1 Towards an alternative 'reading' of the Last Judgement

The first book of the Byzantine chronicle *Theophanes Continuatus* recounts the story of a Byzantine monk named Methodios who is said to have painted an image of the Second Coming and Last Judgement in the house of King Boris of Bulgaria. Methodios was given permission to produce an image of his choice, on the condition that it produced fear in its viewers:

> The painter, who did not know of any subject more apt to inspire fear than the Second Coming of the Lord, depicted it there, with the righteous on one side receiving the reward for their labours, and the sinners on the other, reaping the fruit of their misdeeds and being harshly driven away to the punishment that had been threatened to them. When he [King Boris of Bulgaria] had seen the finished painting, he conceived thereby the fear of God, and after being instructed in our holy mysteries, he partook of divine baptism in the dead of night.[1]

It was the king's experience of this image that hastened his conversion to Christianity in 864 CE, so the chronicler claimed. The chronicle itself was commissioned by the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (905–59 CE) to celebrate the achievements of the Macedonian dynasty, and this story is clearly an embellished account of the conversion of Bulgaria to Christianity. However, as one of the few surviving descriptions of someone interacting with a Byzantine image of the Last Judgement, it conveys several ideas that anticipate the central themes of this book.

The story of Boris suggests that images of the Last Judgement were considered to exert a powerful impact upon viewers, even outside the

1 μηδὲν γοῦν οὗτος πρὸς φόβον ἕτερον ἐνάγειν ἢ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δευτέραν εἰδὼς παρουσίαν, ταύτην ἐκεῖσε καθυπέγραψεν, καὶ τοὺς δικαίους | ἐντεῦθεν τὰ βραβεῖα τῶν πόνων ἀπολαμβάνοντας, ἐκεῖθεν δὲ τοὺς πεπλημμεληκότας τοὺς τῶν βεβιωμένων δρεπομένους καρποὺς καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἀπειλημένην κόλασιν ἀπελαυνομένους τε καὶ ἀποπεμπομένους σφοδρῶς. ταῦτ᾽ οὖν, ἐπειδὴ πέρας ἔσχεν ἡ γραφή, κατιδών, καὶ δι᾽ αὐτῶν τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φόβον ἐν ἑαυτῷ συλλαβὼν καὶ κατηχηθεὶς τὰ καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς θεῖα μυστήρια, νυκτῶν ἀωρὶ τοῦ θείου μεταλαγχάνει βαπτίσματος. *Theophanes Continuatus,* 4.15, trans. Mango 1986: 191.

empire. Methodios's image of the Last Judgement is described as having provoked a compelling emotional response in Boris, and it is this fear that leads to his conversion, which in turn exerts a huge impact on his kingdom.[2] Methodios considered the subject of the Last Judgement most apt to inspire such a response. Comparable stories recount verbal descriptions of the Last Judgement being used to convert leaders from outside of the empire. The hermit Barlaam in the eleventh-century Greek romance *Barlaam and Ioasaph* describes the Last Judgement in detail to convert the Indian prince Ioasaph and his nation to Christianity.[3] Images and verbal descriptions of judgement were deemed capable of prompting conversion through evoking fear in the viewer or listener. The eschatological texts and images discussed in this book were united in facilitating immersive and visceral imagined experiences of judgement, operating according to the properties unique to their mode of transmission. However, images of the Last Judgement have often been understood in scholarship as narrative images that can be 'read', performing in the same manner as a written account. Although words and images were united in their aim of facilitating persuasive encounters with judgement, images did not operate in the exact same manner as written texts, and unpacking how images of the Last Judgement were experienced is central to understanding them and the roles that they performed.

This book moves beyond the prevailing didactic and linguistic model that underlies many previous discussions of Last Judgement images, in which they are characterised as eschatological 'texts' to be 'read' and learned from.[4] Instead, I offer an appreciation of each unique image as having been carefully designed to facilitate an immersive experience of judgement. This foregrounds the role of experience in the generation of meaning and agency, providing a prompt to reconsider approaches to Byzantine narrative images more generally. Such characterisations have also been reductive in terms of the experience of eschatological texts, which were certainly intended to be instructive but also immersive.[5] No systematic eschatology existed in Byzantium, and it is clear that

2 On this story and the evocation of fear through images of the Last Judgement, see Fingarova (forthcoming). I am very grateful to Dr Fingarova for making this article available to me before publication. Fear and the Last Judgement are discussed further in Chapter 6 of this publication.

3 *Barlaam and Ioasaph*, Volk 2006–9: I, 1–95. See also Cordoni & Meyer 2015.

4 The main studies on Byzantine images of the Last Judgement are Jónsdóttir 1959; Milošević 1963; Brenk 1964; 1966; Mijović 1967; Mouriki 1975–6; Velmans 1984; Garidis 1982; 1985; Christe 1999; Drakopoulou 2000; Angheben 2002; Pace 2007; Ševčenko 2009a; Temerinski 2009; Volan 2011; Weyl Carr 2019; Lymberopoulou 2020 (not available at the time of writing); Fingarova (forthcoming).

5 Baun 2007 has very successfully demonstrated this in relation to Middle Byzantine apocalypses.

the Last Judgement needed to be viscerally encountered, rather that expounded, in both word and image.[6]

I focus in depth on a variety of images from the tenth to the fourteenth century, including a mosaic, monumental paintings, illuminated manuscripts and icons, to demonstrate that each image of the Last Judgement was a complex and unique visualisation that informed the identities of the individuals and communities who made and lived alongside it in disparate cultural, religious and socio-economic milieus. Although the account of Boris's conversion is fictional, it conveys an understanding of how powerful images of the Last Judgement were perceived to be, and the catalyst for this book has been the conviction that the Byzantine images of the Last Judgement that do survive are rich resources with great potential to allow insights into the reality of the societies that made and used them.

The power and agency of Byzantine narrative images have not been explored in as great a depth as portrait icons of Christ, the Virgin and the saints.[7] The image that Methodios paints is deemed sufficiently commanding to convert the king, and through him the entire Bulgarian people, to Christianity, bringing monumental social, political and religious change to the region. It is a narrative religious image that exerts such a powerful effect on Boris in the story, but the means by which Byzantine narrative images affected their viewers have yet to be articulated in full. This book aims to articulate *how* images of the Last Judgement exerted a forceful influence in the lives of the individuals and communities who made and lived alongside them.

Byzantine portrait icons were perceived to have considerable power and the ability to influence, intervene and act with wider ramifications for the communities interacting with them, operating like autonomous social agents. In 944 CE, for example, the famous Mandylion – a cloth with an impression of Christ's face miraculously imprinted upon it, that saved the city of Edessa in Turkey from invasion – was installed in the palace chapel, after its translation to Constantinople during the reign of Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos (920–40 CE), 'for the glory of the faithful, the safety of the emperors and the security of the whole city together with the Christian community'.[8] Portrait icons, especially those directly connected to the person of Christ like the Mandylion, operated in a manner akin to relics, standing in

6 On the lack of clear eschatological doctrine in Byzantium, see Wortley 2001: 53–5; Constas 2002: 94; 2006; Baun 2007: 308–9.

7 The bibliography on Byzantine portrait icons is vast, see for example and for further bibliography, Maguire 1996; Pentcheva 2006a; 2006b; 2010; Barber 2007; Cormack 2007.

8 εἰς δόξαν πιστῶν, εἰς φυλακὴν βασιλέων, καὶ εἰς ἀσφάλειαν ὅλης τῆς πόλεως καὶ τῆς τῶν Χριστιανῶν καταστάσεως. Court of Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *Story of the Image of Edessa*, 30.9–10, Guscin 2014: 348, trans. 377. The official history of the mandylion was written in 945 CE. On its translation and entrance into Constantinople, see Cameron 1998; Nicolotti 2014. The most comprehensive studies of the image of Edessa are Guscin 2009; 2016.

as a proxy for the holy personage, with all the honour given to the icon being transmitted to its prototype.[9]

Art historians have written a lot about the power and role of portrait icons, but further work is required to understand narrative images like the Last Judgement.[10] In *Likeness and Presence*, Hans Belting differentiates between icons and the narrative image: the latter, he asserts, presented sacred history and was usually perceived in a way that was more like an act of reading than simple viewing.[11] Indeed, narrative images on the walls of churches, in manuscripts and on icons are often characterised as translating sacred stories into a visual idiom, but I want to go beyond the interpretation of narrative images as didactic 'texts' to think about what they did in their own right. Treating the narrative image as a conglomeration of motifs that should be read like a string of words for meaning – which has often provided the epistemological bedrock for approaching Byzantine narrative images – can impede a full understanding of the viewer's holistic experience of the image, and the considerable social and relational agency invested into these images by their patrons, makers and communities.[12]

This 'image-as-text' idea has resulted in positivist approaches to images of the Last Judgement. These have focused on precisely tracing the 'iconographic' motifs contained within the Last Judgement according to their textual precedents, in order to decode or 'read' the image correctly.[13] 'Iconography' has the suturing of image and writing at the heart of its etymology, in this way, and as an approach it often perpetuates the prioritising of text over image in historical enquiry. Instead of foraging in texts for the sources of visual motifs, I will discuss instead how experience generated meaning, something shared by eschatological images and texts alike. Images of the Last Judgement are not taken as merely conduits of meaning but as sites that generated power and agency through the interaction of viewer and image.

Otto Demus's concept of the 'icon in space' – the idea that the viewer was physically incorporated into the Middle Byzantine system of church

9 Basil of Caesarea first articulated this concept in the fourth century, saying 'the honour shown to the image is passed to the prototype' (διότι ἡ τῆς εἰκόνος τιμὴ ἐπὶ τὸ πρωτότυπον διαβαίνει). *De Spiritu Sancto*, XVIII:44.

10 There are of course exceptions, see, for example, Barber 2001; Dordević 2017. On the merging of portrait icons and narrative scenes from the lives of the saints, see Chatterjee 2014.

11 Belting 1994: xxi.

12 On the concept of agency in relation to images, see Gell 1998. For a full critique, see Layton 2003; Davis 2006. For a positive evaluation, see Pinney & Thomas 2001. For alternative theories that have grown from and modified Gell's now outdated theory, see Knappet 2005 which merges the concepts of agency and network theory. See Gibson 1986 on the theory of 'affordances' (the usages that objects attract).

13 This approach was particularly championed by Beat Brenk who remains the authority on Last Judgement imagery. Brenk 1964 & 1966.

decoration – was one of the first to recognise that the image programmes of Byzantine churches found their meaning and affectivity in the experience of the viewer.[14] The viewer takes pride of place in moving to a consideration of the holistic agency of these images because, regardless of the patron's intended meaning, it was the body, mind, senses and memory of the viewer that allowed the image to be affective. The agency and affectivity of narrative images lie beyond a purely noetic experience: the viewer's encounter with the image was also emotional, mnemonic, gendered and corporeal.[15] Such engagements were implicated in creating meaning and granting social agency to the image beyond the individual viewer, just as Boris's experience was credited with bringing Christianity to the Bulgarian people.

Exploring the holistic experience of these images as needing the body, mind and memory of the viewer for the creation of meaning and agency is necessitated by the material remains themselves. Despite its appearance on a small number of icons and manuscripts, the Byzantine Last Judgement was most often a monumental image, appearing in the western part of church buildings, and it usually surrounded the viewer to some extent. Each image was designed and organised differently with the experience of viewers in each unique setting in mind. My goal is to investigate these images as historical sources in their own right that remain as indexical traces of the people and communities that made and interacted with them, and to understand further the role that these images played in the lives of those who encountered them. Tracing the sources of iconographic elements will not suffice in this regard: the whole bodied interaction of the viewer with these images that more often than not surrounded the faithful on the vaults and walls of churches needs to be considered.

My resolve to focus on how these images were originally experienced has prompted the use of the exploratory frameworks that structure the chapters of this book, namely time and space, agency and use, memory, embodied experience, gender and rhetoric. Unpacking Byzantine images of judgement through these facets of experience elucidates the holistic interaction of the individual with the image, and the ways in which such encounters were intended to influence wider communities. Focusing on the medieval viewer's embodied, rather than purely cerebral, experience reveals each individual image as a complex social discourse invested with agency by patrons, makers and communities. But it also highlights the possibilities for conflict, contradiction and multiplicity. Each image in this book is discussed as a rich historical source and shown to have been a locus of power and possibility, but only to the extent that its viewers imbued it with such agency through their engagement with it. The meaning and influence

14 Demus 1976: 13–14.
15 On the affective/productive, rather than merely representational, image, see Bennett 2001.

of these images ultimately resided in the viewer's interaction with them. Within the inevitable constraints of writing a book, every effort has been made to select a diverse range of images and monuments across a number of mediums, from various temporal and geographical locations and with unique socio-historical backgrounds. The series of case studies that follow this introduction include a mosaic from the Venetian lagoon, two icons from Mount Sinai, one of which was produced by a Georgian monk there, and paintings from northern Greece and Cappadocia in Turkey, along with the fourteenth-century painted image in the Chora Monastery in Istanbul.

Including images from outside the Byzantine Empire, but from within spheres of Byzantine cultural influence, has been inevitable since very few survive from within its parameters. In the account of Boris's conversion, the image is described as being executed by a Byzantine artist outside of the empire, raising the question of whether Byzantine images of judgement were experienced in the same manner in such places. It is pertinent to question in what sense images such as the mosaic at Torcello, executed in a basilica of the Latin rite in the Venetian lagoon, may be considered 'Byzantine' at all, and whether these images were experienced and understood in the same way across geographical, political and religious divides. Choosing images that display a 'Byzantine' iconography but that existed beyond the confines of the empire produces interesting results and guards against treating these images merely as examples of what might have existed in Constantinople. It raises the question of what the adjective 'Byzantine' means when it is applied to an iconography or aesthetic in its own specific context.

The images chosen for inclusion provide case studies, but they are arranged thematically according to the framework that has been used to interpret the image rather than in a chronological sequence. This also serves to undermine canonical narratives of the linear evolution of supposedly standard iconographic 'types'. Each chapter aims to problematise notions of classic, standard or pure Byzantine iconographies from which various images diverge to a greater or lesser extent. The case studies outline the similarities and differences that exist in reality between images of the Last Judgement and stress the multiplicity of experiences to which they gave rise, providing a cumulative case against condensing dynamic, lived images into apparently repetitive Byzantine pictorial 'types'.

A large part of each case study is therefore devoted to a consideration of how the meaning and experience of each unique image was informed to a great extent by its surrounding imagery, architectural framework, liturgical milieu and socio-historical context. The images are situated in what may be known of their original context, but the case studies and their interpretative frameworks are intended to provide exploratory models of approach rather than definitive or exhaustive histories of these pictures. Passing multiple images through various methodological prisms allows a broad spectrum of possibilities to emerge; this does greater justice to the irreducible complexity of these images. To think of a Byzantine image type as containable

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within one authoritative history, or explicable through one methodological approach, would be to neglect these images as dynamic sites of engagement with real people over time – a succession of innumerable historical encounters through which varied meanings and experiences were produced.

What do we know about 'Byzantine' Last Judgements?

To understand how dynamic these complex 'narrative' images were, we need first to consider the emergence of Last Judgement imagery and the slightly problematic relationship that has been previously posited between these images and eschatological texts. Scholars have been frustrated by the paucity of materials and sources that would allow an accurate estimation of when the Last Judgement came into being as an image type. A handful of Early Christian symbolic representations connoting judgement survive, along with basic representations of the judgement parables from Matthew's Gospel such as Christ separating the sheep and the goats.[16] The earliest known representation of this parable is found on a Roman sarcophagus relief from the late third or early fourth century, and its appearance in a sixth-century mosaic on the north wall of the nave of San Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna forms the first surviving instance of a Last Judgement scene in a narrative cycle (Figure 1.1).[17] Christ's judgement is represented by means of the parable in the mosaic, with Christ seated in the centre flanked by a blue angel and a red angel as he separates the sheep from the goats in a vestigial landscape.[18] The ninth century witnessed a shift from such symbolic renderings to more descriptive portrayals of the Last Judgement, and the earliest existing images of the Second Coming and Last Judgement in Byzantium date to this period.[19] Possible references to images of the Last Judgement are found earlier in literature, however, such as in an eighth-century speech levelled at the iconoclast Emperor Constantine V, so the earliest surviving images are not really the first.[20]

16 Matthew 25 comprises the judgement parables, and the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats is found at Matt 25:31–46. Beat Brenk initiated the study of Early Christian symbolic representations of the afterlife, found mostly on sarcophagi between the fourth and seventh century, in his article, *Die Anfänge der byzantinischen Weltgerichtdarstellung*. Brenk 1964. See also Christe 1999: 15–19; Angheben 2007b: 20–6.

17 The lid of this sarcophagus, now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, shows Christ seated in a bucolic landscape flanked by eight sheep to his right and five goats to his left. He gestures in acceptance and rejection of the sheep and the goats, respectively. Brenk 1966: 38–41; Christe 1999: 15–16.

18 Brenk 1966: 38–9; Weitzmann 1979: 558; Christe 1999: 16; Angheben 2007a: 20–2.

19 Brubaker 2009a: 119.

20 *Oratio adv. Constantinum Cabalinum*, PG 95:309–44, esp. 324–5. Yves Christe discredits such references as literary *topoi*, or as not referring to the classic formula of the Last Judgement. Christe 1999: 18.

Figure 1.1 Mosaic of Christ Separating the Sheep from the Goats. North wall of the nave, the Church of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, 6th century. Photo: © 2020. Photo Scala, Florence - courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali e del Turismo.

The earliest surviving image that is often described as a 'Last Judgement', but that more accurately portrays the Second Coming of Christ and the Resurrection of the Dead rather than the separation of the saved and the damned into heaven and hell, is a painting found in a copy of the sixth-century *Christian Topography* by Cosmas Indicopleustes, now in the Vatican (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 699). This version was copied and illustrated in Constantinople in the second half of the ninth century.[21] In the image, Christ is enthroned in glory, occupying the greater part of the upper half of the image. Below him are adoring angels and two subsequent tiers containing the resurrected dead, identified in the accompanying text.[22] Monumental versions of the iconography that represent a more complete scene of the Second Coming and Last Judgement survive from the second half of the ninth century, beginning with the Last Judgement found at Ïçeridere in Cappadocia, followed by the early-tenth-century image in the narthex of Hagios Stephanos in Kastoria (Figures 2.3 & 2.4).[23]

21 On this image, see Kessler 1995. For the text, see Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographie chrétienne*, Wolska Conus 1970.

22 Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographie chrétienne*, V: 247, Wolska Conus 1970: 358–9.

23 On Ïçeridere, see Jolivet-Lévy 2007a. On the imagery at Hagios Stephanos and its date, see Orlandos 1938: 107–24; Brenk 1966: 80–2 (dates it to 1040 CE); Wharton Epstein 1980: 190–207; Pelekanidis & Chatzidakis 1985: 5–18; Moutsopoulos 1992: 202–305, figs. 200, 236–48, pls. 19–20; Siomkos 2005 (who dates the earliest phase of the decoration to the tenth century); Ševčenko 2009 (dates the imagery to the ninth century).

Further tenth-century images are found in Cappadocia, such as those in the narthexes of Yılanlı Kilise, Eğri Taş and Pürenli Seki Kilise, and in the northern funerary chapel at Ayvalı Kilise, Güllü Dere (Figures 3.1 & 3.4).[24] The judgement images in these cave churches do not fully match what has come to be considered the 'standard' iconography, embodied in the Sinai icon described below, but serve as unique iterations of the theme.

The eleventh century is typically hailed as the time when the 'classic' or standard image of the Last Judgement was formulated.[25] This standard 'type' is often seen as fully expressed in the eleventh- and twelfth-century icons of the Last Judgement on Mount Sinai (Figures 1.2 & 5.1), the eleventh-century miniatures of the Paris tetraevangelion (Bibliothèque nationale, Cod. gr. 74, Figure 2.13) and the mosaic in the cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta on the island of Torcello, also eleventh century (Figure 4.1).[26] The main features that are considered part of this 'standard' iconography of the Last Judgement can be clearly seen on a twelfth-century icon from Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (Figure 1.2), and many are clearly labelled by Greek inscriptions so that it is a helpful image to use to outline the motifs often found in images of the Last Judgement.

The Sinai icon is in good condition, apart from two longitudinal cracks. The image is formed of five broad horizontal tiers, intersected by a strong vertical axis along the centre of the icon. The heavenly tribunal that constitutes the top tier of the image is visually dominant. At the centre of this celestial court, Christ is enthroned within an elliptical mandorla, at an enlarged scale, with humankind's primary intercessors – the Virgin and John the Baptist – to Christ's right and left, respectively. This scene is often

24 On Güllü Dere, see Jolivet-Lévy 1997: 56–8; Thierry 1965: 97–154. On Yılanlı Kilise, see Rott 1908: 271–3; Thierry & Thierry 1963: 89–114; Giovanni 1971: 170; Kostof 1972: 203–4; Jolivet-Lévy 2007b: figs. 6–11. On Kokar Kilise, see Rodley 1985: 207–11.

25 See, for example, Angheben 2002: 105–7; Angheben 2007c: 35. By c. 1059 CE, motifs from the Last Judgement were being used independently in manuscripts such as the Vatican Psalter (Vat. Gr. 752). On folio 27v, for example, Christ is enthroned with six angels with the fully developed *hetoimasia*, flanked by the saved, below. Under Christ's suppedaneum, an inscription identifies the event as ἡ δευτέρη παρουσία (the second coming). On folio 28r, the river of fire, with the Rich Man from Luke 16 and other sinners, is labelled τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον (the eternal fire). See Brenk 1966: pls. 25–6.

26 These icons form two of the three painted icons of the Last Judgement that survive from the Byzantine period, all of which were found at Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai. Soteriou & Soteriou 1956–8: I, pl. 150–1; II: 128–31; Weitzman 1973: 297–306, figs. 301–3, 304–7. On the late-fifteenth-century icon on Sinai, see Galey 1980: fig. 106. See also the carved wooden Last Judgement icon from Iceland in Jónsdóttir 1959; Angheben 2002: fig. 6. The Paris manuscript of the four Gospels is thought to have been written at the Monastery of Stoudios in Constantinople. See Omont 1908: I; 7, 11, 41, pl. 81; Brenk 1966: 84–6; Der Nersessian 1972: 109–17, figs. 1–7; Hutter 1997: 202–3, figs. 3, 6; Angheben 2002: 105–34, figs. 1, 7, 12, 14–15, 18, 20. On Torcello, see Testi 1909: 82–6; Wulff 1922: 571–2; Dalton 1925: 290; 1961: 401–4; Gianani 1925; Niero 1967; Andreescu-Treadgold 1976; 1981; Polacco 1986; Andreescu-Treadgold, Henderson & Roe 2006; Caputo & Gentili 2009.

Figure 1.2 Icon of the Last Judgement. St Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai, 12th century. 62.2 × 45.8 cm. Photo: By permission of Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt. Photograph courtesy of Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expeditions to Mount Sinai.

called the Deësis. The imperial overtones of this heavenly court have long been noted, with Christ of the Second Coming having been described as a resplendent and authoritative imperial figure in texts from the Patristic period onwards.[27] He displays the marks of his passion on his hands and feet.

Beneath Christ's throne are fiery winged wheels related to Ezekiel 1:15–21, wherein intersecting wheels accompany the four living creatures that subside beneath the throne of God. The four creatures are not included here. The Deësis is framed by the heavenly host above, with an archangel in a jewelled *loros* at a larger scale in the centre, and it is flanked by the apostles seated on a high-backed bench to either side. Underneath this heavenly tribunal, to Christ's right, the choirs of the saved occupy two tiers and are organised into six groups according to an ecclesiastical hierarchy, with apostles, prophets, martyrs, church fathers, monks and holy women, in this order of rank. At the centre of the icon, along the same vertical axis as Christ, Adam and Eve bow in *proskynesis* before the *hetoimasia* – the empty throne prepared for judgement which is adorned with the cross and the Gospels.[28]

A river of fire flows from Christ's feet to create the lake of fire to his left where the damned are submerged or are about to be. Within the lake of fire, a figure – Judas, or perhaps the Antichrist – is seated on the lap of Hades (or Satan) in a cave-like compartment of darkness on a terrible beast.[29] I will return to the arguments over who these complex diabolical figures may represent in the following chapter. Within the fire, two angels push sinners towards the flames and the darkness. Above the lake an angel rolls up the scroll of heaven, whilst to the right of this angel the choir of the damned is found. They raise their arms, petitioning Christ for mercy, but their fate has been decided: a version of Christ's words of condemnation from Matthew 25:41 is included tellingly above their heads – 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels'. His words of judgement and blessing from this parable were regularly included to the left and right of Christ's feet from at least the time of the first surviving monumental version of the 'complete' iconography at Panagia Chalkeon in Thessaloniki (Kazandjilar Djami), from the early eleventh century.[30]

27 Christ was described like an emperor invested with his cross as a sceptre or imperial trophy. See, for example, John Chrysostom, *Homilies on St Matthew*, *Homily* 2:1, PG 57:23–4, trans. Schaff and Wace 1980–88: vol. 10, 29. This imperial parlance surrounding Christ the Judge would have been familiar from liturgical poetry also. See Romanos the Melode's *Kontakion on the Second Coming*, Grosdidier de Matons 1964–1981: V, 232–67. On the Byzantine court as a reflection of the heavenly court, see Mango 1980: 151–5; Magdalino 1991: 10–11, 14; Maguire 1997a: 247–58.

28 ἑτοιμασία, lit. 'preparation'. Psalm 9:7, Psalm 89:14 and Psalm 103:19 are cited as sources of inspiration for this complex motif.

29 Angheben 2002: 122–7.

30 See Papadopoulos 1966; Brenk 1966: 82–4; Baun 2007: 156–62.

Beneath the lake, two angels ward off diminutive black demons as they weigh deeds in a balance that is now difficult to see. Describing demons as black and as 'Ethiopians' began in Late Antiquity and continued throughout the Middle Ages.[31] Immediately to the right of the weighing of the souls are six compartments of punishments including Tartarus, the worm that never sleeps, the gnashing of teeth, the unquenchable fire and the darkness, motifs all found in the synoptic Gospels.[32] The Rich Man from the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16 is also included here, labelled the greedy or wealthy one (ο πλουσιος) in the red square on the bottom row. The lowest tier of the icon is dominated by Paradise, to which St Peter leads the saved, and by two almost hemispherical compartments representing the raising of the dead from the sea (symbolised as a female figure on a mythical marine creature) and from the land, at the trumpet call of two archangels.[33] Here beasts from both spheres disgorge the parts of those they have eaten, an image of the debates concerning the nature of the resurrected body that occurred in both the East and the West in the Middle Ages.[34] Paradise is formed of two tiers, with the Virgin flanked by angels and the good thief on the upper level, and the patriarch Abraham below. Abraham is surrounded by figures, identified by scholars as souls or children, and the one on his lap is always identified as the beggar Lazarus from Luke 16. The complex issue of whether these small humans were intended to be children or representations of souls will also be explored in the next chapter.

Plenty of iconographic archaeology has already taken place concerning these various visual elements that often populate images of the Last Judgement. Beat Brenk championed the study of the image as a suturing together of textual and pre-existing visual motifs. He argued that the 'author' of the Last Judgement iconography was a compiler who took eschatological motifs that existed independently, both in biblical and extra-biblical written sources and in pictorial form, and integrated them into a consistent whole.[35] Most scholars have accepted this approach.[36] Many of the pre-existing pictorial forms that were incorporated into the Last Judgement have been

31 See Snowden 1970: 169–215; Thompson 1989; Frost 1991; Brakke 2001; 2006: 157–81; Letsios 2009.

32 Mark 9:48; Matthew 8:12, 13:42, 22:13, 25:30; Luke 13:28.

33 For Peter with the key to Paradise, see Matthew 16:19.

34 See Revelation 20:13. See Bynum 1995b, chs. 1 & 2; Angheben 2002: 121–2.

35 Brenk's argument was premised, however, on his erroneous assumption that the classic image of the Byzantine Last Judgement had been formulated by the tenth century, based on his attribution of the ivory in the V&A Museum to the second half of the tenth century. This ivory is now accepted as an Italo-Byzantine work of the twelfth century. Brenk 1966: 91. On the ivory, see Longhurst 1927–9: I, 42; Keck 1930: 161, fig. 24; Goldschmidt & Weitzmann 1934: no. 123; Jonsdòttir 1959: 21; Brenk 1964: 106; Brenk 1966: 84–6: Williamson 1986: 162.

36 For example, see Angheben 2007a: 10.

studied extensively in their own right by other scholars, most notably the Deësis, the hetoimasia, paradise and Hades.[37]

Despite Brenk's efforts to excavate the individual motifs contained in the image, in order to discover potential textual and visual precursors, the point in time and geographical location at which they were finally fused together visually into a recognisable type has remained elusive. Whether the theme was first formulated in the East or the West and whether the Last Judgement was a pre- or post-iconoclastic composition in the East remains unknown. Brenk suggested a terminus ante quem of the eighth century for the development of the Byzantine Last Judgement on the basis that the painting of the theme at Müstair in Switzerland, c. 800 CE, incorporated elements imported from Byzantium, such as the rolling up of the heavens.[38] The formulation of the Last Judgement was thus attributed to the twilight of Iconoclasm in the East. Others have argued for parallel developments in the East and West, with the East lagging behind because of Iconoclasm.[39] Either way, such origin narratives are often inadvertently constructed according to linear teleological processes that privilege the Latin West. This is problematic, both because it devalues understanding eastern images of the Last Judgement for their own sake and because teleology does not provide an accurate model for understanding and describing historical processes.

It is in this context that the Byzantine Last Judgement often appears as an introductory chapter and as a sort of prelude to the Last Judgement proper in the West, which is perceived as reaching its apex in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel (1536–41 CE).[40] Such framing has often occurred because investigations of the Byzantine Last Judgement primarily appear within studies of the development of the iconography as a pan-European phenomenon, rather than as contextual studies of individual images.[41] But framing Byzantine images as a starting point for metanarratives of western iconographies, even if to claim a generative role for Byzantine art within the canon of European Art History, often overlooks the pasts of the communities that made and valued these images. The genesis of the iconography was surely iterative and imperfect, rather than linear, in its spread across the regions that these

37 On the Deësis, see Walter 1968; 1970; 1980; Velmans 1983; Cutler 1987a. On the hetoimasia, see *ODB*: II, 927; Von Bogyay 1960; Volan 2011. On paradise, see Delumeau 1992; Maguire 2002; Mantas 2010: 292–312. On the rolling up of the heavens, see Kepetzis 1993–4. On Hades, see Angheben 2002: 122–7; Maayan Fanar 2006; Marinis 2017a: 60–5.

38 Brenk 1966: 92, pl. 33. He assumes that the type was formulated sometime between the reigns of Justinian and Basil II. Brenk 1966: 86.

39 Christe 1999: 54; Angheben 2007b: 30.

40 Barnes 1999; Hall 2005; Leader 2006.

41 The idea that images from both the East and the West belong to the same category is found in the nature of most publications, in that they deal with these images within the same volume as belonging to the same iconographic type. See Voss 1884; Brenk 1966; Christe 1999; Zlatohlávek 2001; Pace 2007. There are exceptions of course. See Babić & Djurić 1995 and Ševčenko 2009a.

images were found in. Instead of trying to reconstruct a teleological account of the development of an iconography, I am interested in the historical moments that attach themselves to individual material artefacts and the rich cultural discourse that each image of the Last Judgement constituted in its own right.

So regardless of shared doctrinal and formal elements, the context and particularities of each individual image are deemed paramount in the case studies that follow. Variations on the theme enhanced certain possibilities of interpretation and experience and devalued or concealed others. There was no *one* iconography of the Last Judgement because iconographies do not have a transcendental essence and cannot rise above their historical moment: each time this theme was represented, decisions were clearly made by real people to resonate with their religious, political and social context in terms of the physical location, content and material properties of the work. The concept of '*the* image of the Last Judgement' is a useful but, ultimately, ahistorical concept.

Underpinning attempts to ascertain when the motifs of the Last Judgement were fused together is often the assumption that there was one authoritative Byzantine image, upon which all others were based. Implicit is the improbable notion that every image relates to a greater or lesser extent to a determinative image in an unascertained church in Constantinople that no longer exists. The earliest monumental images that survive from Cappadocia and Kastoria can be characterised by their diversity, however, rather than conformity to an assumed prototype. These early images were formulated according to their unique setting and the concerns of the local community, and so it is worth looking at one of these images in detail: a thorough discussion of the image at Yılanlı follows in Chapter 3.

Even a cursory survey of surviving images of the Last Judgement, which for the most part are found outside of the Empire's capital, demonstrates that the treatment of these images as imitations of a central model does not accurately account for the material. Many of the images that survive contain some but not all of the motifs found on the Sinai icon; some images include other motifs not found on this icon or elaborate upon them. Treating such images as provincial derivatives to be mined for what they may reveal about a posited cosmopolitan original does not advance any understanding of the nature and role of these images in their particular contexts. It is a model of artistic transmission from a dominant centre to a lesser provincial setting that distorts the actual processes of artistic dissemination in the empire, underestimating the influence and creativity of regional artistic centres.[42]

It is also assumed that this original image in its unascertained Constantinopolitan church was contained on a flat western wall and that

42 On the problems of 'provincialism' in the study of Byzantine art, see Eastmond 2008.

it was copied in miniature images, in order to be reproduced in spaces elsewhere, some of which were apt for a perfect reproduction like the flat western wall on which the mosaic is placed at Torcello. However, most Last Judgement images were not flat in their composition. The earliest known formulations are found distributed uniquely and meaningfully over vaults and various other architectural surfaces: the first surviving iteration of the 'classic' iconography in the eleventh century is found on the vault and walls of the narthex in Panagia Chalkeon in Thessaloniki. At Panagia Chalkeon, the inscriptions from Matthew's gospel were included for the first time as Christ's words of blessing and condemnation to the saved and the damned, respectively. Other motifs that characterise the 'fully developed' iconographic type were also included such as the good thief in paradise, the Bosom of Abraham, the resurrection of the dead, the rolling up of the heavens and Adam and Eve in proskynesis, although here they bow before the throne of Christ rather than the hetoimasia. Rather than on a flat wall, Last Judgement imagery makes most sense and comes to full fruition when it is distributed across architectural surfaces. Flattened onto the pages of manuscripts and icons, it lost some of its meaning and agency.[43]

The desire to see it as an image ideally distributed on a page or flat surface stems from the interpretation of the image as an arrangement of motifs gleaned primarily from texts and assembled in such a manner that they could be 'read' for information, rather than experienced in the round. Such intepretations overlook the intended immersive experience of texts and images alike. Tracing the meaning of each motif to texts and trying to place the motifs into a meaningful syntactical relationship with one another to create a consistent narrative in images of the Last Judgement does not wield coherent results, however, in monumental or miniature versions of the iconography. It is with great difficulty that images of the Last Judgement can be read as logical chronological narratives. This becomes obvious when they are laid out flat, causing incongruous motifs to converge and artists to use different layouts. Many eschatological texts also display disregard for chronological and spatial precision because doctrine concerning where the individual went after death, and when, was not fully agreed upon in its specifics in Byzantium. Such texts focused instead on experiential encounters that persuasively conveyed their overall message.[44] A large part of this book is thus dedicated to demonstrating that these images were designed in the first instance as dynamic sites to be experienced in the round, and that they were not intended to be rendered visually on a page-like structure to be read diachronically.

43 A comparable argument has been made in Constas 2016: 233–4, and in relation to the Last Judgements of Cyprus in Weyl Carr 2019.

44 This has been demonstrated in relation to the Apocalypses of the Theotokos and Anastasia especially, in Baun 2007: 133–74.

The images and eschatological texts

If images of the Last Judgement should not then be understood as text-like compositions to be taken in by the viewer in a manner akin to reading, it remains to discuss how the relationship between these images and eschatological texts should be understood instead. There was a lack of a sustained and detailed description of the Second Coming and Last Judgement in scripture, upon which the theology could have been based. Like the Old Testament, the New Testament is generally laconic and largely ambivalent in its treatment of death, judgement and the afterlife.[45] New Testament passages pertaining to death and judgement were largely influenced by Jewish apocalyptic thought. These sparse scriptural accounts of the otherworld were richly amplified and added to in second- and third-century apocryphal, visionary literature of the otherworld, such as the apocalypses of Peter and Paul.[46] The Church Fathers, who alongside scripture were the other main source of authority in Byzantium, did not clarify the issues regarding what happened after death and so a theological vacuum remained, one that was happily filled with more popular eschatological traditions such as the apocalyptic and visionary material in the *Lives* of saints. Jewish apocalyptic texts also influenced such writings directly.[47] The popularity of these texts endured and the third- or fourth-century *Apocalypse of Paul* which was written in Greek was translated into many languages, eventually spawning the popular Middle Byzantine apocalypses of the Theotokos and of Anastasia, dating to the tenth century.[48]

In looking to trace the original texts on which motifs in images of the Last Judgement were based, studies often inadvertently emphasise similarities, rather than the differences that exist between the images. This approach culminates in the often-repeated theory that *the* image of the Last Judgement was based on the written sermons on the theme of the Second Coming and Last Judgement attributed to Pseudo-Ephraim the Syrian, as though they

45 On the lack of a systematic theology regarding death, judgement and the afterlife in the New Testament, see Clarke-Soles 2006. For an introduction to the issues at stake in relation to New Testament eschatology, see Fry 2011; Van der Watt 2011. See Hultgren 2002 for an extensive bibliography on the subject.

46 *Apocalypse of Peter*, Klostermann 1903, trans. Elliott 1993, 593–615. *Apocalypse of Paul*, Tischendorf 1866: 34–69, trans. Elliott 1993: 616–44. See Rosenstiehl 1990; Carozzi 1994; Copeland 2001. On the dating, see Casey 1933; Silverstein & Hilhorst 1997: 11–12; Copeland 2001: 10–50.

47 The *Apocalypse of Paul* was clearly indebted to Jewish apocrypha such as 1 Enoch and the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* (first century BCE or CE), as well as the second-century *Apocalypse of Peter*. See Himmelfarb 1983: 41–126; Nickelsburg & VanderKam 2001–12: I, 1–125; Baun 2007: 76–109; Bremmer 2010: 318–21; Marinis 2017a: 11–14.

48 See Baun 2007.

formed some sort of painter's manual.[49] These texts, attributed to the pseudonym of the fourth-century Syriac church father Ephraim, but written by a Greek author in the centuries following his death, patched together the disparate scriptural texts on judgement and elaborated upon them to form cohesive narrative descriptions of judgement in the absence of one definitive scriptural account.[50] This is seen as analogous to the manner in which the image of the Last Judgement was created. The synergies between motifs in his assemblages and those in the images led to the two becoming connected, but there is no single text by Ephraim upon which the iconography could have been based, only a sense of similarity.

No one text has yet been found upon which images of the Last Judgement could have been based. Relating the motifs that are found in these images to a variety of different eschatological texts is not entirely possible either. This is because many of the texts that the Last Judgement can be related to are intricately interconnected themselves, with shared motifs spread across many different biblical and apocryphal writings. Pseudo Ephraim's writings, for example, were mostly based on the Gospels and Revelation and in this way had much in common with other apocryphal texts such as the Late Antique apocalypses of Peter and Paul, which drew upon these two scriptural books also. Any visual motif that one tries to attribute to one of Ephraim's sermons thus resonates with other eschatological accounts too.[51]

Nonetheless, many parts of the image of the Last Judgement do relate to eschatological motifs from scripture and popular textual traditions. But these literary motifs are common across such texts, spread in various

49 Voss 1884: 64–75; Grabar 1936: 250–1; Millet 1945: 14–19; Brenk 1964: 109–14; Milošević 1963: 18–21; Papadopoulos 1966: 57. The French Historians Cahiers and Martins were the first to connect the iconography of the Last Judgement to the writings of Greek/Pseudo Ephraim whilst studying the stained glass windows of Bourges cathedral, but the same observation was made by Voss. The main proponent of this view was Gabriel Millet who connected the iconography of the 'Dalmatic of Charlemagne', a *sakkos* embroidered in gold on blue silk which is a Byzantine work of the fourteenth century, with the writing of the author now known as Pseudo-Ephrem/Ephraim the Syrian (Graecus), or just Greek Ephraim. He also cited Syriac Ephraim as a source. See Millet 1945; Hemmerdinger-Iliadou 1962: 29–37; David 1998. Marcello Angheben more recently has been critical of attributing the iconography of the Last Judgement solely to the writings of Pseudo-Ephraim. Angheben 2002: 129. For an attempt to relate Last Judgement imagery to a more recently discovered writing of Syriac Ephraim, entitled 'Letter to Publius', see Brock 1976; Gavrilovic 1998.

50 Gabriel Millet considered sermons in Greek and Syriac published under Ephraim's name in Mobarak & Assemani 1737–43: II, particularly *In secundum adventum Domini nostri Jesu Christi* and *De fine extremo*. These two sermons have been re-edited in Lamy 1889: 3.133–188; 3.187–212; Beck 1972: 3.4; 3.5 (with a German translation); Phrantzolas 1988–98: IV. For a guide to the main editions and translations of Ephraim and Pseudo Ephraim, see Brock 1990. See also Voss 1884: 64–75; Brenk 1964: 109–114.

51 Garidis 1985: 23–4.

permutations in a rhizome-like manner, so that it is impossible to isolate specific textual 'sources' for each visual motif. Hades, for instance, had a complex history in Greco-Roman and Jewish thought prior to its ambiguous references in the New Testament.[52] Punishment in Hades prior to judgement then became a favourite theme in Christian apocalyptic works from the Patristic period onwards and was found throughout the funerary and commemorative liturgies. Hades as a visual motif often looked the same as the eternal punishments in Last Judgement images, so that to isolate the textual 'origins' of this part of the Last Judgement is complicated, to say the least. Eschatological motifs from scripture were also incorporated into the hymnography for the Sunday of the Last Judgement, found in the Lenten Triodion which was given its definitive form by the monks of the Stoudios Monastery in Constantinople in the ninth century.[53] The liturgical iterations of these eschatological *topoi* were perhaps also instrumental in the creation of imagery of the Last Judgement. However, excavating motifs from this complex textual backdrop tells us very little about images of the Last Judgement, especially if the end point is to merely identify sources.

A key scriptural source to which images of the Last Judgement related was the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats from Matthew 25:31–46:

> When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world' … Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels'.

Christ's words of judgement and separation were often included in images of the Last Judgement, as they were at Panagia Chalkeon and on the eleventh- and twelfth-century icons from Sinai. This primary scripture, however, was supplemented and influenced by a range of other passages: Matthew 3, 19, 25; Revelation 4 & 20; Ezekiel 1; Isaiah 6; Genesis 3; John 5; Psalm 9; Romans 2; 2 Corinthians 5; Hebrews 12; Daniel 7; and Luke 16

52 Patlagean 1981; Kyrtatas 2009. For a comprehensive discussion of the complex history of Hades as an idea, see Maayan Fanar 2006; Marinis 2017a: ch. 2.

53 *Triodion* in Mother Mary & Kallistos Ware 1984: 40–1. It is not clear precisely when this feast, also known as Meatfare Sunday – the Sunday of Apokreas, the second Sunday before Lent – began. It has been translated in Mother Mary & Ware 1984: 150–67.

& 23, amongst others.[54] Formative Jewish apocalyptic literature such as 1 Enoch, which remained popular in the Patristic and Byzantine periods, also informed parts of the iconography. Motifs such as the empty throne, the river of fire and the angelic host, for example, can be found in 1 Enoch 14, which was drawn upon by Christian and Byzantine chronographers as well as in many scriptural passages.[55]

Motifs were not merely picked from these sources and translated into the image in a straightforward manner, however. Many motifs found in the image of the Last Judgement were a creative amalgamation of more than one scriptural passage, such as the apostles reigning with Christ who can be related both to Matthew 19:28 and Revelation 20:4. The rolling up of the heavens as a scroll can be correlated to Isaiah 34:4, Revelation 6:14 and Matthew 24:29, and the river and lake of fire come from an amalgam of Daniel 7, 1 Enoch and Revelation 20. Many other motifs found in images of the Last Judgement, such as the Deësis, the hetoimasia, paradise, the punishments and the weighing of the deeds, traced their roots to scripture but formed complex motifs of visual theology, some of which predated the image and others of which were roughly coeval with it. These complex theological motifs defy attempts to trace exact textual sources, further undermining the idea that the image functioned as a straightforward rendering of an agreed composite narrative.

There is no evidence to suggest that the motifs found in images of the Last Judgement emerged directly from any of the texts mentioned. Rather they seem to have formed part of complex oral, written and visual traditions that eventually fed into the creation of these eschatological images. The development of a favoured image type for representing the Last Judgement in the Middle Byzantine period probably owed not to the compilation of the image as a visual version of established textual renderings, but to an increased interest in an experiential eschatology found across both images and texts, whereby readers and viewers were invited to imaginatively participate. This is particularly seen within visionary material included in the *Lives* of the saints.

The flourishing of eschatological visionary literature from the ninth to the twelfth century coincides with the emergence of a more established iconography of the Last Judgement, and it is possible that both the literary culture and the images owed to a surge in millenarian sentiment.[56]

54 On the biblical sources of individual iconographic motifs, see Brenk 1966: 79–103, esp. 91.

55 Black 1970: 29. George the Synkellos (died after 810 CE) included extracts of 1 Enoch in his work, for example. See Adler 1989: 81–4, 178–81. For an introduction to the compilation of texts from the third century BC to the first century CE that comprise 1 Enoch, see Nickelsburg & VanderKam 2001–12: I, 1–125; Black 1970: 10–13. For a definition and overview of apocalyptic literature, see Collins 2014.

56 Baun 2007: 110–12.

The *Apocalypse of Paul* was condemned by Patriarch Nikephoros I in the ninth century on the basis that it was sacrilegious, and this censure may have owed to a surge of interest in these materials around that time and a desire to control them on the part of the Church.[57] Apocalyptic sentiment was particularly high during the reign of Basil II (976–1025 CE), of whom it was surmised in the Byzantine apocalyptic tradition that he was the so-called Last Emperor, whose time in power would see the Second Coming of Christ.[58] Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081–1118 CE) was also a candidate for this role.[59] The primary evidence for this efflorescence of eschatological visionary literature comes from a group of four related Middle Byzantine fictive hagiographies – namely the *Lives* of Basil the Younger, Andrew the Fool, Irene of Chrysobalanton and Niphon (late-tenth or early-eleventh). These saints' *Lives* contain significant amounts of eschatological material gleaned from Old Testament, Jewish intertestamental, New Testament and Patristic sources, and they seem to date to tenth-century Constantinople.[60]

The *Life of Basil the Younger* provides the most comprehensive account of the afterlife of any Byzantine text. Within the *Life*, Gregory, a pious layman devoted to the saint, receives two visions of the afterlife, the second of which deals specifically with the Heavenly Jerusalem and the Last Judgement.[61] The first vision concerns the narration of the slave woman Theodora's posthumous journey through the celestial tollhouses after death, and it too provides a great deal of insight into eschatological thought in Byzantium.[62] Basil enjoins him to record these visions and his career in Constantinople.[63] It is unknown whether the tenth-century holy man was a real person or a fictive saint created by his hagiographer.[64] Similarities between the *Lives* of Basil and Andrew have long been noted, and Paul Magdalino has argued for a common coordinated authorship, that together they provided a summa of Byzantine eschatological

57 *Syntagma* IV 431. See Baun 2007: 78.

58 On Basil's reign and prophecies concerning the millennium, see Magdalino 2003: 254–5; Volan 2011: 435.

59 See Magdalino 1991: 26.

60 Rydén 1983; 1990; Kazhdan 1999–2006: II, 200–6; Timotin 2006; 2010: 289–91; Marinis 2017b. Those that came after the *Lives* of Basil and Andrew used the same sources, for example the *Life of Niphon* from the late tenth or early eleventh century. On the date of this *Life*, see Rydén 1990: esp. 33. On the date of the *Life of Basil the Younger*, see Sullivan, Talbot & McGrath 2014: 7–11. The dating of the *Life of Andrew the Fool* is greatly contested. Cyril Mango dates it between 674–95 CE, while John Wortley and Lennard Rydén date it to the tenth century. See Wortley 1973: 248; Rydén; 1983: 586.

61 *Life of Basil the Younger*, IV, V.

62 *Life of Basil the Younger,* II. For discussion, see Marinis 2017a: 29–35.

63 On the author Gregory, see Sullivan, Talbot & McGrath 2014: 15–18.

64 See Sullivan, Talbot & McGrath 2014: 12–15 for an outline of the arguments.

thought.[65] These *Lives* may thus have been products of the desire for something more eschatologically systematic and comprehensive, but also experiential, in this period.[66]

Images of the Last Judgement profit from being placed *in parallel* with texts such as the lengthy vision of the Last Judgement contained within the *Life of Basil the Younger*, and they can be seen as working towards the same end of persuading the reader/viewer to avoid hell and to aspire to heaven. Some of the means to this end were also shared, such as facilitating visceral experiences of judgement, but there were similarities and divergences between the visual and verbal as means of persuasion. Middle Byzantine eschatological literature and images of the Last Judgement largely belonged to the same general milieu and so viewed and read together they prove mutually informative in terms of how certain themes were understood and experienced. Both the texts and the images provide glimpses into the communities that created them, and their thoughts, hopes and fears related to judgement after death.[67] The *Life of Basil the Younger* is drawn upon throughout this book, along with material from these other *Lives*, as a gauge of contemporary eschatological thought, rather than as a textual source for the imagery.

It is clear that the motifs found in Last Judgement images related to a wide variety of textual traditions and that a generally accepted understanding of the Last Judgement formed part of people's general knowledge and worldview, based on exposure to textual, liturgical, oral and visual sources. All of these scriptural texts, the larger apocryphal and eschatological textual tradition and the visual repertoire of pre-existing motifs available to artists must be seen as part of a textual and visual climate that made space for an image of the Last Judgment as a general type.

The social agency of the image

The Last Judgement was thus not designed to illustrate any one scriptural or eschatological text. When motifs were shared between texts and images

65 On the similarities between the *Lives* of Basil the Younger and Andrew the Fool, see Angelidi 1980: 98–102. Rydén 1983: 581–5 argues that the same author may have written both. See Magdalino 1999: 87–100; Sullivan, Talbot & McGrath 2014: 9.

66 For a detailed overview of Middle Byzantine eschatological literature, see Marinis 2017a: ch. 3.

67 On the audience of the *Life of Basil the Younger* which may have appealed to, but extended far beyond, a monastic milieu, see Sullivan, Talbot & McGrath 2014: 19–24. It is unknown who the patron was, but Magdalino has argued that it could have been Basil the Parakoimomenos (d. after 985 CE), the eunuch and illegitimate son of Emperor Romanos I. Magdalino 1999: 108–11. Sullivan, Talbot & McGrath have suggested the brothers Anastasios and Constantine Gongylios, both also eunuchs and *praipositoi* at the court. Sullivan, Talbot & McGrath 2014: 11.

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in the wider eschatological tradition of Middle Byzantium it was because of the common social aims of both. Certain topoi were often repeated because they facilitated a visceral experience of judgement, dissuading the faithful from behaviour that could adversely affect their community and their own salvation. The interconnectivity of visual and textual topoi, and the perceived social agency of both, may be discerned in the mid-tenth-century *Life of Andrew the Fool*. His *Life*, purportedly written by a priest of Hagia Sophia called Nikephoros, recounts the exploits of Andrew who was supposedly a contemporary of Emperor Leo I (401–74 CE). Andrew is portrayed as a Scythian slave who came to Constantinople and soon after was asked by Christ to become a fool for his sake. From then on, Andrew played the fool on the streets of Constantinople and was frequently mistreated. In secret he prayed, performed miracles and received visions and hidden knowledge from God.[68] One such vision found in his *Life* demonstrates that both visual and textual representations of the Last Judgement were understood as influential in how Byzantines categorised those in their communities, and that texts owed as much to visual representations, as vice versa.[69]

His vision is told in a vivid way that is reminiscent of an artwork of the Last Judgement.[70] Andrew is standing outside Hagia Sophia in Constantinople during the Easter vigil observing the faithful going in and out of the church, when God reveals all of their virtues and vices to him. He observes the good as being dressed in royal purple robes with faces as white as snow, a *topos* common in eschatological literature – the holy martyrs are described as such in the *Life of Basil the Younger*.[71] In Andrew's vision, the damned, replete with identifying inscriptions, have blackened faces and naked bodies with serpents hanging from their limbs. He describes a group of such women, whose bodies were coated in soot:

> [V]ipers and asps held onto their ears spiritually and blinded their eyes […] Above them there was written in the air, 'Remembrance of wrongs, the first among the daughters of the devil'.[72]

The description is reminiscent of female sinners with snakes attached to their body parts found in images of the Last Judgement, such as those in the tenth-century image at Yılanlı Kilise in Cappadocia and in the late-twelfth

68 For discussion of the *Life*, see *ODB*: I, 93.

69 Nikephoros, 'On the Vision of the Sinners and the Righteous', *The Life of Andrew the Fool*, Rydén 1995: II, 363–75. This vision may be a later interpolation. See Rydén 1995: 361.

70 Gerstel 2002: 207–8.

71 *Life of Basil the Younger*, V.22.

72 ἔχενταί τε καὶ ἀσπίδες κατεῖχον αὐτοὺς νοητῶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀκοῶν καὶ κατετύφλουν τὰ ὄμματα αὐτῶν […] Ὑπεράνω δὲ αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀέρος ἔγραφε ταῦτα· 'Μνησικακία, ἡ πρώτη τῶν τοῦ διαβόλου θυγατέρων.' *The Life of Andrew the Fool*, Rydén 1995: 372; lines 140–4, trans. 373.

century image at Mavriotissa Monastery in northern Greece, and in many later images (Figures 7.1 & 6.2).[73] The inscription of sinful offences on or around the body is a theme common to eschatological literature and imagery, and here the written account seems almost to emulate a work of art, with the inscribed offence hovering above the sinners in the same way that inscriptions were often physically included above the representations of sinners in images of the Last Judgement.[74] Inscribed sinners with snakes biting their bodies are common to both images and texts, and their employment here provides insight into the reciprocal influence of visual representations and visionary accounts, rather than influence having flowed in one direction only, from written accounts to images.

The description also suggests that judgement images played a formative role in relation to the complex of attitudes, values and beliefs held by their viewers. Andrew is described as categorising the real people coming and going from the church according to motifs inscribed in his memory that were common to both judgement imagery and literature. The description of the inscription hanging above their heads, like in a painted representation, testifies to the powerful impact of such visual topoi which had been etched into the author's memory and continued to influence him. Andrew's vision speaks to the social role of committing judgement imagery to memory: such motifs could inform the worldview of those exposed to them, thus perpetuating continued acquiescence to the Christian way of life.

Similarly, the account of Boris's interaction with an image of the Last Judgement pertains to the potential role of the image in the initial conversion experience. Within the account of Boris, fear is produced by the representation of the damned, and by the righteous receiving the reward for their labours, prompting the question of *who* Methodios would have included within these ranks, and whether those included in heaven and hell in images of the Last Judgement were stock characters executed according to an established scheme, or whether they were tailored to each unique context. Very often the inscriptions and attributes of the figures included in images of the Last Judgement do identify particular categories of sinners tailored to their specific community. The mnemonic efficacy of these visual topoi seems to have led, in particular, to social agendas playing out through

73 This motif can also be found in Last Judgement images at Pürenli Seki Kilise and Eğri Taş near Yılanlı, at Hagios Stephanos in Kastoria, at Dečani in Serbia (fourteenth century), and in the fragments that remain of the twelfth-century image at the Cathedral of S Nicolas Dvoriščenskij at Novgorod, among other later images. See Sarab'janov 2007c: fig. 2. On this motif in the medieval West, see Mâle 1978: 373. Sinners are described throughout *Life of Basil the Younger* as having faces like serpents, and liars and perjurers are described as having snakes coiled around their necks and heads. *Life of Basil the Younger*, V.61. This motif is discussed further in Chapter 7.

74 For inscription on foreheads, see *Life of Basil the Younger*, IV. 29. The theme of inscription in judgement literature and imagery is discussed in Chapter 6.

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the identities of those included in heaven and hell, whereby particular social categories of sinner and saint were included by means of attribute and/or inscription so that they could be committed to memory by the community.

Through the inclusion of social sinners, Last Judgement images played a role in the self-definition of the communities that created them. Categories of 'other' were produced – those deemed unacceptable within certain communities – through including recognisable social types in hell.[75] The construction of alterity necessarily implies the correlative creation of subjectivity or identity in the viewer, and each image included in this book is considered as the locus of complex and formative interactions between self and other; a sustained dialectic between alienation and identification, in which viewers were invited to participate.[76] Hell scenes in particular were often loci for the construction and playing out of community identity dynamics, and it is these parts that vary most obviously from one image to another according to whom they were created for.

Some of the images of the Last Judgement explored in this book were created by individual patrons, some by communities, and for some I can only speculate concerning their patronage. The relationships between patronage, power, agency and viewers varied according to the specific image and probably over time. These images were at times sites of intense political, social and even economic investment, and they often formed part of the mechanisms of self-regulation among communities through condemning detrimental social practices. As such, they formed a small part of webs of power relations that were not purely enforced from the top down, but rather spread out laterally among individuals and communities.[77] Close examination of the hell portions of these images has also prompted me to consider the question of whether fear was always the desired impact of these images when social offences were included, or whether other emotional responses were implicated too such as humour, pity and desire. These images were discourses that were intended to structure the social reality of those involved but only when activated through the interaction of individual viewers, to the extent that they resonated with their hopes, fears and experiences.

Communities imaginatively negotiated the general theme of the Last Judgement, gleaned from a complex textual and visual tradition, through claiming to know who would and would not be found in heaven and hell. The Last Judgement and those suffering in hell were thus projected with the weight of church and community authority behind them. Temporal

75 On the 'other', see Butler 1993: 3. On the social other in Byzantium, see Smythe 2000, esp. Mullett 2000; Smythe 2010.

76 On the concept of subjectivity being formed through, rather than pre-existing, discourse, see Butler 1999; 2005; Foucault 1978–88; 1982: 77–131; 1991.

77 See Foucault 1982.

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grievances could thus be addressed within the emotive context of the Last Judgement, and this must have been highly effective in terms of the impact made on the viewer. The Last Judgement played a part in establishing who was in and who was out in each community. This theme recurs throughout most images but varies in its particularities, highlighting again the need to separate the histories of these images, whilst also exploring productive frameworks for interpretation that can be used to study similar images and to understand further the power and agency of Byzantine 'narrative' images.

Case studies and their frameworks for interpretation

Exploring viewers' mnemonic use of the image, their corporeal, emotional and gendered interaction with the image and their involvement in the time, space and visual rhetoric of the image in the following chapters, aids in reconstructing the holistic experience of viewers in relation to Last Judgements and thus the potential agency of these images. These frameworks used for interpretation are clearly not self-contained: they overlap in myriad ways and together provide a more complete matrix for understanding the contingent and multiple experiences of these images.

Following this chapter, the interaction of the viewer with the space and time of these images, both real and represented, will be discussed as having provided the basic terms for viewers' physical and imaginative interaction with them. Time and space, their representation – or the lack thereof – within the image, as well as the architectural space in which the image was found, fundamentally facilitated the viewer's encounter with the image. The fourteenth-century image of the Last Judgement at the Chora Monastery in Istanbul is compared to earlier images to demonstrate that these images were most often experienced in the round, and that they were originally designed in this way to deconstruct the logical progression of time, space and narrative so that the image could not be merely read diachronically (Figure 2.2). Instead, the viewer was incorporated into a physical and peripatetic encounter with the image, especially in monumental versions of the theme. An understanding of the fundamental lack of narrative and chronological coherence in these images, and an appreciation of the original design of the image as being intended for experience in the round, is necessary to understanding all of the other images that follow.

A consideration of the tenth-century image at Yılanlı Kilise in Chapter 3 returns to the beginnings of the iconography to demonstrate that the design of Last Judgement images was governed by intended usage, not fidelity to a composite narrative. This image, situated in a remote cave church in Cappadocia, makes plain the gap that exists between elite theology and 'ordinary' expressions of belief, and between assumed prototypes and the material record (Figure 3.1). The image was invested with a very immediate and palpable form of agency in protecting the viewer and the community in the face of evil and death, through the visual motifs found there. The

potency of the image in its own right is apparent through its use as an illustrated litany and the ambiguous, quasi-magical features added to more traditional motifs. Its intended usage by the community seems to have driven the formulation of this unique image, rather than the desire to illustrate visually a grouping of texts for the education of its viewers. Rather than looking at the image as a proto-judgement from a murky era of experimentation on the periphery of the empire, the image at Yılanlı is appreciated as a pictorial realisation of a community's understanding of what judgement imagery should be, and what it should do.

The famous mosaic at Torcello complicates any attempt to divorce the image from its specific social, cultural and historical context (Figure 4.1). I challenge previous characterisations of this mosaic as embodying the 'classic' composition of the Byzantine Last Judgement in Chapter 4 on the basis that it was created in the Venetian lagoon, outside the borders of the empire, in a basilica that adhered to the Latin rite. The mosaic is situated within its cultural and theological milieu and systematically related it to its surrounding decorative programme in order to probe the extent to which this image can or should be considered the epitome of the Byzantine image of the Last Judgement, as it often is. Moving away from the idea of viewing the image as an example of what should have survived on a wall in Constantinople, I consider how the visual motifs and formal properties of the mosaic were experienced and interpreted in their own context, and whether this image of the Last Judgement can still be considered 'Byzantine' outside of the empire.

The funerary and commemorative contexts of many Last Judgement images necessarily implicated them in memorial practices, but the images were themselves also specifically designed to prompt and facilitate a mnemonic response. On a simple level, they occasioned the remembrance of sin, death and judgement and prompted viewers to pray for the departed, as well as for their own souls. An inscription on the eleventh-century icon of the Last Judgement from St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (Figure 5.1), however, prompts a more nuanced consideration of the mnemonic experience of judgement as being informed by medical and philosophical understandings of memory, and of the dynamics of committing visionary material to memory in Byzantium. The visualisation and remembrance of judgement is also considered in relation to *anamnesis*, or liturgical recollection as presence, within the realised eschatology of the liturgy, in order to unpack another experiential aspect of these images. An in-depth exploration of this eleventh-century icon that formed part of a hexaptych from Mount Sinai – a composition of six icons attached to one another that feature scenes from the life of Christ and the saints – reveals the image as being a specific mnemonic practice unique to its surrounding decorative programme and socio-historical milieu. The meaningful intersection of historical and liturgical time across the entire hexaptych is explored to demonstrate the unique mnemonic practice embodied in its icons. These

icons will be seen as committing social structures to collective memory through individual use, playing a role in the construction, consolidation and contestation of community on the part of the Georgian monk who produced them.

The treatment of the body within these images, through which various body types were inscribed with social meanings, and the manner in which viewers were invited to encounter them in their own bodies is discussed in a case study on the late-twelfth-century image of the Last Judgement at Mavriotissa Monastery in northern Greece (Figure 6.1). Consideration of the real body of the viewer is crucial to understanding how narrative images were experienced. The representation of the body is discussed as a malleable ground upon which a corporeal rhetoric was established in this image. Part of this rhetoric was the construction of a spectacle of pain in the image through allusions to secular forms of law and order. Such imagined physical experiences produced deeply emotional effects and were intended for the instruction, amusement and pacification of the viewer, ultimately allowing for the consolidation of community. The zenith of this community strengthening bodily rhetoric was found in the hetoimasia, intended to persuade viewers of the importance of their bodily transformation in the face of judgement through the life and sacraments of the Church.

Gender is discussed as an organising structure and symbol that was profoundly implicated in the construction of meaning within images of the Last Judgement in Chapter 7. Tension is inherent in the appearance of woman as a symbol within the image and as a concrete reality to which the image referred. Consideration is given to the interaction of male and female viewers with this symbol and to the desired effects of such encounters within the communities using these images. The neatly prescriptive and forcefully asserted gender binary that seems imposed on these images, in terms of woman equals bad/man equals good, is problematised, however, through exploring gender within specific images as a fluid site manipulated for the construction of meaning and affectivity. The intersection of gender with other categories of difference, namely sexuality, ethnicity, social status and religious identity is considered in a discussion of the hell scenes from Yılanlı Kilise and the eschatological images embedded in the twelfth-century Kokkinobaphos manuscripts made in Constantinople by the monk Iakovos for the Sebastokrator Eirene, which contain six homilies on the life of the Virgin (Figure 7.3). Such intersections are seen to have produced different effects on the gender hierarchy within and outside of the image, according to the socio-historical context of the imagery.

The final chapter explores visual rhetoric in images of the Last Judgement. It is evident from the story of Boris that the image was considered one of the most persuasive, and the visual mechanics of this are considered. A shared persuasive nature is explored as central to the common Byzantine analogy between word and image, but I look beyond this comparison at the

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points where the analogy necessarily breaks down to explore the particularities of visual rhetoric, returning to some of the similarities and differences between experiencing an image and a textual/verbal account of the Last Judgement. The manner in which rhetorical tropes, endemic in Byzantine life and thought, manifested visually in these images is considered, along with the persuasive nature of many of the formal properties of the image in and of themselves. Attention is given, above all, to the fundamentally conversational or dialogic nature of these images that necessitated the participation of the viewer in the complex, multisensory, collaborative and highly persuasive experiences that they comprised.

Ultimately, access is scarce to the real events of history and the infinite multiplicity of experiences surrounding images of the Last Judgement. Nonetheless, it is possible to destabilise traditional understandings of the image of the Last Judgement as a standard type and as a didactic 'text' that merely instilled eschatological fear. The generation of fear was certainly intrinsic to images of judgement, but I seek also to postulate alternative responses to the image such as humour, desire and delight, and to challenge the perception of the Last Judgement as merely a visual theological treatise. Instead, images are considered as dynamic sites of experience enmeshed in social relationships of various kinds, loci for the creation of individual and community identities through interaction with their viewers. Considerations of time and space, gender, memory, rhetoric and the body provide interweaving frameworks through which to move towards an understanding of the complexity of images of the Last Judgement and their roles in the lives of those who experienced them.

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