



Shaping Viewer Experience through Images of Unfinished Work: A Visual History of Making in the fourth to eighth-century CE Eastern Mediterranean

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Introduction[1]

What is being attacked...is the rationalistic notion that art is a form of work that results in a finished product....[Art] is mutable stuff which need not arrive at the point of being finalized with respect to either time or space. The notion that work is an irreversible process ending in a static icon-object no longer has much relevance.

Robert Morris, 1969[2]

At the core of this investigation are representations in works of art of unfinished, reversible processes.[3] Images of labor and laborers were uncommon in classical antiquity,[4] but the early medieval period in particular offers a handful of varied depictions highlighting unfinished work as the primary objective (Fig. 1 and

<https://huqoq.web.unc.edu/reports/> Fig. 48).[5] When laboring bodies are shown, typically they are engaged in ongoing production (“endless labor”) in an image that encourages viewer reflection concerning the experience of viewing itself.[6] The image of the making itself becomes part of the experiential basis of viewing.

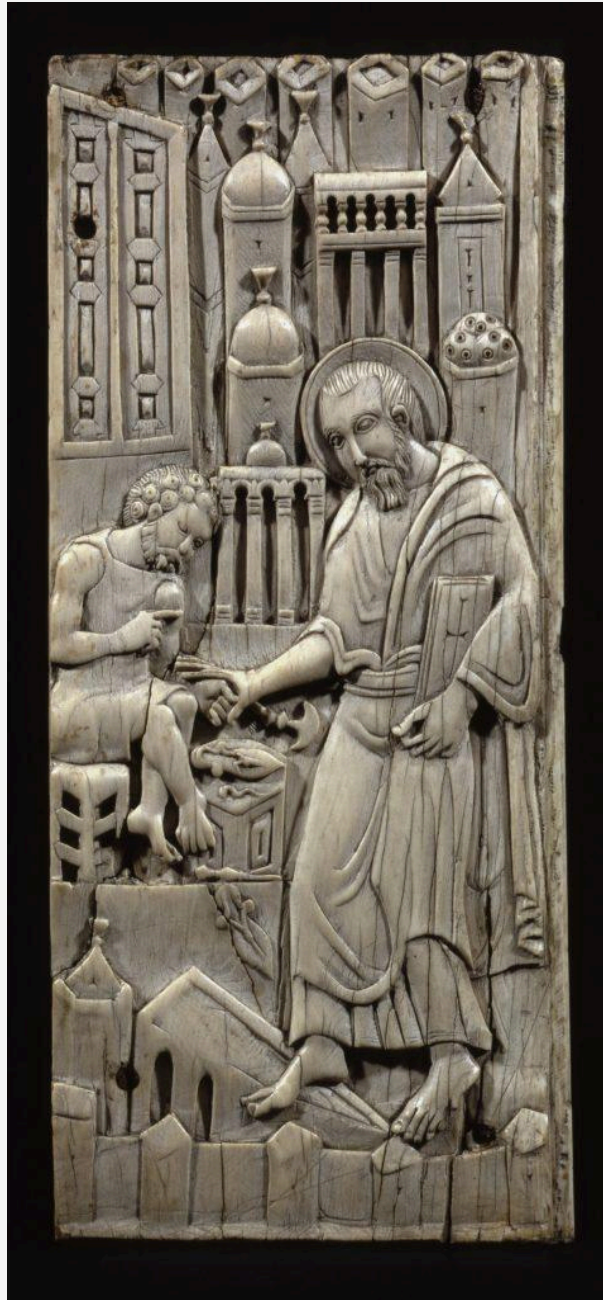


Fig. 1. St. Mark healing Ananias the cobbler, carved ivory panel, c. 7th-8th century CE, possibly an Alexandrian workshop, © Comune di Milano, Raccolte d’Arte Applicata, Castello Sforzesco, Milan (avori no. A3).

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Representations of unfinished work, primarily of fourth to eighth-century in the Eastern Mediterranean,[7] are the main emphasis of this study – or more specifically, the strategic use of images of workers’ bodies to guide the viewer’s experience. These workers are both craftworkers and unskilled laborers. The key pieces of analysis include representations of unfinished work by anonymous workers (in particular, a Tower of Babel mosaic from Huqoq, Israel [<https://huqoq.web.unc.edu/reports/> Fig. 48]), and unfinished work by known commissioners (such as the Eutropos plaque from Urbino, Italy, Figs. 2-4, and the Theodosian Obelisk, Constantinople, Turkey, Fig. 5), and unfinished work by a known maker (Anianos ivory panel, now in Milan, Italy, Fig. 1).



Fig. 2. Eutropos panel, mid-3rd century CE, height: 34.5 cm, width: 113.5 cm, thickness: 2.5 cm, Urbino, Museo lapidario (Palazzo Ducale), inv. no. 40674 (31469). Photo Christoph Rossa, D-DAI-ROM, 1090634, Fig. 2.



Fig. 3. Eutropos panel, mid-3rd c. CE, height: 34.5 cm, width: 113.5 cm, thickness: 2.5 cm, Urbino, Museo lapidario (Palazzo Ducale), inv. no. 40674 (31469). Photo Christoph Rossa, D-DAI-ROM, 1090634, Fig. 5.

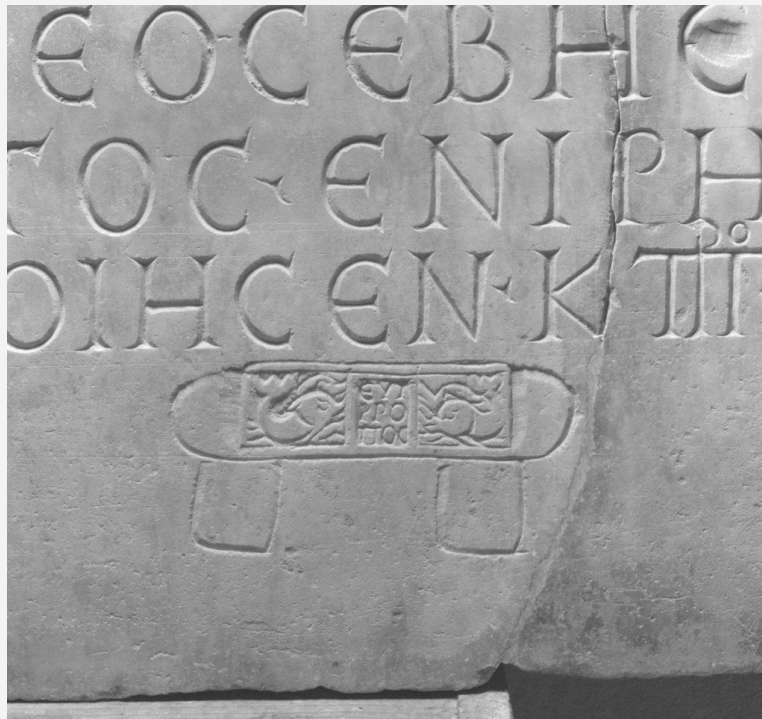


Fig. 4. Eutropos panel, mid-3rd c. CE, height: 34.5 cm, width: 113.5 cm, thickness: 2.5 cm, Urbino, Museo lapidario (Palazzo Ducale), inv. no. 40674 (31469). Photo Christoph Rossa, D-DAI-ROM, 1090634, Fig. 4.

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Fig. 5. Obelisk of Theodosius I, hippodrome, 390 CE, Constantinople, Turkey. © Steve Kershaw, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA. <https://open.conted.ox.ac.uk/resources/images/obelisk-theodosius-i-constantinople>.

Although contemporaneous funerary imagery, concentrated in the fourth century, shows workers as subordinate to the deceased, often conveyed through hierarchical scale or as waiting servers, imagery seldom highlights workers in the process of working.[8] Furthermore, the Anianos panels, and perhaps the Eutropos plaque before it, are very rare instances of unfinished work attributed to a named producer.

Scholarship on Roman, late antique, and early medieval work has received great interest recently (for example, interconnected urban spaces and production economies).[9] Meanwhile, images of unfinished work and technology, particularly in the late Roman and early medieval period, have been largely overlooked.[10] However, the study of incomplete forms of visual culture matters. Differentiable kinds of unintentional and intentional unfinishedness – and the potentially rich and nuanced contribution of unfinished carving inform our knowledge of production processes as part of a dynamic sequence of production – have been neglected. Despite some prominent exceptions,[11] material culture is often regarded as a fairly

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circumscribed relationship between producer(s) and patron/viewer mediated through a finished visual image/object. As such, visual representations are typically considered completed, definitive, and fixed (Fig. 6). The termination of work performed by producers, coupled with ownership and display honoring a benefactor, generally delineates clear boundaries for what constitutes finished as opposed to incomplete work. However, work portrayed as unfinished shifts the focus of viewing to making as an ongoing and highly visible act. A critical question underlying the choice to show unfinished work is: What are the workers depicted making and why is it at the core of this image? As part of this framework of relations, the intersections are between (1) laborers in the process of laboring, referencing change over time; (2) the viewer experience including and perhaps beyond patrons, potentially extending to multiple viewers in real spaces transformed by (3) the unfinished work portrayed (Fig. 7).

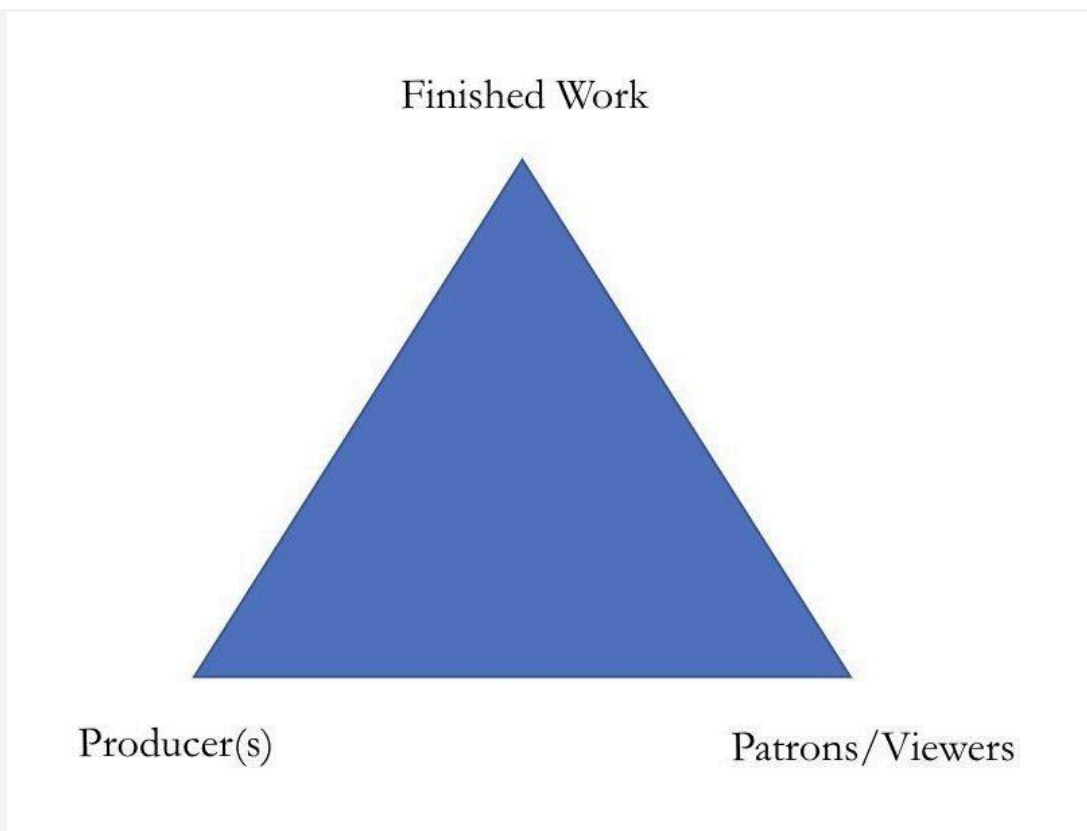


Fig. 6. Diagram of Making with Finished Work as the Focus.

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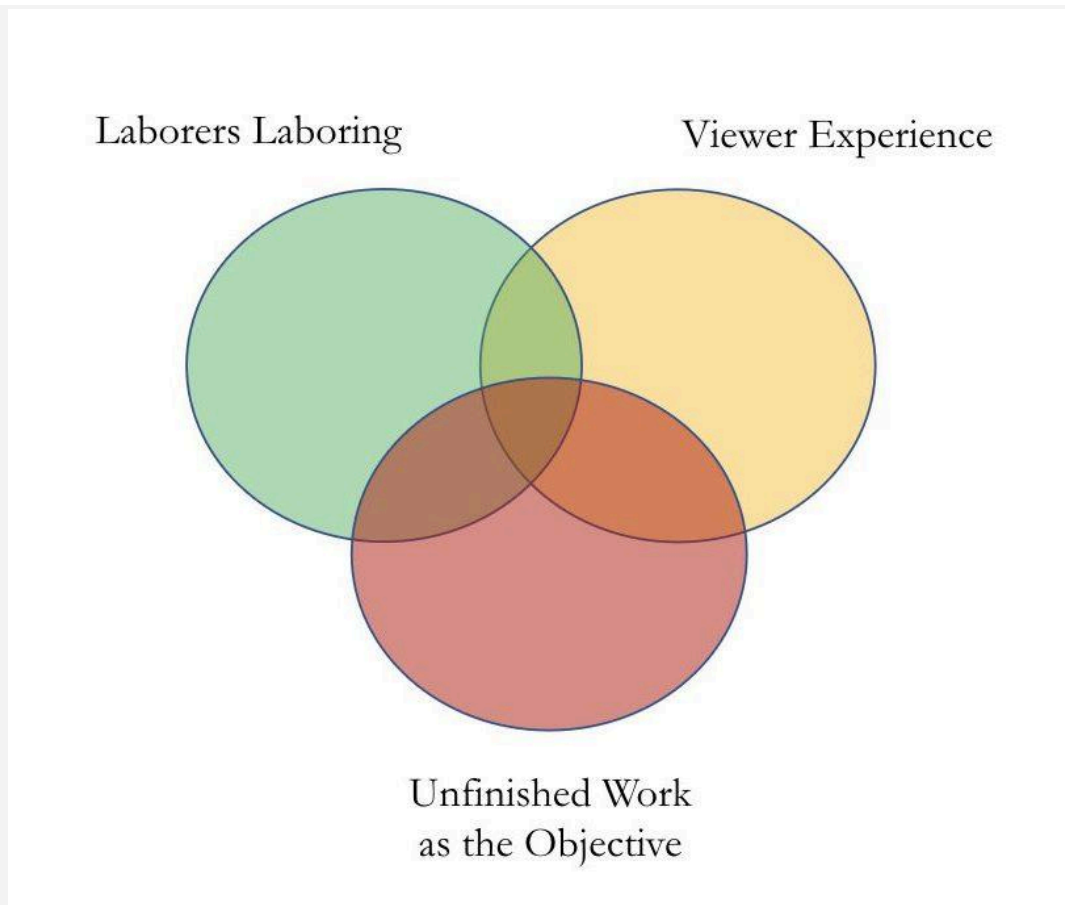


Fig. 7. Diagram of Making with Unfinished Work as the Focus.

The early medieval period marks an important turning point in the visual history of work and working. This may be in part because, as scholars have sought to demonstrate, the sixth century is a watershed moment in the visibility of artisans and merchants in urban centers.[12] Before this period, craftworkers and traders are largely absent from the archaeological record.[13] Despite a dearth of Roman working-shops, surviving examples are concentrated between the fourth and eighth centuries in the Eastern Mediterranean, in particular around the sixth century CE. As has been noted elsewhere, around the fourth to eighth centuries there is unprecedented evidence of widespread display not of primary production (i.e., the extraction and acquisition of raw materials, such as glass making, the extraction of ivory from animals, or mining metals) but of secondary production (i.e., shaping and assembling, using processes such as glassblowing, casting small iron objects, etc.).[14] Not only is there increased urban display in sixth-century shopping areas,[15]

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but it appears that the visual emphasis was on the secondary craftworkers as much as it was on the work produced.

While there is rich evidence concerning the production of craftwork,[16] as well as evidence of interactions between commercial workers and customers, and portrayals of marketplaces,[17] scholars have not yet considered representations of fourth to eighth-century work produced in scenes of skilled and unskilled laborers – in particular with respect to images of unfinished, potentially parallel narratives and self-referential viewing. There is an urgent need to investigate early medieval images of work produced by skilled artisans and unskilled laborers. This is mainly because of an excavated program of mosaics from a fifth-century Jewish synagogue with an unprecedented in-process construction scene.[18] One of these mosaics, which depicts the construction of the Tower of Babel, will be analyzed in this present study, as well as other examples of unfinished works from the time period. The central question leading from the archaeological evidence is this: to what extent do increasingly varied representations of fourth to eighth-century skilled craftworkers in particular (but also unskilled laborers and laboring animals) reflect and perhaps contribute to, or reinforce, their increasing visibility in practice?

Overall, images of craft production processes, from the centuries just before and after the sixth century, portray craftworkers primarily in one of two ways. First, and most often, craftworkers and unskilled laborers are portrayed in a construction scene as a dense array of anonymous bodies shown in multiples (<https://huqoq.web.unc.edu/reports/> Fig. 48). Images of unskilled workers can be distinguished from skilled based primarily on the absence of tools with internal hierarchies among workers suggested by age and dress (<https://huqoq.web.unc.edu/reports/> Fig. 48, and Figs. 2, 3, 8, 9 in this essay). For example, in contrast to a skilled tool user (whether using an adze, plane, saw, etc.), an unskilled laborer moving a stone block performs the task of carrying using only physical strength (<https://huqoq.web.unc.edu/reports/> Fig. 48). Second, and less often even in funerary commemorations,[19] craftworkers are depicted individually (Fig. 1). Workers are represented in the process of making, using tools (such as hand tools, pulleys, winches), and in various stages of production (for instance, assembling, carrying, planing, sawing). However, it is their objective – i.e. the work that they are shown making – that appears to be the primary focus of any image of a laboring body.

Images of workers appear to echo the increased visibility of craftworkers (specifically those involved in secondary production), but the workers are not, however, the

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principal focal point. In images of workers' bodies, workers are presented as an intermediary vehicle, laboring to produce something to serve the viewer. The largely anonymous individual workers are orthogonal to the two main foci: the work they are in the process of producing and the audience it is designed for.

Moreover, the workers' highlighted bodies and conspicuous visibility are serving a larger agenda. Images showing making, for example, on a church mosaic (http://www.bardomuseum.tn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=129%3Achantier-de-construction-dune-basilique-&catid=43%3Alatine-romaine-&Itemid=73&lang=en), [20] present viewers with the history of the construction of the architectural space that they stand within. The processual nature of these representations provides a means of personalizing the scene for the viewer by making the images self-referential, i.e. about the viewer's current relationship to the space or object itself. The unfinishedness of work shown invites viewers to visually enter into an evolving, often moralistic and religious, framework. While laboring bodies appear to be at the core of images of work produced by means of in process, unfinished work, representations of workers working serve to highlight the purpose behind the making, thereby focusing attention onto the viewers and their experience.

Unfinished Work and Anonymous Workers

Images of craftworkers and craftwork were made by real artisans. Although it is unlikely such imagery was documentary in nature, drawing upon what were presumably workers' observations and experiences, these vignettes nevertheless offer unparalleled access to what appears to have been common sights but were otherwise undocumented artistic practice. These representations are therefore important to access fourth to eighth-century practices, such as how particular tools were used, the number of operators for a specialized tool, division of labor, production sequences, to name a few ephemeral tasks that were rendered as pictorial vignettes. Laborers, meanwhile, are seldom if ever the main focal point. Unfinished work appears in images where not only the benefactor is the linchpin but also when an identifiable, named worker is central.

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The Unfinished Tower of Babel at Huqoq

Excavations beginning 2011 at Horvat Huqoq in the eastern Lower Galilee, Israel, led to the discovery of a floor mosaic^[21] representing the construction of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). The scene on the mosaic is premised on the in-process construction of an incomplete building and discord among workers (<https://huqoq.web.unc.edu/reports/>, Fig. 48).^[22] As is well known, the biblical story is about a communal building project doomed when God punished humankind for their hubris resulting in incomprehension, division, and a proliferation of languages.^[23] Five mosaic panels in the basilica are orientated towards viewers entering a main door in the center of the south wall and depict the following from north to south: pairs of animals surrounding Noah's ark (thematically connected to the Babel scene),^[24] Pharaoh's soldiers drowning in the Red Sea, a Helios-zodiac cycle, Jonah, and the building of the Tower of Babel.^[25]

The partially preserved rectilinear mosaic depicting the construction scene of the Tower of Babel is set within a guilloche border^[26] framing the surviving left (west) and lower (south) sides. In addition to the content of the Tower of Babel construction scene, visual connections with adjoining pictorial panels located in the nave and an inscribed panel in an aisle suggest that the in-process construction scene was designed to be understood in relation to the construction of the synagogue itself.

Although no writing survives within the actual Tower of Babel mosaic, a fragmentary centralized commemorative mosaic panel was found in the eastern aisle of the synagogue orientated towards a secondary eastern entrance.^[27] Symmetrical imagery surrounding a six-line commemorative inscription includes three extant adjacent faces, serving as models for viewers with all eyes fixed on the written word (see <https://huqoq.web.unc.edu/reports/> Fig. 34).^[28] There are two possible interpretations based on what survives from six lines. The inscription "likely commemorates the construction of the synagogue by blessing those who adhere steadfastly to all Jewish commandments (the *mitzvot*) or, alternatively, those who made charitable donations to the project."^[29] If the former, then an image of a building scene would complement these words. If the latter, then donors would be honored by a visual representation of production and industrial activity that resonates with the inscription. Either interpretation dovetails with a depiction of workers and their work directly engaging a viewer's experience of the panel in the synagogue itself.

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The ongoing process of constructing the Tower of Babel is the worker's goal and is portrayed as central to this depiction of multiple laboring bodies. This scene features a chaotic mosaic including more than two dozen differentiated but anonymous laborers in action. However, the laborers are not the focus of the construction scene; their fundamental role is to call attention to their unfinished work. Moreover, such portrayals of abstracted or semi-abstracted bodies often appear to be more of a portrait of a tool and its use than of generalized, anonymous workers. Instead of portraits of individual workers, the Tower of Babel scene is a portrait of tools in use, a series of vignettes that highlight detailed representations of tools and their use at varied stages in the sequence of production (actors sawing, planing, chiseling, etc.).[30] Workers can be differentiated by dress, hair, and skin color, but it is their varied activities that are central to the composition's portrayal of the process of ceaseless work, as indicated by a density of figures. The anonymous laborers are truly identifiable only by an illustration of a hand tool, pulley, or winch shown in action.[31]

Representations of early medieval workers, principally in the eastern Mediterranean, are often shown as a cluster of anonymous bodies at work. In the fourth to eighth centuries, multiple workers' bodies are generally portrayed working alongside one another but not necessarily with one another. With the Huqoq mosaic, a mix of solitary figures and groups of two to four-person groups work together, suggesting sequential stages of production in practice, as opposed to all stages at once as depicted in this imagined, composite view.[32] The narrative lends itself to representations of ongoing, in-process labor. In the tower, workmen are shown moving ashlar blocks up the stairs to the entrance and at the top of the tower to further its construction. To the left of the tower, there is an elaborate human-powered pulley to move construction materials. Four men are shown turning a winch (Fig. 5 and <https://huqoq.web.unc.edu/reports/> Fig. 48). To the left of the pulley at the far left of the composition, there are vignettes separated by independent groundlines, depicting related construction activities. The only animal shown is a camel being used to transport a stone block and shown seated and in the process of receiving or removing a block of stone. Also working with stone are quarrymen. Ongoing work is further shown by woodworkers plying their trade, specifically two workers together splitting wood using a two-person saw and a large wooden vise, and a worker planing wood on a sawhorse.[33] Labor and the workers' aim are presented as without end.

Between the pulley and the tower one man's raised arms, mirrored by his upward gaze, are rendered in the process of pulling a rope. His pose is complemented by the lowered gaze and arms of a man at the top of the tower. To the right of the central

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tower are vestiges of a wooden scaffolding structure originally reaching to the height of the tower. Here, near the top, God's punishment is quickly shown by a figure falling to the ground head first.[34] Illustrating the consequences of divine judgment, the ill-fated aim of the Tower of Babel visually communicates to viewers the disintegration of unified industry by its immutable unfinishedness.

The pulley depicted is vertically aligned with the mast of Jonah's ship in the mosaic panel above, pointing up towards the central roundel of the Helios-zodiac cycle in the next panel. In its current partial form, if viewers begin at the left and right extremes of what survives and moves towards the center then they are led from the peripheral preparation of materials in an implied sequence to the unfinished present depicted. In the lower left corner the passage of time is referenced by the work of a solitary woodworker using an adze to smooth a wooden board.[35] His falling wood shavings make it clear that the tower's construction is ongoing and in process.

Further entangling the image of unfinished work shown and the viewer's experience of the physical image itself in the synagogue as a viewing space is a representation of the destruction and abandonment of the Tower of Babel and the destruction of the mosaic image of the tower. Originally, the tower was at the center of the mosaic, but ironically two real ashlar appear to have destroyed the mosaic representation of the tower. These have been identified as the remains of a *bimah* laid on top of the scene when the synagogue was still in use.[36] The parallel nature of this (i.e., genuine ashlar blocks ruining part of a mosaic depiction of the Tower of Babel being constructed using images of stone blocks) underscores the self-referential nature of the viewer's experience of the visual representation of workers and their unfinished work as part of the architectural space of the synagogue at Huqoq itself.

Perhaps the workers shown in profile at the top of the Huqoq Tower of Babel scene on the ropes – and especially the figure on the scaffolding at the far right gesturing upwards towards the missing right side of the mosaic – originally gazed up at a representation of the hand of God.[37] Although later versions of this subject do not focus as extensively on the preparatory stages of production or take advantage of these figures to show the consequences of their hubris (such as by showing fighting between the workers), they hint at what is more extensively represented at Huqoq.[38] Whether communal or solitary, the unified focal point inherent in this scene of workers working is on their unfinished aim. It is only the pair of fighting workers who are now shown distracted from their original purpose (<https://huqoq.web.unc.edu/reports/> Fig. 48).

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The skilled woodworker producing falling wood shavings appears to serve as a visual model for the viewer to follow his gaze (shared with a worker at the top of the depiction of the tower but also at a midway point) to the fighting workers.[39] Reiterating the underlying importance of the implicit portrait of tools rather than workers, the viewer sees the consequences of God's judgement as discord, as communicated by repurposing tools as weapons. Showing the only tool represented twice, one worker holds the throat of another worker in one hand and an axe or mallet in the other hand. The worker held by the throat appears to threaten to strike the other with his bow saw.[40] Divine judgement is conveyed as part of a shift made visible in miscommunications between workers, as they then abandon the unfinished tower and instead use their tools to fight one another. Their unified goal of constructing the tower is shown in process as transforming into hostility and dissension. As such, the mosaic seeks to actively engage the viewers and serve as a model of what not to do. The suggestion of the passage of time in the mosaic combined with a portrayal of the repercussions of God's retribution prompts the worshipper viewing the scene to fill the gap concerning the abandoned fate of the unfinished and ill-conceived work shown. It is the active engagement of the viewer in the synagogue that is the point of the representation.

To reiterate, the mosaic representation does not commemorate individual workers; instead it portrays the use of individual tools and related tasks as part of the entire operational sequence of construction, while also symbolizing the hopeless sin of the Tower. Such portraits of tools in action, in the process of ongoing use, are a means of showing interactions between workers as originating – not from the conventional patron – but from God. Presenting the process of making not only shows the workers employing specific and differentiated tools but also God's punishment unfolding amid the ongoing construction, responsible for the failed projects undoing before the viewer's eyes.[41] The consequences of the Tower of Babel scene are thus framed as a lesson in morality to this fifth-century congregation. What the workers are shown making became a means with which to reference and directly engage the viewer.

Unfinished Work and an Artisans' Identity

Most likely due to the subject matter of the Tower of Babel, the construction scene in the mosaic shows anonymous skilled craftworkers and unskilled laborers. To examine instead the extent to which an individual artisan's identity might impact unfinished work shown, we turn now to work produced by named individuals.

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Fig. 8. Six Craftworkers (and a patron?) on a gold-glass vessel fragment from Rome, 4th century CE, Museo Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (60788). Morey and Ferrari 1959, no. 96.



Fig. 9. Six Craftworkers (and a patron?) on a gold-glass vessel fragment from Rome, 4th century CE, Museo Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (60788). Kisa 1908, III, Fig. 357.

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Seldom is the identity of the worker known in images of in-process work where unfinished work is shown.[42] A handful of commemorations, concentrated in the late fourth century, show laborers in the process of working. Despite the deliberate inclusion of a name, such as that of the deceased, it is frequently uncertain (and unlikely) that accompanying images of workers are in fact the person named.[43]

Scholars today are thus often left questioning how an image of making (for instance, glassblowing, Fig. 10[44] boat building, figs. 8, 9,[45] or marble carving[46]) relates to an individual commemorated in a funerary inscription. For example, was the deceased the large-scale patron of in-process work represented as a small-scale scene? Moreover, was pride in one's own skilled craftwork integrated as a means of honoring another (such as a close family member) in their funerary monument?[47]



Fig. 10. Two craftworkers in the process of making, 2nd-3rd century CE marble sarcophagus, Aphrodisias, Turkey. © New York University Excavations at Aphrodisias (Ian Cartwright).

Evidence of this could be the well-known funerary panel with two inscribed references to Eutropos as the honorand and reliefs showing workers using a specialized drill together (Figs. 2-4).[48] The ambiguous identities of three figures carved on a *loculus* panel toy with viewers today. According to the inscription, Eutropos was the father honored by his son, likely as patron rather than as

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production assistant).[49] Vertically positioned below Eutropos's inscribed name is a large-scale figure (cf. Figs. 8, 9). To the viewer's right is a scene portraying a pair of workers engaged in stone carving using a tool identified as a strap or cord drill.[50] Elevated on a set of low steps and requiring an assistant to use the specialized tool, the expert operator's status is contrasted with an assistant by differences in scale, age, and dress.[51] Such details honor the knowledge and experience of the elder craftsman. He appears to be working on the final deeply carved and distinctive "S"-shaped fluting on a strigillated sarcophagus.[52]) This has led to the conclusion that the deceased was likely the mature drill worker depicted.

Despite two inscriptions stating that the funerary commemoration is honoring Eutropos, the images of workers – and especially their work, as well as which figure is Eutropos – remain a point of debate.[53] Regardless of identity, the panel's main figure is clearly the one to whom all eyes turn: the elder carver represented in the process of carving with related finished work nearby. According to the small number of surviving examples of late Roman funerary commemorations that show images of workers with their in-process work (where a named individual may have been the deceased, a patron or perhaps a family member responsible for the memorial, similar to the Huqoq mosaic), images of multiple small-scale workers were likely a means of honoring the true creator. Such fourth-century funerary portrayals appear to feature designed images of laborers performing unfinished work as a means of commemorating the deceased by engaging mourners.

Depictions of workers' bodies in the process of making work are also central to displaying the power of an imperial benefactor. Dedicated in 390 in the hippodrome in the capital Constantinople, the Theodosian Obelisk (Fig. 5) is a rare example of a late Roman civic monument crediting a highly ranked figure for successfully transporting and erecting an obelisk designed to immortalize the emperor, a task that had defeated previous attempts by others. Rarely is a worker (at any level) publicly acknowledged for their labor on an imperial monument.[54] On this monument, the in-process labor involved in this accomplishment is visually represented. In addition to honorific images of Theodosius and his successors, an accompanying representation, which is immortalized on the northeastern side at the base of the monument and occupying two registers, shows the obelisk itself on its side with a large-scale overseer and multiple smaller-scale workers involved in transporting the 20 meter (c. 65 feet) tall obelisk from Karnak, Egypt.[55] It is therefore noteworthy that Theodosius' monument is presented as a communal triumph shared not only by unnamed laborers but also by a named official.

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Nearly identical inscriptions, in Greek on the north-western and Latin on the south-eastern side, functioned as historic documents crediting Proclus, prefect of Constantinople from 388-392, for engineering this achievement.[56] Each largely identical inscription publicly acknowledges Theodosius for two phenomenal accomplishments: defeating the tyrants Maximus and his son Victor in 388 and raising the obelisk in just over 30 days.[57] Similar to the unfinished Huqoq construction scene, multiple workers remain anonymous. In contrast, however, a high-level Prefect is named twice in this imperial public monument, along with a possible accompanying image.[58] The monument visually acknowledges the effort of numerous anonymous laborers, likely portrayed with Proclus as the overseer orchestrating this achievement. Viewers are shown the history of the monument – in the process of its construction – on the completed monument itself. Such images of past production in the viewer’s present (i.e. a completed structure shown unfinished) appear to represent a widespread commemorative genre in the eastern late Roman world designed not only to depict anonymous and laboring bodies toiling on work presented as incomplete, but also to focus the viewer’s attention on their enhanced experience of the completed monument.[59] Fundamental to such portrayals of unfinished work is the self-referential nature of viewer reception, similar to the Tower of Babel construction scene at Huqoq.

Interrupted Work and the Individual Craftworker: The Anianos Ivory Panels

Although Proclus may have been named and shown alongside laborers laboring with the celebrated unfinished obelisk, he was not a skilled producer. In contrast to this carving in Constantinople and the myriad anonymous bodies portrayed in the process of making at Huqoq, three ivory panels (dated to c. seventh to eighth century) depict the cobbler at work and identify him by name as Anianos (Fig. 1). Anianos’s name and profession are included in the narrative about the life of the Apostle Mark.[60] An inscription specifying the identity of the cobbler was presumably unnecessary given his part in this story,[61] which chronicles how as founder and first bishop of the church of Alexandria, the apostle broke the strap of his sandal and urgently went in search of a cobbler. The purpose of repairing his sandal led to Mark meeting the cobbler Anianos.

A rectangular, vertically orientated ivory panel measuring 190-192 x 82.5-85 x 7 mm presents a crucial moment of convergence between Mark and Anianos.[62] While the cobbler was in the process of repairing Mark’s shoe, Anianos was pierced with a pick. In the visual representation of this event, the portrayal of the body of Anianos

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and this particular tool are both central to the narrative and crucial for viewers' recognition of it. Depicted as a large-scale, haloed figure in the right foreground is Mark, holding a Bible and with the cityscape of Alexandria as background. Following his gaze the viewer is led to the secondary figure of Anianos, recognizable in each of the three panels by his curly hair.

Implied lines reinforce a visual connection between the cobbler, his work, and the apostle. Anianos is portrayed seated on a stool with his workbench and tools before him. Both Mark and Anianos are barefoot and on tip toes.[63] Depicted with the awl used to repair Mark's sandal, the unfinished sandal lies next to the strap on the workbench. The sandal and the pick are shown discarded, lying on their sides. The tool that pierced Anianos's hand lies horizontally on the ground, below the similarly horizontal sandal and strap. Moreover, Anianos's gaze is intently fixed on his clenched left hand while his right index finger points to Mark. Both figures fix their gaze on Anianos's hand. The injured cobbler is about to be touched by Mark's outstretched healing hand; this is the pivotal, implied but unseen, focus of this image.

The cobbler's profession may have provided a reason for his meeting Mark, but as the highlighted unfinished work demonstrates, the healing miracle leads to Anianos's conversion. Two additional ivory panels, each similarly orientated with about the same dimensions, depict Anianos's baptism and consecration as the bishop of Alexandria (Figs. 11, 12).[64] The baptism and consecration panels each have other figures gathered behind the cobbler as witnesses presumably similar to those viewing the panels adorning a *cathedra*, for example (Fig. 13), where these background figures function as models for, and perhaps alongside, viewers.

While there is a wealth of scholarship concerning the 14 related ivories, themes related to work and especially unfinished work have been neglected.[65] Images of identifiable craftworkers laboring are rare. But how does his unfinished work intersect with Anianos's laboring body? By showing Anianos in the process of working, together with his unfinished work, his tools, and his laboring body, the image points to its primary subject. Presented explicitly in the case of Anianos, the maker's body is an instrument in the presentation of a narrative concerning the life of Mark. The profession of the cobbler highlights the importance of the wounded hand for the cobbler's livelihood. The vital miracle is not only healing but returning to Anianos the use of his hand required for his skilled manual work.

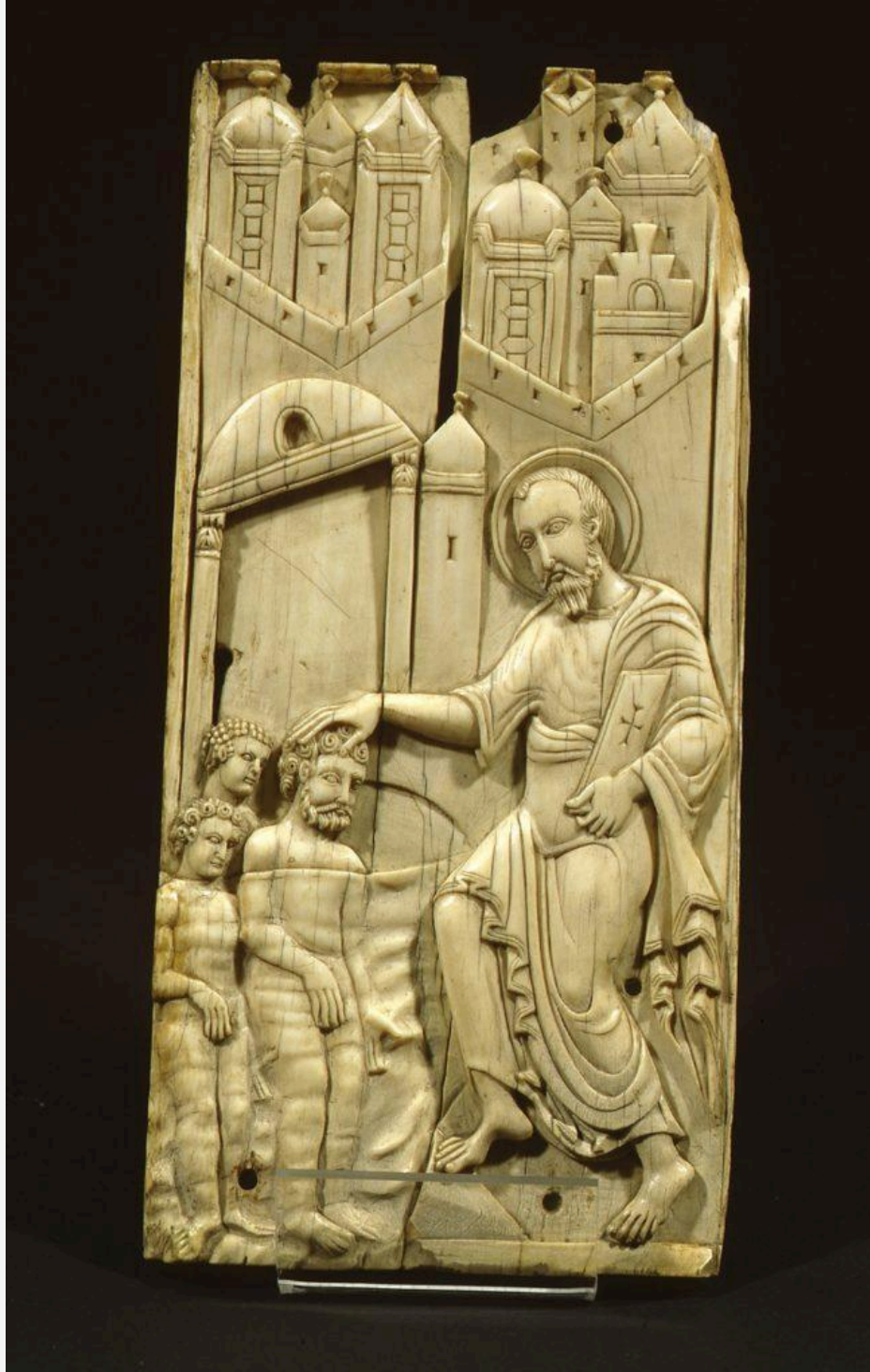


Fig. 11. St. Mark Baptizing Anianus, carved ivory panel, c. 7th-8th century CE, possibly an Alexandrian workshop, 190 x 92 x 7 mm, © Comune di Milano, Raccolte d'Arte Applicata, Castello Sforzesco, Milan (avori no. A4).

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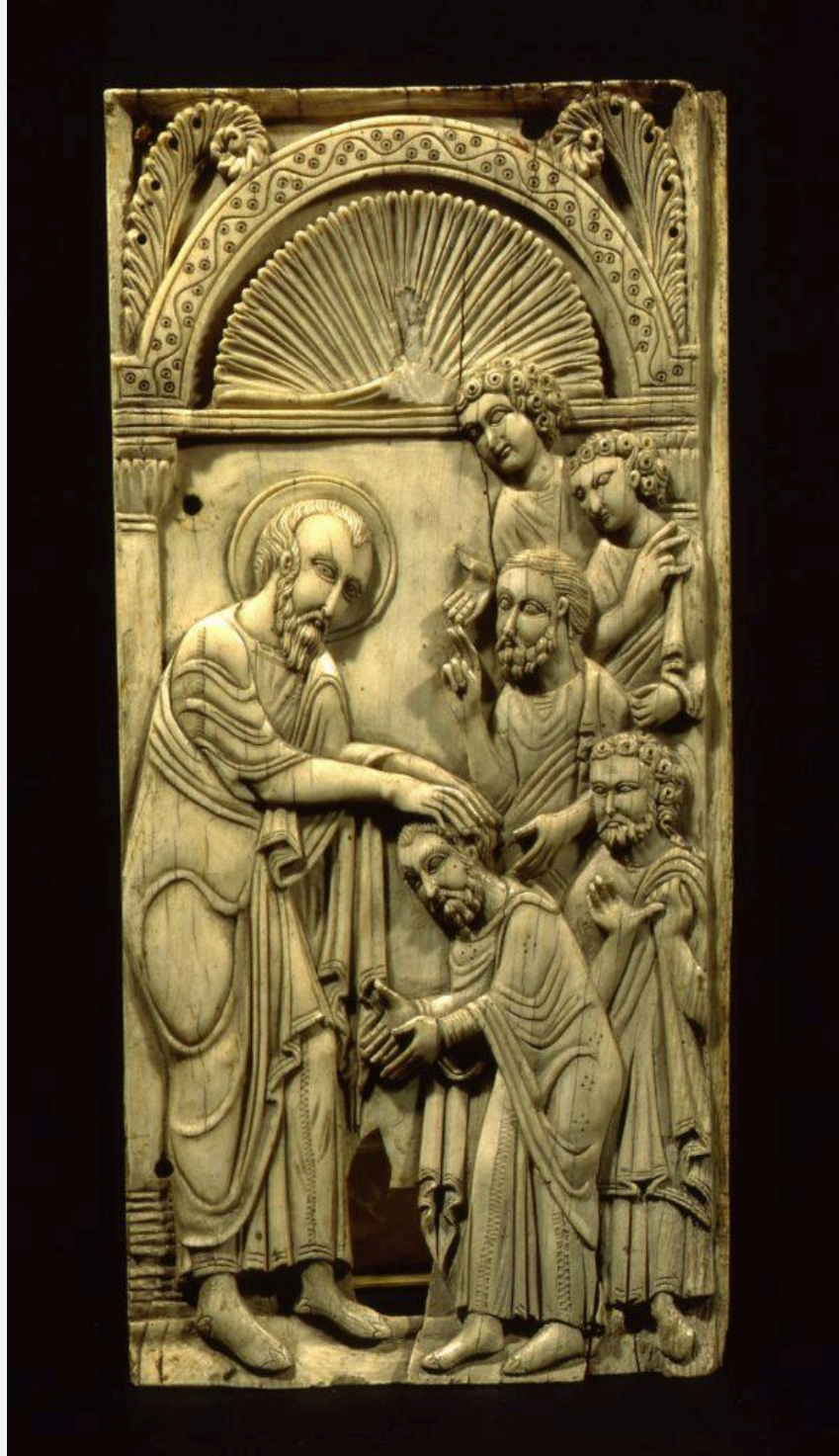


Fig. 12. Ordination scene, carved ivory panel, c. 7th-8th century CE, possibly an Alexandrian workshop, 190 x 94 x 6 mm, © Comune di Milano, Raccolte d'Arte Applicata, Castello Sforzesco, Milan (avori no. A5).

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Fig. 13. Episcopal *cathedra* of Maximian, ivory, c. mid-6th century, 1.50 m, Museo Arcivescovile, Ravenna.
© Opera di Religione della Diocesi di Ravenna.

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The cobbler's unfinished work functions like a metaphoric arrow pointing directly to Anianos's laboring body, as well as his greater calling. Abandoned, unfinished work is represented as the motivation for the meeting between the principal figures of Mark and Anianos. The panel depicts the moment just before the convergence of bodies, foreshadowing the connection to follow. The panels as a whole not only punctuate Anianos's succession as bishop of Alexandria, but also play with the literal unfinished work of the sandal and the metaphoric unfinished work as bishop to be continued by the former cobbler.

Viewers are thereby prompted to anticipate the story and to complete it. This is reinforced by the two related panels that portray subsequent moments in the narrative. Anianos's unfinished work abruptly breaks with the commonplace representation of workers in endless labor by running counter to what may have been a convention since at least the fourth century.

Conclusion

Images of artisans by artisans in the dynamic fourth to eighth centuries offer a glimpse of otherwise undocumented artistic processes, such as how tools were used and at which stage in the operational sequence. In the early medieval period the visual history of making is an index of more than just an historic event. Workers' bodies and unfinished work portrayed are themselves tools. The images discussed present ongoing skilled manual labor as the backdrop. Within each image, select figures are presented in contrast to the rest, through interrupted labor which directs viewers to the true focus of these images, whether religious, political or social, by means of their unfinished work. Whether the identities of workers depicted is known or unknown, they and their unfinished work are vehicles to serve purposes from the moralistic and evangelical in religious contexts to self-aggrandizing in secular contexts.

Although images of early medieval laboring bodies and their unfinished work offer a glimpse of observed and lived experience, such as specific tools depicted and their operation, these workers and their setting are imagined creations, while the true focus is reversed, onto contemporaneous viewers who are turned into witnesses. As this investigation has demonstrated, fourth to eighth-century representations of skilled and unskilled laboring bodies with representations of their unfinished work are nuanced and varied. It is my hope that future scholarship concerning the medieval world will build on this foundation in order to continue to shed light on the

important visual history at the nexus of representations of craftworkers, their in-process labor, and their unfinished work.

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- 1 This paper was supported by a 2020 SECAC William R. Levin Award for Research in the History of Art before 1750 and is part of a larger book project titled *The Unknown Artist: Anonymous Roman Glass Artisans and their Legacy*. A draft paper presented to the volume's contributors benefited greatly from the participants' lively comments. I especially wish to thank Diane Wolfthal, both anonymous reviewers, Nancy Thompson, Jennifer Borland, Stefania Perlini, Lilia Lorenzi, Ilaria Torelli, Jodi Magness, Dan Manwaring, and Michael Thomas.
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- 3 On cross-temporal approaches to visual culture and their potential, see, for example, Alexander Nagel, *Medieval Modern: Art Out of Time* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012); Amy Knight Powell, *Depositions: Scenes from the Late Medieval Church and the Modern Museum* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2012). Cf. Marek Tamm and Laurent Olivier, eds., *Rethinking Historical Time: New Approaches to Presentism* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).
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<https://doi.org/10.5615/bullamerschoorie.380.0061>

6 Whereas unfinished work, whether objects or monuments, are portrayed as incomplete but typically in-process, images of "endless work" shifts attention onto the laborers themselves, as though engaged tirelessly in physical production tasks that are seemingly without end.

7 In addition there are important examples from the third century. On a recent reappraisal of the mid-third century Eutropos plaque, discussed below, see Robert Couzin, "Interrogating the Eutropos Grave Plaque in Urbino," *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 16 (2022):1-31. <https://doi.org/10.18573/jlarc.127>

8 On workers rendered as subordinate through scale, see, for example, workers in the early Imperial Tomb of the Haterii, Rome, Italy, see Eleanor W. Leach, "Freedmen and Immortality in the Tomb of the Haterii," in *The Art of Citizens, Soldiers and Freedmen in the Roman World*, eds. Eve D'Ambra and G. Metraux, (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2006), 1-18. For another relief depicting small-scale workers within a Roman treadmill epigraphically identified as a *prosaenium* commissioned by Lucceius Peculiaris at Capua, *CIL* X 3821; *ILS* 3662, see Sarah E. Bond, "Deus Ex Machina: Depicting Cranes and Pulleys in the Ancient World," in *History From Below: Musings on Daily Life in the Ancient and Early Medieval Mediterranean* By Sarah E. Bond, 16 December 2018. Accessed 8 May 2023, <https://sarahemilybond.com/2018/12/16/deus-ex-machina-depicting-cranes-and-pulleys-in-the-ancient-world/>. On mosaics featuring small-scale figures collecting grapes and producing wine in contrast to a larger-scale bust of the deceased from the fourth century Mausoleum of Santa Costanza, Rome, Italy. On late Antique attending servants or slaves, see Hallie G. Meredith, "Making Anonymity

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https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047407607_016
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- 18** For the interim report, see Magness et al. 2018, 61-131.
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- 19** See below.
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- 20** Mosaic, c. late fourth to sixth century CE, Oued Rmel, Tunisia. The National Bardo Museum.
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- 22** For a floor plan of the mosaics, see Magness et al. 2018, esp. figs. 27, 28, 35-37. See also “Huqoq Excavation Project.” Accessed 8 May 2023, <https://huqoq.web.unc.edu/reports/>.
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- 23** Cf. Gen. Rab. 38:9-11.
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- 24** Genesis 6:11-7:10. See also Britt and Boustán in Magness et al. 2018, 102. On Mopsuestia in Cilicia, a debated synagogue, Michael Avi-Yonah, “The Mosaics of Mopsuestia – Church or Synagogue?” in *Ancient Synagogues Revealed*, ed. L. Levine (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1981), 186-90, or church, Rina Talgam, *Mosaics of Faith: Floors of Pagans, Jews, Samaritans, Christians, and Muslims in the Holy Land* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2014), from the late fourth to sixth century, see Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Synagogues – Archaeology and Art: New Discoveries and Current Research*, Handbook of Oriental Studies 1, The Near and Middle East 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 405 with bibliography.
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- 25** The following mosaics were excavated from the eastern aisle: an elephant panel, a commemorative panel (with a second eastern entrance near the elephant and commemorative panels, Magness et al. 2018, 86) and two Samson scenes (Samson and the foxes and Samson with the Gaza gate), see Britt and Boustán in Magness et al. 2018, 92-8. In 2015, a small sounding in the western aisle indicated additional mosaics, Britt and Boustán in Magness et al. 2018, 98.
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- 26** Extant on the left side of the fragmentary Khirbet Wadi Hamam Tower of Babel scene is a strikingly similar two-part border consisting of an outer guilloche pattern and inner thick line framing the figures. These mosaics are dated to the late third to early fourth century with a repair in the late fourth century, Shulamit Miller and Uzi Leibner, “The Synagogue Mosaics,” in *Khirbet Wadi Hamam: A Roman-period Village and Synagogue in the Lower Galilee*, ed. Uzi Leibner (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 2018), 144-86, esp. 144. For a critique of the c. 300 dating, see Jodi Magness, “The Pottery from the Village of Capernaum
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and the Chronology of Galilean Synagogues,” *Tel Aviv* 39 (2012): 110-22, esp. 112-14; Magness et al. 2018, 118, n. 91.

27 Magness et al. 2018, 86, 96-8, figs. 30, 33, 34. Although the workers remain anonymous, a reference to patrons is immortalized.

28 Commemorative Hebrew inscription, mosaic, east aisle of the synagogue, c. 400 CE, Huqoq, Israel. See “2014-2017 Preliminary Report,” Fig. 34; Huqoq Excavation Project, Magness et al. 2019, 29. The color combination used for a likely Hebrew inscription (as opposed to Aramaic) is white letters on a black background and is unique among synagogue inscriptions. David Amit, “Mosaic Inscription from a Synagogue at Horvat Huqoq,” *Bible History Daily*, 2nd January 2013. On similar phrases used more widely among synagogue inscriptions, see Britt and Boustan in Magness et al. 2018, 97, note 37.

29 Britt and Boustan in Magness et al. 2018, 96.

30 It has been noted that the Tower of Babel scene’s design seeks to make it clear to the viewer what work is being performed. Britt and Boustan in Magness et al. 2018, 115.

31 Instead of a generalized pastoral treatment of milking or an idealized workshop setting in a mythological scene, the Biblical content rendered in mosaic throughout the Jewish synagogue is very detailed. For a fifth to sixth-century pastoral textile depicting a shepherd milking a goat, St. Louis Art Museum, MO. (inv. no. 48, 1939). For a sixth to seventh-century mythological image of production see, a textile fragment with Thetis at the Forge of Hephaistos, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (inv. no. 2140-1900), Suzanne Lewis, “A Coptic Representation of Thetis at the Forge of Hephaistos,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 77, no. 3 (1973): 309-18. <https://doi.org/10.2307/503446>

32 On differentiable groups working in sequence, see the frescoes in the interior of the Red Monastery that have labels used by different groups to communicate work plans to one another, see William Lyster, “Artistic Working Practice and the Second-Phase Ornamental Program,” in *The Red Monastery Church: Beauty and Asceticism in Upper Egypt*, ed. Elizabeth S. Bolman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 97-118.

33 Cf. framed workers at eighth century Qusayr ‘Amra, Claude Vibert-Guigue and Ghazi Bisheh, *Les peintures de Qusayr ‘Amra: Un bain omeyyade dans la bâdiya jordanienne*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, 179, *Jordanian Archaeology*, 1 (Beirut: Institut Français du Proche-Orient and Department of Antiquities of Jordan, 2007), pls. 57-63, 131; Hana Taragan, “Constructing a Visual Rhetoric: Images of Craftsmen and Builders in the Umayyad Palace at Qusayr ‘Amra,” *Al-Masāq* 20, no. 2 (September 2008): 141-60.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09503110802283382>

34 A third figure on the ropes, at roughly the same height as the falling figure to the right of the tower, falls head first, Magness et al. 2018, 115, note 88. Similarly, a fight between two workers with raised tools appears to illustrate accounts in midrashic sources (Gen. Rab. 38:10) that the proliferation of languages led to miscommunication concerning specific tools that were requested, which led to violence and workers wounding one another with their tools. Cf. Uzi Leibner and Shulamit Miller, “A Figural Mosaic in the Synagogue at Khirbet Wadi Hamam,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 23 (2010): 238-64, esp. 247, n. 56.

35 Also representing time is the synagogue’s mosaic Helios-zodiac cycle positioned two panels above the Tower of Babel scene.

36 Magness et al. 2018, 91-2. Similarly, the *bema* was placed on top of the mosaic floor in a secondary phase in the Khirbet Wadi Hamam synagogue, Leibner and Miller 2010, 257. I am grateful to Jodi Magness for confirming that the ashlar blocks postdate the mosaic and were apparently part of the synagogue.

Unfortunately, there is no additional information concerning the sequence of construction or use in the synagogue, email to the Author, 27th September 2021.

- 37** Cf. the third century paintings on the walls of the synagogue at Dura Europos, Syria, Robert du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les peintures de la synagogue de Doura-Europos, 245-256 après J.-C* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1939).
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- 38** For examples of Tower of Babel scenes with Christ, 978-1092 S. Marco, Miller and Leibner 2018, 155-6, Fig. 4.19 (Christ with angels); fifteenth century Bedford Hours, folio 17v MS 18850, British Library, "Book of Hours (the 'Bedford Hours')." Accessed 8 May 2023, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_18850; (angels alone); Pieter Bruegel the Elder, c. 1563, Kunst Historisches Museum Vienna, "Turmbau zu Babel." Accessed 8th May 2023, <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/323/> (secular crumbling tower).
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- 39** This pattern is evident in other mosaics in the nave and eastern aisle. For example, the upper register in the east aisle's elephant panel also uses the crowds' gaze, on either side, to focus the viewer onto the centralized, large-scale figures, Britt and Boustan in Magness et al. 2018, Fig. 32. Cf. the commemorative panel (Fig. 8) and the Jonah scene, Britt and Boustan in Magness et al. 2018, Fig. 34 and 45, respectively. Although fragmentary, the animals in the Noah's Ark scene and the Helios-zodiac cycle also appear portrayed with eyes functioning as arrows, Britt and Boustan in Magness et al. 2018, Fig. 39 and 41.
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- 40** The fight appears to follow the Genesis Rabbah, a religious text from c. fourth to sixth century. This Jewish text is a midrashic collection of interpretations of the Book of Genesis. Commenting on the Tower of Babel story, this text states that "They are one people and of one language...Through their own lips will I destroy them. Thus one said to his fellow-worker...'Bring me an axe,' but he brought him a spade, at which he struck him and split his skull...So the Lord scattered them abroad..." 38: 9-11.
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41 It is noteworthy that the main depictions of unfinished work discussed are in Biblical scenes. I wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting that the presence of incomplete works may have served to signal and underscore the theme of human imperfection to the viewer. For allusions to the virtue of work, see Zinon Papakonstantinou, 2019. "Work and Leisure," in *A Cultural History of Work in Antiquity*, ed. Ephraim Lytle, (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 159-171; Jeremy Goldberg and Emma Martin, "Work and Leisure," in *A Cultural History of Work in the Medieval Age*, ed. Valerie L. Garver, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 165-179. On the staff of Moses in Exodus as a visualization of God's hand, see Hallie G. Meredith, "Christianizing Constantine: Eusebius' *Vita Constantini* as a Late Antique Social Canvas," in *Objects in Motion: The Circulation of Religion and Sacred Objects in the Late Antique and Byzantine World*, ed. Hallie G. Meredith (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011), 7-24.

42 Scholarship concerning the appropriation of workers bodies in general, and in particular in the fourth to eighth centuries is often overlooked. On the absence of identity: Gary T. Marx, "What's in a Name? Some Reflections on the Sociology of Anonymity," *The Information Society, Special Issue on Anonymous Communication* 15, no. 2 (1999): 99-112; William Kuskin, "The Erasure of Labor: Hoccleve, Caxton, and the Information Age," in *The Middle Ages At Work*, eds. Kellie Robertson and Michael Uebel (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 229-60. On Othering: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur: an Essay in Reading the Archives," *History and Theory* 24, no. 3 (1985): 247-72, esp. 252-7; Sune Qvotrop Jensen, "Othering, Identity Formation and Agency," *Qualitative Studies* 2, no. 2 (2011): 63-78; Anja Eisenbeiss and Lieselotte Saurma-Jeltsch, eds., *Images of Otherness in Medieval and Early Modern Times: Exclusion, Inclusion, Assimilation* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2012); Nina Rowe, "Other," in *Special Issue: Medieval Art History Today—Critical Terms. Studies in Iconography*, 33, ed. Nina Rowe (2012): 131-44; Pamela A. Patton, "The Other in the Middle Ages: Difference, Identity, and Iconography," in *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Iconography*, ed. Colum Hourihane (London: Routledge, 2017), 492-503. On multiple identities and the marginalized in antiquity: Margaret Mullett, "The 'Other' in Byzantium," in *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*, ed. Dion C. Smythe (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 1-22; Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004); Douglas R. Edwards and C. Thomas McCollough, eds., *The archaeology of difference: gender, ethnicity, class and the "other" in antiquity: studies in honor of Eric M. Meyers*, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 354 (Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2007); Roland Betancourt, *Byzantine*

Intersectionality: Sexuality, Gender, and Race in the Middle Ages (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020). On social stigmas from the late Republic to the early Medieval period associated with performing a “polluted craft for profit” see Bond 2016. See also Michael Uebel and Kellie Robertson, “Introduction: Conceptualizing Labor in the Middle Ages,” in *The Middle Ages At Work*, eds. Kellie Robertson and Michael Uebel (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 1-16.

- 43** Presumably in funerary monuments mourners already knew the identity of the deceased. Cf. for example: Janet Huskinson, “Unfinished Portrait Heads,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 66 (1998): 129-58; Éric Rebillard, *The Care of the Dead in Late Antiquity*, trans. Elizabeth Trapnell Rawlings and Jeanine Routier-Pucci (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009).
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- 44** See, for example, a second or third-century marble sarcophagus with a secondary scene identified as glassblowing or metalworking. This sarcophagus includes a horizontally presented subsidiary scene with two skilled craftworkers of equal size carved in relief and depicted at work, Joyce Reynolds, Charlotte Roueché, and Gabriel Bodard, *Inscriptions of Aphrodisias*, 2007, insc. no. 13.101. Accessed 8 May 2023, <https://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/insaph/iaph2007/>. This work scene has been interpreted as either a blacksmith’s workshop or glassblowing as suggested by the excavators, Ben Russell, *The Economics of the Roman Stone Trade (Oxford Studies on the Roman Economy)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 304; Reynolds 2007, insc. no. 13.101. Recently, see Thomas Corsten and Constanze Höpken, “Der Aurelia Tate-Sarkophag von Aphrodisias: aufgestellt von einer Glasmacherin?” in *Roman Glass Furnaces: Contexts, finds and reconstructions in synthesis*, eds. Constanze Höpken, Bettina Birkenhagen and Marion Brüggler, (Schiffweiler: Landesdenkmalamt Saarland, 2021), 279-290. A 15-line inscription does not directly mention the two small-scale manual laborers below, but is accompanied by a large-scale figure to either side with a finished body and unfinished face, perhaps blank portraits; see Hallie G. Meredith, “The Late Roman Unfinished *Chaîne opératoire*: A New Approach to Inscribed Glass Openwork,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 127, no. 1 (2023): 119-39. The large-scale figures are identified by the inscription as Aurelia Tate and likely either her first husband (Apollonios), or after his death her second husband (Aurelius Aquilinos). The scene does not highlight their work. Moreover, the semi-abstracted rendering leaves their objective unknown. Therefore, apart from an image of two skilled workers shown in the process of making, the motivation
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behind the choice to include a scene featuring two craftworkers in the process of working remains uncertain. <https://doi.org/10.1086/722079>

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An early fourth-century gold-glass roundel with six peripheral woodworkers building a boat was found in the catacombs in Rome. This fragmentary gold-glass roundel was perhaps used as a personalized grave marker for the central figure shown, Hallie G. Meredith, “Engaging Mourners and Maintaining Unity: Third and Fourth Century Gold-Glass Roundels from Roman Catacombs,” in *The Role of Objects – Creating Meaning in Situations (Lived Ancient Religion). Religion in the Roman Empire*, eds. Jörg Rüpke and Rubina Raja (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, June 2015), 219-41. The workers are portrayed as subordinate, perhaps to honor their patron. The medallion shows half a dozen workers involved in varied stages of production in the process of building a wooden ship. Discovered in 1731 in the cemetery of S. Saturnini Mart., Via Salaria, diameter 160 mm, Museo Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (60788). See also: Anton Kisa, *Das Glas in Altertume*, Three volumes (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1908), III, Fig. 357; Charles Rufus Morey and Guy Ferrari, *The Gold-Glass collection of the Vatican Library, Catalogo del Museo Sacro della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, 4 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1959), no. 96 (345), pl. 16. Cf. Chris Entwistle and Liz James, eds., *New Light on Old Glass: Recent Research on Byzantine Glass and Mosaics* (London: British Museum, 2013). In contrast to the dynamic actions of the peripheral workers, the large-scale central figure appears frontal holding a staff and *rotulus*, wearing trousers, shoes, a short sword, and a red and green *fibula* further distinguishing his elevated rank. The principal figure depicted may have been an overseer, an architect (on the tomb of Trebius Iustus see below). On authority and late Roman dress accessories, see Vince Van Thienen, “A symbol of Late Roman authority revisited: a sociohistorical understanding of the crossbow brooch,” in *Social Dynamics in the Northwest Frontiers of the Late Roman Empire: Beyond Decline or Transformation*, eds. Nico Roymans, Stijn Heeren and Wim De Clercq (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 1-29; Christoph Eger, “Between amuletic ornament and sign of authority: Christian symbols on Mediterranean dress accessories of the fourth to sixth centuries,” in *Graphic Signs of Identity: Faith and Power in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Essays in Early Graphicacy*, eds. Ildar H. Garipzanov, Caroline J. Goodson and Henry P. Maguire (Belgium: Turnhout, 2017), 281-324. Likely responding to increasingly commonplace military trousers among Gauls and Germans, cf. second century Roman troops on the Column of Trajan in Rome, and in 397 Arcadius and Honorius issued a trouser ban, *Cod. Th.* 14.11.2. Cf. Kelly Olson, *Masculinity and Dress in Roman Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 2017). Despite the poor state of preservation when examined, the six workers are somewhat differentiated from one another and each performing a different and

Hallie G. Meredith, “Shaping Viewer Experience through Images of Unfinished Work: A Visual History of Making in the fourth to eighth-century CE Eastern Mediterranean,” *Different Visions: New Perspectives on Medieval Art* 23 (2023): 1-43. <https://doi.org/10.61302/LKIB4582>

related activity on a (shared?) trestle table. Taken as a whole, the laborers' communal action has been interpreted as a representation of the sequential construction of a wooden ship, perhaps with the same board moving through the hands of various workers, Ulrich 2007a, 43, Fig. 2.7.

46 See below.

47 On pride in manual labor in the Roman imperial period, see Michele George, "Social identity and the dignity of work in freedman's reliefs," in *The Art of Citizens, Soldiers and Freedmen in the Roman World*, eds. Eve D'Ambra and Guy P. R. Métraux (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2006), 19-29. Elitist perspectives deriding workers are well known, preserved in written sources such as Cicero's hierarchy of disrepute *de Off.* 1.150-151 or Varro's *instrumenti genus vocale* (talking tools) for their master, *de Re Rustica* 1.17. They have been questioned, and further nuanced from the late Republic to the Medieval period, cf. Kellie Robertson and Michael Uebel, eds., *The Middle Ages At Work* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Bond 2016; Karen Rose Mathews, "Defining a merchant identity and aesthetic in Pisa: Muslim ceramics as commodities, mementos, and architectural decoration on eleventh-century churches," in *Postcolonising the Medieval Image*, eds. Eva Frojmovic and Catherine Karkov (London: Routledge, 2017), 196-217. For self-presentation in epigraphic sources and a proliferation of occupational titles among epitaphs of first and second century slaves and freedmen listing specific functions replacing family name in importance, Sandra R. Joshel, *Work, Identity, and Legal Status at Rome: A Study of the Occupational Inscriptions* (Norman, OK and London: Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture 11, 1992). On titles for craftsmen and traders attested in first-seventh century Greek language inscriptions and papyri, Kai Ruffing, *Die berufliche Spezialisierung in Handel und Handwerk: Untersuchungen zu ihrer Entwicklung und zu ihren Bedingungen in der römischen Kaiserzeit im östlichen Mittelmeerraum auf der Grundlage griechischer Inschriften und Papyri*, 2 vols (Rahden: Marie Leidorf, 2008). On identity and production in the Byzantine world, see: Ivan Drpić, "Painter as scribe: artistic identity and the arts of graphē in late Byzantium," *Word & Image* 29, no. 3 (1985): 334-53; Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, Jean-Michel Spieser, and Robert S. Nelson, "Painters' information on themselves in late Byzantine church inscriptions," in *L'Artista a Bisanzio e nel Mondo Cristiano-Orientale: Giornate di Studio, Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore, 21-22 Novembre 2003* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2007), 55-70; Maria Lidova, "Manifestations of Authorship: Artists' Signatures in Byzantium," *Venezia Arti* 26 (2017): 89-105. Cf. Walter Pohl, "Introduction –

Strategies of Identification: A Methodological Profile,” in *Strategies of Identification*, eds. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 1-64; Martin Pitts and Miguel John Versluys, eds. 2015. *Globalisation and the Roman World: World History, Connectivity and Material Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Walter Pohl, “Introduction: Early medieval Romanness – a multiple identity,” in *Transformations of Romanness: Early Medieval Regions and Identities*, eds. Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner, Cinzia Grifoni and Marianne Pollheimer-Mohaupt (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 3-40.

48 CIG 4. 9598a; ICUR VI. 17225; SEG 49. 1377; EDB 4414, found on the Via Labicana, Rome, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino (D-DAI-Rom 75.1101-1103). For a recent reassessment of the plaques date as mid third-century, see Couzin 2022, 4-7 with bibliography.

49 Likewise, the late third to fourth century tomb of Trebius Iustus, via Latina, Rome, see: Orazio Marucchi, “L’Ipogeo sepolcrale di Trebio Giusto recentemente scoperto sulla via Latina e proposta di spiegazione gnostica delle sue pitture,” *Nuovo Bollettino di Archeologia Cristiana* 17 (1911): 209-35, pl. 11; Orazio Marucchi, “Il singolare cubicolo di Trebio Giusto spiegato nelle sue pitture e nella sue iscrizioni come appartenente ad una setta cristiana eretica di derivazione egiziana,” *Konstantin der Grosse und seine Zeit. Gesammelte Studien* (1913): 297-314; Kurt Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian art, Third to Seventh Century*, Catalogue of the exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977-February 12, 1978 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 276-8, no. 253; Georgios Boudalis, *The Codex and Crafts in Late Antiquity* (New York: Bard Graduate Center, 2018), 3, Fig. 2. The inscription states that the deceased is Asellus, the son of Trebius Iustus and Honoratia Severina. Asellus is depicted in a wall painting among his books, stylus pockets, and a *capsa*. An image of the in-process construction of a villa appears to honor the father as donor. It is unlikely that any of the masons shown working are Asellus, instead related to the profession of his father, an architect. Cf. the painted construction scene in the c. fourth century San Marco villa, Jean-Pierre Adam and Pierre Varène, “Une peinture romaine représentant une scène de chantier,” *Revue Archéologique Nouvelle Série*, Fasc. 2 (1980): 213-38, esp. 216-17, Fig. 2. See also, Couzin 2022, 9.

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- 50** Philippe Jockey, “Les représentations d’artisans de la pierre dans le monde gréco-romain et leur éventuelle exploitation par l’historien,” *Topoi* 8.2 (1998): 625-52, esp. 638-9. <https://doi.org/10.3406/topoi.1998.1776>
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- 51** See: Ulrich 2007a, 40; Ben Russell, “Roman Sculptors at Work: Professional Practitioners?” in *Skilled Labour and Professionalism in Ancient Greece and Rome*, eds. Edmund Stewart, Edward Harris, and David Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 243-66, esp. 243; Couzin 2022, 11-14. Cf. Wolfgang Gaitzsch, *Eiserne römische Werkzeuge: Studien zur römischen Werkzeugkunde in Italien und den nördlichen Provinzen des Imperium Romanum*, 2 vols, *British Archaeological Reports, International Series 78.1-2* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1980); Roger B. Ulrich, *Roman Woodworking* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007b).
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- 52** See in particular, Janet Huskinson, *Roman Strigillated Sarcophagi: Art and Social History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) with previous scholarship.
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- 53** The unfinished work shown (i.e. the image of a strigillated sarcophagus) is perplexing. Originally Eutropos’ name was immortalized twice on the front of a *loculus*: first in the dedication and second as part of an image of the lid of a sarcophagus. This image and the physical funerary panel differ from one another. See also Amanda Claridge, “Marble carving techniques, workshops, and artisans,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Sculpture*, eds. Elise A. Friedland, Melanie Grunow Sobocinski, and Elaine K. Gazda (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2015), 107-22, esp. 114 and Russell 2020, 243. On where the plaque may have been displayed, for example, as part of a columbarium or a tomb, see for instance, John Bodel, “From *Columbaria* to Catacombs: Collective Burial in Pagan and Christian Rome,” in *Commemorating the Dead: Texts and Artifacts in Context, Studies of Roman, Jewish, and Christian Burials*, eds. Laurie Brink and Deborah Green, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 177-242. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110211573.3.177>
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54 Questions concerning the legibility of the figures (such as, whether they were painted, their scale and access) are intriguing but are beyond the scope of this investigation.

55 Serving as a commemoration of his victory, the obelisk was a conspicuous symbol of power in the region and particularly for Rome. See Edmund Dondelinger, *Der Obelisk: ein Steinmal ägyptischer Weltanschauung* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1977).

56 On developments in late Roman government in the third and fourth centuries, see David S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay, AD 180-395 (The Routledge History of the Ancient World)*, 2nd ed., (New York: Routledge, 2014).

57 The inscriptions differ slightly, notably in the number of days it took to raise the obelisk. According to the Latin inscription it took 30 days, and according to the Greek it took 32 days, see Fig. 5.

58 This remarkable commemoration appears to foreshadow non-imperial, episcopal, commemorations in the form of an inscribed name and accompanying image. See Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, "Ecclesius of Ravenna as Donor in Text and Image," in *Envisioning the Bishop: Images and the Episcopacy in the Middle Ages*, eds. Sigrid Danielson and Evan A. Gatti (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 41-62, esp. 42. Cf. Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, "Episcopal Commemoration in late-Fifth Century Ravenna," in *Ravenna: its Role in Earlier Medieval Change and Exchange*, eds. Judith Herrin and Janet L. Nelson (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2016), 39-51, esp. 50 and note 33.

59 See supra note 41.

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- 60** On the story, see: Godefridus Henschenius and Daniel Papebrochius, *Acta Sanctorum*, Aprilis, 3rd ed, 62 vols. (Antwerp: Cnobarus, 1977 [1675]), 361; William Granger Ryan, ed., *Jacobus de Voragine, The Golden Legend. Readings on the Saints*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), I. 242-45.
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- 61** See Henry Maguire, "Eufrasius and Friends: On Names and Their Absence in Byzantine Art," in *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, ed. Liz James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 139-60.
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- 62** Comune di Milano, Raccolte d'Arte Applicata, Castello Sforzesco, Milan (avori no. 3). See Hans Graeven, "Der heilige Markus in Rom und in der Pentapolis," *Römische Quartalschrift* 13 (1899): 109-26; Kurt Weitzmann, "The Ivories of the So-called Grado Chair," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26 (1972): 43-91. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1291316>; Weitzmann, ed. 1979, 508-9, no. 456; Paul Williamson, "Gli avori della cosiddetta 'Cattedra di Grado': Lo state delle ricerche," in *L'Enigma degli Avori Medievali da Amalfi a Salerno*, ed. Ferdinando Bologna, 2 vols. (Pozzuoli: Paparo, 2008), I, 155-9; Gudrun Bühl, "24A-N Ivories of the So-Called Grado Chair," in *Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition 7th-9th century*, eds. Helen C. Evans and Brandie Ratliff (New Haven and London: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2012), 45-50, Fig. 24C.
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- 63** In contrast, see an early ninth century (217 x 300 mm) Carolingian miniature featuring the Evangelists with their symbols from the Aachen Gospels, folio 13r, Cathedral Treasury, Aachen.
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- 64** On these panels, see Bühl 2012, figs. 24D and 24E.
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- 65** See esp. Bühl 2012, 49.