitled *Hiera*, composed in Palestine by John of Damascus (ca. 675 – ca. 749). The only known copy is a ninth-century manuscript (Paris, BnF, gr. 923) thought to have been produced in a Greek monastery in Italy, possibly in Rome.[1] The text contains three treatises—one on God and the Trinity, another on man, and a third on vices and virtues. The scriptural and exegetical citations are arranged in alphabetical order by στοιχεῖα (alphabetical letters) and τίτλοι (titles). The manuscript, lavishly decorated with miniatures executed in a schematized style, represents a defined group of scenes depicting male and female bathers, which, modeled after Graeco-Roman formulae, have never been discussed in light of their value for gender studies.[2]

I contend that the images of bathers, though limited in number, reveal a larger tableau wherein the canonical sensuous naked body of the female undergoes construction and deconstruction. In an attempt to discuss the nature and scope of these images, I will rely on the concepts of the "male gaze" and "visual pleasure" as formulated by cinema critic Laura Mulvey,[3] as well as the notion of "third gender" developed, for instance, in Gilbert Herdt's study as a theoretical tool in the study of gender. [4] The "female" thereby transcends traditional gender boundaries and is no longer portrayed as a fixed perception. Her image acquires a new identity as a "third gender" and emerges on common ground with the male body. This turn of events

creates a dissonance between anatomical sex, gender, and identity, what Judith Butler calls “gender trouble.”[5] In my conclusion, I will test these interpretations against the probable cultural and contextual setting of the images—a Greek monastic community alongside its values and ideals.

Mulvey’s compelling theory claims that women are objectified victims of sexuality, [6] whereby two distinct modes of the male gaze—the “voyeuristic” and the “fetishistic”—view the female body as an object of sexuality and desire meant to stir up “visual pleasure.” The binary approach implied by the “male gaze” theory places the “female” opposite “male,” categorizing her as the “other.” Critics such as Griselda Pollock and Mary Ann Doane elaborate on Mulvey’s argument, proclaiming that the male gaze, and the pleasure derived from viewing the female body, is one of the main strategies used to maintain an oppressive patriarchal and ideological dominance over women.[7]

Why should Mulvey’s interpretation, which she only intended to be used in relation to 1950s cinema, and which subsequently underwent extensive feminist criticism,[8] be applicable to medieval art,[9] and particularly to Byzantine art? My aim is not to decipher the patriarchal ideology behind the female imagery of the bathers, but rather to employ Mulvey’s voyeuristic or fetishistic categorization of the “male gaze” in another perspective. Her theory deals ultimately with meaningful aspects of human behavior, such as sexuality and eroticism.[10] Therefore, it can permit us to learn about people in the past, especially if it leads us to investigate the realm of human motifs, agendas, emotions, and the like. Even more, it can clarify processes of constructing identity, if we take into consideration two more human drives—the scopophilic instinct, the pleasure in looking at another person as an erotic object, and the libido activated during the formation of self-identity[11] —which, it can be presumed, were not absent in a monastic male community.

The essential feminist assumption of the gendered body, both male and female, was contested by scholars such as Gilbert Herdt, who argued that various forms of socialization transcend sexual dimorphism and reproduction.[12] Relevant to our study is Kathryn Ringrose’s claim that specific social groups, such as the eunuchs in Byzantium, should be defined as a “third gender.”[13] A similar categorization of blurred boundaries between the genders may be applied to certain groups in Byzantium as well. Women or nuns practicing transvestitism by disguising themselves as monks, a well-known *topos* in fifth- to ninth-century hagiographic literature, is a case in point.[14]

Once the gender boundaries are exploded, they bring into play new ways of reading the images. Despite the clerical condemnation of erotic innuendo associated with the female body, its conspicuous naked appearance in the *Sacra Parallela* manuscript most likely engaged the male monastic viewer in a gratifying, intimate gaze. Concomitantly, the sensuous images illuminating the moralistic texts challenge him to resist temptation and abstain from sexual indulgence, fortifying in this way his monastic moral fiber.

Bathers in the Sacra Parallela

The first-known image of Bathsheba's bath in art history^[15] appears in the ninth-century *Sacra Parallela* (fig. 1).^[16] Bathsheba, her body turned to the left, is shown long-haired and naked sitting on a bench, her fleshy breasts outlined by a broad black line; her legs, resting on a footstool, are crossed and hide her genitalia. She checks the temperature of the water by dipping her left hand into a basin. The trimmed margins of the folio prevent us from seeing the gesture of her right hand. Nevertheless, since Bathsheba's arm is turned upward, it may be assumed that her hand once held a comb with which she combed her hair. A naked handmaiden stands before Bathsheba, pouring water into the basin with a ewer. This intimate scene appears inside an architectural structure; it also shows King David looking down at Bathsheba from his palace. Since the biblical text does not tell us where Bathsheba took her bath or whether she was naked or clothed, artists were at more liberty to choose what to emphasize and how to depict it.



Fig. 1. Bath of Bathsheba, *Sacra Parallela*, Rome (?), after 843 (?). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 923, fol. 282v (© BnF Paris)



Fig. 2. Susanna spied upon by the Elders; the bath of Susanna, *Sacra Parallela*, Rome (?), after 843 (?). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 923, fol. 373v (© BnF Paris)

Another illumination in the same manuscript depicts Susanna bathing while being accosted by the elders (Dan. 13:42–46; fig. 2). Her apocryphal story is well known, and only the salient details will be recapitulated here. The young and beautiful woman, wife of Joachim the judge, is desired by two old men, also judges. They seize the moment she is bathing alone in her garden, approach her, and threaten to accuse

her of adultery if she does not succumb to their advances. Susanna refuses, preferring to die rather than commit a sin against God. Consequently, the elders appear before her husband, children, and relatives to carry out their threat. Susanna is brought before a tribunal that believes the false allegations and sentences her to death. In her distress, Susanna turns to God and prays for divine help; the intervention of the prophet Daniel proves the woman's innocence. The elders are put to death and Susanna is acquitted (Dan. 13:11–63).

The elders are depicted in the lower part of the miniature, seated in a grotto of sorts and intently ogling the naked woman. Above this scene, Susanna is bathing inside a domed structure; she is portrayed as a young, sensuous, naked woman combing her hair while seated on a bench with her legs crossed. Her posture is the opposite of Bathsheba's as depicted in the previous miniature. A small basin to Susanna's left most probably contains the oil that she had previously asked her servant to bring. One of the old men seizes Susanna's arm, alluding to an impending sexual advance, rape, or "love by coercion";^[17] she turns her head and glares at them with an expression of dismay or fear.^[18] As is often the case in early Christian iconography, Susanna's story shares the same folio with scenes of other biblical figures who have kept their faith in God despite the potential dangers, such as that of the Three Hebrews in the Furnace (Dan. 3:16–17; PG96: 433).^[19]

Unlike Bathsheba's unprecedented iconography, Susanna appears regularly in nearly all media from early Christianity: sarcophagi,^[20] murals,^[21] small objects such as ivories^[22] and gold glass.^[23] The artistic formula—where the main iconographic features are her accusation by the elders or her representation as an orant standing between two elders or two trees—conveys primarily the idea of salvation, which is consistent with contemporary funerary art or with female chastity within marital boundaries, as Kathryn Smith has eloquently demonstrated.^[24] They also advance the idea of Susanna as a prefiguration of Christ,^[25] as depicted in an early fifth-century fresco rendered in a late antique style from a tomb in Thessaloniki. Impassioned by her beauty, the elders—shown as the young, lustful men portrayed in the apocryphal text—gaze intently on the fully clothed young woman (fig. 3).^[26] Yet none of these early extant works shows her bathing—not even the Carolingian Lothair Crystal depicting Susanna in the garden, where she is fully clothed when accosted by the elders (fig. 4).^[27] At this stage, one can only surmise that the *Sacra Parallela*'s artist, illustrating in both cases the theme of physical temptation and the role of men as the agents of misdeeds, chose to objectify in his depictions the naked female body.

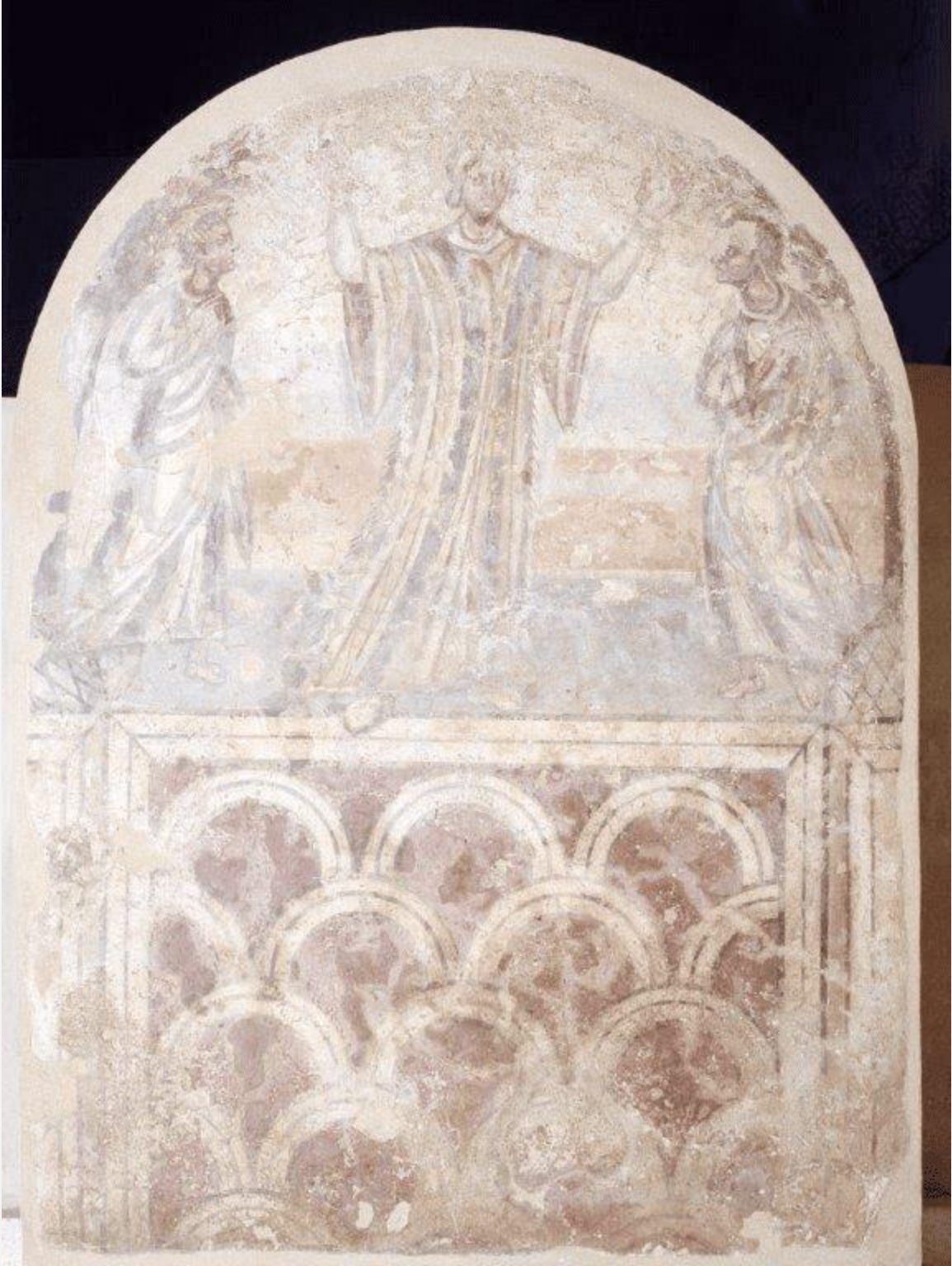


Fig. 3. Susanna in orant posture with the Elders, Thessaloniki, fresco from a local tomb, early fifth century. Thessaloniki, Museum of Byzantine Culture (BT 17B) (Photo: Museum of Byzantine Culture)



Fig. 4. The cycle of Susanna, *Lothair Crystal*, possibly Aachen, Carolingian, 855–869. London, British Museum (M&ME 1855.12–1.5)

Strategies of Constructing/Deconstructing the Naked Body

A comparison of our images is difficult owing to the scarcity of female bathers in pre-iconoclastic art and their nonexistence in post-iconoclastic works. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the postures of both Bathsheba and Susanna draw on the Graeco-Roman model of Venus's toilette, which was a popular motif in both domestic mosaics and on small objects in late antiquity.[28] The bath of Venus appears on the cover of the well-known and much-discussed fourth-century Projecta silver casket whose iconography suggests that it served as a toilette object given to the bride as a wedding present (fig. 5).[29] The goddess is shown naked and facing front, with one leg bare and the other draped with her mantle, which has the effect of emphasizing her nakedness. In her right hand she holds a pin and in her left a

mirror in which her visage is faintly reflected by gilding and stippling.[30] The toilette scene is repeated on the front of the casket, this time bearing the figure of Projecta, fully clothed with a female attendant on her left holding a mirror that reflects her matron's outlines.

Scholars have offered various gendered readings of both female figures: the goddess and the owner of the casket. Maria Wyke constructs the identity of Projecta based on the toiletries restricted to female usage, rendering her figure "a luxury ornament for her husband's possession and pleasure." [31] Wyke's contention is that the casket objectifies the female body for the pleasure of the male eye. Jas Elsner elaborates, arguing that its iconography reflects not only the objectified female body, but also the construction of the "female gaze," meant "to affirm the identity of its female viewers" [32] and, more specifically, Projecta herself.



Fig. 5. Venus at her toilette, Casket of Projecta, metal and silver-gilt, repoussé, Rome (Esquiline treasure), Late Roman, c. 380 AD. London, British Museum (M&ME 1866, 12-29,1)

Bathers in the *Sacra Parallela* emulate Venus in her posture and hand gestures, and especially her nudity—all distinctive aspects of an icon of femininity peculiar to late

antique art. Here I explore the ways in which the artist both deconstructs and reconstructs traditional iconography associated with Venus in order to better suit the monastic context.

However, before proceeding with our analysis, we must ask how familiar would monks have been with the imagery of Venus? The male inhabitants of the Orthodox monastery supposedly located in Rome may have had the opportunity to see sculptures of Venus in their city; furthermore, post-iconoclastic Byzantine art is replete with aestheticized female nudes based on the classical figure of Venus, which appear especially in illuminated manuscripts. The visual model was employed not only to depict mythological scenes illustrating the goddess of love and other Greek goddesses, but also biblical and Christian female characters.[33]

At first glance, it seems that the scenes with the biblical heroines do not reproduce the sensuous and fleshy body of the Graeco-Roman goddess: their breasts are outlined rather than modeled, giving them less volume and a decreased sense of realism, and their bodies are flat to avoid shapely features. The elegance of the elongated late antique body is replaced by a disproportionately large head and a truncated body and limbs. The erotic meaning of the goddess's pubic triangle, sometimes enhanced by V-shaped drapery folds, is altered in Byzantine adaptations where the figure tightly crosses her legs, obstructing a direct view of the female genitals.[34] Yet, what seems to our contemporary eye as flat and under-eroticized may have made a different impression on the Byzantine eye.[35] Anne Hollander has argued that nudity in art always conveys a sexual message; visual images of a nude body are never entirely devoid of sexual associations so as to become a perfect vehicle for an abstract theological message.[36] The same can be said for the unique and conspicuous imagery of female nudity in the *Sacra Parallela*, which attracted the monastic viewers' gazes and engaged them in a pleasurable voyeurism—one of the main elements of the “male gaze” theory.

The Bath of David in the *Sacra Parallela*, a unique representation in Byzantine art (fig. 6),[37] nevertheless deconstructs the binary construction of pleased male gaze/objectified female body. David, bearded and bosomed (!), is shown taking a purification bath following the death of his firstborn, the fruit of his adulterous liaison with Bathsheba. The composition of the scene, including the presence of a naked maidservant partially hidden by a washbasin, closely conforms to that of Bathsheba bathing (fig. 1). Furthermore, the king's posture resembles that of Bathsheba, including the combing gesture and the comb, which is clearly visible here. Were we

to surmise that this image is not an artistic error but an intentional and meaningful part of the manuscript's program, intriguing vistas of interpretation unfold before us. The corporeal similarity of the figures may reflect perceptions of the gendered body as conveyed, for example, by the then popular Galenian theory. Based on the assumption that female genitalia are essentially founded on those of the male (the only difference being that they are located inside the abdomen), it viewed male and female bodies as homologous.[38] This theory, sustained for more than a thousand years, implies that the female body is an exact opposite of the male, the only differences being qualitative.[39]



Fig. 6. The bath of David, *Sacra Parallela*, Rome (?), after 843 (?). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 923, fol. 203r (© BnF Paris)

It seems that the corporeal identity of the female and male figures in the *Sacra Parallela* and the assignment of the traditional metonym for the female toilette (the comb) to a male protagonist throw male and female into one undifferentiated

category, identifying the naked body as a “third gender” that transcends the traditional gender boundaries. The inevitable outcome is the deconstruction of “otherness” (femininity as opposed to masculinity), one of the cornerstones of the “male gaze” theory. This development creates a dissonance between anatomical sex, gender, and identity, what Judith Butler calls “gender trouble.”^[40] I contend that behind this artistic approach stand two interrelated issues—the theological perception of the desire of the flesh and the monastic male’s moral conduct.

The Desire of the Flesh

Bathsheba’s bath was understood as a type of baptism, in which the adultery between her and David is the prefiguration of a sacred union. Ambrose of Milan (339–397 AD) comments as follows:

What, then, prevents us from believing that also Bathsheba, who is associated with St. David, has not been figuratively included to signify the Church of Nations, who has been united to Christ through the legitimate marriage of the faith, and outside the requirements of the Law, since she was destined to introduce herself as if by a back door to win his grace; **her nudity, that of a pure heart** [my emphasis] and her unveiled simplicity, thanks to the justifying sacrament of the bath, was meant to appeal to the heart of true David, the eternal king, and stir his love.^[41]

And in the commentary of John Chrysostom (ca. 347–407),^[42] which appears on the same page as the image of Bathsheba (fig. 1) under the heading ΠΕΡΙ ΠΟΡΝΕΙΑΣ, ΜΟΙΧΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΡΣΕΝΟΚΟΙΤΙΑΣ (“On Prostitution, Adultery and Sleeping with Men”), it is precisely this physical nakedness that acquires a divine dimension:

Around noon, after leaving the dinner table, he [David] took a stroll. And suddenly he saw a naked, beautiful and very elegant woman taking a bath. **But beauty is not faulty, because beauty is a gift from God** [my emphasis]. He saw, I say, a woman on the terrace washing, endowed with extreme beauty, the wife of a soldier. He saw and he was wounded in the eye and he received an arrow.^[43]

In an attempt to remove any erotic innuendoes implied by David’s act, or what may be termed today as the “male gaze” or “voyeurism” of the biblical king, John

Chrysostom offers a discourse on morality by deftly manipulating the notion of “gaze” and reversing its logic: the female beauty is certainly not to be seen as an immoral temptation, but as a positive vision, a divine gift, meant to be contemplated.[44]

A careful reading of the biblical narrative accompanying the image of the elders accosting Susanna in the *Sacra Parallela* once again raises issues regarding the male gaze, sexuality, and the desire of the flesh that are also present in the narrative of Bathsheba:

The two elders rose up and ran to her, saying: “. . . we are in love with you; therefore consent to us and lie with us. If you will not, we will bear **witness** against you that a young man was with you . . . Susanna sighed, and said: I am hemmed in on every side; for if I do this thing, it is death to me, and if I do it not, I cannot escape your hands. It is better for me to fall into your hands and not do it than to **sin in the sight of the Lord** [emphasis mine].[45]

To illustrate this text underlining the biblical figure's chastity, the artist could have contented himself with a fully clothed presentation, as seen in earlier visual formulae, all the more since in Byzantine thinking female sexuality connoted destructive moral associations and provoked an insistence on its containment as an essential element of upholding social order.[46] The deliberate choice of a naked figure was probably employed to imbue it with moralistic functionality meant to work on the mind of the monastic viewer, as will be discussed below. Indeed, what gives the image this association is the *titulus* by John of Damascus, “One should fear God more than humans,”[47] placed beneath it, rendering the nude figure of Susanna the image of a pure heart directed toward the love of God, an interpretation that harmonizes with the early Christian exegetical view of this figure.[48]

The surprisingly positive attitude toward the female body, despite its sexual connotations, may find expression in John Chrysostom's view of the basic differentiation between the sexes. Unlike the great majority of church fathers who were unwilling to seek the spiritual dimension of sexual life, Chrysostom elaborates on the intricacies of conjugal spirituality. He does not endorse the accepted view that all differences between man and woman are reduced to their dissimilar physiognomical features. He instead offers a theological solution, whereby the sexual differentiation between man and woman was effected in order to achieve a higher unity than that given by nature, the unity or bond of love between people, similar to

the image of unity in the Trinity. God introduced marriage as a unity of love to be lived just like divine love.[49]

Pulling all these threads together, it may be suggested that unusual images of female bathers in the *Sacra Parallela* construct female physical nudity as a divine notion challenging the viewer to interpret it in exegetical and moral terms relating to the love of God rather than in purely physical ones.[50] Consistent with this theory is a marginal miniature on fol. 272r of the same manuscript showing St. Basil flanked by two female figures, one naked, the other fully clothed. The former personifies chastity, the latter lust (fig. 7).[51] While sexual desire is represented by a woman wearing a long robe, resembling the one Susanna wears in the manuscript at her accusation, the artist chose the naked female body to personify chastity, conveying notions of spiritual and divine love.[52] The image may well reflect a major principle in monastic life as preached by John of Damascus, who composed the *Sacra Parallela*: all are obliged to seek purity of the heart.[53]

Although Byzantine Orthodoxy regarded sexuality as a natural element in God's scheme to perpetuate humanity, and therefore not innately evil, it was thought to have been perverted by humans into the passions of *πορνεία* (the sin of lust),[54] becoming a powerful tool in the hands of demons[55] and making it one of the seven (or eight) deadly sins.[56] Also, in penitential texts (*kanonika*), that have long-winded expositions of sins, the sin of lust has a central role. For example, the ninth-century penitential of John the Monk and Deacon, which became a standard guide for confessors in Byzantium,[57] mentions three types of fornication (*πορνεία*) and three types of adultery (*μοιχεία*).[58] All of these transgressions, by extension, implicate sexuality and the desire of the flesh. Hence, the presence of male figures gazing at the sensuous female bathers in the manuscript may seem inappropriate, more so if we remember that the supposed viewer is a monk. I contend that the contradictory approach may be explained as an artistic effort to have the viewer resist immoral behavior.



Fig. 7. St. Basil with the personifications of Chastity and Lust, *Sacra Parallela*, Rome (?), after 843 (?). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 923, fol. 272r (© BnF Paris)

Monastic Moral Conduct

If the illustrated Parisian *Sacra Parallela*'s place of production is indeed to be attributed to a Greek monastic community in mid-ninth century Rome,[59] and if we are to gain an in-depth understanding of the images discussed, we should turn to

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values prevailing in Byzantine monasticism, which were largely informed by earlier and contemporary Christian authorities. Theodore of Stoudios (759-826), the abbot of the influential Stoudios monastery in Constantinople, is a case in point. The strict cenobitic community he organized, based on the monastic duty to participate in both manual and intellectual work, was to dominate Byzantine monasticism until the twelfth century.[60] Thus, given the inextricable relationship between monastic life and literacy, it is possible that the visual material—the illustrated book—was meant to shape an ideal mode of behavior among its readers.[61] Examining some monastic ideals clarifies this argument.

Together with the duty to devote oneself to a life of prayer, work, and asceticism, a major feature of monastic life was the struggle against the temptation of the flesh and physical passion.[62] The attempt to distance monks from contact with women, waged among all echelons of monastic communities, was based on the fear that being sexually tempted would be detrimental to attaining spiritual perfection.[63] The fear of having relations with members of the opposite sex was not only an exercise in rhetoric, but it also responded to the reality in which monks lived—which could extend beyond the monasteries to the bathhouses.[64]

The images in the *Sacra Parallela* are accompanied by a blend of holy writings—the Bible, New Testament, and hagiography, all of which played a major role in monastic life and served as a moral guide. The various events served not only as “types” of behavior to be emulated but also as tools to lift the monks’ souls toward God. One of the signs of a fruitful reading is its applicability to saintly conduct. In order to attain this state, the monk had to read the scriptural excerpts intently or pay attention to the personages who served as models of virtue. A monastic group engaged in such a theological reading would need to appropriate texts and images in ways that would make them relevant to their own concerns, especially when they addressed situations that were likely remote from their own lives.[65]

John Chrysostom’s commentary in the *Sacra Parallela* relating to Bathsheba’s bathing offers an illuminating example:

Let the curious listen, those who contemplate the beauty of others! Let those who are suffering from an unhealthy taste for entertainment, those who say “it’s true, we look, but without damage.” David has been injured and you would not be hurt?.... Yet, what he saw was not a prostitute but an honest and modest woman, and not at the theater but at home. But you, you gaze at the theater, there where the location condemns the soul to torture.[66]

The text appears to be reminiscent of the well-known perception, often voiced in early Byzantium, associating prostitution and its practice not only with baths but also with spectacles.[67] Both these public realms were apt to engage the male gaze and stir his passions.[68] Even though these specific situations were likely not directly applicable to the Byzantine monk,[69] nevertheless, we may assume that the moralizing texts of the *Sacra Parallela* miniatures were not lost on them. We know, for example, that Theodore of Stoudios required his monks on their day off (Sunday) to read edifying texts from manuscripts found in the monastery's scriptorium throughout the entire day, until sunset, and he saw to it that they carried out his instruction.[70] There is no reason to believe that this custom was unknown in Greek communities coming under the influence of the monastery of Stoudios. Quite the opposite is true; it appears that between the ninth and fifteenth centuries thousands of cenobites customarily obeyed the abbot's dictum.[71]

The monks also may have been familiar with John Chrysostom's other writings, in which men gazing at women was a recurrent theme;[72] Chrysostom's criticism and reservations regarding physical viewing in comparison to contemplating the soul are indicative of the problematic conflicting aspects of ascetic monastic life. He formulates this elsewhere: "These men [monks] are stirred by a double desire; they are not permitted to satisfy their passion through sexual intercourse, yet the basis for their desire remains intensely potent for a long time." [73] Having gained these insights, one can now understand the bathers' imagery in the *Sacra Parallela* as an ascetic monastic design to reverse the accepted notion of the female body as a desirable object by transforming it into one of contemplation that would elevate the monk's soul to the spiritual realm.[74]

The sensuous images of the *Sacra Parallela* may have operated on another level as well. The conspicuousness of the naked flesh may have impressed the Byzantine monks as being erotic. Thus, one cannot dismiss the applicability of Mulvey's voyeuristic or fetishistic categorization of the "male gaze" to the bathers, female and male alike, thereby indulging the monastic viewer's libidinous gaze from his privileged private space. The monks may be able to think about exegesis in relationship to these images, but they could also entertain thoughts of naked female bodies, sex, and their belief in the superiority of their own male bodies. Sexually challenging, these illuminations not only alienated the male gaze from the object, but also satisfied the monks' fetishistic yearnings. Seen from this perspective, the images of the *Sacra Parallela* acquire greater significance and construct their supposed audience as a nuanced non-unilateral entity.

As much as the discourse on gender in the *Sacra Parallela* and its miniatures is of value, any interpretation of its intention and reception in medieval art is speculative.^[75] We will never know for certain what the artists who illustrated the manuscript had in mind, nor in what ways the images corresponded to the inner thoughts and feelings of its viewers. Nevertheless, the images in this manuscript remain authentic visual documents of their times reflecting deeply embedded cultural and contextual settings of their supposed consumers.

Conclusions

Using critical terms such as “male gaze,” “visual pleasure,” and “third gender,” I have examined bathers imagery against exegetical texts and the place of the manuscript’s production—a Greek monastic cultural setting. Given the limited number of examples, it would be premature to draw broad-ranging conclusions, although some observations are noteworthy. The book’s illuminator was most certainly male and its readership was monks, allowing us to conclude that the illuminations represent an entirely “male” agenda. The images, which are based on the physical perfection of the female body through the Classical motif of Venus, convey the possibility of sexual content through codified postures and stereotyped attributes. Yet, in an attempt to conceal the erotic connotations mirroring carnal desire, patron and artist no doubt manipulated the imagery to make new meanings appropriate to the monastic milieu. First, the images of nude bathers played a dual role, i.e., constructing and indirectly deconstructing the female body by blurring the accepted “female” gendered distinction and creating a “third gender.” Secondly, when viewed in relation to accompanying exegetical-moralistic texts, they were meant to serve as an incentive for moral introspection in the monks’ quest for divine love.

Moreover, the possible erotic perception associated with Venus in these images cannot go unnoticed, demanding that the spiritual-moralistic interpretation be tempered with other possible readings, thus allowing for a broader reading of the images in their immediate context. The miniatures and their moralistic context emerge as a double-edged sword, engaging the male viewer in a discourse based on a theological debate of monastic morality and sexual abstinence while inadvertently indulging scopophilic desires, and thereby challenging him to resist a libidinous gaze and encouraging him to activate his libido in order to buttress a communal identity.

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References

- 1 Opinions regarding the manuscript's place of production and date vary: Kurt Weitzmann (*The Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela: Parisinus Graecus 923*, Studies in Manuscript Illumination 8 [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979]) attributed it to Palestine in the first half of the ninth century, and Massimo Bernabò ("L'illustrazione del salmo 105 [106] a Bisanzio ed una nota sui *Sacra Parallela* di Parigi," *Medioevo e rinascimento* 14, n.s., 11 [2000]: 85–109, esp. 108–109 and bibliography there) argues for a date in the second half of the ninth century, with the Monastery of Stoudios as its possible provenance. This opinion was challenged by Irina Oretskaia, who, on the basis of comparative stylistic features with mosaics in churches in Rome, proposed a date in the first half or around the middle of the ninth century, and the place of production a Greek monastery in Rome, "A Stylistic Tendency in Ninth-Century Art of the Byzantine World," *Zograf* 29 (2002–3): 5–18, esp. 11–4. Maria Evangelatou refutes Weitzmann's thesis on the relationship between the codex illustrations and pre-iconoclastic manuscript illumination, arguing that the manuscript, showing a close relation between text and image, was a one-time production, "Word and Image in the *Sacra Parallela* (cod. Paris. gr. 923)," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 62 (2008): 113–97, with collected bibliography.
- 2 Gender studies in Byzantine art, and particularly those pertaining to women, lag considerably behind their Western medieval counterparts. Some general studies on women include: Averil Cameron and Amélie Kuhrt, eds., *Images of Women in Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1983; rev. ed. Detroit, 1993), esp. Dion C. Smythe, "Women as Outsiders," 149–67; *Women, Men and Eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (London: Routledge, 1997); some of the articles in *Desire and Denial in Byzantium. Papers from the Thirty-First Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, March 1997*, ed. Liz James (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); Ioli Kalavrezou et al., *Byzantine Women and Their World*, exh. cat., Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums (Cambridge, MA; New Haven, CT: Cambridge University Press, 2003); some of the articles in *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience 800–1200*, ed. Lynda Garland (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); and Mati Meyer, *An Obscure Portrait. Imaging the Realia of Women in Byzantine Art* (London: Pindar, 2009). See also the online database, "Bibliography on Gender in Byzantium," hosted by

Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection. It should be mentioned that the *Sacra Parallela* contains other images of nudity—both male and female—conveying a variety of connotations. One such example is the representation of Zimri and Cosbi stabbed to death by Phinehas on fol. 274v, J.P. Migne, *Patrologia graeca* (Paris: 1857-66): 96: 237 (henceforth PG); Weitzmann, *Sacra Parallela*, 60–1, pl. XXI, fig. 78. I have argued elsewhere that it serves to illustrate the denouncement of extramarital sexual relations, *An Obscure Portrait*, 256–58, 297. Nudity may also designate humiliation, as in the scene of Agag, King of the Amalekites, captured and decapitated on fol. 275r (PG 96: 237); Weitzmann, *Sacra Parallela*, 76–7, 97, 98, 100, pl. XXX, fig. 115). In other instances, nudity may be used to illustrate aspects of *realia*, as shown in the depiction of a couple—the woman naked—embracing in bed, which relates to the nocturnal occupations mentioned by Gregory of Nazianzus on fol. 25r (*De Moderatione*, Or.32.9 [PG95: 1585; 36: 184]; Weitzmann, *Sacra Parallela*, 229, pl. CXL, fig. 644). Whether there is a difference in the way male and female nudity is displayed in this manuscript is a valid discussion, but one that lies outside the scope of this article. I hope to address this matter in a future study.

- 3 Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975): 6–18 (repr. in *Feminism and Film Theory*, ed. Constance Penley [New York: Routledge, 1988], 57–68, esp. 60–64). <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6>
- 4 Gilbert Herdt, ed., *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History* (Cambridge, MA: Zone Books; Distributed by MIT Press, 1996).
- 5 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), esp. ix–xi.
- 6 See note 3.
- 7 Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the History of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988; repr. 2003); Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
- 8 For an overview of this feminist criticism, see the special issue "The Spectatrix," *Camera Obscura* 20–21 (1989); and recently Vicki Callahan, "Gazing Outward: The Spectrum of Feminist Reception Theory," in *Reclaiming the Archive: Feminism and Film History*, ed. Vicki Callahan (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 9–16. Miriam Hansen contends that the female spectator gazing at the male body may also derive pleasure from it, "Pleasure, Ambivalence, Identification: Valentino and Female Spectatorship," *Cinema Journal* 25, no. 4 (1986): 6–32. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1225080>

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- 9** This issue was eloquently addressed in Madeline Harrison Caviness, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages: Sight, Spectacle, and Scopic Economy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 17–44.
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- 10** Albrecht Classen, “The Cultural Significance of Sexuality in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and Beyond. A Secret Continuous Undercurrent or a Dominant Phenomenon of the Premodern World? Or: The Irrepressibility of Sex Yesterday and Today,” *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: New Approaches to a Fundamental Cultural-Historical and Literary-Anthropological Theme*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 1–141. For the perception of “female sexuality” as articulating not only sexual behavior but also perceptions of sexual identity, see e.g., Karma Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn’t* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110209402.1>
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- 11** Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 25. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-19798-9>
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- 12** See note 4.
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- 13** Kathryn M. Ringrose, “Living in the Shadows. Eunuchs and Gender in Byzantium,” in *Third Sex, Third Gender*, 85–109. This term was later applied to additional groups in the medieval West, such as male and female saints, monks, and nuns, who strove to suppress intimate and forbidden desires; Jacqueline Murray, “One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders?” in *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe: New Perspectives*, ed. Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lifshitz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 34–51. <https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812204490.34>
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- 14** John Anson, “The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: The Origin and Development of a Motif,” *Viator* 5 (1974), 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1484/J.VIATOR.2.301617>; Evelyn Patlagean, “L’histoire de la femme déguisée en moine et l’évolution de la sainteté féminine à Byzance,” *Studi Medievali* 17 (1976): 597–623; Paul Halsall, “Women’s Bodies, Men’s Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium” (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1999), esp. 184–260. See also the discussion in Alice-Mary Talbot, *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints’ Lives in English Translation* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1996), 1–6.
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- 15** Bathsheba's bath in Byzantine art was studied by Elisabeth Kunothe-Leifels (*Über die Darstellungen der 'Bathseba im Bade': Studien zur Geschichte des Bildthemas 4. bis 17. Jahrhundert* [Essen: R. Bacht, 1962], 7–11), who deals primarily with Western art. This motif, along with Susanna's bath (to be discussed below) in Byzantine illuminated manuscripts, was later examined in Mati Meyer, "L'image de la femme biblique dans les manuscrits byzantins enluminés de la dynastie macédonienne (867–1056)" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2001), 105–13. A recent study of bathing customs and their relations to society ignores this theme as it relates to Byzantine art, Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott, eds., *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). On the iconography of Bathsheba as it pertains to medieval Western art, see also Monica Ann Walker Vadillo, *Bathsheba in Late Medieval French Manuscript Illumination: Innocent Object of Desire or Agent of Sin?* (Lewiston, NY and Queenston, Ontario: Edwin Mellen, 2008); on its function as an illustration of the power of women in both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, see Susan L. Smith, *The Power of Women: A Topos in Medieval Art and Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 150–51, 193–94, 249 n. 16, 250 n. 42, and figs. 20, 39, and 43.
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- 16** Fol. 282v; 2 Kings 11:2; PG 55: 570 (Weitzmann, *Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela*, 83–84, pl. XXXV, fig. 31). The eleventh-century Vatican Psalter, gr. 752, commissioned by Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos and possibly produced in the Stoudios monastery, contains another image of the biblical scene (fol. 162v); Ernest T. De Wald, *The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint, III: Psalms and Odes*, Part 2: Vat. gr. 752 (Princeton: Princeton University Press; London: Oxford University Press; The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1941), 21–22, pl. XXX. See also Ioli Kalavrezou, Nicoletta Trahoulia, and Shalom Sabar, "Critique of the Emperor in the Vatican Psalter gr. 752," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 47 (1993), 202.
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- 17** On the sexual and social implications of this gesture, see Meyer, *An Obscure Portrait*, 260–65.
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- 18** Fol. 373v; Dan. 13:19–23; PG96: 429 (Weitzmann, *Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela*, 159, pl. LXXXVI, fig. 393). Susanna's subsequent accusation and acquittal (Dan. 13:34–37, 41–43; PG95: 1268) are illustrated on fol. 378r of the same manuscript, where she is shown fully clothed, Weitzmann, *Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela*, 159, pl. LXXXVI, fig. 394.
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- 19** Fol. 373v; Weitzmann, *Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela*, 157, pl. LXXXIV, fig. 385.
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- 20** E.g., Susanna and the Elders on the marble “Susanna” sarcophagus, ca. 350 CE, made in Italy and found near Arles (France), today located in the Musée de l’Art Chrétien, Arles.
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- 21** One of many examples is the fresco of Susanna Accused by the Elders in the nave of the Greek chapel in the Roman Catacomb of Priscilla (Wall D), dated to the early third century; see Ferdinand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1927), II:2, fig. 2064. Susanna, occupying the center of the composition, is shown as a young woman wearing a sleeveless tunic and standing in the orant posture. Daniel stands on her right, listening to her; on her left, the two elders turn toward her and accuse her.
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- 22** Susanna Accused by the Elders appears on an ivory casket (cover) from Brescia (Italy), ca. 390, currently housed in the Museo Civico Cristiano in that city; see Catherine Brown Tkacz, *The Key to the Brescia Casket: Typology and the Early Christian Imagination*, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series 14, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 165 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press; Paris: Institut d’ Études Augustiniennes, 2002), 206.
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- 23** See the fragmentary glass bowl from Rome or the Rhineland, dating to the second half of the fourth century. The bowl, decorated with biblical scenes, depicts, inter alia, the figure of Susanna wearing a veil standing between two trees in a gesture of prayer; see Jeffrey Spier et al., *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press: in association with the Kimbell Art Museum, 2007), 184–85 (no. 13B).
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- 24** Kathryn Smith, “Inventing Marital Chastity: the Iconography of Susanna and the Elders in Early Christian Art,” *Oxford Art Journal* 16, no. 1 (1993): 3–24. See also Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, “‘Susanna went into her husband’s garden to walk’. Reading the Gesture and Pose of the Female Body in Christian Art,” paper presented at MAAR, February 26, 1992. I am indebted to Prof. Apostolos-Cappadona for allowing me to cite her presentation.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxartj/16.1.3>
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- 25** Brown Tkacz, *Key to the Brescia Casket*, 74–81.
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- 26** See Robin Cormack and Maria Vassilaki, eds., *Byzantium 331–1453*, exh. cat. (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2008), 58–59, figs. 9.1–9.2.
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- 27** Genevra Kornbluth argues that rather than evoking the traditional early Christian typological message, the crystal conveys a contemporary political message—the triumph of just ecclesiastical judgment; see her “The Susanna
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Crystal of Lothar II: Chastity, the Church, and Royal Justice," *Gesta* 31, no. 1 (1992): 25–39. <https://doi.org/10.2307/767048>

- 28** E. G., the mid-third century mosaic from Shahba (Philippopolis), now in the Suwayda Museum, Syria; see Janine Balty, *Mosaïques antiques de Syrie* (Brussels: Centre belge de recherches archéologiques à Apamée en Syrie, 1977), 16–19, figs. 3–4; Janine Balty, *Mosaïques antiques du Proche-Orient: chronologie, iconographie, interprétation*, Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon 551 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1995), 28–29; pl. VI, or the sixth-century mosaic discovered in Sarrîn (Syria); Janine Balty, *La mosaïque de Sarrîn (Osrhoène): inventaire des mosaïques antiques de Syrie* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1990), 50–52, pl. XIX: 1. For a discussion of the Venus iconography, see Lilian Balensiefen, *Die Bedeutung des Spiegelbildes als ikonographisches Motiv in der antiken Kunst* (Tübingen: Ernst Wasmuth, 1990), 75–78. For a broader discussion of visual models used by the *Sacra Parallela* artist, see Evangelatou, "Word and Image," 151–69. Annemarie Carr-Weyl has also noted the iconographic similarities between the bathing scenes of Bathsheba, Susanna, and David, arguing that the artist did not copy them as Weitzmann had assumed from various codices (*Sacra Parallela*), but created them ad hoc, using the same formula; see her book review of Weitzmann's *Sacra Parallela*, in *Art Bulletin* 65, no. 1 (1983), 149.
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- 29** Jaś Elsner, "Visualising Women in Late Antique Rome: The Projecta Casket," in *Through a Glass Brightly: Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Art and Archaeology Presented to David Buckton*, ed. Chris Entwistle (Oxford: Oxbow, 2003), 22–36. See also Jaś Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 200–24. On the purpose of the casket, see Lambert Schneider, *Die Domäne als Weltbild: Wirkungsstrukturen der spätantiken Bildersprache* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1983), 5–38; Elsner, "Visualising Women," 22–36; and Jane Long, "The Survival and Reception of the Classical Nude: Venus in the Middle Ages," in *The Meanings of Nudity in Medieval Art*, ed. Sherry C. M. Lindquist (Farnham, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 50–51.
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- 30** See Kurt Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 330–32, pl. IX, fig. 310.
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- 31** Maria Wyke, "Woman in the Mirror: The Rhetoric of Adornment in the Roman World," in *Women in Ancient Societies: An Illusion of the Night*, ed. Leonie Archer, Susan Fischler, and Maria Wyke (New York: Routledge, 1994), 143–44.
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- 32** Elsner, *Roman Eyes*, 217.
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- 33** Mati Meyer, "Venus Lost and Found: Aesthetic Perceptions of the Female Nude in Byzantine Art," in *Körper-Ästhetiken. Der [allegorische] Körper als ästhetisches Prinzip: [gender-]theoretische Perspektiven*, ed. Miriam Oesterreich, Julia Rüthemann, Cornelia Logemann, Reihe Kultur- und Medientheorie (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), 181–205.
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- 34** The depiction of genitalia, still present in sixth-century Byzantine works, disappears altogether in later Byzantine art, even in the occasional representation of male and female nudity, as, for example, on the tenth-century Veroli ivory casket; see Helene C. Evans and William D. Wixom, eds. *Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 230–31 (no. 153). See also, Barbara Zeitler, "Ostentatio genitalium: Displays of Nudity in Byzantium," in *Desire and Denial*, 185–201.
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- 35** See the studies of Liz James, who has argued that the Byzantines reacted differently to color than we do today—thus, for example, preferring saturation and especially brightness to the modern-day appreciation of hue; see her "Colour and the Byzantine Rainbow," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 15 (1991): 66–94; and Liz James, *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996). <https://doi.org/10.1179/byz.1991.15.1.66>
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- 36** Anne Hollander, *Seeing through Clothes* (New York: Viking, 1980), 186.
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- 37** Fol. 203r; Weitzmann, *Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela*, 85–86, figs. 134–36.
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- 38** Galen, *De usu partium corporis humani* XIV, 6–11; see Margaret Tallmadge May, ed., *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), II, 628–46.
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- 39** Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 63–113, esp. 63. Viewing women as "inverted" men was not a widely held idea in the Middle Ages; see Murray, "One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders," 37.
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- 40** Butler, *Gender Trouble*.
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- 41** "Quid igitur obstat, quominus etiam Bersabee sancto David in figura sociata fuisse credatur, ut significaretur congregatio nationum, quae non erat Christo legitimo quodam fidei copulata conubio, quod transuersariis quibusdam foret uestibulis in eius gratiam praeter legis ingressura praescriptum, in qua nuda mentis sinceritas et aperta simplicitas lauacri iustificante mysterio ueri David et regis aeterni mentem transduceret, lacesseret caritatem?"; *De apologia*
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- prophetae David*, 3, 14 (J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* (Paris, 1844-1879) 14:857A–B; cf. Ambrose, *Apologie de David*, SC 239, ed. Pierre Hadot (Paris: Cerf, 1977), 91.
- 42** Chrysostom, together with Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzos, are among the most cited authorities in the *Sacra Parallela*; Evangelatou, “Word and Image,” 180–81, 189, 196.
- 43** Ἐν μεσηνβρίαι μέση. Μετὰ ἄπιστον ἀναστάς ἀπὸ τῆς τιβάρδος περιεπάτει, καὶ εἶδε γυναῖκα ἡμνήν, λουομένην, καλὴν καὶ εὐμορφον σφόδρα. Ἀλλὰ οὐκ ἔγκλημα τὸ κάλλος. τὸ γὰρ κάλλος θεοῦ δῶρον. Εἶδε γυναῖκα λουομένην ἐν ὑπερώῳ, γυναῖκα στρατιώτου, καλὴν, ὡραίαν. Εἶδεν, ἐπτερώθη τῷ ὄμματι, ἐδέξατο αὐτὸ τὸ βέλος; John Chrysostom, *In Psalmum* 50.4 (PG 55: 570). The metaphor of an arrow striking one’s sight serves in Classical literature to indicate the mighty power of Eros; see Blake Leyerle, “John Chrysostom on the Gaze,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1, no. 2 (1993), 160–63. Note that this idea is rendered in the only surviving illuminated manuscript of *Cynegetika of Pseudo-Oppian* (Venice, Bibl. Naz. Marc., cod. gr. Z. 479 [= 881], 11th century, fol. 33r), where a winged Eros stretches his bow and aims at a group of Olympian gods; see also Ioannis Spatharakis, *The Illustrations of the Cynegetika in Venice: Codex Marcianus Graecus Z 139* (Leiden: Alexandros, 2004), 101–103, fig. 67.
- 44** In this sense, our reading of Bathsheba’s bath iconography harmonizes with Michael Camille’s interpretation of a key image in the thirteenth-century Saint Louis Psalter (Paris, BnF, MS Fr. 2186, fig. 85v), in which he contends that the beholder (David) had to direct his gaze toward God (= inner gaze) and withstand the beauty of the naked body as physically perceived (= outer gaze); see Michael Camille, *The Medieval Art of Love: Objects and Subjects of Desire* (London: Laurence King, 1998), 29–30, fig. 20.
- 45** Additions to the Greek book of Daniel (Susanna) 13:19–23.
- 46** See, e.g., Mati Meyer, “The Levite’s Concubine: Imaging the Marginal Woman in Byzantine Society,” *Studies in Iconography* 26 (2006): 45–76; Mati Meyer, “Porneia: *Quelques considérations sur la représentation du péché de chair dans l’art byzantin*,” *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 51, no. 203 (2009): 225–44.
- 47** “Ἐπιχρήμαλλον φοβεῖσθαι Θεὸν ἡ ἀνθρώπους (PG96: 429).
- 48** Smith, “Inventing Marital Chastity,” 3–24, esp. 5 n. 20.

- 49 Tómaš Špidlík, Michelina Tenace, and Richard Čemus, *Questions monastiques en Orient*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 259 (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Orientale, 1999), 112–13.
- 50 Other studies reached similar conclusions, positing that the display of nudity in Byzantine art should be perceived as a positive attribute. See, e.g., Eunice Dauterman Maguire and Henry Maguire, *Other Icons: Art and Power in Byzantine Secular Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 97–134; Mati Meyer, “Eve’s Nudity: A Sign of Shame or a Precursor of Christological Economy?” in *Between Judaism and Christianity: Art Historical Essays in Honour of Prof. Elisabeth (Elisheva) Revel-Neher*, ed. Katrin Kogman-Appel and Mati Meyer (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 243–58.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004171060.i-490.66>
- 51 Basil, *Hom. Dicta Tempore Famis et Siccitatis* 8 (PG96: 232; 31: 325); Weitzmann, *Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela*, 212–13, fig. 567. This image is discussed in “Chastity Stripped Bare. On Temporal and Eternal Things in the *Sacra Parallela* (Paris, BnF, gr. 923).” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 38, no. 1 (2014): 1–23.
<https://doi.org/10.1179/0307013113Z.000000000039>
- 52 Mati Meyer, “Chastity Stripped Bare,” 19–23. Equating physical female beauty with spiritual virtues is sometimes found in Byzantine hagiography as well. For example, St. Thomaïs of Lesbos, who lived in the tenth century, said that “she was <a woman> adorned with bodily graces, whom all the virtues bedecked. The nature of her body was equal to that of the incorporeal powers”; see Talbot, *Holy Women of Byzantium*, 297. For more on this topic, see Alexander Kazhdan, “Byzantine Hagiography and Sex in the Fifth to Twelfth Centuries,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990), 134–35. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1291623>
- 53 Špidlík, Tenace, and Čemus, *Questions monastiques*, 92–93.
- 54 Geoffrey W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), IV, 1211 (s.v. πορνεία).
- 55 Richard P. H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988), 106 n. 353.
- 56 On the history and origin of the concept of the seven (or eight) deadly sins, see Morton W. Bloomfield, “The Origin of the Concept of the Seven Cardinal Sins,” *Harvard Theological Review* 34, no. 2 (1941): 121–28. See also Irénée Hausherr, “L’origine de la théorie orientale des huit péchés capitaux,” *Orientalia Christiana* 30, no. 86 (1933) : 164–75. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816000031473>

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- 57** Ioannis Konidakis, "The Ubiquity of Canon Law," in *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth-Twelfth Centuries*, ed. Angeliki Laiou and Dieter Simon (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1994), 131-50, at 132.
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- 58** Miguel Arranz, *I Penitenziali Bizantini. Il Protokanorion o Knaorion Primitivo di Giovanni Monaco e Diacono e il Deuterokanorion o "Secondo Kanorion" di Basilio Monaco* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1993), 48-60, esp. 52-55.
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- 59** See note 1. See also the link Evangelatou ("Word and Image," 120-25) makes between some of the images and the monastic community.
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- 60** The history of the monastery is summarized in: Alexander Kazhdan et al., "Stoudios Monastery," *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), III: 1960-61, and Thomas and Constantinides Hero, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, I, 84-97. On Theodore of Stoudios, see Alexander Kazhdan et al., "Theodore of Stoudios," *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, III, 2044-45, and Thomas and Constantinides Hero, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, I, 67-75. On the abbot's contribution to Byzantine monastic life, see also Rosemary Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium*, 843-1118 (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 14-16. On the influence of the Studite rite on Byzantine liturgy, see Thomas Pott, *La réforme liturgique byzantine: étude du phénomène de l'évolution non-spontanée de la liturgie byzantine* (Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche, 2000).
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- 61** On this, see also Evangelatou, "Word and Image," esp. 139-43.
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- 62** Elizabeth A. Clark, *Jerome, Chrysostom and Friends* (New York and Toronto: Edwin Mellen, 1979), 12, 15, 19, 55-57; Alexander Kazhdan, "Hermitic, Cenobitic, and Secular Ideals in Byzantine Hagiography of the Ninth Centuries," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30, no. 4 (1985): 473-87.
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- 63** E.g., Cyril Mango, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 208-11; Catia Galatariotou, "Byzantine Ktetorika Typika: A Comparative Study," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 45 (1987): 77-138, at 121.
<https://doi.org/10.3406/rebyz.1987.2206>
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- 64** Mary-Alice Talbot, "Monastic Experience of Byzantine Men and Women," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30 (1985), 1-20, at 13-14.
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- 65** Špidlík, Tenace, and Čemus, *Questions monastiques*, 195-99.
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- 66 *In Psalmum* 50.4 (PG55: 570). John Chrysostom's discourse also tells how King David quenched his desire, bearing the consequences of having a child with Bathsheba. Mentioning theater attendance probably has more to do with the rhetoric of morals than with reality in post-iconoclastic Byzantium, when theater was essentially non-existent; see Walter Puchner, "Zum 'Theater' in Byzanz. Eine Zwischenbilanz," in *Fest und Alltag in Byzanz*, ed. Günter Prinzing and Dieter Simon (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1990), 11–16.
- 67 Claudine Dauphin, "Brothels, Baths and Babes: Prostitution in the Byzantine Holy Land," *Classics Ireland* 3 (1996), 47–72, at 52–53.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/25528291>; Albrecht Berger, *Das Bad in der byzantinischen Zeit*, *Miscellane Byzantine Monacensia* 27 (Munich: Institut für Byzantinistik und neugriechische Philologie der Universität, 1982), 44.
- 68 See, e.g., Chrysostom, who warns: "The soul may be compared to the eye, when it is clear and radiant, is sharp-sighted... but when... some foul liquid... some dark smoke... a dense cloud forms before the pupil... it sees nothing plainly.... In the same way it happens to the soul... when it becomes turbid with many passions," *Hom. in John* 2.4; English translation from Leyerle, "John Chrysostom on the Gaze," 161–62.
- 69 The perception of the Byzantine viewer was discussed by Jaś Elsner (*Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity* [Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1995]), who claims that the sixth-century Christian viewer brought his own experience of the visual when gazing at works of art. The Roman viewer saw change differently over time, as well as his move from a "realist[ic] mode of viewing" to a "mystic viewing" that perceives the work of art symbolically and metaphorically. For a more nuanced and critical approach to the ways Romans viewed works of art, see Taylor, *Moral Mirror of Roman Art*, 17–55.
- 70 Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin*, 125–26. See also Julien Leroy, "La vie quotidienne du moine studite," in his *Études sur le monachisme byzantin*, 76.
- 71 Leroy, "La vie quotidienne," 78.
- 72 Leyerle, "John Chrysostom on the Gaze," 162–63. See also Leyerle, *Theatrical Shows and Ascetic Lives: John Chrysostom's Attack on Spiritual Marriage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 154.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520215580.001.0001>
- 73 John Chrysostom, *Subintr.* 1.60–63; trans. Clark, *Jerome, Chrysostom and Friends*, 166.

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- 74** See Caroline Walker Bynum ("The Female Body and Religious Practice in the Later Middle Ages," in her *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* [New York: Zone Books, 1991], 184–221), who shows how the acts and attitudes of men affected the cultural construction of categories such as the "female."
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- 75** See in particular Madeline Harrison Caviness, "The Reception of Images by Medieval Viewers," in *A Companion to Art History*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 65–85, and additional bibliography there.