The origin and significance of Byzantine dress in the secular world

Leonie Ouwerkerk

Cover image: Christ crowning Michael VII Doukas (Nikephoros III Botaneiates) and Maria Alania (1074-1081) (from Evans and Wixom (eds) 1997, 182).

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Introduction

The Byzantine world has always been regarded as strange and separate from western civilization. The term ‘Byzantine’ is pejorative in the English language to denote a system of bizarre and sinister complexity. Its people were Christians but they were and are still often seen as heretics. The Byzantine Empire was actually the continuation of the old Roman Empire for over a thousand years. The people of the Byzantine Empire did not call themselves ‘Byzantines’, but ‘Romans’ (Gregory 2010, 1-2). However, they did differ from the earlier Romans in a lot of ways.

It is a shame that the Byzantine Empire and its people are still often overlooked in archeological research, even though recently there has been more attention for the region. In order to gain more attention for the people living in Byzantium it would be very interesting to take a closer look at a specific aspect in the Byzantine’s life: their clothes. Fashion has always had an important role in society, as it probably did here. The Byzantine Empire was famous in medieval times for its exquisite silk production and elaborate garments, especially at court. But where did their style of dress originate from? The classical Greco-Roman style, or were there influences from the east as well? Was there actually a sort of fashion in place at this early time? At present time it is difficult to discover what kind of clothes the non-elite people of Byzantium wore, except for some Egyptian grave finds and pages with images from manuscripts. Therefore and due to time restrictions the fashion of the elite will mostly be examined, since they had the money to have themselves painted on the walls of churches or graves and their images can be found throughout the Byzantine Empire.

With great numbers of mosaics, paintings and images from manuscripts it is not that difficult to form an image of which kinds of clothes the Emperor and his family and the elite wore and to take a look at their provenance and meaning. What did they want the people to feel when they saw the Emperor in his colorful garments? How was the empress dressed? Did specific colors have specific meanings, or were they random? Was there any difference in how the women and children dressed and did their clothing have special meaning? These are all questions that will be examined and if possible answered, in an attempt to give the Byzantines the attention they deserve and to try to bring them and their fashion and dress more to life.

Methodology

Since paintings and mosaics are easily the most detailed representations of dress, these will mostly be examined. From detailed images it is possible to look at colors, folds, fastenings and other details more easily than in numismatic representations or from statues. It is also useful to examine the few available material fragments that survive from the Byzantine era, and to take a look at the textual descriptions of dress that survive from the Middle Byzantine era. Since the Middle Byzantine period is the most important period in dress and the moment of Byzantine dominance of the textile industry in Europe, this is the period that will be mainly focused on. Jennifer Ball (Ball 2005) has recently written a lot of useful material on the subject and some of her work will be the basis of this thesis together with other experienced authors on the subject. With their work and new research the main goal of this thesis is to give some new insights into Byzantine imperial and elite fashion and to give some new views on Byzantine gender issues and the position of women and children in Byzantine times.

In the first chapter a short history of the Byzantine Empire will be given, in order to give a historic and socio-economic background to the story of clothes of the Byzantine world. In the second chapter the Byzantine court system will be explained in order to understand the hierarchy that was in place at the time, and to see who should be allowed to wear richer garments and more decoration. Women at the Byzantine court will also be introduced in order to see if women also had power in court, or merely in their household. Since all that is left of dress in the Byzantine world comes from artists either in writing or painting a short introduction to Byzantine art will be given in chapter three. In Chapter four the history of Byzantine dress is examined in order to find out the provenance of each garment and to see if this also includes some kind of special meaning. Women's dress will be examined separately, just like the garments worn by the borderland elite, and the fabrics from which the clothing was made.

In chapter five the notion of fashion in the Byzantine world will be examined, in the Imperial court as well as in the outer regions of the borderland elite. In the last paragraph the meaning and status of garments, colors and decoration will be further explored in order to see if there was a link between a specific color or garment and the wearer's status at court. Chapter six will be a gender-related chapter examining the difference in dress between men and women, and how this relates to their status. Chapter seven will be entirely dedicated to Byzantine children, a subject most often

overlooked by scholars. A small introduction will be given to childhood in Byzantium before researching children's dress both in Imperial and elite families.

As a conclusion to the research on the imperial dress it will also be attempted to reconstruct the most famous garments worn by the emperor and empress in their portraits, in trying to recreate the patterns that these clothes would have been made from. An overview of these patterns will be given at the end with descriptions and their respective scale. If time and money allows it, one complete outfit of either the emperor or empress will be reconstructed out of similar (although cheaper) fabrics and imitation precious stones. Since shoe making and jewel crafting are out of the author's respective expertise, these will not be included in the final reconstruction.

Chapter 1: A short history of Byzantium

The Roman Empire was at the verge of collapse at the end of the third century. In the fifty years between the death of Severus Alexander and the emperor Diocletian (235-284) there was chaos in the Empire. The government, military and economy were falling apart, most of the Emperors were murdered by rebels, and the land was flooded by enemies from the north and east. Parts of the Empire became almost independent, and due to inflation the Byzantine currency became practically worthless (Gregory 2010, 23).

During these hard times changes in style of art, literature and religion became clear. Some have called it a period of 'military anarchy' due to the fact that Emperors were murdered so frequently that they were unable to establish firm policies, and they were often lacking the education to be able to rule an empire to begin with (Gregory 2010, 23-24). The reasons behind the fall of the Empire are lengthy and still widely discussed, and fall outside of the scope of this research. Its effects however tell how the Byzantine Empire began, and perhaps which cultures and arts had an impact on it from the start.

Chaos at the end of the Roman Empire and the beginning of Byzantium c.300-741 AD

During the third century the Roman world was under threat due to civil wars and barbarian invasions. The Roman army was stretched thin along the extremely long borders, making it impossible to fight wars on more than one front, and maintaining the army cost huge amounts of money. When Germanic peoples pressed in from the north, and the newly established Sassanid Persians pressed in from the east, the Roman Empire almost collapsed. At the end of the third century some stability returned after fighting a number of successful frontier wars (Haldon 2000, 15).

The Emperor Diocletian recognized the problem of commanding the entire Roman Empire by just one man, and appointed four rulers, two Augusti and two Ceasars in order to better divide rule. However soon the Emperors began fighting among themselves over power, and after years of murders and alliances one Emperor was left as the final victor: Constantine. Constantine saw his victory as a result of his appeal to the Christian god, and he soon after decreed through an edict that all Christians were free to practice their religion. He moved his seat from Rome to Byzantium, renaming the new

‘city of Constantine’ as Konstantinoupolis. Constantine also reformed the Roman government and moved it to the new city. He also started minting new coins as well as reforming the old coin system. A grand building program was soon underway. (Haldon 2000, 15-17).

His successors however had to deal with threats from within as well as from the outside, with Franks, Alamanni, Saxons and Goths at the borders and a lot of political unrest. The Romans lost North Africa, Spain and France to the barbarian tribes, and even Italy was occupied. The empire was only truly stabilized by the Emperor Justin in 518 AD, who was popular among his people and soldiers and stabilized and consolidated both the borders and political life. His nephew Justinian who succeeded him in 527 was said to truly mark the start of the beginning of a medieval East Roman world (Haldon 2000, 18-20).

Justinian had grand plans for the expansion of the empire and re-conquered Italy, North Africa and south-eastern Spain. He also produced a new book that contained Roman laws: the Codex Justinianus that provided the basis for later Byzantine rule. He also persecuted the last of the pagans and reformed the administrative system in order to more smoothly run the empire. Upon his death however he did leave an expanded empire that was under threat from multiple sides and with highly overstretched financial problems (Haldon 2000, 20-26).

In 623 after a lot of unrest and fighting off barbarian tribes the Empire was stable again, but still money remained a problem. The Balkans had also been taken by the barbarians, further shrinking the Byzantine Empire. Also internal religious problems were an issue up to this time, when Islam started to arise. Soon the Christians united against the new foreign religion. The Islamic Arabs attacked the empire and took over Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Egypt due to incompetence and inadequate defensive arrangements by the Romans. After losing these financially lucrative countries, which had provided the bulk of the Roman’s tax revenue, the empire had to be completely restructured both financially and in the way the army was recruited and supported. Thus in the later seventh century the empire had undergone a great metamorphosis (Haldon 2000, 26-29).

In the years following after more political unrest and military setbacks the empire finally stabilized again in the first half of the eighth century under Emperor Leo III. The frontiers along the Taurus and Anti-Taurus range were secured and again new fiscal and military arrangements were made. Under his leadership the empire’s fortunes seemed to have turned, and his son Constantine V was to become one of the Byzantine

Empire's most successful generals and a hero, even during his own lifetime (Haldon 2000, 29-32).

Medieval Byzantium c.741-1453

Under Constantine V and the emperors following him the empire continued the slow process of consolidation and recovery, even with many setbacks such as iconoclasm that divided church and state, and several military setbacks. At the beginning of the ninth century, the west had also separated itself from the Byzantine Empire under their new emperor Charlemagne. Although relations were not always hostile, there was still the Arab threat from the east, who were plundering and sacking cities. During the beginning of the tenth century Constantinople was even under siege by a powerful Bulgar army, but soon peace was achieved that lasted until the 960's (Haldon 2000, 35-38).

The tenth century was more successful for the Byzantine Empire since the emperors were able to recover lost territories in northern Syria, Iraq, Crete, Cyprus and areas around Antioch, while even closing in on Jerusalem. They also annihilated the Bulgar army after decades of war, incorporating their lands into Byzantium. The empire had expanded greatly and was rich, with an efficient bureaucracy. Only in the second half of the eleventh century the empire was threatened once again by lazy emperors, the rebelling elite and Turkish steppe peoples advancing on the Balkan and eastern borders (Haldon 2000, 39-42).

After some military defeats and political unrest the Byzantine Empire lost central Asia Minor and the Balkans, while the Normans were raiding the empire in the west. After a short period of reconquering parts of Asia Minor the area was further Turkified and converted to Islam and almost impossible to reclaim. Further internal struggles and opposition from the powerful Venice further reduced the Byzantine Empire. Bulgaria was once again lost and in 1189 the third Crusade took Cyprus. In 1204 the armies of the fourth Crusade completely sacked the city in a three-day raid, destroying countless artifacts while precious metals were melted down or stolen. The Byzantine territories were divided among the victors and a new Latin king, Baldwin of Flanders, was installed in Constantinople (Haldon 2000, 43-46; Nicol 1991, x).

However it was still not the end of the Byzantine Empire. The Angelos family established an independent principality, the Despotate of Epiros that lasted to the end of the fourteenth century. They tried to recover their power in the Balkans with the help of

the German emperor Frederick II and later with the king of Sicily. At the end of the thirteenth century they had re-conquered parts of central Greece and the central and south-eastern Peloponnese. In 1261 they were even able to retake the city of Constantinople, making it the capital of Byzantium once more. However in the last two centuries of its rule the Byzantine territories were heavily invaded and its territory greatly reduced by 1300. In 1328 the Byzantine Empire due to Ottoman attacks and political unrest was even further reduced to a few isolated fortress-towns which also left the treasury almost empty. In 1453 the Ottoman emperor Mehmet II besieged Constantinople and after several weeks the Ottoman forces that were equipped with heavy artillery such as cannons finally breached the city walls on the 29th of May. The last emperor Constantine XI died during the attack, his body was never found. The city quickly became the new Ottoman capital, ending the Byzantine Empire.

Conclusions

The Byzantine Empire was only truly stabilized in the seventh and eighth centuries, when the long wars finally ended and Byzantium was able to develop into what would truly be the Byzantine Empire. Up to the twelfth century the empire remained stable, until large territories were lost and the city was sacked by the fourth Crusade at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The empire continued to exist in later centuries in a highly downsized form until the Ottomans finally took the city in 1453.

Chapter 2: the Byzantine court

Before the images of Byzantine royalty are examined it is important to understand their background. It is important to know who exactly the court consisted of, who were the officials that were important in daily court life, what kind of role women had in it, and how this might relate to the types and colors of garments and decorations worn at the time. Did women also have power in court or were they seen as inferior to men? These are all issues that will be examined in the next paragraphs.

Byzantine political society

In the Byzantine Empire, rural society was the primary from of income, with agricultural and pastoral activities at the core of Byzantine daily life. But peasants had no influence over politics or the rule of the Empire. Byzantine society was clearly stratified, with a hierarchical culture, and each group had its own role in Byzantine life. At the bottom were the peasants, in the middle the military and at the top the Emperor and his court (Haldon 2000, 113).

Until the tenth century in the Byzantine Empire, aristocracy was still only developing. The head of authority was the Emperor, and the ruling class was formed out of people who were in good standing with him (or in rare times, her). Those who possessed great private or economic power were often placed in the outskirts of court officials. The elite class was however highly unstable, and high-ranked military commanders, state bureaucrats and courtiers were never really sure of their position. In the eighth and ninth century it is clear that aristocracy did not really exist yet, since surnames did not appear on official documents. Only in the eleventh and twelve centuries did surnames become very common on seals, even though they had existed for a far longer time, indicating the start of the formation of an aristocracy. (Maguire et al. 2004).

In the period before the tenth century the administrative power was usually made up of the Emperor's core family. Brothers, sons, son-in-laws, and sometimes even wives were the ones in power. This stands in high contrast with the tenth century, when none of the high officials were relatives of the Emperor. Also society at this time was comprised of '*basileis kai archontes kai idiotai kai penetes'* as mentioned by the author

of the Miracles of the Virgin, or; 'emperors and officials and private citizens and the poor'. Earlier sources, from around the early ninth century, mention society as: priests, archons, the well-to-do, and the pious people. From around the tenth century onwards it was also possible for 'regular' people to climb up to high positions by receiving a proper education and climbing the ranks. People were judged according to their ability, not their ancestry (Maguire et al. 2004).

The next question being asked is: what exactly did 'the court' consist of? The exact number of people that made up the court is unknown and still being debated, but would probably have been between 500 – 2000 individuals. The people at court could be divided in several groups. The group that was the most important at court was the elite; the Emperor's closest associates and friends. Another group was the *koubouklion*, the palace's eunuchs. Around the tenth century, eunuchs were becoming more common among natives, in contrast to the centuries before, since unique career opportunities suddenly arose for them. They were held in high regard, and could even create a family through adoption (Maguire et al. 2004).

Eunuchs were becoming more and more important because they were considered reliable, since they were free of the interests of close family relations and offspring. Positions at court were especially reserved for them, and they were entrusted with running the ceremonial life of the courts, as well as carrying responsibility for the emperor's wardrobe and bedroom. They also had special privileges and tasks in the women's quarters, such as protecting the women and educating their children. Highly educated eunuchs were especially valued since princes as well as princesses were expected to receive an extensive education. This way they could be married off to foreign rulers as a part of keeping diplomatic relations, while still representing Byzantine culture (Herrin 2001, 18).

Other groups included religious personnel such as priests, deacons, sub-deacons and readers. Next in power were the middle-class bureaucrats of the 'Sandaled Senate'. These civil servants were below the aristocracy, and extended beyond the ruling class. Finally the city officials, the officers of the palace security forces, the heads of city welfare institutions, the head doctors and the *diaitarioi*; the service personnel, make up the final classes at court (Maguire et al. 2004).

In daily court life harmony was essential for the proper functioning of the court and for the empire. The court consisted of an elaborate hierarchy of offices and titles, with the emperor at the top. Their order of importance was especially relevant during lavish banquets where the most important court officials were seated closer to the

emperor. Court rituals were also very important at court, and these were meticulously executed, down to the costumes to be worn by certain officials such as described in the *Book of Ceremonies* which survives today in a tenth-century compilation (Maguire 1997, 184). Court life was obviously a busy place with many court officials and their wives while court ritual and dress was essential to their daily functioning.

Women and power at Byzantine court

Since women played an important role in the Byzantine court system, and sometimes even held great power it is important to take a closer look at how they functioned in court. What positions did they hold, and were they seen as inferior to men, or as powerful women? These notions are important to research in order to better understand the empresses' and elite women's clothing.

In the Byzantine Empire, the ruling couple was crowned as Emperor and Empress, even though the Emperor usually held power. However some Empresses had great influence on government matters, and in some cases even ruled the Empire alone. Some Empresses ruled as regents before their sons came of age, but were unwilling to let go of their power. Irene for example had her son Constantine VI blinded so she could keep on ruling in his name, and Eudokia Makrembolitissa ruled as regent instead of her son, even though he was old enough to rule himself (Garland 1999, 1; Cameron & Kuhrt 1983, 184).

Some Empresses ruled alone for a while, even though it was considered normal to choose a husband who could rule for her. Irene and Theodora for example chose to rule alone, and the sisters Zoe and Theodora ruled together as *autokratores* before Zoe decided to marry. Empresses also held power being the wife of the Emperor, but they always needed to respect his authority. Some of the less dominant Emperors however were sometimes overtaken by their more dominant wives and often when the Emperor was away on campaign, his wife would rule in his stead. Euphrosyne, the wife of Alexios II Angelos held her own court alongside her husband's, and was highly respected for her role in the government (Garland 1999, 1-2; Herrin 2001, 3).

Even though empresses could carry great power in Byzantium, they were still seen as inferior to men. Emperors were expected to carry out two main duties: lead their troops into battle and function as the head of the church. Women could not take armies into battle, even though they could appoint generals to do it for them, such as some of

the Emperors had also done. However in church, women were certainly seen as inferior and weak; they could not become priests and were not allowed in the sacred areas of the church. Historical writers also say that women had to rely too much on their court officials and advisors for political matters, and that they could not be blamed for not practicing religion properly, since they could not be expected to comprehend the complexity of theology, and could not engage in theological discussions (Herrin 2001, 6). So even though women could carry great power, they were still seen as slightly inferior to men.

Empresses were known under a variety of titles, such as *basilis(sa)* or *despoina*, while Empresses that ruled alone could take on names such as *basileus* or *autokrator*. An Augusta was the principal Empress who co-reigned with a *basileus autokrator*, and who was supposed to preside over ceremonies for the wives of court officials. She held her own imperial powers and had her own imperial paraphernalia; she had her own crown with jeweled *pendilia*, wore special red imperial shoes and held her own scepter. The title of Augusta had to be awarded to his wife by the Emperor, which was only rarely done until 527 AD. Not only wives could be made empress, sometimes mothers or daughters were granted the rank as well (Garland 1999, 2).

The Empress was also in charge of the women's quarters in the Great Palace, the *gynaikonitis*, where she had her own staff of eunuchs and her own chamberlain. The empress even had her own court consisting of the wives of dignitaries and court officials. While the regular size of these courts is largely unknown, Theodora the wife of Justinian was known to be accompanied by more than 4,000 attendants, but the number of courtiers in the tenth century is estimated at about 1,000 to 2,000 people (Garland 1999, 5).

The wives and widows of court officials held the same status as their husband indicating that they might have been viewed as equals, although this is not clear. The women at court had important roles to fulfill, and while the men had their banquets and ceremonies, the women usually had their own ceremonies, parallel to those of the men. The women's ceremonies were also sometimes held in public, as well as inside, thus they were not merely tucked away in the palace but also had a public role. The ceremonies and banquets were also at least as elaborate as the men's, and the women also wore similar clothing to that of their husbands (Maguire 1997, 190-191).

Conclusions

Before the tenth and eleventh centuries the Byzantine court mainly consisted of the Emperor, his family, and close friends and associates in addition to the elite. Only from the tenth century onwards the non-elite were able to attain high positions at court, such as the eunuchs, and a true aristocracy started to develop. There was a strict and elaborate court hierarchy where order was very important, especially during court rituals and banquets.

Empresses held power on their own and even had their own court and as many as 4000 court officials. In some exceptions they were even able to rule the empire alone as sole empress. However they were still seen as inferior to their husbands, especially in a religious sense since women were not allowed to enter certain parts of the church and could not become priests. Elite women carried the same position as their husband and were also important during court rituals. It is obvious that women were certainly respected even though they were seen as inferior to men.

Chapter 3: Byzantine Arts

Most of the images of the Imperial family that are known from Byzantine times come from paintings and mosaics found in churches and books. Byzantine Art is therefore essential in understanding and interpreting these paintings and mosaics. How were people normally depicted? What kind of style was in fashion around which time? Therefore the history of byzantine art will be explored before taking a look at the images and dress style of the Byzantine royals throughout Byzantine times.

A short history on Byzantine Art

Byzantine art is the art of Constantinople, its empire, and those influenced by Byzantium during the eleven hundred years of its existence. It encompasses painting, mosaics, architecture and sculpture.

In the Early Byzantine phase the empire still existed out of most of the lands the earlier Roman empire held, up to the Alps. The theme in the arts at this time is still classical, but slightly starts to transform toward a new aesthetic and a new ideology in the middle sixth century. During this period classical Roman art began to change with influence from the east. A truly Byzantine style began to develop with both Islamic and Roman styles intermixed (Mathews 1998, 12).

After this relatively quiet period a more unstable period began with Islam closing in and the rise of barbarian peoples at the borders. At the start of the Middle Byzantine phase in the ninth century, the Byzantine territories were reduced to contemporary Turkey and the Balkans, but the country was still wealthy, which can also be seen in its art. Society was well educated, and art was highly treasured. Great works from this time display a sophisticated people that were dedicated to their religion. Icons were painted and laid in mosaics and imperial portraits were displayed in the most beautiful garments (Mathews 1998, 12).

When Constantinople was conquered by the Fourth Crusade in 1204, the empire almost fell apart. However in 1261 the Byzantines managed to free themselves from the Western force and re-establish their empire. In this last period art became much more humanized that would become famous in surrounding countries and would highly influence the Italian Renaissance and eventually the entire European medieval world.

In their art the Byzantines were as organized as they were in daily life. There was a strict set of ideal images in their art as well as at court. Byzantine art resembled church art in that it followed established patterns of iconography and expression, although the Byzantines were not exactly chained to these conventions. Official imperial art was still quite strict, but in other examples of art a more playful style of painting could be found (Maguire 1997, 191).

In Byzantine art painting was the most important. Sculptures and reliefs were mostly abandoned in favor of painting and mosaic murals. Byzantine painters were famous around the western world as can be seen from King William II of Sicily, who sent for Byzantine artists to decorate the naves of the monastery of Monreale. They then created the largest mosaic artwork in the world (Mathews 1998, 15).

Icons and Iconoclasm

Icons were a critically important element in Byzantine art since the Byzantine people highly venerated images for a long time. They were famous for their lifelike Christian images of the mother Mary and Christ, and several beautiful mosaics that were in high demand in churches all over Italy. However at two separate times the Byzantine emperors decided to abolish images. Sometimes even destroying or removing images of icons from churches.

Emperor Leo III was the first emperor to abolish images. After some bishops of Asia Minor commented on the Old Testament and its prohibition of idolatry, Leo III (717-41) took up this cause. He created a law against idols and had idols removed from churches and due to his success, his son Constantine V (741-75) continued his cause. He even expanded it with harsh measurements against monks, and the purging of his government from officials who were sympathetic to idols. His reason for this was the Old Testament, but more so that the divineness of Christ could not be shown in an image, and that the power of the Church was no longer with the Church and the Eucharist, but with these idols (Mathews 1998, 55-57).

In 787 CE idols were once again allowed by the Second Council of Nicaea, under leadership of the Empress Irene. For a short while Iconoclasm was reinstated by Leo V in 813, but he received little support and in 843 idols were reinstated, again by a female empress, Theodora, the wife of Theophilos. Even in the era of Iconoclasm icons were still

venerated, only in the privacy of one's own home, and often by women (Mathews 1998, 55-57).

Even though Icons were for a time removed or even destroyed, usually images of the Imperial family were left intact, since they were not considered icons to be worshipped. Thus most of the portraits that were lost through time were not a result of iconoclasm and most still remain in their original locations to be studied, even though it is a shame that we might be missing some of the grandest pieces of ecclesial history. It is likely though that in the iconoclast period not many paintings and mosaics with portraits were commissioned by the royal family and the elite since this could be seen as hostility towards the church.

Examining Imperial images and texts

Taking a look at regal images at the time is still not as easy as it might seem. Since images are one of the most important sources we have of Byzantine imperial clothing it is important to think if the depictions are an actual one-on-one representation of the person in question? Or is it the artist's liberty to paint as he sees fit? Since all of the Imperial images are portraits it is to be expected that the royal family (and regular commissioned portraits) are mostly shown in a realistic fashion, of course with a certain artist's freedom and personal interpretation and in the style that was common at the time as is described above.

Since order was very important in the Byzantine Empire, order was also expected to be seen in imperial images. Byzantine artists had very idealized images of the emperor's appearance and costume, to which a good emperor was supposed to conform. They also had a set of models and metaphors with which to emphasize a ruler's good or bad sides, such as his wisdom and virtue. A good emperor was supposed to be tall with a nice symmetrical face, with broad shoulders, a strong and manly chest and a lean and muscular stomach. If in an artist's eyes the emperor was not a good one, he might paint an emperor with lesser broad shoulders and an asymmetrical face for example (Maguire 1997, 186).

A good emperor was also supposed to be strong, steadfast, and with controlled emotions. His body and behavior were clearly held to ideals of beauty and decorum, and his costumes were also judged. His costume and regalia were the expression of his majesty and virtues. 'Your might is made known…by the throne, and by the tiara, and by

the pearl-spangled robe,' said Euthymios Malakes to Manuel I Komnenos in 1161 as is known from a historical source (Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1913 cited in Magdalino 1993, 463). Hostile writers would describe the emperor's clothes as dirty, foul smelling, and faded with age (Maguire 1997, 186-187). If an emperor was not well-loved by his people he could thus change his appearance or even his clothing to try and voice his opinion. This is something to take into account when judging images of the emperor and his wife.

Writers were also fond of comparing emperors to saints or biblical characters. Such as the emperor Isaac II who was compared to the biblical king David by the writer Michael Choniates at the end of the twelfth century: 'The emperor resembles David in almost all characteristics that adorn not only the soul but also the body. It is not possible to set them side by side at the present time, except insofar as one can be pleased by an icon of David, and by means of the icon briefly demonstrate the identity of the original characteristics….If, then, the emperor may be shown to resemble the icon of David, it is plain that the emperor must be much like David himself in all respects' (Lampros 1879, 215). It was also possible for the emperor to be compared to 'bad' characters like Saul or with Herod if he was considered a bad emperor. Sometimes even comparisons with gods or characters from pagan religions were made, such as with the many-headed Hydra, with Dionysos or with Orpheus (Maguire 1997, 188).

In our time it seems very strange that for example the Dutch queen would be painted to resemble a biblical character, but it is still something to keep in mind. In the mindset of a tenth century Byzantine it might have been a normal practice to paint the emperors to resemble someone famous. After all, the emperor could always be recognized by his crown and *loros* or other imperial garments. Many of the imperial portraits were painted far away from Byzantium such as in Italy or Greece, and the painter may never even have seen the imperial family at all. However no images are known from manuscripts or otherwise that depict 'bad' emperors, this is only evident from textual sources.

Another known fact is that images of children in Byzantium, especially of the imperial family were sometimes made older than they actually were. For example in the case of the image of Milutin and his young wife Simonis, the daughter of Andronikos II, as seen in the Church of Joachim and Anna at Studenica. Simonis was married when she was only five years old, too young even for the rules of the Byzantine Empire. She was therefore depicted as a grown woman, and dressed as an adult, avoiding the Byzantine rules on childhood and sexuality (Hennessy 2008, 169). If it satisfied the Byzantine's needs images could therefore be adapted to something other than reality in order to

show the people what they wanted them to see, a fact that should be taken into account when examining any portrait.

It is obvious that the public was supposed to understand who it was that was painted on the walls and the meaning of their garments and regalia. People recognized the emperor and his wife due to their clothes and inscription. These paintings may have been made in commission by the emperor, but there is still a degree of freedom the artist could use according to the emperor being good or bad in the artists' eyes. Another fact that is known from several examples is that the face of the emperor was sometimes changed when he had died and his wife had married a new man. The face of the old emperor could then simply be replaced by the image of the new one. This happened on several occasions such as in the painting of Christ crowning Michael VII Doukas and Maria Alania (cover image). Michael's face was later changed to Maria's new husband Nikephoros III Botaneiates. The inscription was also changed. This indicates that the Byzantine emperors wanted their representations to look exactly like them, but that their clothes were interchangeable.

Conclusions

Byzantine art developed through time from a roman style to a style also influenced by the east into what developed as a true Byzantine art form in the sixth and seventh centuries. Until the twelfth century art was highly treasured and many masterpieces from this time still exist. In the late Byzantine Empire art started to become more humanized, later influencing the Italian renaissance and later the European arts.

Iconoclasm arose several times, condemning icons and their veneration, and sometimes great works of art were destroyed during this period. Even though portraits were probably painted far less in this period, it probably had no real impact on the royal and elite paintings that can still be seen today.

While examining imperial and elite portraits it is very important to keep in mind that the artist may not have been true to reality, but might have used a bit of artistic freedom. However there are no actual images of 'bad' emperors, and official imperial images were sometimes changed from one emperor to the next simply by painting over the face or changing the inscription. Imperial regalia stayed the same while only the emperor's face and inscription were changed indicating that at least in official images no real artistic freedom could be expressed since this could be carried over to the next emperor.

Chapter 4: The history of Byzantine dress

Clothing and fashion were extremely important in the Byzantine Empire. There were rules and regulations on what to wear on a daily basis and on special occasions and even books were written on what to wear during a special occasion or a banquet. One of these books, the *Kletorologion* (Treatise on Invitations to Banquets) was written in 899 by Philotheos, and describes where everyone was supposed to be seated according to what they were wearing (Scott 2007, 20-21). In order to understand these garments and their respective meaning it is important to take a look at their provenance first.

It is also essential before taking a look at Byzantine portraits and historical textual sources on clothing to know what kinds of clothes were worn by whom; the emperor's clothes differed from those of the elite and those of his wife. Specific garments and colors were only to be worn by the emperor and empress. It is clear why, but why were these specific items and colors chosen? To answer these questions an understanding of the history of these garments is essential. Where did they come from and which meaning was carried by which piece of clothing? What exactly did men and women wear? What kinds of fabrics were used and what kind of patterns were used as decoration? These questions will be answered in the following paragraphs.

The history and significance of imperial regalia

Imperial dress of the earliest periods is clearly still a remnant of the Roman Empire. The Emperor often wears the short *chlamys*, tunic and toga that are so typical for the old Roman world. Only after the Byzantine Empire comes more often into contact with the west after the fourth crusade did clothing styles start to change, becoming more westernized. Italian influences become visible, since Italy was in possession of most of the textile market at the time, and from the east Ottoman Turkish styles are first seen. In the middle Byzantine period a true Byzantine style of dress emerges, with its own unique textile patterns, and an almost fixed imperial regal style. Roman garments were still used for specific ceremonies, but they were adapted to a Byzantine style. Old styles were changed and reinvented and new styles developed (Ball 2005, 6).

Byzantine ceremonial garments are based on Roman dress from the second century BCE onwards. From then on, many variations of the toga started to appear,

including the *toga trabea*, a toga that drops vertical, with red stripes and a purple hem (Ball 2005, 6). In Roman times the toga was worn by adult males, prostitutes, or girls up to the age of twelve. Little is known about the origins of the toga, since we do not have many early examples but it is clear that it was a garment that was half elliptical in shape, with rounded ends. By the time of Augustus the toga was decorated according to the rank of its wearer, and worn by the Roman man while doing business. The purple toga was reserved for the emperor (Stone 1994, 13).

Figure 1: the traditional Roman toga worn in the early Byzantine period (from: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/31/Toga_%28PSF%29.png).

The *trabea triumphalis* was a ceremonial toga worn until the sixth century which developed into the *loros*, a leather or heavy silk stole studded with precious stones and pearls. It fell from the ankles to the shoulders in the front, with the back panel reaching to the buttocks before coming around the front of the body and falling from the arm to the knee, with a length of at least 3,66 meter. In the earlier Byzantine period the *loros* was worn in the shape of an X in front of the body, while in the Middle period it was mostly worn like a poncho. Both versions are still seen until the 12th century when it was worn less often (Ball 2005, 12).

Figure 2: Santa Maria della Clemenza from the Santa Maria in Trastevere wearing the trabea (date disputed and ranges from the sixt to ninth century) (*from: http://farm1.staticflickr.com/182/370560536_b409554600_b.jpg)*.

The *loros* usually had two to four rows of jewels cut in squares surrounded by pearls as we can see in several imperial images. It was also sometimes worn with a jeweled collar that was worn either under or over the *loros*. The *loros* was actually only rarely worn on very special occasions and holidays, being a part of the Byzantine 'crown jewels'. It would also have been very heavy with all of the jewels and pearls, and less wearable than other garments. It however was depicted on most imperial images, probably serving as an icon of the Empire rather than being the daily reality (see figures 11 and 12 for examples) (Ball 2005, 12-13, 16). In the *Kletorologion* the *loros* is described as symbolizing Christs' winding-sheet and his victory over death. This may indicate that the emperors wearing of the *loros* also symbolizes his trying to defeat death (Scott 2007, 33).

The crown of the emperors also known as *stemma* or *diadem* also has ancient origins. It was based on the Hellenistic crown that Alexander the Great wore, both versions consisting of jeweled panels with even more precious stones hanging down from them. These were also worn at least until the twelfth century (for examples see figures 8, 9, 11 and 12) (Ball 2005, 13). Unfortunately we do not have many images of

the type of shoes worn by the imperial family since mostly long tunics were worn that covered most of the feet and shoes. There are however a lot of descriptions of these *tzangia* that were worn by the emperor. They were slipper-like shoes never seen before since in ancient times mostly sandals or boots were worn. They indicated a high rank and were unique to family members of imperial rank, their color signifying their importance. Black was for common people, but purple and red were considered imperial colors. They were made of woven silk, embroidered and sometimes encrusted with precious stones (see figure 9). (Ball 2005, 13-14).

The silk garment worn underneath the *loros* was the *divetesion*, often dyed in the exclusive imperial purple. This color was so hard and expensive to produce that only the imperial couple were allowed to use it. Often gold thread was woven into the *divetesion*, making it even more impressive. Extensive gold colors were also usually reserved for the imperial family, a remnant from the Roman past. Blue was regularly used in the garments of the *sebastokrator*, and green for a Caesar. Whites and reds were used both by the emperor and courtiers. Still colors were not ascribed to one specific position in court; these did change over time, and varied from ceremony to ceremony (see figures 11 and 12 (Ball 2005, 15-16).

A more commonly worn piece of clothing is the *chlamys*, a Hellenistic word meaning cloak. It is derived from military regalia and is worn by both the emperor and the male members of his court. It originated in Roman times, from the *paludamentum*, a short cloak that was worn by soldiers, hunters and horsemen up to the late Roman period. The word *chlamys* indicated a cloak made of felt that was primarily worn by the military. This evolved in Byzantine times into a luxurious short or longer cloak made of silk and other precious materials held together by a jeweled fibula. The short version was worn as a military garment, while the long version was reserved for ceremonial usage (see figure 9 where Justinian is wearing the longer version *chlamys*) (Ball 2005, 30).

The *chlamys* was often worn by the emperor and sometimes by the empress on occasions when she wanted to show that she too had considerable power (Scott 2007, 21). It was often worn with a *tablion*, a large decorative rectangle made from gold thread that was sewn onto a white or purple *chlamys* over a *divetesion* in white or purple. The emperor (and/or empress) wore this piece of garment during most festivals and during his coronation and was also buried in it. It was mostly worn with the *tzangia* and crown, with the *divetesion* underneath. The *chlamys* was the item most worn by emperors on coins and images until the middle Byzantine period when the *loros* took over. The *chlamys* was also commonly worn, in a less elaborate form by courtiers and could even

be owned by women outside of the court (Ball 2005, 30, 32). Ball therefore names the *chlamys* as the equivalent to the modern business suit, which seems appropriate as it was worn during coronation and funerals, and that other people in court also wear it, just as office workers wear suits today (in figure 9 emperor Justinian can be seen wearing the longer version of the *chlamys* and *tablion* with underneath the *divetesion* along with the *tzangia* and crown).

Besides the previously mentioned pieces of clothing more common garments were of course also part of the royal wardrobe. At least nine separate words were used in middle Byzantine times for a tunic. It is still unclear if each word is specific for a type of tunic, but what is known is that they were available in a wide variety of colors, lengths and fabrics. Some were reserved for high officials, while others could be worn by everyone (Ball 2005, 40).

Cloaks were available in different forms and colors and these are known as the *chlamys*, *skaramangion* and *sagion*. The *sagion* is worn by most courtiers as well as the emperor and can have different colors and shapes (see figure 3). It is unclear exactly what the *skaramangion* might have been. Some authors describe it as part of a riding outfit, but it might also have been just a bolt of cloth or a description for several different pieces of clothing. The term literally means 'from Kirman', a region in Persia that was famous for its textile production. Wool, cotton and silk were produced there making it clear that the term *skaramangion* was used for pieces of clothing originating from Kirman (Ball 2005, 43-44). Others claim that the *skaramangion* was a tunic worn by senior officials and courtiers (Scott 2007, 21).

Figure 3: Christ to the right and Andronicus to the left wearing a divetesion, loros and sagion (1183-1185) (from http://www.gold-stater.com/images/byzantine/IMG_0057andronicusav.JPG).

There were also different words for each type of insignia: *Blattia* for pieces of purple fabric, *tablia* for embroidered trapezoids of fabric, *fibulae* for brooches and *baltadin* for belts made with precious stones. One type of insignia clearly did not state the position of the wearer, but as a part of the whole outfit could be an indication of position (Ball 2005, 45-46).

Hats are only rarely described by historical authors and we do not have many images showing them. It is thought that hats were worn from the ninth century onwards in court. We do see that there were hats in several shapes and colors in an image where the women are wearing fan-shaped hats adorned with ornaments (see figure 4). Men can sometimes be seen wearing trapezoidal and conical hats, and bulbous caps. What can also often be seen on several images are turbans. Archaeological evidence from gravesites in Egypt shows us that hats worn at that time were made from wool, are fitted close to the head and had no brims. Both solid colored and multi-colored or geometrically patterned examples were found. Some were striped and most had tassels (Ball 2005, 46-48).

It is clear that every royal piece of clothing has an extensive history, even though the exact provenance of a piece of clothing such as the *tzangia* remains unclear. The *loros* has a rich history as it first transformed from the Roman toga into a ceremonial toga, and then into the richly decorated garment worn exclusively by the imperial family. Even in Roman times tunics were decorated in a manner that would denote a Roman man's (or women's) status (Sebesta 1994, 46). This clearly progressed in Byzantine times, when the decoration of this garment made it clear that its wearer was part of the Imperial family. The imperial crown also has a long past with Hellenistic origins. Clearly the emperor wanted the people to see him as equal to Alexander the Great, ruling his empire just as well as his inspiration did. Even though the rest of his clothing might be the same as what court officials or even regular citizens might wear, its decoration or color would indicate the status of its wearer.

Women's garments

Since female Imperial clothes will be closely examined it is also important to look at what 'regular' women at court used to wear. Unfortunately very little is known about what women at Imperial court used to wear since hardly any historical author mentions female dress. When pieces of clothing are mentioned, a *delmatikion*, *maphorion* and *thorakion* are named. The *maphorion* is a headscarf or veil that is normally worn by women, although a male version did exist. It is still unknown what a *thorakion* is, but it is clear that it was only worn by women. The *delmatikion* is also exclusively female and was a religious garment that originated from a Roman wide-sleeved tunic (Ball 2005, 49-50).

Other mentions of clothing only reveal that important court officials wives were dressed alike to her husband, perhaps just like the empress was dressed the same as the emperor. We also know that female servants were dressed similar to each other as is the case in our modern society. From the images that we have of high ranking females it is clear that they were dressed in tunics or dresses with busy patterns decorating the fabrics. In this image the women also wear large white fan-shaped hats with ornaments (see figure 4). If the women have a higher status they wear a crown or another accessory that denotes her imperial rank. All of the women wear rich bracelets and their sleeves are so wide that they almost touch the floor. This is obviously an influence from the medieval west. It is unclear if their adornments show their rank, as is usually the case in men since they all wear similar dress, except for the women wearing crowns or other items that indicate their status (Ball 2005, 50-51).

Figure 4: the daughter of the emperor greets a foreign princess and then sit below chatting on a couch, twelfth century (from Hennessy 2008, 116).

What is known about women's dress is that every woman, except the very rich, were highly modest. Their clothes seem to have been very shapeless and would have to be able to accommodate pregnancy. The basic garment in the early period comes down to the ankles with tight sleeves and a high round collar. Fringes and cuffs were sometimes decorated with embroidery, with a band around the upper arm (see figure 5). In the tenth and eleventh centuries widely flared sleeves first appeared. Working women used to tie up their sleeves, while court women wore their garment with a V-collar instead of a round one. Belts were regularly worn, sometimes with tassels as decoration (Dawson 2006, 50-53,57).

Figure 5: birth of the virgin, Chora Church, Constantinople (1316/21) (from: http://ic2.pbase.com/u47/dosseman/large/30644459.354Istanbul_KariyeChoraChurchjune2004.jpg).

Hair was covered by head-cloths and veils that were probably removed inside the home. Caps were sometimes worn underneath the veil and sometimes the veil was tied up in a turban style, especially for working women. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the veils started to become longer. The younger and perhaps unmarried women are often shown with their hair uncovered and sometimes wearing diadems (see figure 5). Others had a filigree roundel or Y emblem, or both, standing up on the front. Rarely a diadem was worn over a sheer headscarf (Dawson 2006, 43-48).

Much is known about footwear, since many examples were discovered during archaeological excavations in the dryer parts of the empire. Sandals, slippers and boots were regularly found in several colors and with diverse decorations. Surprisingly the color red is the most common footwear in women, while this color was reserved for imperial shoes in men. Purses were rarely found and it is likely that pockets were sown in several of the garments (Dawson 2006, 57-59).

Although Dawson (Dawson 2006) claims that the face-veil was invented by the Byzantines, women were never pictured with their faces covered, although their hair is often veiled. Historical sources are not clear enough to be able to distinguish between a face-veil or a head-veil (Angold 1995, 426-427).

Borderland elite dress

Elite dress differed from the pieces of clothing worn at the capital, but they do show the different varieties of garments worn throughout the Empire, and might tell more about other aspects of a Byzantine's life. It is therefore important to look at exactly what they were wearing in which region, and where this style (or different styles) originated.

In Cappadocia caftans were most frequently worn by both males and females. They only differ slightly from *divetesions* in that they are open at the front and are worn with tunics underneath. These are easier to wear and to move in than the traditional *divetesions*, one of the possible reasons as to why they were so popular in this region. The caftan originated in Armenia and Georgia, where they were a symbol of power. This is another possible reason as to why the Byzantine elite found it an attractive piece of clothing to wear, indicating that they too had some power at their disposal (Ball 2005, 63-64).

Also popular in Cappadocia were roundel patterns used on several pieces of clothing such as caftans and cloaks. Even one image from Constantinople is known with a court official wearing a similar pattern on his clothing indicating once again that fashion often came from the outskirts of the empire towards the center. This pattern seems to originate from Armenia and Georgia, just like the caftan it was frequently worn on. Turbans are also often seen on images from the Cappadocian region from the eleventh century onward, even though they might have already been present since the ninth century. Turbans are known from Islamic, Armenian and Georgian regions, and it is apparent to know that these too came into fashion in the Byzantine court in the later centuries (Ball 2005, 64-65). It is unclear exactly why turbans became popular in the Byzantine world, but as they were worn by several powerful peoples such as the Islamic and Armenian cultures they might have also indicated a sense of power. Turbans were also relatively expensive in that they incorporated a lot of fabric and were decorated with expensive adornments, showing that only the well-to-do people were able to buy them or have them made.

Kastoria, located in present day northern Greece, only became a part of the Byzantine Empire in 1018 when Basil II re-conquered Thrace. The Bulgarians living in Kastoria were incorporated in Byzantium along with about 12.000 Armenians that had settled in the region at around 790. The Normans occupied Kastoria from 1082 to 1093 when the Byzantine army retook it. Clothing from this region was thus influenced with Bulgarian, Armenian and Norman elements (Ball 2005, 69).

The population of Kastoria was wealthy and spent their money on churches and lavish clothing. It is no surprise that their clothing was also under the influence of foreign trends. Men and women usually wore different clothing, but with similar accents. Caftans were widely worn in bright colors such as blues and reds, and usually adorned with embroidery. The caftan was sometimes worn with a belt with underneath a tunic. Women usually wore a brightly colored lined cloak, a high-closing dress with pointed

sleeves that almost touch the floor and exquisite jewelry. Women were known to wear large basket earrings and as many as fourteen rings depending on how wealthy they were. On their heads they wore turbans, mostly in white (Ball 2005, 69-71).

It is impossible to prove if there were any influences from Bulgaria, almost no images of Bulgarians exist until the thirteenth century, and most of the images that are known were painted by Byzantines. What is remarkable is that over thousands of kilometers, people seem to be wearing the same kinds of clothing that differ from the ones worn in the capital. The garments from Kastoria largely resemble Cappadocian dress even though they are far apart. Would this be due to an Armeno-Georgian influence? It is known that there were Armeno-Georgians living a short distance from Kastoria in the south and east. And it is known that in Cappadocia people were impressed with this rich clothing style making the garments wanted throughout the region. Perhaps the same had happened in Kastoria, explaining why garments were so alike throughout the different regions (Ball 2005, 71-73).

Fabrics and decoration

The information we have about the types of fabrics that were used for garments and the decorations adorning them mostly come from images and descriptions from historical authors. It is clear that heavier fabrics were of the best quality, as courtiers were often paid in a certain weight of cloth. The best fabrics also had brocading and embroidery, which also added to the weight of the materials. When a person was described as modest, they usually wore thin fabrics indicating their lack of richness. Courtiers were known to have garments made of embroidered fabrics instead of multicolored fabrics called *blattia* or *tablion*. The embroidery was usually later applied to fabrics, and these embroidered pieces of fabric make up the majority of textiles that were found at excavations in Egypt. From this it is possible to discern that it is likely that most courtiers were dressed in plain clothes, but that they were decorated with embroidery and nice accessories such as belts and fibulae (Ball 2005, 53).

It is not only clear from the garments but also from the patterning on the fabrics that foreign influences were present. Expensive fabrics such as silks were carefully regulated in their fabrication, use and sale, but still exotic patterns could be found on them. These patterns originated from Islamic motifs and from patterns used in the

Mediterranean and Islamic world. The garments made from them were still unique to the Byzantine world and not merely copies of pieces of clothing from the Islamic world in that the Byzantines adorned their robes with gems and gold thread, which was not allowed in the Islamic religion, and the cut of their garments were still inspired on ancient Roman and Greek styles (Mathews 1998, 80).

Fabrics were made by both men and women, with women always doing the spinning and the men weaving the fabrics. This could be done at home or at workshops that were either privately owned or were involved in a guild (Mathews 1998, 80-81). From the fourth to the twelfth century the most important silk production centers could be found in Byzantium and in several Islamic centers of the Mediterranean. Only from 1147 silk was also produced in Palermo under King Roger of Sicily. Up till then Byzantium was still the main silk producer. Even after the occupation of the Byzantine capital (1204-1261) the production of silk does not seem to have stopped, it was merely reduced. Only in the fourteenth century did Islamic Mediterranean designs change under the influence of European, Mongol and Asian contacts (Muthesius 2003, 325).

Producing and trading in silk was highly important in the Byzantine world. The highest quality silks were produced in Byzantine and Islamic centers and its trade was highly restricted as described in the tenth century book called *The Book of the Eparch* (Scott 2007, 21). Byzantine silks were famous even in Europe and were literally worth their weight in gold. As such they were valuable as diplomatic gifts, and used to impress political visitors. Silk court costumes were extremely lavish, and the Byzantine and Islamic courts rivaled each other for their most beautiful attire (Muthesius 2003, 326).

In the Byzantine and Islamic silk centers there were five weaves that were used up to the thirteenth century: tabby, twill, damask, lampas and tapestry. Out of these twill was the most important weave in Byzantium. Twill could be solid colored or figured and woven with or without metal threads. Damask was widely available after the thirteenth century, while tabbies were available throughout the period. Lampas was developed in the tenth and eleventh centuries. They were figured silks, just like the tapestry weaves. Only after the thirteenth century new wefts were invented such as satins, velvets, taffetas and brocading (Muthesius 2003, 343).

Dyes were very expensive in the Byzantine and Islamic worlds and they were also carefully regulated. Up to the eleventh century bright red, blue and green ground patterned silks were the most popular in Byzantium. In the late tenth and early eleventh century however the taste for these brightly colored fabrics changed. Now more subdued monochrome colored cloths were becoming more common. Fabrics were

colored with indigo, madder, kermes, brazilwood, sumac, saffron and several ferrous dyes. A book from the beginning of the tenth century called the *Book of the Prefect* described several rules regarding the dyeing of fabrics, and the fines associated with breaking them. Such as certain murex dyes that were to be exclusively used by the emperor and which held heavy penalties when used wrongly. Dyes could be so expensive that one third of the total cost of producing a certain fabric would come from dyeing it (Muthesius 2003, 349).

Up to the thirteenth century Islamic and Byzantine patterns were almost indiscernible from each other. Until the eighth and ninth century's hunter and charioteer themes were most popular, but after the year 1000 AD when monochrome twill and lampases production began, more foliate and birdlike patterns were designed. On polychrome compound twills large bird and animal motifs began appearing such as lions, eagles, griffins and elephants, usually within a medallion setting (see figure 6). Figurative scenes also sometimes appeared as imperial scenes on tapestries, but it is clear that possibly due to Islamic belief regulations and the period of Iconoclasm made animal and plant motifs far more popular. After the thirteenth century tartar and other oriental patterns also became more common, until the fourteenth century when hunting, romantic and religious themes appeared (Muthesius 2003, 350-351).

Figure 6: a piece of Byzantine silk fabric from the twelfth century showing griffins and phoenixes within a medallion setting (from: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3d/Pseudo_Kufic_script_in_medallion_on_Byzantine_shroud_of_Saint_Potentien_12th_century_rotated.jpg).

Conclusions

Byzantine dress was mostly based on Roman dress, as is expected, but it was also inspired by eastern influences. Persian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Georgian and Islamic influences all created the style of dress that can now be seen on the walls and floor mosaics of Byzantine churches and villas. Women's clothing did differ from those of men's, each having their own pieces of clothing unique to their sex, but often men and women did wear similar clothing. One fascinating aspect of the patterning on the Byzantine fabrics is that they were highly influenced by eastern motifs and often displayed large bird, animal and floral decorations as well as, in rare cases, figurative patterns. Colors for the fabrics varied and at first bright colors were popular, until in later time a taste for monochrome colored fabrics developed.

Chapter 5: Fashion and the significance of dress in the Byzantine world

Looking good was extremely important in the Byzantine court as well as in public life. Courtiers during festivities were known to change their outfits at least five times and were even partly paid in textiles and garments. Several books were even written to prescribe recommended wear for each formal occasion (Vogt 1935 cited in Ball 2005, 1). Even though it is known that fashion was important in the Byzantine world many authors still do not acknowledge its existence until at least the fourteenth century.

Dress was not only important to members of the court, but also to common people. The fashion that was worn in Byzantium was considered one of the finest in both the European and Mediterranean world. Western courts were known to be envious of such lushly decorated styles and they traveled far across the borders of the Byzantine world. Slaves were known to be dressed in gold and silk to show off their masters wealth, and even charioteers at the hippodrome dressed their best before a competition. Only nuns or monks were known to wear coarse fabrics and plain clothes. (Ball 2005, 1)

Even though garments, colors and accessories in Byzantine dress can point to an identity or status, this is not a set code for identification. Meanings can change over time, as well as personal preferences and fashion styles. One set of styles can have one meaning to one group of people, and an entirely different one to another group, or in a later time. Thus it is impossible to discern one style or color for every rank, but it is possible to try to uncover Byzantine attitudes toward clothing and also about gender, ethnicity, status and so forth. (Ball 2005, 2).

Fashion in the Middle Byzantine world

Fashion is still a dangerous word to use in historical context. Many authors feel that fashion only developed in the 14th or even as late as the 16th century. Fashion is also always seen as radiating out from the center towards the rural areas. Clothing styles of medieval times are mostly viewed as utilitarian, and with little decoration. Anne Hollander shares this opinion and James Laver writes that ‘only in the second half of the fourteenth century clothes for both men and women start to take on new forms, and

something that can be called fashion emerges' (Laver, 2002, 62). His opinion is that only fitted clothing, instead of loose-hanging garments can be viewed as fashion. Anne Hollander denotes fashion as: 'the whole spectrum of desirable ways of looking at any given time. The scope of what everyone wants to be seen wearing in a given society is what is in fashion' (Hollander 1978, 350). But why do these people judge fashion on the pieces of clothing itself? (Ball 2005, 55)

Ball makes a very good statement about fashion because is fashion not about the desire to want to wear a certain type of garment? It is well known that fashion often originates in the elite. What do they wear? Is it expensive fabrics or extensive decorations with gold or silver? Then often the lower class population will want to wear those types of clothing as well, even if they cannot afford it. Sometimes imitations are made for the people of a lower class, until the elite grows tired of being imitated and starts to wear a new style that they have seen on the king or during their travels. In this way fashion constantly transforms and the significance of garments changes.

To state an example the emperor might have seen turbans on foreign visitors and envied how they looked. He might have received one as a present and starts to wear it and soon the elite surrounding him starts to wear it as well, and the peasants may start to imitate those too. Until the emperor grows tired of it and finds another headpiece to wear. This is just one example of how fashion can transform through time and is in no way restricted to a certain time period as most fashion historians claim. The meaning or significance of a royal piece of clothing may stay stable for a long time, but they do start to change bit by bit over time, even if the socio-economic climate does not change. Such as the *loros* that can be worn with a belt by women, the sleeves on women's garments that suddenly grow longer under the influence of the western world, or their crowns that show more and more similarities with the western variants. Exactly how should this occur if not through fashion, wanting to wear what someone else is wearing? Therefore it is clear that there was indeed fashion at work at this time (and even in early Byzantine times), even if it did not work in exactly the same way or in the same pace as it does today.

People at the imperial court might even have been more fashionable than we are today, with people wearing casual clothing to work and gym-shoes and even tracksuits to the supermarket because it is easy to wear. People in Byzantine times clearly thought twice about what they were going to wear to a certain ceremony, or to court that day depending on what the planned activities were.

Fashion in borderland Byzantium

In the borderlands the elite had the funds to have themselves painted in dedicatory images and portraits and they were also elaborately described by several authors. It is clear that in these borderlands fashion and being stylish was very important, and that there were a lot of influences from borderland countries and cultures such as Georgian, Armenian and Islamic dress styles (Ball 2005, 57).

The borderland elite images that are known mostly show the wealthy in clothes that were greatly inspired by neighboring countries and not by the capital Constantinople. The elite here did not want to wear clothing similar to the emperor, but they longed to wear different kinds of exotic clothing. Cappadocia neighbored Georgia, Armenia and Islamic countries, there were heavy Bulgarian influences and even Norman settlers had an effect on clothing styles. It is also known that fashion from the provinces was eventually taken over by the court, such as the Turban that was a part of Cappadocian dress before it came in style in the capital (Ball 2005, 57).

What is also interesting information that is known through textual sources is that wealthy people from the provinces found it very important to look stylish. This in total contrast to the imperial court where people were only concerned with looking decent for the occasion. This point is illustrated by one account of a man that was worried about how his wife would look after death, because he had no decent clothes to dress her in as she had given all of her clothes to the church (Laiou in Talbot 1996, 266-267). He was obviously worried about her not looking her best in death. Benjamin of Tudela, a twelfth-century traveler describes the well-dressed Byzantines as: 'The Greeks who inhabit the country are extremely rich and possess great wealth of gold and precious stones. They dress in garments of silk, ornamented by gold and other valuable materials; they ride upon horses and in their appearance they are like princes' (Kazhdan and Epstein 1985, 77). It is therefore very obvious that the well-earning Byzantines were very concerned with their appearance and interested in looking fashionable (Ball 2005, 58).

From textual sources it is clear that a kind of foreign-influenced fashion already existed in the ninth century, even though it took up to the twelfth century before it penetrated the Imperial court. The Byzantines simply looked at what everyone surrounding them was wearing, picked out those pieces of clothing that they desired, and started wearing these themselves, perhaps influenced by the meaning these garments had to their neighbors. Pieces of clothing exclusively worn by the local elite

and that were very impressive were of course more attractive to wear than cheap, shabby looking clothes (Ball 2005, 59-61).

The significance of royal and elite garments and decoration

It is clear by now that dress was critically important both to the imperial court and to the elite. Clothing regulations for court rituals were strict and court officials were often paid in garments in addition to gold. Colors and decoration also had meaning in every garment; even it was not a set meaning in every way. It is interesting to see what kind of meaning there was to the decoration, colors and fabrics that the imperial and elite couple used to wear in their dress.

A well-known fact is that purple colored garments were only to be worn by the imperial family due to the expensive process of making the dye from mollusks. There was even one instance when a foreigner was stopped at the city gates for trying to bring purple fabrics with him to Italy, which of course was not allowed. Other colors were also an indication of status, such as white or red hats, gold cloaks or blue tunics. A white hat worn with a white silken robe with lavish decorations also seems to be an indicator of one of the highest positions in court (Maguire 1997, 184-185).

Crowns, *tzangia* and the *loros* were an indication of being part of the royal family, just like wearing elaborately decorated gowns with pearls and jewels. It is said that each jewel on the emperor's regalia symbolized an aspect of his virtue. Manuel I says that the gold of his (the emperor's) crown 'flashed like lightning, the pearls appeared white, and the precious red stone glistened, these being the mirror of the treasury of 'wisdom that resides in the emperor's head' (Lampros 1908, 17). Another interpretation is given in the *Oneirokritikon* (dream book) of Achmet Ben Sirin, a Byzantine primer from the tenth century that interprets dreams; 'If someone dreams that he had the distinction of wearing an imperial crown that had been studded with pearls and gems, he will have dominion and glory analogous to the crown; and if he dreams that the gems and pearls were hanging down from it like earrings, his dominion will be in accordance with their length and beauty. If the emperor dreams that the pendants of his crown were cut off, his reign will be disorderly and short-lived' (Drexl 1925, 202 cited in Oberhelman 1991, 219). It is clear that the pearls and pendants on the emperor's crown and gown was a representation of the emperor's prowess: the longer the pendants, the better and longer his rule (Maguire 1997, 187-188). It is clear that all

of the adornments on the emperors (and probably on the empresses) gown were not merely decoration but actually stood for something: the emperor's virtue and ability to rule.

Conclusions

Even though none of the fashion historians are willing to admit that fashion existed before the mid-fourteenth century, it is clear that a primitive form surely did exist in Byzantine times. The court and imperial family were obsessed with what to wear for which occasion, and perhaps the borderland elite had even more of a sense for fashion. They did not only want to look decent for the occasion but really wanted to look fashionable, constantly looking to their neighbors for new inspiration. It even seems that fashion in the Byzantine empire worked the other way around from modern fashion; it started in the outskirts before moving towards the center.

Fashion also did not seem to be merely fashion, the colors and decorations on the Imperial family's garments also had special meaning. Purple colored garments were only to be worn by the Emperor and his family and red, blue and white were high-ranking colors mostly worn by high standing courtiers. Even the gems and pearls on the Emperors gown had special meaning; they stood for his virtue and wisdom while the length of the gems hanging from his crown indicated the length of his rule. Further meaning to garments is difficult for modern eyes to discover, but surely the elite must also have had garments that carried special meaning and significance.

Chapter 6: Gender differences in dress

Gender issues have been and remain very popular since the last decade or so and therefore it is also relevant to look at the roles of females in Byzantium and to examine the differences in dress between men and women in the Byzantine world. From understanding dress it is possible to try to dissolve the meaning and purpose of women in this time. Did they have power? Were they important at court or just a method to breed offspring? Did this status reflect in the empresses garments or were there disparities? This subject will be examined in the following paragraphs.

Difference in dress between emperor and empress

Imperial dress from the Byzantine period was famous for their beautiful silken and elaborately decorated garments. In the areas surrounding Byzantium and even in the west the elite and even kings and queens envied the beautiful clothes of the Byzantine Empire. The empress also wielded considerable power and even had her own court, but was this also reflected in her dress?

It seems that it was typical in Middle Byzantine times for the royal couple to be dressed alike. Both the emperor and the empress wore almost exactly the same clothes, as can be seen in the portrait of Zoe and Constantine IX (figure 7). This was highly unusual in the medieval world and only appears in the Byzantine Empire between the 8th and the 12th century. In the medieval kingdoms emperors usually wore very different garments from their wives, with men usually wearing tunics, while women wore fitted dresses. In the Islamic world gender differences in clothing were also apparent, making this an almost unique situation. Up to the 8th century there were also gender differences visible in dress in the Byzantine world, as we can see in the images of Empress Theodora and Emperor Justinian (figure 8 and 9) (Ball 2005, 19-21). So why would this style of dress suddenly change, and when did the empress start to wear the same clothes as her husband?

Figure 7: Zoe and Constantine IX from the south side gallery of Hagia Sophia 1028-1042) (photo by author).

Figure 8: Theodora and her court (547) (from http://traumwerk.stanford.edu/philolog/Theodora.jpg).

Figure 9: Justinian and his court (547) (from http://traumwerk.stanford.edu/philolog/Justinian.jpg).

This change in dress can be followed from dynasty to dynasty, beginning with the Book of Job (Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS I.B, fol.18) where Heraklios and his family are depicted wearing imperial dress dated to 615-640 AD. Heraklios is clearly wearing military inspired garb, with a short tunic and *chlamys*, while the women wear a *dalmatic*, a belted wide tunic (Ball 2005, 21). It is clear here that women did have significant imperial power as they wear a highly decorated crown and jeweled collars and belts, signifying their status. It is likely that the emperor's military garb is due to the military unstable period filled with wars and unrest, and Heraklios needing to show his military power in his depictions at this difficult time.

On a coin of the late 8th century Constantine VI is still depicted in his military garb with the *chlamys*, while his mother, who acted as his regent, wears a *loros*, one of the first that is known (figure 10) (Ball 2005, 22). Strangely Constantine's mother Irene seems to be more elaborately dressed than her son, perhaps trying to show her power as regent in court. She has a much more decorated crown with *pendulia*, and a with gemstones encrusted *loros*. Her unpopular status may also have had something to do with her need to decorate, trying to show her imperial power and status through dress. Exactly why the *loros* and other lavish imperial clothing came into fashion is still unclear and seems to suddenly arise, but it is likely that this happened under the influence of

peoples across the borders such as the Georgians, Armenians, Bulgars or the Sassanids. Certainly the Sassanids were a very successful people who greatly influenced the Romans and even Europe and Asia in many aspects. Unfortunately there is no direct evidence that links the Sassanid dress to the later Byzantine imperial garments.

Figure 10: A solidus of Constantine VI with his mother Irene (780-797). She is dressed in the loros *while he is still wearing the* chlamys. *(from http://media.liveauctiongroup.net/i/9721/10543262_1.jpg).*

One of the earliest examples of non-gendered imperial dress that is known is the image of empress Eudokia with her sons Leo and Alexander. This is unexpected since Eudokia Ingerina was married to Basil I, but she had an affair with the emperor Michael III who fathered her son Leo VI (Ball 2005, 22). This apparently gave her and both her sons an imperial status and the right to wear these similar imperial garments even though one of the sons was not even fathered by Basil I.

Another couple that wear the same garments are Constantine Monomachos and Zoe on the wall of the Hagia Sophia. They too both wear a *loros* and a jeweled collar over a *divetesion*. Their crowns do differ, with Zoe's being more elaborately decorated with a double row of gemstones (Ball 2005, 22). Again this may point to a woman trying to show her power that is grander than the emperor's. She was after all the one born from royal blood, legitimizing her husband as emperor.

Figure 11: Constantine Monomachos and Zoe in the Hagia Sophia (1028-1034) (photo by author).

Two more examples of an imperial couple that have similar dress are John II and Irene, who also both wear a *loros* and jeweled collar, and Constantine Doukas and Eudokia Makrembolitissa, who too wear the *loros*. In this case even their crowns and gem patterns match, and the highly unusual title *Basilissa* is used for Eudokia signifying her as highly important since this title is only rarely used for empresses (Ball 2005, 22-23).

Even though most of the images from this time show the royal pair dressing the same, there are in some cases small differences between male and female dress. Even though all of the pieces of clothing are similar, empresses sometimes wear their *loros* with a belt. Ball argues in her book that the shield-like jeweled piece of the *loros* is merely created by wearing it belted, and pulling the lower part of the *loros* to one side (Ball 2005, 23). This cannot be true however. In most images it is clear that the shield-like ornament is definitely separate from the rest of the garment since the lower part of the *loros* can be seen beneath it. The shield also often shows a cross and is sometimes decorated differently from the *loros*. This style of a simplified loros with the shield is also almost always worn with a jeweled collar either underneath or over the loros and what seems like a dress with very long sleeves, obviously an influence from the medieval west.

Figure 12: Christ crowning Michael VII Doukas (Nikephoros III Botaneiates) and Maria Alania (1074-1081). *Maria is wearing the adapted* loros *with the shield like element and the western dress with long pointed sleeves (from Evans and Wixom (eds) 1997, 182).*

Exactly why the empresses started wearing this style of clothing is not immediately clear. What is clear is that this type of fashion seems to begin in the eleventh century, perhaps merely a fashion influence from the west. Perhaps the empress wanted to differentiate herself from the emperor with a more fitted dress with long sleeves, and a shield with a cross showing that she too had power over Christianity, or perhaps showing that she received her imperial power from god. Ball (Ball 2005) suggests that perhaps women tried to distribute the weight of the *loros* by wearing it this way, since it was very heavy, or because they were pregnant. But if this was the case why were they displayed this way? Surely they had influence on how they were to be depicted. Then why show such a weakness if they did not think it was pretty? And clearly from most of these images the weight of the shield was added to the existing *loros* (even though the part of the *loros* from the shoulder to the waist disappeared), making it even heavier. It would certainly be heavier in front of the garment, something that a pregnant woman certainly would not desire (see figures 12 and 14).

But even though there were differences, most of the garments worn by the imperial couple were very similar. This signifies that there were specific imperial pieces

of clothing, shoes and the crown that separated the imperial couple from 'common' people. Wearing a crown, *tzangia* or the *loros* stated that they had the imperial office and were thus part of the exclusive imperial regalia. Thus in this case there were no gender differences between male and female. These clothes made the emperor or empress.

So why and how did this similar dress style occur? Did females become more important in the Middle Byzantine period, allowing them to dress the same as the emperor or were there other reasons? *The book of Ceremonies* written in the tenth century by emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and *The Kletorologion of Philotheos*, a book published in 899 listing offices and court precedence, both indicate a renewed interest in imperial ceremony. More ceremonies were carried out in the next twenty years than in the previous hundred and fifty years. Historians learned from Constantine's book that he wished to restore ceremonial traditions and pass them on to the next generations. Also after Constantine's reign two usurpers came to power that needed imperial ceremonies in order to legitimize themselves, and the imperial regalia to match (Ball 2005, 27).

At this time there was also a sort of dynastic succession, making the wife as important as the emperor in procreating the next emperor. They also both represented their respected dynasties. Women were additionally important as they sometimes acted as regents for their young emperor sons, and even had the power to make anyone they married emperor after their husband died (Herrin 2001, 23). A few empresses even ruled alone such as Irene, Zoe and Theodora (Ball 2005, 27-28). They of course had to be wearing the imperial regalia of an empress that stated they had power equal to an emperor.

It was also important to give a powerful signal to the outside world that both emperor and empress stood for the imperial office in their emblematic clothes as could be seen on coins and paintings. This was essential in the Middle Byzantine period when diplomatic relations with the Arabs and other peoples were on the rise. Diplomatic marriages were carried out regularly, and a powerful statement to the outside world was essential, impressing and awing the foreigners (Ball 2005, 28-29). It was no longer necessary to state their military power with clothes such as a *chlamys*, like during the early Byzantine period, although these kinds of images can still be seen when an emperor tried to claim the throne through military victory (Ball 2005, 32).

In the thirteenth century there is a shift back to gender differences. Emperors start to wear the *chlamys* and other military style garments once again, and the *sakkos*, a

belted tunic, begins to show up. Empresses start to wear more western late medieval styles with sleeves almost hanging on the ground, fitted bodices and pointed crowns (Ball 2005, 26-27).

So why did the non-gendered dress styles revert back to gender differences in clothing between men and women? In the beginning of the thirteenth century Byzantine was sacked by the fourth crusade, the Empire started to fall apart, and a new emperor was installed. Thus showing military power might in this period might have become more important than religious ceremony, and dynamic succession was destroyed apart from a few small principalities.

Gender differences in the world of the Elite

The power that Byzantine empresses could carry was considerable, and elite women carried the same titles their men did, but not much else is known about them from historical sources. Therefore it is useful to further examine their dress in order to find out more about the divide of power within their household. Were elite women respected as much as empresses and women at court or were they looked down upon?

In Cappadocia it is clear from the many images that are known from this time that women were often dressed the same as their husbands. They too wore the same caftans, turbans and cloaks, even in similar colors and patterns. Women in the capital sometimes wore the *chlamys*, like men did. Empresses wore similar clothing to their husbands for long periods of time. However in Kastoria in the middle Byzantine period this seems to have been very different. Women here were heavily influenced by the west (Ball 2005, 73). Why would this be the only place to have gender differences?

The women of Kastoria were known to wear dresses with long sleeves that almost touched the floor, a clear western influence. Western influence was, especially during the Early and Middle Byzantine period, very rare. Byzantine clothing was often copied by Western Kings, such as Otto II of Germany and the King of Norman Sicily. During Middle Byzantine times, silk was only produced in the East, making it a very wanted product with Kings and Queens in the West. Woolen garments were far less common in Byzantium (Ball 2005, 73). So why the sudden change in influence from East-West towards West-East? And why only in Kastoria and not in the rest of the realm? The only Empress known to wear such a dress in the twelfth century is the Empress Irene

in the Hagia Sophia. Only in the Late Byzantine period these dresses started to become more widespread (Ball 2005, 73-74).

Perhaps people who settled in this region came from the West, bringing their local fashions with them, exposing the Byzantine world to this kind of garment for the first time. Exactly why the local population would also start to wear dresses is guesswork, perhaps they just liked the style of clothing, making them more feminine, but making a break from their usual dress that was similar to their husbands' must have been an important change in their lives. Cultural influence could also have been a reason, perhaps the women wearing these dresses were highly respected in their culture, making the garment even more attractive to wear to the local elite.

Conclusions

Emperors and empresses were dressed very similar to each other from at least the 8th to the 12th century. Before this period the empire was unstable and wars frequently occurred, making it necessary for the emperor to dress in a more military style. When a more stable period began the need for military garb disappeared and dynastic succession became more important. The empress and emperor were both needed in order to create offspring and thus the empress would be able to wield great power and even hold her own court. When her husband died the empress would be able to continue the dynasty by marrying a new man or by ruling as a regent until her son would come of age. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries garments changed again under the influence of the west and perhaps the new threat from the Ottomans made the emperor revert back to his military garb.

The elite both in court and in the outer regions of the empire also seem to be wearing clothing similar to their husband. Women at court even carried the same title as their counterpart, showing that they were awarded the same status and respect. Only in Kastoria women dressed differently from their husband, wearing dresses with long sleeves, an influence from the medieval west. It is likely that families from the west living in nearby colonies influenced fashion. They were probably wealthy families which made it very attractive for the people in Byzantium to copy their dress style. This is another example of fashion that started in the borderlands before finally arriving in the capital some time later.

Chapter 7: Children's dress in the Byzantine world

While in recent years children in the ancient world are very popular among scholars, their dress has been largely if not totally overlooked. In the many books about the Byzantine world children are often not even mentioned at all, and if they (or their images) are mentioned not a word is said about their style of dress. Even in Ball's book about Byzantine dress children are not even looked at even though they can be seen on several images. Children from the Byzantine world are largely unknown although they are depicted numerous times often in consequential contexts and locations. They clearly played a central role in the Byzantine world, so why ignore them and only look to adults as if children did not even exist in the Byzantine world? At least half of the Byzantine population was aged under twenty so they must have had a great impact not only on daily life, but also on the arts depicting them and perhaps on dress as well (Hennessy 2008, 2).

We know much of elite Roman children such as that the girls wore a *toga praetexta*, their hair was often braided and tied with a *vitta*. Boys also wore the *toga praetexta*, probably with slightly different decoration. Their toga was like the ones worn by adult males, but they were decorated with a narrow, reddish purple woven border along one side of the hem. Underneath they wore a tunic, like the adults, but which was also decorated with two purple woven stripes, or *clavi*, that extended from the shoulders to the hemline. They also usually wore a locket made of gold, silver, bronze or leather holding an amulet, often of a phallic symbol (Sebesta 1994, 46). Was the Byzantine's children's dress also derived from what the adults wore, just like in Roman times, or did they wear very different garments? What status did children in Byzantium have? These are all important issues that have not yet received researchers' full attention.

In the next paragraph childhood in Byzantium will first be examined so a better picture of the byzantine child can be formed. How were they seen in their culture, did they go to school, how did they play and live and how was their legal and cultural status? In the next chapters the children's garments will be examined to see if they had their own style of dress or if they dressed similar to adults and if their clothes changed when they were considered adults. Did girls and boys wear different things and was rank obvious from their garments as it was with adults? These and other questions will be explored.

Childhood in Byzantium

Antiquity and Christianity are the main basis of Byzantine culture. Their legal, administrative and social backgrounds were taken from the ancient Greek and Roman world. These values changed when Christianity came into view, adapting the ancient notions to what was accepted in a Christian manner. Attitudes towards children and childhood also changed with the new Christian views, which also partly consisted out of Judaism (Hennessy 2008, 3-4).

In Christian Byzantium a child was considered an adult as soon as he or she reached a marital age, 12 for girls and 14 for boys. The Byzantines considered girls to be matured earlier than boys, unlike our modern society does, at least in legal terms. Boys were also allowed a period of adolescence, which girls were not (Hennessy 2008, 3-4). Children were often used to form family alliances by engaging them at an early age, usually at about seven, and the male child would be able to object if he wished. In legal terms youths of both sexes were only adults at the age of 25, before which they were under the authority of legal guardians. Guardians in Roman times were always males, but Theodosios made it possible for women to be guardians if their husband had died. Justinian also wanted women to be able to become a guardian to her male family members allowing them more rights. Orphans were well cared for under guardianship or at orphanages and their rights were carefully legislated. Infanticide and the rejection of children were only outlawed in Justinian's Code in AD 529, but this does not seem to have been a common practice. Children were raised by their mothers and abandoned children were fed at day nurseries set up by the church (Hennessy 2008, 11).

Education for children could be given in monastic, ecclesiastical and secular schools, or more commonly at home. Both boys and girls were allowed to be educated (although girls went less frequently) and they usually started at age seven. This first stage of education usually ended at age 11, when they had to memorize Homer and the psalms. They were trained primarily in Greek and historical sources confirm that primary education was not limited to the middle and upper class. Secondary schooling was hard to come by and tertiary education was only given one-to-one by tutors. This only changed in the ninth century when the Magnaura school was founded, where philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and grammar were given. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the University of Constantinople was founded giving more people a chance to become educated (Hennessy 2008, 15).

Children after the age of eleven or twelve would sometimes become apprenticed to some sort of profession and after a period of five to ten years of training the child would receive the tools of the trade or some capital. Others were trained in the family business at home, while the women usually spent their days spinning. Women (and girls) were not supposed to work out of the house since this was not seen as 'decent' behavior. Male children were also sometimes castrated by their parents or as child captives. This usually happened at a young age when puberty had not yet set in. Boy eunuchs were worth much more money than normal boys and they could at times be very popular at court and rise to power, even though castration was officially outlawed in Byzantium (Hennessy 2008, 16-17).

Children would join their parents at church, being allowed in the same places the adults were, indicating their equal status. From at least the sixth century onwards families were close social structures consisting out of between one and three generations, with sometimes nephews and nieces. Children also had godparents who could give advice to the parents and presented the child with gifts. Imperial children were closely tied to the church since the Byzantines believed that their power came from god. They were thus highly involved in court ritual and well educated in religion, ritual, geography and political and military knowledge and skills and were considered of great importance. The young emperors were usually considered old enough to rule at age 14, even though there was no actual age limit (Hennessy 2008, 22-26).

Children's dress in official Imperial portraits

Many images of imperial children still exist, either in churches showing a family portrait or in images in manuscripts. It is now known that empresses were often dressed the same as her husband, showing her imperial power. Is it the same with children? Are these just small copies of the emperor? And do female children also dress the same as the male imperial children? And what about other members of the family that will probably not inherit the throne? Are they also shown in the same way?

In a manuscript from the ninth century the emperor Basil I is depicted flanked by two prophets. On the other side his wife Eudokia and his two sons Leo and Alexander are represented (figure 13). What is clearly visible is that both sons are dressed exactly alike, and that they also look very similar to their father, all of them wearing the *loros* with the silken *divetesion* underneath. They each have a *stemma* on their head and *tzangia* on

their feet. They also seem to be wearing a similar crown and look identical even to their mother. This has to indicate that both sons were equals, and valued members to their imperial family. From the image it is not clear who the heir was since there seems to be no difference in status. This seems to be confirmed in the historical volume *Vita Basilii*, written by Constantine Porphyrogennetos (945-959), Basil's grandson. In the imperial palace there used to be a similar image in mosaic that decorated the ceiling of the bedchamber. Basil I was depicted along with his family, his wife, sons and daughters. The book tells that sons and daughters were all educated in the scriptures, pointing out that there was no difference in education between sons and daughters (Hennessy 2008, 144). Basil apparently thought that equality in his family was very important even though his daughters are not displayed in this particular document.

Figure 13: emperor Basil I flanked by two prohets (left) and his wife and his two sons Leo and Alexander (right) (879-883) (from Hennessy 2008, 146-147).

In another image from the *Barberini Psalter* three members of the imperial family are drawn. The identity of these figures has been disputed, but it seems likely that these are emperor Alexios I with the empress Irene and their young son John (Hennessy 2008, 161) (figure 14). Again it is clear that father and son seem to be wearing the exact same garments, indicating once more their unity and lack of difference in status. It is

possible that this was an image of the crowning of the young John at age four since the angel above him seems to be awarding him the crown. Both Alexios I and John are dressed in what seems like a scarcely decorated *loros* with a *divetesion* underneath. The queen is dressed slightly different in the adapted version of the *loros* with the shield decorated with a cross and the garment with long sleeves underneath. If this image is indeed of Alexios I and his son it is apparent that his daughter is not in the portrait. Why would she be left out of this picture? Perhaps she was not deemed important enough after all to fit in this small image, not being the heir like John was.

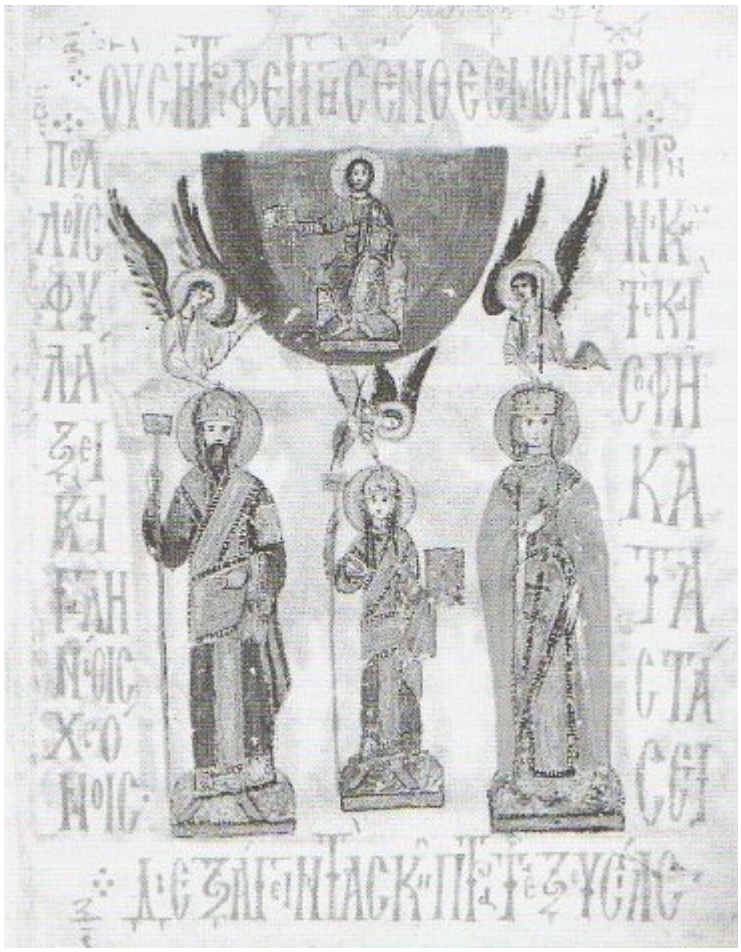

Figure 14: the emperor Alexios I with his son John and the empress Irene (1092) (from Hennessy 2008, 162).

One image that does exhibit a difference in dress between children is the image of Emperor Manuel II with his son, the future emperor John VIII, his wife Helena and his other two sons Theodore and Andronikos (fig 11). What immediately catches the eye is that only the eldest son is dressed like his father in a *divetesion* and *loros*, while the two youngest sons are dressed like their mother in red and gold. The empress does seem to

be wearing a *loros*, but it is unclear if the two boys do because the cloak covers most of their clothing.

Figure 15: Emperor Manuel II with his three sons and his wife empress Helena (1403-1405) (from http://www.hubert-herald.nl/ByzantiumArms_bestanden/image073.jpg).

The empress again wears the dress with long sleeves, this time first seen with the 'regular' version of the *loros*, without the shield-like ornament. All five of them are wearing the *stemma*, although the two youngest sons seem to be wearing a far less luxurious version than their parents and oldest brother. Clearly this image indicates that the oldest son was more important than the other two brothers and perhaps his mother as well, since he is dressed exactly the same as his father the emperor. Why this change suddenly occurred is debatable, but in this late period the empire was about to fall apart under the threat from the Turks and in their quest for help from the west perhaps they wanted to show who would become the new emperor after Manuel II. This manuscript was after all a gift to St-Denis after an excursion to France seeking help (Hennessy 2008, 173).

A second image also showing a difference in dress between the children is known from a manuscript dated to 1356 of the emperor of Bulgaria and his family. The emperor is wearing the *loros* and *divetesion* along with the jeweled collar and *stemma*.

His eldest son is dressed exactly alike while the rest of his family is wearing very different garments. His younger son is dressed like the eldest daughters' husband in a more modern version of the tunic that opens in the front while his mother seems to be wearing something completely different; a cloak and a dress. The three eldest daughters are also wearing a cloak and dress. This separates the emperor and his heir from the rest of his family, even though they still wear the crown, indicating their royal status. Since both of these images are from the later period perhaps this is a change that occurred later in the Byzantine Empire under pressure from the Turks and other invading peoples. The dynasty was becoming less important while survival and a good visible ruler were becoming essential.

Figure 16: The emperor of Bulgaria with his wife and two sons at the right, to the left are his three daughters and the eldest daughter's' husband (1356) (adapted from Hennessy 2008, 170-171).

Children's dress in unofficial images

Relatively few images of children are known from a non-imperial context since only the very rich could afford to have family portraits made. The few images that do exist are

from floor mosaics in villas, some portraits, and from religious images where children can often be seen in dedicatory images.

Some well-known floor mosaics are those from the Great Palace in Istanbul showing a variety of children engaged in several different activities such as riding camels, herding birds or spinning hoops. These activities could probably not have been found in the palace, but were games from the countryside. This image is from the early Byzantine period, around the first half of the sixth century, and at this time mostly Roman dress was still very present. In all of the images from the palace mosaic floor the children are dressed in short tunics, sometimes sleeveless, indicating that Roman clothes were still often worn around this time (figure 17). In later periods this style of dress likely changed.

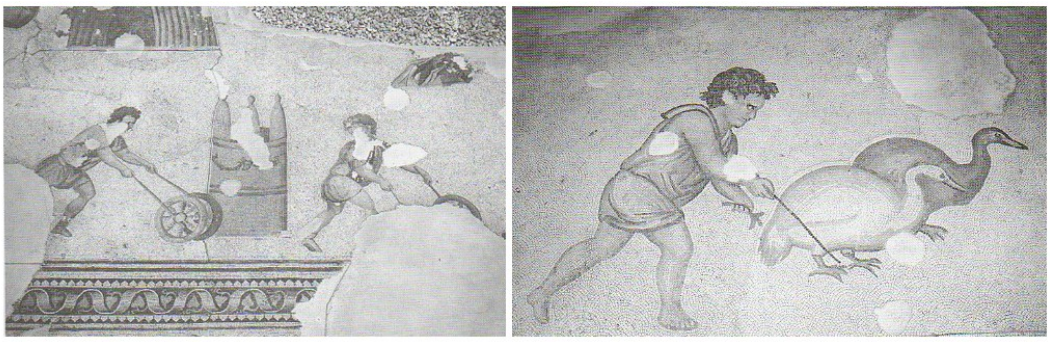

Figure 17: Two of the mosaics from the great Palace in Constantinople, first half of the sixth century (adapted from Hennessy 2008, 55-57).

A rare image that is located in a church is the portrait of Theodotus with his wife, son and daughter, next to the Virgin and Child in the S. Maria Antiqua in Rome dated to the mid eight century. He was the chief administrator of the chapel where the painting is located, and most certainly it was painted on his request. Unfortunately the painting was damaged so that the top part is missing, but the two children can still be seen even though the daughter's head has partly disappeared. The images of the children seem very lifelike and not generalized such as the earlier mosaics. The boy is dressed in a relatively short tunic that is belted. The girl is dressed in a longer tunic with a cloak that has the opening in front. Their parents seem to be wearing more elaborate clothes, especially the mother with a wide gown and long sleeves that is more decorated than her children's garments (figure 18).

Figure 18: Theodotus with his wife and son and daughter along with the Virgin and the Child, mid eighth century (from Hennessy 2008, 97).

Byzantine infants were swaddled with soft woolen bandages, just like the Romans did before them, and the practice continues to present day in some areas in Greece and Anatolia. This was done in order to straighten the limbs, but also to give the child warmth. From the age of four months, children could be given other garments. From Michael Psello's encomium to his grandson it is clear that even at a young age children should be dressed according to their status: 'Whenever your mother adorned your head or dressed you in a fancy outfit, you wriggled and turned in every direction, delighting in and preening yourself on account of your costume' (Kurtz and Drexl 1941, 79-80). Dressing up and showing their children in elite dress was thus very important (Pitarakis 2009, 178).

Byzantine images showing Christ in loose-fitting, brightly colored short dresses that are decorated with blue and red borders and geometrical motifs are common in churches. But is this a realistic image of what children actually used to wear? Other images, such as those from the Chora Church in Constantinople show children dressed in short tunics that are worn loose or belted at the waist (figure 19). The tunics are often decorated at the collar, shoulder and sleeves with decorative bands. They also sometimes wear a mantle. From one image it becomes clear that the garments of the rich children were sometimes also lavishly decorated and made from very expensive fabrics. The painted funerary panel is found in the outer narthex of the Chora Church in

Constantinople and shows two parents flanking a child. Unfortunately the upper part of the panel is destroyed, but the parents garments are decorated with the Palaiologan monogram, an indication that they were related to the imperial family. The child wears an ankle-length caftan that is buttoned down the front and around his waist a girdle is knotted at the front, with what seems like a handkerchief hanging from it. The caftan is decorated with a diaper pattern in gold leaf on a red base. At this time the caftan was the traditional male garment for both adults and children. Even the white handkerchief is decorated with a gold border and gold fringes (figure 20) (Pitarakis 2009, 178-179). Some children were obviously dressed like their parents, just like the children of the royal family, while less important families probably dressed their children in shorter tunics even though these could also be lavishly decorated and covered with luxurious mantles.

Figure 19: two wrestling boys from the Chora Church, Constantinople (1316/21) (adapted from: Pitarakis 2009, 179).

Figure 20: Image of two adults and a child in the Chora Church, outer narthex (1330) (from: http://nauplion.net/CP-Pal-Portraits.html).

Children's clothes were also sometimes found during archaeological excavations in Egypt. These can be dated between the fourth and ninth century but can still give valuable clues as to what children wore in the early Byzantine period. The garment that was most frequently found was a miniature version of the standard long-sleeved adult tunic. It was made from linen or wool and was woven from sleeve to sleeve in one piece and sewn together at the sides, just like the adult version. The decoration of the garments did not differ much from the adult tunics. Birds and animals were common patterns, just like vegetal and floral ornaments, but dancing female figures were also found. The brown or cream color of the background was often highlighted with tapestry strips (*clavi*) at the front and the sleeves, with two round patches on the shoulders. More elaborate versions have also been found with a tapestry panel around the neck (Pitarakis 2009, 180).

Clothes from the early Christian period also often display decorations in a cross shape or even religious images that were intended to protect the wearer from evil or for good fortune and prosperity. A variant from the standard tunic found in Egypt has a hood attached. Two examples of this tunic are present in the Benaki Museum in Athens and the Louvre in Paris. The pointed hoods are often decorated with fringing or multicolored pompoms flanked by two tapestry roundels enclosing a variety of animals such as lions. The *clavi* are sometimes bordered with wave-crested bands that are adorned with a row of stylized creatures such as birds and fish in profile or with stylized quadrupeds (see figure 21) (Pitarakis 2009, 182-183).

Figure 21: an early hooded tunic from the fifth or sixth century decorated with lions in roundels and plant and bird embroidery (from http://awalimofstormhold.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/hoodedchildtunic5or6thcent.jpg).

The hood was probably a protection for the child against wind and cold. Younger children were known to wear caps tied below the chin. Another type of garment that seems to be made specifically for children is the flared tunic with underarm gussets to increase freedom of movement (Pitarakis 2009, 184). It is clear that children were often dressed like adults, but that perhaps on not so formal occasions they would be dressed in clothes specially made for children so that they could play and move about more freely.

Conclusions

Imperial children were almost always dressed exactly like their mother and father, even though there were sometimes small variations in the empress' garments. Not only the heir would be dressed like the emperor, but their sisters and brothers were also wearing the same; the *loros*, *divetesion*, *stemma* and *tzangia* at the very least. Only sisters were often omitted from official Imperial portraits. The reasons for this are unknown but it is likely that sons were still seen as more important than the girls, since they could not

inherit the empire. If space was limited they were quickly dropped from the painting or drawing.

In the very late Byzantine Empire there was a change in how Imperial children were depicted. Now only the heir to the throne would be dressed exactly like the emperor while the other children, girls as well as boys, would look like their mother. This change certainly indicates that perhaps due to the pressure and the near collapse of the empire the heir became more important. The dynastic family was pressed more to the background while the emperor and his heir were supposed to 'save' their empire from destruction.

Children of the elite were, like imperial children, often dressed the same as their parents. Expensive fabrics and decorations were used and even clothes of infants were decorated with pearls and jewels. Shorter versions of adult's clothes were also found during excavations in the dryer climates. A short version of the tunic seemed to be regularly worn as well as some clothes designed specifically for children. A tunic with hood was also found on several occasions, protecting the children from the wind and rain. Another garment exclusively for children was the flared tunic with underarm gussets in order to accommodate more freedom of movement for playing and moving around. From this it is possible to conclude that while children were dressed like their parents in elaborate clothing during official events and celebrations, in more private settings they would be dressed in clothes more fitting and specially designed for children. It is also a possibility that these garments were owned by the less fortunate who were not able to afford the more expensive clothes to dress their offspring in.

Patterns of Byzantine garments

In this chapter some of the patterns from the most common (or imperial) Byzantine garments will be shown with a short description in order to get an idea of how these pieces of clothing were constructed. Unfortunately it was not possible for the author to examine actual garments from archaeological finds so these patterns were constructed by examining images and descriptions from textual sources.

The chlamys

The pattern for the *chlamys* is relatively simple and described several times as being semicircular in shape with rounded edges. It could either be very long or worn in a short version. Below is a possible pattern for a long *chlamys*.

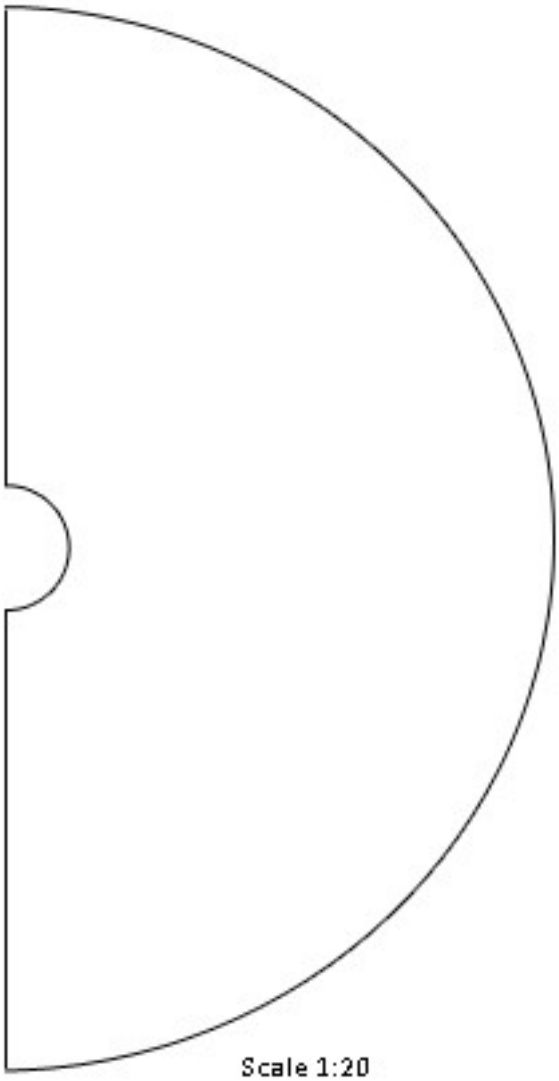

Figure 22: an interpretation of a pattern of a long chlamys *at floor length (image by author).*

The divetesion

The pattern for the *divetesion* is very similar to that of other tunics and could have narrow or slightly wider sleeves (see figures 7, 11 and 12). Patterns from this time were still relatively simple, the only difference between pieces of clothing being its fabric and decoration. Below is an example of the pattern for a *divetesion* or a similar tunic.

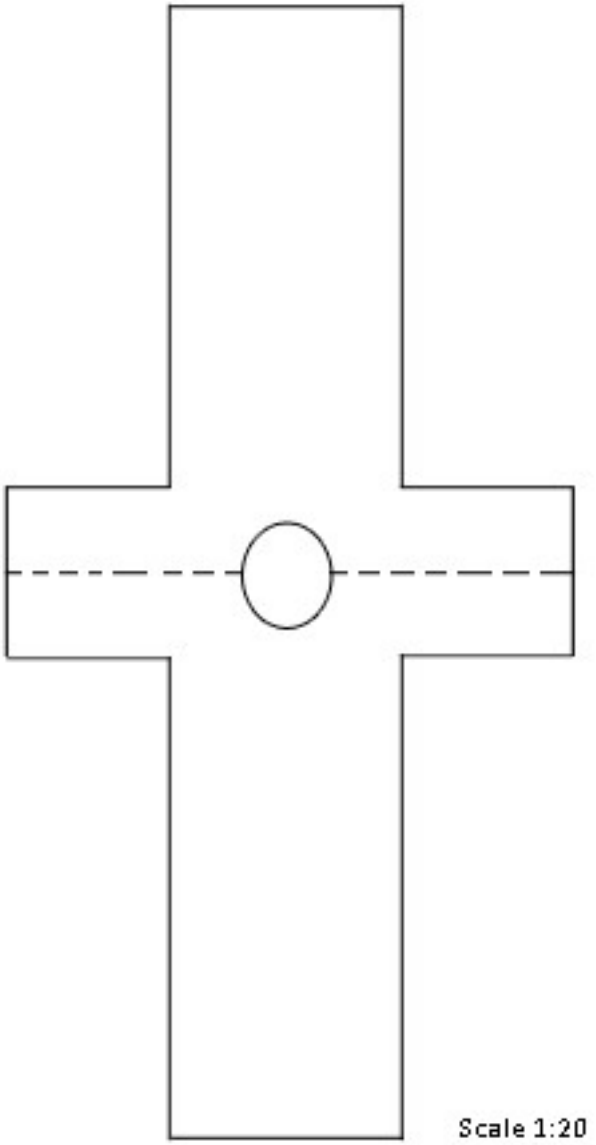

Figure 23: an interpretation of a pattern for a divetesion *or long tunic. The tunic would be woven from one piece with a hole in the middle for the head. The tunic is folded over the dotted line and the sides stitched closed. The sleeves could also be gathered at the cuff making them narrow at the wrist. The hole for the neck was often round but could also have a V-neck (image by author).*

The female dress with wide sleeves

This garment is likely made from the same pattern as the male tunic. It could be possible however that this garment was more fitted, and that the sleeves were put in separately, preventing it from tugging at the armpits. This is only an example of a pattern for such a dress.

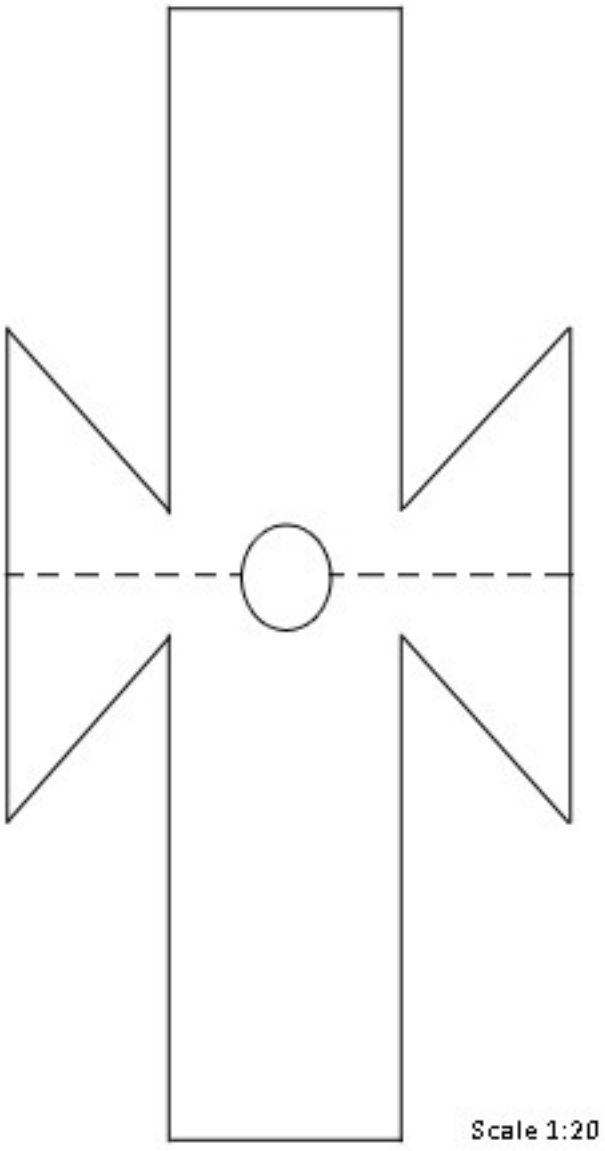

Figure 24: a pattern for the female dress inspired by the medieval west. It is unclear if the sleeves were put in separately or that the dress was made from a single piece of cloth (image by author).

The loros

The pattern for the *loros* is the simplest of all: it seems to have been a simple straight piece of fabric varying in length and width. From most images it can be assumed that the *loros* must have been at least 360 to 450 centimeters in length with a width of about 25 to 35 centimeters. It was lined at the back with what seems to be red silk in most images.

About the reconstructed costume

After much consideration the costume chosen for reconstruction is from the cover image: Christ crowning Michael VII Doukas (Nikephoros III Botaneiates) and Maria Alania (1074-1081) (from Evans and Wixom (eds) 1997, 182). Michael VII Doukas' costume will be reconstructed.

Reconstructing a Byzantine costume, especially without being able to examine remaining garments from that time is very hard. The patterns seem fairly straightforward but choosing a nice fabric that looks like silk and with a similar pattern is not easy. Unfortunately real silk is mostly outside of the author's budget but luckily one fabric company was so kind to sponsor 350 cm of fabric to make the *divetesion* from. The fabric is supposed to be used for upholstering chairs and furniture but it is a nice, heavy fabric that can no longer be found in general fabric stores and will suit the purpose of an imperial costume nicely. It also has a nice shine similar to silk.

The glass pearls and fake jewels were found on eBay since more than 500 real pearls would be much too costly. The jewels were all hand painted with glass paint to make the color more similar to real rubies and sapphires. All 500 pearls and 160 jewels were hand sewed on the *loros*. The *loros* itself is made from real dupion silk in a gold color and lined with a red synthetic fabric similar to satin. The *loros* is made from four pieces sewed together in order to save on fabric. Especially the dupion silk is very expensive and making it from one piece would have quadrupled its cost.

The border on the hem of the *divetesion* was bought from a shop in Amsterdam and the border of the *loros* was bought in a fabric store in Katwijk. It may not be exactly similar to the one on the picture but the color and pattern were very Byzantine like and would look very good with the rest of the costume. The pattern dividing the gems on the *loros* was made by sewing a thin imitation satin ribbon on the loros, more than 58 meters in total.

Conclusion

From the start of Byzantium up to the seventh and eighth century the empire was still very unstable. Only after the second half of the eighth century did the Byzantine empire truly started developing. After a long period of prosperity and strong leadership the eleventh and twelfth centuries were less peaceful with barbarians at the gates and the city was sacked at the beginning of the thirteenth century by the fourth Crusade. The empire continued to exist until the Turks finally invaded the city in 1453.

The Byzantine court was still in development until the tenth and eleventh centuries. Before then the court mostly consisted of the emperor's close family and friends and the very rich. Only from the tenth century onward did a true aristocracy start to form and even 'regular' people could rise up to a high position through education and climbing the ranks. The court was a highly stratified institution where order and court ritual were extremely important. The empress held her own court with possibly as many court officials as the men. Women could also hold great power and sometimes even ruled alone or as regent to her young son. Elite women at court held the same position as their husband and were seen dressed very similar to him.

The Byzantine arts were inherited from the late Roman empire, but this soon started to change under the influence from the east. Islamic and other eastern influences formed a true Byzantine art style in the middle of the Byzantine period. Grand paintings were done in churches and great mosaic decorations were added to the great Palace and private villas. At the end of the Byzantine Empire the visual arts started to become more humanized and were to be a great inspiration to later Italian and European artists.

During several short periods figurative art and especially icons were banned by the emperor. Possibly due to recent losses during conflicts that were interpreted as a sign from god while the Arabs were prospering while not allowing figurative art the Byzantine emperor wanted to be more like them. Several times images were abolished before being allowed once again for the final time in 843 AD. Sometimes images were removed from churches and even destroyed, and it is likely that during periods of iconoclasm almost no figurative art was made. However there are still plenty of images of saints and the imperial family present, indicating that it did not have a very large impact on the arts in the period before and after iconoclasm.

Before examining images of the imperial family and the elite it is wise to consider what kind of impact the artist could have had on a portrait. Were they actually depicted lifelike or was there a bit of artistic freedom present? From several historical sources it is known that emperors that were bad rulers in the eyes of his people were described as foul-smelling with crumpled old clothes that are faded with age. Something to keep in mind when looking at any piece of art.

Byzantine dress has Greek and Roman origins and later transformed under influences from the east. The tunic, toga and *chlamys* were simply taken over from the Roman empire while the *loros* was an adaptation to the Roman ceremonial toga, the *trabea triumphalis*. It was a leather or heavy silken stole decorated with pearls and gems cut in squares in rows of two to four. The *loros* was exclusively worn by members of the imperial family, including women. Also exclusive to the royal family were the royal diadem or crown, the *stemma* and the red silken shoes called *tzangia*. The crown had Hellenistic origins dating back to Alexander the Great, while the provenance of the imperial shoes is largely unknown. Underneath the *loros* a silken tunic called a *divetesion* was normally worn that was often purple colored, a color that was also exclusive to the emperor. The *divetesion* was normally decorated with gold thread, making it an even more impressive garment. Several other colors were also considered as high-ranking such as red, white and blue that could be worn by the emperor as well as his courtiers.

The *chlamys* was traditionally a cloak made of felt, but in the Byzantine period it developed into either a long or short cloak made from silk. It was often worn with a *tablion*, a large decorative rectangle made from gold thread that was sewn onto a white or purple *chlamys* with a *divetesion* underneath. This was also the most common image of the emperor on coins and official images until the *loros* took over. Apart from the *chlamys*, two other types of cloaks were commonly worn, the *skaramangion* and *sagion*. The *sagion* was commonly worn by courtiers, but exactly what a *skaramangion* was is unclear. It was also possibly a cloak regularly worn by courtiers.

Women's dress was similar to that of men's at least until at least the eleventh century, but they did have garments that were unique to women. The *delmatikion*, *maphorion* and *thorakion* are named as female pieces of clothing. The *maphorion* was a veil of some sort and the *delmatikion* was a religious garment based on the Roman tunic. Exactly what a *thorakion* used to be remains a mystery. Veils were also regularly worn by women and most garments for the not so rich were very wide and would have to be able to accommodate pregnancy. Strangely enough red shoes were most often worn by women, while in men this was a color reserved for the royal family.

Byzantine dress in the borderlands was highly influenced by the east as well as the west. The *caftan*, a tunic with the opening in front was very popular in several regions, as well as the turban and dresses for the women with long sleeves like those in the medieval west. Fabrics were decorated with patterns inspired by the east with few figurative motifs, but many bird, animal and floral patterns. Trade in the most exquisite silks was very important in the Byzantine Empire and was highly restricted. Fabrics could be extremely expensive and were often graded on their quality by their weight.

With the Byzantines' obsession for looking good and the high importance of the production of fabrics it is not really a surprise that in the Byzantine Empire a notion of fashion was present. Most fashion historians are convinced that fashion only arose in the second half of the fourteenth century, but it is difficult to deny that the Byzantines were also interested in fashion. At court strict regulations were present in order to ensure that all the court officials dressed decently for every occasion and in the borderlands clothing styles changed even more quickly, its people adapting garments from their neighbors as it suited their needs. Clothing styles also seem to have traveled from the outskirts towards the center as western styled dresses and turbans appeared first in the borderlands before coming into fashion in the capital several years later.

Specific garments such as pieces of clothing worn by the emperor were often not merely decorative, but also carried meaning. The pearls and gems on his garments were an indication of his virtue and wisdom, while the length of the ornaments hanging from his crown indicated the length of his rule. Furthermore purple colors were only to be worn by the imperial family and the silken red shoes were also exclusive to the royals. It is likely that several other garments carried great meaning for the Byzantine people but it is very difficult to uncover those from modern time.

Surprisingly the emperor and empress were dressed very similarly from the eighth century onwards, both of them wearing the *loros*, *stemma*, *tzangia* and *divetesion* in most of the images. Before the eighth century in a period of war the emperor was often dressed in garb associated with the military, and the women wear the *dalmatic*, a belted tunic. Clearly in the more peaceful period of the middle Byzantine era the dynasty and thus women providing offspring became more important. When an emperor died the empress could even rule alone and continue the dynasty until she remarried or until her son came of age. Only after the eleventh century did women's dress start to differentiate when more western styled dresses came into fashion that were more fitted and with long sleeves. Perhaps this was a reaction to the unrest and threat to the empire from the Ottoman Turks as well as other peoples. It seems that

since women shared their husbands title and dress, they were respected as well as men were, even though women had far less power in church.

In the world of the elite gender differences in dress were also relatively few, most of the women carried their husbands title and also dressed alike. Only in the borderlands where people were directly in contact with foreign peoples more gender difference seemed to have been present. From an early date western dresses were worn here and it is likely that other styles were also quickly adapted if the women fancied new styles of fashion. This seems to have had no relation to the women's status however.

It is very strange that in recent years children and Byzantium have gotten more and more attention from scholars, but that Byzantine children are hardly ever mentioned, let alone their style of dress. Children from the imperial family were dressed the same as their parents in the royal *loros*, *stemma* and *tzangia*. Like women the children continuing the bloodline were very important within the dynasty and were treated and dressed as such. Even girls were often dressed in the same royal garments, if they were not omitted from the images at all. Female imperial children were important to the empire however since they could be married off and create alliances with foreign peoples. They were probably only omitted from official images because they would move to their husbands house and start their own family line. In the later Byzantine period a differentiation also began between the heir and his brothers, the former being dressed in imperial garments, while the latter were made to look like their mother. This is also seems to be an indication of the threat from the Ottomans and other peoples and the empire nearly falling apart; only the emperor and his heir were still deemed important since they were essential to the survival of the empire.

Elite children were often dressed the same as their parents, especially in rich families and on official occasions. Garments were lavishly decorated with gold thread, pearls and gems and diverse patterns. Shorter versions of adult clothes were also common, perhaps for less formal occasions, allowing the child more room for movement. Adapted tunics with flared sides and underarm gussets were also regularly worn as well as tunics with a hood, protecting the child against wind and rain. It is likely that the less rich who were not able to afford the garments made from expensive fabrics often dressed their children in these kinds of clothes, allowing them to play and move around more easily.

Abstract

In the last fifty years the subject of Byzantium has received more attention by scholars. However one aspect of the Byzantine Empire has still been largely ignored: the lavish garments worn by both the emperor and his people. Dress can say much about a people: how were women seen, were they dressed similar to the men and did they have power? How was the imperial family dressed, and could an empresses power be visible from her garments? Was a sort of fashion already present at this early time or did clothing styles not change at all? And how were the children dressed? Were the imperial children dressed differently from the elite, and were the elite dressed like their parents?

From images it is clear that both emperor and empress wore the same lavish garments that were exclusive to the imperial family and which carried great meaning. At least from the eighth to the eleventh century women dressed exactly like their husbands, even in the world of the elite. Variations did occur, just like garments that were only worn by women such as the veil. Only in the early and late Byzantine Empire differences in dress appeared between men and women, possible due to the pressure from barbarians invading the country. The men had to show a more military styled garb in these periods.

Even though many fashion historians claim that fashion only started in the middle of the fourteenth century it is certain that some basic form of fashion was already in place in the middle Byzantine Empire. New styles of dress were often adopted from the outskirts of the Empire and these new fashions were later also seen in the center. In this way turbans and western styled dresses traveled from the Islamic world and the west through the borderlands towards the capital. From historical sources it is also known that people were obsessed with looking good and fashionable, the clearest indication one would wish for an early notion of fashion.

Children of the imperial family were dressed exactly like their mother and father in the beautiful royal garments. Brothers to the heir were not discriminated (even though girls were sometimes omitted from family portraits). Clearly all of the imperial children were cherished, not only the heir. Girls were important tools in order to gain alliances with important families and were cherished. Elite children, like imperial children, were dressed like their parents, at least on official occasions and holidays. On not so formal occasions they were likely dressed in special garments for children which gave them more room to move and play. It is also possible that these garments were

owned by the less fortunate who were not able to afford the expensive luxurious clothes of the most important families.

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