Zsuzsanna D'Albini

CHANGING ICONOGRAPHY IN ELEVENTH- AND TWELTFH-CENTURY PSALTERS: MIRIAM'S DANCE AS AN EXPRESSION OF PERSONAL DEVOTION

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Zsuzsanna D'Albini

(Hungary)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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I, the undersigned, **Zsuzsanna D'Albini**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 17 May 2013

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Signature

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CahArch	*Cahiers Archéologiques*
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*
ODB	*Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. 3 vols., ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan.
PG	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus.* Series Graeca, ed. J.-P. Migne.
REB	*Revue des Études Byzantines*
REG	*Revue des Études Grecques*

INTRODUCTION

The portrayal of dance is a complex task for artists. They are not required to simply isolate a moment from a sequence of movements like a photographer does.[1] A painted image uses "visual signifiers" that denote movement. By the term visual signifiers I refer to characteristic instances and postures that an artist should select and depict convincingly enough in order to render the dance included in the image recognizable. Through these visual signifiers viewers can identify specific types of motion. This is made possible by recognizing, for instance, a characteristic step, such as the holding of hand or a twist of a head.[2] While looking at the image certain connotations or common knowledge comes to the mind of the viewers. For instance, the tango generally evokes passion, while the ballet can suggest sophistication. The choral dance[3] is closely linked with the idea of participation, in as much as individual dancers partake in and are constituent elements of a team activity performed by a group of people.[4] Certainly, these evocations depend on the culture in which the viewers were brought up, the type of dances they are familiar with and how these dances have been explained to them. The interpretation of an image is deeply affected by the context in which this appears. In this respect, the images of Miriam's dance on which I focus in my thesis are to be found in Psalters. Considering all the above, it is clear that the interpretation of images of Byzantine dances[5] is a challenging endeavor.

[1] Recently Tilman Seebass dealt with the issue of depiction of dance. For a short introduction to this issue, see: Idem., "Iconography and Dance Research," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 29 (1991): 33-51.
[2] Ibid., 35-36.
[3] I use the term "choral dance" to refer to a collective dance. The form of the choral dance is specifically circular. For more connotations of the term *choros* see: Nicoletta Isar, "Chorography (*Chôra, Chorós*) – A Performative Paradigm of Creation of Sacred Space in Byzantium," *Hierotopy. Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, ed. Alexei Lidov (Moscow: Indrik, 2006), 59-61.
[4] Nicoletta Isar, *ΧΟΡΟΣ: The Dance of Adam. The Making of Byzantine Chorography,* (Leiden: Alexandros Press, 2011), 26-28. On metamorphosis and participation in the choral dance, Bissera V. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium,* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 158.
[5] By the term "Byzantine dance" I refer to dances performed by the subjects of Byzantine Empire. It does not necessarily refer to the origin of the dance.

In Byzantium images of dancers appear in secular and religious contexts. The images on ivory caskets frequently portray dancing *meneads* and *puttos*.[6] Representations of dance appear also in religious imagery, such as in the illuminations of the Octateuch and psalters. Most frequently dancers are depicted in illustrations of David's triumphal Entry into Jerusalem and miniatures of the first ode of Moses which was sung after the crossing of the Red Sea.[7] The illuminations of the first ode frequently portray the thanksgiving triumphal dance of Miriam. My thesis focuses on images of Miriam's dance from eleventh- and twelfth-century psalters. The particular subject matter appears also in ninth- and tenth-century psalters. Such images portray the solo dance of Miriam who is depicted raising her hands above her head, while holding small cymbals. After the middle of the eleventh century a new iconographic type of Miriam's dance appeared. This involves the choral dance of Miriam and her companions clad in costumes featuring trumpet-sleeves. The nine psalters I discuss portray a choral (or circle) dance, performed by a different number of participants. (for a list of manuscripts see Appendix I)

Of these nine psalters, eight are frequently included among the so-called "aristocratic psalters." This category was coined at the end of the nineteenth century[8] and was later also used by other scholars.[9] At the same time, the term was also subject to debate due to numerous deviations among their illuminations and its allusion to aristocratic patronage which

[6] For more on these objects decorated with mythological representations see: Ioli Kalaverzou, "Luxury Objects," *The Glory of Byzantium,* ed. Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 219-223.

[7] Thomas Steppan's article on middle and late Byzantine images of dance is essential regarding the iconography of dance. Idem., "Tanzdarstellungen der mittel- und spätbyzantinischen Kunst. Ursache, Entwicklung und Aussage eines Bildmotivs," *CahArch* 45 (1997): 141-167. Further observations were made by Angeliki Liveri, "Der Tanz in der mittel- und spätbyzantinischen Kunst," *Wiener Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik*, ed. Wolfram Hörander and Johannes Koder (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004), 287-298.

[8] J.J. Tikkanen, *Die Psalterillustration in Mittelalter* (Helsinki, 1895), cited by Anthony Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium,* (Paris: Picard, 1984), 8. And also by A. Springer, *Die Psalter-Illustration im frühen Mittelalter mit besondered Rücksicht auf dem Utrecht Psalter* (Leipzig, 1880), cited by Georgi R. Parpulov, "Toward a History of Byzantine Psalter" (PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2004), 2.

[9] For a general introduction to the use of the terminology see Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium,* 9.

is not presumable for all psalters in the group.[10] I avoid using the term because it implicitly refers to the patronage, while this issue should not be taken self-evident. At the same time, aristocratic patronage is a feasible possibility regarding the eight psalters that I discuss. Five of the nine psalters[11] are connected to the so-called *Family 2400*.[12] Because of the diversity of the *Family 2400* manuscripts in terms of style, paleography and quality, Annamarie Weyl Carr has proposed the categorization these provincial manuscripts into various sub-groups.[13] The above mentioned five psalters are connected to the so-called "Chicago group".[14] The thirty-one manuscripts of this group show diversity in size, lineation and illumination, yet they are related in various levels.[15] Although they present similarities, it is not likely that they were products of a common workshop.[16] The origin of these manuscripts is quite ambiguous. Weyl Carr proposes that the manuscript of the "Chicago group" may have been produced on Cyprus or in its closest cultural neighbor Jerusalem.[17] Although the origin of the manuscripts points to provincial manufactures, what is more important to the subject of my thesis is that the costly illuminations imply elite, aristocratic patronage.

The majority of the discussed Psalter was produced during the rule of the Komnenian dynasty (1081-1185). This period in Byzantium is generally characterized by the

[10] For example, several differences were shown by Sirarpie der Nersessian, "A Psalter and New Testament Manuscript at Dumbarton Oaks," *DOP* 19 (1965): 167-177. The issue of the term was discussed by John Lowden, "Observations on Byzantine Illuminated Psalters," *The Art Bulletin* 70:2 (1988): 255-256.
[11] Mt Athos, Megiste Lavra, MS B 26. London, British Library, MS Add. 11836. London, British Library, MS Add. 40753. Palermo, Fondo museo, MS 4. Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, MS Suppl. gr. 1335.
[12] The features of the *Family 2400* manuscripts were first described by Harold R. Willoughby, "The Codex 2400 and Its Miniatures," *Art Bulletin* 15 (1933): 3-74. The group was later discussed by Anthony Cutler and Annamarie Weyl Carr, "The Psalter Benaki 34.3. An Unpublished Illuminated Manuscript from the Family 2400," *REB* 34 (1976): 281-323. It was further elaborated by Annamarie Weyl Carr, "A Group of Provincial Manuscripts from the Twelfth Century," *DOP* 36 (1982): 39-81. The Family 2400 comprises over eighty manuscripts, for a list see: Ibid., 40.
[13] For more details on the various sub-groups see, Annamarie Weyl Carr, *Byzantine Illumination, 1150-1250: A Study of a Provincial Tradition* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
[14] Ibid., 13-14.
[15] The varieties of relations were discussed in detail: Ibid., 12-28.
[16] Ibid., 14.
[17] The place of production is suggested on the evidence of three manuscripts, which were probably produced on Cyprus as it is implied by their included inscriptions. Ibid., 20.

decentralization of state, the urbanization of the provinces and economical growth.[18] The economic growth with the opening up of Western markets led to an increased demand for manufactured goods.[19] Constantinople had not lost its importance in manufacturing luxury items such as silks, precious metalwork or illuminated books.[20] At the same time, several towns in the Balkan region and in Asia Minor emerged as centers of production of both bulk and luxury products to satisfy increased demands. Luxury items were produced in new urban centers for export, for the urban aristocracy and probably for a rich and influential group of merchants who could afford these costly codices.[21] The patrons of these illuminated psalters may have been members of these latter two groups: the urban aristocracy and the wealthy middle-class of the cities. The representations of the icons of the Virgin with the Child in these psalters may imply that they were produced for the ruling aristocracy to gratify their demands and to meet their devotional practices, because these icons held imperial connotations and they were venerated by the members of the Komnenian dynasty (see the section on iconography in the first chapter).[22] However, the majority of the psalters do not refer clearly to the Komnenian dynasty, thus the question of patronage cannot be answered with certainty.

After this general introduction to my visual sources, I discuss here two issues that should be taken into consideration regarding the representations of dance in Byzantine psalters. First, I investigate the issue of appearance of *realia*[23] in religious imagery, then I discuss the views on dance in Byzantium. In the first chapter of my thesis I argue that the representations of Miriam's dance in the nine psalters portray a contemporary dance. The

[18] Alexander P. Kazhdan and Ann Wharton Eppstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California, 1985), 31-46.
[19] Angeliki E. Laiou and Cécile Morrisson, *The Byzantine Economy* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 134.
[20] Ibid., 132.
[21] Laiou and Morrisson, *The Byzantine Economy*, 141.
[22] Annamarie Weyl Carr, "Diminutive Byzantine Manuscripts" *Codices Manuscripti* 6 (1980): 132.
[23] The term "*realia*" refers to contemporary secular artefacts, see: Maria G. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th-15th Centuries)* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 1.

detailed descriptions of the images reveal that they generally portray the same features, such as similar dress, similar steps, similar holding of hands. At the same time there are significant differences, for instance in the number of dancers or the level to which these hold their hands. I argue that while they are similar enough to refer to the same dance, their visual affinity in not strong enough to substantiate common iconographic source. Since they cannot be traced back to a common model, one should perhaps search for a model outside art, namely in everyday life. Although, it is not possible to reconstruct a Byzantine dance based on these images, one cannot exclude the possibility that these referred to contemporary dance. This suggestion is not without problems.

Maria Parani has dealt with the issue of the appearance of contemporary material objects in religious iconography.[24] She points out that since the byzantine iconography traditionally reflects an ideal prototype, it follows standardized models. As Parani explains, "The faithful representation of the surrounding material world had to be avoided since it would have resulted in images too specific in terms of time and space."[25] At the same time, the inclusion of material objects in these representations allows the impression of an attempt for a more realistic approach that would make the scenes more recognizable to the viewers.[26] While these images cannot be regarded as accurate representations of everyday life, they cannot be entirely dismissed as sources of information on Byzantine culture. Of course, dance is not an object, but it can be treated similarly to material objects in terms of its representation in religious iconography. A certain dance can be identified by its general characteristics (steps, holding hands etc.) and the costume.

The representation of profane subjects in religious context can be problematic; even more so in cases, images involving dancers. The most frequently cited passages on Byzantine

[24] Maria G. Parani, "Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography," *Material Culture and Well-Being in Byzantium (400-1453),* ed. Michael Grünbart and Ewald Kislinger (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademia der Wissenschaften, 2007), 181-192.
[25] Parani, "Byzantine Material Culture," 181.
[26] Ibid., 181.

dance underline the condemnation of dancers. John Chrysostom, the bishop of Constantinople (398-404) and famous orator, criticized dancers and their audiences. He elaborated on the effect of the sight of stage performers, dancers: their moves, gestures, glances remain in the viewer's mind and deceive the spectator's soul.[27] Several Acts of Church Councils attempted to restrict dancing during private and public festivals.[28] These prohibitions were probably not effective: the twelfth-century commentaries on the eight-century Acts of the Council of Trullo reveal that dance was still part of private and public festivals.[29] These passages on the derogatory nature of dance in Byzantium reflect the official viewpoint of the church. However, they do not reflect the attitude and experiences of the Byzantine society. Byzantine rhetoric views dance from a more positive perspective. As Henry Maguire argues, subjects like nudity or dance were not good or bad in themselves. Their negative or positive connotations were dependent on the context in which these images appear.[30] Regarding dance, there was difference between the harsh, bacchic dances and the solemn movements.[31] The condemnatory comments of the church fathers and the legislative acts of the church were against dances in pagan context and judged the seductive elements of dance. Images of dance in psalters, however, do not seem to portray these pagan dances. Rather, it appears that the dances depicted therein formed part of joyful banquets and triumphal ceremonies. To understand the message of the portrayal of Miriam's dance one should investigate these positive contexts of Byzantine dance.

Byzantine novels of love and adventure often describe luxurious banquets with music and dancing. The genre of the Byzantine novel reappeared in the middle of the twelfth

[27] Ruth Webb, "Salome's Sisters," in *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium,* ed. Liz James, (London: Routledge, 1997), 133. She has extensively discussed the social status of dancers in Idem., *Demons and Dancers: Performance in Late Antiquity,* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2008).
[28] Cyril Mango, "Daily Life in Byzantium" *JÖB* 31, no. 1 (1981): 349-351.
[29] Anthony Kaldellis, "The Kalends in Byzantium, 400-1200 AD: A New Interpretation," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 13 (2012): 192-194.
[30] Henry Maguire, "The Profane Aesthetic in Byzantine Art and Literature," *DOP* 53 (1999): 203.
[31] Ibid., 197.

century; four of them are known today.[32] They draw on Late Antique novels dated to the second through to the fourth century and frequently cite *topoi* from ancient literature.[33] The text of the Byzantine novels was written in the Atticizing sociolect of the educated middle-class in Constantinople.[34] It implies that probably these novels were meant to be presented in *theatron* in front of Constantinople's social elite.[35]These fictional narratives of love and adventure take place in the distant past, in Ancient Greece. Although the plot and language of these novels are bound to the past, the novels reflect the concerns of their time, for instance the battles and fighting with pirates or the issue of marriage, and the conceptual framework of their contemporary audience.[36] The banquets in these novels appeared to abound in of food, drinking, joking, and dancing.[37] It is likely that these descriptions were inspired by twelfth century Byzantine banquets, although according to the stories these banquets took place in distant past. Descriptions of dance appear in a Dionysiac context; on banquets organized for the festival of Dionysos. Here I cite only one passage which refers to the circular dance of Drosilla and her companions on a festival of Dinoysos in Niketas Eugenianos' *Drosilla and Charikles*:

> It was for this festival the maiden Drosilla too,
> with the girls and maidens who were her companions,
> had already left the wall of the city,
> and started the fair circling of dance.[38]

[32] Theodore Prodromos: *Rhodanthe and Dosikles*; Eumathios Makrembolites: *Hysmine and Hysminias*; Constantine Manasses: *Aristandros and Kallithea*; and Niketas Eugeniaos: *Drosilla and Charikles*. Recently translated by Elizabeth Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine Novels* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012).
[33] Suzanne MacAlsiter, "Ancient and Contemporary in Byzantine Novels," *The Search for the Ancient Novel,* ed. James Tatum (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 339.
[34] Ingela Nilsson, *Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure: Narrative Technique and Mimesis in Eumathios Makrembolites' "Hysmine and Hysminas"* (Uppsala, 2001), 20-21.
[35] Cyril Mango, *Byzantium: the Empire of the New Rome*, (London: Phoenix, 1984), 237. Elizabeth Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine Novels,*14.
[36] MacAlister, "Ancient and Contemporary in Byzantine Novels," 310.
[37] Corinne Jouanno discusses the metaliterary meaning of banquet-scenes and their allusions to everyday experiences in the twelfth century, see: Idem., "Sur un *topos* oublié: les scènes de banquets," *REG* 109 (1996), 157-184.
[38]Eugenianos, *D&C* 1:116.119.:
Δι' ἣν ἑορτὴν καὶ Δροσίλλα παρθένος
σὺν ταῖς κατ' αὐτὴν καὶ κόραις καὶ παρθένοις
τὸ τεῖχος ἤδη τῆς πολίχνης ἐξέδυ,
χοροῦ καλὴν τόρνωσιν ἐνστησαμένη.

It is noteworthy that the passage describes the dance as a fair circle dance. As I have discussed above, this dance has nothing to do with harsh, bacchic movements which were condemned by the church. As Maguire argues, dance in itself was not negative or positive; its appreciation was dependent on the context.[39] It seems that in twelfth-century novels it was possible to praise the fairness and the joy of dance. The events take place in the distant past thus providing a context seemingly far from twelfth-century Byzantium.

In addition, the *Book of Ceremonies* of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos shows that the dances performed in official imperial banquets had triumphal connotations. The prescribed acclamations during imperial banquets underline that the dancers were celebrating with joy the victorious emperor who rules the world by the will of God. I discuss the triumphal connotations of dance in more detail later.

Dance appears also in ritual context in Byzantium, though evidence is few and unclear. For this reason I chose not to discuss this issue extensively. During the wedding ceremony, couples go around the altar with the priest three times. This is called the "Dance of Isaiah" and it is still part of Orthodox weddings. The other occasion on which dance could take place in ritual context was during funeral. In late antiquity the oral lamentations, the *moirologia*, were recited by women in responsorial form. John Chrysostom in the fourth century accused mourning women for blasphemy.[40] They were yelling and made wild gestures of dance to the sound of the flute. In later times, women performed their sorrowful gestures outside the church or in the narthex during the funeral.[41] It was not part of the official liturgy and was probably connected with ancient popular traditions.[42] Triumphal and joyful dance was mentioned several times in the context of the resurrection of Christ. The first ode

Fabrizio Conca, *Il Romanzo bizantino del XII secolo* (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1994), 312; trans. Elizabeth Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine Novels*, 355.

[39] Maguire, "The Profane Aesthetic in Byzantine Art and Literature," 197.

[40] Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081-1261,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 453. And Diane Touliatos-Miles, "Ο Βυζαντινος Χορος Σε Κοσμικους Και Ιερους Χωρους [Byzantine Dance in Secular and Sacred Places]," *Αρχαιολογια & Τεχνες* 91 (2004): 29-36.

[41] Touliatos-Miles, "Byzantine Dance in Secular and Sacred Places," 32.

[42] Angold, *Church and Society*, 443.

of Moses – with the dance of Miriam – was part of the canon of the *Lenten Triodion* and the Easter vigil.[43] The *Lenten Triodion* provided the texts for the liturgy during the weeks prior to the Holy Week and Easter. The events of the Easter celebrations culminate in Christ's resurrection and his triumph over death. Christ's descent to hell and the salvation of Adam and Eve were frequently depicted in images of *Anastasis* on church-walls or in psalters. A characteristic feature of the *Anastasis* image is the way in which Christ holds the wrists of Adam and Eve respectively. Nicoletta Isar argues that the depiction of this particular feature goes back to ancient Greek sacral dances.[44] Isar points out, that triumphal dance was mentioned in Easter homilies and hymns (see in section Spiritual triumph and the dance of soul).[45] At the same time, Christ's triumph over Hades inspired proverbs such as: "There were we have lingered so long, and John and all (the others) were dancing."[46] John the Baptist was supposed to welcome Christ at the gate of hell. He and all the other righteous men and women of the Old Testament period started to dance upon the arrival of Christ.[47] That the topic of joyous dance over the descent to hell is mentioned in popular proverbs suggests, that dance was frequently seen as an act of joy and triumph even in a religious context.

Having discussed the above literary evidence on Byzantine dances, I return to the images of dance. I attempt to trace the possible role of the images of dance found in Byzantine psalters and their function in personal piety. For this reason, it is necessary to investigate the use and role of Psalters at the time. In Byzantium, Psalters were frequently used for personal prayer and contemplation as Georgi R. Parpulov discusses it recently.[48] The Psalter played a prominent role in personal devotional life as implied in several prefaces.

[43] Isar, *ΧΟΡΟΣ: The Dance of Adam*, 58-61.
[44] Ibid., 52. And Antonia Roumbi, "Κειρ Επι Καρπω Ἡ Το Ταθιδι Ενος Εικονογραφικου Μοτιβου Στο Χρονο ["Wrist Holding" or the Route of an Iconographic Motif Through Time]," *Αρχαιολογια & Τεχνες* 91 (2004): 37-42.
[45] Isar, *ΧΟΡΟΣ: The Dance of Adam*, 57-62.
[46] Angold, *Church and Society*, 461.
[47] Ibid., 461.
[48] Parpulov, *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters*, and "Psalters and Personal Piety in Byzantium," *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. Paul Magdalino and Robert S. Nelson (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2010), 77-105.

Psalms and hymns helped readers to overcome their passions and lead a moral life. They were used as handbooks for spiritual guidance setting, at the same time, models of devotion. I argue that the images of Miriam's dance should be discussed in conjunction with the other portraits included in psalters. The narrative framework of the images of Miriam's dance and their association with the accompanying text were discussed by Kurt Weitzmann.[49] Christopher Walter points out, that themes of prayer appeared more and more frequently in tenth- and eleventh-century psalters. [50] At the same time, he suggests that the illuminations of the first ode remained primarily narratives.[51] While agreeing with his point of view as regards the tenth- and eleventh-century psalters he discusses, I argue that there was a change in the visual articulation and reception the images of Miriam's dance included in eleventh- and twelfth-century psalters. In this period there was an emphasis on their role as models of devotion.

In order to examine the above, I choose to follow the methodology of Maria G. Parani. I base my argument on the assumption that pictorial deviations from standardized models can provide grounds to support that distinct visual features were drawn from everyday life. In this light, if the same features are found in other contemporary images, one can assume that the artists actually reproduce contemporary objects. It is also necessary to consider the iconographic context, the quality and the quantity of details in the rendering of the supposed *realia*. The acquired information can be viewed against written sources.

In the first chapter I discuss visual sources, namely images of dance. The text of the Psalter confirms that the images of Miriam's dance are suitable for them. I start with the description of the visual and textual contents of the nine psalters. Subsequently, I focus on the details of the representations. Close observation and comparison of the nine images reveal the quality and large quantity of the depicted details. In the chapter on Iconography I compare the

[49] Kurt Weitzmann, "The Ode Pictures of the Aristocratic Psalter Recension," *DOP* 30 (1979): 69-71.
[50] Christopher Walter, "The Aristocratic Psalters and Ode Illustration in Byzantium," *Byzantinoslavica* 51 (1990): 45.
[51] Ibid., 52.

images in the eleventh- and twelfth-century psalters with those of earlier psalters from the ninth- and tenth-century. I argue that the above research suggests that the artist portrayed a contemporary dance.

In the second chapter I attempt to contextualize the images of dance with the help of written sources. The examination of the latter shows, that choral dances were appreciated and had triumphal connotations in Byzantium. Subsequently, I investigate the images in their overall context, namely in the Psalter. Since the Psalter constituted the prominent tool for personal devotion I attempt to interpret their images in this light.

CHAPTER I: Representations of dance

in nine eleventh- and twelfth-century psalters

In this first Chapter I present in detail the nine psalters and their images of Miriam's dance informing the argument of my thesis. I have chosen these Psalters because their illuminations allude to a choral, circular dance which appeared as a novelty in the portrayal of Miriam's dance in the eleventh century. All nine psalters are dated to the second half of the eleventh and the twelfth centuries. There are later depictions of the same choral dance for example in the Hamilton Psalter,[52] or in the Venetian Alexander Romance[53] from the fourteenth century. The connection between these two and the earlier representations is unclear, the issue would worth further investigation. The relatively great number of the representations of Miriam's dance as choral dance implies a shift in the interpretative scheme of the image of Miriam's dance in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In order to demonstrate this transformation in the interpretation of Miriam's dance, I first discuss the relation of text and image, as well as the relation between the image of Miriam's dance and the illuminations of the surrounding odes. Second, following these considerations I describe and compare the nine illuminations of Miriam's dance and discuss the question of manufacture and patronage. Third, in the concluding subchapter on iconography, I compare the eleventh- and twelfth-century representations of Miriam's dance to earlier examples and discuss the connotations of choral dance and the costumes of the dancers.

My research would not have been possible without Anthony Cutler's catalogue on Byzantine Psalters. Regarding the general information (date, size and the structure of the

[52] Berlin, Staatliche Museen, MS 78 A 9, fol. 243v.

[53] Venice, Hellenic Institute, MS 5, fol. 131r. Nicolette Trahoulia, "The Greek Alexander Romance: Venice Hellenic Institute Codex 5" (PhD Dissertation, University of Harvard, 1997) and Idem., "The Venice *Alexander Romance*: Pictorial Narrative and the Art of Telling Stories," *History as Literature in Byzantium*, ed. Ruth Macrides (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 145-166.

illuminative system) I usually rely on his publication. The earliest manuscript that represents a circle dance is the Vatican Psalter (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS gr. 752), dated to 1058/59.[54] The next manuscript, in chronological order, is the so-called Mar Saba Psalter (London, British Library, MS Add. 36928), dated ca. 1090.[55] Cutler dates four codices to the second half of the twelfth century (Mt Athos, Megiste Lavra, MS B 26;[56] Istanbul, Topkapı Sarai, MS gr. 13;[57] London, British Library, MS Add. 11836;[58] and London, British Library, MS Add. 40753[59]). Two codices are dated to the last quarter of the twelfth century (Palermo, Fondo Museo, MS 4;[60] Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, MS Suppl. gr. 1335[61]). Mt. Athos, Megiste Lavra, MS B 24[62] is dated to the twelfth century.

The size of the codices may reflect their original use, and certainly affects the illuminations. Generally, smaller manuscripts could have been held in the hand while the larger ones were designed to be placed on a lectern or table for the study or recitation of the text. Seven of the nine manuscripts are less than 25 centimeters in height.[63] Two of these seven are rather small, measuring less than 12 cm in height. In contrast to these pocket-sized codices, the Topkapı Saray manuscript is rather large at 34.2 x 23.7 cm, a size which is rare among Psalters. Only seven of all eighty-three illuminated psalters preserved today exceed 30 cm in height, according to Lowden's table. The Vatican Psalter has similarly large

[54] The date is based on the Paschal tables running from 1059 until 1090, see: Ioli Kalavrezou, Nicolette Trahoulia and Shalom Sabar, "Critique of the Emperor in the Vatican Psalter gr. 752," *DOP* 47 (1993): 197.
[55] Cat.no. 30 in Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*, 48.
[56] Cat.no. 12 in ibid., 24.
[57] Cat.no. 23 in ibid., 39.
[58] Cat.no. 29 in ibid., 46.
[59] Cat.no. 31 in ibid., 50.
[60] Cat.no. 38 in ibid., 62.
[61] Cat.no. 41 in ibid., 76.
[62] Cat.no. 10 in ibid., 22.
[63] London, BL, Add. 40753: 8.6 x 6.4 cm; London, BL, Add. 36928: 12.0–11.5 x 9.5 cm; Lavra, B 26: 17 x 12 cm; Lavra, B 24: 18 x 12 cm; London, BL, Add. 11836: 18.8 x 13.5 cm; Paris, Suppl. gr. 1335: 21.5 x 15 cm; Palermo, Fondo museo 4: 21.6 x 16 cm. Most of the illuminated Psalters are around this size. For a comparison of the size of Psalters see the fourth table in Lowden, "Observations on Illuminated Byzantine Psalters," 248.

dimensions; it measures 33.5 x 27 cm.[64] Further peculiarities of these two manuscripts will be discussed later in this chapter.

Text and image: illuminations of the odes in the nine psalters

As Psalters, the manuscripts contain the text of the psalms and the odes. In many cases they incorporate other texts as well, such as commentaries or New Testament books. Two manuscripts comprise only the Psalms and Odes: Lavra B 24 and Add. 40753. The two large-sized manuscripts, the Topkapı Saray manuscript, the Vatican Psalter and also the pocket-sized Mar Saba Psalter (Add. 36928) contain commentaries.[65] John Lowden argues convincingly that the volume of the Topkapı Saray manuscript was not conceived as a stand-alone piece. It was a companion to another three codices containing books from the Old Testament:[66] the Minor and Major Prophets, the Maccabees and excerpts from the *Antiquities* of Josephus,[67] various Old Testament books,[68] and the catena on the Wisdom Books.[69] Although the Topkapı Saray manuscript is regularly referred to as a Psalter, the accompanying Euthymios Zigabenos' commentary is quite emphatic. Short biblical passages in purple ink are followed by commentaries in black.[70] This layout suggests that the text (and the whole manuscript) was prepared for the study of the Bible (I discuss this topic in detail in

[64] Kalavrezou, Trahoulia and Sabar, "Critique of the Emperor," 196.
[65] The Topkapı Saray manuscript contains the commentaries of Euthymios Zigabenos from the end of the eleventh century, see: John Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books* (University Park.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 28.
The Vatican Psalter contains the commentary of Pseudo-Chrysostom, an explanatory preface to the psalms and the letter of Athanasios to Marcellinus, see: Ernest T. De Wald, *The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septaguint,* III, *Psalms and Odes,* Part 2: *Vaticanus Graecus 752* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942), xi-xii.
The Mar Saba Psalter contains prolegomena on the Psalms by St. John Chrysostom, Kosmas Indikopleustes and others, see: Anthony Cutler, "A Psalter from Mar Saba and the Evolution of the Byzantine David Cycle," *Journal of Jewish Art* 6 (1979): 40.
[66] Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books*, 28.
[67] Oxford, New College, MS gr. 44.
[68] Athens, National Library, MS 44.
[69] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. E. 2.16
[70] Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books*, 30.

Chapter II). Four Psalters among the nine contain books from the New Testament.[71] It is not rare that manuscripts of the New Testament also contained a Psalter. Lowden lists ten codices from Cutler's catalogue that include the New Testament in addition to the Psalms and Odes, and lists six further manuscripts that probably incorporated both the New Testament and the Psalter.[72]

After introducing the contents of the codices I describe the place of the illuminations of Miriam's dance in the manuscripts as well as their respective relation to the neighbouring illuminations of the odes. Generally, the images of Miriam's dance appear in two modes: either as full-page miniatures dividing the psalms and the odes or as headpieces to the first ode.

The representation of Miriam's dance appears as a headpiece above the text of the first Ode in four codices: Lavra, B 24, fol. 203r (**fig. 1**), Lavra, B 26, fol. 262v (**fig. 8**), Add. 11836, fol. 298r (**fig. 6**), and Paris, Suppl. gr. 1335, fol. 327r (**fig. 5**). The text was written in one column in each of them, the frames of the images are of the same width as the column. Lavra B 24 contains relatively few images: only four figural illuminations. The frontispiece shows a full-page miniature depicting David as musician, three further images appear as headpieces to the psalms and the odes. The three other manuscripts feature from eight to seventeen figural images distributed among the psalms and odes. The odes are preceded by a full-page miniatures depicting Moses parting the Red Sea in these three codices (Lavra, B 26; Add. 11836; Paris, Suppl. gr. 1335). The function of these full-page miniatures before the Odes was probably to separate the Book of Psalms from the Odes. The full-page miniature of the Crossing of the Red Sea is followed by representations of Miriam's dance, Moses,

[71] Lavra, B 26 contains the Gospels and Epistles; Add. 11836 the Gospels and Praxapostolos; Paris, Suppl. gr. 1335 the Gospels, Praxapostolos and the Epistles; the Psalter of Queen Costanza (Palermo, Fondo museo 4) the New Testament.

[72] Lowden, "Observations on Illuminated Byzantine Psalters," 249.

Hannah, Habakkuk, Isaiah, Jonah, the Three Men in the Furnace, and the Virgin; the supposed authors of the odes. (To avoid unnecessary repetition, I refer to the portraits illustrating the odes as "author portraits," though these images portray the respective protagonists of the Old Testament books.) It was quite usual to illustrate the odes with the figures of their authors in prayer, sometimes with a roll in their hand, or in *proskynesis*.

The illuminations in the Topkapı Saray manuscript are placed on the right-hand side of the text. The illuminations of the odes begin with the dance of Miriam (fol. 265v; **fig. 3**), followed by Hannah (fol. 271r), Isaiah (fol. 275r), Jonah (fol. 276v), the Three Men in the Furnace (fol. 277v) and the Virgin (fol. 279v). Hannah, Isaiah, and Jonah are holding scrolls in their hands. The texts of the odes begin on the same level as the upper frame of the illuminations. Although the images are placed next to the text and not above the titles of the odes, probably the same function can be assigned to them as in the other manuscripts: they functioned as images introducing their respective odes.

The pocket-sized Add. 40753 has twelve full-page miniatures and one ornamental headpiece decorating the first Psalm. Four miniatures illuminate the Psalms and eight miniatures are devoted to the Odes. The first ode is introduced by the dance of Miriam on folio 146v (**fig. 4**). The following miniatures portray Moses (fol. 148v), Hannah (fol. 152v), the Three Men in the Furnace (fol. 153v), Habakkuk (fol. 155v), Isaiah (fol. 157v), Jonah (fol. 159v) and the Virgin in prayer (fol. 163v). It seems unusual that each ode is introduced with a full-page miniature. This arrangement can be explained by the small size of the manuscript (8.6 x 6.4 cm); there was not enough space on one folio for both the text and the image.

The Mar Saba Psalter (Add. 36928, **fig. 7**) incorporates a David cycle in full-page miniatures collected at the beginning of the codex.[73] No further figural illuminations accompany the Psalms. The illuminations of the odes are arranged according to the same

[73] The cycle is discussed in detail by Cutler, "A Psalter from Mar Saba."

system: the figural illuminations are collected before the text of the odes. Furthermore, only the first ode is decorated with an ornamental headpiece on folio 280v. Folio 279r depicts the Crossing of the Red Sea. Folio 279v is divided into two registers. The upper scene portrays Moses seated in the center with a scroll in his hand. The lower register depicts the dance of Miriam. The Psalter of Queen Costanza (Palermo, Fondo Museo 4, **fig. 2**)[74] also contains a similarly composed full-page miniature on folio 287v, although the following illuminations in this psalter are arranged according to an entirely different system. The psalms are not illuminated, only an ornamental headpiece decorates the first psalm. Folio 287v divides the psalms from the odes. The subsequent pages contain headpieces to the odes with representations of the authors. The miniature between the psalms and odes is divided into two registers. The upper register depicts Moses with a rod in his hand followed by three women on the shore of the Red Sea; while the lower register portrays the dance of Miriam and her companions. Unfortunately the following folio with the text (and probably an illumination) of the first ode is missing from the codex (I discuss a possible reconstruction of the missing folio later). The illuminations of the odes portray Moses,[75] Hannah (fol. 289r), Habakkuk (fol. 289v), Isaiah (fol. 290v), Jonah (fol. 291r), the Three Men in the Furnace (fol. 291v) and the Virgin *orans* (fol. 293v, **fig. 16**). Moses, Hannah, Habakkuk, Isaiah and Jonah are portrayed similarly in a three-quarters view with a gesture of speaking, singing the hymns.

The so-called Vatican Psalter (Vat. gr. 752) combines two themes – the dancers of Miriam and eight musicians of David – on a full-page miniature between the Psalms and the Odes (**fig. 9**).[76] This large-size manuscript is decorated with more than two hundred

[74] The Costanza Psalter is named after its supposed owner, Queen Costanza of Sicily (1154-1198), although this notion is based on a seventeenth-century inscription, see: Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalter in Byzantium*, 61.
[75] The folio is in Philadelphia, Freer Library, MS Lewis 353, fol. 2v.
[76] This quite peculiar iconography appears only in the Hamilton Psalter (late thirteenth – early fourteenth century), but in a more narrative manner, see: Thomas Steppan, "Tanzdarstellungen der mittel- und spätbyzantinischen Kunst," 147.

miniatures, all painted on gold backgrounds.[77] At first sight the illuminations of the odes appear quite regular: Moses (fol. 453v), Hannah (fol. 462v), Habakkuk (fol. 465r), Isaiah (fol. 469r), Jonah (fol. 472r), the Virgin with the Child (fol. 485r), Zachariah (fol. 486r), Simeon (fol. 488r) and Hezekiah (fol. 488v) are portrayed according to the regular scheme: in prayer or with scrolls in their hands. It is notable that the more or less regular order of the odes changes: it is not the Magnificat that ends the manuscript, but the ode of Hezekiah. The illumination of the ode of the Three Men in the Furnace is also quite peculiar: ten miniatures between fol. 473v and 484v illuminate their narrative and hymn. The remarkable emphasis on this ode is probably connected to the patronage and the historical context of the Psalter, which I discuss below.

As I demonstrated above, the representations of Miriam's dance can be sorted into two groups based on their arrangement and functions. Six of the nine miniatures are included among a group of headpieces. A second group of full-page miniatures comes from three manuscripts. In all three cases Miriam's dance is combined with other images; in the Mar Saba Psalter with a teaching scene of Moses, in the Psalter of Queen Costanza with the Crossing of the Red Sea, and in the Vatican Psalter with the musicians of David. These three full-page miniatures are placed between the psalms and odes and functioned as markers between the two types of text, introducing the odes.

The illuminations of the odes portray the supposed authors of the odes in a more or less static manner; in prayer, singing the odes, or in the act of composing their respective odes. As Christopher Walter has shown, this interest in prayer themes appeared as early as on miniatures in ninth-century psalters, though far less frequently and with less consistency.[78] Representations of prayer scenes gradually became more and more frequent in the following centuries, emphasizing the role of the Psalter as a book of prayer. At the same time, Byzantine

[77] Kalavrezou, Trahoulia and Sabar, "Critique of the Emperor," 196. The illuminations of the manuscript were published in De Wald, *The Illustrations in the Manuscript of the Septaguint.*
[78] Walter, "The Aristocratic Psalter and Ode Illustration in Byzantium," 46.

psalters were never entirely devoid of narrative illuminations, as is attested by several psalters.[79] In contrast to these psalters with narrative illuminations, I argue that the psalters discussed in this thesis reflect the increased importance of the Psalter as a devotional book of personal prayer (with the exception of the Vatican Psalter and the Topkapı Saray manuscript) in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. From the enumeration of illustrations I presented above, it becomes apparent that the illuminations emphasized prayer and veneration (I return to this topic in my section on Iconography, and Chapter II). In line with these *proskynetaria* (images of veneration) the representations of Miriam's dance should not be considered an exception. On the contrary, I argue that they should be seen similarly to the others. Furthermore, I suggest that if the dance of Miriam was employed as a *proskynetarion* then the bodily reality of the dance may also have had similar implications. Of course, this cannot be applied to all kinds of dances. Only the circular, choral dance which was portrayed in Psalters may have qualified as a dance of veneration.

Detailed descriptions of the nine representations

To demonstrate that the nine Psalters represent the same (or similar) contemporary type of dance I shall compare the nine images focusing on the poses and costumes of the dancers. The detailed descriptions and the comparison demonstrate that the representations are sufficiently similar to refer to a common model. However, the several differences suggest that the images do not derive from a common pictorial model. In other words: the common model of these representations is not a pictorial schema but presumably, the dance itself in its

[79] To cite only a few examples between the tenth and twelfth centuries: the Paris Psalter (Paris, Biblithèque national de France, MS gr. 139) dated to ca. 975. Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, MS Suppl. gr. 610, dated to the last quarter of the eleventh century. Washington, Dumbarton Oaks, MS 3, ca. 1085. Athens, National Library, MS 15, ca. 1180. Several further examples can be found in the catalogue of Cutler, and Weitzmann, "The Ode Pictures of the Aristocratic Psalter Recension," 65-84.

corporeality. In the descriptions I signal directions from the view of the protagonist on the image according to the heraldic directions.

Generally, the illuminations portray women holding hands and forming a circle. With one exception the dancers wear long dresses with wide trumpet-sleeves, and wide collars. Their bent knees, the twisting poses of their bodies and the waving arrangements of their arms allude to the dynamism of the dance, signify the movement. There is variety in the portrayed steps: some dancers make a cross-step, the others step sidelong. The dancers hold their heads in frontal position looking forward, or they turn it to the left or right. The juxtaposition of the direction of the step and the turning of the head constitute the impression of the twisting move of the body. The positions of their arms also show great variety: they hold hands at the height of the hips, shoulders or head. In some cases the arrangements of the arms compose a waving form. In one case the dancers tie their arms at their elbows and hold hands in front of the chest of the next dancer, forming thus an interlacing formation (Lavra, B 26, **fig. 8**). After this general introduction I turn to the peculiarities of the images. I describe the images along the line of the number of dancers: first the images with two dancers, then the images with three, four, six and, finally and exceptionally, fourteen dancers.

Three codices – Lavra, B 24 (**fig. 1**); Psalter of Queen Costanza, Palermo, (**fig. 2**); Topkapı Saray manuscript (**fig. 3**) – represent a pair of dancers. Though the Costanza Psalter portrays in fact four dancing figures, I discuss it here because the two central figures dancing in a couple are quite similar to the dancing couple in Lavra B 24. In both cases the dancers are facing each other and hold hands on their right side at about the height of their hips, on their left side over their head. They take a step towards each other. The dancers wear trumped-sleeved costumes. Their garments in the Costanza Psalter are decorated with arm-bands. There are two further dancing female figures in the Costanza Psalter flanking the two sides of the illumination. The figure to the right of the dancing couple holds a tambourine in her hands

raised above her head, the figure to their left side makes a twisting move as is suggested by the juxtaposition of the direction of her step and the turning of her head. This twisting movement is emphasized by the position of her arms: her right hand is raised above her head, while her left hand is lowered. The colors of the illuminations are worn, but the gold of the background, the red of the garments of the two figures on the left and the right fringes, and the rose of the garment of the left dancer of the couple in the center are still vivid. The blue color of the costume of the right central dancer and the skirt of the figure with the tambourine looks almost white now, just like the green zone of the ground. Traces of blue and green pigments are still visible. The background is empty in the Costanza Psalter, while in Lavra B 24 and in the Topkapı Saray manuscript a segment of a wall appears. None of the three illuminations has inscription.

The posture of dancers in the Topkapı Saray manuscript is quite different: they are portrayed frontally to the viewer as they are holding hands at the height of their hips. Their free hands are lifted above their heads with their palms open. The poses of their legs are symmetrical: they take a step away from the center. This symmetrical sidelong step suggests that they are opening up their circle to the front. They do not wear any headgears and their costumes, with wide sleeves, are decorated with a wide collar. The garment of the dancer to the right is blue with a purple collar and hem. The dancer on the left has purple garment. The register of the sky is painted with gold and the ground with green.[80]

Two illuminations (Add. 40753 and Paris, Suppl. gr. 1335) represent three dancers in a slightly bent row. The first dancer on the right in Paris, Suppl. gr. 1335. (**fig. 5**) is slightly closer to the plane of the viewer than the following dancers. She makes a cross-step to the left side, turning back toward the other two dancers. The two dancers to the left are stepping to the right. The arms of the three women form a wave: the right hand of the women on the right is

[80] The colors are listed in the catalogue of Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*, 39.

bent at the elbow and her open palm is facing upwards, while her left hand is tied with the right hand of the women in the center and raised to the height of their heads. The left hand of the central woman is tied with the right hand of the woman to the left and lowered to the height of their hips. The left hand of the dancer to the left mirrors the position of the right hand of the woman with the bent elbow and upward facing palm. The garment of the central dancer is rose with red arm-bands and a relatively thin collar, and the costumes of the exterior dancers are red with gold arm-bands and collars. Their shoes are black, they do not wear headgears. The background is formulated similarly to the Costanza Psalter: the zone of the sky is depicted in gold and the ground is colored with green. An additional dancing female figure originally drawn in red planned on the outer margin of the page was later erased; only a few features are visible now. She is facing in the direction of the three dancers and holds a hooked stick in her raised left hand. Her right hand is lowered. An oval shaped object on her lap is hardly visible, probably a drum hanging from her neck.[81] Her garment is short-sleeved. Since this marginal miniature was erased, it is difficult to date. A script on the upper margin of the page denotes the dancers as the sisters of Moses.[82]

Similarly to the miniature of Paris, Suppl. gr. 1335, the pocket-sized Add. 40753 represents three dancers in a slightly bent row (**fig. 4**). The poses of the dancers are more static: they hold hands at the height of their hips, and the movement is signalled only by the turning of the heads and the slightly bent knees. The figure to the left slightly turns to the direction of the other two dancers while she is making a sidelong step to the left. The depicted garments are unique in comparison to the other eight images informing my argument. The

[81] Anthony Cutler has compared this figure to the figure on the left of the Mar Saba Psalter. Idem., "A Psalter from Mar Saba and the Evolution of the Byzantine David Cycle" *Journal of Jewish Art* 6 (1979): 42. Though both miniatures are quite ruined a closer look reveals that the Paris, Suppl. gr. 1335 represents a drummer with a drum-stick in her hand. The Mar Saba Psalter portrays a female figure with a similar hooked stick in her hand. Unfortunately it is not visible on the reproductions whether she holds a drum or not, but this possibility cannot be excluded. The representation of a drummer clearly fits to the iconographic context. The Byzantine images of musicians and dancers several times portray musicians with drums.

[82] A phonetic inscription on the upper-margin: ἀδελφι μωϊσις το μάριᾶμ και ἀλι (γ)ηνεκες (Sisters of Moses, Miriam and other women.) Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*, 76.

long dresses feature narrow sleeves closing at the wrist and wide golden collars. The women wear belts and headgears resembling "turbans". Another peculiarity of the image is the buildings decorated with draperies in the background. A script above the upper frame of the illumination identifies the scene.[83]

The question may emerge: how do these illuminations with three dancers portray a circle dance? As I demonstrated above, the dancers form a slightly bent row; the dancers to left are standing slightly in front of the other figures and they are turning with a few grades into the direction of the other dancers. Their positions thus suggest that the dancers are not standing in a straight row, but in a curved line. It is possible that these images represent that phase of any circular dance when the dancers arrive (or leave) the space designated for their performance.

There are two images representing four dancers. Though both show an equal number of dancers, the two illuminations are quite different. Add. 11836 (**fig. 6**) has the most dynamic and complex representation among the nine images, while the illumination of the Mar Saba Psalter (Add. 36928, **fig. 7**) is one of the most static images. In Add. 11836 one of the four dancers is facing to the center of the circle, while three are turning outside. It is probable that in the reality all dancers were facing into the same direction (inward or outward the circle) for practical reasons. It is thus likely to have been the pictorial invention of the illuminator to portray them in altering directions because of compositional considerations. In this way s/he did not have to portray a dancer from the back. The arrangement of the arms forms three waves: the central figure in the back raises her left arm and holds hands with the dancer to her right slightly higher than at shoulder height. Proceeding in the description along the circle, this figure lowers her left hand and holds the right hand of the central figure at hip level. The central figure in the front raises her left hand and ties it with the right hand of the dancer to

[83] Inscription above the image: ἀδ(ελφαὶ) μωυσέ(ως) χορέους(αι) ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐξόδ(οῦ) τοῦ ἰ(σρα)ήλ (Sisters of Moses dancing on occasion of the Exodus of Israel.) Ibid., 50.

the left at head level. This figure on the left raises her left arm and bends it at the elbow in a way that her forearm is pointing downwards. She is holding the left hand of the central figure in the back of the circle who is also bending her arm but in reverse fashion: her upper-arm pointing downward, her forearm upwards. In this way the hands of the two dancers are tied at shoulder height. The dynamism of the dance is expressed by the cross-steps of the women and the wimple of their garments. They wear wide-sleeved long costumes with arm-bands. The colors of the costumes are the following from the central front to left: red, green, green and blue. Their white arm-bands are decorated with red cross motifs, just like the wide collar of the central dancer in the back of the circle. The three other dancers wear red scarves tied around their neck. The central dancer has red plaited hair and the three other dancers are dark brown-haired. The zone of the sky is painted with gold and the zone of the ground with green.

The depiction of the four dancers in the Mar Saba Psalter (Add. 36928, **fig. 7**) is certainly less dynamic. The dancers appear in the lower register of the folio; the upper register portrays the teaching Moses.[84] All four dancers are facing the center of the circle. Their knees are bent and the two figures on the left and on the right lift their lower legs performing a step to the center of the circle. They hold the hands of the neighboring dancer at the height of their waists. There is a separate taller figure to their left holding a crooked stick in her hand. On the analogy the drum-player on the margin of Paris, Suppl. gr. 1335 (**fig. 5**), it is probable that female figure beats the rhythm on a drum with the stick. To the right a tree is balancing compositionally this figure. All of the figures are wearing garments with wide sleeves. According to the description of Cutler the rear figure has a red colored garment, and the dancer to her right wears a purple costume.

Lavra B 26 (**fig. 8**) contains a representation of six dancers. A dancer in the front to the right is turning outward the circle while the others are facing to the center. As I mentioned

[84] Anthony Cutler, "A Psalter from Mar Saba," 42.

above in the case of Add. 11836, it was probably the pictorial invention of the illuminator to portray them in altering directions. The dancers cross their arms at their elbows and hold hands in front of the chest of the neighboring dancer. Their knees are slightly bent. They wear costumes with wide sleeves and wide golden collars. The lower bands of the costumes are also decorated with gold. The colors of their dresses are the following starting from the central figure in the front: red, rose, red, green, green, rose. The background is divided into two zones: the upper zone of the sky is golden and the lower zone of the ground is green. The inscription on the gold background above the head of the dancers identifies the scene as singing a hymn to the Lord.[85]

The composition in the Vatican Psalter is fundamentally different from the above listed examples (**fig. 9**). All fourteen dancers are portrayed frontally, placed next to each other forming a circle. They all make a cross-step to their right; the ground is signed by a red circle under their feet. Their tied arms at shoulder height form an outer rim to the circle traced by their feet. The background is gold inside this outer rim. There are eight musicians depicted in the middle of the circle with drum, flute, viol and cymbals. The dancers' garments are red, blue and gold with gold and red patterns and they wear pompous headgears. These costumes are similar to the previous examples, but clearly more luxurious: adorned with gold collars and bands on the lower rim of their dress, and gold belts. There are three inscriptions on the illumination: one runs around the linked hands of the dancers, the other runs between the feet. The third type of inscription is placed near the musicians and denotes them. I discuss the meaning and the interpretation of these inscriptions in the chapter on Iconography.

As I have discussed in the Introduction, the real dance did not looked exactly the same as on the images. The postures depicted on images reflect only the most characteristic elements of this dance evoking memories and connotations of this dance in the mind of the

[85] Inscription on the gold background above the dancers: ἄδουσαι τὸ ἄσμα κ(υρι)ῶ ((women) singing the hymn (song) to the Lord) Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium,* 24.

viewer. The circular, choral form of the dance is shared by all nine illuminations. I discuss its connotations in the following chapters.

The detailed descriptions show that there are several further similarities, parallels among the images. I have already mentioned that Willoughby in the 1930s has paralleled Lavra B 26 and Suppl. gr. 1335 with the Rockefeller McCormick New Testament and applied the name *Family 2400* to them.[86] Altogether five of the nine manuscripts I discuss belong to these *Family 2400* manuscripts.[87] The technique, the compositions and the colors of the illuminations suggest that they were produced in closely associated workshops.[88] Indeed, the five illuminations of Miriam's dance are closely related: the green and gold background, the hair and the garments of the dancers, the simple frames of the miniatures and the *mise en page* are quite similar. It is conceivable that they are products of the same or closely related scriptoriums. However, not only these five manuscripts are lavishly decorated. For example, the Vatican Psalter with its more than two hundred miniatures once belonged to a patron from the highest social strata (see later in Chapter II). It is probable that the patrons of these costly manuscripts belonged to aristocratic families of the social élite, thus the iconographic program of the Psalters reflect their devotional practice. I return to the issue of patronage in the following subchapter.

Subsequently I compare the eleventh- and twelfth-century images to surviving earlier examples. The comparison underlines that a significant change in the depiction of Miriam's dance occurred during the period under consideration.

[86] University of Chicago Library Ms. 965. Harold R. Willoughby, "The Codex 2400 and Its Miniatures," *Art Bulletin* 15 (1933) referred to the manuscript as Codex 2400, hence the name of the Family 2400.
[87] Add. 11836; Add. 49753; Lavra B 26; Palermo, Fondo museo 4; Paris, Suppl. gr. 1335.
[88] Cutler and Carr, "The Psalter Benaki 34.3," 306.

Comparison to earlier images:
iconography and further considerations regarding the changing form of representation

Previously I noted that the images of Miriam's dance appear as illustrations to the first ode of Moses. Moses and the sons of Israel sang the first ode after their miraculous escape, the so-called episode of the crossing of the Red Sea. The hymn praises the victorious God who defeated the Egyptians and saved the sons of Israel. The text of the ode can be read in Exodus 15:1-19, it was sung by the sons of Israel and Moses. The dance of Miriam is mentioned in Exodus 15:20-21. With drums and dance they praised the Lord and sang the same hymn as the sons of Israel. Exodus 15:21 repeats the first two lines of the first Ode of Moses (Ex 15:1). It is noteworthy that the text of the ode does not refer to the dance of Miriam, which is mentioned only in the following two verses, while the illuminations of the first Ode most frequently portray the dance of Miriam.

The first ode was associated with the triumphant dance of Miriam from the beginning of Byzantine Psalter illumination. The first ode was illustrated with the representation of Miriam's dance from the ninth century, although not exclusively; the image of the Crossing of the Red Sea was among the possible choices for illumination. Sometimes the two images were combined. The marginal illuminations of ninth-century psalters portray the dance of Miriam in the narrative context of the Crossing of the Red Sea. On the lower margin of the Khludov Psalter from the ninth century Moses and the sons of Israel are leaving the Red Sea from the left side (**fig. 10**). The image is followed the dance of Miriam on the right side of the same folio.[89] Miriam is portrayed as a solo-dancer with cymbals in her hands. She is wearing a long red costume with narrow sleeves closing at her wrist. Her long dark hair is loose. The dance

[89] At first sight it seems that the figure of Miriam precedes the figures coming from the Red Sea, but the image must be read from the left to the right. Moscow, Hist. Museum, MS 129, fol. 148v.

of Miriam is portrayed in the same manner in other ninth-century manuscripts and psalters.[90] The marginal illustration of the first ode in the tenth-century Barberini Psalter[91] is similar, yet slightly modified (**fig. 11**): the narrative was divided to the margins of two pages. Folio 249r portrays the figure of the dancing Miriam accompanied by musicians on the left side; on the right Moses is leading the Israelites. The following page, folio 249v, represents the Crossing of the Red Sea and the chariots of the Pharaoh. Miriam's costume and her hair differ from the illuminations of the ninth-century psalters, but the general features of her dance are similar to those: she is portrayed as a solo dancer with cymbals in her hands. It is clear that the marginal illuminations from the ninth and tenth century cannot be considered as models for the images of eleventh- and twelfth-century psalters which represent circle dances. Not only are the portrayed dances different, but so is the general character of the illuminations: the ninth- and tenth-century images represent the dance in narrative context, while illuminations of the eleventh- and twelfth- century psalters usually omit the Crossing of the Red Sea. Only the context of the ode – although as I have mentioned above, the ode itself (Ex. 15:1-19) does not refer to the dance of Miriam, only the subsequent lines do (Ex. 15:20-21) – and the inscriptions reveal to the beholder that the image portrays Miriam's dance. In this regard the Psalter of Queen Costanza is an exception among the nine psalters, because the illuminator composed the dance of Miriam and the Crossing of the Red Sea on the same page in two registers.

There are further differences between the images in the Psalter of Queen Costanza and the other eight psalters. Only the Costanza Psalter portrays a dancer with cymbals in her hand on the left fringe of the image. Two Octateuch manuscripts,[92] from the eleventh and twelfth

[90] For example: Mt Athos, Monastery of Pantokrator, MS 61, fol. 206r; Homilies of Gregory of Nazzianzen in Paris, Biblitohèque national de France, MS gr. 510, fol. 264v

[91] Biblioteca ApostolicaVaticana, Barb. gr. 372, fol, 249v-249r. End of the eleventh century.

[92] Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS gr. 747, fol. 90v (ca. 1050-1075) and Istanbul, Topkapı Saray, MS gr. 8, fol. 194v (1125-1155). Both manuscripts have been discussed by John Lowden, *The Octateuchs: A Study in Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 11-15, 21-26.

centuries, contain analogous images of dance. In the two Octateuch manuscripts four figures are portrayed, just like in the Costanza Psalter: one pair of dancers, and two separate dancing figures, one on the left and another on the right side of the image (**fig. 12**). The two Octateuch manuscripts portray the two separate figures with instruments in their hands: drums and cymbals. The Costanza Psalter depicts the figure to the left with cymbals, while the Octateuch manuscripts depict the corresponding figure with drums. The separate figures on the right side in the Octateuch manuscripts hold cymbals in their hands, while in the Costanza Psalter Miriam is portrayed without the cymbals. At the same time her pose is identical with those in the Octateuch manuscripts, though in a mirror image. Although the costumes and the hair of the dancers are different in the three manuscripts, it is still possible that they rely on a common iconographic model, because the composition and the relations of the figures are identical. I do not suggest that they rely on exactly the same exemplar, but there is too much correspondence among the three compositions to exclude the possibility of a common iconographic model. At the same time it is clear that the illuminators followed the model only loosely. The illuminator of the Psalter of Queen Costanza painted the costumes of the dancers according to eleventh-century fashion and combined the image with the Crossing of the Red Sea on the same page, which emphasizes the narrative character of the image as I argued above. The following folio is missing from the Costanza Psalter. That this Psalter contained the text of the first ode is clear: fol. 288r contains the last verse of the first ode (Ex. 15:19). It is also probable that the missing folio carried another image. The codex runs to thirty-four to thirty-five lines per page, sixty-eight to seventy lines per folio. The first ode has nineteen verses, which consist of forty-nine lines,[93] and the last verse was written on the following page (Ex 15:19). This supports the idea that the lost folio may have carried an image. But what could it portrayed? It is difficult to reconstruct, as from the Psalters here discussed only

[93] Of course, the exact number of lines depends on the size of the column and letters. The number of lines is only a rough estimation. The proportion of the number of lines per folio and of the ode shows that probably there was enough space for an image.

the Mar Saba Psalter features a similar folio with two registers, but does not contain images illuminating the Odes.

I need to signal two Psalters from the late twelfth century which include quite peculiar illustrations of the first ode of Moses. Mt. Athos, Monastery of Vatopedi, MS 851[94] portrays Miriam and her companions in the *orans* pose (**fig. 13**).[95] An inscription makes it clear that the figures are Miriam and her companions.[96] The following Odes are illustrated with the figures of the authors with scrolls in their hands (Moses, Ananias, Isaiah) or in prayer on their knees (Hannah and Jonah). The Three Men in the Furnace are portrayed according to the general model; they are in the *orans* pose in the furnace with an angel behind them. The last image in the Psalter is quite special again. The figure of the Theotokos in *orans* pose with the Christ child on her chest illuminates the Magnificat (**fig.14**). It follows the typology of the Virgin Platytera. Icons of the Christ child referring to the infant Logos played an important role in the personal devotion of Anna Komnene.[97] The Eleousa icon and another icon of the *orans* Theotokos with the Christ child in a medallion suspended over the chest of the Virgin (Blachernitissa) were venerated in the Blachernai church. The Blachernai palace was reconstructed by the Komnenoi[98] and Alexios I (1081-1118) used the Blachernitissa as a tool of propaganda, hence the veneration of the Blachernitissa icon evoked imperial connotations.[99] The figure of the Emmanuel (Christ child) was also associated with the Komnenoi. Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180) used the Christ Emmanuel on his coins.[100]

[94] Vatopedi 851 also belongs to the *Family 2400* manuscripts, see Cutler and Carr, "The Psalter Benaki 34.3," 307.
[95] Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*, Cat.no. 16.
[96] (Μα)ριάμ. Ibid., 30.
[97] Anna Komnena wrote a poem about the infant Logos which suggests that it played a particular role in her personal devotion, see: Carr, "Diminutive Byzantine Manuscripts," 132.
[98] On the Blachernai palace see: Ruth Macrides, "The Citadel of Byzantine Constantinople," *Cities and Citadels in Turkey: from the Iron Age to the Seljuks*, ed. Scott Redford and Nina Ergin (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 277-304.
[99] Bissera V. Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," *RES: Antrophology and Aestethics* 38 (2000): 50-51. And Idem., *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 145-164. Not only the Blachernitissa icon held imperial connotations. The role of the Theotokos in imperial propaganda is discussed in detail in: Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium.*
[100] Carr, "Diminutive Byzantine Manuscripts," 132.

Following this imperial initiative, the icon of the Theotokos with the Child became especially popular in the mid-twelfth century.[101] To return to the illuminations of the odes in Vatopedi 851, it seems that they are devotional in character. Under "devotional character" I refer both to the depiction of prayer and icons. In other words: these images do not explain and elaborate on the narrative, but on the devotional act.

The illumination of the first Ode in Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, MS Plut. 6.36 also emphasizes the devotional character of the figure of Miriam (**fig. 15**).[102] Miriam and her companions follow the praying Moses. They are all portrayed in prayer, not dancing. There are no other inscriptions on the image except the name of Moses. From the context of the first ode it is clear that the women are Miriam and her companions venerating the Lord. I return for a moment to the missing folio of the Psalter of Queen Costanza. It is possible that it contained a similar image to those in Vatopedi 851 and Laurenziana Plut. 6.36, which portray the figures of Miriam and her companions venerating the Lord. The final image of the icon of the Virgin *orans* in the Costanza Psalter (**fig. 16**) exemplifies that a devotional character was not alien to the manuscript. I doubt that it would have contained the image of Crossing the Red Sea or the dance of Miriam twice, and I have not come across any another motif illuminating the first ode in Byzantine psalters.

After this introduction to the illuminations of the first ode I return to my main set of discuss two characteristic features of the dancers in the eleventh- and twelfth-century psalters: the costumes and the choral form of the dance. One of the most striking features of these dancers that clearly distinguishes them from the earlier examples is their costume, with wide trumpet-sleeves. This type of dress started appearing on images in the eleventh century. The

[101] The imperial associations of the icon of the Virgin and the Child (especially the Hodegetria and the Blachernitissa) was discussed recently by Christine Angelidi and Titos Papamastorakis, "Picturing the Spiritual Protector: from Blachernitissa to Hodegetria," in *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (London: Ashgate, 2005), 209-217. The veneration of the Hodegetria and the Blachernitissa icon in the Komnenian dynasty: Ibid., 214-217.

[102] Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium,* Cat. no. 22. (late twelfth century)

costume could be adorned with collar-bands and arm-bands and be worn with or without a belt.[103] One of the earliest depictions of this garment survived in the Vatican Psalter, which depicts not only the dancers in this costume but, for example, also the servants of Bathseba on the illumination of Psalm 50. Not much later, a coin of Eudokia Makrembolitissa (1059-1071) from 1067 shows the empress in a wide-sleeved garment.[104] This type of dress was worn by all women of the imperial court in the following century.[105] Timothy Dawson has discussed the social aspect of women's dress and argues that this type of dress was mainly worn by women of higher social standing, yet their servants are also depicted in similar garments.[106] This costume appeared in the imperial court in the eleventh century and soon spread across the empire among the élite women (see below). A veil or a headscarf was a general part of women's attire,[107] while the elaborate headgear of the dancers in the Vatican Psalter was worn probably exclusively in the imperial court. The dancers in Add. 40753 are portrayed wearing headgears resembling "turbans" in a costume with long, narrow sleeves and wide collars. Basically women from all social classes were depicted in these garments with headgears.[108] The fabric and the adornments of the dress could have signaled the social standing of the women wearing these garments. The collars of the costumes in Add. 40753 are decorated with gold and ornamental pattern. It suggests that they stand for élite women. Although the costumes do not reveal the exact social status of the figures portrayed, they refer to women from courtly milieu. The courtly milieu does not refer exclusively to the imperial court. It denotes also the smaller aristocratic courts in the capital and in the provinces.

[103] Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 73-74.
[104] The dress of the empress was frequently depicted a shield-like element of the dress hanging from the waist. This feature appears in eleventh- and twelfth-century representations. Ibid., 25-26.
[105] Ibid., 25-26 and 73-75.
[106] Timothy Dawson, "Propriety, Practicality and Pleasure: The Parameters of Women's Dress in Byzantium, A.D. 1000-1200" in *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience AD 800-1200*, ed. Lynda Garland (London: Ashgate, 2006), 51.
[107] Ibid., 44-45.
[108] Ibid., 50.

Although not much information survives regarding the patronage of these illuminated Psalters, the costly illuminations imply that the patrons belonged to the aristocratic élite.[109] The portrayal of icons similar to those that were venerated by the imperial family (see above) may suggest that these Psalters may have been prepared for the loyal supporters of the Komnenoi. However, the cult of these Marian icons was quite wide-spread in the Empire.[110]

The second shared characteristic among the nine images is the choral form of the dance. I use the term "choral dance" in reference to a circular dance. The ritual connotation of the ancient circular dance (*choros*) and its echoes in the constitution of a sacred place in Byzantium was discussed recently by Nicoletta Isar.[111] Bissera Pentcheva investigated the performativity of icons and the significance and connotations of the circularity of the inscriptions on Byzantine icons.[112] Regarding the connotations of choral dance I base my arguments on their research. Choral or circle dance is among the most ancient dance forms which convey the idea of collectivity; it is a collective, ordinate and circular movement. In ancient Greece the choral dance was a ritual, sacred dance characterized by the motif of wrist-holding.[113] The unbroken chain of people in the *choros* constituted the sacred space (*chora*) of communication between humans and the divine.[114] There is no direct evidence on Byzantine ritual dances, although the "Dance of Isaiah" and the circling movement of the wedding couple around the altar may be a distant echo of these ancient ritual dances. It is probable that the images of the circle dance in the Psalters also evoked this ideal of sacred space, as was

[109] The term élite refers to both the social and economic situation of the members of the dominant class who held positions in the state and church. At the same time, the social élite cannot be seen as a homogenous class. It consisted of competing and allying families and individuals, each with specific cultural and political backgrounds. John Haldon discusses the changing structure of the social élite in Byzantium in: Ibid., "Social Élites, Wealth, and Power," *The Social History of Byzantium,* ed. John Haldon, 168-211 (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 183.

[110] See: Natalia Teteriatnikou, "The Image of the Virgin Zoodochos Pege: Two Questions Concerning Its Origin," in *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium,* ed. Maria Vassilaki (Ashgate, 2005), 230

[111] Isar, "Chorography (*Chôra, Chorós*) – A Performative Paradigm of Creation of Sacred Space in Byzantium," 59-90 and idem., *ΧΟΡΟΣ: The Dance of Adam: The Making of Byzantine Chorography* (Leiden: Alexandros Press, 2011).

[112] Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 155-182.

[113] Isar, *ΧΟΡΟΣ,* 52-54.

[114] Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*., 170.

suggested by Pentcheva.[115]There are two inscriptions on the image of Miriam's dance in the Vatican Psalter. The inscription at the foot of the fourteen women is taken from a text of Pseudo-Chrysostom and refers to the eight musicians portrayed in the middle of the circle of dancing women. It denotes the *choros* of the musician-prophets who surrounded David and accompanied him in the composition of Psalms.[116] The words of the first ode run on the exterior frame of the circle formed by the linked hands of the dancers. The text starts at the top center figure with the name of Miriam. It is followed by different lines from the first ode, but not the whole ode. Pentcheva has investigated the structure of the inscription and argues that the text has a cyclical, circular structure form with returning and intertwining verses.[117] In other words, the circular movement of the *choros* is reflected in the structure of the inscription. Pentcheva argues that "it [the image] is probably less concerned with the depiction of a new ritual or a contemporary aristocratic dance … than with the persistence of tradition."[118] I agree with her that the image reflects the ancient tradition of the *choros* but I think that these two, the ancient tradition and the contemporary dance, do not disqualify each other. In other words, the allusion to a choral dance with its reference to an ancient tradition does not exclude the possibility of portraying a contemporary dance form. The costumes of the dancers reflect the contemporary eleventh-century fashion, thus Miriam's dance is placed in the eleventh-century imperial court. The evidence from the nine images I have discussed also points to a contemporary circle dance. Stylistically the illuminations of the Vatican Psalter are different from the other eight Psalters, but it does not follow that they represent different dances. I argue that all of these images refer to the same (or a similar) dances and they all highlight the ancient tradition of ritual dance.

[115] Ibid., 170.
[116] Ernest T. DeWald, *The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint, III, Psalms and Odes,* Part 2*: Vaticanus Graecus 752* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942), 41.
[117] Bissera V. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 171.
[118] Ibid., 173.

The comparison between the ninth- and tenth-century illuminations and the eleventh- and twelfth-century images demonstrates the there was a change in the portrayal of Miriam's dance: the solo dance of Miriam was shifted to a circular dance of women. It seems that the dancers were depicted in the costume of courtly women of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The garments of the dancers correspond with the supposed patrons of the fine illuminated manuscripts, who belonged to the well-to-do aristocracy. The circle dance in the context of the psalters alluded to the connotations of an ancient ritual dance and to the triumphal meaning of dance (see in chapter II). With the changes in the form of the dance shown, the character of the illuminations also shifted from narrative to devotional. I elaborate on the implications of the devotional character of the Psalter and its illuminations in the following chapter and I also discuss the triumphal connotation of dance in Byzantium.

CHAPTER II: Triumphal connotations of dance and the role of the illuminations of psalters in personal devotion

In the previous chapter I proposed that the images of Miriam's dance refer to a contemporary choral dance and at the same time evoke ancient rituals. In this chapter I discuss literary sources for dance in the middle Byzantine period. In the first part of this chapter I focus on the triumphal connotation of dance. Subsequently, I suggest that images of dance in psalters also conveyed this triumphal meaning. Psalters played a prominent role in personal devotional practice and psalms and odes offered exemplary models for their readers. For this reason I suggest that the images of Miriam's dance could have been regarded as exemplars and inspiration for devotion.

As I mentioned in the Introduction, textual sources that convey the official view of the church, view dancers in negative light. At the same time, in Byzantine rhetoric dance is treated differently as it is described as a mean of expressing joy. These opposing perspectives can be observed in the comparison of different texts on imperial banquets. Niketas Choniates describes a private banquet in the court of Isaac II Angelos (1185-95, 1203-04). The banquet of Isaac II contained the same elements as the banquets in twelfth-century novels, namely abundance of food, drinking, joking, music and dance. At the same time Choniates' account views these entertaining activities from a negative perspective.

> As he delighted in ribaldries and lewd songs and consorted laughter-stirring dwarfs, he did not close the palace to knaves, mimes, and minstrels. But arm and arm with these must come drunken revel, followed by sexual wantonness and all else that corrupts the healthy and sound state of the empire… Standing nearby admiring the dance of women made up of the emperor's concubines and kinswomen was Chalivoures, the wittiest of mime who retorted …[119]

119 Choniates, Historia III.: Χαίρων δὲ ταῖς εὐτραπελίαις καὶ τοῖς ἐκ τῆς ἁπαλῆς Μούσης ἅσμασιν ἁλισκόμενος ἐγερσιγέλωσί τε ἀνθρωπίσκοις συμπαραφύρων οὐκ ἐπεζύγου κέρκωψί τε καὶ μίμοις καὶ παρασίτοις καὶ ἀοιδοῖς τὰ βασίλεια. τοῖς δὲ τοιούτοις ὁ πάροινος κῶμος συνέζευκται πάντως καὶ ἡ κατὰ τὰς κοίτας ἀσέλγεια συνεφέπεται καὶ ὅσα χρηστῆς καὶ ὑγιοῦς βασιλείας συνδιαφθείρει κατάστασιν. ... παρεστὼς δὲ τῶν τότε μίμων

Niketas Choniates was serving at the court of Alexios III (1195-1203), the opponent of Isaac II. The *History* of Choniates was composed under different patrons, in different historical circumstances. The words of Choniates must be interpreted in this context of patronage: he presented the banquet of Isaac II as a sign of moral decay because he wrote this part when he was employed by Alexios III.[120] Though the account of Choniates portrays the banquet in a negative light, there were official banquets in the imperial court that communicate a more positive impression dances and feasts.

Triumphal dance at imperial banquets

The tenth-century *Book of Ceremonies* sheds light on the triumphal connotations of dance in the middle Byzantine period. The tradition of triumphal dance dates back to antiquity. It is clear therefore, that the triumphal connotations of dance persisted throughout the centuries and were subsequently maintained during tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries. While there are two more or less detailed descriptions of different dances in the *Book of Ceremonies*, dances were probably performed more frequently during imperial banquets. For example, a couple of passages draw attention to the fact that on specific days dances were not part of the banquet.[121] This suggests that on other days dancing was normally part of an official banquet.

ὁ χαριέστατος, ᾧ τὸ ἐπώνυμον Χαλιβούρης, περιβλεψάμενος τὸν τῶν γυναικῶν χορὸν ἐκ παλλακῶν καὶ συγγενῶν τοῦ βασιλέως κεκροτημένον ...

J. van Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae historia* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975), 441; trans. Harry J. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 242. Cited also by Lynda Garland, "Imperial Women and Entertainment," *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience AD 800-1200,* ed. Lynda Garland (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 181.

[120] Recently Alicia J. Simpson has discussed the issue of compilation of the *History*, see: Idem., "Before and After 1204: The Versions of Niketas Choniates' '*Historia*'," *DOP* 60 (2006): 201-202.

[121] It is mentioned regarding the reception of the Gold Hippodrome Festival on the Monday after Antipascha. Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Ceremoniis,* Book I, ch. 65; trans. Ann Moffatt and Maxeme Tall, *The Book of Ceremonies* (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2012), vol. 1, 293.

Chapter 65 describes in detail the dance performed at a banquet organized for the emperor in the ninth century.[122] The dance took place after the roast meat course in the Hall of Justinian. The same choreography was danced twice; first by the Blues, then by the Greens. The rulers were reclining at the table when the *atriklines*[123] led in the dancers, namely the head of the faction (*domestikos*), three senior members, and several other members of the faction. Before the performance dancers went behind a curtain and prayed for the ruler. Then the *domestikos* held up a document in his right hand which was taken by the steward of the table (*trapezes*) who handed it to the *nipsistarios*.[124] Subsequently, the dancers recited a hymn like acclamation to the emperor praising his God-given right to rule and urging people to offer him obeisance.[125] *The Book of Ceremonies* describes in detail the sign that was given to the dancers to start their performance: "Then the *trapezes* turns and extends his right hand and spreads his fingers like rays and contracts them again like a bunch of grapes."[126] Upon this signal, the dancers began to circle around the imperial table three times. Unfortunately it is not clear when the dancers came out from behind the curtain; did they recite the acclamations behind the curtain or while they were already on the stage? The dancers held *phengia*, staffs

Philotheos makes the same note in the *Kletorologion* (899) regarding the banquet that took place in the Hall of Justinian after Renewal Sunday, see: Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Ceremoniis*, Book II, ch. 52; trans. Ann Moffatt, vol. 2, 773.

[122] Chapter 65 is dated to the ninth century, to the reign of Michael III (842-847), see: Michael McCormick, "De Ceremoniis," *ODB*, 596. In Book II chapter 35 it is recorded that before Michael III the Blues and Greens never danced on the birthday of the emperor. This can be interpreted to mean that the presentation of a dance was a new element on these occasions from the middle of the ninth century onward. Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Ceremoniis,* Book II, ch. 35; trans. Ann Moffatt, vol. 2, 633.

[123] An official responsible for the hierarchical ranking and seating at banquets. Alexander P. Kazhdan, "Atriklines," *ODB*, vol. 1, 227.

[124] An eunuch responsible for the imperial washbasin. Alexander P. Kazhdan, "Nipsistarios," *ODB*, vol. 3, 1488.

[125] Const. *De Ceremoniis*, I:65.: Ἐν ταῖς χερσί σου σήμερον παραθέμενος τὸ κράτος, Θεός σε ἐπεκύρωσεν αὐτοκράτορα δεσπότην, καὶ προελθὼν οὐρανόθεν ἀρχιστράτηγος ὁ μέγας, πρὸ προςώπου σου ἤνοιξε τὰς πύλας τῆς Βασιλείας· ὅθεν ὁ κόσμος προσπίπτει τῷ σκήπτρῳ τῆς δεξιᾶς σου, εὐχαριστῶν τῷ Κυρίῳ τῷ εὐδοκήσαντι οὕτως. Σὲ γὰρ ἔχειν ἐπεπόθει τὸν εὐσεβῆ βασιλέα, δεσπότην τε καὶ ποιμένα, ὁ δεῖνα αὐτοκράτωρ.
Having placed the power in your hands today, God has confirmed you as sovereign ruler. The great Archangel Michael having come from heaven, has opened the doors for your imperial power before your eyes; therefore the world falls down in obeisance before the sceptre in your right hand, giving thanks to the Lord who has thus determined. He was longing to have you as the pious emperor and ruler and shepherd, so-and-so, sovereign.
Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, vol. 2, 102.; trans. Ann Moffatt, vol. 1, 294.

[126] Const. *De Ceremoniis*, I:65.: Καὶ εἶθ' οὕτως στρέφεται ὁ τῆς τραπέζης, καὶ ἐκτείνει τὴν δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ χεῖρα, καὶ τοὺς δακτύλους ἀκτινοειδῶς διαστέλλων καὶ πάλιν βοτρυδὸν ἐπισυστέλλων ...
Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, vol. 2, 103; trans. Ann Moffatt, vol. 1, 294.

with crescent tips, in their hands. A marginal note mentions that the dancers made a gesture of prayer to the emperor when they passed before the imperial table. After the dance they went down and stood below the table before the emperor. The word κατέρχονται (go down) implies that the table of the emperor was placed on some kind of dais and the dance took place there. The dance was followed by applause, then the *trapezes* handed a purse to the *domestikos*. (Did it contain the payment?) After the dancers made obeisance to the emperor they started reciting about the delight of the world in the ruling emperor. Finally, they offered a prayer, and the Green faction performed the dance in the same way.

Another dance described in detail took place during the so-called Gothic game. This was organized on the ninth day of Christmas during the supper in the Hall of the Nineteen Couches.[127] This part of the *Book of Ceremonies* probably draws on a fifth- or sixth-century record.[128] The *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, dated to end of the ninth century, does not mention that dancing was part of the banquet on this day, but describes that the participants of the reception were led in a circle around the imperial table.[129] The "Gothic dance" was performed by the two factions, the Blues and Greens. On the left side the Blue faction stood in attendance with musicians and two "Goths". The latter were not "Goths" but were impersonated by actors, mimes. They wore furs and masks and carried shields in their left hands and staffs in their right. On the right side the faction of the Greens stood in the same manner. First, a juggling troupe entered the stage. After their performance the ruler gave a command to the *trapezes*, who passed it to the *archon* in charge of the entertainment. After the *archon* received the command, he went out and called the "Goths" in. They were striking their shields with their staffs as they ran up to the emperor's table where they formed two

[127] Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Ceremoniis*, Book I, ch. 83; trans. Ann Moffatt, vol. 1, 381-386. Kletorologion: Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Ceremoniis*, Book II, ch. 52; trans. Ann Moffatt, vol. 2, 751.
[128] Michael McCormick, "De Ceremoniis," *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 596.
[129] Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Ceremoniis*, Book II, ch. 52; trans. Ann Moffatt, vol. 2, 751. It is possible that even if the Gothic dance was not performed at the end of the ninth century – when the *Kletorologion* was compiled – that this circular set-up was a distant echo of the fifth- sixth-century ceremony.

concentric circles: an inner and an outer circle. After circling around the table three times they opened up the circles and went back to their respective places: the Blues to the left, the Greens to the right. Standing on their places they chanted "Gothic chants" accompanied by *panduri*, a three stringed-instrument. Although the majority of the words of this chant seem to make no sense, a couple of words are understandable. The chant was referring to the enslavement of enemies and praised the emperor as saviour and as the symbol of victory. After the recitation the "Goths" formed circles again enclosing the leaders of the two factions inside the circle. When they finished the dance, they opened up the circle and returned again to their respective places. They repeated this performance – the dance in concentric circles and recitations – another three times, with different recitations between the dances. Altogether the same choreography was repeated five times. After the last recitation the Goths ran out of the hall.

These performances were definitely not the same dance that is represented in the psalters. First of all, the dancers were men. As a result, the costume was different from the one in the discussed images, it is hard to imagine that they were holding hands while carrying staffs and shields. However, there are parallels between the images of Miriam's dance and these performances. All of these dances are characterized by circular movements, and all of them allude to victory. The acclamations during the performance at the Hall of Justinian – the first dance I described – referred to the joy of the whole world for the emperor. The acclamations during the "Gothic dance" referred to the triumphant emperor, similarly to the first Ode, which praises the victorious God who defeated the Egyptians and saved the sons of Israel.

The *Book of Ceremonies* indicates that the first ode was recited during triumphal celebrations. A triumphal celebration with the ritual humiliation of a captive Arab emir in the

Forum of Constantine is described in the second book, chapter 19. This section was compiled between 957 and 959.[130]

The program started early in the morning: the emperor went in procession to the Palace of Daphne with the members of the senate wearing ceremonial costumes. There the *magistroi*,[131] the patricians and officials made obeisance to him, then they proceeded to the Chapel of The Holy Well in Hagia Sophia.[132] After the liturgy – during which they chanted Marian hymns – they went to the Forum of Constantine, where. captives and the troop waited for the emperor and his retinue.[133] When the emperor arrived with his retinue, the protonotary led the captives to the middle of the Forum and a singer started to sing the first ode of Moses.[134] After the hymn a delegation of leading officials led the emir to the emperor and placed the head of the emir under the emperor's feet, while the other prisoners prostrated themselves. The singers sang further triumphal songs,[135] finally the celebration was closed with acclamations.[136]

It is questionable whether the chanting of the first ode was a regular element of triumphal ceremonies. At the same time, the account of the *Book of Ceremonies* suggests that the first ode could have been sung on triumphal celebrations. The history of triumphal processions goes back to antiquity. Even though they went through serious modifications, several elements of the celebration remained constant. The decoration of the houses and streets with garlands and draperies, the salutation of the emperor or the military commander with acclamations, banquets with dancing and music as part of the celebration probably never went out of fashion.

[130] Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 161.
[131] *Magistros*: high-ranking dignity in the imperial court. Alexander P. Kazhdan, "Magistros" *ODB*, vol. 2:1267.
[132] Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Ceremoniis*, Book II, ch. 19; trans. Ann Moffatt, vol. 2, 608.
[133] Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Ceremoniis* Book II, ch. 19; trans. Ann Moffatt, vol. 2, 609.
[134] Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Ceremoniis* Book II, ch. 19; trans. Ann Moffatt, vol. 2, 610.
[135] The Psalms 76 (77), 14, 15. McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 162.
[136] Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Ceremoniis*, Book II, ch. 19; trans. Ann Moffatt, vol. 2, 611-612.

The decoration of houses with draperies can be seen in the background in the illustration of the first ode in MS Add. 49753. This element underlines the festive, triumphal context of the dance in the image by referring to the habit of decorating houses. An eleventh-century illumination in the Vatican Book of Kings[137] illustrates David's entry in Jerusalem. Eight figures with cymbals in their hands are dancing in a circle in front of the city-walls. The dance is not the same as in the psalter illuminations, but it also attests to the link between triumphal celebrations and dance.

According to Ioli Kalavrezou it is possible that the illumination of the Vatican Psalter (1058/59) depicting Miriam's dance and the musicians of David referred to a specific victory, which is now forgotten.[138] The unique program of the Vatican Psalter has been discussed in detail by Ioli Kalavrezou, Nicolette Trahoulia and Shalom Sabar.[139] They attempt to interpret the miniatures in relation to the events and the relations between the state and church in the middle of the eleventh century, suggesting that the Vatican Psalter was produced in the Studios monastery in Constantinople. The illuminations of psalms refer to the role of Keroularios in the conflicts between emperor and patriarch and allude to the latter's demand for the supremacy of church over the emperor.[140] This suggests that the owner of the Vatican Psalter was an educated man sympathizing with the Constantinopolitan patriarch,

[137] Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS gr. 333, fol. 24r.
[138] Ioli Kalavrezou, Cat. no. 142, *The Glory of Byzantium*, ed. Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixdom (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 206-207.
[139] Kalavrezou, Trahoulia and Sabar, "Critique of the Emperor," 195-219.
[140] Patriarch of Constantinople (1043-1059), influential opponent of Constantine IX Monomachos. Keroularios played prominent role in the Great Schism in 1054. Constantine Monomachos favoured to preserve the alliance with the papacy, while Keroularios was against the union of the two churches, because the union would have challenged the patriarch's authority, see: Michael Angold, *The Byzantine Empire 1025-1204: A Political History* (London, New York: Longman, 1984), 28-31, 47-48. Amphilochos opposed Arianism as heresy in the fourth century. He petitioned Emperor Theodosios to forbid Arian conventions. Theodosios first refused his petition but later Amphilochos convinced him to forbid assemblies of Arians.See: Kalavrezou, Trahoulia and Sabar, "Critique of the Emperor,", 217. Arethas, archbishop of Caesarea (902-ca. 932) opposed the fourth marriage of Emperor Leo VI with Zoe Karbonopsina in 907. Arethas was sent into exile because of his critique, but soon he returned to the court and withdrew the charges. Romilly J. H. Jenkins, "Eight Letters of Arethas on the Fourth Marriage of Leo the Wise," *Hellenika* 14 (1956): 339-347. The same two concerns featured the eleventh-century disputes. The errors of the Latin Church stipulated the eleventh-century relations of the church and emperor. Keroularios accused Constantine IX for consorting with heretics and convicted him for his uncanonical marriage with Zoe and his illegitimate relationship with Maria Skleraina. See more in: Tia M. Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010) and Idem., "The Virtues and Faults of the Latins," in *The Byzantine World*, ed. Paul Stephenson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 114-130.

Keroularios.[141] In the manuscript the figures of Amphilochios and Arethas on several illuminations stand for a powerful church leader who fights again heresy and defend the faith even if these acts result in conflict with the emperor.[142] The patriarchal career of Keroularios was indeed rich in conflicts with emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055) and his successors, Michael VI (1056-57) and Isaac I Komnenos (1057-59). In 1057 Keroularios helped Isaac I to the throne. In reward for his assistance the emperor granted several rights to the church that significantly increased the power of the patriarch.[143] The demand for the supremacy of the church over state – which became reality for a short period in 1057/58 – was probably mirrored in the illuminations of psalms and odes. As mentioned above, the illuminations of psalms were discussed by Kalavrezou, Trahoulia and Sabar in this historical context. In the light of their research, I suggest that the illuminations of the odes also reflect this demand for the supremacy of the church. In the previous chapter (section Text and image) I have already mentioned two peculiarities in the arrangement of representations, namely the emphasis on the ode of the Three Men in the Furnace with its ten illuminations and the placement of the ode of Hezekiah at the end of the manuscript. The detailed discussion of these illuminations and hymns is beyond the aim of my thesis. For this reason, I offer a possible direction for a further research and do not intend to confirm my hypothesis. The representation of the ode of Hezekiah (Izaiah 38:9-20) portrays the king approaching a sanctuary. According to Biblical texts, king Hezekiah forbade idolatry, introduced religious

[141]. Kalavrezou, Trahoulia and Sabar, "Critique of the Emperor," 218.
[142] Amphilochos opposed Arianism as heresy in the fourth century. He petitioned Emperor Theodosios to forbid Arian conventions. Theodosios first refused his petition but later Amphilochos convinced him to forbid assemblies of Arians, see: Kalavrezou, Trahoulia and Sabar, "Critique of the Emperor,", 217. Arethas, archbishop of Caesarea (902-ca. 932) opposed the fourth marriage of Emperor Leo VI with Zoe Karbonopsina in 907. Arethas was sent into exile because of his critique, but soon he returned to the court and withdrew the charges, see: Romilly J. H. Jenkins, "Eight Letters of Arethas on the Fourth Marriage of Leo the Wise," *Hellenika* 14 (1956): 339-347. The same two concerns featured the eleventh-century disputes. The errors of the Latin church stipulated the eleventh-century relations of the church and emperor. Keroularios accused Constantine IX for consorting with heretics and convicted him for his uncanonical marriage with Zoe and his illegitimate relationship with Maria Skleraina. See more in: Tia M. Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010) and Idem., "The Virtues and Faults of the Latins," in *The Byzantine World*, ed. Paul Stephenson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 114-130.
[143] Kalavrezou, Trahoulia and Sabar, "Critique of the Emperor," 215.

reforms and ruled in harmony with the will of God. The story of the Three Men in the Furnace is about the salvation of three righteous men who turned against the will of the king because his order was inconsistent with their faith. It is not beyond possibility that the special emphasis on these two odes alludes to the eleventh-century events and reveals the views of the manuscript's patron similarly to the illuminations of the psalms. The emphasis on the ode of the Three Men in the Furnace refers to the supremacy of faith/religion over the order of the king. Considering that religious matters were dictated by the church, the allusion to eleventh-century events seems possible. To return to the representation of the first ode, I suggest that it is conceivable that the image of Miriam's dance referred to the victory of the church and not to a victory won on the battlefield. As I mentioned above, in the year 1057 the position of the patriarch was strengthened and the church gained control over matters that were under the emperor's government earlier.[144]

In contrast to the representation of the Vatican Psalter, the images of Miriam's dance in other Psalters probably did not refer to concrete victories. These images reminded the viewer of the joy and festive mood upon triumph. In the context of the first ode they alluded to the victorious God and urged the beholder to celebrate the Lord. The two textual sources I discuss in the following subchapter demonstrate that dance appeared as an instrument for the expression of joy not only in Byzantine rhetoric and ceremonies, but in religious texts too.

[144] Ibid., 215.

Spiritual triumph and dance of the soul

Previously I discussed the triumphal connotation of dance on imperial banquets. In this subchapter I show that dance as a mean of expressing joy was employed in religious context too. The resurrection of Christ and his triumph over death were celebrated during the Easter celebrations. As I mentioned in the Introduction the hymns in the *Lenten Triodion* were sung during the weeks preceeding the Holy Week. The hymns for the Sunday of the Cross describe the joy of Adam: "Adam has arisen and dances for joy. Therefore let us cry aloud and sing a song of victory."[145] Furthermore: "This day, ye peoples, let us dance and sing to the music of the harp, and greatly rejoice at the veneration of the cross, giving glory to Christ …"[146] As becomes apparent, the joy of Adam and the joy of people were exemplified by dance. In this context the celebration with dance should be understood metaphorically. It certainly does not mean that descent to hell and resurrection were celebrated with a dance during the liturgy, but it was celebrated by the dance of soul and heart.

The personal, spiritual victory of the soul was paralleled with the victory of the Lord over the Egyptians in the episode of the Crossing of the Red Sea. The eleventh-century author Elias Ekdikos[147] interprets the dance of Miriam as the dance of virtues in his *Gnomic Anthology*.[148] In the fourth part of the *Gnomic Anthology* Ekdikos elaborates on spiritual practice and contemplation:

> In olden times, when Miriam, the sister of Moses, saw the fall of the enemy, she took up a timbrel and led the women who sang the victory-songs (Ex. 15:

[145] *The Lentent Triodion*, trans. Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber, 1978), 337-338. Greek from Isar, *ΧΟΡΟΣ: The Dance of Adam*, 58.: Ὁ Ἀδὰμ ἐξαναστὰς χορεύει χαρὰ.

[146] *The Lenten Triodion*, 343. Greek from Isar, *ΧΟΡΟΣ: The Dance of Adam*, 59.: Τῇ λύσᾳ τῶ΄ ἀσμάτων χορεύοντες, ἀγαλλιαζώμεθα σήμεζον, λαοί, τῇ τοῦ σταυροῦ προσκυνήξει.

[147] The name "Elias Ekdikos" is conventionally used to identify the author of the *Gnomic Anthology*. "Ekdikos" refers to his occupation as a judge at the ecclesiastical court of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. He lived at the turn of the eleventh century, see: G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherard and Kallistos Ware, *The Philokalia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), vol. 3:32.

[148] Kiss Etele, "Új eredmények a Monomachos-korona kutatásában?" [New Results in the Research of the Monomachos Crown?] *Folia Archaeologica* 46 (1997): 156.

> 20-21). In our days, when the soul overcomes the passion, love – the highest of the virtues – rises up to praise it. As though taking up the lyre, it embarks upon the contemplation that long ago has been appointed for it as a hard-won addition to its beauty; and it ceaselessly glorifies God, rejoicing with sister-virtues.[149]

The dance of Miriam is paralleled with the victory of the soul, which overcame passions. And how can one overcome passions? According to Elias – among other practices – through contemplation, prayer and psalmody. Although it is a more "abstract" victory than a victory on the battlefield, it still shows that Miriam's dance was cited for its triumphal connotations in spiritual, devotional context.

The role of psalters in personal devotion

As I presented in Chapter I the images I discuss can be found in eleventh- and twelfth-century psalters. The Psalter was among the most frequently copied books in Byzantium.[150] Psalters were used during the liturgy and for personal prayer. It was advised to learn the psalms by heart,[151] which refers to their importance in religious practice. Although psalms were regularly sung during the liturgy, most of the surviving Byzantine psalters do not reflect liturgical use, but seem to have been designed for personal use.[152] Therefore, it seems appropriate to investigate the role of the images included in Psalters in a personal devotional context.[153] The illuminations were not made only for the sake of their beauty, or for practical

[149] Ekdikos, *Gnomic Anthology*, 2:77.: Πάλαι μὲν ἡ τοῦ Μωςέως Μαρία τῶν πολεμίων τὴν πτῶσιν θεασαμένη, τὸ τύμπανον ἀραμένη, ἐξῆρχε ταῖς ᾀδούσαις τὰ ἐπινίκια· νυνὶ δὲ εἰς εὐφημίαν τῆς νικηςάσης τὰ πάθη ψυκῆς , ἡ κρείππων ἐν ἀρεταῖς ἀγάπη διεγερθεῖσα, τῆν μετ' ᾠδῆς χιθάραν ὡς τινα θεωρίαν μεταχειριζομένη ταύτῃ, πάλαι τὴν πονηθεῖσαν εἰς κάλλους περιουςίαν, οὐ παύεται σὺν ταίς περὶ αὐτὴν ἀγαλλιωμένη αἰνεῖν τὸν Θεόν. PG 27:1164; trans. Palmer, Sherard and Ware, *The Philokalia*, vol. 3: 57.

[150] Lowden, "Observations on Illuminated Byzantine Psalters," *The Art Bulletin* 70 (1988): 249.

[151] Georgi R. Parpulov, "Psalters and Personal Piety in Byzantium," *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. Paul Magdalino and Robert S. Nelson (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2010), 79-80.

[152] Lowden, "Observations on Illuminated Byzantine Psalters," 247.

[153] By the term "personal use" regarding Psalters, I refer to the practice of recitation of psalms out of liturgy for the spiritual and moral benefit of the practitioner.

reasons, namely to facilitate the search for a certain passage or assist with memorizing it,[154] but they probably played a precise role in the process of contemplation and prayer. I argue that the portraits of the supposed authors of the odes did not explain or illustrate the story, but showed a model for the right approach to the text and for the right mood and devotion. In the following subchapter I discuss the place of the Psalter in this devotional context. It seems that the odes were treated as prayers, hence the authors were frequently portrayed in prayer (see the section on Text and image).[155] Above in the first chapter, I argued that the images of Miriam's dance were not exceptional among the portraits depicting the supposed authors of the odes. For this reason I suggest that the image of Miriam's dance would have been perceived similarly to the author portraits.

The use of the Psalter in personal piety was recently discussed by Georgi Parpulov in detail in his doctoral dissertation, for this reason I frequently refer to his research in this part of my thesis.[156] The prefaces and commentaries in the manuscripts refer to the use of Psalter in the devotional practices recommended for laymen, churchmen and monks. A poem inserted in a ninth-century Psalter reads: "This book is proper to every devout human being, and the divine David speaks in common for all mankind."[157] The *Advice and Counsels* of Kekaumenos from the eleventh century exemplifies that the Psalter was indeed used by laymen frequently. In his *vademecum* Kekaumenos recommends that his son should attend church services regularly and recite psalms at midnight: "You should … also pray at midnight by saying one Psalm each time, for at this hour one can speak to God without distraction."[158] Kekaumenos was a layman, a general, later the governor of the *thema* of Hellas. He wrote *Advices and Counsels* soon after 1075. Though his remarks are personal advices to his son, it

[154] For more on the role of images as tools of mnemonics see: Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 221-257.
[155] Walter, "The Aristocratic Psalters and Ode Illustration in Byzantium," 52.
[156] Parpulov, *Towards a History of Byzantine Psalters*, especially 33-46.
[157] Parpulov, "Psalters and Personal Piety in Byzantium," 80.
[158] Cited by. Parpulov, *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters,* 36.

seems probable that he describes the regular customs of his time, such as the recitation of psalms in solitude.[159] The words of the already cited Elias Ekdikos elaborate on the effect of prayer and the singing of psalms:

> The soul still in pursuit of prayer is like a woman in the pains of childbirth; but the soul that has attained prayer is like a woman who has given birth and is full of joy on account of her child.[160]
> … and prayer that is free of forms is like sweet-smelling wine. Those who drink deeply of this wine are rapt out of themselves.[161]
> When through continuous prayer the words of psalms are brought down into the heart, then the heart like good soil begins to produce by itself various flowers …[162]

This text exemplifies that through prayer and psalmody the soul experiences great joy. Prayer and psalmody seems to be considered as practices leading to the illumination of the soul. The devout practitioners could have expected to gain spiritual and moral advancement through recitation of psalms.

A fourth-century letter of Athanasios of Alexandria was cited in the prefaces of Psalters.[163] In this letter he explains that psalms offer models for proper living. Furthermore, he elaborates on the importance of a personal approach to psalms:

> … he who recites the Psalms is uttering the rest as his own words, and each sings them as if they were written concerning him, and he accepts them and recites them not as if another were speaking, nor as if speaking about someone else. But he handles them as if he is speaking about himself. ... And it seems to me that these words become like a mirror to the person singing them, so that he might perceive himself and the emotions of his soul, and thus affected, he might recite them.[164]

[159] Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium*, 391.
[160] Ekdikos, *Gnomic Anthology*; 2:69.: Ἡ μὲν ἔτι καταδιώκουσα ψυκὴ τὴν εὐχὴν, τῇ ὠδινούσῃ ὑπάρχει παρεμφερής. Ἡ δὲ καταλαβοῦσα, τῇ κυηςάσῃ, καὶ πλήρει γενομένῃ διὰ τὸν τόκον χαρᾶς.
PG 27: 1161; trans. Palmer, Sherard and Ware, *Philokalia*, vol. 3:56.
[161] Ekdikos, *Gnomic Anthology*; 2:72.: ... θεωρίας, ὡς ἔλαιον πιαίνουσα· ἡ δὲ ἀνείδεως, ὡς οἶνος εὐώδης οὗ οἱ ἐμφορούμενοι ἁπλήστως ἐξίστανται.
PG 27: 1161; trans. Palmer, Sherard and Ware, *Philokalia*, vol. 3:57.
[162] Ekdikos, *Gnomic Anthology*; 2:78.: Ὁπόταν συνεχείας τῆς κατὰ τὴν εὐχὴν κατασχεθῇ τὰ λόγια τῶν ψαλμῶν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τοῦ εὐχομένου, τότε καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ γῆ καθάπερ ἀγαθὴ, ἄρχεται αὐτομάτη ἄαφέρειν·
PG 27: 1163; trans. Palmer, Sherard and Ware, *Philokalia*, vol. 3:57.
[163] The first codex that contains his letter *Ad Marcellinum* in the preface is the Codex Alexandrinus (London, British Library, MS Royal 1. D. V-VIII) from the fifth century. Later it was cited in the tenth century codex Paris, Biblithèque national de France, MS gr. 146. The eleventh-century Vatican Psalter also includes the letter. Paprulov, *Towards a History of Byzantine Psalters*, 35.
[164] Athanasios of Alexandria, *Ad Marcellinum*, 11-12.: ... ἀλλὰ καὶ μάλιστα ὡς ἴδια καὶ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ γραφέντα θαρσεῖ λέγων ὁ ψάλλων ταῦτα. Τὸν γὰρ φυλάξαντα τὴν ἐντολὴν, καὶ παραβάντα ταύτην, τήν τε ἑκατέρου

> And so, on the whole, each psalm is both spoken and composed by the Spirit so that in these same words, as was said earlier, the stirrings of our souls might be grasped, and all of them be said as concerning us, and the same issue from us as our own words, for remembrance of the emotions in us, and a chastening of our life. For what those who chant have said, these things also can be examples and standards for us. [165]

Though Athanasios elaborates on the singing of the psalms, it is worth considering that psalms can be read in a book, sometimes supplied with illuminations. If the bond between the text and its reader was so intimate and personal, so could have been the bond between the image and its beholder. Of course, Athanasios in the fourth century did not refer to illuminated psalters, but later, when his words were cited in eleventh-century psalters such a link is conceivable. Psalms are compared to a mirror in the text. Similarly to the texts, the images included in psalters may have been perceived as a mirror, in which the right practice of devotion is reflected. (I do not claim that the Byzantines contextualized the words of Athanasios in this way. I use this parallel to point to a possible way of seeing an image in psalters.) Thus images could illustrate the different movements of the soul and just as the psalms, they may have offered models for devotional life. I suggest that the illuminations may have demonstrated to the viewer the right approach to the Lord and the appropriate manner in which hymns should be chanted.

The dedicatory poem of the Vatican Psalter explains the effect of singing the psalms and seeing, looking at the psalter:

πρᾶξιν περιέχουσιν οἱ Ψαλμοί. Ἀνάγκη δὲ πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐν τούτοις συνέχεσθαι, καὶ ἢ ὡς φυλάξαντα τὴν ἐντολὴν, ἢ ὡς παραβάντα ταύτην, λέγειν τοὺς περὶ ἑκάστου γεγραμμένους λόγους... Καί μοι δοκεῖ τῷ ψάλλοντι γίνεσθαι τούτους ὥσπερ εἴσοπτρον, εἰς τὸ κατανοεῖν καὶ αὐτὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ τὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῆς κινήματα, καὶ οὕτως αἰσθόμενον ἀπαγγέλλειν αὐτούς.
PG 27:24; trans. Robert C. Gregg, *Athanasius: the Life of Saint Anthony and the Letter to Marcellinus* (New York, Ramsey, Toronto: Paulist Press, 1980), 110-111.

[165]Athanasios of Alexandria, *Ad Marcellinum*, 12.: Καὶ ὅλως οὕτως ἕκαστος ψαλμὸς παρὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος εἴρηταί τε καὶ συντέτακται, ὡς ἐν αὐτοῖς, καθὰ πρότερον εἴρηται, τὰ κινήματα τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν κατανοεῖσθαι, καὶ πάντας αὐτοὺς ὡς περὶ ἡμῶν εἰρῆσθαι, καὶ εἶναι ἡμῶν αὐτοὺς ὡς ἰδίους λόγους, εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν κινημάτων καὶ διόρθωσιν τῆς ἡμῶν πολιτείας. Ἃ γὰρ οἱ ψάλλοντες εἰρήκασι, ταῦτα καὶ ἡμῶν δύνανται τύποι καὶ χαρακτῆρες εἶναι.
PG 27:24; trans. Robert C. Gregg, *Athanasius*, 111.

I, the Davidic tablet [book] of odes, having been created,
continuously bestow to the author the best frame,
to the one who owns it – divinely inscribed *charis*,
to the one who know [it] – honorable heart,
to the ones who see [it] – most divine thoughts,
to the ones who sing the odes – *pneumatic choregia*.[166]

This translation by Pentcheva shows the complexity of reception of the manuscript from the act of writing through seeing the illuminations to singing the odes. Seeing the illuminations urges the mind to divine thoughts, while singing the odes brings joy to the spirit. (*Pneumatic choregia* refers to the celebration of the spirit.)[167] As I have discussed, the illuminations of the Vatican Psalter indeed transmitted a specific message and alluded to specific events of their time, thus it seems reasonable that the dedicatory poem emphasizes the role of seeing the illuminations of the manuscript. Although generally the other eight psalters had no such specific message, the poem still seems applicable to them, in the sense that their representations should be perceived as mediators of divine thoughts.

Illuminations of the odes as tools of devotion

As I have already discussed in the section on Iconography, the illuminations of the first ode were frequently representations focusing on the events during crossing of the Red Sea. At the same time I argued that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries a different type of representation was depicted in Psalters. These new representations did not refer to the narrative, but they portrayed dancers without visual references to the crossing of the Red Sea. I have already discussed that Odes were generally illuminated with portraits of their supposed

[166] Δαυϊτηκὴ πέφυκα δέλτος ᾀσμάτων·
φέρουσα τῷ γράψαντι φέρτατον κλέος·
Θεόγραφον χάριν δὲ τῷ κεκτημένῳ·
καὶ μανθάνουσιν εὐκλεᾶ τὴν καρδίαν·
καὶ τοῖς βλέπουσιν ἐνθεεστάτους νόας
ψάλλουσι δ' ᾄσμα πνεύματος χορηγίαν·
Lines 6-12. De Wald, *The Illustrations in the Manuscript of the Septaguint*, xii; trans. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 173-174.

[167] Pentcheva connects this celebration of the spirit (*pneumatic choregia*) to the *choros* of dancers on fol. 449v in the Vatican Psalter, see: Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 174.

authors. These authors were portrayed sometimes with scrolls in their hands or in prayer. As Christopher Walter has discussed, prayer themes appeared more and more frequently in Psalters from the eleventh century onward.[168] I suggest that eleventh- and twelfth-century representations of Miriam's dance may have been perceived in the same manner as representations of authors in prayer. The letter of Athanasios cited above provides an approach to the authors of odes. He elaborates on the different expressions of divine grace apparent in psalms and odes. Grace could descend in different forms according to the requirements of the Spirit and the circumstances. Each author of the Scripture received the grace in different form in order to fulfill their individual missions. Consequently, psalms and odes offer solution and models to overcome various difficulties in life. As I discussed above, the representations, namely the portraits of authors, could have been perceived as mirrors (just like the text) reflecting exemplary models for devotion. In other words: the images function as mediators between text and reader. The text provided the reader with guidance in spiritual and moral life, while the image provided a focus of meditation for the beholder. The portraits, in this sense, certainly do not refer to the physical features, but to the exemplary attitude to faith and life of their subjects.

Icon-like representations in psalters underline the devotional character of the illuminations. In the Costanza Psalter the headpiece for the prayer of the Virgin is similar to an icon; the Virgin is portrayed in *orans* pose in frontal view (**fig. 16**). The authors are depicted in the act of speaking; singing the hymns, praying. Codex Lavra B 26 has also an icon-like image for the headpiece of the prayer of the Virgin. The illumination of the Magnificat in codex Vatopedi 851[169] depicts a Platytera icon, the Virgin with the child. Though the Benaki Psalter does not contain the image of Miriam's dance, devotional

[168] Walter, "The Aristocratic Psalter and Ode Illustration in Byzantium," 52.
[169] A late twelfth century manuscript. Cutler, Cat. no. 16, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*, 29-31.

representations and prayer images characterize the illuminations of this Psalter.[170]The illustration of the Magnificat is an almost full-page miniature depicting the veneration of a Nikopoia icon of the Virgin. Though Cutler and Carr argue that this image was attached in the post-Byzantine period to the psalter, a similar iconography can be found in a twelfth-century Psalter.[171]The iconography of the original twelfth-century illumination remains questionable. The odes are preceded by three full-page miniatures: a monk kneeling before the Virgin (fol. 175v), the Egyptians drowning in the Red Sea (176v) and the Israelites witnessing the drowning (fol. 177r). The Israelites are portrayed in *orans* gesture, in prayer. According to Cutler and Carr this pair of miniatures is also a later addition to the Psalter from the fourteenth century.[172] The other illustrations of odes in the Benaki Psalter are the usual author portraits: Hannah, Jonah, and Manasses in *proskynesis,* Moses and Habakkuk with parchment in their hand. In the Benaki Psalter both the narrative images and the portraits emphasize the praise and veneration of the Virgin and the Lord, just like the texts of the Odes. It is true that some of these illuminations are replacements, thus the original twelfth-century iconography is not reconstructable. I do not claim that the original twelfth-century illustrations were the same. I refer to them only because the devotional character is more apparent, more articulate on the representations of the Benaki Psalter than on the author portraits of other Psalters.

As I have presented in the section on Iconography, MS Vatopedi 851 contains a peculiar image of Miriam and her companions. The headpiece of the first ode portrays three women with *orans* gesture, not dancing. This image does not refer to the narrative context as the image of the Benaki Psalter, it portrays only the act of thanksgiving through prayer. The illumination of the first ode in codex Laurenzianus Plut. 6.36[173] is analogous to Vatopedi 851. It depicts three women in prayer on their knees led by Moses. These are the same women who

[170] Athens, Benaki Museum, MS 34.3. Last quarter of the twelfth century. Ibid. Cat. no. 52, 99-103.
[171] Cutler and Carr, "The Psalter Benaki 34.3," 286.
[172] Ibid., 285.
[173] Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*, Cat.no. 22.

are portrayed dancing on the illustrations of the other psalters. These prayer images exemplify that the images of Miriam and her companions could have been perceived as models of prayer. I suggest that representations of Miriam's dance alluded similarly to prayer and thanksgiving, thus they could have been perceived as models of devotion. Images of the dancing women in the context of the first ode refer to the victorious God. At the same time they quote the joy upon victory. Elias Ekdikos (see: Spiritual triumph and the dance of the soul) connected Miriam's dance to the victory of the soul which overcame the passions. In his *Gnomic Anthology* he also elaborated on the joyful experience of the soul upon reading and contemplating the psalms.

It seems that Miriam's dance portrays the joy of the soul upon the victory of God and also upon the victory of the soul. Athanasios of Alexandria explained that the psalms and odes may have offered models for a devout life. Thanksgiving and joy over the triumphant God were expressed by the dance of Miriam. As I discussed above, the performance of triumphal dance was an old tradition rooted in antiquity. Though generally the performance of dance was condemned in Byzantium in this triumphal context it was accepted. In the first chapter I suggested that the nine images probably represented a contemporary dance. It seems that on the images the dancers wear the costume of aristocratic women in the eleventh-century imperial court. Why were aristocratic dancers portrayed in Psalters wearing contemporary costume, and what does this imply? Any answer to this question must remain tentative. As Maria Parani argued, the representation of contemporary objects could have helped the beholder to understand the message of the religious image, thus supported the access to the spiritual content.[174] The portrayal of familiar objects can facilitate the perception of the image, because the viewer can compare easily the image to his/her own experiences. In this way, images of dance could have reminded the beholder to the joy of triumphal celebrations.

[174] Parani, "Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography," 181.

Presumably, triumphal dances were seen positively, thus the inclusion of their portrayal in Psalters seems appropriate.

In order to contemplate and to recite psalms it is not necessary to include commentaries in psalters, but as I discussed in the first chapter most of the psalters were not standing alone. They came along with different texts from the New Testament, Old Testament, and commentaries. Two types of psalters can be distinguished based on their contents: Psalters with commentaries and those without commentaries.[175] Psalters with commentaries have been used to understand the theological meaning of psalms, while psalters without the commentaries were more appropriate for prayer. However, the distinction between the two types of psalters is not absolute.[176] Psalters with commentaries may have been read for the purpose of personal prayer also, not only for theological contemplation. Among the nine psalters discussed there are three that contain commentaries: the Vatican Psalter, the Topkapı Saray Psalter and the Mar Saba Psalter. Because of its small size the Mar Saba Psalter could have been easily used for personal prayer beside the theological study of the text. Both the Vatican Psalter and the Topkapı Saray Psalter are large-sized manuscripts. None of the two is believed to have been used for personal prayer. It is indeed hard to imagine that these huge and heavy manuscripts were used as tools of daily meditation or prayer.

As I have mentioned in the first chapter the Topkapı Saray manuscript was a companion to Old Testament books. Furthermore, it contains the commentary of Euthymios Zigabenos.[177] Probably, the manuscript was not prepared for personal devotion or contemplation, but the texts were compiled for theological investigation. At the same time, it

[175] Parpulov, "Psalters and Personal Piety in Byzantium," 82. And Lowden, "Observations on Illuminated Byzantine Psalters," 248-250.
[176]. Parpulov, "Psalters and Personal Piety in Byzantium," 82.
[177] Euthymios Zigabenos was a monk who lived in a monastery near Constantinople on the turn of the eleventh century, see: Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books*, 31.

seems that the illuminations were not made specifically for the commentaries.[178] They repeat the same pictorial formulas of author portraits with scrolls in their hands, and Miriam's dance.

Here I have to refer again to the peculiarities of the Vatican Psalter. As I described earlier, the Vatican Psalter is distinguished by many features. Its large-size, the abundance of illuminations and the commentaries that it contains separate it from the other Psalters. I have already discussed how specific political circumstances and patronage have influenced the iconography of representations. These peculiarities in iconography and the manuscript's large size imply that probably it was not only designed for recitation of psalms. It seems that the Vatican Psalter was more like a representative manuscript placing contemporary eleventh-century events in the history of Salvation. With the exception of the Vatican and the Topkapı Saray Psalters then it seems probable that the psalters forming the subject of this thesis were used regularly for personal prayer. Thus their illuminations were executed in order to facilitate and to focus the contemplation of the beholder.

There is one further question left to discuss. Does this focus on prayer and devotional images in this group of late eleventh- and twelfth-century psalters imply a change in the use of psalter and devotion? At this stage of research, I see no significant change in the reception of the Psalter in the twelfth century in comparison to the earlier practice. It seems that the psalter retained its prominent role as tool of prayer and contemplation from the fourth century as it is implied by the letter of Athanasios and its inclusion in psalters from the later centuries. At the same time, the significant economical growth under the Komnenoi implies that more people could have earned enough income to be able to afford luxury goods[179] such as illuminated psalters. As it was demonstrated several times, there illuminations of psalters show numerous varieties.[180] It seems that they were executed for the special demands of the

[178] Ibid., 30.
[179] Laiou and Morrisson, *The Byzantine Economy*, 134.
[180] der Nersessian, "A Psalter and New Testament Manuscript at Dumbarton Oaks," 167-177. Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*, 9. Lowden, "Observations on Byzantine Illuminated Psalters," 255.

patron.[181] Perhaps not entirely wrong to suggest, that the emphasis on prayer and devotion on the images of Psalters is in connection with the growing demand and financial accessibility to Psalters for personal use.

[181] Lowden, "Observations on Byzantine Illuminated Psalters," 259; Parpulov, "Towards a History of Byzantine Psalters," 204.

CONCLUSION

This thesis focuses on the images of Miriam's dance in eleventh- and twelfth-century psalters. In the first chapter I have demonstrated that a new type of representation appeared in the images of psalters in this period, namely the circular dance of Miriam and her companions. The garments of the depicted dancers can be correlated with the eleventh- and twelfth-century courtly milieu. This implies that the images place Miriam's dance in a contemporary environment, or at least an environment recognizable to contemporaries. Furthermore, the detailed description of the images shows that the general characteristics of the dances portrayed can be perceived to allude to a very similar circle dance. At the same time there is great variety among the representations. The varying postures, steps, twists of heads and holdings of hands imply that the images do not rely on a common pictorial model. For this reason, I suggest that these representations were inspired by a circle dance in its bodily reality. As Nicoletta Isar and Bissera Pentcheva have argued recently, circularity had specific connotations in Byzantium. The circular movements of dancers could have evoked an ancient Greek ritual dance. Furthermore, the circular movements could have alluded to the constitution of a sacred space for the communication between human and divine spheres. The "Dance of Isaiah" that is still part of the ceremonial of orthodox weddings echoes the ritual circle dances. The triumphal connotation of dance is apparent in the written sources. There are two dances described in detail in the *Book of Ceremonies*. The acclamations during and following the performance of dance allude to the triumphant emperor. The spiritual joy over bridling the passions and the triumphant Christ were described as a dance of the soul. Considering that the representations of Miriam's dance appear in the context of the first ode, which praises the victorious God, it seems likely that the images referred to this triumphal meaning of dance. As the *Book of Ceremonies* shows, the first ode may well have been sung during triumphal ceremonies.

In addition to discussing these connotations of the representations, I have also investigated their placement within the manuscripts and their relation to other illuminations of the odes. It seems that the illuminations of odes usually portray the supposed authors either in prayer or holding scrolls in their hands. For this reason, I have suggested that the images of Miriam's dance should be viewed similarly to these author images, namely as representational portraits rather than narrative images. The absence of any visual reference of these images to the narrative suggests that these illuminations can be perceived as representational portraits in the sense that they do not narrate a specific episode as one finds, e.g. in earlier psalters, but make evident the depicted subject per se, thus the portraits provide visual focus for contemplation and prayer. Furthermore, I have suggested that author portraits in psalters could have been perceived as examples, models of devotion and prayer.

The psalter played a prominent role in personal piety. The letter of Athanasios of Alexandria elaborates on the importance of singing the psalms and interprets the psalms as mirrors in which the movements of the beholder's soul are reflected. Furthermore, according to his letter, the psalter can be used as a handbook providing guidance for devout souls. Although the letter was written in the fourth century, it was frequently included at the beginning of middle Byzantine psalters. Therefore, it is plausible to interpret the Psalter in the light of Athanasios' influential letter even in later centuries. I have suggested that the images could have been perceived similarly to a mirror; in this way, the portrait of the author could "become" the portrait of the beholder. More accurately, the portraits showed the image of devotional role models. As I have argued, it seems that the images of Miriam were not exceptional in this regard. The dedicatory poem of the Vatican Psalter reveals that the images in psalters were considered as mediators of divine thoughts. Thus the representations may have been perceived as focal points of contemplation, meditation during the recitation of psalms and odes.

Furthermore, I have discussed the issue of patronage. The illuminations were painted on gold background and most of the manuscripts contain a great number of images. This suggests that the majority of them were luxurious manuscripts prepared for the demands of members of the aristocracy. It follows, that this aristocratic élite's devotional practice is reflected in the images of these psalters.

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APPENDIX I: FIGURES

Fig. 1.: Mt. Athos, Megiste Lavra, MS B 24, fol. 204r.

Fig. 2.: The Psalter of Queen Costanza. Palermo, Fondo Museo, MS 4, fol. 287v.

Fig. 3.: The Topkapı Saray MS. Istanbul, Topkapı Saray, MS gr. 13, fol. 265v.

Fig. 4.: London, British Library, MS Add. 40753, fol. 146v.

Fig. 5.: Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, MS Suppl. gr. 1335, fol. 327r.

Fig. 6.: London, British Library, MS Add. 11836, fol. 298r.

Fig. 7.: The Mar Saba Psalter. London, British Library, MS Add. 36928, fol. 279v.

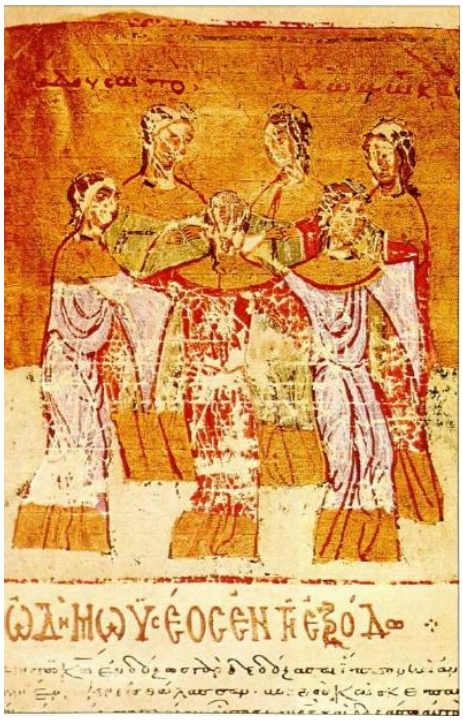

Fig. 8.: Athos, Megiste Lavra, MS B 26, fol. 262r.

Fig. 9.: The Vatican Psalter, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS gr. 752, fol 449v.

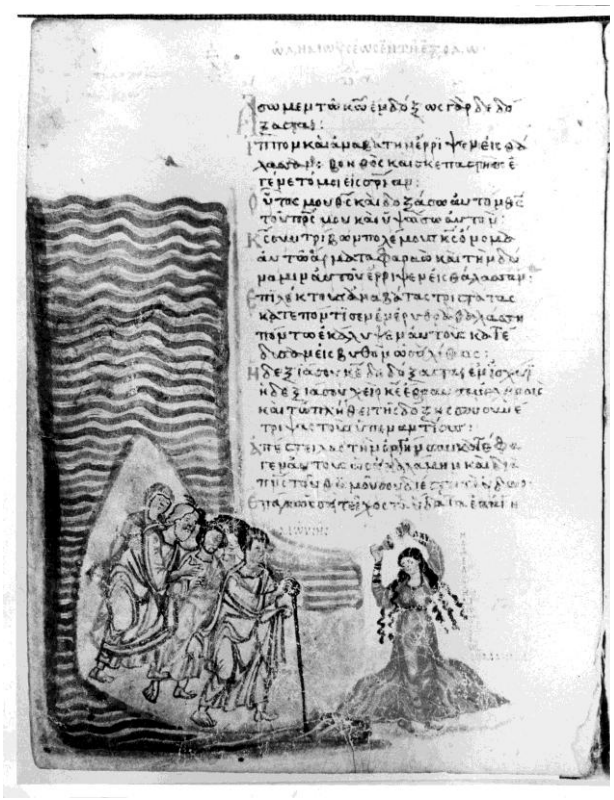

Fig. 10.: The Khludov Psalter, Moscow, Historical Museum, MS 129 D, fol. 148v.

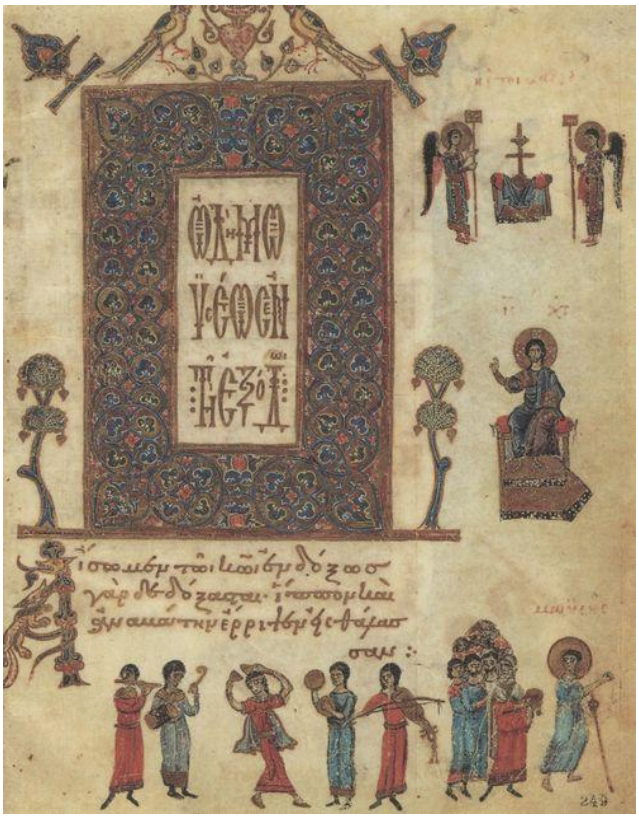

Fig. 11: The Barberini Psalter, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Barb. gr. 372, fol.249r.

Fig. 12: Istanbul, Topkapı Saray, MS gr. 8, fol. 194v.

Fig. 13.: Mt. Athos, Monastery of Vatopedi, MS 851, fol. 184v.

Fig. 14.: Mt. Athos, Monastery of Vatopedi, MS 851, fol. 190v.

Fig. 15.: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, MS Plut. 6.36, fol. 349r.

Fig. 16.: The Psalter of Queen Costanza, Palermo, Fondo Museo 4, fol. 293v.

APPENDIX II: LIST OF MANUSCRIPTS

1, London, British Library, MS Add. 11836 (second half of the twelfth century).

2, London, British Library, MS Add. 40753 (second half of the twelfth century).

3, Mar Saba Psalter: London, British Library, MS Add. 36928 (ca. 1090).

4, Mt. Athos, Megiste Lavra, MS B 24 (twelfth century).

5, Mt Athos, Megiste Lavra, MS B 26 (second half of the twelfth century).

6, Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, MS Suppl. gr. 1335 (last quarter of the twelfth century).

7, Psalter of Queen Costanza: Palermo, Fondo Museo, MS 4 (last quarter of the twelfth century).

8, Topkapı Saray Manuscript: Istanbul, Topkapı Saray, MS gr. 13 (second half of the twelfth century).

9, Vatican Psalter: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS gr. 752 (1058/59).