Lucy-Anne Hunt, **"Thirteenth-Century Wallpainting at the Church of St. Theodore, Behdaidat (Crusader County of Tripoli): Configuring Confraternity, Community and Commerce."** Forthcoming in: Isabelle Doumet-Skaf, Georgio Capriotti and Lucy-Anne Hunt, **"**Final Report of the Conservation Project at the Church of Mar Tadros, Behdaidat, Northern Lebanon. Bulletin Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises (National Museum of Beirut) 17 (2017).

Introduction

Now in the hands of the Maronite community, the church of Mar Tadros (**Figs. 1-2)** lies in the mountains above Jubayl, medieval Gibelet, in the Crusader County of Tripoli **(Maps, Fig. 29).** The conservation work on the wallpainting programme, undertaken between 2009-2013, has clarified several aspects of the programme. This provides the basis for the present paper which aims to draw some conclusions as to the circumstances under which the programme was painted.[1] A brief survey of the programme here precedes a summary of the state of research and the issues to be addressed. Liturgical use is discussed with reference to the newly-conserved apse painting and the Annunciation to the Virgin. Next, community veneration, popular piety and the power of relics are considered through the figures of St. John the Baptist in the apse, and St. Stephen. Daniel and the military saints represent personal salvation. The identity of the praying figures supplicating Sts. Theodore and George personalise the programme. Finally, the crosses at the east end of the church are viewed as an integral part of the programme as well as underlining the Holy Land agenda.

The interpretation offered here is that the wallpainting was painted at a time of a coordinated military effort by members of the Melkite confraternity dedicated to the shrines of St. George at Lydda and that of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem in late 1262-early 1263 (**Map, Fig. 27)** This was in response to aggression by the Mamluk sultan Baybars Ibn Qalawun of Egypt when the Church of the Nativity was attacked by and Antioch threatened. The church of St. Theodore was arguable the focus for the mobilisation campaign for the village and its surrounds. A significant feature of the wallpainting is its dual Byzantine-Latin character. On the one hand the community's involvement in the textile industry and trade and the Confraternity's involvement in defence put it politically and legally under the control of the Genoese-held Latin lordship and under the protection of the Knights of the Hospital of St.

[1] The Conservation project was led by Isabelle Doumet-Skaf and Giorgio Capriotti under the aegis of ICCROM (the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property)-ATHAR: see the preliminary report: Doumet-Skaf, I. and Capriotti, G. (eds), 2009, 257-320 with earlier bibliography. I am grateful to Isabelle Doumet-Skaf for the invitation, as an art historian, to join the team of conservators on this project and to her, Georgio Capriotti and the members of the conservation team for discussing aspects of their work with me while it was in progress. I am also grateful to John Davis for additional photography, Nigel Dodds for the maps and drawings, Ann Hunt for help with translating Latin texts, and Gertraud Reynolds, Curator of the Sinai Archives at the University of Michigan, for facilitating permission to reproduce the photographs of Sinai icons. Aspects of this paper have also been presented at conferences organised by: the University of Mainz, "Merchants, Monks and Artists: the Relations of Byzantium to the Arab Near East (9th-15th c.) 17-19 October 2012"; the University of Cyprus, 2nd International Workshop "The Middle-Late Byzantine Era, 12th-13th Centuries" (Naoussa, Paros Municipality, 24-25 May 2013); the University of London," Sharing the Holy Land: Perceptions of Shared Sacred Space in the Medieval and Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean" (Warburg Institute, 12-13 June 2015). The first and third of these are being published.

John. On the other, as a Melkite confraternity, through its ecclesiastical jurisdiction as part of the patriarchate of Antioch, it came under the traditional aegis of the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Palaiologios in his capacity as protector of the Holy Places of the Holy Land. Michael VIII was intent on ecumenical union with Rome to safeguard his position as the emperor of Byzantium, newly re-established in its former capital of Constantinople after the overthrow of the Latin Empire of Constantinople in 1261. His strategy of union – which culminated in the Second Council of Lyons in 1274 - was a reawakening that of his predecessor Manuel Komnenos a century before, as articulated then in the artistic programme at Bethlehem. Michael's ecumenical policy in the County of Tripoli was arguably administered through the local jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, Eutychios. This patriarch was reappointed in 1260 through pressure on the Latin prince of Antioch by the Mongol Khan, with whom the Byzantine emperor had established diplomatic relations. But the programme is not all about defence. A pivotal factor was the political and trading involvement of the indigenous Christians through different, if interlocking, routes (**Map, Fig. 28**). Based on well-established Byzantine networks, these were principally with the Genoese, with the Muslim world through Tyre and Damascus, and with the Mongols who were overlord-allies of the Cilician King Hetoum II of Armenia and the Latin Prince Bohemond VII, prince of Antioch.

The Context

The context is one of urgency after Muslim attacks on pilgrims in Jerusalem in 1261 were followed by an offensive by the Mamluk Sultan Baybars against Christian shrines, including Bethlehem as well as the city of Antioch (**Map fig. 27)** in 1262-1263.[2] In the middle of 1262 Mamluk troops raided Antioch's port at which point the Armenians called on help from Mongol troops to divert Baybars' troops from the Antioch area.[3] 1263 saw the sack of the church of the Annunciation at Nazareth and the expulsion of Latin worshippers.[4] In response to Sultan Baybars' attacks on Holy Land sites, Pope Clement IV asked Hetoum, king of Cilicia Armenia, to intervene to help the Knights of the Hospital of John.[5] The Genoese Latin Embriarchi lords of Gibelet had effectively placed responsibility for defence of the lordship in the hands of the Hospitallers. This crisis called for a coordinated Christian defensive response. Shortage of manpower in the Latin east meant that the Crusader states were dependent on their indigenous *turcopole* forces. The Papacy, through its local mendicant bishops especially the Dominicans – Raoul Bishop of Gibelet in 1262 was a Dominican - had cultivated good relations with the indigenous Christian communities.[6] Meanwhile the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII's proposal, also dating to the middle of 1262, of church union with the Pope, designed to deflect European support for Michael's arch-enemy Charles of Anjou, had consequences in Latin Syria. The Mongols would have been implicated: the Byzantines had diplomatic relations with the Mongol court and Hülegü Khan was Hetoum's effective overlord. The Mongols also had control over Asia Minor, having defeated the Seljuks at the battle of Koseh Dag in 1243, after which the Selkuk state was held as a Mongol

[2] Richard, J. 1999, 416.
[3] Amitai-Preiss, R. 1995, 54.
[4] Hamilton, B. 1980, 273.
[5] Hamilton, B. 1978 rpt. 1979, 82 with note 103.
[6] Hamilton, B. 1980, 235-236, and, 242, noting that the mendicant bishops were "open to new influences from the west". For the likelihood that "frère Raoul evesque de Gibel" was Bishop of Gibelet see Hamilton. B. 1980, 235 note 3.

protectorate. Furthermore, beginning in 1262, Mongol rulers sought direct diplomatic contact with western rulers and the papacy.[7] This overlapping is not unexpected: research has emphasised the extent to which the County of Tripoli was a multicultural society.[8] The result was the harnessing of an ethnic Syrian force focused on the ideal of defending - and ultimately regaining - the Holy Land. The painted programme at Behdaidat arguably encapsulates this situation, fused with the artistic language of textile production and trade of the community.

The particular concerns of the confraternity were the holy land shrines and trading activities. As the Melkite Confraternity of St. George (Lydda) and Bethlehem (*la frarie de St. Jorge et de Belian*) this was a militia dedicated to the protection of the shrines of St. George at Lydda and the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem.[9] The shrine of St. George near Ramla where the body of St. George was housed after his martyrdom, was cared for by Syrian monks.[10] The same is true of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. The Confraternity's activities caring for the shrines and the Latin pilgrims who visited them also brought then into contact with the Papacy, who intervened in 1245 to recover relics removed from Bethlehem by the Hospitaller and the Templar military orders.[11] While the presence of the Latins at Bethlehem was intermittent during the thirteenth century, the Melkites held responsibility for the high altar after the final political expulsion of the Latins in 1244.[12] The Melkite Confraternity was under the political control of the Genoese in Gibelet, with the ruling Genoese Embriarco family holding the lordship. (**Map**, **Fig. 25)**. At Behdaidat their mission went to the heart of the protection of home, family, and the livelihood of the community itself.

The period saw intense commercial rivalry between the Venetians and the Genoese and the Melkites were caught up in this. Guy Embriaco, lord of Gibelet, in which lordship Behdaidat lay (**Map, Fig. 26**), supported the Genoese against the Venetians and Pisans during the War of Mar Saba in Acre between 1256-1258, thereby disobeying his own feudal overlord Bohemond VII Prince of Antioch and Count of Tripoli.[13] At the instigation of the Hospitallers the Confraternity also supported the Genoese. This war resulted in the expulsion of the Genoese from Acre and the establishment of Tyre as their commercial base. The indigenous merchants ("Mosserins") continued to work to maintain their role in the lucrative local coastal trade linking Tyre, Tripoli, Acre and the other the Syria ports with Ayas (Italian Lajazzo) in Cilician Armenia.[14] This linked with commerce with the Arab world via Damascus and along the silk roads under the co-called Mongol Peace (*Pax Mongolica*). With the retaking of Constantinople by the Byzantines in 1261, the Genoese expanded their activities northwards via the Black Sea. In this way local and global strategic and mercantile interests were combined (**Map, Fig**. **27**.). The Melkite-Genoese association extended to

[7] Jackson, P. 2005, 165.
[8] See the essays assembled in Dédéyan, G. and Rizk, K (eds.), 2010.
[9] Richard, J., 1966, 451-452.
[10] Pringle, D. 1993-2009, 2, 13. The site of the cathedral church of St. George is described, 9-27
[11] Pringle, D. 1993-2009, 1, 155.
[12] Pringle, D. 1993-2009, 1, 139.
[13] Richard, J. 1985, 216.
[14] Irwin, R. 1980, *passim* for Syrian trade routes in the thirteenth century, esp. 75 on the Confraternity as a settled, rather than a newly-migrant, entity in Acre. See also Jacoby, D. 2004b, 103. For a recent study of Syrian trade emphasizing the connections between Antioch and Cilician Armenia see Redford, S. 2012, 297-309.

trading networks at a very high level. A court case involving indigenous merchants ("Mosserins") of Acre, Damascus, Antioch, Ayas/Lajazzo, Tyre and the Mongol territories was heard in Genoa in 1268.[15] This concerned losses that the merchants had sustained when their ship suffered an unauthorized attack outside Corycos by the Genoese admiral Luchetto di Grimaldi in c. 1263. The Genoese agreed to pay a substantial amount in compensation. The lord of Tyre (Philip de Montfort), khan of the Mongols (Hülegü), the king of Armenia (Hetoum II), the patriarch (Euthymios) and the prince of Antioch (Bohemond VII) were represented by their agents. This shows trading collaboration in action, as well as the prominent activities of indigenous merchants. The will of one of those merchants, a *confrater* named Saliba from Acre, attests to the wealth and status that such trading activities could bring.[16]

The Programme: Iconographic and Stylistic Overview

As a whole, the painted programme represents prayer, intercession and salvation. The focus of the programme is the apse painting (**Figs. 1, 3**) of the Apocalyptic Vision, centred on Christ enthroned in Majesty holding a text from the Gospel of St. John, written in Syriac with the first word in Greek, surrounded by the four evangelist symbols with the cherubim and seraphim on either side holding banners with the *Trisagion* in Syriac. The Virgin and St. John the Baptist intercede to his right and left respectively.[17] Below are twelve standing apostles blessing with alternating eastern and western gestures, paralleling the painting at the nearby church of Mar Charbel where Latin blessings appear on one side of the apse and Greek on the other, as Erica Cruikshank Dodd noted.[18] Facing the worshippers in the nave, Daniel stands on the north pier and St. Stephen the protomartyr on that to the south. The earthly zone is delineated by a horizontal band of interlocking rectangles found frequently in other wallpaintings in the area.[19] Moving upwards, the Annunciation (**Figs. 7a-7b**) spans the triumphal arch. In the register above that (**Fig. 1)** Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac is painted on the north side with the sacrificial ram depicted on the barrel vault behind Abraham, appearing simultaneously as the hand of God appears above to deliver the message of salvation. It is through Abraham's faith in God that his son was rescued at the last minute. God's son was sacrificed for mankind. This sets the tone for the programme: that of salvation at the Last Judgement and also personal last-minute salvation. God's hand, the vehicle of speech, appears from the starry heaven is directed at Abraham's eyes, privileging real as well as spiritual seeing. To the viewer's right Moses receives the Tablets of the Law, handed down from God, apparently in Arabic script. At the apex is a window; this is literally a window into heaven, through which God reveals himself as pure light. It is matched with a similar window at the west end (**Fig. 2**). God made flesh is represented by his son as the young Christ in a jewelled medallion immediately below. The upper part of the head is now lost as the window has been extended in modern times.[20] On either side of the "portrait" of Christ are the red sun

[15] De Mas Latrie, M.L. 1852, 74-77; Riley-Smith, J. 1973, 79.

[16] Delaville Le Roulx, J. 1894-1906, III, 91-92 no. 3105 (16 Sept 1264, Acre).

[17] For this iconography see Hélou, N. 1998 *passim*.

[18] Cruikshank Dodd, E. 2004, 341-342.

[19] See, amongst other paintings, the fragment of the standing Virgin Hodegetria with female supplicant - arguably a *consoror* - from the chapel, probably dedicated to St. Barbara, in Beirut, in the National Museum of Antiquities in Beirut. It has recently been conserved and I am grateful to Anne-Marie Afeiche for information. For bibliography see Hunt, L.-A. 1991 rpt.2000, 84-85, 114-115 with Fig. 9 (drawing); Cruickshank Dodd, E. 2004, 375-377, pl. 21.1-2 with further bibliography. .

[20] For the destruction of the upper part of Christ's medallion in recent times by the extension to this window see Salem, G and Jabbour-Gédéon, B., 2009, 271.

and the pale moon, their faces displayed prominently and alertly.[21] Given the culture of the thirteenth century and the prominence given to astrology this is no ordinary depiction of day and night. The Mongols in particular had their astronomers watch the sun and the moon closely and would take shelter inside in the event of an eclipse.[22] The sun and moon's wide eyes and the light in the form of white lines emanating from them show this to be an optimum moment for immediate action. The elements of the sanctuary are closely integrated through the balancing of figures in size and colour. There is also flow between one scene and another: the feet of Abraham and Isaac, for example, touch the zone below with the Annunciation, physically demonstrating that the Incarnation was the culmination of Old Testament prophecy. While most of the inscriptions are in Syriac, representing the ethnic bias of the programme, trilingual elements also including Arabic and Greek are integrated into the whole.

The material presence of sanctity is ever present. Christ in the Deisis (**Fig. 3**) and the Virgin in the Annunciation (**Fig. 7b**) are seated on the striped cotton fabric manufactures in the area. The rim of the apse (**Fig. 3**) is shown as richly-decorated textile bands. Daniel's costume (**Fig. 1**) is decorated with the pearls traded, especially through Tabriz. The colours of the painting overall are expressive of the textile trade. These include bright colours, imitating those which would require alum as a fixative, found in Asia Minor and the Aegean islands including Mytilene. Prominent among them is the madder lake, the red rose colour known as *rubia tinctorum* in Latin. This is derived from madder, a root, a valuable commodity found in the Damascus area and in the Orontes valley (Map, **Fig. 26**).[23] The gems surrounding the portrait of the young Christ are another valuable traded commodity from the east, including India (Map**, Fig. 28**). The Confraternity is offering its wealth in the cause of Christianity. But it is also claiming its right to these physical materials.

The theme of salvation is continued on the north and south walls, with the magnificently-dressed equestrian saints shown riding towards the apse. On the north side St. Theodore **(Fig. 11**) spears a serpent with a human head. Before him a supplicant genuflects (**Fig. 13**), his hands outstretched in prayer. On the south wall St. George (**Fig. 15**) protects the young man of Mytilene riding pillion behind him, having just rescued him from captivity and servitude. A supplicant (**Fig. 21**) below raises his hands in the eastern, *orans* pose. Spatially the upper parts of the military saints' bodies occupy the continuation of the sacred middle zone marked out in the apse. They are magnificently dressed and equipped. The supplicants occupy the earthly zone. Their dress contains distinguishing features which identify them as a Genoese-appointed agent (St. Theodore's) and a *confrater* of the Knights of St. John (St. George's). Fabrics, textures, colours, pearls and other gems are all indicative of trade undertaken by the confraternity (**Map, Fig. 28)**. Marco Polo referred to the spices, pearls, cloth of gold and silver which indigenous merchants handled, connected to the east through Mosul.[24] In Tabriz he was struck by the precious stones and pearls.[25] The defence of the community and the maintenance of its prosperity are paramount concerns expressed in the programme. Finally, painted crosses at the west end of the church representing the Holy Land

[21] Special attention was given to the face of the sun, with later a later alteration by the artist: Salem, G and Jabbour-Gédéon, B., 2009, 271.
[22] Kuehn, 2011, 214 with note 41.
[23] Heyd, W. 1923, I, 179.
[24] Moule, A, C. and Pelliot, P. (transl. and annotated), 1938, I, 100; see also Richard, J. 1966, 244 with note 13. For indigenous Christians' production and trading of silk see Jacoby, D 2004a, 231.
[25] Moule, A, C. and Pelliot, P. (transl. and annotated), 1938, I, 104.

endorse Latin patriarchal-Hospitaller cooperation, and mark prayer and blessing. A small window at the apex of the wall of the west end (**Fig. 2)** matches that at the east end, to introduce light and air when the door is closed.

A defining feature of the wallpainting is the immediacy of its style and colour. This is direct, linear and patterned, relying on shape, abstraction, colour-blocking and contrast, constituting a deliberate Syrian aesthetic. The skill of the artists in achieving this has only become apparent through the conservation work.

The Technique and date in the light of the conservation.

The only dated evidence associated with the church of Mar Tadros is the textual reference, in a book of Sacerdotal Ordinations, to the appointment of a West Syrian Orthodox ("Jacobite") priest, Bahnam son of the priest Naaman, in 1256.[26] But this Western Syrian tenure had nothing to do with the wallpaintings. The conservation work showed that the existing first layer of plaster on the walls of the church, below the present painted layer, was already dirty when the upper layer was applied.[27] This suggests that there was a time lag between the first layer of plaster – very likely undertaken in 1256 - and the painted decoration as it now stands. This explains the six-seven year interim period when dust settled before the final layer was completed, arguably in 1262-3. The conservation work has shown that the painting programme is complete as it now stands. This means that the painted figural programme was always concentrated at the east end of the church, with the crosses. If a Dormition scene ever existed - as it did at Mar Charbel, Ma'ad and St Saba at Edde-Batroun - representing veneration to the Church of the Virgin at Jehoshaphat – perhaps it was displayed on the south wall, or even in the form of an icon in the manner of those visible at the church at the present time (**Fig. 2**).[28] The concentration at the east end points, then, to a specific moment and set of circumstances, those of the early 1260s, and arguably specifically 1262-1263.

The conservation work has now yielded information concerning the techniques used, and the use of colour, all of which had direct bearing on the circumstances of the interpretation of the programme. Red was rendered more lustrous by the inclusion of vitreous mineral aggregates.[29] This imitated the valuable textiles manufactured at the time. Five main pigments were used: black, white, red hermatite, red vermillion and yellow ochre, with no green or blue, the range of tone achieved by overlaying and combining colours in up to four layers.[30] This imitates the red-gold fabric traded at the time. There is overlap with the late twelfth-early thirteenth century painting at Marqab castle and at Mar Musa al-Habashi in terms of pigments.[31] Translucence was a quality in painting traditionally valued in the painting of Antioch and its surrounding multicultural eastern Christian monasteries. Alexander Saminsky has noted translucency in the use of pigments as a feature of Greek manuscript illumination in Antioch in the eleventh century.[32] This contributed to his suggestion that Antioch may be the source of Comnene painting on Cyprus.[33] Historical ties

[26] See Hunt, L.-A., 2009, 274-275.

[27] Capriotti, G. 2009, 264.

[28] Respectively Cruickshank Dodd, E. 2004, 320-321 and 281. For the discussion as to whether was once a Dormition scene see Hunt, L.-A. 2009, 281

[29] Capriotti, G. 2009, 265.

[30] Capriotti, G. 2009, 265.

[31] The blue at Marqab is carbon black and lie white mixed: Folda, J. (with French, P. and Coupel, P.) 1982, 205. There was no azurite at Mar Musa al-Habashi: Cruikshank Dodd, E. 2001, 109 with note 27.

[32] Saminsky, A. 2013, 229 with fig. 44, coupling this with the "dynamism" in figural representation.

[33] Saminsky, A. 2013, 229, with reference to the wallpainting at the church at Asinou of 1108.

bound the area of Tripoli within ecclesiastical bounds of the ancient Patriarchate of Antioch, especially through its Greek Orthodox patriarch. Traditional techniques may well have reinforced that affiliation to Antioch. What is also clear is the value put on sheer skill, as opposed to relying on the value of materials alone.

The State of Research and Present Questions

The wallpaintings at Behdaidat have long been known and their Syrian style established, especially by Erica Cruikshank Dodd, Levon Nordiguian and Jean-Claude Voisin, Nada Hélou and Mat Immerzeel.[34] They have always been juxtaposed with wallpaintings displaying a more "Byzantine" style. However, I would caution against polarisation on the basis of style: Behdaidat in fact shares many elements in common with those churches that have designated as within the "Byzantine" spectrum. Indeed it will be argued here that Behdaidat is also within the imperial Byzantine orbit.

Significant information has recently come to light with the publication of recently-conserved at the churches of Sts. Sergios and Bacchos at Kaftoun and also Saydet Kharayeb, Our Lady of the Ruins, at Kfar Helda in the region of Batroun.[35] As to Kaftoun, pointing to the use of modelling, especially through the use of green shading, Tomasz Waliszewski, Krzysztof Chmielewski, Mat Immerzeel and Nada Hélou have remarked that "the quality of the Kaftoun wall paintings is unparalleled by any other painted decorations" in the area, except Kfar Helda.[36] On the face of it this value judgement is valid, if we interpret "Byzantine" in the classical art historical sense. However, this is to ignore iconographic, historical and technical similarities between churches' painted programmes which allows instead for a different, and more inclusive interpretation of Greek Orthodox/Melkite art in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries. For example: modelling does occur at Behdaidat, including the rounding of the apostles' faces, even if this conforms to a more stylised approach. Furthermore, there are several iconographical overlaps between Kaftoun and Behdaidat, including the apse Deisis and the Annunciation paintings of the "second" artist. Also the painting technique is similar: the artists at Kaftoun also layered their pigments, as Waliszewski and his colleagues noted.[37] This is a major feature at Behdaidat, identified during the conservation process. The difference is that acquamarine, or azurite is used at Kaftoun.[38] The azurite blue is completely absent at Behdaidat. Instead areas of the wallpainting at Behdaidat appear dark blue, composed of layering. The artists at Behdaidat were more interested in emphasising red.

The blue at Kaftoun echoes that at the Hospitaller church of Abu Ghosh (Emmaus) in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem of c. 1170, conserved at the turn of the twenty-first century. This

[34] For comment on the Syrian style of the programme at Behdaidat see Cruikshank Dodd, 2004, 95, 343, viewing the painting particularly in relation to that at the church of Mar Musa al-Habashi in Syria of the early years of the thirteenth century and that at Mar Charbel at Ma'ad. See further Nordiguian, L. and Voisin, J. C. 1999 rpt.2009, 212; Immerzeel, 2009, 320 (index); Romeny, B. ter Haar, with Atto, N., van Ginkel, J.J., Immerzeel, M. and Snelders, B., 2010,. 32, with the proposed dating of 1243/1261-1262; Hélou, 2012, 183, 185, listing other Lebanese churches displaying a similar style.

[35] See Waliszewski, T., Chmielewski, K., Immerzeel, Hélou, M, 2013 for Kaftoun, with bibliography. For Kfar Helda see Nordiguian, L. 2012, 108-110 with Figs. 9--11; Hélou N. 2012, 180-181 with ills. 3-4. For a discussion of Lebanese painted churches as a whole see Vorderstrasse, T. 2011, *passim*.

[36] Waliszewski, T., Chmielewski, K., Immerzeel, Hélou, M, 2013, 311.

[37] Waliszewski, T., Chmielewski, K., Immerzeel, Hélou, M, 2013, 311 with Fig. 24.

[38] Waliszewski, T., Chmielewski, K., Immerzeel, Hélou, M, 2013, 310 with Fig. 23.

observation is supported by other parallels including the eight-pointed stars above the standing saints Bacchus and Theodore which are prominent in the subterranean chapel at Abu Ghosh.[39] They also appear in the cave church at Jehoshaphat, site of the Tomb of the Virgin. I would argue that this is associated with the Virgin, and, by association, Bethlehem. They appear on the Virgin's shoulders in the Deisis image in the apse, an image which is very closely related to icon painting, especially the Virgin from a Deisis group at the Monastery of St. Catherine's at Mount Sinai Sinai (**Fig. 4**).[40] They reappear, in red, in the sky of the St. Theodore panel at Behdaidat (**Fig. 11).** This linkage arguably expresses the devotion and commitment to the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. And they are also indicative of the Crusader County of Tripoli, as demonstrated in its coinage.[41] All these churches have the Holy Land link in common with Behdaidat, but are stylistically distinct.

Lévon Nordiguian has also described the paintings at Kfar Helda as belonging to "une école de tradition byzantine".[42] Yet again the
layering technique is used..[43] The relationship with icon painting is another factor in common. Furthermore, on architectural grounds, Nordiguian has suggested that Kfar Helda, with its double naves could have been a mixed-liturgy church.[44] On archaeological and historical grounds Ronnie Ellenblum has argued for mixed Frankish and local settlements in the Latin Kingdom.[45] The same can be argued for Behdaidat. So, again, the indications suggest common ground aside from stylistic considerations.

The cross-over between wallpainting and icon painting has been identified at Kaftoun with the suggestion that the second wallpainting artist at Kaftoun - responsible for the apse area - also painted the bilateral Kaftoun icon of the Baptism of Christ/Virgin Blachernitissa, as well as the bilateral icon of the Virgin Hodegetria/ soldier saints Sergios and Bacchus (**Fig. 17a-b**) and that of Virgin Blachernitissa, all at Sinai.[46] But the association with icon painting is also very clear at Behdaidat as will be seen. Rebecca Corrie has supported the supposition that the bilateral icon still housed at Kaftoun "was meant for a Maronite or more likely a Melkite foundation, groups that spoke Arabic but used Syriac as their liturgical language" and further supported the view that icons now at Sinai were made in Syria and Lebanon.[47] A further suggestion can be added to the mix: while it is likely that one or other face of the icon was predominantly used by one community or the other – the Hodegetria by the Melkite, associated with Bethlehem, and the Baptism by the Maronite - the icon as a whole arguably expresses an agreed ecumenical purpose. Above all, icons can be shown to be common to the liturgies of all these churches: Melkite/Maronite in the case of Kaftoun, and Melkite/Latin at Behdaidat.

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[39] Compare Waliszewski, T., Chmielewski, K., Immerzeel, Hélou, M, 2013, Figs. 32 and 33 with Kühnel G., 1988, Pl. XXXIX, figs. 66-67.

[40] Nelson, R.S. and Collins, K.M. (eds.), 2006, 182-185, no.24, with colour plate (entry B. Pentcheva).

[41] Hunt, 2017 Forthcoming.

[42] Nordiguian 2012, 110 with note 22.

[43] Waliszewski, T., Chmielewski, K., Immerzeel, Hélou, M, 2013, 313 with Figs. 25 and 26.

[44] Nordiguain 2012, 107.

[45] Ellenblum, R. 1998, passim esp. 119-144.

[46] Waliszewski, T., Chmielewski, K., Immerzeel, Hélou, M, 2013, 320. The Kaftoun icon is reproduced, in colour, figs 34-35. For the bilateral icon of the soldier saints, and the Virgin Hodegetria: 251-253 (entry R.W. Corrie) with colour plates.

[47] Corrie, R.W. 2010, 423.

The challenge now is to marry the Syrian local style and character of the painting at Behdaidat with information from the conservation work and historical indicators. I have previously suggested that trade, religion and politics intersect at Behdaidat, with indigenous Christians operating under the aegis of the Latins.[48] I would now like to examine the conserved Behdaidat wallpaintings within a wider historical perspective that takes particular account of the Antiochene ecclesiastical basis, trade and defence.

The Apse Painting: The Deisis Vision, Syrian Greek Orthodox/Melkites and the Byzantine Ecumenical Project

What is most striking as the viewer now enters the church is the powerful, dominating, figure of Christ enthroned emerging from the conch of the apse in the apocalyptic vision which envisages his appearance at the last Judgement at the end of time (**Figs. 1.3**). From the worshipper's point of view the dominating image of Christ, with the evangelist symbols and the cherubim and seraphim below. This is tempered by the intercessionary figures of the Virgin and St. John. This iconography has been shown to represent Greek Orthodox, anti-Iconoclastic theology in Constantinople and Cappadocia[49]. It was through the Palestinian monastery of Mar Saba that liturgical practice based on the liturgy of St. Bail came to be developed and adopted in Constantinople through the reforms of St. John the Studite in the ninth century[50]. In its conserved state at Behdaidat the convergence of colour and form moulds the characteristic "Syrian" aesthetic to shape the figure of Christ as a powerful, numinous entity, giving it aesthetic shape and providing indelible form and definition. Its form, iconography and the inscriptions evokes the liturgy of the Greek Orthodox/Melkite Christians of Syria, within the ancient theological orbit of Antioch.

This will be clarified here in preference to two previous theories based on discussion of the apse painting of the religious affiliation of the community at Behdaidat, to either West Syrian ("Jacobite") or Maronite. These theories can be briefly mentioned. The iconography of Christ in Majesty has been in the past associated with the enduring tradition of the older liturgy of St. James.[51] This argument is based on the assumption that this older liturgy survived the introduction of the Greek liturgies of St. Basil and St. John Chrystostom.[52] However, as will be seen below, it was these Greek Orthodox/Melkite liturgies that predominated at Behdaidat in the thirteenth century. The other proposal, that Behdaidat was exclusively a Maronite church, can also be discounted. This suggestion was made on the basis that the banners held by the cherubim and seraphim proclaiming the *Trisagion* are a direct reference to the version of the hymn used by the west Syrian and Maronite churches.[53] It is likely that both versions of the *trisagion* would have been used in some other churches, accommodating both Melkites and Maronites.[54] This might well be applied to churches where the presence of dual naves indicate dual religious practice, such as Kafr Helda. The dual presence in such cases can be regarded as acceptable to Maronites and Latins who could have worshipped in the church or

[48] Hunt, L.-A. 2009, 281-282.
[49] Woodfin, W. T. 2003-2004, *passim*.
[50] Thomas, J / Constantinides Hero, A., with the assistance of G. Constable, 2000, 86-88.
[51] Cruickshank Dodd 2004, 32-33, 339 with references.
[52] Cruickshank Dodd 2004, 102.
[53] Mouawad, R.J. 2003, *passim*. The argument was that this implies the incorporation of the additional phrase added by Peter Fuller, Patriarch of Antioch in the later fifth century: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal *who was crucified for us,* have mercy on us: Taft, R.F. 1991; Rosiński, R. 2010, 70.
[54] For liturgical aspects of the Trisagion see Karim, A. 2014, *passim*.

at least have been affiliated.[55] However architecturally Behdaidat is a single-naved church. The Greek Orthodox/Melkite element predominates, with the Latin presence represented by the alternate Latin blessing hands of the apostles in the lower part of the apse. I will argue that the programme at Behdaidat was painted by members of the Confraternity of St. George (of Lydda) and Bethlehem, with Latin affiliation to the Hospitaller Order, and with ties to the Bethlehem shrine itself. The Greek Orthodox/Melkite liturgies of Sts. Basil and John Chrysostom would have been used.

The text inscription on Christ's open book reinforces the assumption that the Greek Orthodox/Melkite liturgical presence was predominant. The recent cleaning and conservation work has revealed that the text is that of St. John's Gospel VIII: 12 in Syriac, written in Serto Urhoy (Edessa) script. This text reads, from right to left with a couple of illegible words:

Enā ... Nūhreh d-'almā Kūl d-mehalekh b-pūqdānay (?) lā mehalekh b-ḥeshūkhā

ܐܢܐ ... ܢܘܗܪܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܟܠ ܕܡܗܠܟ ܒܦ̈ܘܩܕܢ̈ܝ ܠܐ ܡܗܠܟ ܒܚܫܘܟܐ

"I am the light of the world; he that follows my commandments (?) shall not walk in darkness". To the left of the Syriac is the word EGON/EGOU "I am" in Greek, thereby adapting the usual Greek.[56] This suggests scribal involvement. The *serto* script is assumed to have been one of the forerunners the Melkite script.[57] The primary focus of the imagery is Melkite. An immediate reference point is in the icon of Christ (**Fig. 5**) from the same Deisis group as the Virgin icon just mentioned at Sinai, in which Christ holds the open book beginning with the same text of St. John in Greek.[58] It has been suggested that the elements of spoken, rather than written, orthography on the icon of Christ point to its performative liturgical use.[59] In the case of the Behdaidat apse the limited Greek orthography surely indicates that for the Melkite community here Greek was not the predominant liturgical language of the people. The liturgy in Syriac is the predominant indicator of identity for this confraternity. Syriac was used as the language of the liturgy by the Melkites, of which there were communities in Syria as well as the Syriac-speaking monks on Sinai.[60] This arguably continued the tradition of eastern Christian scribes evidenced at the Palestinian village of ʿAbud and elsewhere in the eleventh century who continued their activity in the twelfth century associated with the church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.[61] The association of the icons of Christ and the Virgin (**Figs. 4 and 5**) with the textile-working confraternity is suggested by the presence on the back of a textile pattern of horizontal brushstrokes. Both icons also demonstrate the chrysography that the painters at Behdaidat were imitating in their use of yellow ochre. This, with other elements in the decoration, betokens trade with the Mongols, with their appetite for gold.[62]

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[55] Mouawad, R.J. 2003, 539-540 and 547 points to the Maronite writer Thomas of Kfartab who added references to the Latins in the second edition of his treatise on the Trisagion of 1189.

[56] I am grateful to Professor Rifaat Ebied of the University of Sydney for this reading and transliteration. A rare text liturgically, John Cotsonis has noted that John VIII: 12 is only read once a year in the Greek Orthodox liturgy, on the fourth Thursday after Easter. See Evans, H.C. (ed.) 2004, 30-361 with n. 3 (no. 219: Entry J. Cotsonis).

[57] McCollum, 2015, noting that the earliest-known example of Melkite script is that in a manuscript of 1045 AD from the Black Mountain monastery of Mar Elias.

[58] John VIII: 12-13. Nelson, R.S. and Collins, K.M. (eds.), 2006, 182-185, no. 25 with colour plate (entry B. Pentcheva).

[59] Nelson, R.S. and Collins, K.M. (eds.), 2006, 25.

[60] Smelova, N. 2011, 121-122.

[61] Ellenblum, R. 1998, 128-135 with bibliography.

[62] Yellow was the imperial Chinese colour and gold provoked "awe": Allsen, T.T. 1997, 62-63.

In general the parallel between the working practices of scribes at Sinai and that of icon production in the thirteenth century has been suggested by Nancy Ševčenko who saw no evidence of a consistent school of icon painters at the monastery itself in the early thirteenth century.[63] Instead, interpreting the icon evidence in the light of study of Syriac manuscripts at Sinai between the early 1230s-early 1290s, she concluded that the painting of icons mirrored the activity of scribes visiting the monastery, including those from this area and around Aleppo and Damascus up to 1265.[64] This supports the suggestion here that a scribe who was involved in the painting of the apse at Behdaidat very likely also produced icons and had connections with Sinai. He could well have been the organising mind behind the programme, working with local Syrians.

The Deisis image in the apse at Behdaidat arguably has direct imperial connotations at this time. This leads us to Constantinople itself. Michael VIII had taken back the former Byzantine capital from the Latins in 1261 and chosen the Deisis as the image to decorate the imperial enclosure of the south gallery of the church of St. Sophia in Constantinople. This mosaic is normally dated to the time of the reconsecration of St. Sophia in the autumn of 1261.[65] However, I would instead suggest that it postdates Michael's correspondence with the Pope in the summer of 1262 which triggered this initiative.[66] The Deisis arguably becomes the flagship image of the policy of ecumenical union.[67]

There are several indicators that the Melkite community at Behdaidat identified with the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII in his role of protector of Levantine Christians and Christian sites in the Holy Land. This can be seen in the painted figure of the equestrian St. George (**Fig. 15**) and elsewhere. The first is the red and white chequerboard design of the saint's shield. This heraldic pattern appears in Byzantine flags as early as the tenth century.[68] The pattern is echoed in a different form on St. George's saddle guards to front and back, and also appears on St. Theodore's saddle (**Fig. 11**). The colour red is itself the most commonly-used colour in Byzantine heraldry.[69] The roundel, in red, with the symbol of an eagle (**Fig. 16a**) represents the Byzantine standard. This is thought to have been of an eagle, continuing the memory of the Roman imperial past.[70] Its depiction in a roundel is suggestive of its original appearance embroidered in gold on clothing, as well as its appearance on flags and shields. This, then, can be seen as a symbol of the intervention of the Byzantine emperor, Michael VIII, in the same way as the eagle design embroidered on the dalmatic of the deacon St. Stephanos on a column painting at the Church of the Nativity Bethlehem (**Fig. 16b**) indicated the intervention of Manuel Komnenos in the late 1160s, also with an ecumenical agenda.[71] While not directly politically controlled, the community here is recognising the overarching ideological authority of Byzantium. This identifies the status of the seigneurie of Gibelet as a suzerain, or client, state of the Byzantine Empire. While not under direct political rule, the community here are subscribing to the Byzantine ideology of the protection of the emperor. It

[63] Ševčenko, N.P. 2010, 258.
[64] Ševčenko, N.P. 2010, 250-252.
[65] Cormack, R. 1981, 145-146 with pl. 7.
[66] Geanakoplos, D. J. 1959, 146-147 for this correspondence.
[67] I discuss this further in Hunt, L.-A. 2017 Forthcoming.
[68] Babuin, A. 2001, 41.
[69] Babuin, A. 2001, 34.
[70] Babuin, A. 2001, 41.
[71] Bagatti B. 1952 rpt 1983, 99 with fig. 22 (drawing reproduced here); Kühnel G., 1988, 64-69, fig. 3 no 11 (location plan), pls. XX-XXI.

can be argued that the eagle component of the eagle-lion moulded decoration framing the Virgin Hodegetria bilateral icon at Kaftoun has similar imperial connotations.[72]

The important point is the concentration on common ground between the churches and the deflection of attention from the divisions that came about following the Council of Chalcedon in 451. This is a return to the unified church of the emperor Constantine. This ecumenical agenda was furthered by the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII who regarded himself as the successor to Constantine.[73] In this he is reviving the ecumenical policy of his predecessor Manuel Komnenos who gave the policy visual expression in the mosaics at the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, dated 1169.[74] This duality is reflected in the mixed services of communities elsewhere in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.[75]

Michael VIII's concern as Protector of Christians of the Holy Land therefore unites Syria with the Holy Land within the Greek Orthodox cultural orbit of Constantinople. The Patriarch of Antioch, Euthymios in post from 1260 to 1263, was arguably instrumental in facilitating this and I would therefore argue that the programme at Behdaidat was painted during his time in office. It can be seen as part of a wider campaign to rally the indigenous population, which explains similarities between the programme here and at other churches in Lebanon. The presence of a fragmentary wall inscription at the church at Kaftoun which mentions the patriarch of Antioch endorses this suggestion.[76] Euthymios had been reinstated as Patriarch through pressure imposed by the Mongol Khan Hülegü, the overlord-protector and ally of King Hetoum II, king of Cilician Armenia and his son-in-law Bohemond VII of Antioch at the time of victory against the Mamluks in 1260. This had seen the regaining of land, including that in the Orontes area and also the conquest of Damascus. Behind the move to reinstate Euthymios was the agreement between the Byzantine emperor of Nicaea and the Great Khan of the Mongols.[77] The territorial gains were soon lost, however, with the defeat of the Mongols by the Mamuks at the battle of Ain Jalut, also in 1260.

The Annunciation to the Virgin and textiles

While there is also no doubting the Greek Orthodox basis of the imagery of the Virgin it is suffused with Syriac Antiochene Christology, which provides the most systematic imagery of clothing metaphors for the history of human salvation, including the Incarnation.[78] The scene of the Annunciation (**Fig. 7a-b**) shows the Virgin holding the red thread before her house. The Protoevangelium of James describes how, at the time of the Annunciation, the Virgin was spinning this purple thread in order to weave a veil for the temple.[79] The text of the Epistle to Hebrews (9:11) refers to the veil as the flesh of Christ.[80] The fifth-century writer Proclus of Constantinople envisaged the womb of the Virgin as a "workshop in which the unity of divine and human nature was fashioned."[81] From this a rich tradition of artistic

[72] For this decoration see Waliszewski, T., Chmielewski, K., Immerzeel, M, Hélou, N. 2013, 319 with note 23.
[73] Macrides, R. 1980, *passim*.
[74] Hunt, L.-A. 1991 rept. 2000a, *passim*; Jotischky, A. 1994, *passim*; Augé 2007, 227. See now , M. 2017, 165.
[75] For example the joint Latin-Syrian parish of St. George above Tiberias in the 1170s: Ellenblum, R. 1998, 119-120.
[76] Waliszewski, T., Chmielewski, K., Immerzeel, Hélou, M, 2013, 317.
[77] Hamilton, B. 1980, 325; Harris, J. 2003, 197.
[78] Brock 1982 rpt.1992, esp. 16-18 on the Incarnation.
[79] Constas, N.P. 1995, 181 with note 38.
[80] Constas, N.P, 1995, 181.
[81] Constas, N.P. 1995, 182.

imagery is derived.[82] Furthermore the Behdaidat painting directly follows Proclus' explanation that the Virgin's conception (Luke 1: 26-38) took place as she listened to the small dove who spoke into her ear.[83] This is also depicted on icon painting at Sinai (**Fig. 8)** on a panel of a templon beam of c.1260 of arguably Melkite workmanship.[84]

She is sitting, as is Christ in the apse, on a red and white striped cloth, probably cotton or linen, which drapes over her throne. As already mentioned, this is locally-produced fabric an example of cloth such as this is a child's shirt of cotton embroidered with silk, dated to the twelfth century, which was found in the cave excavation at the Hadith in Lebanon.[85] Finer versions are also depicted in other Lebanese wallpaintings, and on icon painting at Sinai.[86] This has special resonance in this church, where the rich patterning and fabric arguably represent a community of weavers and textile workers and traders, involving the whole community, women as well as men. It may well also have been open to other merchants with whom they traded, including those from Damascus and the Arab world. The prevalence of textiles here puts one in mind of Lisa Golombek's description of "the draped universe" to describe the Islamic "obsession with textiles."[87] A particular example of the depiction of textiles here is the decorative border to the apse. This can be compared with the *podea*, the cloth shown suspended from an early thirteenth-century icon of the Eleousa, the Praying, Virgin, from St. Neophytos near Paphos on Cyprus (**Drawing, Fig. 6**).[88] This icon is related to another icon of the Virgin Hodegetria, dated to the early thirteenth century, which again has the textile brushstroke patterning on the back imitating fabric.[89] Such patterned cloths, through their contact with the holy, themselves represent textile relics.

Thus members of the textile-producing communities of Syria and Cyprus, with connections to the Holy Land, can be seen to share this imagery, appropriate to their working lives and communal devotion. The Behdaidat wallpainting can be further associated with icons. The Virgin and angel in the Annunciation (**Fig. 7a-b)** adapts work such as the sanctuary screen doors in a chapel at Sinai **(Fig. 9)**, even positing a direct derivation.[90] Similarities include the shaping of the angels' draperies and the roundness of the lower part of the faces in both.

St. John the Baptist: **Patron saint, Relics, and the Holy Land.**

St John the Baptist, on Christ's left side in the Deisis (**Fig. 3**), is of central importance to both the Melkites and the Hospitallers, as patron saint of the Order of the Hospital. He prophesied and recognized Christ in his role as witness and is interpreted as the second Elijah in St. Matthew's Gospel (11:14) and several times in the Gospel of St. Luke.[91] This was particularly concerned with preparing the way for Christ as the salvation of mankind. Very striking at Behdaidat is the way that John extends his two bare outstretched arms to Christ

[82] Gibson, G.M. 1990, *passim*; Evangelatou, M. 2003, *passim*.
[83] Constas, N.P. 2003, 4.
[84] Reproduced by Folda, J. 2005 318 with Fig. 164.
[85] Kallab, O. 2012, 208 with colour photo.
[86] For a wallpainting example see that decorating the throne of the Virgin and Child at the Church of St. George at Rachkida: Nordiguian and Voisin, 1999/2009, 300. For an example in icon painting see Ševčenko, 2012, 282 with cotton fabric, which she describes as ikat, depicted on a templon beam of St. Eustratios at Sinai.
[87] Golombek, L. 1988, *passim* esp. 25. For the cross-cultural aspects of textile trading see Jacoby, D. 2004a *passim*.
[88] Papageorgiou, A.1969, fig. 19; Mouriki, 1987, 412-413 with Fig. 4.
[89] In the Byzantine Museum in Athens: Mouriki, D. 1987, 413-414 with Fig. 3.
[90] Nelson, R.S. and Collins, K.M. (eds), 2006, 179 no 22 with colour plate (Entry S.E.J. Gerstel).
[91] Rindoš, J. 2010, 195-197 and conclusion, 231-233.

(**Fig. 10a detail)**. This is paralleled in the Sinai icon of St. John from the Deisis group, of which the icons of Christ and the Virgin have already been mentioned.[92] It is also a feature of St. John in the apse at Kfar Helda. There are two implications to this. One is the presence of red lines emphasising the hair on John's arms which represents the "internalisation" of Elijah's fur mantle and expresses John's linkage with Elijah which validates his monastic credentials. Second, the way he extends and displays both his bare arms denotes his arm relics, crucial to his cult and its site in the Holy Land and the role the Melkites played at it. Let us look at the implications of each in turn.

St John the Baptist identified with Elijah and al-Kidr

First, the identification with Elijah, John is invariably depicted in Byzantine art wearing the same fur mantle as Elijah, whose monastic appearance, as in the famous eleventh-century icon at Sinai, is derived from his time living as a hermit in the desert.[93] At Sinai there was a chapel by the cave on Jebel Musa (Mount Horeb), where God spoke to Elijah, and his mantle was venerated as a relic in Constantinople. At Behdaidat, however, St. John does not wear the fur as a mantle but wears it literally, in the form of body hair, over both his arms. In this way he becomes the embodiment of Elijah. Elijah was regarded as the archetypal hermit in east and west.[94] St. John takes on this literal embodiment of the monastic ideal. This is not new: it is found in a twelfth-century icon from Cyprus from the church of the Virgin Phorbiotissa in Asinou now in the Byzantine Museum in Nicosia.[95] At the Hospitaller church of Abu Ghosh (Emmaus) near Jerusalem in c.1170 a huge standing figure of St. John epitomising Elijah stands on the first pier of the nave opposite St. Stephen facing towards the church's worshippers. In this position at Abu Ghosh he reinforces his position in the Deisis in the apse in the same church.[96] The trail leads back to Bethlehem in the recently-conserved Deisis painted in the chapel at the base of the north tower dating to the twelfth century but arguably also in use in the thirteenth (Drawing, **Fig. 10b**), not least in the 1240s when relics were returned to Bethlehem through the intervention of the papal representative.[97] St. John, then, has particular resonance in the context of the protection of the Holy Land sites.

The early 1260s was an important time for eremetical practice in the Latin East. Attracted by the association with Elijah, Greek and Syrian hermits on Mount Carmel had been joined by Latins to form a mixed community of Orthodox and Latin hermits.[98] Following the regularisation of the Latin hermits, a bull of Pope Alexander IV in 1261 offered indulgencies to any who visited a Carmelite church in Syria or Cyprus.[99] Furthemore the newly-established monastic orders were placed under the protection of the Hospitallers.[100] This would have

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[92] Nelson, R.S. and Collins, K.M. (eds.), 2006, 182-185, nos.2-25 with Fig. 109.4, with colour plate (entry B. Pentcheva.)

[93] Kalavrezou, I. 1997, 70.This shows Elijah in the desert being fed by a raven: Nelson, R.S. and Collins, K.M. (eds), 2006, 181 no. 28 with colour pl. (Entry: G. Parpulov).

[94] Jotischky, A. 1995, 159,

[95] Eliades, I. 2013, 129 fig. 5.

[96] Kühnel, G. 1988, 157-159 with Pls. XLIX/85.

[97] Bagatti, B, 19952.83, 75 with fot. 47-48; Folda, J, 1995, 165 with 6.15a-b; Piccirillo, M. ofm, 2008, figs. Pringle D. 1995-2009, 2, 152 with references.

[98] Jotischky, A. 1995, 140-141.

[99] Jotischky, A. 1995, 149.

[100] Jotischky, A. 1995, 61.

given extra stimulus to this iconography. Arguably, then, the Hospitallers are here claiming the eremitical heritage of the Holy Land by way of the association between St. John and Elijah.

In embodying Elijah in the apse Deisis St. John links with Moses, placed over the triumphal arch at Behdaidat, to demonstrate the correspondence between the Old and New Testaments. Elijah, with Moses, witnessed Christ's Transfiguration, as in the Justinianic apse mosaic at Sinai. Subsequently Elijah ascended into heaven where he remained a witness to Christ's preparation for his appearance at the Last Judgement.[101] He himself became an instrument of salvation. Elijah as protector and rescuer is a feature of popular culture in the coastal area of Syria and Asia Minor and merges with the Islamic al—Khidr, the Islamic holy Green Man, the nameless companion and teacher of Moses in the Qur'an (18:60-82).[102] Al-Kidr-Elijah (Ilyas) is also associated with the water of life and hence resurrection. Through the baptismal link it is then only one further step to the identification of John the Baptist himself with al-Kidr. In this guise Khidr/St. John becomes the Armenian Surb Karapet, the defender and protector of both Christian and Muslim communities.[103] At Behdaidat St John has, then, a multi-faceted role not only as witness and intercessor but also the additional roles ascribed to him by these associations with Elijah and al-Kidr, of last-minute rescuer, protector, defender and intercessor on behalf of both the individual and their community for victory, salvation and triumph over death. The associations through popular culture also gave them common ground with other denominations and non-Christians, Mongols and Muslims As merchants and transporters of pilgrims the Melkites at Behdaidat worked with other Christian denominations including the Armenians, not least via the port of Ayas/Lajazzo (**Maps, Figs. 27-28**) and also with Muslim traders on the coast and to the hinterland.

St John and the power of his Relics

By exposing his bare arms **(Fig. 10a**) St. John the Baptist at Behdaidat is actually displaying his own relics. St. John's sites of commemoration are close to those of Elijah in the Holy Land and retained a deep significance for Melkite communities and pilgrims alike. Elijah's ascent in the fiery chariot (2 Kings 2:11-12) was believed to have taken place from the Hermēneim (Mount Hermon), near the site of Christ's Baptism in the Jordan valley.[104] At the latter site was the monastery of St. John Prodromos.[105] This monastery was not only a Melkite site but it had imperial connections: it had been restored by the Byzantine emperor Manuel Comnenos (1143-.1180).[106] Thietmar, the German pilgrim, recorded in 1217 that the Greeks and Syrians came at Epiphany each year to have their children baptised at the monastery church.[107] The monastery continued to be occupied by Greek monks, documented here in the fourteenth century.[108] The relics of St. John, of which the hand and left arm were the most famous, must have been translated here from Sebaste sometime after 1187.[109]

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[101] Elijah and Enoch are the only two Old Testament prophets who attained this status, as medieval theologians emphasised: Roubach, S. 2006, 308.

[102] Pancaroğlu. O. 2004, 158; Kuehn, S. 2011,235.

[103] Van Lint, T.M. 2005, esp. 362-378.

[104] Pringle, D. 1993-2009, II, 241; Pringle, Pilgrimage, 195 with note 46 (the account of the Greek Anonymous pilgrim.)

[105] Pringle, D. 1993-2009, 2, 240-44.

[106] Pringle, D. 1995-2009, 2, 241. The monastery church of Our Lady at Kalamoun was probably rebuilt at the same time: Pringle, D. 1995-2009, I, 197.

[107] Pringle, D. 1993-2009, I, 241.

[108] Pringle, D. 1993-2009, II, 241.

[109] Pringle, D. Churches, II, 241-42 referring to pilgrim account between late 1160s and mid-1280s.

Fourteenth-century pilgrims record seeing - and touching - this relic of the left arm of John the Baptist.[110] One function of the imagery of St. John's bare arms at Behdaidat may well, have been therefore, to "authorize" the Behdaidat church to function as a village "proxy" church. In other words families would have had their children baptised here in place of, or replicating, the experience of travelling south to the monastery of the Prodromos itself. This would have been particular important at times of dangerous attack, as in the early 1260s.

The other, right, arm relic of John the Baptist – that used to baptize Christ - had been taken from Antioch in 956 and kept in the Great Palace at Constantinople. Ioli Kalavrezou has pointed to the significance of the right arm relic in Byzantine ceremonial of the Macedonian emperors in Constantinople in the ninth-tenth centuries.[111] She argues that its presence in the Great Palace, together with that of the arm of St. Stephen, was seen to validate the emperor's authority as a Christian emperor through divine intercession.[112] It was last recorded by the pilgrim Anthony of Novgorod in 1200 in the palace chapel of the Virgin of the Pharos with other relics including St. John the Baptist's iron rod surmounted by a cross.[113] During the same visit Anthony saw the face of John the Baptist there and the upper part of the head in the Blachernai.[114] In the church of St. John in the monastery of Studios he also saw the thumb which had been detached while the relic was in still Antioch and used to kill a dragon.[115] The right arm may have been taken from Constantinople to the monastery of Cîteaux in France by Count Eudes de Cicons in 1263.[116]

Relics of St. John were owned and revered by the Genoese. Guglielmo, the founder of the lordship of Gibelet and of the Embriaco family's trading fortunes after the First Crusade, had been responsible for the transfer of relics of St. John the Baptist from Caesarea to the treasury of the cathedral of S. Lorenzo in Genoa in 1098.[117] Furthermore, the Genoese kept their quarters and church of St John in Antioch in the mid-thirteenth century: this is known from a document of 1264.[118] "Reuniting" both arms in the wallpainting at Behdaidat gave access to the relics' power to intercede, to bestow moral and spiritual authority as well as provide practical power. It was the alliance between the Genoese and the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII after 1261, with the intervention of the Hospitallers, that would have made this reconciliation imaginable.

Stephen and Daniel: Intermediaries and salvation history

At the base of the triumphal arch stand Stephen and Daniel act as intermediaries between the holy figures in the apse and the worshippers in the nave. St Stephen (**Fig. 1**), the protomartyr deacon is depicted in the image of Christ, dressed in pearls and silk. Tonsured

[110] Pringle, D. 1993-2009, I, 197-202; II, p. 241.
[111] Kalavrezou, I. 1997, *passim.*
[112] Kalavrezou, I. 1997, esp. 78, 79.
[113] Kalavrezou, I. 1997, 67-68.
[114] Kalavrezou, I. 1997, 68 note 65. Face or lower part to Amiens in 1206, where it remains. See Weyl Carr, 2007,
[115] Kalavrezou, I. 1997, 69 with note 68.
[116] Kalavrezou, I. 1997, 68 with note 62. For the "constructed" history of the right arm hand and arm, the diffusion of the relics, competing claims and its subsequent history after 1484 on Rhodes, see Sinkević, I. 2014*, passim*.
[117] Epstein, S.A. 1996, 29; Gorse 2003, 315. Soon after the First Crusade the Genoese also acquired the relic of a green glass dish, believed to be the platter on which John the Baptist's head was delivered to Herod: Epstein, S. 2012, 173 note 54.
[118] Heyd W. 1923, I, 324.

and swinging the censor with his right hand, he is participating in a service. The first Christian martyr, his relics were removed from Jerusalem to Constantinople in the first half of the fifth century, venerated there and called upon in support of imperial authority.[119] He represents Jerusalem itself, in Muslim hands. He is paired with Daniel, the archetypal Old Testament image of salvation, rescued from the lions' den.

Military Saints Theodore and George: stories of personal salvation and popular piety

The equestrian saints Theodore and George are shown on panels on the north and south walls riding towards the apse (**Fig. 1** for position). Military saints were venerated by both the Greek Orthodox/Melkite and Latin communities and further express the duality characteristic of Behdaidat. From the Greek Orthodox/Melkite perspective, the popularity of the military saints from the twelfth-thirteenth centuries is attributable to the renewed threat from Muslim Seljuk settlement which had been gathering momentum since the Seljuk victory over the Byzantines at the battle of Manzikert in 1071. The veneration of military saints, including the popular cult of St. Theodore, had been particularly prominent in the Byzantine army in the eastern provinces of the empire in the eleventh century.[120] Here at Behdaidat there is a turning back to this era of the Macedonian Byzantine emperors (late ninth to early eleventh centuries), a period when art and society in Syria Cappadocia are concerned with combat against the Muslims, both defending territory and expanding in Cilicia and Northern Syria. On the Latin side, these saints were believed by the Latins to have brought victory in the fight for Antioch during the First Crusade. They were commemorated in churches in the west with links to the Holy Land, with the sculptural representation of St. George on the façade of San Marco in Venice being an example.[121] In this respect Antioch had a further resonance: it was in recognition of the achievement of their ancestor Guglielmo Embriarco in fighting for Antioch in the First Crusade that this Genoese family had gained control of the seigneurie of Gibelet.

The panel depicting St. Theodore Stratelates the General on the north wall (**Fig. 11**) next to the figure of Daniel representing salvation. Framed in dark red, he is shown riding a reddish-brown horse. The upper part of his body is turned towards the worshipper and the events taking place in the church. He is crowned and dressed in chain mail; with a dark red mantle fluttering behind him, scattered with pearls. His brightly coloured patterned shield, rimmed with painted jewels and pearls, is strapped on behind him. His leggings have a roundel design, and his cuffs are gilded. Stars noted earlier as related to Virgin imagery at Bethlehem, are scattered in the sky. Directed by the hand of God at the top right, he raises his staff to spear a demonic figure crouching beneath, the stomach of which is coiled in a knot. The chequer design of the saddle has been noted above as sign of association with the Byzantine army.

St. Theodore Stratelates, the general, often paired with St. George, is paralleled at Mar Musa al-Habashi (latest phase) of 1208 as well as Qara and Deddé.[122] He presents particular identifying features - the fairly long hair, slightly cleft beard, and prosperous clothing befitting a soldier of high high-rank, which distinguish the General from the Theodore Tyron,

[119] Kalavrezou, I. 1997, 64-67.
[120] Cheyne, J.-C. 2008, 307. See now White, M. 2013, for comment on the special popularity of military saints in the later ninth to early tenth centuries (64) and in the Comnene period (92).
[121] Dale, T.E.A. 2011, 161 with note 32.
[122] Cruikshank Dodd, E. 2004, 72.

the Recruit, who was most popular in the early Christian centuries before the ninth century.[123] But the third Theodore, the Oriental, Theodore of Euchaneia, who emerges in the ninth century, surely enriches the tradition.[124] It is this enriched tradition, which draws Antioch into the discussion that is evident here at Behdaidat. St. Theodore emerges as the general leading troops fighting the twin cause to save Antioch and rescue the Holy City of Jerusalem, represented here at Behdaidat as St. Stephen.

A homily delivered at Antioch on the feast day of St. Theodore Stratelates in the church of St. Theodore the Eastern, preserved in a fourteenth-century manuscript, explains this further.[125] Here the two Theodores are paralleled: they share the same feast day, they are both royal, "like the two sons of Moses the prophet," they are both generals and fought for Antioch. Both slew dragons: even the fearful sound of their horses' hooves will save a soul who is being tortured by a dragon. The defence offered by Theodore the Eastern against the pagan tyrant Diocletian, who took Antioch, explains the presence of the semi-human head on the serpent at Behdaidat. This provides an archetypal personification of non-Christian evil, appropriated by a community faced with the Mamluk threat. The dragon-slayer as the type of Good triumphing over Evil offers basic human appeal as an apotropaic image. This type of military saint spearing a serpent or dragon, often with a knotted central section, has been associated with Byzantine, Armenian and Georgian examples The carving of St Theodore spearing such a serpent on the façade of the Armenian church of the Holy Cross at Aghtamar, on Lake Van, dating to 915-921 is the earliest preserved dated example.[126] It is accompanied by the vision of the bust of Christ in a roundel; the bust of Christ in the jewelled medallion at the apex of the triumphal arch at Behdaidat is just such as vision, inspiring the military. This points to the use of the Behdaidat church as a military chapel.

St. George (**Fig. 15**) is shown as a warrior riding a white horse rescuing the young cup bearer of Mytilene that is particularly common in the Levant in the period of the Crusades.[127] A very Syrian image, it is depicted in wallpainting in the church of Mar Musa al-Habashi in 1208 and the small chapel outside the main gate at Crac des Chevaliers of the late twelfth to early thirteenth centuries.[128] The saint secures the young man under his left arm as he hold the reins in his hand. His right arm is hidden behind the arched neck of the horse. In common with St. Theodore he is shown facing towards the viewer. He too wears a royal, jewelled diadem.[129] His leg juts forward with his foot in the stirrup, in the Frankish fashion, a feature also of later, related, Melkite-Latin frontier art in the Morea.[130] He wears body armour with a red cloak fluttering behind, which is decorated with pearls, and the chequered shield. His leggings have the heraldic symbol mentioned earlier, of an eagle with the head facing to the viewer's left (**Fig. 16a**). Behind him in the saddle is the young servant boy offering the goblet of wine to the saint in his right hand, with the left grasping the ewer behind (**Fig, 18**). The

[123] Walter C. 2003, 102-103, who points out that even after the ninth century in the Byzantine world, especially in Cappadocia, the "default " St Theodore, without qualifying inscription, was invariably the Recruit.
[124] Walter, C. 2003, 102 with note 53.
[125] Winstedt, E. O. (ed. and trans.) 2010, 73-133. For the life of St. Theodore the Eastern see Papaconstantinou, A. 2011, 330, 332.
[126] Walter, C. 2003, Fig. 50; Pancaroğlu, O. 2004, 152 with fig. 1.
[127] For this iconography see Grotowski, P.L. 2003 *passim*:
[128] For Mar Musa al-Habashi: Cruickshank Dodd, E. 2001, 50-56 with pls. IX, 27; Immerzeel, 2009 65 with Pl. 25. For Crac des Chevaliers: Folda, J. 1982, 194-195 with fig. 22; Folda, J. 1995, 402 with Pl. 9.37m.
[129] Arnulf, 1990 *passim* cited by Grotowski, P.L. 2003, 45 with note 66.
123. For an example of the jutting foot recognised as Frankish see the scene of St. George spearing the dragon on the North wall of the Nauplia gate chamber, dated to between 1291-1311: Gerstel, S.E.J. 2001, 267-268 with Fig. 3 and Hirschbichler, M. 2005, 19 with Fig. 8.

boy wears a red tunic and a striped towel around his shoulders. Charged with Eucharistic significance, this is the cloth used to wipe the Eucharistic chalice. It serves as a textile relic.

Beneath the horse's hooves is a strip of water depicting the Aegean Sea. On the near shore is the small figure of the supplicant, his hand raised in the *orans* pose, with both hands raised, palms facing outward (**Fig. 21**). He is linked with St. George above with the saint's staff which touches the left side of his head, the implication being that he will attain salvation through accepting fealty to and serving St, George as a member of the Confraternity. The question of his identity is returned to below. This scene of rescue is particularly related to icon painting. St. George's white horse is linear, resembling a cardboard cut-out, representing a more advanced stage of stylisation than the icon of the soldier Sts. Sergios and Bacchos at Sinai (**Fig. 17b**). There are several other similarities in the armour and mantles of the saints and their diadems. The horse-trappings are also similar, as well as the chevron girths. The mane and forelocks are delineated with dark red wavy lines. But one feature is particularly indicative: St. Sergios wears a belt around his waist which is wrapped at intervals with groups of thin vertical silver loops. This resembles the viewer's left side of the worn by the supplicant and is a sign of commitment, of binding, to the Confraternity, its ethos and its mission. To one of these on the icon is attached a red thread. The pendant of the red cross against the white ground should be interpreted, then, as the standard of this Confraternity operating in Acre and the County of Tripoli, and arguably beyond, especially those areas with traditional Melkite social and family ties and trading interests within the Byzantine network.

The origins of the image of St. George rescuing a young servant boy can be sought in Cappadocia in Asia Minor. It is connected to three different written versions, the texts of which established by the late tenth - early eleventh centuries, referencing different events involving the Byzantine army all with the same motif of salvation from captors through prayer to the saint and his subsequent action. In summarising these Piotr Grotowski pointed out that two of these have their origins in Asia Minor, in Paphlagonia, an area of the northern Black Sea coast.[131] In the earliest one the boy is returned to the monastic environment of the pilgrimage church of St. George where he had served, and in the second to his parents on the anniversary of the saint's feast day. The one here at Behdaidat can be primarily identified with the third version, concerned with the rescue of the servant boy from Arab Mytilene (Lesbos) recounting how the saint rides across the Aegean to bring the young man back to his island home. In common with the earliest story it is directly linked to salvation from Muslim captors, with obvious resonance to those living directly under, or threatened by, Islam. This is not to say that it does not retain or draw on elements from the other versions: the saint's white horse is specified in the second, rather detailed, account.[132] This second account also specifies that the jug, still carried by the young servant boy at the time of his rescue, which became a chalice for use in the church.[133] This explains why the ewer is given such detailed attention at Behdaidat. It emulates the kind of metalwork that was made, and traded by merchants, in Mosul and Damascus in the thirteenth century.[134]

I would like to argue that the image of the young man being rescued represents the island of Mytilene (Lesbos) itself needing protection from Turkish attack. The island had been in

[131] Grotowski, P.L. 2003, 27-77, esp. introductory section, 27-35.
[132] Grotowski, P.L. 2003, 31.
[133] Grotowski, P.L. 2003, 31;
[134] For an example of such a spouted ewer in the Museum für Islamische Kunst Berlin, part of a set with a basin signed by Mosul metalworker and dated to c. 1275-1300, see Ward, R. (ed), 2014, 142-145 with colour plate, 145.

Latin hands (Baldwin of Flanders) after 1204 but was reconquered by the Byzantine emperor of Nicaea, John III Vatatzes, after 1224.[135] Its particular value was as a source of alum, used as a fixative for dyes in the textile industry. It held this distinction in common with Phocaea in western Asia Minor, with the rights to mine there being in Genoese hands from 1267.[136]This came about as a result of the expansion of Genoese commercial interests in the Aegean following the agreements reached with Byzantine Nicaea at the treaty of Nymphaeum in 1261.[137] In the context of Behdaidat, it can be suggested, then, that the image of the youth of Mytilene being rescued from the Turks is a personification, representing the protection of the island of Mytilene from the Turkish Muslim threats, especially piracy, to Asia Minor. The Genoese shared an obvious commercial interest in this. The existence of icons of this subject suggest that this was a favoured subject. Three icons of this subject are preserved at Sinai of which two are in similar style: one is reproduced here (**Fig. 19**).[138] These are small panels, indicating private ownership, very likely by soldiers. Another, a scene from a painted beam in the church of Dayr Abu Sayfayn in Old Cairo (**Fig. 20**), points to the transfer of this style of art by Melkites operating alongside Genoese across trade routes into the Muslim world

The Supplicants at Behdaidat: Who were they?

This context helps to elucidate the question of the identity of the supplicants praying to the equestrian saints Theodore (**Fig. 13**) and George (**Fig. 21).** The figure supplicating St. Theodore raises his hands in prayer in the western manner, showing that he was affiliated to the Latin Church whatever his ethnic background. He wears the garments of a merchant and notary: he was arguably a scribe and procurator, working as an indigenous merchant within the Genoese trading network.[139] He can be identified, as an indigenous Christian with dual Latin-Melkite status and identity, particularly involved with the textile industry for which the County of Tripoli was famed, through its cotton and silk industry. Two particularly indicative elements in his dress, his headwear – a common medieval indicator of status - and the red stripe down his dark garment, point to this conclusion and enable us to be more precise about his role within the framework of the painted programme. Let us take each in turn.

The hat worn by St. Theodore's supplicant is a cap with a white lining which widens into a kind of flap just above the ear. This surely represents the textiles traded by the Confraternity (**Fig. 13**). Perhaps it was a product of Tyre, which was famous for its white cloth.[140] This was of cotton or linen.[141] It is arguably a sign that he is an appointed representative of the governing Genoese authority. In general such a hat may well have been worn by high-ranking Italians connected to Syria, who were appointed to oversee Italian interests, as a good example of a depiction of this hat happens to be Venetian rather than Genoese. It is worn by two members of the governing élite in a mosaic (Prayers for the Discovery of the Body of St.

[135] Gregory, T.E. 1991, 1219.
[136] Balard, M. 1989, 161.
[137] Balard, M. 1989, esp. 159, 161 points out that the privileges promised in the Aegean were, in the event, only partially delivered by Byzantium.
[138] For the one reproduced here see Galey, J. 1980, Pl. 98 (wrongly dated). For another in this style: Pace, V. 1990, 515, fig. 6. The third, with gilded and gessoed background, is reproduced in Folda, F., 330 with fig. 185.
[139] Hunt, L.-A. 2009, 279, 282 with fig. 67 for preliminary comment on this figure. The figure was clearly added after the panel as a whole was painted. Some dots on the front of his garment may indicate buttons, but this is by no means clear.
[140] Heyd, W. 1923, I, 179.
[141] Jacoby, D. 2007, 164.

Mark) in San Marco in Venice.[142] In this San Marco mosaic the figures' headgear displays the same white lining which widens into a kind of flap just above the ear. The faces are also shown at the same two-thirds angle towards the viewer, with one of the figures extending his hands in prayer in the same way as the Behdaidat supplicant. Dateable to between 1253 and 1266, it is near-contemporary with Behdaidat. There might even have been involvement from artists from Tyre, or elsewhere the County of Tripoli, since mosaic cubes from Tyre were brought, with others from the Levant, from there.
[143] Trading activity would have included textiles: the doge Raniero Zen was himself in possession of a *sandal* silk from Tripoli which was documented amongst his possessions when he died in 1268.[144]

While the wearing of the hat with the white flaps in the San Marco mosaic denoted the wearer's status as representative of Venetian power in Syria, here at Behdaidat its wearer arguably represents Genoese political and mercantile authority on the local level in Gibelet. The Genoese too had a system of officials. These included provision for the administrative, financial and personal family arrangements of Genoese merchants who amassed great wealth in Syria. This involved a process of centralisation on the part of the commune with a system of consuls and *vicecomites* assisted by legal and administrative officials including notaries or scribes. Their roles were extensive, extending to ambassadorial and diplomatic responsibilities as well as presiding over the court cases involving Genoese citizens and merchants temporarily resident in Syria.[145] Next, a single executive, which had overriding legal as well as centralising administrative powers, was introduced after the mid-thirteenth century.[146] Further direct ties with Genoa included the channels by which dissatisfied litigants could appeal over the heads of the officials in Syria to the government of Genoa. This was the case with the indigenous Christian "Mosserin" merchants in Ayas/Lajazzo in the later thirteenth century, mentioned above.[147] Following the Genoese withdrawal from Acre (1258), Tyre became the focus, the local centre of Genoese operations, especially for trade with Damascus and the Islamic world. Tripoli would also have been important not only as the location of the Prince Bohemond's court but, given the major coastal trading route between the coastal cities and Ayas/Lajazzo in Lesser Armenia (Map, **Fig. 28**), it also linking Antioch itself with its dependencies, cut off by the Islamic-held territory in between. While the lord of Gibelet was in conflict with his liege-lord Bohemond, a figure such as this supplicant could have acted as a go-between for business and legal matters.[148]

Conservation work on the Behdaidat figure revealed a thin red stripe down his dark garment which indicates that he was a member of the Confraternity. As a leader of his community he arguably occupied an intermediary status, then, as an indigenous Greek Orthodox/Melkite-born member of the Confraternity acting as an agent of the Genoese. He supplicates St. Theodore in similar fashion to a figure named as George Parisis before his eponymous saint, shown with St. Theodore Stratelates on an icon at Sinai (**Fig. 12**).[149] The red stripe appears on this icon in the form of red ties attached to both horses' hooves. These

[142] The mosaic is in the southern transept, paired with the Apparition: Demus, O. 1984, 2, 27-44 with colour pls, 7, 33; Demus, O. / Kessler, H.L. 1988, 108-114. See Hunt, L.-A. 2017 forthcoming.
[143] For the presence of mosaic cubes from Tyre and elsewhere in the Levant see Demus, O. 1984, I, 29.
[144] Jacoby, D. 2000, 43-44 with note 43.
[145] Bryne, E. 1982, 165-182, esp. 178-179.
[146] Bryne, E. 1982, 167-168.
[147] Bryne, E. 1982, 169.
[148] Richard, J. 1985, *passim*.
[149] Evans, H.C. (ed.) 2004, 376, no. 231 with colour plate (entry, J. Folda).

link with the red thread suspended from the belt of St. Sergios on the Sinai Soldier Saints panel (**Fig. 17b).**

The supplication is for protection: the epithet 'Diasorites' accompanying St. George on the icon is associated with safe-keeping.[150] It is associated with the cult centre of the monastery of Pyrgion in the Kaystros valley in Asia Minor.[151] Seal evidence suggests its association with Byzantine military commanders with family links with Asia Minor. An image on the reverse of a seal dated before 1203 represents the future Byzantine emperor Theodore Komnenos Laskaris who became military leader (*strategos*) of Bithynia (northwest Asia Minor) before becoming emperor.[152] The evidence from Behdaidat would suggest commencial as well as family and military ties. As mentioned elsewhere, it is the allum, mined in Asia Minor and used as a fixative that enables the dying process of this colour red, produced from madder. Plants are shown growing in the St. Theodore panel: perhaps these are a reference to the madder root.

The supplicant's dual Melkite/Latin status can be paralleled elsewhere, including the portrait of a supplicant, a Melkite man named as John on an icon from Moutoullas on Cyprus dated c. 1300 (**Drawing Fig. 14)**.[153] That panel arguably dates to the time of another anti-Mamluk military push that of 1300, led from Cyprus, which succeeded in regaining the bridgehead of Ruad (**Map, Fig. 26**).[154] John of Moutoullas' garment in the icon is black with white cuffs and a white head-covering and he prays with his hands extended in the western manner to St. John the Baptist, who converses with Christ appearing from a segment of heaven top right. The inscription refers to the supplicant's entreaty (*deisis*). Between the two figures is the head of John the Baptist on a platter, as a relic, with Eucharistic significance. This parallels the other Eucharistic relic, the cloth used to wipe the chalice, identified held by the Virgin on a different icon featuring St. John with scenes of his life.[155] The cloth used to wipe the chalice is also shown at Behdaidat, around the neck of the young man from Mytilene (**Fig. 18**), as already mentioned, where is gives protection and offers redemption. The axe at the base of the tree in the panel appears behind Christ admonishing the viewer into action rather than being considered dead wood. In this icon, as at Behdaidat, St. John the Baptist's body is covered with body hair, emphasising the monastic Holy Land heritage link with Elijah. Not only do John of Moutoullas' white headcovering and cuffs, together with his western praying hand gesture, point to the same dual Latin-Greek Orthodox /Melkite status as St. Theodore's supplicant at Behdaidat. The back of the icon also has the same wavy textile design. Surely John Moutoullas is a member of the Confraternity after the move of its members to Cyprus after the fall of Syria, with the icon shows the continuation of the same ecumenical agenda with a common military and commercial purpose. The same can be said

[150] Grotowski, P.L. 2003, 57 with note 1.
[151] Puech, V. 2011, 70 with Map, 80.
[152] See Wassiliou, A.-K. 1997, 416-426 and Puech, V. 2011, 69-70 for this seal.
[153] Vocotopoulos, P.L. 1999, 167-170 with Figs 7, 8, and pl. 12 in colour with details of the praying figure Figs. 9 and 10. Panayotis L. Vocotopulos (168 with note 55) considered him to be the same John Moutoullas the patron of the church of Moutoullas whose portrait with his wife appears in the church.
[154] Schein, S. 1998. 163-165.
[155] For the Eucharistic cloth held by the Virgin in the icon of St. John the Baptist with scenes of his life: Weyl Carr, A. 2007, 163 with Fig. 5. For this icon see Nelson, R.S. and Collins, K.M. (eds.), 2006 147 no 10 with colour plate.

for donors at the Church of the Panagia Phorbiotissa at Asinou on Cyprus, arguably also *confratres* and *consorores,* with several elements of continuity with Behdaidat.[156]

The Behdaidat St. Theodore supplicant **(Fig. 13)** stares intently outward, as if across to the St. Theodore supplicant. The viewer is also drawn into this gaze. So far it has been deduced that that he was an agent, a scribe, notary and translator who held a key intermediary position between the Latins and the indigenous village population.[157] This can be clarified in feudal terms. As the headman of the community his role was to supervise the indigenous Christian community. As such he would have presided over the local *cour des syriens* which dealt with cases involving local Christians.[158] Jonathan Riley-Smith has suggested that such leaders, mostly indigenous-born Christians, became Latin Christians and would even have held land.[159] His gaze is as a commander. He must also have had responsibility for the local militia, the *turcopole* soldiery. Taken in relation to the St. George supplicant, he is arguably witnessing an oath-taking.[160]

The oath is being taken by the figure supplicating St. George who prays in the eastern manner in an *orans* pose and who is paying homage to the saint (**Fig. 21**). The figure stands frontally as do the three military saints on a small, near-contemporary icon from Sinai (**Fig. 22**) on which Theodore and Demetrius, to centre and right, raise a single palm while holding a cross in their right hands.[161] This pose reflects imagery of the standing St. George which appear on the obverse of Byzantine seals.[162] The supplicant is swearing his loyalty and commitment before the figures of the *Deisis* group in the apse: the Virgin representing Bethlehem, St. John as the patron saint of the Hospitaller Order, as well as Christ himself, nominated by the hand of God at the apex. During the induction ceremony of a new Hospitaller *confrater* the oath was taken on the Missal "in the name of God, Our Lady, St. John the Baptist, and the sick."[163]

St. George's supplicant's *mi-parti* garment graphically expresses his dual Melkite-Latin identity, indicating that he is entering into a contractural arrangement. In other words, he is proclaiming his loyalty to the Confraternity, with St. George representing the shrine of Lydda itself. His dress gives pointers as to his identity. His tunic is bipartite in colour, blue down his left side and red down his right. The *mi-parti* clothing needs to be looked at in its specific context according to contemporary dress conventions. By the mid-thirteenth century this *mi-*

[156] For similar garments see the donor figures at Asinou, invoking the Virgin and Child and St. George in the apse: see Kalopessi-Verti, M. 2012, 179-190, with Figs., esp. 5.44-5.48. I would argue Confraternal affiliation for these donor figures too.

[157] For the contemporary historical circumstances see Riley-Smith, Nobility 52-56, 90-91.

[158] Riley-Smith, J. 1973, 90, pointing out (90-91) that by the mid-thirteenth century at Acre this court had been replaced by a commercial *cour de la fonde* which also dealt with cases involving indigenous Christians.

[159] Riley-Smith, J. 1973, 90 with note 224.

[160] Riley-Smith, J. 1973 52 with note 125 cites an example of an interpreter overseeing oaths of fealty on the part of villagers to the Hospitallers in 1254.

[161] Pace, V. 1990, 515 with Fig. 3; Folda, J. 2005, 338 with fig. 196, who ascribes devotional use to the panel. The saints on the icon display the same ears as at Behdaidat: St. George the small drop type, Theodore and Demetrios the projecting floridl type.

[162] Wassiliou, A.-K. 2001, 209-224 passim, giving the names of individuals. She mentions he link with icons and wallpantings, 211-212, notes 13-14.

[163] Riley-Smith, J. 1967, 244 describes the ceremony, mentioning a Syrian text which mentions the laying of hands on the altar but does not specify the source.

parti dress signified that the wearer was in service of some sort, determined by the context.[164] Here it indicates both servitude to the saint, as well as practical service as a liegeman. This also has feudal connotations, with the costume denoting his dual status, acknowledged by law. Whatever the local status he would have had protection under burgess law. This can be explained by its presence worn by a figure in an image in a fourteenth-century Cilician Armenian manuscript of the Assizes of Antioch. Here a petitioner wearing a red and green bipartite tunic is shown kneeling before a pair of figures seated below the King in the frontispiece to a Cilician Armenian manuscript of the Assizes of Antioch, copied and painted by Sargis Pitsak in Sis in 1331 for King Levon IV.[165] The context indicates that the figure is being offered legal protection by the king against the injustices of his overlord, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the law code.

The key point is that he is a feudatory.[166] Despite being born an indigenous Christian his dual identity as a *confrater* elevates him to the status as a feudatory and as such he is offered protection under law. It can be argued, then, that St. George's supplicant at Behdaidat is offering fealty and is petitioning his feudal overlords. As a vassal he would be obliged to serve his military obligations in person.[167] He can be seen, then, as a Melkite functioning as a serjeant-at-arms in a Hospitaller–controlled company, as a *turcopole*, an indigenous member of the light cavalry in the Latin army. He seeks the protection of St. George, with the expectation that salvation is at hand, in the same way as the young cup-bearer from Mytilene riding pillion is saved from servitude. The supplicant is offering himself in fealty to St. George, who acknowledges this trust by touching him with his lance. I would go so far as to say that this lance could represent the lance of Antioch, found during the fighting for Antioch in 1098 in the cathedral of St. Peter at Antioch following a dream by a soldier in the Latin army.[168] The power enshrined in the material presence of the revered relic is passed to the soldier.

The supplicant as a *Confrater* in the Context of the Defence of Latin Syria

The way St. George's supplicant's hair is cut, rounded at the forehead and long at the back, arguably to form a type of tonsure, indicates his position as a *confrater* of the Hospitallers. C*onfratres, and consorores* were lay associates of the military orders.[169] They retained their own wealth but gave a certain proportion to the Hospitallers.[170] They also arranged to be buried by the Order on their death. The Embriaci lords put their trust in the Hospitallers: Guy I became a *confrater* in 1221 and his son Guy II in 1274.[171] The supplicant offers himself as a serjeant to serve the saint. This status as a serjeant is as a full monk.[172] The simpler belt on his left side may well reflect the monastic aspect. He stands in imitation of Christ, for whom he is prepared to sacrifice himself. The theological emphasis on the humanity of Christ has

[164] Mertens, V. 1983, 10, 52; Hunt, L.-A. 2009, 280. The *mi-parti* garment is also seen in the painted programme at Asinou: Kalopissi-Verti, Murals 127-128, who also points to its presence in Crete under the Venetians.

[165] MS Venice, Mekhitharist Library 107: Der Nersessian, S. 1993 159-160 with Fig. 648; Uluhogian, G, Zekiyan, B.L., Karapetian, V. 2011, 101 Nr. 26 (Entry A. Sirinian) with colour plate.

[166] Edbury, P.W. 2013. 245.

[167] Unless allowed by his lord to send a substitute: Edbury, P.W. 2013, 246.

[168] For the lance of Antioch, found following the dream of a soldier: Harris, J. 2003, 73; Weltecke, D. 2006, 99.

[169] Schenk, J.G. 2008, *passim.*

[170] The same system applied to the Templar Order: Schenk, J. 2012, 57.

[171] Marshall, C., 1992, 43.

[172] Riley-Smith, J. 2012, 381.

here come to fruition: the soldier takes on the attributes of Christ. He puts his faith and trust in Christ, and in the salvation promised through the Second Coming in the apse.

The recruitment of St. George's supplicant is part of a wider defensive initiative, in place and developed since the twelfth century. Three examples of painted *confratres* portraits can be selected to elucidate this time span. One of these is the figure of Simonin supplicating the Virgin in the scene of the Presentation from the castle chapel at Crac des Chevaliers of c. 1200 (**Fig. 23**).[173] His status as a *confrater* is apparent from the way his hair is cut, again rounded at the forehead and long at the back. Crac des Chevaliers had been given to the Hospitallers by Count Raymond of Tripoli in 1142. It served as a major frontier fortress, a lynchpin of Crusader defence of the County of Tripoli, until its fall to Baybars in 1271.[174] Raymond III (Count of Tripoli between 152-1187) was a Hospitaller *confrater.* [175] In 1180 Raymond gave the castle of Touban, northeast of Crac des Chevaliers to the Hospitallers as a prelude to donating a much larger stretch of territory to the south. (**Fig. XX**).[176] Another *confrater* portrait with the same haircut is that of the damaged but sensitive pleading head of kneeling figure before St. Mamas at the church of Edde-Batroun is dateable by a now largely-lost inscription to 1261/2 stating that the painting was then resumed after a period of fighting.[177] A third example is that of the shepherd in the Nativity of Christ at Kafar Helda,[178] Arguably of similar date to Behdaidat this shows that *confrater* status was no longer restricted to the knightly classes as in the twelfth century but was open to all classes including the peasantry.[179]

While depicting individuals, the supplicants at Behdaidat also represent a collective, the Confraternity of St. George and Belian (Bethlehem) affiliated to the shrines of Lydda and Bethlehem. As such it was one of several Confraternities attached to particular sites as military defensive forces. As Jonathan Riley-Smith pointed out, these should be considered as "crusading societies, and it is clear that they should be treated in the same way as the better known military orders rather than burgess charities".[180] While the eagle roundel worn by St. George's supplicant on his hose (**Fig. 16a**) represents the Byzantine affiliation it also stands for the collective activity of the local community in textile production. The red-purple background of the roundel represents the valuable purple cloth reserved for imperial use. It can be argued that this community, under Eutychios, the Melkite patriarch of Antioch (1260-1263) made the surviving *peplos* (pallium, or *pallio* in Italian), a ceremonial outer robe now in the Museo di Sant'Agostino in Genoa, given by Michael VIII to the Genoese Commune for display in the cathedral of St. Laurence at Genoa.[181]

Finally, fragmentary crosses are painted on the west, north and south walls at the western end of the church, at the point of entry. That on the south wall, the best preserved, is a leaved, double-barred patriarchal cross which names Christ at the top with the abbreviation IX XC

[173] Folda, J. 1995 4002 with Pl. 9.37g; Immerzeel, M. 2009, 75 with pls. 46, 126.
[174] Deschamps, P., 1973, 25, 29 for its acquisition.
[175] Riley-Smith, J. 1967, 242.
[176] Deschamps, P. 1973, 160.
[177] For the remnants of the inscription are above the Dormition on the north wall see Immerzeel, M. 2009, 109-110 with note 95 and Pls. 88-89 in colour.
[178] Reproduced in colour in Hélou, N. 2012 181.
[179] Selwood, D., 1999, 135.
[180] Riley-Smith, J. 1971, 307-308.
[181] I discuss this further in Hunt, 2017 forthcoming.

(**Fig. 25**),[182] This, with the others, is both symbolic and functional, linking Holy Land and St. John imagery to the Hospitallers. The symbolic associations are with relics and the imagery of St. John. This represents the saving power of the cross and the agenda to recapture the Holy Land, as well as offering blessing and protection. Its foliate base has resonance as the relic of the living, wooden, true cross, as depicted on pilgrim flasks, especially one dateable to the twelfth century in Berlin which shows the leaved cross surmounting the Tomb of Christ, repeated again on the reverse with the women at the tomb.[183] The presence of the crosses can also be seen as a military exhortation as the relics of the True Cross were taken into battle. While the Latin relic of the true cross had been lost at the battle of Hattin in 1187, Mamuka Tsurtsumia has argued that the Georgians continued in the thirteenth century to use their True Cross in the same way as the Franks in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem had theirs in the twelfth.[184] This demonstrates the ongoing symbolic importance of the cross to eastern as well as Latin Christians – and it was Georgians and Armenians who, as vassals, fought with the Mongols in the thirteenth century. The presence of the cross here thus exhorts Christians to fight for Christianity and the Holy Land. The eastern Christian hope was that the Mongol alliance would ultimately deliver the Holy Land back into their hands.[185] This provides continuity with liturgical worship by pilgrims. The leaved Latin patriarchal cross also appears on icon painting. A late twelfth-century century icon of St. John the Baptist with scenes of his life at Mt. Sinai shows the saint standing, holding a staff with upturned leaved ends very similar to the Behdaidat cross, even though without the second vertical bar This recalls the relics seen by the pilgrim Anthony of Novgorod in 1200 in Constantinople, as mentioned earlier. It displays the text of his prophecy John 1:29 with the axe at the base of the tree to his right threatening those who do not bear good fruit (exhorting Mat 2:10).[186] As mentioned earlier, this could represent a warning to those who do not step up to fight and instead become dead wood.

The presence of the crosses at Behdaidat could well have been functional as evidence from this period suggests a ceremony with bells that took place at the door of a church as part of the initiation of a *confrater*.[187] So prayers and singing at the west end of the church were part of the confraters' initiation before or after the main oath-taking at the altar. This endorses the suggestion that when it was painted this church functioned principally as a military chapel. The leaved patriarchal cross points up the Hospitaller element as similar crosses were depicted on the twelfth-century seals of the Grand Masters, in conjunction with Holy Sepulchre imagery. These show the Grand Master kneeling, with his hands held together before a patriarchal cross on the reverse, with the burial chamber of Christ on the obverse.[188] Contemporary with the Behdaidat painting, the patriarch and papal representative of the day, William of Agen, included imagery of Christ's tomb chamber, the "Sepulchre of the living Christ," even if not the patriarchal cross itself.[189] As papal representative as well as patriarch of Jerusalem William was involved in the politics of the day and dealings with the Mongols: he was charged by Pope Urban IV with verifying the credentials of one John the Hungarian, who claimed to be ambassador from the Ilkan Hülegü.[190] The presence of the leaved cross

[182] Cruikshank-Dodd, E. 2004, 343 with fig. 191, F; Pl. 19.41; Hunt, L.-A. 2009, 281 fig. 74.l.
[183] Pitarakis 2012, 246 with Fig. 1 (drawing).
[184] Tsurtsumia 2013, *passim*
[185] Jackson P. 2003 rpt. 2009, *passim*.
[186] Kalavrezou, I. 1997, 71-72 with Fig. 9.
[187] Riley-Smith, J. 1967, 244.
[188] Pitarakis 2012, 45 with note 27.
[189] Pitarakis, 2012, 245-246 with Fig. 5.
[190] See Jackson P. 2005, 166 for this episode, dating the Pope's reply to the Mongol court to 1263-1264.

endorses the Christian message of salvation through Christ's death. So here at Behdaidat the crosses act as a seal of patriarchal and papal endorsement of the process here of the swearing in of *confratres* as well as projecting the Holy Land agenda. Patriarchal crosses are to be seen on the reverse of the small Sinai icons: the British Museum St. George attributed to Acre is one.[191] I would argue, taking the imagery of both side together, than the function of this icon is as a record of the initiation ceremony for the *confrater.* At the time of prayer or contemplation with the icon the soldier in the church would recall his initiation ceremony and the decoration of the church in which it took place. The owner of the small icon of military saints (Fig. 22), recalling the style of the church at Behdaidat, could have been initiated here or another local Greek Orthodox/ Melkite church.

Conclusion

The Behdaidat wallpainting programme is here attributed to the Melkite Confraternity of St. George (Lydda) and Bethlehem (the Church of the Nativity) and dated to between the second half of the second half of 1262 and early in 1263. The immediate context was arguably the response to Sultan Baybars' aggression towards the Holy Land shrines including Bethlehem and Nazareth which culminated in his attack on Antioch in 1263. The Confraternity was a militia dedicated to the protection of the shrines of St. George at Lydda and the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. In this area it represented the textile-producing community trading and defending itself under the aegis of the Hospitallers and working with Genoese traders in the Genoese-held enclave of Gibelet. A dual Greek Orthodox/Melkite-Latin identity is expressed through clothes and gestures, particularly of the individuals supplicating the military saints Theodore and George. These are identified as, respectively, the head of the village who commanded the *turcopole* contingent and an individual soldier swearing his initiation oath. This overlaps with the time that the Greek Orthodox/Melkite patriarch Eutychios was in post at Antioch and Michael VIII was in negotiations over Church union with the Pope in Rome. Denominational differences are resolved to create an ethnically Syrian force. The presence in the apse of the Trisagion draws on early Antiochene theology. The image of the Deisis emerges as the image of ecumenicalism. The presence of the Greek Orthodox/Melkite patriarch at Antioch would have facilitated this.

The programme arguably depicts a particular moment, then, that of the oath-taking of the St. George supplicant as a *confrater* of the Knights of the Hospital, then charged with the defence of the seigneurie of Gibelet. As a *turcopole* member of the defence force he is responsible to the civil authority represented by the St. Theodore supplicant. Functioning as a military chapel, the church would also have been the location for future initiation ceremonies. The individual recruit entering the church would have been drawn into the process first by the patriarchal crosses at the west end. He processed to the apse to experience the full force of the Last Judgement figure of Christ. This is tempered by the presence of the intercessionary figures of the Virgin, the patron saint of Bethlehem, and St. John the patron saint of the Hospitaller Order. Ancient relics were invoked. Scenes of last-minute redemption offered reassurance. The oath itself would be made in the presence of the icons of the iconostasis. There would arguably have been a Deisis group in the epistyle, with icons such as that shown here (**Figs 4-5**).[192] The doors opening into the sanctuary would have been the same or similar to those now at Sinai **(Fig. 9**). A bilateral icon with a Hodegetria **(Fig. 17a**) on the obverse and the military saints George and Theodore on the reverse (**see Fig. 12**)

[191] Cormack, R. 2007, 76 with fig. 46, with the back of the icon with Sts. Theodore and George, Fig. 47.

[192] An epistyle with the Deisis and military saints at either end is reproduced in Pace, V. 1900, 515 with fig. 7; and Folda, F. 2005, 436-8 with Figs. 256-261, xxx.

might well have been made for the church and used in processions and services. The Hodegetria reflects the devotion to this icon at Bethlehem itself.[193] It is also suggested here that individual *confrater* soldiers had icons (eg. **Figs. 19, 22**) made at the time of their initiation and in memorial of it.

Popular piety is on display, with the intersection of the personal, the political and the communal materiality of a society concerned with the fabrication and trading of textiles. The association of the hairy-armed St. John to Elijah and al-Kidr has a serious religious undertow, with the water association linking both to baptism and to the waters of eternal life. But it is also a shared point of intersection with Islamic culture, with trading activity with the Islamic world through Damascus and Cairo, as well as Asia Minor. Of the many items traded with the Muslim world, the supply of the red colourant madder from the Orontes valley – by 1262-63 back in Muslim hands - would be one Material aspects of the prosperity of his community: the textiles produced, including the striped cloth, the commodities traded, including pearls and gems. Spices would also have been traded. The red thread is given particular prominence, as are textile relics, including the cloth held by the young man of Mytilene used to dry the Eucharistic chalice, with its redemptive Eucharistic significance. The raw materials need to produce the textiles are also alluded to. The material world is equated with the spiritual one: materials and commodities are offered up and a religious justification is given for their exploitation. The rescue of the young cupbearer from Mytilene draws both these ideas together: it is both a story of individual rescue from Islam and also arguably the protection of the Byzantine hold on island of Mytilene, and the related Byzantine-Genoese commercial interests in Asia Minor, a major source of alum for the textile producers of the community. Several aspects of the programme have their roots in Asia Minor, tapping into traditional Byzantine trading networks, and reinforcing family, commercial, and trading links between the Greek Orthodox/Melkite communities. The area was under threat from Mamluk Islam despite being a Mongol Protectorate.

The relationship with other painted churches in Lebanon is also an issue. Several iconographical cross-over have been noted here between Behdaidat with Kaftoun, known to be identified with Greek Orthodox/Maronite, and also the programme at Kfar Helda. The use of the same icons as the basis points to the same Melkite basis. The Melkites, in negotiation with other groups, would have coordinated these. The Melkite community was arguably, then, responsible for coordinating all of these programmes. The stylistic differences between churches can, then, be explained by the ethnic and denominational affiliation, in conjunction with Latin collaboration. Behdaidat has been shown here to have functioned as a military chapel for recruitment and initiation. This suggests that *turcopole* forces were organised into contingents on these lines. These may well have been broken down even further according to local devotion to particular shrines. All point to the visual arts as a means of differentiation, affiliation, and cultural pride and community cohesion, with devotion to the Virgin as a common thread.

The ravaging of Cilician Armenia by Sultan Baybars ensued in 1264. The Syrian Christians lost their shield with the death of Hülügu Khan in 1265. The fall of Antioch in 1268 was followed by that of Tripoli in 1289 and culminated in the loss of Acre in 1291. Uniquely, however, the eastern Christian communities and their Latin overlord of Gibelet, through astute politics, with no doubt business acumen, and Latin military intervention in the

[193] Riant, Le Comte 1885, *passim*.

case of Ruad on the coast, held out as Christian enclaves until the early years of the fourteenth century before finally being absorbed into the Mamluk polity (**Map, Fig. 27**).