

reinterpretation of the figure known as “Luxuria” as someone guilty not of a lack of chastity but rather of charity, as a woman who failed to nurse her infant. There would seem to be plenty to work with here, since Bleeke brings up the theme of lepers at Moissac, combined with that of toads and snakes as the causes or cures of leprosy. Bleeke, however, then introduces a sixteenth-century *transi* tomb, that of Jeanne de Bourbon-Vendôme, in which the swelling entrails of the decaying corpse suggest to Bleeke pregnancy. The tomb sculpture is so far removed in time, space, and viewership from the portal sculpture that it distracts from Bleeke’s arguments about the female beholders and maternal suffering at Moissac.

Bleeke’s focus is tighter in her third topic, the Eve from the lost east portal of Saint-Lazare in Autun. Bleeke’s goal is to associate Eve with the female figures from the tomb of St. Lazarus, formerly in the apse of the church. Bleeke brings in Lazarus Plays, childbirth charms, and, in the absence of miracle literature from Autun, miracle accounts from elsewhere, to suggest that female pilgrims would have paired Eve on the lintel with Mary Magdalene on the tomb and thus received messages about the potential loss of a child.

Bleeke’s final chapter is the least developed. She examines Virgin and Child sculptures from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to make the case that the specific items of clothing worn by the Virgin in these statues evoked the bodily experience of childbirth for female spectators. While it is always useful to pay attention to dress, Bleeke needs to consider the original settings and specific audiences of the sculptures at greater length.

There is much to admire about Bleeke’s energetic and wide-ranging study. A great strength of her book is her belief that public sculpture could shape peoples’ thoughts and behaviors, and that it could do so in ways not intended by the designers of the program. While her search for insights into the responses of medieval women ranged at times very far afield, the message that women mattered comes through loud and clear.

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JELENA BOGDANOVIĆ, *The Framing of Sacred Space: The Canopy and the Byzantine Church*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. xxxiv; many color and black-and-white figures, 5 maps, and 7 tables. \$60. ISBN: 978-0-19-046518-6. doi:10.1086/708473

How were the Byzantines able to display the sanctity of space on earth, particularly within the microcosm of the church? How were they able to define the boundaries of the sacred in a tridimensional way that would express the inherent supernatural value of a given space or object to the viewers? Jelena Bogdanović answers these questions through an extensive study (more than 400 pages) of an architectural element, the canopy. For the first time a thorough investigation examines the symbolism, cultural and religious value, and fortune of the canopy as a basic element of church architecture in Byzantium and related cultures (300–1500). The reader is invited to explore the appearance and meaning of what architectural historians commonly define as the ciborium, which, as the author states in the introduction, was “a centrally planned columnar structure” (i). While this type of architectural element has been found in a small scale within royal and religious contexts since antiquity, during the epoch Bogdanović discusses, it achieved such a great significance in Byzantine architecture that it influenced the most common type of church building: the domed church.

The author introduces the subject of her research by discussing the fact that scholarly literature has generally understated the value of the canopy because of a lack of archaeological evidence. In the first chapter, Bogdanović explores the terminology used for the canopy through a detailed analysis of textual sources from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries. Contrary to what was previously thought, the word *ciborium* (καβώριον) was seldom used to denote a church canopy. Rather, Byzantines tended to utilize other words and periphrases in order to describe this

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structural element, suggesting perceptions and meanings that are instrumental in revealing the value of the ciborium in Byzantine Orthodox culture. This is followed by a long discussion of the extant evidence for canopies, much larger than previously thought. Bogdanović's survey goes through the entire eastern Mediterranean, from North Africa to the Balkan peninsula, from Italy to Armenia and Georgia, thus also exploring areas that, during the long period under consideration, came under the control of other powers but always maintained cultural or religious ties with Byzantium. Furthermore, it touches upon territories that were deeply dependent upon Byzantium, such as medieval Rus'. Her work is not limited to altar canopies but includes all canopies, with various uses, in church buildings. Made of a number of different materials (stone, wood, metals), canopies appear to have been a long-lasting feature of church architecture from the fourth century to the fall of Byzantium. The third chapter focuses upon the role of the canopy within the church and the way it shaped the identity of the space it framed and thereby expressed its sacredness. Bogdanović demonstrates her points by focusing on two case studies: a canopy from the Middle East now in the Royal Ontario Museum, and the canopies used in the complex of Hagia Sophia—which, although mostly known only from literary sources and comparative visual evidence, appear to have been the model for all the other churches in Byzantium. Chapter 4 examines how the typical domed church can be connected to the development of the canopy itself, as the latter is the basic spatial unit of a Byzantine church around which walls and other structures are juxtaposed. The canopy can therefore be defined as a micro-architectural frame of a sacred space. The last chapter connects the architectural reflection on building design to the models that imbued the church with meanings: the Temple and the Holy Sepulcher. As these were the conceptual and physical prototypes for the Byzantine church—itsself a compound of several canopies—and were represented as a more or less complex canopy, it can be said that the canopy was “a microcosmic place of divine presence” (292).

This book is the result of a long and detailed doctoral thesis that formed the methodological basis for a line of research consistently pursued by the author. Bogdanović addresses the subject of her inquiry from the point of view of an architectural historian, and drawings and charts demonstrate her comprehensive architectural understanding of structures and buildings. However, this research has the power to extend far beyond the limits of an architectural study, as it shows the inherent connection of forms and built space to religious beliefs and theological concepts. Furthermore, the author examines a number of other subjects, including the relationship between artifact and model (that is, between type and prototype), the connections between human perception and space, and the concept of sacred space and the ways in which it was visualized in Byzantium, as well as the impact of the Orthodox rite on religious architecture throughout the centuries and across a wide geographic area of investigation. Although, as the author admits, her survey of more than 240 canopies and more than 500 visual depictions of canopies is by no means complete, it takes into consideration a considerable amount of specimens from all the most relevant territories that were included within the borders of Byzantium or were culturally dependent on it. This obviously constitutes a strong base for serious research and ensures the value of its results.

This book, which receives an elegant treatment from Oxford University Press, is furnished with rare illustrations and a number of charts and drawings that clarify the author's points and provide the nonexpert reader with precious help. Indeed, this is an invaluable scholarly contribution that helps us to understand the complexity of thoughts and beliefs behind what may appear to be a small architectural element, the canopy.

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