



NIKEPHOROS II PHOKAS AND ORTHODOX MILITARY MARTYRS

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ABSTRACT

The Byzantine emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (r. 963–69), revered by the Orthodox Church as a saint, is reviled in John Skylitzes's eleventh-century chronicle. Skylitzes's criticism has been widely quoted to support many claims but never examined on its own merit and is too quickly accepted by modern scholars. When examined in the context of tenth-century warfare and Byzantine religion, Skylitzes's remark—the claim that Nikephoros attempted to pass a law declaring fallen soldiers automatic martyrs—reveals conflict between emperor and patriarch but ultimately cannot be considered either plausible or accurate, because it fails to take account of the emperor's ascetic faith as well as the high spiritual honor accorded to military casualties by the population.

KEYWORDS: Byzantine, Byzantium, Eucharist, martyrdom, orthodoxy

Memorialized as a saint by Athonite monks, Nikephoros II Phokas (r. 963–69) epitomized the Byzantine ideal of the warrior-emperor, yet he was vilified by a Byzantine chronicler only a hundred years after his death. John Skylitzes, a compiler of chronicles working near the end of the eleventh century, depicted Nikephoros as “hated by all men” and took pains to enumerate grounds for this animosity.¹ The most famous item on his list was the claim that Nikephoros II Phokas attempted to enact a law forcing the patriarch to grant martyrdom status to soldiers who died fighting Muslims.² Unfortunately, this cryptic and otherwise unattested remark has been overplayed in modern scholarship, leading to a distorted view of Nikephoros II.

Byzantinists have often quoted Skylitzes's tantalizing statement as evidence for various arguments: an “abusive rumour,”³ a proto-crusading ideology,⁴ proof of Byzantine holy war,⁵ proof that there was no such

thing as Byzantine holy war,⁶ the start of a failed Byzantine revolution,⁷ an inheritance of Leo VI's theories,⁸ and the influence of jihadist military philosophy on the emperor.⁹ Notably, however, Skylitzes's claim is rarely accompanied by any discussion of its significance; it is plucked from the source with little reflection on its context or meaning. It has become a versatile proof text while never having been the subject of a study in itself. The present investigation aims to examine the comment against the tenth-century context of the reign of Nikephoros II to show that Skylitzes has been deemed more credible than he deserves and to recalibrate modern understanding of medieval Byzantine faith.

WHAT SKYLITZES WROTE

Skylitzes's remark occurs as a brief notice in an undated list of grievances meant to illustrate the unpopularity of the emperor: "He [the emperor] was zealous to lay down a law that all soldiers who had been killed in battle be deemed worthy of martyrs' honors, because he placed the salvation of the soul in battle alone and in no other thing. And he pressured the patriarch and the bishops to agree to this dogma. But some of them nobly opposing him hindered [the accomplishment of] his goal, putting forward one of the canons of the great Basil who said, those who kill an enemy in battle shall be denied communion for three years."¹⁰ Tantalizingly, there is no further detail given, just the bare assertion and a tidbit that the patriarch and bishops refused to cooperate with the idea. According to Skylitzes, they buttressed their refusal by citing the thirteenth canon of Basil of Caesarea (d. 379), which counseled combat veterans to refrain from the Eucharist for three years as a penance for violating the Sixth Commandment (against murder).

At first glance it makes perfect sense that a deeply spiritual commander would want to level the playing field, as it were, for his own army. In every battle his soldiers were facing Muslims animated by strong belief in an immediate posthumous spiritual reward, while the Byzantines enjoyed no such assurances.¹¹ In fact, past events revealed that Byzantine soldiers who died in captivity could be awarded the crown of martyrdom, but not those who avoided captivity by fighting to the death.¹² A commander as savvy and devout as Nikephoros would no doubt understand the crucial necessity of motivating soldiers and thus could very plausibly have moved to increase their spiritual as well as military confidence on the field of battle. Whether the

emperor was motivated by an interest in holy war is not at issue; indeed, the whole concept of Byzantine holy war has been thoroughly debunked and thus need not be addressed here.¹³ A number of interesting questions provoked by Skylitzes's remark invite deeper consideration. These questions are: Is it likely that Nikephoros II did in fact make this request? Did he hold to a heterodox view of salvation, as the chronicler implies? Is the clergy's putative response credible? Given their response as recorded by Skylitzes, how important was spiritual uncleanness in Byzantine culture? Was temporary excommunication viewed as a proportional response to killing in battle? What did the Church gain by the severity of its response? How did medieval Byzantines understand the relationship between martyrdom and battlefield casualties, and is this why the proposed law failed?

THE CRYPTIC QUALITY OF SKYLITZES'S REMARK

This request for automatic martyrdom does not occur in any other source of the period, including Leo the Deacon, the most contemporary historian for the reign of Nikephoros.¹⁴ It is found solely in Skylitzes's eleventh-century compilation, which uses sources both friendly and hostile to the Phokas family.¹⁵ This particular remark is consistent with Russian Byzantinist Alexander Kazhdan's posited "Source A"; Kazhdan identified the friendly source as "Source B." However, since Skylitzes merely compiled instead of composing history, he stitches the hostile Source A and the adulatory Source B together in a hodgepodge that Oxford historian Catherine Holmes has termed "rather schizophrenic."¹⁶ Skylitzes's method elsewhere reveals his interpolation of unrelated material; thus it is possible that he exaggerated or invented this charge against Nikephoros. One might have expected Skylitzes, as a jurist, to have been much more precise with an account of a legal challenge such as this one, but in this case he was not. There may have been a synodal decision, but it is more likely, in the absence of firm evidence to the contrary, that Skylitzes garbled his summary of the account he borrowed from the highly biased Source A.

The remark appears as an aside, one brief line in a laundry list of imperial offenses, and certainly not the worst one. These offenses include the emperor's edict that new bishops could not be ordained without his approval, the devaluation of the gold coinage (*nomisma*) and creation of a new lightweight coin (*tetarteron*), and the heavy taxes exacted to support the army.¹⁷ However, Skylitzes (or his source) considered Nikephoros's

construction of a fortified palace wall to be the final straw, because it meant the destruction of (otherwise unattested) architectural art.¹⁸ Here the chronicler dryly notes, “He did this because it was predicted that he would die in the palace, but he appears to have ignored [Psalm 126:1]: ‘If the Lord does not guard the city, the watchman guards in vain.’”¹⁹ Significantly, the martyrdom request is buried in a lengthy section of anti-Phokas polemic. It does not, on its face, appear at all substantial, but despite its brevity, it has received a great deal of attention.

Two further things are mysterious. First, what does Skylitzes (or his source) mean when he says that the emperor “placed the salvation of the soul in battle alone and in no other thing” (ἐν μόνῳ τῷ πολέμῳ τιθέμενος καὶ οὐκ ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς σωτηρίαν)? Wortley’s recent English translation describes the law as “making the salvation of the soul uniquely and exclusively dependent on being in action on military service.”²⁰ The implicit criticism is that the emperor did not accept Orthodox dogma identifying union with Christ as the source of salvation but located it in the rather more mundane sacrifice of a Christian soldier. For a Byzantine emperor charged with leading an ancient Christian empire as God’s vicegerent, this is tantamount to heresy. The charge is even more problematic when one considers that the emperor was famously ascetic, a devoted believer who founded the Great Lavra monastery on Mount Athos and required his spiritual father to accompany him on campaign.²¹

WAS NIKEPHOROS LIKELY TO HAVE MADE THE REQUEST?

Curiously, this particular accusation against Nikephoros is not articulated anywhere else in the extant literature;²² at the very least, it sounds like an exaggeration or caricature of the emperor’s attitude. Skylitzes depicts Nikephoros as a ruler with an inordinately high opinion of what a professional soldier could accomplish, both militarily and spiritually. One wonders how far the emperor’s regard for soldiering extended, if he could be accused of viewing only battle-hardened soldiers as true Christians, as Skylitzes implies here.

Second, the appeal to Basil of Caesarea, reported by Skylitzes as grounds for refusing to ratify the proposed law, is odd. The request is clearly on behalf of the dead, yet the refusal refers only to a sanction upon the living.²³ This is like asking for one thing but being told one may not have a different thing. Nikephoros allegedly wanted those slain to be granted martyrs’ honors,

yet the bishops responded that slaying others is a sin. This does not address the status of those who are slain. The response is skewed; it does not answer the question posed.

The patriarch and the metropolitans who refused to permit Nikephoros to canonize fallen soldiers chose to invoke a somewhat obscure remark written six hundred years earlier, despite a total lack of evidence that this canon was ever actively obeyed. On the contrary, the twelfth-century Byzantine canonists Zonaras and Balsamon affirm that this canon had never been applied in the Church.²⁴ Both assert that the force of the injunction in Basil's original canon was viewed as too harsh to apply, yet Skylitzes presents it as a precedent of canon law used here for opposing the emperor.²⁵

At issue, then, is an imperial request, based on an ostensibly wild view of salvation in battle alone, vehemently denied by the Church on archaic and irrelevant grounds. And all this springs from a single passing mention in a text written more than a hundred years after the event, by a chronicler using an unidentified polemical source that no longer survives. Taken together, these things seem to indicate that the remark by Skylitzes should be treated with significant skepticism. Although perhaps superficially plausible, this lone, late, brief, polemical remark is too frail to bear the full weight of proof that the request actually happened.²⁶ Tenth-century Byzantine Christians did not ascribe to monolithic belief in martyrial honors for battlefield fatalities.²⁷ A closer look at the emperor who proposed that such honors be enshrined in law is therefore warranted.

A CHRISTIAN WARRIOR-EMPEROR IN BATTLE WITH MUSLIMS

Nikephoros II Phokas was, as Rosemary Morris observes, “a paragon of the personal and imperial virtues.”²⁸ Gifted in military arts, he proved himself worthy of his name (literally, “Bringer of Victory” in Greek) in battle—from the recovery of Crete in 961 to the conquest of Antioch in 969. Moreover, he was famed for his asceticism and Christian devotion; Angeliki Laiou calls him “the epitome of the pious warrior fighting for the Christian people”²⁹ and “the φιλομόναχος [monk-loving] emperor, the commander who went into battle with the prayers and the presence of monks.”³⁰ Leo the Deacon, a historian whose writing covers 959–95, eulogized him as “strict and unbending in his prayers and all-night standing vigils to God, [keeping] his mind undistracted during the singing of hymns, never letting it wander

off to worldly thoughts.”³¹ Despite the skepticism this panegyric comment invites, it is clear that Nikephoros II embodied the distinctly Byzantine fusion of war and religion: a monkish ascetic with a flair for fighting.

In July 960, the Byzantines under the command of Nikephoros II attacked Crete.³² After a long siege, the island was brought under Byzantine rule for the first time in 137 years.³³ The victory occasioned a lavish triumphal parade in Constantinople; Theodosios the Deacon, an otherwise unknown poet, composed a panegyric poem in celebration that described the reconquest as a victory of light over darkness.³⁴ In contrast, Yahya ibn Saïd (d. 1066), an eleventh-century Melchite Christian historian from Antioch, related in detail the riots that broke out in Egypt, including the slaughter of Christians there in retaliation for the deaths of Cretan Muslims.³⁵ For the caliphate, the bad news did not end there. The 962 sack of Aleppo, the home city of the emir best known for his dedication to holy war, Sayf ad-Dawla, “created special waves of horror amongst the Muslims of al-Jazira and Syria, and had repercussions in the outbreaks of popular unrest in distant Baghdad.”³⁶

By way of explanation for Nikephoros’s victories, papal envoy Liudprand of Cremona reported the circulation of an apocalyptic prophecy from the *Visions of Daniel* at the Byzantine court during his visit in 968. It said that “as long as this Nikephoros lived, the Assyrians [= Arabs] would not be able to resist the Greeks.”³⁷ As the Byzantine military juggernaut continued to expand eastward, there seemed little reason to doubt the prophecy, particularly with an emperor who displayed such extraordinary Christian fervor.

Surrounded by a loyal, battle-hardened army, Nikephoros II Phokas was elevated to the imperial purple by acclamation in July 963 and crowned by the patriarch Polyeuktos on August 16.³⁸ The strength of Nikephoros, which at first was a reassurance, later became a threat, and he was assassinated by one of his own generals, his nephew John Tzimiskes, on December 10, 969. After his death, he was celebrated in monastic circles as a martyr and memorialized as a model of pious chastity for future emperors to emulate.³⁹ As a model emperor, therefore, and in accord with his military and spiritual sensibilities, Nikephoros II was not the sort of man to request automatic martyrial honors. Such a request would have violated his calling to represent Christ on earth as ruler of the Byzantine *oikoumene*.

Emperors often employed propaganda to bolster this image; triumphal ceremonies were successfully used to portray Nikephoros II Phokas as a Christlike figure. In 961, after the great reconquest of Crete, he walked up

the Mese, instead of riding on horseback as was the custom. Behind him walked the captured emir of Crete, with his family and the rest of the Arab prisoners, all of them clad in the white robes of martyrs. This made the parade look like a scene from Revelation 7, where the eschatological emperor brings people of various nationalities to salvation.⁴⁰ L. Simeonova views this as coded symbolism “designed mostly for domestic consumption”⁴¹ and argues that the triumph carried apocalyptic connotations.⁴² In other words, the parade itself was an example of performance propaganda designed to reinforce the public image of Nikephoros II Phokas as a model Christian emperor, even before his elevation to the purple.

As part of the spoils from the 965 defeat of Tarsus, Nikephoros recovered the cross-standards (σταυρικὸν τρόπαιον) “made of gold and precious stones”⁴³ lost by Basil I in circa 882.⁴⁴ The gates of Tarsus were gilded and attached to the rarely used St. Barbara gate in the sea wall; they would therefore have been highly visible from the Bosphorus.⁴⁵ The capture of Tarsus thus led to a dramatic display of Byzantine superiority in a way that publicly announced the victory to all who approached the capital city by sea. Placing the gates on a wall through which no army would ever march was a sort of architectural, monumental *calcatio* reinforcing Nikephoros’s glory as a champion of Christianity.⁴⁶ The superiority of Byzantine over Arab religion was thus powerfully demonstrated. An emperor who had thus displayed the victory of his faith would have no need to request a law that imitated the legal status of Islamic martyrdom.

WHAT SYNOD RULED ON THE NEW LAW?

It is clear that Skylitzes’s account telescopes a rather complicated episode and caricatures the emperor, yet historians have traditionally quoted it without first examining the context. For example, scholars have assumed that the conflict took place in a synodal setting. Skylitzes may imply this, but it is an assumption with little basis in the primary source material. When citing this remark of Skylitzes, scholars will often refer to the “synod” that met to discuss and deny the emperor’s request. Most of them footnote *Les registres des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople* as proof of the synod’s existence.⁴⁷ However, the reference in *Les registres* to the synod is based on the remark made in Skylitzes (and copied verbatim by Zonaras), making this a circular reference that does not prove the existence of the synod at all. There is no extant patriarchal archive to prove that any such synod occurred.

Possibly the “synod” refers to the σύνοδος ἐνδημοῦσα, the permanent standing synod from which the patriarch drew most of his political power. In the absence of more detail in the primary sources, the most one can say is that Skylitzes—a jurist by profession—was writing in the late eleventh century, when emperors generally showed little legislative initiative, so he would have disapproved of Nikephoros II’s move to arrogate ecclesiastical responsibility. He might have exaggerated the imperial “pressure,” although considering Nikephoros’s character and previous legislation, perhaps Skylitzes’s attitude is not farfetched.⁴⁸

For all the difficulties inherent in using Skylitzes’s text, the passage depicts a dramatic battle of wills between the emperor and the patriarch. Skylitzes says that Nikephoros “pressured the patriarch and the bishops to agree” (κατήπειγε δὲ καὶ τὸν πατριάρχην καὶ τοὺς ἐπισκόπους συνθέσθαι). The patriarch not only denied his request but added a disproportionately harsh sanction: denial of Communion for three years as specified in Basil’s thirteenth canon. The power of the Church did not surpass that of the palace until the thirteenth century and later, but the political theory that supported patriarchal power was already in place. In the late ninth century, for example, the patriarch Photios (d. ca. 893) described the relationship of the patriarch to the emperor as that of the soul to the body.⁴⁹ The conflict between Nikephoros II Phokas and the patriarch Polyeuktos constituted a confusion of roles, from the patriarch’s perspective.

Why did the emperor use pressure, if indeed he did? Hans-Georg Beck believes that Nikephoros’s motivation lay in securing posthumous honor specifically for those of his army who died retaking Crete.⁵⁰ If so, it would have made no difference to morale during the battle. It could only have been seen as a subsequent matter of honor due the dead, or possibly to improve morale in future battles.

Before this momentous victory, a number of superstitions swirled about the reconquest of Crete. For example, when Constantine VII asked for the advice of Saint Paul the Younger on whether to launch the 949 expedition, he was told that it was not “in God’s mind.”⁵¹ Another legend, which held that the conqueror of Crete would undoubtedly become emperor, was used to discourage Romanos II from pursuing the 960 expedition that eventually brought Nikephoros II to glory.⁵² Perhaps it was this epic victory, plus the fulfillment of the legend, that caused Nikephoros to view himself as a divinely appointed ruler, the recipient of God’s favor, thus giving him the confidence to challenge the Church by initiating martyrial honors for

Byzantine casualties. After all, if his reward for Crete was the throne, then it would not seem unreasonable to seek heavenly glories also for his soldiers who died at the hands of Cretan Muslims. Such a scenario is very different from requesting such honors for those not yet killed in battle, which is clearly in view when establishing a new law to govern the status of future military casualties.

DID NIKEPHOROS HOLD TO A HETERODOX VIEW OF SALVATION?

Nikephoros II Phokas was obviously very interested in theology and especially in the practice of holiness as a method of making oneself fit to approach God. His asceticism, self-discipline, prayer vigils, and devotion to the establishment of “lavriote” monasteries, or hermitages (κελλία), make it likely that he would also express concerns about the accomplishment of salvation. Indeed, there were already clues to his concerns in the homiletical *proimion* to his novel restricting monasteries.⁵³ So what does it mean that he “placed the salvation of the soul in battle alone and in no other thing” (ἐν μόνῳ τῷ πολέμῳ τιθέμενος καὶ οὐκ ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς σωτηρίαν)? This question is worth asking, because if it were true that the emperor placed salvation in battle alone and in no other thing, that would mean he held a heterodox view of the doctrine of salvation. This would be problematic because as emperor, he is supposed to represent Christ on earth (and therefore his orthodoxy must be above reproach). Indeed, if Nikephoros held to a heterodox understanding of salvation—available in battle alone rather than in union with Christ, the Orthodox view—it would delegitimize him also as a spiritual leader, as well as distorting his military role as the supreme general of the explicitly Christian Byzantine armies.⁵⁴

There is an implicit theological criticism of the emperor’s soteriology in Skylitzes’s remark. Byzantine Orthodoxy held that salvation is accomplished through the union of the believer with Christ in the death and resurrection of Christ, yet Skylitzes appears to accuse Nikephoros of a view dangerously close to the Muslim view of jihad. The Orthodox Church had always presented killing as a necessary evil for soldiers, with emphasis on the “evil.” It was something to be avoided if possible, performed if necessary, but never enjoyed and certainly not worthy of religious accolades. In making this request for martyrdom status, most likely for those already dead, Nikephoros was following the example of Leo VI, who had implicitly advocated such honors already in his *Taktika*.⁵⁵ It was the combination of

the gloriously successful military emperor, Nikephoros, and his use of Leo VI's theologically creative advice—and everyone knew that Leo had fought the Church and won—that constituted extraordinary pressure on Polyuktos and his bishops.⁵⁶

THE CHURCH'S COUNTERPUNCH: WAS IT CREDIBLE?

If Nikephoros invaded the Church's theological territory, then the churchmen repelled him with their own weaponry, so to speak, that is, canon law. This employment of theological artillery (by invoking the hallowed name of Basil of Caesarea) may be why the senior clergy were able to prevail while simultaneously reinforcing patriarchal power over the imperial throne.

The leverage used to deny the law is difficult to discern; the Basilean canon invoked by the clergy declares punishment for “those who kill an enemy in battle” (τοὺς ἐν πολέμοις φόνους), despite the fact that it was entirely possible for a Byzantine soldier to be killed in battle without ever killing an enemy first. Would such a man be eligible for martyrdom on the grounds that his hands were still clean? This would introduce a strange sort of inequality, whereby a neophyte could become a martyr, while an experienced soldier could not. In effect, it rather misses the point of the putative request.

The emperor's motivation is key. Captives who died at the hands of Muslims were often viewed as martyrs, like the forty-two of Amorion.⁵⁷ One might thus expect a savvy general to realize that Christian soldiers might prefer surrender (and eventual martyrdom) over an unmentioned death on the battlefield. If the emperor's thought was to shore up morale, a two-tier reward system would play havoc with, rather than achieve, the objective. In other words, if Muslim soldiers could suffer death on the battlefield with greater spiritual equanimity than could the Byzantines, then the only way to equal Muslim motivation would be to address the disparity directly: to assure Christian soldiers that they too would go directly to heaven.⁵⁸ Moreover, their posthumous battlefield honor would also accrue to their families, despite the Byzantine distaste for killing.

The Basilean injunction appears in the first canonical letter to Amphilochius of Iconium: “Our fathers did not consider killing on the battlefield as murder, it seems to me, [but] pardoned defenders of chastity

and piety.” However, Basil added a caveat: “that it might be good to advise these [men], having unclean hands, only to be abstinent for three years from communion.”⁵⁹ The injunction is directed at those who kill, but Basil explicitly stops short of calling them murderers. Instead, he notes that the early Church Fathers did not view killing in battle as a sin. Byzantine soldiers were by definition, as he says, “defenders of chastity and piety” (τοῖς ὑπὲρ σωφροσύνης καὶ εὐσεβείας ἀμυνομένοις). The religious practices of the army, particularly under Nikephoros II Phokas, emphasize the purity and piety of the soldiers. However, Basil’s recommendation that soldiers “having unclean hands” should abstain from Communion implies three important things. First, while not a flagrant sin, killing professionally causes a kind of spiritual uncleanness, but only as far as their hands are concerned. The grammatical structure of the Greek implies that the soldiers in question are not wholly unclean, but just “as far as their hands” (ὡς τὰς χεῖρας). Second, as previously mentioned, the phrasing suggests that this should be a voluntary choice on the part of the soldier: He is “to abstain” (ἀπέχεσθαι); he is not barred. Third, and perhaps most important, the present-tense verbs indicate that this injunction applied to the living, not the dead.

SPIRITUAL UNCLEANNESS IN MEDIEVAL BYZANTIUM

What were the Byzantine traditions for dealing with the problem of spiritual uncleanness? Basil wrote the original comment in a letter to the bishop of Iconium in reply to questions arising from pastoral concerns, such as whether women who had abortions were murderers, whether heretics who repented on their deathbeds ought to be received, and whether to force the oaths of ordination on unwilling men.⁶⁰ Thus it is likely that the query about soldiers as murderers also refers to specific concerns for the bishop’s flock, perhaps retired soldiers, no longer engaged in active military service but under the pastoral care of a priest who was unsure whether they ought to partake of the divine mysteries. An active soldier who was instructed, as in the military manuals, to take Communion on the eve of battle could hardly refrain from it for three years without disobeying orders. Since Basil was probably addressing an issue of retired soldiers, it seems inapposite to apply his canon to combat fatalities. What does the broader context of Byzantine practical theology indicate? Did “uncleanness” bother ordinary Byzantine Christians?

Mary Douglas has described the cultural reaction to uncleanness (and rituals of purity) as “a creative movement, an attempt to relate form to function, to make unity of experience . . . a positive effort to organize the environment” in such a way as to ease the offense against order, as “positive contributions to atonement.”⁶¹ In a culture such as Byzantium, deeply concerned with good order (τάξις), the idea of uncleanness would have required just such a “positive effort to organize” and address the problem. Since the Byzantines were heavily influenced by the Greek Old Testament, they may have shared the Hebrew biblical notion of holiness as something related to separation, or being “set apart.”⁶² This does not necessarily mean being clean or dirt-free but, rather, is measured more concretely, in spatial terms that determine one’s proximity to God. The Hebrew notion of spatial holiness can be likened to concentric circles, typified in the design of the Hebrew Tabernacle, with graded levels of holiness (read: cleanness) that ranged from outside the camp—the place for dead bodies and non-Israelites—to the Holy of Holies at the very center of the Tabernacle, accessed only by the high priest, only after he performed purifying rituals, and only once a year.⁶³

There is evidence that in Byzantium also it was important to purify oneself before entering a church. The famous Byzantine palindrome “Νῖψον ἀνομήματα, μὴ μόναν ὄψιν” (“Clean the outside, cleanse the inside” or literally, “Wash not only your face but also your sins”) is attributed to a certain Stylianos,⁶⁴ and it is found in a number of Byzantine monasteries, such as the Blatadon monastery in Thessaloniki, where it is inscribed around the rim of a well.⁶⁵ It is also reported to have been inscribed on two large water basins in the Hagia Sophia, for which items its suitability “is also suggested by the text itself and by its circular shape.”⁶⁶ Moreover, both the Studios monastery in Constantinople and the Basilica of St. John at Ephesus bear an inscription that warns the faithful to approach the altar with fear and trembling, because “the gift [Communion] is a fire that burns the unworthy” (πῦρ γάρ τὸ δῶρον τοὺς ἀναξίους φλέγον).⁶⁷ Similar inscriptions are found in narthex entrances, above the main doorway leading into the nave, or near the altar, indicating that Byzantines were aware of a need for personal purity in Orthodox worship.⁶⁸

WAS EXCOMMUNICATION A PROPORTIONAL RESPONSE?

As early as the eighth century, the Byzantine liturgy was described by the patriarch Germanos (d. 740) as “an earthly heaven, in which the heavenly God lives and moves.”⁶⁹ Thus one might expect that the penalty for

uncleanness (viewed as a violation of order without moral overtones) would be a separation from full participation in the liturgy, that is, by withdrawal from Communion. This notion of uncleanness cannot be compared with a distinction between the sacred and the secular. The Old Testament, adopted by the Byzantines, saw a world with gradations of holiness. That the Byzantines limited access to the city of Constantinople illustrates their understanding of purity and right order.⁷⁰ A common penalty applied to its own citizens who irreparably broke with the right order was exile from the city, usually to an island. Perhaps the key thing to note in the controversy that erupted in the tenth century over the martyrdom request is the fact that Basil's canon was never enforced, a fact that leaves room for it to have been voluntarily observed. Of course, a voluntary, temporary separation as counseled by Basil is rather different from a punitive excommunication imposed by clergy.

Furthermore, was the punishment a merely temporary denial of Communion (ἀκοινωνία), or was it the more severe casting out of the Church (ἀφορισμός)? Beck's discussion on the martyrdom request makes clear that the proposed sanction on "uncleanness" is excommunication, not anathema.⁷¹ None of the interpretations of the canon amount to full excommunication, and moreover, it was never enforced. One cannot help but think that if the request really did take place, Skylitzes is either unhelpfully editing his source to the point of inscrutability or embroidering it with irrelevancies. Either way, the meaning is obscured. So why did the Church associate Basil's canon with excommunication?

This is the canon that the clergy of the late tenth century invoked, as reported in an eleventh-century text, in order to foil the emperor. This presents several interesting questions. First, how severe would it be for a medieval Byzantine to be barred from the Eucharist for three years? Second, having determined the force of the punishment, what, then, does that indicate about the medieval Byzantine view on bloodshed (unavoidable in warfare), shaped as it was by Old Testament sensitivities to the "uncleanness" of blood?

What was the force of the proposed punishment? The grammatical structure of the injunction contains the gentle language of uncertainty (τάχα), advice (συμβουλεύειν), minimalism (μόνης), and the exercise, not suppression, of human volition (ἀπέχεσθαι). From a linguistic standpoint, then, it would appear that not only was Basil unwilling to condemn soldiers for the successful performance of their profession; his counsel to them appeared to constitute not a ban but a fatherly suggestion that they

voluntarily (and temporarily) remove themselves from the Communion table for reasons of ceremonial uncleanness, not sins of morality. This is far milder than the version presented in Skylitzes and presumably put forward by the dissenting clerics, which prescribed “excommunication” (ἀκοινωνήτους). If Skylitzes is presenting an accurate report of the conflict with the emperor, then he (or his source) appears to be exaggerating the weight of the Basilean injunction. In the commentaries of later canonists, the injunction is described as “not in force”⁷² or as an argument only used as a counter to the emperor.⁷³

If it were to be enforced, however, and a man were in fact to be banned under the harsher application of the canon, how many times does that mean he would have to attend the liturgy without partaking of the mysteries? It was Orthodox tradition, inherited from apostolic practice, to perform the sacrament on Sundays. Later, this was extended to include feast days and Saturdays. At the time of Basil’s original institution of the canon, however, Communion was not held weekly but, rather, more seldom, perhaps because of an increasing emphasis on the mysterious nature of the sacrament at the moment of epiclesis,⁷⁴ when the Holy Spirit descends. Beginning with the Stoudite monastic reforms of the early ninth century, it appears that more frequent observation of the sacrament was encouraged.⁷⁵ By the later ninth century, the patriarch Photios was obliged by apparent overuse to establish an official regulation to limit it to once a day.⁷⁶ Thus by the tenth century, the sacrament was observed daily from Easter to Pentecost, as well as on Saturdays, Sundays, and some feast days throughout the year.⁷⁷ Liturgical historian Robert Taft concludes that in the Byzantine tradition, “daily communion seems to have been the ideal.”⁷⁸ Whether most Byzantines took Communion daily or weekly, the important thing to note is that they were able to take it very often. It is a truism that when people take things for granted, the removal or threat of their removal is often met with outrage. If a medieval Byzantine was accustomed to receiving the Eucharist often, then the threat of being banned from it for three years would have seemed rather an extreme proposition.

Denial of the Eucharist had been recommended before in Byzantium, in the case of second marriages or mixed marriages (i.e., marriage between an Orthodox Christian and a non-Christian). The reason for this was theological: marriage was considered a “eucharistic” event.⁷⁹ In the ninth century, Theodore of Stoudios required a temporary or permanent abstention from Communion for couples who entered second or third marriages.⁸⁰ Provoked by the fourth marriage of Leo VI, the *Tome of*

Union (920) stipulated a severe punishment for successive marriages: excommunication.⁸¹ Thus, by invoking the threat of excommunication, the bishops were threatening a rare but not unusual punishment.

The severity of excommunication is related directly to the meaning of the Eucharist in Byzantine theology. According to Maximus the Confessor (d. 662), the influential mystic theologian, the goal of an Orthodox Christian was to develop ever more perfect knowledge of God; one of the primary means of receiving this knowledge was through the sacrament of Communion.⁸² Thus, partaking of the mysteries was a way of observing as well as progressing in the faith. Denial of the sacrament was not only punitive but spiritually damaging. The patriarch's refusal thus went beyond a simple no. It constituted a severe rebuke. This is all the more interesting because it is an extreme overapplication of Basil's original gentle suggestion. In this sense, the extraordinary force of the refusal would have been commensurate with the gravity of the soteriological heresy in the emperor's request.

WHAT DID THE SEVERITY OF THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE GAIN?

The timing of the rebuke raises questions. After all, the request was made by the most successful military emperor in centuries, the man who had fulfilled the prophecy of Paul the Younger, who had accomplished the legendary feat of recovering Crete, and who was at full strength, engaged in reconquering the eastern lands beyond the Taurus at a rate that engendered rumors of his invincibility and gained him a moniker redolent of his epic power.⁸³ Because of him, cities were recovered for the empire, relics were translated to the churches of Constantinople, and symbolic spoils of war flowed into the capital. Why should the Church respond so vehemently to such an emperor?⁸⁴

The violence of the clergy's reaction to Nikephoros's proposed law shows that, in the eyes of the Church, it was a long way from expiating the uncleanness engendered by killing (even of the legitimate sort that happens in obedience to military orders) to achieving the high status of a martyr. They were so firm in their rebuke that the canon of Basil was awkwardly pressed into service to justify excommunication.

How did this emperor, known as a man of war, attain the status of a man of God? How did the "pale death of the Saracens" become "comrade to martyrs"?⁸⁵ At issue is not only the external reputation of the emperor as a

brilliant military strategist but the extent of his power and influence inside the capital. His reputation as a devout ascetic, undimmed by the lowly manner of his death, revealed him as the ideal Christian emperor. Perhaps more was at stake than the eternal felicity of dead Christian soldiers. The Church and the palace were clearly at odds. This legislative debate (if it was a debate) casts into sharp relief the tension between the emperor and the patriarch.⁸⁶

THE POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN EMPEROR AND PATRIARCH

Gilbert Dagron has usefully sketched the historical outline of this power struggle.⁸⁷ In 806, Theodore of Stoudios, himself a candidate for the patriarchate, composed what has been dubbed a “mirror of patriarchs,” including a procedure for selection, for the emperor Nikephoros I Phokas (r. 802–11). In it, he diplomatically emphasized that the choice of patriarch should be at the discretion of the Church. His advice was ignored. Photios (858–67, 877–86), a later patriarch who emphatically did not fit Theodore’s model, also addressed the problem. The first three titles of the *Eisagoge*, Photios’s legislative work, describe patriarchal and imperial power as both subject to law. In it, he controversially claims that the patriarch embodied “a new Moses and a new Melchizedek.” Dagron criticizes the *Eisagoge* as a text that “fossilised a transitory situation.”⁸⁸ He is correct, because Leo VI within months of his accession deposed Photios and delivered a homily at the new patriarch’s installation service reasserting imperial over patriarchal power.⁸⁹ Constantine VII encroached even further on patriarchal territory by adopting an overtly sacerdotal role in ceremonial processions as well as in his military speeches. Skylitzes even hints that the patriarch Polyeuktos was such an obstacle that Constantine was plotting to remove him but died before he could make it happen.⁹⁰

The position of the emperor with regard to the patriarch was thus a growing source of tension in the tenth century. On the side of imperial power during the reign of Nikephoros II, however, was a widespread awareness of the *Donation of Constantine*, an inauthentic eighth-century Latin document purportedly written by Constantine the Great (d. 337), which gave dominion over the western world to Pope Silvester while relocating the seat of imperial power from Rome to Constantinople. The pope was to receive “the city of Rome and all the provinces of the whole of Italy and the western regions, their districts and cities,” while “imperial power should be transferred and changed to the regions of the east, in the best site in the

province of Byzantium.”⁹¹ The objective was to declare the independence of the see of Rome and its primacy over the other four sees of the pentarchy, but it also presented unimpeachable (if spurious) historical justification for the primacy of the Byzantine emperor over the patriarch of Constantinople. Although a forgery, it was well known and even believed in Byzantium, because it was invoked in later conflicts between emperor and patriarch.⁹²

A reference to it made by Liudprand in 968 places a discussion of the document very close to the time of the reported conflict between Nikephoros II and the clergy. It comes in the report of a meeting in the palace between Liudprand and a eunuch named Christophoros, along with some other court officials. The Byzantine officials were infuriated by a papal letter addressing Nikephoros II as “emperor of the Greeks” (*Grecorum imperator*). Calling the pope stupid and idiotic (*papa fatuus, insulsus*), they claimed that he “does not know that the Holy Emperor Constantine transferred the imperial sceptre here, likewise all the senate and the whole order of Roman knights.”⁹³ The argument recorded by the ambassador clearly expresses the customary Byzantine certitude of the superiority of the Constantinopolitan emperor over any western emperor, but it is also useful because it shows that palace authorities in the tenth century were aware of the *Donation of Constantine* and appealed to its authority.⁹⁴ Nikephoros II himself likely knew of the document and was willing to gamble that his authority would trump that of the patriarch.

Although his request was a step too far for the patriarch and the senior ecclesiastical hierarchy, there are signs that Nikephoros’s theology had sympathizers outside the senior ranks. The request could have evolved naturally from the prevailing culture, instead of from the imaginings of an isolated emperor. Nikephoros II Phokas, as a successful field general both before and after his accession to the throne, would have been familiar with all aspects of military life, including its associated beliefs and superstitions. It would be surprising if he were not familiar with the social convention of comparing the deaths of Christian soldiers with the deaths of martyrs. Indeed, it is this popular acceptance of military martyrs that offers a fuller and more tenable account of the Byzantine stance.

DID MEDIEVAL BYZANTINES BELIEVE IN MARTYRDOM FOR SOLDIERS?

From the early tenth century, perhaps influenced by the ideas of Leo VI, there is evidence that soldiers who died in combat deserved the dignity of the martyr’s crown, at least in the eyes of the general populace.⁹⁵ The key

thing to note is that these honors were inevitably granted after death, not presupposed while a soldier still lived. A tenth-century manuscript of liturgical hymns contains an unusual *akolouthia*, or order of worship, dedicated to “generals, officers and soldiers who died in combat or captivity.”⁹⁶ Written in Constantinople, it is intended to be sung on the Saturday before Lent, a day that commemorates the dead. Since this tradition of the pre-Lenten Saturday service for the dead dates to the ninth century, the editors of the *akolouthia* have dated its composition to the late ninth or early tenth century.⁹⁷ It is very long and has two parts: six verses and a canon, or collection of funeral songs. A number of things are interesting about this composition.

The verses begin with a call for the people to assemble in order to celebrate the memory of “our brothers who died in battle, and those who died in intolerable captivity.”⁹⁸ Further on, the poem praises them for “being heroic until death,”⁹⁹ a phrase that neatly includes both combatants who fight and captives who are not permitted to fight. Additionally, the word here translated as “death” (σφαγής) is a religious word used in classical sources to refer to victims of blood sacrifices, not mere physical expiration.¹⁰⁰ The term is not used in the LXX in a liturgical sense but appears mostly in the prophets, with the sense of “slaughter.”¹⁰¹ It deliberately brings in a religious tone, imbuing the deaths of men killed in action as well as in captivity with spiritual significance.

No other liturgical hymn of the Church mentions captives, and this was written within a few generations of the martyrdom of the forty-two from Amorion. The praiseworthiness of the captives celebrated here is further described in a verse that addresses Christ: “They kept good faith, firm in conviction, steadfastly bearing the fetters for your sake, gladly receiving death for your sake and for your sake [enduring] many years [of captivity], they did not deny you, the living Lord.”¹⁰² This description of captives who endured long years of captivity without denying their faith and died as sacrifices could describe the forty-two martyrs added to the *Synaxarion* in the later ninth century. Because the description fits so closely the pious facts of their martyrdom, this hymn could be making a direct, if veiled, reference to them. Both the referenced forty-two martyrs and all soldiers who die in battle are accorded, however obliquely, the high honor of martyrdom for Christ. The hymnodist concludes the last verse: “in captivity and in combat, they received the death [τέλος].”¹⁰³

Second, the canon is composed in the form of an acrostic given in the title “Funeral Song for Defenders of Christians” (Τῶν χριστιανῶν τοῖς ὑπερμάχοις μέλος <ἐντάφιον>). The entire piece claims praise for fallen

soldiers (and prisoners too)¹⁰⁴ who have earned the rewards of faithfulness. Indeed, they are Christlike in their imitation of his passion (συμπαθείας).¹⁰⁵ As Christians, they “were as martyrs.”¹⁰⁶ The canon goes on to declare that these soldiers (and prisoners) “will be proved to Christians to be propitiatory offerings, holy and sacred.”¹⁰⁷ Propitiatory offerings are ones that suffer the consequences of sin, so that others might escape punishment. In this sense, the soldiers are being presented as exemplary Christians who have achieved the highest height of imitating Christ. Their deaths are viewed as accomplishing a spiritual good, both for themselves and for those who survived them.

In the tenth century, the same attitude is evident in an anonymous epigram that was written for Katakalon, the *strategos* of Thessaloniki, who died in battle against the Magyars.¹⁰⁸ It refers to him as “martyr or general” (μάρτυς ἢ στρατηλάτης). This is a little bit equivocal—“martyr or general”? The lyricist seems reluctant to commit himself to the word *martyr*, although of course Katakalon’s rank could not be in doubt. There is another epigram on Katakalon that is not so shy. It urges other generals to follow the example of Katakalon, “the glorious martyr of God.”¹⁰⁹ Oxford philologist Marc D. Lauxtermann notes that this second epitaph was certainly not inscribed on the tomb of the general, while the first one probably was.¹¹⁰ Was Katakalon viewed as a martyr after his death? Lauxtermann comments, “The poet does not provide an answer, but the mere fact that the question is put forward indicates an uncertainty typical of tenth-century Byzantium, when the canonical ideas about warfare clashed with certain ‘grassroots’ sympathies for the army and its brilliant accomplishments against the infidel. The epitaph to Katakalon is very much a product of its time, for it raises a question typical of tenth-century Byzantium at war: does death on the battlefield amount to martyrdom or not? The official answer is: no. The unofficial answer is: possibly.”¹¹¹

The official answer obviously came from the patriarch and bishops who deemed Nikephoros II Phokas’s putative martyrdom request beyond the pale. The unofficial answer, however, was something stronger than “possibly,” although still far from a definite yes. After all, even the Church celebrated the death of fallen soldiers and prisoners with a delicately worded canon that used the imagery of martyrdom and even the term *martyr*. An imperial request for a new law that codified what the church hymnodist had already implied would not be seen as wildly inappropriate, but it would have been out of character for such a devout emperor. Further supporting the popular view of dead soldiers as martyrs, Nikephoros himself was acclaimed a “companion to martyrs” shortly after his death.¹¹²

Two things are apparent: First, the idea of fallen soldiers deserving the honor of martyrdom status occurred to more than one person in the tenth century—the poet in Thessaloniki and the canonist in Constantinople, as well as the emperor evidently predisposed to the idea already through his monkish “soldier of Christ” lifestyle. Second, the culture was somewhat ambivalent about the idea, although it was widespread in influence, because both the poet and the canonist are careful only to imply and not directly claim martyrdom for dead soldiers. Moreover, this ambivalence could have compelled the emperor to make martyrdom status a legal obligation, thus openly protecting and legitimizing what was already a common assumption. With only the flimsy, awkward comment of Skylitzes, there is no incontrovertible proof that Nikephoros in fact did attempt to make battlefield martyrdom a prior legal obligation.

Nikephoros II Phokas has been described as “the incarnation of the cooperation of church and state.”¹¹³ Yet the story of the famous martyrdom law indicates a tension between the patriarch and the emperor that could not be accommodated by the traditional ambiguity enshrined in the *Book of Ceremonies*, where “the emperor’s ritually programmed actions are those of a clergyman (albeit a clergyman of indeterminate rank).”¹¹⁴ Although imbued with spiritual authority as the emperor of Byzantium, Nikephoros II could not compel the Church to grant martyrdom honors to his fallen soldiers, even after their indisputably honorable deaths. Remarkably, this does not appear to have deterred others from according martyrdom to him.

CONCLUSION

Nikephoros, a devoted ascetic supported by monks, was a threat to the authority of the Church, particularly with regard to military martyrs. He is portrayed in Skylitzes’s account as something of a loose cannon, with outrageous ideas that could not possibly be entertained. However, the evidence shows that he was closely attuned to his culture. And although he was not directing the spiritual slipstream, his martyrdom request, however garbled by Skylitzes, bore its cultural momentum. In order to deny it, church authorities were forced to rely on an overapplication of a previously obscure canon. They not only twisted the canon but used it to counterattack by sanctioning excommunication of active soldiers who were skilled (or lucky) enough to stay alive.

Although the request carried the cultural momentum of the era, it failed because of the overpowering authority of the Orthodox Church. Although Nikephoros very nearly was the ideal emperor, his flaw seemed to be that he put the army above all else, including his own personal desire to take monastic vows. The patriarch was unwilling to subscribe to the emperor's martial priorities and chose to preserve Orthodox theological integrity, as he saw it. The martyrdom request was not a bolt from the blue but a reasonable step in a culture beginning to enjoy military dominance over an old enemy for the first time in centuries. It was also a logical step in a progression that began with Leo VI's nuanced admiration of Muslim cultural and religious support for military endeavor. The martyrdom request, as described by Skylitzes (but no other chronicler), took the imitation of a rival religion simply too far.

Had such a law been successful, it would have discernibly raised the profile of Byzantine soldiers, investing them with a sheen of holiness. Skylitzes's outrage at this request indicates that Byzantium was confirmed in its official denial of holy war as acceptable to Byzantine Orthodoxy. Although Byzantines were comfortable celebrating the martyrdoms of past soldiers, culturally it was not possible to embrace anything so close to holy war, even for the emperor. Under the leadership of Nikephoros II Phokas, Byzantine soldiers pushed through the last defenses of the frontier emirates and reclaimed the offensive in the never-ending battle against the Muslims. However, conviction alone had to suffice, because approving their automatic martyrdom would have changed the Byzantine approach to one more closely resembling jihad—or even crusade.

NOTES

I would like to thank the kind reviewers whose very helpful suggestions significantly improved this article. Any errors that might inadvertently remain are of course my responsibility and do not reflect the much appreciated efforts of the reviewers and editors.

1. *John Skylitzes: "A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057,"* trans. John Wortley, intros. by Jean-Claude Cheynet and Bernard Flusin, with notes by Jean-Claude Cheynet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 262. This is an English translation of the critical edition published as *Ioannis Scylitzae, Synopsis historiarum*, ed. Hans Thurn (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1973). The notes by Cheynet are updated and translated from his notes in the French edition, Jean Skylitzès, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, trans. from Greek by Bernard Flusin, with notes by Jean-Claude Cheynet (Paris: Lethielleux, 2003).

2. *Ioannis Skylitzae, Synopsis historiarum*, 18.62–65; *John Skylitzes: "A Synopsis of Byzantine History,"* 263.

3. Mark Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium, 600–1025* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 352.

4. Cf. Gustave Schlumberger, *Un empereur byzantin au Xe siècle: Nicéphore Phocas* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1923).
5. Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki, *The Byzantine "Holy War": The Idea and Propagation of Religious War in Byzantium* (Athens: S. D. Basilopoulos, 1991), 187–88.
6. G. T. Dennis, "Defenders of the Christian People: Holy War in Byzantium," in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy P. Mottahedeh (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), 31–49, at 35. Also, Jonathan Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 102.
7. Angeliki E. Laiou, "The Just War of Eastern Christians and the Holy War of the Crusaders," in *The Ethics of War: Shared Problems in Different Traditions*, ed. Richard Sorabji and David Rodin (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 30–44, at 36.
8. Gilbert Dagron, *Le traité sur la guérilla de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963–969)* (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1986), 286.
9. I. M. Konidaris, "The Ubiquity of Canon Law," in *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth–Twelfth Centuries*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Dieter Simon (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1994), 131–50, at 137.
10. *Ioannis Scylitzae, Synopsis historiarum*, 18.62–69; my translation: "ἔσπούδασε δὲ καὶ νόμον θεῖναι τοὺς ἐν πολέμοις ἀποθνήσκοντας στρατιωτῶν μαρτυρικῶν ἀξιοῦσθαι γερῶν, ἐν μόνῳ τῷ πολέμῳ τιθέμενος καὶ οὐκ ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ τῆν τῆς ψυχῆς σωτηρίαν. κατήπειγε δὲ καὶ τὸν πατριάρχην καὶ τοὺς ἐπισκόπους συνθέσθαι τῷ δόγματι. ἀλλὰ τινες τούτων γενναίως ἀντιστάντες ἀπέιρξαν αὐτὸν τοῦ σκοποῦ, προθέντες εἰς μέσον τὸν τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλείου κανόνα, ἐπὶ τριετῶν ἀκοινονητόους εἶναι λέγοντα τοὺς πολέμιον ἐν τινὶ πολέμῳ ἀνηρηκότας."
11. However, Paul Stephenson has noted that Byzantine soldiers in the tenth century probably did expect martyrdom honors if they died in battle. Paul Stephenson, "About the Emperor Nikephoros and How He Leaves His Bones in Bulgaria: A Context for the Controversial *Chronicle of 811*," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 60 (2006): 87–109, at 105.
12. As recently as the mid-ninth century, Byzantine captives killed by Muslims were declared martyrs of the Church, and a feast day was added to the *Synaxarion* in their honor. See Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki, "The Execution of the Forty-Two Martyrs of Amorion: Proposing an Interpretation," *Al-Masāq* 14, no. 2 (2002): 141–62.
13. Ioannis Stouraitis, *Krieg und Frieden in der politischen und ideologischen Wahrnehmung in Byzanz (7.–11. Jahrhundert)* (Vienna: Fassbaender, 2009). This volume deals with all the relevant secondary scholarship as well as primary sources.
14. M. Siuziumov and A. Kazhdan have shown that Skylitzes did not use Leo the Deacon as a source. He was nonetheless aware of Leo's history, since he dismisses him ("Leo Asianos") as a poor historian in the preface. M. Siuziumov, "Ob istochnikakh Leva Diakona i Skilitsii," *Vizantiiskoe Obozrenie* 2 (1916): 106–66; A. Kazhdan, "Iz istorii visantiikoï chronographii X v. Istochniki Leva Diakona i Skilitsii dlya istorii tretei chetverti X stoletiya," *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* 20 (1961): 106–28.
15. Siuziumov, "Ob istochnikakh Leva Diakona i Skilitsii." See Catherine Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976–1025)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 120–52, 174–202.
16. Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire*, 94. For a fuller development of Skylitzes's analysis, see 240–98.
17. For more on changes to the currency, see M. F. Hendy, "Light Weight Solidi, Tetartera, and the Book of the Prefect," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 65 (1972): 57–80; H. Ahrweiler, "Nouvelle hypothèse sur le tétartèron et la politique monétaire de Nicéphore Phocas," *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 8 (1963): 1–9; Philip Grierson, "Nomisma, tetartèron et dinar: Un plaidoyer pour Nicéphore Phocas," *Revue belge de numismatique* 100 (1954): 75–84.
18. *Ioannis Skylitzae, Synopsis historiarum*, 18.62–65; Skylitzès, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, 230. See also Cyril Mango, "The Palace of the Boukoleon," *Cahiers archéologiques* 45 (1997): 41–50. Mango says that the wall did not encircle the entire palace, but only "its more prestigious [post-Justinianic] section" (45).
19. Skylitzès, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, 231.
20. John Skylitzes: "A Synopsis of Byzantine History," 263.
21. For more on Mount Athos, the famous northern Aegean peninsula home to nearly three dozen Orthodox monasteries, see Anthony A. M. Bryer and Mary B. Cunningham, eds., *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996).
22. There are of course plenty of other charges laid against the emperor (previously listed), but these are beyond the scope of this article.

23. Paul Stephenson discusses this confrontation, saying that the emperor “demanded a review of Orthodox canons relating to death in battle.” Nowhere does Skylitzes mention anything about a review of canons, nor does he mention the “synod” referenced four times by Stephenson in the same discussion. See Stephenson, “About the Emperor Nikephoros and How He Leaves His Bones in Bulgaria,” 105.

24. “τάχα ἂν τὸ θεσπέσιον ἐκείνον κεκύρωτο θέσισμα.” *Ioannis Zonarae Epitomae Historiarum*, ed. M. Pinder, vol. 3 (Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1897), 506.24. Cf. Theodore Balsamon, in K. Rhalles and M. Potles, eds., *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων*, 6 vols. (Athens, 1852–59), vol. 4.

25. Patrick Viscuso has compared their arguments in his essay “Christian Participation in Warfare: A Byzantine View,” in *Peace and War in Byzantium: Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis*, S.J., ed. Timothy S. Miller and John W. Nesbitt (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 33–40.

26. Skylitzes lists fourteen sources for his history in the preface to his work, but for the latter part of the tenth century, there are no extant contemporary histories used by him against which we can check his rendition.

27. There was cultural precedent, however, for viewing battle casualties as equivalent to martyrs’ suffering; Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos writes in a military oration dated to 958 that he “will kiss your bodies wounded for the sake of Christ in veneration as the limbs of martyrs.” E. McGeer, “Two Military Orations of Constantine VII,” in *Byzantine Authors: Literary Activities and Preoccupations*, ed. John W. Nesbitt (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 111–35, at 132.

28. Rosemary Morris, “The Two Faces of Nikephoros Phokas,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1988): 83–115, at 84.

29. Laiou, “Just War of Eastern Christians and the Holy War of the Crusaders,” 35.

30. Angeliki E. Laiou, “The General and the Saint: Michael Maleinos and Nikephoros Phokas,” *Byzantina Sorbonensia* 16 (1998): 399–412, at 399.

31. Alice-Mary Talbot and Denis Sullivan, eds., *The History of Leo the Deacon: Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2005), 139–40 (V.8). For more on the dates covered by Leo the Deacon, see p. 11.

32. Dēmētrēs Tsoukarakēs, *Byzantine Crete: From the Fifth Century to the Venetian Conquest* (Athens: Historical Publications St. D. Basilopoulos, 1988), 63.

33. Leo the Deacon gives a lively account of the final onslaught (II.6–7). Talbot and Sullivan, *History of Leo the Deacon*, 76–79.

34. *Theodosii Diaconi De Creta Capta*, ed. Hugo Criscuolo (Leipzig: Teubner, 1979), verses 182–83, 224–25, 443–44, 617–40, 654–55.

35. *Histoire de Yahya-ibn-Sa’id d’Antioche, continuateur de Sa’id-ibn-Bitriq*, ed. and trans. Ignati Kratchkovsky and Aleksandr A. Vasiliev (Paris: Fermin-Didot, 1924), 782–83. For further discussion of this source with some excerpts translated into English, see John Harper Forsyth, “The Byzantine–Arab Chronicle (938–1034) of Yahya B. Sa’id al-Antaki” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1977).

36. C. E. Bosworth, “Byzantium and the Arabs: War and Peace Between Two World Civilisations,” *Journal of Oriental and African Studies* 3 (1991): 1–23, at 10; repr. in C. E. Bosworth, *The Arabs, Byzantium, and Iran: Studies in Early Islamic History and Culture* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), chap. XIII. See also Marius Canard, *Histoire de la dynastie des Hamdanides de Jazīra et de Syrie* (Paris: Universitaire de France, 1953), 809–16.

37. Liudprand of Cremona, *Relatio de Legatione Constantinopolitana*, trans. Brian Scott (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1993), 152. The *Visions of Daniel* was a prophetic work probably compiled in the early 960s. Cf. Paul Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). For more on the apocalyptic literature of the tenth century, see Paul Magdalino, ed., *Byzantium in the Year 1000* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

38. *Ioannis Scylitzae, Synopsis historiarum*, 7.60–64; John Skylitzes: “A Synopsis of Byzantine History,” 247–49.

39. Joseph A. Munitiz, ed., *Theognosti Thesaurus* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1979), 196–203.

40. The scene is the presentation of the 144,000 just before the breaking of the seventh seal: “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” (Rev. 7:9–10, NAS).

41. Liliana Simeonova, "Foreigners in Tenth-Century Byzantium: A Contribution to the History of Cultural Encounter," in *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*, ed. Dion Smythe (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 229–44, at 238. See Pseudo-Symeon, *Chronographia*, in *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn: Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, 1838), 3–48; Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 168.

42. Liliana Simeonova, "In the Depths of Tenth-Century Ceremonial: The Treatment of Arab Prisoners of War at Imperial Banquets," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 22 (1998): 75–104, at 101.

43. As described in Talbot and Sullivan, *History of Leo the Deacon*, 109 (IV.4).

44. Skylitzes gives an account of the rout of Basil I's commander Stypeiotes at Tarsus in 882 (*Ioannis Skylitzae, Synopsis historiarum*, 144.48–49; Skylitzès, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, 123; John Skylitzes: "A Synopsis of Byzantine History," 141–42).

45. The symbolism of the gates as "jihad gates" sufficed for their removal from the conquered city. There is no further information on the placement of these gates; however, the area was a busy one, close to the commercial activity described in the Book of the Eparch, and housed numerous charitable foundations, monasteries, a hospital, and the major worship center of the Hagia Sophia. Paul Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale: Études sur l'évolution des structures urbaines* (Paris: De Boccard, 1996); Cyril A. Mango, *Studies on Constantinople* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993); Raymond Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine: Développement urbain et répertoire topographique* (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1964 [1950]); Leslie Brubaker, "Topography and the Creation of Public Space in Early Medieval Constantinople," in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Mayke de Jong and F. Theuvs, with Carine van Rhijn (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 31–43. I am grateful to Cyril Mango for clarifying details of the location of the St. Barbara gate.

46. This is an oblique reference to Constantine VII's reenactment of the *calcatio* in the summer of 956 c.e., placing his imperial red boot on the neck of a defeated Muslim enemy in a religiously saturated triumphal ceremony.

47. V. Grumel, no. 790, in *Les registres des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople, vol. 1: Fasc. II et III, les registres de 715 à 1206*, ed. J. Darrouzès, 2nd ed. (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1989), 302.

48. Nikephoros promulgated new laws to respond to the changing needs of the empire. Five are still extant and include land legislation intended to control the "instability and wandering" of Armenian soldiers or *stratiotai*, a homiletical novel restricting the growth of monasteries, two decrees limiting the purchase of properties by the powerful, and a revision to one of Constantine VII's laws raising the minimum inalienable value of military properties. Cf. Nikos Svoronos, *Les nouvelles des empereurs Macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes* (Athens: Centre de Recherches Byzantines, 1994), 151–84 (doc. nos. 8–12); Eric McGeer, *Land Legislation of the Macedonian Emperors* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2000), 87–108.

49. Dieter Simon, "Legislation as Both a World Order and a Legal Order," in *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth–Twelfth Centuries*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Dieter Simon (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1994), 1–25, at 17.

50. Hans-Georg Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur im Byzantinischen Reich, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft XII.2.1* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1959), 274.

51. H. Delehaye, ed., "Vita S. Pauli Junioris in monte Latro," *Analecta Bollandiana* 11 (1892): 5–74, at 71–74.

52. I. Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Bonn: Weber, 1838), 474.23–475.1; *Ioannis Skylitzae, Synopsis historiarum*, 250; Skylitzès, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, 210.

53. The *proimion* asserts that salvation shall be attained by "abstinence from certain practices and adherence to others," identifies wealth as an obstacle, and chastises the "great excess and false frenzies" of the monasteries, referring to increases in their holdings. It holds up the austerity of the early desert fathers ("those who flourished in Egypt, Palestine and Alexandria") as worthy of emulation, and the whole argument is reinforced with scriptural references, mostly from the New Testament and almost exclusively from the Gospel accounts of Jesus's preaching. Svoronos, *Les nouvelles*, 151–61 (doc. no. 8); McGeer, *Land Legislation of the Macedonian Emperors*, 92–96.

54. Jean-René Vieillefond, "Les pratiques religieuses dans l'armée byzantine d'après les traités militaires," *Revue des études anciennes* 36 (1935): 322–30; Paul Goubert,

“Religion et superstitions dans l’armée byzantine à la fin du VI^e siècle,” *Orientalia christiana periodica* 13 (1947): 495–500.

55. Meredith L. D. Riedel, *Unexpected Emperor: Leo VI and the Transformation of Byzantine Law, Faith, and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

56. Romilly J. H. Jenkins, “Three Documents Concerning the ‘Tetragamy,’” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): 231–41; N. Oikonomidès, “La dernière volonté de Léon VI au sujet de la tetragamie (mai 912),” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 56 (1963): 264–70.

57. Kolia-Dermitzaki, “Execution of the Forty-Two Martyrs of Amorion.”

58. Paul Stephenson has also observed this. See his “Imperial Christianity and Sacred War in Byzantium,” in *Belief and Bloodshed: Religion and Violence Across Time and Tradition*, ed. James K. Wellman Jr. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 81–94, esp. 90–91.

59. Yves Courtonne, ed., *Saint Basile lettres*, vol. 2 (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1961), 130 (Greek with French translation); my translation. In Greek, the thirteenth canon reads: “Τοὺς ἐν πολέμοις φόνους οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τοῖς φόνοις οὐκ ἐλογίσαντο, ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν, συγγνώμην δόντες τοῖς ὑπὲρ σωφροσύνης καὶ εὐσεβείας ἀμυνομένοις. Τάχα δὲ καλῶς ἔχει συμβουλευεῖν, ὡς τὰς χεῖρας μὴ καθαροὺς, τριῶν ἑτῶν τῆς κοινωνίας μόνης ἀπέχεσθαι.”

60. All of these are addressed in the same letter to Amphilochius.

61. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (repr.; London: Routledge, 2003 [1966]), 2.

62. Cf. Leviticus 20:25–27, a passage that articulates the concept of holiness as set-apart-ness, especially from what is unclean.

63. Exodus 25–27 and 35–40 contain detailed instructions about the construction, size, furnishings, and use of the Tabernacle, all of which reinforce the notion of spatial holiness.

64. This may refer to Stylianos Zaoutzes, who built a church in Constantinople in the ninth century. The palindrome is famous because it is the only one that makes any sense, according to Marc Lauxtermann (personal communication, 2007).

65. Marc D. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres* (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2003), 248.

66. *Ibid.*

67. *Ibid.*, 247. On the Basilica of St. John, the inscription reads “Approach the gate of [the church of] the Theologian in fear; receive Holy Communion tremblingly. For it is a fire, it burns the unworthy.” (Φόβῳ πρόσελθε πύλην τοῦ Θεολόγου, τρόμῳ λάμβανε τὴν θείαν κοινωνίαν· πῦρ γάρ ἐστι, φλέγει τοὺς ἀναξίους.)

68. These include Akhisar (ninth century), Fetoka (933–34), St. Achilleios, Pontos (late tenth century), Panagia Chalkeon, Thessaloniki (after 1028), and the Basilica of St. John, Selçuk (early ninth century). A complete list of published archaeological evidence can be found in *ibid.*, app. 8, 352.

69. Patriarch Germanos, *On the Divine Liturgy*, trans. Paul Meyendorff (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1984), 57.

70. The *Book of the Eparch* (attributed to Leo VI, ca. early ninth century) does not allow certain foreigners into the city, segregating them on the other side of the Golden Horn, and permits only a controlled number of entries.

71. Hans-Georg Beck, *Nomos, Kanon und Staatsraison in Byzanz* (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), 21ff.

72. Balsamon, in Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων*, 4:131.

73. Matthew Blastares, in *ibid.*, 4:132–33.

74. Although the word *sacrament* is used here simply for convenience, it must be acknowledged that it is a Latin word and therefore somewhat inappropriate. The Greek term is *mysteries* and better reflects Eastern Orthodox apophatic theology.

75. Thomas Pott, *La réforme liturgique byzantine: Étude du phénomène de l’évolution non-spontanée de la liturgie byzantine* (Rome: Centro Liturgico Vincenziano, 2000), chap. 4. Cf. Robert F. Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 52.

76. *Les registes du patriarcat de Constantinople*, 163 (doc. 587 [588]). Because the document mentions a Nicholas and not Photios, there is some doubt as to its authorship; however, the point stands.

77. Juan Mateos, *Le Typicon de la Grande Église*, vol. 2 (Rome: Institutum orientalium studiorum, 1963), 302. For more on the significance of Communion in Byzantium, see Bishop Kallistos of Dioklea, “The Meaning of the Divine Liturgy for the Byzantine Worshipper,” in *Church and People in Byzantium*, ed. Rosemary Morris (Birmingham, England: Center for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham, 1990), 7–28.

78. Robert F. Taft, "The Frequency of the Eucharist Throughout History," in *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Rome: Edizioni Orientalia Christiana, Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1997), 87–110, at 108.

79. John Meyendorff, "Christian Marriage in Byzantium: The Canonical and Liturgical Tradition," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): 99–107, at 104.

80. Ep. I.50, *Theodori praepositi Studitarum, Epistolae. Liber primus, Patrologia Graeca* 99, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1860), col. 1093AC: "Ὁ δὲ δεύτερος γάμος, εἰ καὶ συγκεχώρηται, ἀλλ' ἐπιτείνεται . . . πῶς δὲ καὶ μεθέξει τῆς θείας κοινωνίας, ὁ δι' αὐτὸ τοῦτο εἰργμένος χρόνῳ ἐνὶ καὶ δυοῖ τῶν ἀγιασμάτων."

81. According to the *Tome of Union*, a person aged forty or older might marry a third time, but only if she or he had no children, and he or she would incur excommunication for five years. A person aged forty or older with children could not marry a third time. A person aged thirty might marry a third time but would suffer four years of excommunication. Critical text and translation in *Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople: Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. and trans. L. G. Westerink (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, Center for Byzantine Studies, 1981), 59–71.

82. Maximus Confessor, *Scholia on the "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy" of Dionysius the Areopagite, Patrologia Graeca* 4, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1868), col. 161D; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600–1700)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 12.

83. "Pale death of the Saracens" (Latin: *pallida Saracenorum mors*). This epithet is known only by the (otherwise negative) report Liudprand of Cremona, *Relatio de Legatione Constantinopolitana*, 4.

84. For more on Nikephoros II Phokas's use of relics, see D. Sullivan, "Siege Warfare, Nikephoros II Phokas, Relics, and Personal Piety," in *Byzantine Religious Culture: Studies in Honor of Alice-Mary Talbot*, ed. Denis Sullivan, Elizabeth A. Fisher, and Stratis Papaioannou (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 395–410.

85. "Μαρτύρων σύσκηνος." *Memorial to the glorious emperor Nikephoros Phokas* (μνήμη τοῦ ἐν βασιλευσίν ἀοιδίμου Νικηφόρου τοῦ Φωκά), l. 47, in Louis Petit, "Office inédit en l'honneur de Nicéphore Phocas," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 13 (1904): 398–420, at 402.

86. For a recent nuanced discussion of the power struggle in terms of politics, see Stouraitis, *Krieg und Frieden*, 346–62.

87. Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 221–60.

88. *Ibid.*, 234.

89. Theodora Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). See Homily 22.245.

90. Skylitzēs, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, 208.

91. *The Edict of Constantine to Pope Silvester*, in *Constantine and Christendom; The Oration to the Saints; The Greek and Latin Accounts of the Discovery of the Cross; The Edict of Constantine to Pope Silvester*, trans. Mark Edwards (Liverpool University Press, 2003), 113.

92. For example, John Kinnamos refers to it in his history of the reigns of John and Manuel Comnenus (*Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1978], 7:218–20). See also Georg Ostrogorsky, "Zum Stratordienst des Herrschers in der byzantinisch-slavischen Welt," *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 7 (1935): 187–205; Paul J. Alexander, "The Donation of Constantine at Byzantium and Its Earliest Use Against the Western Empire," *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloskog Instituta* 8 (1963): 11–26.

93. Liudprand of Cremona, *Relatio de Legatione Constantinopolitana* 19 (Latin), 48 (English).

94. Paul Alexander has argued, unconvincingly, that this reference in the *legatio* of Liudprand "offers no evidence for the knowledge and use of the Donation of Constantine in tenth century Byzantium." His argument rests on the assumption that Christophoros knew of the "doctrine of the *translatio imperii*" but not the actual document whence it originated. See Alexander, "Donation of Constantine at Byzantium and Its Earliest Use Against the Western Empire," 25.

95. For details and discussion of the ideas of Leo VI on the status of soldiers, see Riedel, *Unexpected Emperor*.

96. Th. Détorakis and J. Mossay, "Un office byzantin inédit pour ceux qui sont morts à la guerre, dans le *Cod. Sin. Gr. 734–735*," *Le Muséon* 101 (1988): 183–211.

97. *Ibid.*, 184.

98. "In Honor of Those Who Died in War" (ἀλλὰ εἰς τοὺς ἐν πολέμοις θανέντας), in *ibid.*, ll. 9–12; my translation: "τῶν θανέντων ἐν πολέμοις ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν καὶ τεθνηκότων δεσμοῖς ἐν ἀνυπόστοις."

99. *Ibid.*, l. 14; my translation: “ἠρίστευσαν μέχρι σφαγῆς.”
100. For example, in Euripides (*Hecuba*), Aeschylus (*Eumenides*, *Agamemnon*), and Sophocles (*Trachiniai*).
101. The sole biblical liturgical reference is in Leviticus 14:6, in a passage that details the cleansing of a house occupied by a leper by means of sprinkling it with the blood of a sacrifice.
102. In Détorakis and Mossay, “Un office byzantin inédit,” 196, ll. 31–39; my translation: “Βεβαίαν πίστιν τὴν πρὸς σὲ τηρήσαντας, γνώμη τε στερεῶ ὑπὲρ σοῦ τὸν θάνατον δεξαμένους χαίροντας δεσμά τε καρτερήσαντας ὑπερ σοῦ πολυχρόνια καὶ μὴ ἀρνησαμένους τὸν ζῶντᾶ σε Κύριον.”
103. *Ibid.*, ll. 66–67; my translation: “ἐν δεσμοῖς καὶ πολέμοις τὸ τέλος δεξάμενοι.” The verb τελέω has traditionally been used in Christian theology to refer to the performance of rites and sacraments, including chrisim, Eucharist, ordination, unction, and consecration, as well as deification, or the “being made perfect” of a saint. Cf. G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 1387.
104. Throughout the canon one repeatedly finds phrases like “ἐν δεσμοῖς καὶ ἐν πολεμοῖς.”
105. In Détorakis and Mossay, “Un office byzantin inédit,” 196, l. 155. It is a play on words. For a discussion that traces the development of the acceptability of Christian soldiers’ deaths in captivity under Muslims, see D. Woods, “The Good Soldier’s End: From Suicide to Martyrdom,” *Byzantinoslavica* 66 (2008): 71–86.
106. In Détorakis and Mossay, “Un office byzantin inédit,” 196, ll. 184–85; my translation: “ἐφάμιλλα μαρτύρων ὡς χρηματίσαντα.”
107. *Ibid.*, ll. 243–44; my translation: “ἰλαστήρια σεπτὰ καὶ ἱερώτατα χριστιανοῖς ἐδείχθητε.”
108. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres*, 226–27, 321.
109. S. Lambros, “Τὰ ὑπ’ ἀριθμὸν ΡΙΖ’ καὶ ΠΓ’ κατάλοιπα,” *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 16 (1922): 54, 1–4, 7–8, cf. 53, 27–29.
110. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres*, 227 n. 40.
111. *Ibid.*, 227.
112. “Μαρτύρων σύσκηνος.” *Memorial to the glorious emperor Nikephoros Phokas*, l. 47, in Petit, “Office inédit en l’honneur,” 402. See also Munitiz, *Theognosti Thesaurus*, 196–203.
113. Laiou, “General and the Saint,” 399.
114. G. P. Majeska, “The Emperor in His Church: Imperial Ritual in the Church of St. Sophia,” in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1997), 1–11, at 4.