

***Ktētōr* and *Synthesis*: Epigrams, Miniatures, and Authorship in the Leo Bible**

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Abstract

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The Leo Bible (Rome, Vat. Reg. Gr. 1) is a Byzantine illuminated Old Testament produced during the mid-tenth century. Presented as a gift to a monastery of St. Nicholas by Leo Sakellarios, a court eunuch and palace treasurer, the Bible is the only surviving manuscript of its kind from Byzantium. Known for its luxurious epigrams and miniatures, the Leo Bible's classicizing miniatures are frequently cited as exemplars of tenth-century Byzantine art, although the manuscript is rarely considered as whole. This study takes a new approach to the Leo Bible, focusing on the manuscript as a work of visual and poetic exegesis, in which word and image work together to frame the Old Testament in a Christian context. Beyond its exegetical nature, the Leo Bible also demonstrates a marked interest in the theme of authorship. By considering Byzantine notions of authorship in conjunction with the Bible's visual and epigrammatic program, this study offers new insights into the concept of patronage in Byzantium and the means by which patrons constructed their image and legacy through their commissions. In the case of the Leo Bible, this study will address how Leo Sakellarios is understood to be the author of the manuscript and its exegetical commentary, and how this act of authorship is reflected in the manuscript's visual and poetic programs.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

## The Leo Bible: Miniatures and Epigrams

As the only surviving illuminated manuscript of its kind, the Leo Bible (Rome, Vat. Reg. Gr. 1) is an outlier among extant Byzantine art. The Leo Bible is a luxury volume produced in the mid-tenth century and originally contained both the Old and New Testaments, though only the Old survives. The Bible was commissioned by Leo Sakellarios, a court eunuch and palace treasurer, and was presented as a gift to a monastery of St. Nicholas founded by Leo's deceased brother Constantine. Measuring at 41 by 27 cm, the Leo Bible is one of the largest volumes ever produced in a Byzantine scriptorium.<sup>1</sup> The Bible contains 565 folios, 18 of which are illuminated with full-page miniatures.<sup>2</sup> A two volume Bible was an unusual commission in Byzantium, where patrons generally favored shorter and more "practical" selections from the Bible – such as the Psalms or Octateuch – rather than the full canon of scripture.<sup>3</sup> Many of the Leo Bible's miniatures draw upon familiar models, while others seem to be unique compositions. This, in combination with the Bible's inclusion of epigrams framing each of its frontispieces, makes the manuscript even more unique. The Bible's elaborate miniatures are divided into two groups: five prefatory miniatures and thirteen frontispieces. The prefatory miniatures include a table of contents, two *cruces gemmatae*, a dedication to the Virgin, a dedication to St. Nicholas, and are accompanied by a dedicatory epigram. Each frontispiece miniature accompanies a book of the Old Testament and contains a full-page miniature framed by an epigram. All of the epigrams found in the Leo Bible are written in dodecasyllable. With its combination of illuminated frontispieces, scriptural material and epigrammatic poetry, the Leo Bible is understood as a

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<sup>1</sup> T.F. Mathews, "The Epigrams of Leo Sacellarios and an Exegetical Approach to the Miniatures of Vat.Reg.Gr.1." *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 36 (1977): 98.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Canart, "Notice Codicologique et Paléographique," in *La Bible du Patrice Leon: Codex Reginensis Graecus I*, ed. Paul Canart (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2011), 9-13.

<sup>3</sup> Mathews, "The Epigrams of Leo Sacellarios," 98.

collaborative enterprise. Although their identities have been lost to history, a painter, poet and at least one scribe were involved alongside Leo Sakellarios in the production of the Bible.

The Leo Bible's dedicatory epigram (fols. 1r -1v) implies that the books it contains are meant to be read typologically. To this effect, the epigram reads,

“Already Moses, in representing through the Law the astonishing and inexpressible assumption [of human nature] that is free from fusion, the ineffable union on the part of the All-Ruler (who is by nature the Logos of God) for the sake of mortals, and readily announcing its beginnings, makes manifest its outcomes by means of prefiguration; as Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and the book of Deuteronomy teach us most wisely; whereby God the Word, the All-Ruler, came forward as the Creator of heaven and earth, governing everything, therefore, for the salvation of mortals, as He alone knows how to.”<sup>5</sup>

Despite this typological intent, the Bible's miniatures are not explicitly typological and the onus is on the beholder to arrive at a typological reading. In this respect, an inscription in a contemporary miniscule beneath the dedication provides further instructions, by explaining the correct mode for approaching the miniatures. The inscription reads,

“It should be noted that in every picture, i.e. in the holy images that have been represented in the two books – in every picture scanned iambic verses go round the four corners of the borders, signifying most clearly in summary form the meaning of the representations.”<sup>6</sup>

It would seem then, that whoever planned the arrangement of miniatures and epigrams intended for the epigrams to serve an explanatory purpose in regards to the miniatures. If the books of the Old Testament are meant to be read typologically in the Leo Bible, the epigrams can be understood to supply this typological meaning. The “meaning” of the representations then, can

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<sup>5</sup> Trans. by Cyril Mango in, “Epigrams,” in *La Bible du Patrice Leon: Codex Reginensis Graecus 1*, ed. Paul Canart (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2011), 62. All citations from the Leo Bible epigrams that follow are translations from Mango, “Epigrams.”

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 64.

Δεῖ εἰδέναι ὅτι καὶ καθ' ἐκάστην ἱστορίαν ἤγουν εἰς τὰς ἁγίας εἰκόνας τὰς ἱστορηθῆσας ἐν τοῖς δυοῖν βιβλίοις, ἐν ἐκάστη ἱστορίᾳ στίχ(οι) ἑμμετροὶ ἰαμβικοὶ περίεισιν ἐν ταῖς τέσσαροι γωνίας τῶν περιφερῶν τῶν ἱστορηθέντων νοῦν ἐν ἐπιτομῇ σαφέστατα δηλοῦντες.



be understood as the typological significance of the Old Testament book that each frontispiece introduces. Or more simply put, its role as a prefiguration of the life of Christ and Christian morality.

The idea that the epigrams provide the Christian context for the frontispiece miniatures is supported by the fact that, outside of the preface, none of the Leo Bible's miniatures reference the New Testament or the life of Christ; their iconography adheres strictly to Old Testament material. Without the epigrams, the Leo Bible does not read as typological, but instead presents a visually Old Testament narrative. In this way, it is impossible to separate or disregard the relationship between the epigrams and miniatures in the Leo Bible. Thanks to Cyril Mango's new translation of the Bible's epigrams it is now possible to carry out a study of the manuscript that considers the full extent of the symbiosis between word and image in the Leo Bible.

The purpose of this study is to reach a better understanding of the Leo Bible's visual and poetic program, and the emphasis it places on authorship. In part, this will be accomplished through a consideration of how exegesis informs the manuscript's preface and frontispieces, and how this exegesis instructs viewers on how to approach the text. This study will not comment on each of the Leo Bible's miniatures individually, but instead will focus on the Bible's prefatory miniatures and frontispieces for the Pentateuch and the book of Psalms. It is through these miniatures that the Bible's use of exegesis and interest in authorship is most clearly observable. The Leo Bible's demonstrable interest in authorship has not yet been considered by scholars, and places the manuscript in a new and illuminating context. In the Leo Bible, exegesis and the theme of authorship are related, because both rely on perception of authority. The Bible's exegetical commentary authoritatively instructs viewers on how to interpret the Old Testament. At the same time, the various authors highlighted in the Leo Bible depend on audiences'

perception of their authority to provide legitimization and support for the Bible's Christian reading of the Old Testament.

The Leo Bible planner's use of exegesis could be seen as related to the tradition of John Chrysostom's homilies on the Old Testament. Chrysostom wrote many homilies on Old Testament books and figures with the intent that they would render them less obscure to Christian audiences. To this effect, Chrysostom wrote,

“The Old Testament, in fact, resembles riddles, there is much difficulty in it, and its books are hard to grasp, whereas the New is clearer and easier. Why is it, someone will ask, that they have this character, apart from the fact that the New talks about more important things, about the kingdom of heaven, resurrection of bodies and ineffable things that also surpass human understanding? So what is the reason why the Old Testament works are obscure?”<sup>7</sup>

As a result, Chrysostom's homilies serve as a means of clarifying the Old Testament for Christian audiences. As exegesis, they explain how stories and figures from the Old Testament are relevant to the events of the New Testament and Christian morality.

It can be argued, that the Leo Bible frames the Old Testament in a similar way. While from first glance it might seem to be a literal and uncomplicated illumination of the Old Testament, the Leo Bible is in fact a sophisticated work of visual and poetic exegesis. The Bible's epigrams serve as a sort of gloss on the often conventional images of the Old Testament found in its miniatures. The epigrams use the tradition of Byzantine exegesis to quite literally frame the miniatures in the context of Christianity, so that their details and narratives can be better understood. Because the Leo Bible was commissioned as a gift for a monastery, its intended audience would presumably have been familiar with the Byzantine homiletic and

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<sup>7</sup> Trans. by, Robert C. Hill in, *Reading the Old Testament in Antioch* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010) 41.

exegetical tradition. It is perhaps because the manuscript was intended for such an audience that its planner was able to construct a complex visual and poetic exegesis for its frontispieces. Previous studies have drawn attention to apparent visual and poetic inconsistencies within the Leo Bible, but this study will argue that many, if not all, of these perceived inconsistencies can be explained through a consideration of the volume as a work of exegesis. A consideration of the Bible's preface and Pentateuch cycle will demonstrate how its visual and epigrammatic programs show a clear interest in the action of authorship, and the authority of the authors found within its pages. In the Leo Bible, the preface and frontispieces portray Leo and the authors of the Old Testament as messengers who assemble and interpret the sacred history of Christianity by way of the Old Testament. If every detail of the manuscript is to be understood as a deliberate choice on the part of the poet or illuminator, details that have been more difficult to account for can be explained as part of the manuscript's larger exegetical project. Rather than treating the Leo Bible as a collection of parts, it is important to remember that the manuscript is a unified whole. It is a single composition made up of miniatures, epigrams and scripture, that when brought together communicate an important message about Leo Sakellarios and his desire for salvation.

## **Historiography**

Nikolai Kondakov's 1876 history of Byzantine manuscript illumination provides the foundation for scholarship on the Leo Bible.<sup>16</sup> Kondakov's interest in establishing a setting for the Leo Bible is carried over to more contemporary scholarship on the manuscript. Basic questions of date, style and the identity of the Bible's patron Leo Sakellarios have been of

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<sup>16</sup> Nikolai Kondakov, *Istorja vizantijskogo iskusstva i ikonografii po minitjuram greceskich rukopisej*, (Odessa: V tip. Ulrika i Shultse, 1876).

foremost interest to scholars. Definitive answers to these questions, however, have been elusive due to how little is known about the exact circumstances surrounding the Leo Bible's production.

Questions of the Leo Bible's date and patronage are intertwined due to the nature of the manuscript as a donor commission. What is certain is that the Bible was donated to a monastery dedicated to St. Nicholas by a eunuch named Leo who held the office of sakellarios. Beyond these details, it is not clear which "Leo Sakellarios" or monastery of St. Nicholas are implicated, because Leo was a common name in Byzantium, as were monasteries dedicated to St. Nicholas. Cyril Mango's essay on the date of the Leo Bible has proven to be the most useful study of the topic so far.<sup>17</sup> Mango rejects the common identification of Leo as the exegete Leo Magistros, which was used to date the manuscript to around the year 900.<sup>18</sup> Mango easily disproves this identification, noting that the exegete Leo Magistros never held the office of Sakellarios (the chief financial minister of the Empire).<sup>19</sup> Instead, using two letters from the first half of the tenth century addressed to a Λέοντι σακελλαρίῳ, Mango is able to attest to the existence of a Leo Sakellarios between roughly 925 and 944. Using this information and the depiction of an aged Leo in the Bible's preface, Mango arrives at 940 or later as the most likely date for the manuscript.

Determining a date for the Leo Bible's production is important to a stylistic study of the manuscript because of its miniatures' similarities to other tenth-century manuscripts. It has often been observed that the Leo Bible bears striking similarities to the Paris Psalter (Paris, B.N. gr. 139), but without knowing precise dates for the two manuscripts it is not possible to say whether the Leo Bible uses the Paris Psalter for a model, or if the two share a third manuscript as their

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<sup>17</sup> Cyril Mango, "The date of Cod.Vat.Regin.Gr.1 and the 'Macedonian Renaissance.'" *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia* 4 (1969): 121-126.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 122-123.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 123.

source. Efforts to determine the stylistic models for the Leo Bible have dominated art historical scholarship on the Bible. On the basis of its decorative style, Kurt Weitzmann originally attributed the manuscript to a late ninth-century provincial workshop, but later amended his position in favor of an early tenth-century Constantinopolitan origin on the basis of figural style.<sup>20</sup> In his monograph on the Paris Psalter, Hugo Buchthal also considers the stylistic origins of the Leo Bible.<sup>21</sup> The Paris Psalter is an illuminated Psalm book that is conventionally dated to the tenth century and, according to Buchthal, was a gift from the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (r. 913-959) to his son, the future emperor Romanos II (r. 945 as co-emperor - 963).<sup>22</sup> Buchthal recognizes the stylistic similarities between the Leo Bible and Paris Psalter and suggests that, while the exact relationship between the two can not be determined with the available information, it seems that the volumes draw from a third manuscript or model rather than from one another. If we are to accept Mango's date for the Leo Bible and Buchthal's hypothesis that the Paris Psalter was a gift from Constantine VII to Romanos II, it seems unlikely that the Leo Bible artist used the Paris Psalter as a model.

The most recent study of the Leo Bible's miniatures and iconography was done by Suzy Dufrenne for the 2011 Vatican Library volume on the manuscript.<sup>23</sup> Dufrenne's chapter is an exhaustive study of each of the Bible's miniatures and their possible stylistic and iconographical sources. This study of the miniatures will take Dufrenne's work into account although, with slight exception, it will not be interested in proving or disproving her identifications. Dufrenne's work is extremely important, but the focus of this consideration of the Leo Bible is not to

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<sup>20</sup> Kurt Weitzmann, *Die byzantinische Buchmalerei des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: 1935), 40-42; Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll: A Work of the Macedonian Renaissance* (Princeton: 1948) 39-42.

<sup>21</sup> Hugo Buchthal, *The Miniatures of the Paris Psalter, A Study in Middle Byzantine Painting* (London: Warburg Institute, 1968).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Suzy Dufrenne, "Les miniatures," in *La Bible du Patrice Leon: Codex Reginensis Graecus I.* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2011), 81-184.

determine specific stylistic models for its miniatures. Rather, interest here lies in achieving a better understanding of the different models employed in the illustration of the Leo Bible's miniatures, and how these miniatures work together with the manuscript's poetic and scriptural material towards an exegetical purpose.

An additional work of importance to this study is Thomas F. Mathews' article on the epigrams of Leo Sakellarios.<sup>24</sup> Mathews' study has been criticized in recent years for his mistranslation of the Bible's epigrams, but his approach to the manuscript deserves attention and serious consideration. Setting aside Mathews' imperfect translation and treatment of the epigrams, much can be taken away from his exegetical approach to the Bible's frontispieces. In his article, Mathews chose three frontispieces – Leviticus, Genesis, Numbers – and identified possible exegetical sources for their epigrams and miniatures. Mathews' analysis of the exegetical sources for the miniatures is thorough and a model for this study, which takes a similar exegetical approach, but to a different end. Mathews was concerned with the exegesis offered by the frontispieces, but here the focus will be an exegesis of the manuscript in general that sees the Leo Bible as a typological project whose intent was to Christianize the Old Testament through visual and poetic means.

With Mathews' imperfect translation now abandoned in favor of Mango's, it is possible to undertake a thorough appraisal of the Leo Bible's epigrams and their role in the manuscript. The study of Byzantine epigrams has gone through a reappraisal itself in the last decade, with the most important contributions offered by Marc Lauxtermann and Andreas Rhoby. In his volume, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres*, Lauxtermann takes issue with customary approaches to Byzantine poetry, which tend to apply either modern or classical criteria to the

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<sup>24</sup> Mathews, "The Epigrams of Leo Sacellarios," 94-123.

study of Byzantine literature.<sup>25</sup> He argues instead, that the key to understanding Byzantine poetry is to take a historicizing approach that looks at the texts themselves and the contexts under which they were generated.<sup>26</sup> One way to achieve this is by privileging what the Byzantines thought about their own poetry rather than what moderns have said, in an attempt to understand Byzantine poetry on its own terms.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, Lauxtermann problematizes the accepted definition of the Byzantine epigram, stressing that the epigram needs to be viewed as a genre that changed over time.<sup>28</sup> The conventional, classically informed definition of epigrams as short and pointed does not hold up in a Byzantine context, where epigrams could be of any length and rarely ended with a *pointe*.<sup>29</sup> Lauxtermann instead proposes that term “epigram,” when in reference to a Byzantine poem, means either a text written on an object, or a text written next to a piece of literature.<sup>30</sup> The Leo Bible’s epigrams fall into the former category. The most thorough consideration of the relationship between art and epigrams comes from Andreas Rhoby’s multi-volume German publication on Byzantine art and Epigrams, but Lauxtermann does address the topic in this text.<sup>31</sup>

In his discussion of epigrams on works of art, Lauxtermann touches on the survival rate of such objects, noting that the majority of these extant objects are stone or luxury objects.<sup>32</sup> The higher survival rate of these objects can be owed to the greater durability of stone and care under which luxury objects were preserved and kept, in contrast to the perishability of paintings,

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<sup>25</sup> Marc Diederik Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres: Texts and Contexts*, vol. I (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 24.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 24-25.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

<sup>31</sup> Andreas Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken*. (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009); *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten der Kleinkunst*. (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010); *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Stein* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014, forthcoming).

<sup>32</sup> Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, 150.

mosaics and frescoes. Because so many epigrams of the latter type were destroyed by time of the Ottoman conquest, Lauxtermann asks the question of how our view of Byzantine epigrams might be different had these monuments not been destroyed. One relatively large category of Byzantine epigrams that does survive is dedicatory epigrams. Lauxtermann proposes that all dedicatory epigrams fall into two categories: texts on religious or public buildings, and texts on religious works of art. The second category, to which the Leo Bible's dedicatory epigram belongs, is characterized by the donor's use of an intermediary in order to appeal to God for salvation.<sup>33</sup> The donor cannot approach God directly, so the presence of a divine intermediary, who will intercede on behalf of his soul, is required.<sup>34</sup> In the Leo Bible, as in many other cases, this divine intermediary is the Virgin. What results, is a double act of patronage, in which the patron of a work of art must find his own divine patron to sponsor his salvation.<sup>35</sup>

Lauxtermann directly addresses the epigrams in the Leo Bible, and draws attention to the Leo Bible poet's use of verbs of perception and words such as "painter," "image" and "to depict."<sup>36</sup> He makes the argument that the poet's use of these words suggests that the Bible's epigrams comment directly upon the miniatures themselves, rather than generally commenting on the books that they preface. Lauxtermann observes that the relationship between word and image in the Leo Bible is not a one-to-one correspondence.<sup>37</sup> Both mediums correspond to a certain degree, but it is clear that the artist and poet did not always have the same intention. For his part, the poet communicates instructions and tools for viewers to read and interpret the message of the miniatures. The significance of the Leo Bible's epigrams, Lauxtermann

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<sup>33</sup> Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, 161.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 193.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 196.



concludes, is what the poems reveal about tenth-century Byzantine attitudes towards the visual.<sup>38</sup>

The epigrams provide a rare insight into how a Byzantine viewer would have approached images. Their content is prescriptive, as it would have informed and influenced viewer response to material. As it will be seen, this prescriptive quality is particularly worthy of attention in relation to the Leo Bible epigrams, owing to their expressly explanatory function in the manuscript.

### Scope of Thesis

As a work of visual and poetic exegesis, the Leo Bible's miniatures and epigrams provide exegetical content that expands upon the literal text of the Old Testament that is contained in the volume. In her study of ninth-century Psalters with marginal illustrations, Kathleen Corrigan has proposed that the manuscripts' illustrations fall into two categories: literal and typological.<sup>39</sup> Literal images depict the text of the psalms literally, while typological images use the text as a prefiguration of an aspect of the New Testament or more recent history.<sup>40</sup> This model is applicable to the Leo Bible, which uses its frontispieces to place its Old Testament material into a Christian context. It is important to note however, that the Leo Bible's frontispieces comment on the Old Testament both typologically and exegetically. Exegetical miniatures and epigrams provide commentary on material from the Bible, while typological miniatures and epigrams see events and figures from the Old Testament as "types" that prefigure the New. As such, typology is by definition exegetical, but exegesis is not necessarily typological. Corrigan also argues that sometimes, the addition of an inscription can be enough to transform an image from literal to

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Kathleen Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 8-9.

typological.<sup>41</sup> This is an important point to consider when studying the Leo Bible, because many times it is the Bible's epigrams that provide the frontispieces with their exegetical content. What is more, although exegetical miniatures are present in the Leo Bible, none of frontispiece miniatures alone are typological. Outside of the preface, all typological content is provided by the epigrams.

The Leo Bible's epigrams are striking for their number and their exegetical commentary, but it was not unusual in Byzantium for inscriptions to be found on works of art or architecture. Andreas Rhoby discusses inscriptions in Byzantine art, describing them as multidimensional in function, and part of a vivid performance.<sup>42</sup> He explains that inscriptions serve more than just a mediatory role between object and audience; they have their own value as well.<sup>43</sup> Some inscriptions were simple and written in prose, while others were more elevated and poetic. Epigrams and inscriptions presented an opportunity for the patron to communicate both his identity and rank to the beholder; the ability to commission an epigrammatic inscription was an indicator of the patron's status. Epigrams present a greater compositional challenge than prose inscriptions because they follow rules governing their prosody, number of syllables and more.<sup>44</sup> Rhoby's arguments are illuminating in regards to the Leo Bible and Leo Sakellarios' role as patron. It is important to look at the Bible's epigrams as a product of Leo's donor commission, and consider how Leo's role as donor shaped their contents and appearance. If the Leo Bible epigrams function as indicators of Leo's high status, then they can be seen to function as an extension of Leo's patronage. As the donor of the manuscript Leo would have been understood

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>42</sup> Andreas Rhoby, "The Meaning of Inscriptions for the Early and Middle Byzantine Culture. Remarks on the Interaction of Word, Image and Beholder", in: *Scrivere e leggere nell'alto medioevo. Spoleto, 28 aprile – 4 maggio 2011 (Settimane di Studio della Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo LIX)*. Spoleto 2012, 732.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 733.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 734.

as the author of the epigrams, and thus their meaning is tied to his overall project and motivations behind commissioning and donating the Bible.

It is also necessary to consider the epigrams' relationship to the Bible's miniatures. Henry Maguire outlines two possible types of relationships between epigrams and art in Byzantium.<sup>45</sup> The first type are epigrams composed without any reference to the work of art to which they are attached. These epigrams were either written for a different work of art, or were originally independent poems later made into inscriptions. The second type are epigrams composed by a poet who had close knowledge of the work of art in which they are inscribed. In this category the poet either saw the work in person or had it explained to him. This model is perhaps too narrow to account for the diversity of epigrammatic commissions in Byzantium, but it brings up a series of questions relevant to previous scholarship surrounding the Leo Bible. Scholars including Mango have remarked that the relationship between the content of the Leo Bible's frontispiece epigrams and miniatures is at times discordant, casting doubt as to whether or not the Leo Bible's epigrams were composed specifically for the volume. It would appear however, that the Leo Bible's epigrams fall into Maguire's second category. Though it is nearly impossible to determine conclusively, enough parallels exist between the epigrams and the miniatures to justify their attribution to a poet who was involved in the production of the Leo Bible. It is an aim of this study to demonstrate, through these parallels between word and image, the existence of a planner or unifying force behind the Leo Bible's visual and textual program. Whether this force was Sakellarios, the poet or someone associated with the monastery is inconsequential. What is important is the fact that the Bible's miniatures and epigrams interact in such a way that it is

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<sup>45</sup> Henry Maguire, *Image and Imagination: The Byzantine Epigram as Evidence for Viewer Response* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Balkan Studies, 1996).

difficult to believe they could be unrelated, when so much meaning is reciprocally supplied from one medium to the other.

In the Leo Bible, the frontispiece epigrams and miniatures often take disparate approaches to the same Old Testament material. This difference in approach can be accounted for through the concept of what Leslie Brubaker has described as “genre rules.” Brubaker argues that text and image use different “genre rules,” and thus can never communicate an identical message.<sup>46</sup> For example, visual narrative can present multiple sequences simultaneously and present complex verbal narratives instantly. What this means in the context of the Leo Bible, is that the frontispieces are able to offer disparate, but unified interpretations of the books of the Old Testament using visual and poetic means. What results is a symbiosis of word and image that creates a dependence between the visual, poetic and scriptural components of the Leo Bible. Brubaker also discusses the concept of intervisuality, which is an additional term of significance when discussing the Leo Bible. Intervisuality involves a deliberate cross-referencing of models and so-called “visual clichés” within images. Visual clichés are stock figure types that are repeated throughout a manuscript. The Leo Bible provides an excellent example of intervisuality through its citation of established models and employment of visual clichés. Examples of this in the Leo Bible include its possible borrowing of the *crux gemmata* pages from the Paris Gregory, and the repetition of common iconographic models in many of its miniatures. The interactions between these intervisual references and the way in which they create meaning ties into the overall idea that the Leo Bible is an exegetical composite of parts that take on new meaning under the guidance of its planner.

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<sup>46</sup> Leslie Brubaker, “Every Cliché in the Book: The Linguistic Turn and the Text-Image Discourse in Byzantine Manuscripts,” in *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, ed. Liz James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

A further contributing factor to the Leo Bible's intervisuality comes from its miniatures' classicizing style. Classicism appears in the miniatures by way of details such as their architectural settings, the style of clothing worn by figures and the presence of personifications of nature and virtues. The Leo Bible's classicizing style clearly fits into larger artistic and cultural trends present in tenth-century Constantinople, where classicism can be seen as a badge of culture and the elite. In the Bible, classicizing style and poetic material amplify the miniatures, lending them an aura of prestige and grandeur. The Leo Bible has often been held up alongside the Paris Psalter as exemplifying the so-called "Macedonian renaissance," but this attribution is not necessarily accurate. Ioli Kalavrezou has argued that, in the case of secular luxury goods, no such renaissance occurred during the tenth century, and that classicizing elements were the result of a surviving rather than renewed interest in antiquity.<sup>47</sup> Instead, the perceived "renaissance" that occurred during the tenth century was more likely a continuation and intensification of the classical tradition. As a religious volume the status of the Leo Bible's relationship to the classical tradition is more complex. Regarding the Leo Bible's classicizing elements as hold outs from antiquity rather than innovations of the tenth century allows for the manuscript to be considered as more than merely a product of the Macedonian renaissance, but evidence of an established taste for classicism among Constantinople's elite, present even in religious commissions. In the case of the Leo Bible, classicism can be thought of as a visual language that was adopted in order to add an additional layer of meaning to the manuscript.

Ascribing the role of author to a single figure involved in the Leo Bible's production is not a straightforward task. The very notion of "authorship" as a category for study in Byzantium is problematic, because the term did not exist in Byzantium in the sense that it does today. Stratis

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<sup>47</sup> Ioli Kalavrezou, "The cup of San Marco and the 'Classical' in Byzantium," in *Studien zur mittelalterlichen Kunst* (Munich, Prestel-Verlag, 1985), 173.

Papaioannou explains that neither a single term, nor a unified understanding of authorship exists in Byzantine language or culture.<sup>48</sup> Instead, he conceives of authorship in Byzantium as characterized by an “ostensive preoccupation” with submission to authority that conditioned and defined authorial practice in Middle Byzantium.<sup>49</sup> According to Papaioannou, unique and exemplary authors comprised the standard of authority, and held immense cultural and social value, as is evidenced by the frequency with which such authorities were evoked, commented on, and depicted in art.<sup>50</sup> Examples of exemplary authors in Byzantium include figures such as David, Paul and John Chrysostom. This model of Middle Byzantine authorship is easily supported by the Leo Bible and its treatment of the authorities found therein. The authorities whose accounts form the Leo Bible vary in station and inspiration, from the authors of the Old Testament, and Byzantine Church Fathers, to the patron Leo. As this study will show, there is a pervasive interest in authorship in the Leo Bible that extends to the patron himself. The content of the volume’s prefatory miniatures and epigrams serves as an introduction to these authoritative figures and the authorial roles they play in the rest of the Bible.

As a result of Byzantine conceptions of patronage, Leo Sakellarios would have been understood as the author of the Leo Bible. Byzantines did not differentiate between funder and producer in the case of manuscript commissions. All of the labor involved in the creation of the Leo Bible would have been subsumed under the authority of Leo because of his role as patron. This notion is reflected in a prose note to the dedicatory epigram on fol. 1r, “Iambic verses signifying the precise number of the books and the conjunction (σύνθεσιν) of the Old and New [Testaments]; indicating, furthermore, the patron (κτίτορα) who has written these things [or

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<sup>48</sup> Stratis Papaioannou, “Voice, Signature, Mask: The Byzantine Author,” in *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature. Modes, Functions, and Identities*, ed. Aglae Pizzone (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 22.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

rather “caused these things to be written”].”<sup>51</sup> Here, the poet (or planner) describes Leo as κτήτωρ using the active rather than the passive voice. This usage mirrors the active participation and agency that Leo had as patron of the Leo Bible. This choice on the part of the poet to express Leo’s role in commissioning the manuscript as active and causal foregrounds the manuscript’s unusual emphasis on authorship. The writer’s use of the term σύνθεσις (synthesis) is also telling in respect to the manuscript’s larger project. While σύνθεσις here may refer to the manuscripts’ bringing together of the Old and New Testaments it might also conceptually reference the bringing together of word and image in the volume. The themes of patronage and synthesis are important to keep in mind when considering the Leo Bible, its miniatures, epigrams and authors.

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<sup>51</sup> Mango, “The Epigrams,” 60.

## Chapter Two: Prefatory Material



The Leo Bible begins with an eight-page preface, made up of five full-page miniatures and a dedicatory epigram.<sup>52</sup> Included amongst the miniatures are a table of contents page, two *cruces gemmatae*, and two dedicatory miniatures. The dedicatory epigram sets the tone for both the preface and manuscript, highlighting two of its major themes: Leo Sakellarios' desire for salvation, and the Leo Bible poet's typological reading of the Bible. Leo's desire for salvation led to the production and donation of the Bible, and his aspirations for the future are realized in the manuscript's dedicatory miniatures, where a humble Leo joins the Virgin in prayer. The goal of this study of the Leo Bible's preface is to offer a reconsideration of the preface's contents that treats each page as an intentional piece of a unified whole. In particular, reevaluation of the *crux gemmata* motif will show that its presence in the Leo Bible is not an empty recitation of an earlier model, but the conscious employment of a symbolic and transformative motif. Furthermore, it can be argued that the preface serves the purpose of σύστασις, or "personal introduction" for the authors of the Leo Bible. By exploring the concept of σύστασις and its function in the Leo Bible preface it is possible to see how the layout and contents of the preface are consistent with the Bible's overall emphasis on authorship and authority. It is in part through his inclusion in the preface, that Leo becomes an author, and numbers amongst the volume's authorities. An understanding of the preface's role in the Leo Bible is necessary for any study of the manuscript, in so far as it introduces key themes such as typology and authorship that reappear throughout the rest of the volume's frontispieces.

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<sup>52</sup> The Genesis frontispiece is now bound into the preface, but it is generally accepted that the pages were rebound out of order some time after the manuscript's original binding. The miniature originally would have paired with the book of Genesis.

## The Dedicatory Epigram and Table of Contents

The Leo Bible's dedicatory epigram provides a necessary framework for understanding the Bible's poetic and artistic program. As the first and most lengthy of the Leo Bible's epigrams, the dedicatory epigram describes the nature and purpose of not just the Leo Bible, but the Bible in general. Written in majuscule over two folios, the epigram concentrates the ways in which the Old Testament prefigures the New, and describes the nature of Leo's donation (fol. 1r) (Fig. 1).

“Already Moses, in representing through the Law the astonishing and inexpressible assumption [of human nature] that is free from fusion, the ineffable union on the part of the All-Ruler (who is by nature the Logos of God) for the sake of mortals, and readily announcing its beginnings, makes manifest its outcomes by means of prefiguration; as Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and the book of Deuteronomy teach us most wisely; whereby God the Word, the All-Ruler, came forward as the Creator of heaven and earth, governing everything, therefore, for the salvation of mortals, as He alone knows how to. Thus He drew His friends to Himself, raising them from the earth by supernatural miracles. So Joshua, Judges, Ruth (an alien she) and the fourfold foundation of Kings, so Ezra in his two books exalt His glory and honor His power; so do women – Esther and Judith – by their pious armament strengthen His victories; so Tobit is cleansed of disease (for the injury of his eyes was terminated); so also [the deeds] of the Maccabees were lifted to the height of their love for Him. So Job endures the dunghheap and smites Satan's dire error; so David, as he plays the kinnor, shows in advance that Christ is to be his offspring; so Solomon has found the breadth of wisdom; so the spirit-filled mouth of the prophets clearly announces the coming of Christ; for He appeared single out of two opposites, being as He was perfect man and God by nature. So the foursome of the wise heralds of God, the Evangelists, confirm the fear [of God]; so the God-inspired sayings of the Disciples and the divine mouth of Paul, the herald, drew to themselves the universe by their epistles. For why investigate the insolence of Chatterers? Thus Leo, ardent observer of the commandments, who is the faithful treasurer of the palace, bearing gloriously for himself the titles of his piety – those of protospatharios, patrician and praepositus – just as he has fashioned faith in his heart (as if it were his treasure), yea, has sharpened it by means of books, so he offers with ardent love as a gift to the Virgin, who is the Mother of God the Logos, this volume that speaks of God, containing as it does every divine book. He desires thereby to clearly obtain remission of his sins, for no one would be able to find a precious thing to offer that is [truly] worthy. May you receive it, all-hymned Maiden, granting me always to be endowed in full measure with a contrite spirit, a splendid life and a pure heart, that I may attain to

heavenly glory, who am offering this gift to you and to Nicholas, my good protector, through the love of my heart.”<sup>53</sup>

The epigram begins with evocation of Moses, as an example of how the God of the New Testament was already present in the Old. This is taken as evidence of a typological relationship between the Testaments in which the Old is read to “prefigure” the New. Accordingly, the poet singles out the Pentateuch in particular as a precursor to Christianity writing, “as Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and the book of Deuteronomy teach us most wisely; whereby God the Word, the All-Ruler, came forward as the Creator of heaven and earth, governing everything, therefore, for the salvation of mortals, as He alone knows how to.”<sup>54</sup> This assertion sets a distinctly typological tone for the manuscript, but also serves to highlight the significance of the Pentateuch in the Leo Bible’s visual and poetic program.

In addition to its foregrounding of the Bible’s typological tone, the dedicatory epigram also functions as a means of introducing Leo to the Bible’s audience. Leo is praised for his Christian morality, as an “ardent observer of the commandments,” and lauded for

<sup>53</sup> Mango, “The Epigrams,” 62-63.

Τοῦ παντάνακτος καὶ θεοῦ λόγου φύσει / τὴν πρὸς βροτοὺς ξένην τε καὶ ὑπὲρ λόγον/ ἀσύγχθον πρὸς ληψιν, ἄφραστον κράσιν./ Μωσῆς μὲν ἤδη τὸν νόμον διαγράφων / δῆλους παριστᾶ τῷ τύπῳ τὰς ἐκβάσεις./ ταύτης προφαίνων εὐμαρῶς τὰς ἐκβάσεις./ ὡς ἡ Γένησις, Ἔξοδος, Αριθμοὶ τε./ τὸ λευτικὸν καὶ τοῦ Δευτέρου νόμου/ ἡ βίβλος ἡμᾶς ἐκδιδάσκει παντάναξ θ(εὸς) λόγος/ ὡς δημιουργὸς οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ χθονός./ τὰ πάντα λυπὸν ὡς ἐπίσταται μόνος/ διευθύνων βροτῶν περ εἰς σωτηρίαν./ οὕτω γὰρ ἤρκεν πρὸς ἕαθτὸν τοὺς φίλους/ ἐκ γῆς ἀνυψῶν θαύμασιν ὑπὲρ φύσιν./ οὕτως Ἰησοῦς καὶ Κριταί, Ροῦθ (ὡς ξένοι)/ καὶ Βασιλειῶν ἡ τετράριθμος βάσις./ οὕτως ὁ Ἑσδρας τοῖν δροῖν τῶν βιβλίων/ αἶρει τὸ κῦδος καὶ γεραίρει τὸ σθένος./ οὕτω γυναικὸς εὐσεβῆ πανοπλία./ Ἐσθήρ, Ἰουδῆθ ἐκραταίωσαν νίκας./ οὕτως ὁ Τωβίτ ἐκκαθαίρεται λίμης./ τῶν ὀμμάτων γὰρ ἔσχε συμφορῶν πέρασ./ οὕτω δὲ λοιπὸν καὶ τὰ τῶν Μακκαβαίων/ εἰς ὕψος ἤρται τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀγάπης./ οὕτως ὁ Δα(υὶ)δ ὡς ἄδει τὴν κινῦραν/ υἱὸν ἑαυτοῦ τὸν Χ(ριστὸ)ν προδεικνύει./ οὕτω σοφίας εὗρεν Σαλομῶν πλάτος./ οὕτω προφητῶν πνευματέμφορον στόμα/ σαφῶς ἐλεθσόμενον Χ(ριστὸ)ν προγράφει/ (εἷς γὰρ προῆλθεν ἐκ δυοῖν ἐναντίων./ μέρωσιν τέλειος καὶ θ(εὸς) φύσει πέλων)/ οὕτω τετρακτὺς τῶν σοφῶν θεηγόρων/ εὐαγγελιστῶν αὐθῆς + ἐμπεδοὶ φόβω, + οὕτω μαθητῶν οἱ θεόπνευστοι λόγοι./ Παύλου τε τοῦ κήρυκος ἔνθεον στόμα / ἐπιστολαῖς εἰλκυσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην/ (τί γὰρ ἐρευνᾶν + τὴν τομὴν + τῶν φληνάφων;)/ οὕτω Λέον ὁ θερμὸς ἐντολῶν φύλαξ./ πιστὸς ταμείας τῶν ἀνακτόρων πέλων./ τῆς εὐσεβείας εὐκλεῶς τῆς ἀξίας./ τέτευχεν πίστιν, ναί γαρ οὕτω καὶ βίβλοις/ ταύτην τεθηκῶς, δῶρον ἐμπύρω πόθω / τῇ Παρθένῳ καὶ μ(ητ)ρὶ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου./ δέλτον προσάγει τήνδε τὴν θεηγόρον/ ἔχουσαν ἔνθεν ἀμπλακημάτων θέλοι/ σαφῶς μετασχεῖν, οὐδὲ γὰρ κατ’ ἀξίαν./ εὐρεῖν τισ ἰσχύσειεν ὄλβον προσφέρειν./ δέχοιο δ’ ἔνθεω, ὃ πανύμνητε κόρη./ διδοῦσ’ αἰεὶ σοὶ πνεῦμα συντετριμμένον./ λαμπρὸν βίον τε καὶ καθαρὰν καρδίαν/ πλουτήν ὅπως με τῆς ἄνω τυχεῖν δόξης./ τόν σοι τὸ δῶρον καὶ καλῶ μοθ προστατῆ / Νικολάω σπένδοντι καρδίας πόθω.

<sup>54</sup> Mango, “The Epigrams,” 62.

accomplishments as Sakellarios. The poet lists Leo's honorific titles as protospatharios, patrician and praepositus, which is redundant, but perhaps a conscious choice made in order to highlight Leo's earthly successes and prestige.<sup>55</sup> The poet also explains that Leo has "sharpened" his faith by means of books, and consequently is offering this volume to the Virgin for remission of his sins. The Virgin is described as "the Mother of God the Logos," drawing a parallel between Leo's commissioning of a volume containing the *Logos*, and the Virgin's role as bearer of the Logos. The final figure mentioned in the epigram is St. Nicholas, Leo's protector, and patron of the monastery to which the manuscript has been donated. As it will be seen, the dedicatory epigram's description of Leo, the Virgin and St. Nicholas is illustrated in the manuscript's dedicatory miniature (fols. 2v-3r).

Below the dedicatory epigram is a short prose note that provides the Leo Bible's reader with further instructions on how to approach the manuscript (fol. 1v). Written in a contemporary hand and wedged into the page's lower margin, the inscription describes the way each miniature is framed by an epigram, and declares that the epigrams "form the meaning of the representations." (Fig. 2)<sup>56</sup> Though the inscription seems straightforward, closer consideration suggests that it may in fact be a revealing statement about the typological nature of the manuscript. As it will be addressed later, the Leo Bible's frontispiece miniatures firmly adhere to Old Testament iconography. Although their compositions are sometimes exegetical, providing extra-textual commentary, the miniatures never incorporate overt New Testament imagery or symbolism. Whereas New Testament material is absent from the Bible's miniatures, its epigrams are full of references to Christ and Christian morality. This fact takes on a new level of significance in the context of the miniscule inscription because, according to the inscription, the

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<sup>55</sup> Mango notes that the inclusion of Leo's title as "protospatharios" is redundant because it was inferior to "patrician," Ibid, 63.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 64. See pg. 3 for full inscription.

“meaning” of the miniatures is supplied by the epigrams. By this explanation, the Christian content of the epigrams is understood to inform the more strictly Old Testament scenes found in the miniatures. In this way, the manuscript takes on an explicitly typological quality. While the Bible’s miniatures may contain only Old Testament material, their real significance is only revealed once they have undergone a Christian reading. In this way, the typological frontispieces set the tone for how readers of the Leo Bible can approach the rest of its scriptural content.

The theme of typological exegesis is also taken up in the Bible’s table of contents (fol. Ir). In the table of contents miniature, medallions inscribed with the books of the Old and New Testaments are arranged to form the shape of the cross (Fig. 3). A roundel depicting Christ occupies the center of the cross, while a larger roundel portrait of the Virgin is centered above the composition. In this way, the books of the Old Testament become a part of a larger Christian vision, by forming the cross that represents God’s new covenant. This covenant was made possible by way of Christ’s incarnation, and is visualized in the miniature by Christ at the center of the cross and the Theotokos above. Four figures surround the cross, but due to the poor condition of the page, two of the figures are not easily identifiable. It is most likely though, as Suzy Dufrenne has argued, that the top two figures are David and Moses, the lower left is Peter and the missing figure would have been Paul.<sup>57</sup> What is more, the presence of four authors of the New and Old Testaments alongside their writings carries similar connotations as an author portrait. Next to David is an inscription from Psalm 101:26 that reads, “In the beginning, O Lord, thou foundedst the earth: and the heavens are the works of thy hands.” The placement of such an inscription next to an Old Testament prophet testifies to the idea, expressed in the epigram, that God’s plan in the New Testament was already manifest in the Old. Through these devices and the composition of the page, David and Moses can be interpreted to prefigure the New Testament

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<sup>57</sup> Dufrenne, “Les Miniatures,” 88.

figures that are depicted below. This connection between authorship and the incarnation is a theme that is at the core of the Leo Bible's artistic and poetic program, and it will be considered later on in this study.

The table of contents miniature's composition is consistent with the dedicatory epigram's typological reading of the Bible. As such, the miniature can be seen to illustrate the epigram and its discussion of prefiguration in the Bible. This argument is supported by the fact that the epigram has sixty lines, just as there are sixty books in the Leo Bible and sixty roundels on the cross. In this and other ways, the dedicatory epigram functions as a means of uniting the individual parts of the preface: table of contents, *crucis gemmatae* and dedicatory miniatures. Just as the epigram shares a similar typological character as the table of contents, it also introduces themes of donor and donation. At the close of the dedicatory epigram and writing as Leo, the poet addresses the Virgin asking,

“May you receive [this Bible], all-hymned Maiden, granting me always to be endowed in full measure with a contrite spirit, a splendid life and a pure heart, that I may attain to heavenly glory, who am offering this gift to you and Nicholas, my good protector, through the love of my heart.”

Through this appeal, Leo explains the nature of his donation, and what he hopes to receive in return. These themes are dealt with in the dedicatory miniatures that follow. While the dedicatory miniatures are, in a way, introduced by the epigram, the *crux gemmata* pages (fols. 2r & 3v) that surround them do not immediately appear to relate to the themes of prefiguration and donation that characterize the rest of the preface. If the cross pages are not an expression of these themes, then what function do they serve in the preface, and what is their relationship to the dedicatory miniatures? In order to approach these questions, this study will examine the source of the Leo Bible's *crux gemmata* pages and the usage of the palmette cross motif in Byzantium. Better

understanding of the *crux gemmata* pages will provide a new context in which to consider the dedicatory miniatures and their role in the manuscript.

### **The Palmette Cross Motif**

The significance and role of the *crux gemmata* pages in the Leo Bible is worth consideration. The precise role of the miniatures is not well understood, but through comparative study of other palmette crosses it is possible to provide a new interpretation of how the pages function in the Leo Bible. The Leo Bible's preface contains two full-page miniatures featuring jeweled crosses (*cruces gemmatae*) that flank the manuscript's dedicatory miniatures (Figs. 4 & 5). Aside from color and minor decorative details, the two pages' compositions are identical. Both miniatures show a jeweled cross inside of a ciborium or archway, inscribed with the abbreviation IC XC NHKA. The motif of a jeweled cross inside of a ciborium has been interpreted to represent the cross Theodosius II erected at Golgotha. The Golgotha cross often appears in art as a cross on top of a stepped platform enclosed by a ciborium. This motif is present on an early sixth-century glass chalice from Syria (Fig. 6).<sup>58</sup> Depicted on the chalice are steps leading up to a cross inside of a ciborium. Both the chalice's ciborium and the architectural frame around the Leo Bible crosses have some sort palm leaf or foliage emerging from their columns' capitals. In addition to this architectural foliage, the Leo Bible crosses also have palmette leaves springing from their bases, making them appear as what is referred to as "floriated" or "palmette" crosses.

This combination of two palmette crosses flanking two dedicatory images is not unique to the Leo Bible. In fact, it has been argued that whoever planned the Leo Bible copied this

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<sup>58</sup> Kurt Weitzmann and Hans-Georg Beck. *Age of Spirituality: A Symposium* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), 609-610; Marvin C. Ross. *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, vol.1* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, 1962), 81-82.

arrangement from the Paris Gregory (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, gr. 510), an illustrated volume of the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus that was made as a gift for Basil I (r. 867-886).<sup>59</sup> The *cruces gemmatae* in the Paris Gregory miniatures (fols. Bv and Cr.) differ somewhat in appearance from the Leo Bible's crosses, but the same palmettes and abbreviations are found in both sets of images (Figs. 7 & 8). According to Brubaker, the palmette cross pages in the Paris Gregory had an imperial connotation.<sup>60</sup> Crosses in general, and jeweled crosses in particular, could have multiple imperial associations. As noted above, Theodosius II erected a jeweled cross at Golgotha that may likely serve as a prototype for the jeweled crosses found throughout Byzantine art, giving the motif an imperial connotation. The specific jeweled crosses that are depicted in the Paris Gregory feature gold cords and gems hanging from their cross bars. This detail, which is not repeated in the Leo Bible, would have given the crosses the appearance of contemporary Byzantine processional crosses, adding another level of imperial symbolism.<sup>61</sup> Further imperial significance is supplied by the inclusion of the inscription IC XC NHKA on the miniature. The inscription, which expresses God-given imperial triumph or 'victory through Christ,' is an allusion to Constantine's victory at the battle of the Milvian bridge.<sup>62</sup>

As an imperial commission, it is easy to accept that the cross pages in the Paris Gregory were meant to convey some type of imperial connotation. The appearance of the crosses in the Leo Bible is more complicated. Leo was a high ranking official but not himself a member of the imperial family; his usage of such a strongly imperial motif would not have the same effect. It is possible that the crosses were copied from the Paris Gregory as a means of emphasizing Leo's ties to emperor or to give the manuscript a more imperial air. It is also possible, however, that the

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<sup>59</sup> Suzy Dufrenne and Paul Canart. *Die Bibel des Patricius Leo: Codex Reginensis Graecus I B.* (Zürich: Belser, 1998), 19-20; Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 157.

<sup>60</sup> Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 152-157.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 152.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 153.



pages were copied not for their imperial connotations, but for their “life giving” connotations. The addition of palm fronds at the base of the crosses transforms them symbolically into the ‘life giving cross’ of Christ’s crucifixion, a symbol that found renewed popularity during the ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>63</sup> The palmette crosses found in Leo Bible and Paris Gregory fit in to a larger contemporary corpus of palmette crosses, but the motif can be traced back to the Early Christian period.<sup>64</sup> Early Christian marble slabs are difficult to date, but stylistic evidence indicates that the palmette cross motif was present on slabs from at least the sixth century onwards (Figs. 9, 10, 11).<sup>65</sup> Extant examples of the palmette cross are clustered around the sixth and ninth to tenth centuries, indicating that the motif underwent some type of revival during the Macedonian period. This revival of an early Christian motif is consistent with the renewed in early Christian and classical material that occurred during the so-called ‘Macedonian Renaissance.’

Ninth and tenth century palmette crosses appear across mediums, and an examination of their appearance in varied contexts will provide perspective on their function and presence in the Leo Bible. In addition to the manuscript examples already under consideration, palmette crosses are also present in ivories, reliquaries and icons of the period. An ivory now in the Victoria and Albert museum in London depicts a scene of the Visitation and Christ’s Presentation at the Temple on one side, and *crux gemmata* with palmette leaves on its reverse. (Fig. 12).<sup>66</sup> Arguably once part of a triptych, the plaque’s evenly worn surfaces indicate that it may have been worn as an encolpion, or carried in a pocket and rubbed as an amulet.<sup>67</sup> The London plaque’s reverse resembles the combination *crux gemmata* and palmette leaves found in the Leo Bible, but is not

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<sup>63</sup> Carl D. Sheppard, “Byzantine Carved Marble Slabs,” *The Art Bulletin* 51.1 (1969): 68.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 65.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 68.

<sup>66</sup> Catalogue entries presently date the ivory to the eleventh century without explanation. I would argue that due to the heavy wear obscuring many of its stylistic details, and the inclusion of the palmette cross motif popular during the earlier Middle Byzantine period, there is no reason to exclude a date as early as the tenth century.

<sup>67</sup> Anthony Cutler, *The Hand of the Master: Craftsmanship, Ivory, and Society in Byzantium (9th-11th centuries)* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 28-29.

inscribed with the IC XC NHKA abbreviation. A second ivory plaque from the Dumbarton Oaks collection, dated from the tenth to twelfth century, features the abbreviation, and a cross with rosettes and palmette leaves at its base (Fig. 13). Weitzmann believes that the 6.8 x 5.8 cm plaque would likely have been encased in a metal frame with a loop on top, so as to be worn as an encolpion.<sup>68</sup>

Palmette crosses can also be found on silver objects attributed to the late tenth century. The reverse side of a silver staurotheke from the Hermitage museum is decorated with a similar combination of rosettes and palmette leaves as the Dumbarton Oaks plaque, with the addition of a complex foliate design on its cross (Fig. 14).<sup>69</sup> The staurotheke, which would have held relics of the True Cross, is now damaged but its front doors were originally decorated with enameled roundels and polychrome glass. The composition on the reverse of the Hermitage staurotheke is nearly identical to the reverse of a silver encolpion from St Peter's in Rome (Fig. 15). Because of its location, the palmette cross is on the side of the encolpion that would presumably be worn facing its owner's chest. Both the encolpion and Hermitage staurotheke feature palmette crosses that end in rosette roundels, and the IC XC monogram. One key difference however, is the surface of the encolpion cross, which is gemmed rather than foliate. A staurotheke in the San Marco treasury depicts another silver *crux gemmata* with palmettes and IC XC NHKA abbreviations (Fig. 16).<sup>70</sup> The cover of the reliquary features an enameled plaque with a scene of the crucifixion surrounded by gems and portrait enamels of saints. Yet another silver staurotheke that features the palmette cross is the gilded Limburg staurotheke, which dates to the latter tenth century (Fig. 17).

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<sup>68</sup> Kurt Weitzmann, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Vol. 3* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1972), 106.

<sup>69</sup> Dimitrios G. Katsarelias, cat. 38, in *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 79-80.

<sup>70</sup> Jeffrey C. Anderson, cat. 37, *Glory of Byzantium*, 78-79.

A final instance of the palmette cross motif that is of great interest to this study comes from an icon at Sinai. The early tenth century icon depicts saints Zosimas and Nicholas, and was possibly once part of a set (Fig. 18).<sup>71</sup> Saint Nicolas wears blue and holds a gospel book in his left hand, while the monk Zosimas to his right wears brown and raises his hands towards the viewer. It is the reverse of the icon, though that is of greatest interest. On its reverse, the icon has a monumental red palmette cross painted on a gesso ground (Fig. 19). The cross is inscribed with the IC XC NHKA monogram and appears to be contemporary to the image on the other side of the icon. The cross displays a simple design, and is therefore not a true *crux gemmata*, but the discs on its stems are consistent with those found in tenth-century ivory representations of the motif and the San Marco staurotheke. The icon is an important point of comparison for the Leo Bible, because of its similar date and medium. It is possible that the Leo Bible's use of the motif is part of a larger pattern of its appearance in personal devotional objects in general, and icons in particular.

While this discussion has focused so far on the appearance of the palmette cross in middle Byzantine devotional objects, it is important to note that crosses without palmette leaves commonly appeared in the same context. For example, a *crux gemmata* can be found on the reverse of an ivory triptych in the Vatican, and crosses decorated with rosettes appear on the reverses of the Harbaville and Palazzo Venezia ivory triptychs (Figs. 20 & 21). Similar to the palmette crosses, the Harbaville triptych cross is set against a foreground of edenic foliage. Crosses that appeared on the reverse of devotional objects could also be very simple. Many of the icons at Sinai, for example, were decorated on the reverse with a simple cross.

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<sup>71</sup> Kurt Weitzmann and John Galley, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, The Icons* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 83-85.

All of the objects considered thus far suggest that the image of a decorated cross had some sort of special significance when paired with sacred images. In all but one of the examples above, the cross is found on the reverse a devotional image or object. In the case of the Dumbarton Oaks encolpion, the cross itself was the devotional object. Furthermore, each of these items which carry the cross on their reverse were tactile objects that were interacted with on a deeply personal level. Take for example the London plaque, with its surfaces worn down from heavy use as an encolpion or amulet. These objects had a tactile and interactive role in religious devotion, such as the staurotheke with opening doors for viewing the True Cross, or the encolpia meant to be worn against the body. This pairing of a decorated cross with objects meant to be handled and revered is at home in a codex where the palmette *crux gemmata* pages would have been turned by the viewer to reveal its dedicatory images. In this way, the Leo Bible's preface, with two *crux gemmata* pages covering images of its donor and holy figures, comes to resemble the St. Nicholas icon from Sinai. The compositional similarities between the St. Nicholas icon and Leo Bible preface are significant because of what they might say about the possible function of the preface miniatures. With their combination of palmette crosses and images of Holy figures, the preface miniatures form a diptych of devotional images that resembles contemporary icons.

## **Dedicatory Miniatures**

*Dedication to the Virgin – Fol. 2v*

“Other men make different gifts from their soul to the all-glorious Nature through wise love. As for me, I am making a lowly [but] noble sacrifice, yet with [all] my faith, unto God and the Mother who bore Him, the Theotokos, namely this book [containing] the

pre-eminent advocates of the Old and New [Testaments] for the remission of my transgressions.”<sup>72</sup>

*Dedication to St. Nicholas – Fol. 3r*

“[You who are] the victory of the people over wretched wrong-doing and evil spirits, grant O blessed one, to the [superior?] of your monastery to speed in wondrous fashion to the abodes of life, and likewise to its founder, as you dispense your grace to both – strength to the one, and to the other remission of his debts over here.”<sup>73</sup>

Following its dedicatory epigram and between the two *crux gemmata* pages, the Leo Bible contains two dedicatory miniatures. The two pages lay side by side when the volume is open, forming a unified composition of two saints each depicted in a niche. Fol. 2v is in dedication to the Virgin Mary (Fig. 22), and fol. 3r to St. Nicholas (Fig. 23). Both miniatures’ compositions contain lesser humans in the act of devotion to Holy figures, and are framed by epigrams. The epigrams are fairly standard in message. The dedication to the Virgin describes the circumstances of Leo’s donation to the monastery, with the hope that his gift of a Bible will bring remission for his transgressions. The dedication to St. Nicholas contains a lacuna, but what remains is a prayer to the saint on behalf of two supplicants. In this way, both epigrams make reference to the figures and compositions that they frame, further contextualizing the miniatures. In the fol. 2v miniature, Leo in a humble stance offers his codex to an orant Virgin Mary who intercedes between Leo and Christ. Christ is shown in half-length in the upper right corner of the composition, reaching his hand out toward the Virgin to receive Leo’s offering. The same overall composition is repeated in the St Nicholas miniature, but this time figures named Constantine and Makar kneel in proskynesis at the feet of the saint. The Constantine who is depicted was

<sup>72</sup> Mango, “The Epigrams,” 65. Ἄλλοι μὲν ἄλλως τῆ πανολβίῳ φύσει/ σπένδουν ψυχῆς τὸ δῶρον ἐμφρόνῳ σχέσει./ ἐγὼ δὲ λοιπὸν ἐσθλὸν εὐτελὲς θύω,/ ἐκ πίστεως πλὴν τήνδε τὴν βίβλον θ(ε)ῶ/ σὺν τῆ τεκούσῃ μητρὶ κ(αὶ) Θεητόκῳ,/ πρέσβεις παλαιᾶς καὶ νέας τοὺς προκρίτους,/ εἰς ἀνταμειψιν τῶ(ν) ἐμῶ(ν) ἐγκλημάτων.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 66. Νίκος λαοῦ μοχθηρᾶς τῆς κακουργίας/ καὶ τῶν πονηρῶν πνευμάτων, δίδου, μάκαρ,/ τῶ τὴν μονὴν σοὶ πρὸς μονὰς ζωῆς θέειν/ ξενιτρόπως, ἄμφω τὴν χάριν, τῶ μὲν κράτος,/ ἰλασμόν ἐνθε τῶ δὲ τῶν ὀφλημάτων.

Leo's deceased brother, and Makar was the abbot of the monastery of St. Nicolas to which the manuscript was donated. Although the miniatures and inscriptions are fairly conventional, their specific orientation within the manuscript gives them a unique quality that is worth further examination. The two dedicatory miniatures form a diptych of devotional images that, when enclosed by the *crux gemmata* pages, can be observed to form a pair of icons. While the miniatures are of course not literal icons, their composition and presence in the manuscripts produces a similar effect. Visually, the miniatures resemble devotional icons with their nimbed and frontal holy figures centered in front of a simple background.

In the Leo Bible dedicatory miniatures, it is as though Leo, Constantine and Makar have entered into the space of the icon. The holy figures are larger than life size, denoting their removal from the worldly figures who appear in stages of proskynesis at their feet. Robert Nelson describes the icon as a "mediator," or a medium through which believers can comprehend and interact with God.<sup>74</sup> Citing Otto Demus' conception of the "icon in space," Nelson explains that the space of an icon extends in front of its picture plane, and encompasses the viewer.<sup>75</sup> This dynamic can be seen to work on two levels in the Leo Bible. First, Leo and his companions are literally depicted as having been encompassed by the iconic miniatures of the Virgin and St. Nicholas. The presence of these images in a manuscript, surrounded by epigrammatic prayers connects not only Leo to God but also to the beholder of the manuscript. As Nelson argues, text and image establish a "discourse" that has the ability to animate a "dead text," and in turn address it to the beholder.<sup>76</sup> When the Leo Bible's epigrams were read aloud, as they would have been by viewers, Leo's original prayer would be reactivated through the recitation, connecting himself and the beholder to God. As a gift to a monastery, Leo's intent for his Bible would have

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<sup>74</sup> Robert S. Nelson, "The Discourse of Icons, Then and Now," *Art History* 12.2 (1989): 149.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 152.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 149.

been that it would be used regularly by monks actively contributing to his salvation through their commemoration and prayer. Although this was the intent of Leo's donation, in reality the Bible would not have been used much by members of the monastery because it was too precious and luxurious. Nevertheless, in theory there would have been an active and dynamic relationship between the donor, recipient readers and Logos, conducted and facilitated by the Bible's iconic dedicatory miniatures.

When evaluated as a part of the preface's composition as a whole, the dedicatory images take on the character of icons to an even further degree. The dedicatory miniatures form their own unit within the manuscript, separated from the rest of its contents by the pair of palmette crosses. As it has been discussed above, there appears to be a connection between the palmette cross motif and middle Byzantine devotional objects. Its use in the above staurtohekes, ivory and icon is comparable to its appearance in the Leo Bible if the dedicatory images are read as icons. Perhaps to a middle Byzantine viewer accustomed to viewing the palmette cross in devotional contexts, its appearance in the Leo Bible would call such objects to mind. In this way, one could re-imagine the cross pages and dedicatory images as though they are two parts of a diptych, instead of four separate miniatures. In this context, the cross pages become images on the reverse of the dedicatory pages rather than independent miniatures. Like many Byzantine icons, the Leo Bible's "manuscript icons" remain covered when not in use. The images face inward until the viewer turns the cross pages to reveal the devotional images contained inside, and activates them by reading their epigrammatic prayers.

## Conclusion

In a discussion of the role of the patron in the Theodore Psalter (London, British Library, Add. Ms. 19352), Charles Barber argues that the Psalter's patron, Abbot Michael was integrated into the "visual and verbal economy" of his donation.<sup>77</sup> Of a marginal illustration from the Psalter featuring and author portrait of David and Michael holding a codex, Barber writes, "As the first consumer of this work, its patron and possessor, [Michael] has become the figure of the present in the manuscript. He is the culmination of a genealogical chain of speech that begins with David... and ends with Michael, the patron in whose hands the book can now be seen."<sup>78</sup> This notion that the donor becomes the figure of the present in a manuscript, through integration into the volume both visually and verbally is supported by the Leo Bible. Leo's integration into the Bible is especially noticeable in the preface, where, through the dedicatory epigram and miniatures, Leo becomes a link in the Bible's "genealogical chain" of authorship. In the Leo Bible preface, as in the Theodore Psalter, the donor serves as a representative of the present. Throughout the Leo Bible, the boundaries between past, present, future, Old and New Testaments are often collapsed. This is seen visually in the typological table of contents page and the imagined iconic scenes of the dedicatory miniatures. These same boundaries are blurred verbally through the dedicatory epigram and later, the frontispiece epigrams. Leo's presence in the preface acts as a constant that testifies to the power of the Old and New Testaments and their role in Leo's future salvation. Additionally, it can be argued that his presence in the preface also serves as a means of placing Leo's role as patron of the manuscript on level terms with the other authorities responsible for authoring the volume. In this way, Leo asserts himself through personal introduction, as a voice of authority within the manuscript.

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<sup>77</sup> Charles Barber, "In the Presence of the Text: A Note on Writing, Speaking and Performing in the Theodore Psalter," in *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, ed. Liz James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 92.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.



In Byzantine literature, authors used means of self-authorization to present themselves favorably to their audiences. As Aglae Pizzone explains, the personal introduction (ή προσωπική σύστασις) was placed at the start of a work, in order to present the poet or author as “absolutely learned and versed” in his material.<sup>79</sup> As an act of self-authorization, the introduction allowed the author to portray himself as a self-inspired, expert rhetorician.<sup>80</sup> In the Leo Bible then, the preface can be seen to function as a visual and poetic self-introduction for Leo and the biblical authors highlighted in its pages. By casting the Leo Bible’s prefatory material into such a role, this study sees the preface as participating in the Byzantine convention of σύστασις, or personal introduction. Leo’s self-introduction, by way of the preface, is a key means through which Leo crafts his image as patron, author and provider of the Bible’s exegetical commentary. Even if it is now understood that Leo did not physically author the Bible’s epigrams, or illuminate its pages, their production was tied to his authority and patronage. For the purposes of this study, the preface’s introduction of Moses and David is also of interest, owing to their prominence in the Bible’s subsequent epigrams and miniatures. This study will now turn to a consideration of the Pentateuch and Psalms frontispieces, in order to show how the Leo Bible uses visual and poetic exegesis to highlight the importance and authority of Moses and David as authors of the pre-history of Christianity.

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<sup>79</sup> Aglae, Pizzone, “Introduction,” in *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature. Modes, Functions, and Identities*, ed. Aglae Pizzone (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2014) 6-7.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

## Chapter Three: The Pentateuch and Psalms Frontispieces

## The Leo Bible Frontispieces

Of the twenty-five books of Old Testament that make up the Leo Bible, thirteen contain full-page miniatures illustrating figures or narratives from the book they accompany. The term “frontispiece” is used to describe these compositions although it is somewhat misleading, due to the fact that not all of the frontispieces are placed at the beginning of their book. The frontispieces are found at either the beginning or end of the books, with no obvious logic behind their placement. Similarly, there is no clear reason as to why some of the books of the Bible receive miniatures while others do not. In this respect, it is not impossible that the manuscript originally contained frontispieces for all of its books, but some were lost over time. This idea is supported by the likelihood that at some point, during a rebinding, the manuscript was reordered. Some disruption of the miniatures has occurred over time, as evidenced by the fact that the Genesis frontispiece is now placed out of order. Because all but one frontispiece folio has one blank side, it would be possible to remove a folio without disrupting the text.<sup>81</sup> This is important to keep in mind when considering the presence or absence of certain details in the Bible’s frontispieces, because what survives today may not be the full extent of the original Bible. In terms of content, the miniatures do not make any references to figures or events from the New Testament. The only place Christian imagery or overt symbolism appears in the Leo Bible’s miniatures is the preface. Outside of preface, all of the Bible’s miniatures adhere only to Old Testament material. This strict visual adherence to the Old Testament does not carry over to the frontispieces’ epigrams, which draw upon Byzantine exegesis to frame the Old Testament in a new light.

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<sup>81</sup> The Maccabees frontispiece is painted on the verso of last page of the text that precedes it.

In addition to the miniatures, each frontispiece contains an epigram. The Leo Bible's epigrams are written in dodecasyllable and are inscribed in frames around the miniatures. Written in majuscule, the epigrams read from the top left across and down, and then from the top left down and across. While the frontispiece miniatures contain imagery that is strictly from the Old Testament, the same is not true for the epigrams. The epigrams use exegetical and typological readings of the books they accompany, in order to orient their message within a Christian context. This interest in exegetical readings of the Bible is found throughout the Leo Bible's epigrams and miniatures. Even though the miniatures are never explicitly typological, they often contain visual exegesis of Old Testament material. It is worth noting though, that in the Leo Bible the frontispieces present their material both literally and exegetically. Some frontispieces present complex exegetical interpretations of a scene, while others present material literally. In this respect, the Leo Bible's epigrams and miniatures can be placed into two categories: literal and exegetical. Literal epigrams and miniatures present material just as it is presented in the Old Testament, without interpretation. Exegetical epigrams and miniatures, on the other hand, provide commentary and interpretation of the material they present. Previous studies of the Leo Bible have often misconstrued its exegetical content by taking a unilaterally literal or positivist approach to its frontispieces. This approach has led to misunderstanding over what exactly is being conveyed by the frontispieces, and in some cases the misidentification of their figures and scenes. Using the frontispieces from the Bible's Pentateuch and the Psalms as a case study, it is possible to observe the ways in which an exegetical approach to the Leo Bible may explain details that have previously been labeled inconsistencies or errors on the part of the poet or artist. By using such an approach in conjunction with Mango's new translations of the

Leo Bible's epigrams, it is possible to provide new and original analyses of the relationship between the Bible's frontispiece epigrams and miniatures.

### **The Pentateuch Cycle**

The Pentateuch is the oldest portion of the Old Testament and deeply significant for Judaism. The five books were known to Hellenized Jews and Greek-speaking Christians as "the Law," and form the basis for the Octateuch.<sup>82</sup> Although there is disagreement over whether or not Octateuch manuscripts were more widely produced than the Pentateuch in Byzantium, a larger corpus of illustrated Octateuch manuscripts survives today.<sup>83</sup> While the earliest of the Octateuch manuscripts dates to roughly one hundred years after the Leo Bible, they still serve as a good point of comparison for the Bible's miniatures because of the breadth of their iconography. Weitzmann has argued that the iconography of the Octateuchs grew out of a combination of Jewish, early Christian and Classical elements, while Lowden sees the cycle as a product of middle and later Byzantine conventions. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are some stylistic and iconographic similarities between the Octateuchs and the Leo Bible miniatures. One notable difference however, is the size and placement of the miniatures in the Leo Bible versus the Octateuchs. In the Octateuchs, miniatures are generally smaller and embedded within the text of the Bible. The Leo Bible, on the other hand, is more similar in form and appearance to the so-called "aristocratic psalters" with their lavish full-page illuminations.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> John Lowden, "Illustrated Octateuch Manuscripts: A Byzantine Phenomenon," in *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. Paul Magdalino and Robert S. Nelson, (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010), 107.

<sup>83</sup> Weitzmann has argued that the Octateuch was more popular than the Pentateuch in Byzantium, but Lowden argues that the evidence is inconclusive. Weitzmann, *Octateuchs*, 299; Lowden, "Illustrated Octateuch Manuscripts," 107.

<sup>84</sup> Anthony Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium* (Paris: Picard, 1984).

Determining the identity of one of the figures in the Genesis miniature may have wider implications for the first five of the Leo Bible's frontispieces. Scholars are divided over whether the figure who writes in a codex in the top right corner of the miniature on fol. 11r should be identified as Adam or Moses (Fig. 24). If the figure is Adam, as Dufrenne and Mango have asserted, then the register illustrates the scene of Adam naming the animals.<sup>85</sup> If the figure is Moses, as Thomas Mathews has argued, the register represents an anachronistic scene referencing Moses' authorship of Genesis.<sup>86</sup> For several reasons, it is unlikely that this figure was intended to be Adam. To begin with, it does not make sense chronologically that Adam would be depicted clothed in the top register while naming the animals (Gen 2:20) and nude in the lower register being tempted by the serpent (Genesis 3:1-6). According to Genesis, Adam named the animals before the creation of Eve and the pair's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. It is difficult to accept that Adam would be depicted wearing clothes, before he became aware of his nakedness, only to be seen without them in a subsequent scene. In extant representations of Adam naming the animals in Octateuch manuscripts, Adam is never depicted wearing clothes or writing in a codex.<sup>87</sup> The physical appearance of the writing figure is further evidence that it is not meant to represent Adam. It is difficult to tell how Adam was depicted in the lower register because this portion of the miniature is badly flaked. From what remains however, it is possible to make out a relatively long, thin face with high cheekbones. It also does not appear that Adam was nimbed in the lower register, whereas the writing figure is. Instead, the figure follows the type for Moses that is used throughout the Bible's other miniatures. Moses appears nine times in the Leo Bible, and while his exact features are not standardized he always appears as a nimbed, beardless, idealized youth wearing either a blue or rose-colored robe. The writing figure

<sup>85</sup> Mango, "The Epigrams," 68; Dufrenne, "Les Miniatures," 109-110.

<sup>86</sup> Mathews, "The Epigrams of Leo Sacellarios," 111-112.

<sup>87</sup> For example: fol. 6r, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana cod. Plut 5.8; fol. 22r Vat.gr. 747.

conforms to this type, and seems to have shorter hair and a squarer face than the lower register's Adam. Though figures in the Leo Bible do not conform to a standardized type across miniatures, their features are always standardized within an individual miniature. It would be inconsistent with the rest of the manuscript for Adam to have such dissimilar representations within one composition.

If the writing figure is in fact Moses, then the Genesis miniature's top register can be thought of as an author portrait. Moses was understood to be the author of the Pentateuch, and the Leo Bible emphasizes Moses' role as a witness and recorder of the Old Testament. This is perhaps best seen through the Leo Bible poet's interest in Moses, that is communicated by the dedicatory epigram. The dedicatory epigram begins by crediting Moses with delivering God's Law to mortals through his authorship of the Pentateuch.<sup>88</sup> Moses is also depicted among the authors of the Leo Bible in the table of contents miniature, and his authorship is referenced in the Genesis epigram. This interest in the Pentateuch is reflected in the fact that each of its books receives a frontispiece illumination in the Leo Bible. If intentional on the part of the planner, rather than an accidental survival, this would support the idea that all of the books of the Leo Bible were not originally illuminated, and that a deliberate choice was made as to which books to illuminate. If this is in fact the case, then the interest in the Pentateuch that is demonstrated by the dedicatory epigram may have also been expressed by the deliberate choice to illustrate all of the Pentateuch. To this effect, it is possible to consider the Pentateuch frontispieces as an individual cycle within the Leo Bible.<sup>89</sup> In this context, the author portrait of Moses unites the frontispieces together under his authority, and allows for the author to be present in all five

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<sup>88</sup> Mango, "The Epigrams," 62.

<sup>89</sup> It is also worth noting that the books of Joshua and Ruth do not receive a frontispiece, which means that the Pentateuch cycle is illuminated, while the Octateuch is not. This contributes to the idea that the Pentateuchs were deliberately illuminated to make them stand out as a unit apart from the rest of the books. After the Pentateuch, there are never more than three books illuminated in a row.

Pentateuch miniatures. Treating the Pentateuch miniatures as their own cycle within the Leo Bible helps to account for their anachronisms and the special significance the Pentateuch seems to hold within the Leo Bible.

### *Genesis – Fol. Iir*

“He who holds timelessly the existence of the earth and heaven above like a leather curtain has placed dust in the midst, within time, having excellently fashioned it into a living being endowed with speech. The serpent, however, as Moses writes, has become envious and is crawling as he addresses Eve in the picture.”<sup>90</sup>

The Genesis epigram is a prime example of the exegetical type of epigram found in the Leo Bible. Rather than interpreting a single passage from Genesis, the epigram comments more broadly on the creation story, with specific emphasis on Eve’s interaction with the serpent. Cyril Mango explains that the epigram’s characterization of the serpent as having been “envious” is not a standard reading of Genesis, but can likely be attributed to John Chrysostom’s exegetical reading of the story.<sup>91</sup> In his sixteenth homily on Genesis, Chrysostom describes the serpent as the “wildest” of all the animals, explaining that he was jealous of the high status humans had among the animals.<sup>92</sup> Chrysostom writes, “[the serpent] saw that the human being, creature though he was, had the good fortune to enjoy the highest esteem and was scarcely lower than the angels.”<sup>93</sup> The serpent was jealous of man for having what he perceived as undue eminence over the other animals, which ultimately led him to tempt Eve with the forbidden fruit. As such, the “meaning” of the Genesis frontispiece might be understood as a warning to Christians about the moral danger posed by envy and disobedience.

<sup>90</sup> Trans. Mango, “The Epigrams,” 68. Τὸν χοῦν ὁ τῆς γῆς τὴν ἴθαρξην ἀχρόνωσ/ κ(αι) τὸν πόλον ἄνωθεν ὡς δέρριν φέρον/ ὑπὸ χρόνον τίθησι + ποῦτον + ἐν μέσῳ./ ζ[ῶο]ν λαλητὸν ἐκπρεπῶσ διαπλάσας./ ὄφης δὲ λυτὸν ε[...], Μωσῆ]ς ὡς γράφει,/ φθονήσας ἔρπει προσλαλῶν τῇ εἰκόνι./

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>92</sup> Trans. Robert C. Hill, *Homilies on Genesis, 1-17* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 208.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.



Stylistically, the Genesis miniature is an example of a visual exegesis in that it is a unique composition meant to address the themes of the epigram (Fig. 24). The miniature is broken into three horizontal registers, with each depicting a different aspect of the epigram. The Genesis miniature's composition appears to be unique, and does not directly copy any known models. The top register of the epigram depicts Moses writing the book of Genesis, surrounded by animals who look upon him with respect. This relationship between man and the animals recalls John Chrysostom's description of man's dominion over the animals in Genesis. Because the folio is heavily damaged it is difficult to tell exactly what the middle register was meant to depict, but from what remains it is clear that it is an ocean scene. The scene is divided into sky above and water below, teeming with swimming fish. Above the water, in the center of the sky, the dove of the Holy Spirit is present. Centered above the dove, a flaked orb-shape radiates faint white lines. This separation of Heaven and earth seen in the register is consistent with the separation described in the frontispiece's epigram. The lowest register, featuring Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden also follows the epigram's description of the temptation, as the serpent crawls up the tree to address Eve. The epigram is necessary for providing the "meaning" of this scene because it is not possible to convey the serpent's envy visually. If the intent of the frontispiece's reading of Genesis is to highlight the sinfulness of envy, this meaning must be supplied by the epigram.

*Exodus – Fol. 46v*

“Moses has shown God's power in a bush, [the power] that buried in the sea the proverbial (?) oppression, which had weighed on Abraham's tribes, distressing them by the troublesome evil of brickmaking.”<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Mango, “The Epigrams,” 68. Mango describes his translation of the epigram as “tentative” due to the obscure nature of some of its phrasing. Ἐδειξεω Μωσῆς ἐν βάτω θεοῦ σθένος/ Πόντῳ καλύψας γνωμικὴν θραυνίδα,/ ἢ τὰς φυλάς κατεῖχεω Ἀβραὰμ θλίβειν/ τῇ Πλινθοποιῶ τῶν κακῶν μοχθηρία.

From first glance, the Exodus epigram appears literal, but the choice on the part of the poet to highlight brickmaking may be better explained in an exegetical context. The poet's description of 'brickmaking' refers specifically to the bricks that the Israelites were forced to make as a part of their enslavement by the Egyptians. After Moses returns from the burning bush he goes with Aaron to ask the Pharaoh if the Israelites may leave for three days to worship in the Wilderness.<sup>95</sup> The Pharaoh denies Moses' request and retaliates by ordering the Israelites to make the same quantity of bricks as before, but now without straw.<sup>96</sup> All things considered, it is a fairly minor aspect of the Exodus story, and is not clearly represented in the Exodus miniature. As such, it comes as somewhat of a surprise that the Leo Bible poet would chose to include the episode in the frontispiece's explanatory epigram. An exegetical context for this reference can be provided by Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Moses*.

In *The Life of Moses*, Gregory comments on the Israelites' "wretched labor of brickmaking." Gregory compares the Israelites' subjugation to the tyranny that Christians face when adversaries threaten them with "onslaughts of temptation."<sup>97</sup> Of these Christians he writes,

"Many of them do become more firmly established in their faith as they are hardened by these grievous assaults, but some of the weaker ones are beaten to their knees by these misfortunes and say outright that it would have been more useful for them not to have heard the message of freedom than to endure these things for freedom's sake."<sup>98</sup>

This may be the "oppression" that the Leo Bible poet writes is "buried" when the Egyptian army drowns in the Red Sea. Gregory relates the crossing of the Red Sea back to tyranny of brickmaking and, typologically to Christian baptism. He likens the Israelites' crossing of the Red

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<sup>95</sup> Exodus 5:1-4.

<sup>96</sup> Exodus 5:7.

<sup>97</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, trans. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), II: 56.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, II:57.

Sea to baptism, because both the Israelites and baptized Christians emerge from the water with a newfound freedom. When the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea, the Israelites were freed from the tyranny of brickmaking, just as Christians are freed spiritually through baptism. In this context, the unbaptized are subject to assaults on their faith in the same way as the Israelites were when they were forced to make bricks for the Pharaoh. Gregory describes both processes as, “breaking the continuity of evil by a radical change for the better,” continuing that, “this is what we hear through the history, which says that in the same water the enemy and the friend are distinguished by death and life, the enemy being destroyed and the friend given life.”<sup>99</sup> In the epigram, the Israelites’ “proverbial oppression” and enemies are buried in the water, while the Israelites are given life and freedom. The epigram does not explicitly cast the episode in a typological light, but it is perhaps clear from the absence of literal brickmaking in the miniature that the frontispiece is meant to be read exegetically.

Commenting on his translation of the Exodus epigram, Mango describes the relationship between the frontispiece’s epigram and miniature as “incomplete.” He cites the absence of brickmaking in the miniature and the fact that the middle register is not directly addressed in the epigram.<sup>100</sup> This perspective is characteristic of the positivist approach that has been commonly applied to the Leo Bible. When read exegetically however, the relationship between epigram and miniature follows logically. The top register of the miniature is a clear and literal depiction of Moses’ encounter with God at the burning bush, and is consistent with the epigram (Fig. 25). Although the middle register is not literally addressed by the epigram, it is a part of the sequence of events it describes. The register’s first scene depicts the meeting between Moses, Aaron and the Pharaoh that led to the increase in burden of the Israelites’ brickmaking. This new burden

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid, II:126.

<sup>100</sup> Mango, “The Epigrams,” 69.

was the start of the chain of events that eventually led to the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. The second scene in the register is more difficult to read. The scene could either depict the Israelites about to cross the Red Sea, or after having crossed it. Moses' staff touching the water would suggest that they are about to cross the sea, but in the register below, the Pharaoh's army is already drowning. This instead would indicate that the Israelites had already safely crossed. In this respect, the three registers should be thought of as independent scenes, and although Moses' staff crosses into the bottom register, the scenes should not be understood as occurring simultaneously. The bottom register, as demonstrated above, can be exegetically linked to the epigram's reference to "brickmaking," because when the Pharaoh's army drowned in the Red Sea the Israelites were freed from the assaults to their faith that came in the form of brickmaking.

*Leviticus – Fol. 85v*

“The priests and levites of the Old [Testament] as they lift up the Ark, are here mystically prefiguring the glory of the New, namely Christ, for just as the tables of the Law were within the Ark, so Christ, too come forth twofold from the Virgin, mortal nature [joined] to divinity.”<sup>102</sup>

The Leviticus frontispiece contains what is perhaps the Leo Bible's most explicitly typological epigram. The epigram discusses the typological significance of the Ark of the Covenant as prefiguring Christ's incarnation. Specifically, the Ark is seen as a prefiguration of the Virgin in her role as God-bearer. This view is thoroughly expounded upon by John of

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<sup>102</sup> Mango, “The Epigrams,” 69. Οἱ τῆς παλαιᾶς ἱερείς καὶ Λευῖται/ τὸν ὄλβον ὧδε μθστικῶς τὸν τῆς νέας/ εἰς Χριστὸν αἴρειν τὴν κιβωτὸν προγράφουν,/ ὡς αἱ πλάκες ταύτης γὰρ ἔνδον τοῦ νόμου,/ οὕτω φύσις βρότεια τῆ θεότητι,/ διπλοῦς πρόεισι Χ(ριστὸ)ς ἐκ τῆς Παρθένου.

Damascus in his three sermons on the Dormition of the Virgin.<sup>103</sup> John describes the Virgin as the “sacred and living ark of the living God” and writes,

“The ark foreshadowed thee who hast kept the seed of the new world. Thou didst bring forth Christ, the salvation of the world, who destroyed sin and its angry waves. The burning bush was a figure of thee, and the tablets of the law, and the ark of the testament.”

In this regard, John’s characterization of the Virgin parallels the way she is portrayed in the epigram, and may even be its exegetical source. The epigram is a departure from the other Pentateuch epigrams, in that it does not reference a specific passage or moment from Leviticus, but rather uses the book’s context and explanation of the duties of the Levites as an opportunity to make a larger typological point about the Ark. Analysis of the Leviticus miniature will help provide a better understanding as to why the book was given a frontispiece that does not directly relate to its narrative or a passage from its text.

The Leviticus miniature is unusual in that it does not illustrate a scene from the book of Leviticus (Fig. 26). The miniature depicts Aaron, who holds a censer and leads a procession of six Levites carrying the Ark of the Covenant. Moses follows behind the group and holds a small scroll. There are many peculiarities within the scene. To begin with, the Ark that the Levites carry does not match the description of the Ark found in the Old Testament. The Ark is described in Exodus 25:10-22, and its description includes several details that are not present in the frontispiece miniature. Most notably absent are the propitiatory<sup>104</sup> and cherubim that are supposed to cover the Ark. These features are described in instructions to the Israelites for building the cover,

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<sup>103</sup> John of Damascus, *On holy images, followed by three sermons on the Assumption*, trans. Mary H. Allies (London: Thomas Baker, 1898).

<sup>104</sup> Also known as the “mercy chair,” “seat of grace” or “Atonement cover” referring to its role in the rituals of the Day of Atonement.

“Thou shalt make also a propitiatory of the purest gold...Thou shalt make also two cherubims of beaten gold, on the two sides of the oracle. Let one cherub be on the one side, and the other on the other. Let them cover both sides of the propitiatory, spreading their wings, and covering the oracle, and let them look one towards the other, their faces being turned towards the propitiatory wherewith the ark is to be covered.”<sup>105</sup>

The Ark in the Leviticus miniature has no type of ornamentation on its cover, but is instead plain and cylindrical. Furthermore, the Ark of miniature is green in color, although the hue could be the result of damage to the miniature over time. In addition to the dissimilarities in Ark covers, there is also a discrepancy between the way the Israelites are told to carry the Ark in Exodus, and the way it is carried in the Leviticus miniature. Exodus 25:12-15 describes a configuration of rings and poles that should be used to carry the Ark, while the Leviticus miniature shows the Ark being merely carried on the shoulders of the Levites. Add to this the fact that the Levites are wearing antique garments instead of the priestly garments described in Exodus 28, and the scene depicted on fol. 85v proves itself to be wholly inconsistent with what is described in Exodus and Leviticus.<sup>106</sup> This is because the Leviticus miniature is not a depiction of events from Leviticus at all, but rather an imagined scene composed from references to various moments in the Pentateuch. The miniature does not illustrate a specific moment from Leviticus, but instead creates a general vision of the Levites carrying the Ark. In this way, the Leviticus frontispiece is more about the Levites themselves and the symbolism of the Ark than it is about the book of Leviticus.

By focusing on the Levites rather than the story of Leviticus, the Leviticus miniature relates to the frontispiece’s epigram and its emphasis on the Ark of the Covenant as a prefiguration of Christ’s incarnation. The impression of the Ark that is created by the Leviticus frontispiece is less interested in the particulars of Mosaic Law surrounding the Ark and Levites

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<sup>105</sup> Exodus 25: 17-20.

<sup>106</sup> Dufrenne, “Les Miniatures,” 125.

than it is in their typological significance. It is possible that the planner of the Leo Bible wanted to include a reference to Ark as a prefiguration of the incarnation and chose Leviticus because of its description of the anointing of the Levites and the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:2). The miniature does not depict the exact rituals of the Day of Atonement, but the combined presence of the Ark with Aaron holding the censer and its connection with the book of Leviticus calls its ceremony to mind. Thematically, the Day of Atonement can be typologically linked to the incarnation as a prefiguration of Christ's self-sacrifice for the sins of humanity. While the Bible's planner could have chosen to illustrate the Day of Atonement, the miniature's general focus on the Ark is more consistent with the epigram's emphasis on the Virgin's role as God-bearer. In this way, the Virgin is like the Ark in that she bears God's covenant with his chosen people. As a result, the Leviticus miniature can be read as an exegetical, rather than literal, depiction of the book of Leviticus that anticipates Christ's incarnation through the Virgin and Moses' role in its communication.

#### *Numbers – Fol. 116r*

“Moses, as he numbered the tribes of the stock of Israel, let them go, while Joshua concurs with him. But the one who astonished earthly nature introduces from her loins an equivalent number, namely [that of] the Disciples as he assigns from afar, I believe, each tribe to Christ.”<sup>107</sup>

The Numbers frontispiece presents an interpretive challenge due to the difficult language of its epigram, and anachronistic miniature. In terms of exegesis, the epigram uses a common exegetical reading of the number of the twelve tribes of Israel as prefiguring Christ's twelve

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<sup>107</sup> Mango, “The Epigrams,” 70. Μωσῆς ἀριθμῶν Ἰ(σρα)ήλ τὰς ἐκ γενουσι/ φυλάς μεθῆκεν, Ἰησοῦς δὲ σθνηθέει,/ ἀλλ' ὁ ξενίσας τὴν χοϊκὴν οὐσίαν/ ταύτης ἀριθμὸν ἄλλον ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος/ πόρρωθεν, οἶμαι, τοὺς μαθητὰς εἰσφέρει,/ φυλὴν ἐκάστη πρὸς Χριστὸν διαγράφων.

Apostles,<sup>108</sup> but its treatment of Moses and Joshua deserves more attention. Mango interprets the epigram as identifying Moses' Census of the twelve tribes in Numbers 1 as prefiguring later events from the book of Joshua.<sup>109</sup> In Joshua 1, God calls Joshua to lead the Israelites across the river Jordan. Although the river was flooding, when the Levites carrying the Ark reached its shores the flow halted and the Israelites were able to cross.<sup>110</sup> Once the Israelites had crossed to the other side, God ordered Joshua to send a representative from each of the twelve tribes to take a stone from the middle of the river.<sup>111</sup> Joshua then set up the stones in the Israelites' camp as a reminder of God's covenant.<sup>112</sup> According to Mango, this is what the Leo Bible poet refers to when he describes Joshua as "concurring" with Moses and, "astonishing earthly nature." Joshua 'concurred' with Moses by confirming the number of the twelve tribes when he ordered the Israelites to pick up twelve stones from the river bed, and he 'astonished nature' by performing the miracle at the Jordan.<sup>113</sup> This exegetical reading of the census informs the frontispiece's unique and anachronistic miniature presenting Joshua as Moses' successor.

Folio 116r appears to depict the scene of Joshua aiding Moses in the census (Fig. 27). At the start of the book of Numbers, Moses takes a census of all Israelite males over age twenty for the purpose of military conscription.<sup>114</sup> While the Numbers miniature literally represents this aspect of the census, it does not depict Aaron as Moses' assistant, as he was in the Bible. Instead, Joshua is represented next to Moses, writing in a codex. This detail is inconsistent with the account of the census found in Numbers. Moses takes two censuses in Numbers. In the first

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<sup>108</sup> For example, Prokopius of Gaza, PG 87/1, col. 1008a.

<sup>109</sup> Mango, "The Epigrams," 70.

<sup>110</sup> Joshua 3:14-17.

<sup>111</sup> Joshua 4:4-8.

<sup>112</sup> Joshua 4:23-24.

<sup>113</sup> Mango, "The Epigrams," 70.

<sup>114</sup> Numbers 1:1-16.



census Moses is accompanied by Aaron, and in the second, Aaron's successor Eleazar assists.<sup>115</sup> Joshua's presence alongside Moses is even more confusing when it is taken into account that God does not name Joshua as Moses' successor until after the final census had already taken place.<sup>116</sup> For this reason, Joshua's appearance in the miniature cannot be approached from a literal standpoint. Instead, one must take the exegetical context of the epigram into account, and consider the possibility that the miniature may not depict Joshua's participation in the census at all.

Rather than literally placing Joshua into the narrative of the census, the Numbers frontispiece presents Joshua as a successor to Moses in both leadership and authorship. It should not be taken as a given that the codex Joshua holds is a reference to his participation in Moses' census. Joshua's presence in the miniature can instead be understood to communicate his role as Moses' successor, which God announces to Moses in Numbers. In this way, the image of Joshua with a codex is comparable to the author portrait of Moses in the Genesis frontispiece. Both images announce their subjects as authors of the books that follow. Moses is the author of the Pentateuch, but Joshua is the author of the book of Joshua, which follows the Pentateuch. The author portrait of Joshua emphasizes his role as Moses' successor as an author of the Bible. The epigram conveys a different facet of Joshua's succession, emphasizing how he assumed Moses' role as leader of the Israelites. When taken together, the Numbers miniature and epigram emphasize the legitimacy and continuity of Joshua as Moses' successor. Joshua's role as successor to Moses is significant, because it is under his leadership that the Israelites reached the promise land, and God's promise to Moses in the Pentateuch is fulfilled.

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<sup>115</sup> Numbers 26.

<sup>116</sup> Numbers 27:12-22.

*Deuteronomy – Fol. 155v*

“The painter has shown us in this image that divine man Moses bringing from the mountain the tablets with the God-written laws, traced by a miraculous hand in ineffable fashion.”<sup>117</sup>

The Deuteronomy frontispiece is unique among the Leo Bible frontispieces because it does not illustrate or comment on events from the book it accompanies. Instead, fol.155v presents material from the book of Exodus. The Deuteronomy epigram is one of the Bible’s shortest and least evocative epigrams, describing the subject of the miniature in only the vaguest of terms. It does not reference a specific passage from the Bible, but mentions in general Moses’ receiving of the Law in Exodus.<sup>118</sup> Compared to the Bible’s other epigrams, the Deuteronomy epigram takes up very little space on the page, and does not fill its entire frame. Also of note, is the poet’s description of the artist’s hand in the composition. This device is rare in the Leo Bible, and only appears one other time in the Job frontispiece (fol. 461v). This referencing of the artist serves as a reminder of the Bible’s materiality and its viewer’s active role in deciphering its meaning. It harkens back to the dedicatory epigram and its miniscule inscription with instructions on how to read the frontispieces. The fact that meaning is not always readily apparent in the Leo Bible is reiterated by the Deuteronomy frontispiece’s miniature and its non-sequential use of a scene from the Pentateuch.

The miniature used to illustrate the Leo Bible’s book of Deuteronomy is familiar to modern viewers because it is nearly identical to a miniature found in the Paris Psalter. The elegant classicism of the scene is somewhat out of place among the rest of the Pentateuch’s more idiosyncratic miniatures, giving the impression that the artist to great care and deliberation in

<sup>117</sup> Mango, “The Epigrams,” 70. “Ἐδειξεω ἡμῖν ὁ γραφεὺς ἐν εἰκόνι/ Μωσῆν ἐκεῖνον ἐνθεον τὰς ἐξ ὄρους/ πλάκας κρατοῦντα καὶ νόμους θεογράφους/ χερὶ ξένι [...] γραφέντας ἀρρήτην λόγον.

<sup>118</sup> Exodus 19-20.

copying it from a model (Fig. 28). What is more, as is the case with the frontispiece's epigram, the miniature does not actually illustrate events that took place in the book of Deuteronomy, making it even clearer that the miniature may have been chosen for a specific purpose that is no longer apparent. Moses teaches the Israelites about the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy, but scene illustrated in the miniature occurs in the book of Exodus.<sup>119</sup> Because no other frontispiece in the Leo Bible presents a scene that did not occur in its accompanying book, one is left to wonder why the planner of the Bible chose this miniature to accompany Deuteronomy.

Miniatures depicting Moses teaching the Israelites were common in other Byzantine manuscripts. Although dating to a later period, illustrated Octateuch manuscripts used depictions of Moses teaching the Israelites to illustrate Deuteronomy.<sup>120</sup> A miniature from an 11<sup>th</sup> century Psalter (W. 530. B, Walters Museum) combines the two events into one miniature, with Moses receiving the Law in the top register, and presenting it to the Israelites in the lower (Fig. 29).<sup>121</sup> Such a scene would have perhaps been more fitting in Deuteronomy frontispiece, but the fact remains that the planner of the Leo Bible chose a scene from Exodus. This choice is indicative of a tendency throughout the Pentateuch frontispieces for figures and events to appear anachronistically. Although later frontispiece epigrams make typological references to the New Testament and the life of Christ, we do not see the same level of anachronism outside of the Pentateuch.

In the Pentateuch cycle, boundaries of time and sequence collapse to form a sort of 'exegetical time' where events are reordered and combined to serve an exegetical purpose. In the Genesis frontispiece, Moses is present in the miniature's top register. He is writing in a codex,

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<sup>119</sup> Deuteronomy 5:1-21; Exodus 19-20.

<sup>120</sup> See: Vat.gr.746 and Athos, Vatopedi 602.

<sup>121</sup> Baltimore, Walters Ms. W.530.B, originally from Athos, Vatopedi 761.

and his appearance gives the impression of an author portrait. It is a fitting representation, because Genesis is the first of the five books Moses authored. The third Pentateuch frontispiece, Leviticus, presents a scene that, although thematically linked to the story does not actually take place within the book. What is more, the artist's depiction of the Levites carrying the ark is strikingly similar to representations in the Octateuchs of the Levites carrying the Ark across the river Jordan in the book of Joshua. In this respect, the artist may be pointing forward towards the book of Joshua and the fulfillment of God's covenant with Moses. This foreshadowing of Joshua's fulfillment of the covenant is also present in the Numbers frontispiece, which combines events from the books of Numbers and Joshua into a single composite episode. In contrast, the final book of the Pentateuch looks backward to Moses' first communication with God and the origins of the covenant. By circling back to events from the earlier chapters of the Pentateuch the planner of the Leo Bible reminds the viewer that the events are all interconnected under Moses' presence and authority. As a witness and recorder of the events, Moses serves as a constant, a role that is passed to Joshua upon his death. By combining and re-ordering events, the Pentateuch frontispieces exegetically highlight aspects of Pentateuch and, in part, emphasize Moses and Joshua's roles as the leaders and biographers of God's chosen people. This interest in authorship can be seen in several places throughout the Leo Bible, and provides a new avenue through which to approach some of the Bible's miniatures and themes.

### **Authorship in the Leo Bible**

The Leo Bible contains four miniatures that could be read as author portraits. The table of contents miniature and the Genesis, Numbers and Psalms frontispieces all include elements that give the impression of an author portrait. The three frontispiece miniatures contain nimbed

figures holding or writing in codices, who all also happen to be authors of Old Testament books. In the case of the Genesis and Psalms frontispieces, the figures are the authors of the book they accompany, while Joshua's presence in the Numbers frontispiece seems to prefigure his authorship of the book of Joshua. In their appearance, these figures resemble author portraits from illuminated prophet books or common evangelist portraits. This detail is striking, but has not been addressed by previous studies of the manuscript. Seven illuminated prophet books survive from Byzantium and are, for the most part, illustrated according to a formula that pairs a portrait of each author with his book.<sup>122</sup> Some of the portraits are found in small miniatures within the text, while other manuscripts use full-page miniatures to depict the portraits.<sup>123</sup> Consistent throughout the majority of the portraits however, is the depiction of the prophet holding a scroll featuring text from his prophet book. Although most of the figures hold scrolls, several of the prophets in the Vat. gr. 1153 are seen holding codices like the authors in the Leo Bible. The fact that the Leo Bible authors hold codices rather than the scrolls usually associated with Old Testament figures may be a self-referential nod to materiality of the Leo Bible, and the authors' contributions to it. By taking on the attributes of authorship as seen in the prophet books and evangelist portraits, the Leo Bible authors are presented as not merely participants in their frontispiece miniatures, but as recorders of the events.

The seated portrait of Moses from the Genesis frontispiece closely resembles evangelist portraits in which the evangelist is depicted as a seated scribe. The Leo Bible's portraits of Joshua and David show the authors merely holding codices, but the Genesis portrait of Moses shows the prophet in the act of writing. As Ivan Drpić has observed, this latter type of portrait is

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<sup>122</sup> John Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books: A Study of Byzantine Manuscripts of the Major and Minor Prophets* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 49.

<sup>123</sup> For the first type see: Bodl. Laud.gr.30A and Oxford, New College 44; for the second type: Vat.Chisi.R.VIII.54 and Vat.gr.1153.

more uniquely Byzantine. While evangelist portraits in general evoke classical models, the familiar Byzantine type of the seated and writing evangelist is without classical precedent; ancient scribes were never portrayed in the act of writing.<sup>124</sup> Drpić argues that the image of the writing evangelist is indicative of a milieu in Byzantine culture in which the scribe was a figure of authority associated with transmission of *logos*.<sup>125</sup> In the Leo Bible this transmission of *logos* is made visible through both the author portraits that appear in the frontispieces, and the table of contents miniature.

The Bible's table of contents miniature does not quite fit the conventional type of a Byzantine author portrait, but can be thought of as one, nonetheless. The miniature, addressed earlier in this study, is composed of four figures surrounding a cross made of medallions that display the names of each book of the Bible. The four figures (Moses, David, Peter and Paul) are all significant Biblical authors. While it is impossible to determine what kind of role Peter and Paul might have played in the missing New Testament frontispieces, Moses and David's appearance in the miniature is very much consistent with the emphasis that is placed on them throughout the Old Testament frontispieces. Moses' importance is shown through his Genesis portrait and presence in each of the Pentateuch miniatures, and David's through his elegant depiction in the Psalms frontispiece (fol. 487v) (Fig. 30).

Not only does the Psalms frontispiece's portrait of David mark his authorship of the book, but it also serves as a preface and introduction to the book of Psalms, which could be used as a stand-alone Psalter within the volume. Georgi Parpulov explains that it was common practice in Byzantium that when the Psalms were copied together with other Biblical books they

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<sup>124</sup> Ivan Drpić, "Painter as Scribe: Artistic Identity and the Arts of Graphē in late Byzantium," *Word & Image* 29.3 (2013): 338-339.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 339.

were framed by a preface and the Odes, forming a distinct unit from the rest of the manuscript.<sup>126</sup> Such is the case for the Leo Bible. In the Leo Bible, the preface to Psalms consists of an introduction by Eusebius of Cesarea, a list of the psalms that concern the life of David, a table of hours and a list of Eusebius' titles for the psalms.<sup>127</sup> According to Parpulov, these titles appear in a number Psalters from the tenth century onward, and were used to provide a Christian reading of the Psalms.<sup>128</sup> This choice in prefatory material is consistent with the Leo Bible's overall interest in the figure of David and typological readings of the Old Testament. Returning to the frontispiece miniature of David, this choice to preface Psalms with an author portrait rather than a scene from the book, speaks again to an interest in David, his life and his role as author of the text. This treatment of David recalls that of Moses in the Bible's Pentateuch cycle. In the case of both David and Moses, the planner of the Leo Bible chose to highlight the lives and written works of the two prophets. In order to gain a better understanding as to why David and Moses were highlighted in such a way it is necessary to consult the epigrams.

In the Leo Bible's epigrams, David and Moses are held up as examples of figures who anticipated Christianity through their writings and actions. The dedicatory epigram cites Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch as announcing the beginning of God's relationship with man and a prefiguration of Christianity.<sup>129</sup> This declaration of Moses' primacy as the first mediator between man and God opens the dedicatory epigram and in this way introduces the important role that Moses will play in the manuscript's epigrams and illustrations. Moses is praised through the Bible's poetic and visual descriptions of him for his role as the recorder and conduit of God's first covenant.

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<sup>126</sup> Georgi Parpulov, *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters* (PhD dissertation, Univ. of Chicago, Illinois, 2004), 14.

<sup>127</sup> Table II in Canart, "Notice codicologique et paleographique," 11-12.

<sup>128</sup> Parpulov, 14.

<sup>129</sup> Trans. Mango, "The Epigrams," 62. See full translation on p. 21.

David is given a similar treatment to Moses in the Samuel and Psalms frontispieces. The Samuel frontispiece copies the Paris Psalter type, and depicts David's anointing by Saul (fol.

263r) (Fig. 31).<sup>130</sup> The frontispiece epigram reads,

“Small, indeed, in stature, not in his behavior, David is crowned with the tens of thousands, seeing that Saul went by with his thousands; for the former prefigures through them, thanks to the increase of his people, the Lord Christ as God, whereas the latter has strangely abandoned the symbols of these things.”<sup>131</sup>

Here, David is held up as an example of a figure who acted as a Christian before Christianity.

The poet casts David as a prefiguration of Christ through his moral behavior and leadership. It is possible that the “behavior” the poet references here was the kindness and humanity that David treated Saul with when he had a chance to take his life.<sup>132</sup> This episode is used to the same effect by John Chrysostom in a homily on the importance of clemency and gentleness in Christian morality.<sup>133</sup> Like the Leo Bible poet, Chrysostom uses David as an example of a figure who lived by Christian morals under the old covenant. The Bible's second epigram about David, found in the Psalms frontispiece, praises David's talents as the author of the Psalms (fol. 487v). The poet writes,

“Who would be capable, O Prophet David, to express the wealth of doctrine and the marvelous gifts, which the grace of the Spirit has granted you for the salvation of mortals? We lovingly praise you now as we represent you, the begetter of God's incarnation.”<sup>134</sup>

In this second epigram about David, the poet highlights David's ability to “express the wealth of doctrine and the marvelous gifts” of God through his authorship of the Psalms. The poet

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<sup>130</sup> 1 Samuel 16.

<sup>131</sup> Trans. Mango, “The Epigrams,” 72. Ὁ μικρὸς ὄντως τὴν φύσιν, οὐ τοῖς τρόποις/ στεφηφορεῖται Δαυὶδ τὰς μυριάδας./ ἐπεὶ Σαοὺλ παρήλθεν ἐν χιλιάσιν./ ὁ μὲν γὰρ εἰς αὐξήσιν αὐτὰς τοῦ γένους/ ἀνακτα Χριστὸν ὡς θεὸν προδεικνύει./ ὁ δὲ ξένως παρήκε τόνδε τοὺς τύπους.

<sup>132</sup> 1 Samuel 24.

<sup>133</sup> John Chrysostom, *St. John Chrysostom Old Testament Homilies vol. 1*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2003), 10.

<sup>134</sup> Trans. Mango, “The Epigrams,” 75. Τίς σου φράσαι, προφήτα Δα(υί)δ, ἰσχύσει/ τῶν δογμάτων τε καὶ ξένων χαρισμάτων/ τὸν πλοῦτον, ὄνπερ ἡ χάρις τοῦ πνεύματος/ παρέσχεν, ὄντων εἰς βροτῶν σωτηρίαν./ ἀλλ' οὖν νῦν ἡμεῖς. ὡς θεοῦ σαρκώσεως/ γεννήτορα γράφοντες ἠθιμοῦμεν πόθῳ./



describes David as “the begetter of God’s incarnation,” calling to mind the dedicatory epigram’s earlier description of Moses as announcer of the incarnation. In this way, the Leo Bible poet’s prefiguration of Christ comes full circle through the figures of Moses and David. In the Bible’s first epigrammatic lines the poet presents Moses as “announcer” of the incarnation. In its final line, he credits David as the “begetter” of the incarnation; a reference to Biblical genealogy, because Jesus comes through Mary from David’s line. As such, the two prophets’ presence together in the table of contents miniature, and the emphasis placed on their authorship may be explained as result of their role in prefiguring the incarnation.

The role of Moses and David in the Leo Bible stands as an example of how an exegetical approach to the Leo Bible reveals details that are lost when the Bible’s frontispieces are interpreted literally. The significance of authorship as a theme in the Leo Bible has been overlooked in previous studies due to their literal approach to the material. One case that stands out in particular is the Genesis frontispiece and author portrait of Moses. When taken literally, the figure in the miniature’s top register would have to be Adam naming the animals. This identification however, is not only inconsistent with the frontispiece’s epigram, but has little to no basis in extant representations of the scene. An exegetical reading of the frontispiece allows for a better identification of the figure to be made on the basis of the patristic tradition and contribution of the Bible’s epigrams. The knowledge that authorship was important to the planner of the Leo Bible helps to account for other details found in the Bible, and paints a broader typological narrative across the frontispieces as anticipating Christ’s incarnation. Overall, an exegetical approach to the Pentateuch and Psalms frontispieces highlights, again and again, that the Leo Bible was planned with intention. Details that appear inconsistent or out of

place are not necessarily so, and can more likely be explained as a conscious choice on the part of the planner.

## Epilogue – Leo Sakellarios as Author

A consideration of authorship in the Leo Bible must address the question of authorship in regards to the volume itself. Who – if anyone – should be considered the author of the Leo Bible and its epigrams? Several possible candidates emerge: the volume’s patron Leo Sakellarios, the poet or poets who wrote its epigrams, or the so-called “planner” of the Bible. As patron of the manuscript, Leo would have been understood as its author by Byzantine standards. Although Leo may not have been involved in the particulars of planning the Bible, it was in his name and image that the Bible was commissioned and dedicated. Even if by contemporary standards Leo is not regarded as the author of the Bible’s epigrams, he likely would have been viewed as such by the recipients of his donation. This view is articulated by Marc Lauxtermann in his consideration of the authorship of two penitential prayers from the Harvard Psalter. Ultimately, Lauxtermann concludes that in Byzantium, “appropriation and internalization” of pre-existing texts could constitute authorship.<sup>135</sup> The identity of the actual author was less important than the audience’s perception and understanding of whose authority a volume was produced. What this means in the context of the Leo Bible, is that although he did not literally author its contents, Leo Sakellarios would have been viewed as the Bible’s author because of his authority and primacy in its commission. As author of the manuscript, Leo is depicted in the preface in a similar manner to the Bible’s other authors. This is because, like the Old Testament authors in the Leo Bible, Leo is also shown holding a codex. Leo’s authorship of the Bible covers not only his commissioning of the physical manuscript, but can also be seen to include his role in constructing the Bible’s visual and poetic exegesis. As patron of the Bible’s epigrams and miniatures, Leo was responsible for authoring its exegetical content.

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<sup>135</sup> Marc Lauxtermann, “His, and Not His: The Poems of the Late Gregory the Monk,” in *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature*, 78.

With the Leo Bible's underlying emphasis on authorship, if Leo is understood to be the author of the manuscript, he can be placed alongside the Bible's other divinely inspired authors. Unlike Moses or David, Leo does not receive his authority from God, but from his patronage of the Bible. This act patronage connects Leo to the *Logos*, because Leo uses his authority as patron as a means for securing his salvation. As a gift to a monastery, the Leo Bible would have been activated through monks' devotion, honoring Leo's memory and praying for his salvation. Leo's role as author of the Bible's visual and poetic exegesis would also have been important to his legacy as donor, for providing the framework through which his audience could interact with the Bible. In this respect, the preface is an especially important part of the manuscript, because it introduces Leo and his donation to their audience. When placed in this context, the preface provides a necessary bridge between Leo's authority and that of the Bible's other authors.

As a final point of consideration, it is important to consider the dedicatory epigram's prose note, and its use of the terms σύνθεσις and κτήτωρ as means for understanding the project of the Leo Bible as a whole. The note reads, "Iambic verses signifying the precise number of the books and the conjunction of the Old and New [Testaments]; indicating, furthermore, the patron who has written these things."<sup>136</sup> Putting the Leo Bible into perspective as a "synthesis" compiled by Leo, the patron, highlights both Leo's active role and authoritative presence in the manuscript, and its hybrid nature. The degree to which the Leo Bible's combines word and image and Old and New Testaments sets it apart from other Byzantine commissions. The themes of σύνθεσις and κτήτωρ are brought together under the figure of Leo Sakellarios. As author of the Bible's exegetical commentary, Leo provided the defining synthesis of Biblical, visual and

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<sup>136</sup> Mango, "The Epigrams," 59-60. "Ἰαμβοὶ δηλοῦντες τὸν τε ἀκριβῆ ἀριθμὸν τῶν βιβλίων καὶ τὴν σύνθεσιν παλαιᾶς τε κ(αὶ) νέας, καὶ τὸν κτήτορα ὑποφαίνοντα [sic] τὸν ταῦτα γεγραφότα.

poetic material in the manuscript. The large scope of Leo's project, both physically and conceptually, speaks to Leo's desire for salvation and wish to establish a legacy for himself as an authorial figure.

## Contents of the Leo Bible<sup>137</sup>

### I. Preface

1. (f. Ir) Cross of medallions presenting the contents of the two volumes – f. Iv is blank.
2. (f. Iir) Genesis Miniature – on the verso, a note (dating to the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century or the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup>) which specifies the current content of the manuscript.
3. (f. 1r-v) Description in iambic verse of the contents of the manuscript and the circumstances of its making – on the verso, a note in a tenth century hand explaining the role that the epigrams on the frames of the miniatures.
4. (f. 2r) Miniature: Monumental cross.
5. (f. 2v) Miniature: The Virgin and the donor Leo.
6. (f. 3r) Miniature: St. Nicolas, Makar and Constantine.
7. (f. 3v) Miniature: Monumental cross.
8. (f. 4r) Paschal table.
9. (f. 4v) Table of the 25 books contained in volume 1.

### II. The first volume

1. (ff. 5r-45v) Genesis.
2. Exodus.
  - (ff. 45v, 47r-86r) text
  - (f. 46r) blank; (f. 46v) miniature: Moses and the Pharaoh
3. Leviticus.
  - (f. 85r) blank; (f. 85v) miniature: The Ark of the Covenant
  - (ff. 86r-115v) text
4. Numbers.
  - (f. 115v, 117r-154v, 156r) text
  - (f. 116r) miniature: census; (f. 116v) blank
5. Deuteronomy.
  - (f. 155r) blank; (f. 155v) Moses and the tables of the Law
  - (f. 156r-182v) text
6. (ff. 182v-205r) Joshua.
7. Judges.
  - (f.f. 205v, 207r-229r) text
  - (f. 206r) miniature: Judges; (f. 206v) blank
8. (ff. 229r-232r) Ruth.
9. (ff. 232v-262r) I Kingdoms.
10. II Kingdoms.
  - (ff. 262v. 264r-280v) text
  - (f. 263r) miniature: Unction of David; (f.263v) blank
11. III Kingdoms

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<sup>137</sup> Translated from: Paul Canart, “Notice Codicologique et Paléographique,” in *La Bible du Patrice Léon*, 9-13.

- (f. 281r) blank; (f.281v) Miniature: coronation of Solomon
- (ff. 282r-301v) text
- 12. IV Kingdoms.
  - (f. 302r) blank; (f. 302v) miniature: Elijah and Ahab
  - (ff. 303r-321r) text
- 13. (ff.321r-337r) I Paralipomenon.
- 14. (ff. 337r-359r) II Paralipomenon.
- 15. (ff. 359r-368v) I Esdras.
- 16. (ff.369r-382v) II Esdras.
- 17. Judith.
  - (ff. 382v, 384-393v) text
  - (f. 383r) miniature: Judith and Holofernes; (f. 383v) blank
- 18. (ff. 394r-400v) Esther.
- 19. (ff. 401r-406v) Tobias.
- 20. (ff. 406v-427v) I Maccabees – on f. 406v, a contemporary hand signals the different order that accompanies the books of Maccabees in the manuscript
- 21. (ff. 428r 443r) II Maccabees.
- 22. (ff. 443v-450r) III Maccabees.
- 23. IV Maccabees
  - (f. 450v) miniature: Eleazar and his family
  - (ff. 451r-460v) text
- 24. Job.
  - (f. 461r) blank; (f. 461v) miniature: Job on his dunghill
  - (ff. 462r-486v) text
- 25. Psalms and Canticles.
  - (f. 487r) empty; (f. 461v) miniature: King David
  - (ff. 488r-565v) text:
    - a (f. 488r) Introduction by Eusebius (P.G. 23, 66C5-68A6); in appendix, a list of the Psalms that concern the life of David, organized in chronological order.
    - b (ff. 488v-490r) Subjects of the Psalms by Eusebius (P.G. 23, 68A11-72)
    - c (f. 490r) Table of hours which states which Psalms are to be recites during the day and at night.
    - d (ff.490v-559r) Psalms 1-150, followed by the Psalm, “Idiographos”
    - e (ff. 559r-565v) Canticles, 14 in number: the usual 9, followed by those of Zachariah, Symeon, Hezekiah, Manasses and the hymn of the morning.

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