Valonia: A Journal of Anatolian Pasts 2 (2025): 1-18.
DOI: 10.5505/valonia.2025.08208

THE MULTIPLE VOICES OF A REUSED FUNERARY RELIEF: THE INSCRIBED LINTEL AT THE CHURCH OF SAINT ANNE IN TREBIZOND

Spyros Avgerinopoulos*

The lintel above the southern entrance to the Middle Byzantine Church of Saint Anne in Trebizond is adorned with a high relief that has received only limited scholarly attention, despite the diverse interpretations it seems to have inspired over the centuries. This relief likely originates from a Roman sarcophagus and originally depicted a lance and shield-bearing soldier alongside a winged Nike. Considering the widespread veneration of the Archangel Michael in Asia Minor, it seems quite plausible that the Christian inhabitants of Trebizond recognized in this relief the features of this particular angel. Similarly, Christians may have perceived the soldier as a member of Michael's celestial army. It is also entirely possible that strategos and protospatharios Alexios, the founder of the church, chose this particular relief to commemorate an episode from his military career. Over the centuries, however, the initial interpretations of the sculpture appear to have been forgotten. Since then, various scholars have sought to reinterpret the relief, drawing occasionally on their personal knowledge and at other times on local traditions.

Keywords: Saint Anne, Archangel Michael, Trebizond, Digenis Akritis, spolium.

YENİDEN KULLANILMIŞ BİR LAHİT RÖLYEFİNİN ÇOKLU SESLERİ: TRABZON'DAKİ AZİZ ANNA KİLİSESİNİN YAZITLI LENTOSU

Trabzon'daki Orta Bizans dönemi Aziz Anna Kilisesi'nin güney girişinin üzerindeki lento, yüzyıllar boyunca farklı yorumlara ilham vermiş gibi görünmesine rağmen, şimdiye kadar sınırlı ölçüde akademik ilgi görmüş yüksek kabartmalı bir rölyefle süslenmiştir. Bu rölyefin muhtemelen bir Roma lahitinden geldiği ve aslında bir mızrak ve kalkan taşıyan bir askeri, yanında kanatlı bir Nike figürüyle birlikte betimlediği anlaşılmaktadır. Küçük Asya'da Başmelek Mikail'e yönelik yaygın saygı düşünüldüğünde, Trabzon'un Hristiyan sakinlerinin bu rölyefte söz konusu meleğin özelliklerini tanımış olmaları son derece muhtemeldir. Benzer şekilde, Hristiyanlar askeri, Mikail'in göksel ordusunun bir üyesi olarak algılamış olabilirler. Kilisenin kurucusu olan strategos ve protospatharios Alexios'un da, askeri kariyerindeki bir olayı anmak amacıyla bu rölyefi özellikle seçmiş olması mümkündür. Bununla birlikte, yüzyıllar içerisinde heykelin başlangıçtaki yorumlarının unutulduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Bu tarihten itibaren çeşitli araştırmacılar, kimi zaman kişisel bilgi birikimlerine, kimi zaman da yerel geleneklere dayanarak rölyefi yeniden yorumlamaya çalışmışlardır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Aziz Anna, Başmelek Mikail, Trabzon, Digenis Akritis, spolia/spolium.*

*Independent researcher, spyrosavge@hotmail.com, ORCiD: 0009-0008-1727-5082

Submitted: 31 May 2025. Accepted: 3 October 2025.

PROLOGUE

The church of Saint Anne in Trebizond stands, for various reasons, as a particularly fascinating monument of the Middle Byzantine Period. The significance of the church lies not only in its "archaistic" architectural features but also in the symbolic and religious messages conveyed through its inscribed spoliated relief, which was used as a lintel at the southern entrance. In the ensuing sections, the historical and conceptual framework of both the church and its relief will be explored from a multifocal perspective, starting with an in-depth topographical and historical examination of the monument throughout the centuries. This will be followed by an analysis of the interpretations that the local inhabitants and the state official Alexios may have attributed to the relief, as well as those proposed by Pontic and non-Pontic scholars from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century CE. Finally, the broader significance of the monument within the socio-political landscape of medieval and post-medieval Trebizond will also be examined, while a comparison will be drawn between the Church of Saint Anne and other monuments both within and beyond the kingship of the Romans.

THE LOCATION OF THE CHURCH IN TREBIZOND

The small Church of Saint Anne (Fig. 1), which typologically belongs to the category of three-aisled barrel-vaulted basilicas with clerestory and crypt,[1] was built just outside the walls of the middle city (Mesokastro) of medieval Trebizond, approximately 250 m to the northeast of its Eastern Gate (Tabakhane Kapısı).[2] From the Ottoman *takrir* "Kuyudu Kadimi Fihristi No. 29," dated to 1583 CE, we learn that the Church of Saint Anne was located in the quarter of Saint Basil (Mahalle-i Ayo Vasil),[3] a fact confirmed by later nineteenth- and twentieth-century CE authors.[4] This quarter took its name from the Church of Saint Basil, whose site was 100 m north of Saint Anne.[5] Moreover, we know that by the nineteenth century CE, Saint Anne belonged to the parish of Saint Basil, which was also called the "market parish," due to the bazaar that took place in the area.[6] It is no coincidence that even after the Greek-Turkish population exchange of 1923 CE and the abandonment of the Church of Saint Anne by the Christian Orthodox community, the name of the quarter and of the parish of Saint Basil were preserved, however indirectly, in the memory of the Muslim inhabitants of Trebizond. Thus, because of this particular remembrance, the Church of Saint Anne was renamed Küçük Ayvasıl Kilisesi, which translates as "the little Church of Saint Basil." Today, the Church of Saint Anne, surrounded by a cluster of newer apartment buildings, is located in the district of Çarşı, south of Kahramanmaraş Street and approximately 230 m northeast of the Tabakhane Camii.[7]

1 For further details on the church's architecture, see Selina Ballance, "The Byzantine Churches of Trebizond," *Anatolian Studies* 10 (1960): 154–55, https://doi.org/10.2307/3642433; Robert G. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford University Press, 2019), 437–38.

2 Chrysanthos, "Ē Ekklēsia Trapezountos," *Archion Pontou* 4–5 (1933): 374; Raymond Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins: Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galèsios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique* (Institut Francais d'Études Byzantines, 1975), 257.

3 Heath Ward Lowry, *The Islamization & Turkification of the City of Trabzon (Trebizond), 1461–1583* (The Isis Press, 2009), 121, 124, 131, 137–38; Parysatis Papadopoulou-Symeonidou, *Trapezous: ē polē sto fōs tou politismou tēs: istoria, koinōnia, mnēmeia, architektonikē* (University Studio Press, 2011), 106, 198.

4 Iōannēs Mēliopoulos, "To naidion tēs Agias Annēs," *Neos Poimēn: Mēniaion theologikon periodikon* 3, no. 5 (1921): 265. Mēliopoulos originally published his article in 1916 CE in the short-lived Trebizond-based journal Oi Komnēnoi, no. 17, which was not accessible to the present author. Minas Bijişkyan, *Pontos tarihi. Tarihin horona durduğu yer Karadeniz*, trans. Hrand D. Andreasyan (Çiviyazıları, 1998), 103.

5 Anthony Bryer and David Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos* (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1985), 1:218–19.

6 In this particular parish, according to Chrysanthos "Ekklēsia," 792, were also included the church of Saint Constantine, which was demolished by the Ottomans in 1880 CE, the church of the Evangelistria, and the remains of the monastery and church of Theodoros Gavras.

7 Bryer and Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments*, 218; Papadopoulou-Symeonidou, *Trapezous: ē polē sto fōs*, 197, 203.

FIG. 1

The southern facade of the Church of Saint Anne (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hagia_Anna_Trabzon.JPG, accessed 31.05.2025).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH

Saint Anne is one of the very few churches in Trebizond that can be dated with absolute precision, as a founding inscription is preserved on the lintel of its southern entrance (Fig. 2). The inscription names the founder and the year of its reconstruction: Ἀνενεόθι ὁ ναὸς τ[ῆς ἁγίας] | Ἄν[νη]ς ἐπὶ Βασιλεί[ου] Λέ[οντος καὶ] Ἀλε|ξάνδρου, στρατηγ[οῦ]ντος Ἀλε|ξίου, κ(αὶ) (πρωτο)σπαθ[αρίου] ἀνα[νεώ]||σαντος τὸν ναὼν ἔτ(ους) ,ϛτϙγ΄ / "The church of Saint Anne was renovated under Basil, Leo, and Alexander, during the generalship of Alexios, who, as *protospatharios*, also renovated the church in the year 6393."[8] From this inscription, we learn that in the year 884/885 CE, the Church of Saint Anne was rebuilt by the *strategos* of Chaldia and protospatharios Alexios during the co-reign of Emperor Basil I and his sons, Leo VI and Alexander. Although the historian Procopius informs us that several churches in Trebizond were renovated during the reign of Justinian (527–565 CE),[9] none of those buildings survive today, making Saint Anne the oldest standing church in the city.[10]

8 Gabriel Millet, "Les monastères et les églises de Trébizonde," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 19 (1895): 434, https://doi.org/10.3406/bch.1895.3650; Gabriel Millet, "Mission à Trebizonde en 1893. Étude détaillée de quelques églises," in *Byzantine Painting at Trebizond*, eds. Gabriel Millet and David Talbot-Rice (G. Allen & Unwin, 1936), 23, n. 1; Bryer and Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments*, 218.

9 Procopius, *Buildings*, trans. Henry Bronson Dewing and Glanville Downey, Loeb Classical Library (Harvard University Press, 1940), iii.7.1–3.

10 Ballance, "The Byzantine Churches," 142.

Nevertheless, the very object of the donation raises numerous questions, since the Church of Saint Anne, beyond its small size, was also located just outside the city walls. In 1819 CE, the Armenian-born scholar and traveler from Trebizond, Bijişkyan, was the first to propose the theory that Saint Anne had been built atop an earlier pagan temple.[11] A century later, the Trebizond-born I. Mēliopoulos,[12] in his attempt to explain the church's "unusual" location, offered a rather imaginative interpretation, suggesting that during Roman times there was a mausoleum on the site of Saint Anne, to which three apses and a bema were later added. At the same time, both G. Millet and D. Talbot-Rice accepted an earlier phase of the monument, which they dated to the sixth, seventh, or eighth century CE.[13] However, according to S. Ballance and to A. Bryer and D. Winfield, the Church of Saint Anne appears, from a morphological and architectural perspective, to have been constructed in a single phase, most likely replacing the earlier monument entirely from its foundations.[14] The existence of this monument is indicated primarily by the founding inscription of Saint Anne, which explicitly refers to the renovation of a church using the verbal forms "ἀνενεόθι" (was renovated) and "ἀνενεώσαντος" (who renovated). It is also highly likely that a part of the left leg of Saint Anne, which has been kept since 1686 CE at the skete bearing her name on Mount Athos, originated in Trebizond.[15] This relic may have been transferred within the walled city during periods of siege and hostile incursions—something we know happened in the case of the relics of Saint Eugenios.[16] Consequently, one can reasonably assume that, on the site where the Church of Saint Anne stands today, there likely existed an earlier church dedicated to the same saint in which some of her relics or other sacred artifacts were possibly kept.

During the rule of the Grand Komnenoi (1204–1461 CE), Saint Anne, being one of the oldest churches in the city, came to be regarded as a sacred place (*locus sanctus*) and was transformed into a funerary chapel for state and especially ecclesiastical officials, likely from the late thirteenth century until the early fifteenth century CE.[17] According to A. Rhoby,[18] the

11 Bijişkyan, *Pontos tarihi*, 104. This hypothesis was also expressed by: Periklēs Triantaphyllidēs, *Ē en Pontō ellēnikē phylē: ētoi ta Pontika ē prosetethēsan kai logoi tines en Trapezounti ekphōnēthentes* (ek tou typographeiou Laz. D. Villara, 1866), 50; Millet, "Les monastères et les églises," 444; Chrysanthos "Ekklēsia," 375; Chrēstos Samouilidēs, *Ē autokratoria tēs Trapezountas: Ta 257 chronia tou Ellēnikou Mesaiōnikou Kratous tōn 21 Komnēnōn autokratorōn tou Pontou (1204–1461)* (Ellēnika Grammata, 2007), 697. Samouilidēs' testimony in Chrēstos Samouilidēs, *Odoiporiko ston Ponto: taksidiōtiko* (Diogenēs, 1979), 50, from his journey to Trebizond in 1963 CE is particularly interesting. When he attempted to gather information about the Church of Saint Anne from locals during his visit, they responded—much to his surprise—that the church had been built in the time of the "Yunanlides" (Greeks) and not of the "Rum" (Romans), as the Turks usually referred to Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians. This information likely indicates that even for the Muslim inhabitants of Trebizond, the Church of Saint Anne was considered so ancient that its construction was attributed to the Greeks rather than the Romans.

12 Mēliopoulos, "To naidion," 266.

13 Millet, "Les monastères et les églises," 444; David Talbot-Rice, "Notice on Some Religious Buildings in the City and Vilayet of Trebizond," *Byzantion* 5 (1930): 57; David Talbot-Rice, "The Messel Expedition, 1929. A Survey of the Monuments," in *Byzantine Painting at Trebizond*, eds. Gabriel Millet and David Talbot-Rice (G. Allen & Unwin, 1936), 107. This view is also supported by Janin, *Les églises et les monastères*, 257.

14 Ballance, "The Byzantine Churches," 154; Bryer and Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments*, 219.

15 Eirini Panou, *The Cult of St Anna in Byzantium* (Routledge, 2018), 37–39. More specifically, the author suggests that Basil I was the first to transfer the relic of Saint Anne to Trebizond. However, this view contradicts the very act of renovation, which in itself presupposes the existence of a significant pre-existing monument on the same site.

16 John Lazaropoulos, *A Further Partial Collection from among the Saint's Numerous Miracles*, trans. Jan Olof Rosenqvist (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1996), 321, 323; Sofia Georgiadou, "Architecture and Statehood in Late Byzantium: a Comparative Study of Epiros and Trebizond" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015), 262–64, n. 855.

17 Millet, "Les monastères et les églises," 434; Chrysanthos, "Ekklēsia," 376; Bryer and Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments*, 218–19; Thomas Alan Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey: An Architectural and Archaeological Survey* (The Pindar Press, 1989), 2:74.

18 Andreas, Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Stein nebst Addenda zu den Bänden 1 und 2: Byzantinische Epigramme in Inschriftlicher Überlieferung*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historischen Klasse, Denkschriften (ÖAW) 474, Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung 35 (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014), 3.1–2:804–5. The inscription reads: Ἀπήκεν ἐκ γῆς ὁ χρυσοῦς οὗτος θύ(της), | ὁ δευτερεύων κ(αὶ) Γεώργιο(ς) μέγ(ας)· | καὶ τοῖς ἀΰλοις συναμιλλήθη νόοις | συνεῖν(αι) τούτοις κ(αὶ) βιωτεύειν ἅμα / "From the earth departed this golden priest, the Deutereuon and great Georgios; and he competed with the immaterial spirits to be with them and to live with them."

FIG. 2

The carved inscription on the lintel of the Church of Saint Anne (photo: David Hendrix/The Byzantine Legacy).

epigram of Georgios Deutereuon, dated to 1361/1362 CE and located in the northern recess between the old western entrance of the church and its northern pilaster, indicates that a high-ranking ecclesiastical official, most likely either a *protopapas* or an abbot, was buried at that spot. If this was indeed the case, it would indirectly suggest that the Church of Saint Anne probably belonged to a monastic complex within the city. It should be noted, however, that the name of Georgios does not appear in any other contemporary sources, and it is quite possible that he had been appointed directly by the Metropolis of Trebizond in the small Church of Saint Anne.

Unlike other churches in Trebizond, Saint Anne was never converted into a mosque during the Ottoman period (1461–1923 CE). Nevertheless, M. Bijişkyan[19] informs us that by the early nineteenth century CE, the church was in ruins and on the verge of collapse (Fig. 3). This situation changed drastically with the renovation of Saint Anne during the first decade of the twentieth century CE. It should be noted, however, that when D. Talbot-Rice visited the church in 1929 CE, many of the wall paintings and inscriptions inside were no longer visible—or had ceased to exist—having been covered by a thick layer of soot and dust.[20] This damage was caused primarily by fires lit inside the church by a Turkish family

19 Bijişkyan, *Pontos tarihi*, 104.

20 Talbot-Rice, "The Messel Expedition," 107.

6

FIG. 3

The southern facade of the Church of Saint Anne in 1893 CE, prior to its renovation (https://bibnum.explore.psl.eu/s/psl/ark:/18469/2q2js, accessed 31.05.2025).

who had taken up residence there after the 1923 CE population exchange[21] and, to a lesser extent, by the candles and oil lamps used by Christians.[22] From 2016–2022, after having remained in a semi-abandoned state for many decades, Saint Anne underwent extensive restoration and was converted into a cultural venue operated by the Municipality, while also functioning as a public heritage site open to visitors.[23]

THE INSCRIBED RELIEF AND ITS (RE)INTERPRETATIONS

On the lintel of the southern entrance of Saint Anne, a high-relief marble sculpture (Fig. 4)[24] has been embedded depicting two heavily worn figures. Between them, as previously mentioned, the founding inscription of the church is carved. This relief likely

21 Chrysanthos "Ekklēsia," 378.

22 Mēliopoulos, "To naidion," 277.

23 Papadopoulou-Symeonidou, *Trapezous: ē polē sto fōs*, 206; Parysatis Papadopoulou-Symeonidou, *Trapezous: ē polē stēn deisa tou metaschēmatismou tēs. Istoria, Koinōnia, Politikē, Dioikēsē, Architektonikē, Poleodomia, Politismos* (Ekdotikos Oikos Stamoulē, 2020), 129–30; Özlem Us, "Trabzon Azize Anna (Küçük Ayvasıl) Kilisesi" (MA thesis, Ordu University, 2023), 72. Disappointingly, during the recent restoration of Saint Anne, the joints and stones of its exterior surfaces were extensively cleaned, and all the ancient bricks of its windows were replaced with new ones.

24 This particular *spolium*, which is classified as an accentual spolium by Bente Kiilerich, "Antiquus et modernus: Spolia in Medieval Art—Western, Byzantine and Islamic," in *Medioevo: Il Tempo Degli Antichi*, ed. Arturo C. Quintavalle (Electa, 2006), 135, lacked any actual structural function.

originates from a Roman-period sarcophagus[25] and originally depicted a lance- and shield-bearing soldier on the left—whose shield appears to be of the *parma* type—and a winged Nike on the right.[26] It is also plausible that the Nike held a palm branch in her right hand, while in her left, she may have carried a laurel wreath. Most likely, during the renovation of the church, a small cross with expanding ends was carved directly above the figure of the armed soldier. It is important to note here that, through the engraving of the cross—a practice known in the modern literature as *sphragis* or *stigmata*[27]—a pagan relief or statue was sanctified and purified in order to be reused in a new Christian context, where it acquired new layers of meaning.[28] In this manner, the function of the relief as an affective object was reaffirmed through the addition of a Christian symbol, thus making it appear innocuous and non-malevolent to Christian viewers,[29] who, until its Christianization, would have in all likelihood believed that harmful demons inhabited it.[30]

According to C. Mango,[31] the placement of a pagan sculpture in such a prominent spot indirectly indicates that the sculpture had already been imbued by the inhabitants of Trebizond with a new symbolic meaning.[32] In addition, according to A. Eastmond,[33] the relief demonstrates how the past had already been recycled in the city to imperial benefit, while simultaneously functioning in an apotropaic manner. Although we do not know the exact reinterpretation of the scene, we can reasonably assume that, in the eyes of Christians, the winged Nike had been transformed into a winged angel,[34] while the male figure generally retained its military identity.

Given the widespread veneration of the Archangel Michael throughout Asia Minor from as early as Late Antiquity,[35] it seems quite likely that the inhabitants

25 Mēliopoulos, "To naidion," 283; Roger Stephen Sharp, "The Outside Image: a Comparative Study of External Architectural Display on Middle Byzantine Structures on the Black Sea Littoral" (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2010), 111. It is noteworthy that during Late Antiquity in western Asia Minor, and likely in other parts of the region, sarcophagi were not spoliated, in contrast to other funerary monuments, such as mausolea. According to Luke Lavan, "Memorial and Oblivion in Late Antiquity: the Testimony of Spolia in City Walls," in *Burial and Memorial in Late Antiquity: Thematic Perspectives*, ed. Luke Lavan (Brill, 2024), 1:389, n. 16, "This suggests an awareness of legal prohibitions or local traditions, alongside a pragmatic ability to bend the rules where possible." However, such reservations seem to have faded from the transitional period (seventh–eighth centuries CE) onwards as Roman society underwent a radical transformation.

26 Bryer and Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments*, 219. For a more recent (though somewhat laconic) description of the Nike figure, see Us, "Trabzon Azize Anna," 36. Nevertheless, the possibility should not be excluded that the armed male figure on the left originally depicted a gladiator of the hoplomachus type, since the helmet he wears—although heavily worn—closely resembles the distinctive *cassis crista*.

27 Troels Myrup Kristensen, "Miraculous Bodies: Christian Viewers and the Transformation of 'Pagan' Sculpture in Late Antiquity," in *Patrons and Viewers in Late Antiquity*, eds. Stine Birk and Birte Poulsen, Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity (ASMA) 10 (Aarhus University Press, 2012), 31, n. 3.

28 Aggelos Dellēvorias, "Interpretatio Christiana. Gyrō apo ta oria tou paganistikou kai tou christianikou kosmou," in *Eufrosynon: afierōma ston Manolē Chatzidakē*, ed. Euaggelia Kypraiou (Tameio Archaiologikōn Porōn kai Apallotriōseōn, 1991), 1:111–114; Helen Saradi, "The Use of Ancient Spolia in Byzantine Monuments: The Archaeological and Literary Evidence," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 3, no. 4 (1997): 403–4, 422–23, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12138-997-0008-4.

29 Kristensen, "Miraculous Bodies," 52.

30 Helen Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): 55–58, https://doi.org/10.2307/1291617, where relevant bibliography is also provided.

31 Cyril Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): 63–64, https://doi.org/10.2307/1291190.

32 This view is further supported by the fact that, during the placement of the relief on the lintel of Saint Anne, an earlier crack in the marble slab was repaired using stucco. This restoration highlights even more clearly the value that had already been attributed to the relief by the founder, Alexios.

33 Anthony Eastmond, *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond* (Ashgate, 2004), 42, 61.

34 For the gradual transformation of the pagan figure of Nike into the Christian angel in Early Byzantine art, see Elenē Chrysafē, *Oi aggeloi ōs melē tēs ouranias aulēs stēn technē tēs prōimēs kai mesēs vyzantinēs periodou* (Kentro Vyzantinōn Ereunōn, 2024), 55–58, 162–64, 166.

35 Cyril Mango, "St. Michael and Attis," *Deltion Tēs Christianikēs Archaiologikēs Etaireias* 12 (1986): 53, https://doi.org/10.12681/dchae.946; Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, "Culte et iconographie de l'archange Michel dans l'Orient byzantin: le témoignage de quelques monuments de Cappadoce," in *Études Cappadociennes*, eds. Catherine Jolivet-Lévy and Soo-Jeong Cho (Pindar Press, 2002), 413–14; Ine Jacobs, "Old Statues, New Meanings. Literary, Epigraphic and Archaeological Evidence for Christian Reidentification of Statuary," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 113 (2020): 819, https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1515/bz-2020-0035/html; Chrysafē, *Oi aggeloi*, 147–48, 150.

FIG. 4

The lintel relief above the southern entrance of the Church of Saint Anne (photo: David Hendrix / The Byzantine Legacy).

of Trebizond recognized in the relief of Saint Anne the features of this particular angel. As commander-in-chief of the celestial army at the Second Coming, Michael functioned both as a mediator between humans and God and as a psychopomp. Furthermore, during the reign of Basil I, the veneration of Michael saw a significant resurgence, as he became increasingly associated with imperial authority and was regarded as the protector of the kingship of the Romans.[36]

Comparable depictions of the archangels were also rendered on the gateways and facades of churches in Asia Minor, where they functioned as guardians and protectors. Characteristic examples include the reliefs of the Archangels Gabriel and Michael carved at the entrance to the western basilica of the monastic complex of Alahan in Cilicia (Fig. 5), dating to the late fifth century CE,[37] as well as the frescoes of the archangels at the entrance leading from the now-destroyed narthex to the main Church of Nikephoros Phokas—also known as Güvercinlik Kilisesi—in Çavuşin, Cappadocia, dating to 963–969 CE.[38]

The hypothesis that the angelic figure in the relief of Saint Anne represents the Archangel Michael can be

36 Jolivet-Lévy, "Culte et iconographie," 431–34.

37 Jacobs, "Old Statues, New Meanings," 819–24, fig. 4. According to the author, in certain cases, preexisting pagan images could potentially be reinterpreted as archangels.

38 Jolivet-Lévy, "Culte et iconographie," 434, n. 76, fig. 7.

FIG. 5

Relief of Archangel Michael from the entrance of the western basilica at Alahan in Cilicia (photo: Efkan Sinan).

further supported by examination of the now heavily deteriorated painted decoration inside the church. Specifically, on the northern recess of its western wall, an oversized wall painting of Archangel Michael was made in 1401/1402 CE (Fig. 6),[39] accompanied by a prayer by Savvas Karimis: Δέησις τοῦ δούλ(ου) τοῦ Θ(εο)ῦ Σάβα | τοῦ Καρίμι | ἔτους ,ϛϡι′ / "Prayer of the servant of God Savvas Karimis, years 6910."[40] This fresco was painted over an earlier depiction of Michael (Fig. 7) probably dating to the thirteenth or fourteenth century CE. It is quite likely that Karimis consciously chose to have the image of Archangel Michael repainted, being aware both of the local tradition surrounding the entrance relief and of the archangel's role as mediator and psychopomp.

However, the newly Christianized role of the soldier is less clear. If we accept the hypothesis that this particular sculpture had already acquired a new meaning for the Christian inhabitants of the city before the ninth century CE—or at least before the renovation of the church—we may conclude that the soldier relief was likely directly associated with Archangel Michael. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that, from a Christian perspective, the soldier depicted in the scene belonged to Michael's angelic army, which would ultimately defeat Satan's demonic forces at the Second Coming.[41] Although the soldier is not depicted with wings, it should be noted that in early Christian art, angels were often represented simply as ordinary humans.[42] A characteristic example is the depiction of the Sacrifice of Isaac on a Christian sarcophagus from the early fourth century CE in which the Archangel Gabriel appears as a beardless, wingless youth (Fig. 8).[43] Similar depictions of angels can be found up until the mid-sixth century CE, such as in the mosaic decoration of Saint Vitale in Ravenna (Fig. 9). Specifically, on the drum of the northern wall of the bema, we observe the Old Testament scene of the Hospitality of the three angels by Abraham. Notably, in contrast to the other angels depicted in the mosaic program, these particular figures are shown without wings.[44] According to E. Kitzinger,[45] the decoration of Saint Vitale appears to draw its iconographic models from a period "much earlier than the age of Theoderic." It is therefore quite reasonable to assume that in a church characterized by architectural "conservatism," the sculptural decoration would incorporate iconographic themes from the Early Byzantine Period.[46]

It is also entirely possible that the founder Alexios chose this particular relief to depict an episode from

39 Henry Finnis Blosse Lynch, *Armenia, Travels and Studies. The Russian Provinces* (Longmans, Green, and co., 1901), 1:30; Millet, "Mission à Trebizonde," 36. The identification with Archangel Michael rests largely on his depiction wearing a red *sakkos* and *loros*. Moreover, in his left hand, he holds a sphere that once bore a now-erased cross, while in his right, he carries some kind of scepter. The sphere also originally featured the painted monograms Φ(ῶς) Χ(ριστοῦ) Π(ᾶσιν) / "The Light of Christ for All."

40 Millet, "Les monastères et les églises," 436.

41 David Bentley Hart, trans., *The Revelation of John*, 2nd rev. (Yale University Press, 2023), 12.7-10; Jacobs, "Old Statues, New Meanings," 822–23.

42 Therese Martin, "The Development of Winged Angels in Early Christian Art," *Espacio, tiempo y forma. Serie VII, Historia del arte* 14 (2001): 16–18, https://doi.org/10.5944/etfvii.14.2001.2373; Glenn Peers, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium* (University of California Press, 2001), 21–23.

43 Friedrich D. Deichmann, Giuseppe Bovini, and Hugo Brandenburg, *Repertorium der christlichantiken Sarkophage* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1967), 1.1–2:35–36, no. 40, pl. 13.

44 Deborah Mauskopf-Deliyannis, *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 243–44, fig. 86. For additional examples of wingless angels from the third–sixth century CE, see Chrysafē, *Oi aggeloi*, 42–44, 47–52, figs. 1–2, 5–6, 11.

45 Ernst Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd–7th century* (Faber and Faber, 1977), 82.

46 Even in much later periods, the Greek-speaking Christians were able to recognize angelic features even in representations of anthropomorphic figures that were completely wingless. A characteristic example is a Roman sarcophagus with Dionysian scenes which was placed in the courtyard of the Metropolis of Mystras at an unknown date. When the Greek writer N. Kazantzakis observed this particular sarcophagus in 1937 CE, he reprimanded the elderly sacristan of the church, saying, "It doesn't go with the church at all! For shame! Don't you see? Who are those naked, dancing children?" To which she immediately replied, "They're little angels themselves. They're little angels, so don't be scandalized." For a more detailed examination of the aforementioned passage, see Amy Papalexandrou, "Conversing Hellenism: The Multiple Voices of a Byzantine Monument in Greece," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 19, no. 2 (2001): 237–39, 249, 251, https://doi.org/10.1353/mgs.2001.0023; Michał Bzinkowski, "Nikos Kazantzakis' Travelling: The Morea—Byzantium as an Ideological Construct or a Unique Source of Personal Inspiration?," *Eos* 111, no. 1–2 (2024): 215–16, https://doi.org/10.34616/e.2024.199.225.

FIG. 6

Depiction of Archangel Michael in the interior of the Church of Saint Anne (photo: Seçkin Evcim).

his own military career while simultaneously emphasizing the role of Archangel Michael as his personal protector on the battlefield. As *strategos* of the newly established frontier theme of Chaldia,[47] whose seat in the tenth century CE was referred to as Ikrita by the Iranian geographer Ibn al-Faqih—a term closely associated with the frontier soldiers "*akritai*"[48]—Alexios likely not only defended the eastern borders of Romanía but also took part in numerous raiding expeditions into the Caucasus and Mesopotamia.[49] Even the church's "akritic" location in relation to the topographical layout of the city may have carried a deeper symbolic meaning—intertwining the protection offered by the Church of Saint Anne to Trebizond as a whole with the particularly important

FIG. 7

Revealed fragment of the earlier fresco of Archangel Michael (photo: Seçkin Evcim).

47 More specifically, the theme of Chaldia, with Trebizond as its capital and the seat of its *strategos*, was established around the year 820 CE. By 824/825 CE, the first known *strategos* of the theme simultaneously held the titles of *strategos* and *doux*. For more information on the early years of the theme of Chaldia, see Bryer and Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments*, 182; Alexios Savvidēs, "Thema Chaldias," in *Ē Mikra Asia tōn thematōn: ereunes panō stēn geographikē physiognōmia kai prosōpographia tōn byzantinōn thematōn tēs Mikras Asias (7os–11os ai.)*, eds. Vasilikē Vlysidou et al. (Institouto Byzantinōn Ereunōn, 1998), 287–96; Alexios Savvidēs, "O vyzantinos Pontos stēn periodo apo ton 40 aiōna m.Ch. eōs tēn idrysē tou kratous tōn Megalōn Komnēnōn," in *O Vyzantinos Pontos (4os–15os aiōnes m.Ch.): istorikes symvoles*, ed. Alexios Savvidēs, Addendum 30 (Archeion Pontou, 2013), 19–20; Sergey Karpov, *Istoria tēs autokratorias tēs Trapezountas*, trans. Eugenia Kritsephskagia and Aggelikē Eustathiou (Ethniko Idryma Ereunōn, 2017), 80–83.

48 James Crow, "The Monastery of Christ the Saviour in Sourmaina and the Hagiographical Dossier of St Eugenios," in *After the Text: Byzantine Enquiries in Honour of Margaret Mullett*, eds. Liz James, Oliver Nicholson, and Roger Scott, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies 32 (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022), 289.

49 Karpov, *Istoria*, 81–82.

FIG. 8

Relief depiction of the Sacrifice of Isaac from a Christian sarcophagus (photo: Richard Stracke, https://www.christianiconography.info/sicily/sarc31551Pio.abrahamIsaac.html, CC BY-NC-SA 3.0, accessed 31.05.2025*).*

role played by the theme of Chaldia in defending the borders of Romanía.[50]

Having outlined a series of hypotheses regarding the interpretations that the inhabitants of Trebizond, as well as *strategos* and *protospatharios* Alexios, may have attributed to the relief of Saint Anne, it would be appropriate here to draw a comparison with another church built around the same time, also by a state official. In 873/874 CE, the *protospatharios* Leo founded the Church of the Dormition of the Virgin of Skripou in Boeotia, which is notably large in size and typologically belongs to the category of cross-in-square churches with a dome.[51] Neither Alexios and Leo neglected to mention Emperor Basil and his co-emperors at the time of the commission in their founding inscriptions, and they intentionally displayed *spolia* from earlier pagan monuments on the exterior of the churches. Furthermore, it seems that the founders intended to convey certain messages through the spolia, along with their founding inscriptions. More specifically, Alexios appears to place greater emphasis on his military rank, as indicated by the mention of his generalship (στρατηγ[οῦ]ντος) and by the depiction of an armed soldier on the inscribed relief. In contrast, Leo, although we know he also had military duties, emphasizes his cultured background and his place within the literate elite of the time.[52] This is particularly evident both through the use of dactylic hexameter in one of the four founding inscriptions and in the extensive use of *spoliated* masonry on the exterior walls of the church.[53]

Unfortunately, over the centuries and due to the natural erosion of the relief, the initial Christian interpretations of the sculpture appear to have been forgotten. Since then, several scholars of the monument have attempted to reinterpret the relief, relying at times on their personal knowledge and at other times on local traditions.[54] The first was the Trebizond-born M. Bijişkyan, who, in 1819 CE,[55] interpreted the heavily worn angelic relief as a winged female figure of pagan origin. A different interpretation of the relief was offered by S. Iōannidēs in 1870 CE,[56] who identified the figure as a woman with a fish tail, whom he regarded as a personification of the city of Trebizond. A similar

50 According to Crow, "The Monastery of Christ the Saviour," 298–299, while the theme of Chaldia may have had boundaries protected by fortified akritic castles, it lacked a truly defensible frontier, as the old Roman concept of frontiers had already become obsolete before the sixth century CE.

51 Amy Papalexandrou, "The Church of the Virgin of Skripou: Architecture, Sculpture and Inscriptions in Ninth-century Byzantium" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1998), 1:42–93.

52 Papalexandrou, "Conversing Hellenism," 242; Oscar Prieto-Domínguez, "On the Founder of the Skripou Church: Literary Trends in the Milieu of Photius," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013): 170, 177–80.

53 Papalexandrou, "The Church of the Virgin of Skripou," 141–55, 250–57.

54 In her article, Jacobs, "Old Statues, New Meanings," 817–18, 832, provides an in-depth analysis of the reinterpretation of sculptures that had already been Christianized.

55 Bijişkyan, *Pontos tarihi*, 104.

56 Savvas Iōannidēs, *Istoria kai statistikē Trpezounots* [sic] *kai tēs peri tautēn chōras ōs kai ta peri tēs entautha ellēnikēs glōssēs* (typografeion Vretos, 1870), 135–36.

FIG. 9

*Mosaic depicting the Hospitality of Abraham at San Vitale in Ravenna (*https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sacrifice_of_Isaac_mosaic_-_Basilica_San_Vitale_(Ravenna).jpg*, accessed 31.05.2025).*

view—though without the fish tail—was expressed by K. Papamichalopoulos in 1903 CE,[57] who also identified the military figure on the left as a "warrior." In contrast, H. F. B. Lynch, in 1901 CE,[58] argued that the relief at Saint Anne depicted a colossal seated figure alongside a shield-bearing soldier. Also noteworthy is I. Mēliopoulos' 1916 CE interpretation,[59] in which he considered the military figure on the left to be a "guard" and the angelic figure on the right to be a "nereid."

It is worth noting here that, according to a local Pontic tradition, Basil Digenis Akritis was buried very close to the city of Trebizond. Additionally, many Christian inhabitants of the former theme of Chaldia bore, during the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century CE, the surnames Akritidis, Akritopoulos,[60] and Akritas.[61] Moreover, in certain akritic songs featuring Digenis Akritis as the protagonist, Archangel Michael appears as a psychopomp and as a personification of death, visiting the hero at the moment of his passing.[62] Taking these traditions into account, as well as the possible survival of a folkloric memory regarding Trebizond's connection to the "akritai," one could cautiously suggest that, in the minds of the Christian inhabitants of the city, the relief may have represented the dying Digenis Akritis confronting

57 Kōnstantinos Papamichalopoulos, *Periēgēsis eis ton Ponton* (typografeion tou Kratous, 1903), 201.
58 Lynch, *Armenia, Travels and Studies*, 29–30.
59 Mēliopoulos, "To naidion," 283–84.
60 Iōannidēs, *Istoria kai statistikē*, 39.
61 Panaretos Topalidēs, *O Pontos ana tous aiōnes* (n. p., 1929), 82.
62 Michał Bzinkowski, "The Case of the Angels. The Relevance of the Research by Classical Scholar John Cuthbert Lawson (1874–1919) on Modern Greek Culture," *Classica Cracoviensia* 18 (2015): 99–105, https://doi.org/10.12797/CC.18.2015.18.04.

FIG. 10

Relief with flying winged angels from the katholikon of the Jvari Monastery in Georgia (Wachtang Beridse and Edith Neubauer, Die Baukunst des Mittelalters in Georgien vom 4. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert *[Union Verlag Berlin, 1980], fig. 30).*

the psychopomp Archangel Michael. Lastly, we should also mention the interpretation offered by the last Metropolitan of Trebizond, Chrysanthos (1913–1938 CE),[63] who identified in the angelic figure the features of a woman with a fish tail, which in his view represented a river or sea deity.

Similar placements of sculptures at church entrances and facades can be found both within, as we see in Cilicia and Cappadocia, and beyond the kingship of the Romans. One of the most notable examples is the relief with two angels placed in the relieving arch of the eastern entrance of the *katholikon* at the Monastery of Jvari in Georgia (Fig. 10). This relief, dated to the late sixth or early seventh century CE (586/587–604/605 CE), depicts two flying winged angels holding a circular mandorla in their hands. Within the mandorla, a cross is depicted, whose lower arm bears a foliated ornament.[64] It is also noteworthy that many angel reliefs carved into the entrances and facades of churches in Georgia, dating from the sixth/seventh–twelfth centuries CE, were often painted.[65]

63 Chrysanthos "Ekklēsia," 375.

64 Wachtang Beridse and Edith Neubauer, *Die Baukunst des Mittelalters in Georgien vom 4. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Union Verlag Berlin, 1980), 24–26, fig. 30.

65 Nina Iamanidze, "Painting the Stones: The Value of Color in Georgian Medieval Architectural Sculpture," in *Artists and Craftsmen on the Road. Georgian Medieval Architectural Sculpture in Interaction with Byzantine, Persian, Seljuk and Armenian Art*, eds. Nina Iamanidze and Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger (Anton H. Konrad Verlag, 2024), 66–78 and more specifically, see figs. 1–2, 5, 11–12.

FIG. 11

The likely painted section of the relief at the Church of Saint Anne (photo: David Hendrix/The Byzantine Legacy).

Similarly, the relief on the lintel of Saint Anne may also have been painted, as the section depicting the Nike/angel figure shows a noticeable color difference compared to that of the soldier (Fig. 11). Of course, it is also possible that this subtle discordancy is due to the patina of time rather than intentional pigmentation.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, we can argue that the relief under examination at Saint Anne was enriched over the centuries with diverse interpretations and layers of meaning, participating—with varying intensity—in the ever-changing social, political, and religious landscape of the city. Although we do not know the original interpretation that was assigned to the now-Christianized scene of this funerary relief, the hypothesis that it remained in continuous dialogue with the inhabitants of Trebizond throughout the ages seems both plausible and compelling. According to the view of art historian W. J. T. Mitchell, as interpreted and conveyed by D. Plantzos in his conceptually dense monograph on the epistemological reorientation of classical archaeology,[66] "the images that surround us engage in dialogue with us regardless of the creator's intentions: they possess a life of their own and are therefore capable of expressing autonomous moods and emotions—they desire, they command,

66 Dēmētrēs Plantzos, *Oi Archaiologies tou Klasikou. Anatheōrōntas ton Empeiriko Kanona* (Ekdoseis tou Eikostou Prōtou, 2014), 153, see n. 19 for the reference to W. J. T. Mitchell.

and ultimately, they assert themselves." Therefore, through this constant process of resignification, a polysemic palimpsest emerges in the form of a "living" spolium, where time, as well as contexts and meanings, are unimpededly manipulated.[67]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Platon Petridis and Giorgos Pallis for their valuable observations and comments. I am also grateful to David Hendrix, Seçkin Evcim, and Efkan Sinan for kindly providing me with several excellent photographs. An early version of this paper, entitled "Reinterprenting an Ancient Funerary Relief: The Inscribed Lintel at the Church of Saint Anne in Trebizond (884/885)," was presented on 10 April 2025 at the *44th Symposium on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Archaeology and Art of the Christian Archaeological Society*, held in Athens.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ballance, Selina. "The Byzantine Churches of Trebizond." *Anatolian Studies* 10 (1960): 141–75. https://doi.org/10.2307/3642433.

Beridse, Wachtang, and Edith Neubauer. *Die Baukunst des Mittelalters in Georgien vom 4. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*. Union Verlag Berlin, 1980.

Bijişkyan, Minas. *Pontos tarihi. Tarihin horona durduğu yer Karadeniz*. Translated by Hrand D. Andreasyan. Çiviyazıları, 1998.

Bryer, Anthony, and David Winfield. *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos*. Vol. 1. Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1985.

Bzinkowski, Michał. "The Case of the Angels. The Relevance of the Research by Classical Scholar John Cuthbert Lawson (1874–1919) on Modern Greek Culture." *Classica Cracoviensia* 18 (2015): 83–110. https://doi.org/10.12797/CC.18.2015.18.04.

Bzinkowski, Michał. "Nikos Kazantzakis' Travelling: The Morea—Byzantium as an Ideological Construct or a Unique Source of Personal Inspiration?." *Eos* 111, no. 1–2 (2024): 199–225. https://doi.org/10.34616/e.2024.199.225.

Chrysafē, Elenē. *Oi aggeloi ōs melē tēs ouranias aulēs stēn technē tēs prōimēs kai mesēs vyzantinēs periodou*. Kentro Vyzantinōn Ereunōn, 2024.

Chrysanthos. "Ē Ekklēsia Trapezountos." *Archion Pontou* 4–5 (1933): 1–904.

Crow, James. "The Monastery of Christ the Saviour in Sourmaina and the Hagiographical Dossier of St Eugenios." In *After the Text: Byzantine Enquiries in Honour of Margaret Mullett*, edited by Liz James, Oliver Nicholson, and Roger Scott, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies 32, 289–302. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022.

Deichmann, D. Friedrich, Giuseppe Bovini, and Hugo Brandenburg. *Repertorium der christlichantiken Sarkophage*. Vol. 1.1–2. Franz Steiner Verlag, 1967.

Dellēvorias, Aggelos. "Interpretatio Christiana. Gyrō apo ta oria tou paganistikou kai tou christianikou kosmou." In *Eufrosynon: afierōma ston Manolē Chatzidakē*, edited by Euaggelia Kypraiou, 1:107–123. Tameio Archaiologikōn Porōn kai Apallotriōseōn, 1991.

Eastmond, Anthony. *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond*. Ashgate, 2004.

Georgiadou, Sofia. "Architecture and Statehood in Late Byzantium: a Comparative Study of Epiros and Trebizond." PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015.

Hart, David Bentley, trans., *The Revelation of John*. The New Testament: A Translation. 2nd revised edition. Yale University Press, 2023.

Iamanidze, Nina. "Painting the Stones: The Value of Color in Georgian Medieval Architectural Sculpture." In *Artists and Craftsmen on the Road. Georgian Medieval Architectural Sculpture in Interaction with Byzantine, Persian, Seljuk and Armenian Art*, edited by Nina Iamanidze and Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger, 66–78. Anton H. Konrad Verlag, 2024.

67 Kiilerich, "Antiquus et modernus," 136.

Iōannidēs, Savvas. *Istoria kai statistikē Trpezounots [sic] kai tēs peri tautēn chōras ōs kai ta peri tēs entautha ellēnikēs glōssēs*. Typografeion Vretos, 1870.

Jacobs, Ine. "Old Statues, New Meanings. Literary, Epigraphic and Archaeological Evidence for Christian Reidentification of Statuary." *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 113 (2020): 789–836. https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1515/bz-2020-0035/html.

Janin, Raymond. *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins: Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galèsios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique*. Institut Francais d'Études Byzantines, 1975.

Jolivet-Lévy, Catherine. "Culte et iconographie de l'archange Michel dans l'Orient byzantin: le témoignage de quelques monuments de Cappadoce." In *Études Cappadociennes*, edited by Catherine Jolivet-Lévy and Soo-Jeong Cho, 413–46. Pindar Press, 2002.

Karpov, Sergey. *Istoria tēs autokratorias tēs Trapezountas*. Translated by Eugenia Kritsephskagia and Aggelikē Eustathiou. Ethniko Idryma Ereunōn, 2017.

Kiilerich, Bente. "Antiquus et modernus: Spolia in Medieval Art—Western, Byzantine and Islamic." In *Medioevo: Il Tempo Degli Antichi*, edited by Arturo C. Quintavalle, 135–45. Electa, 2006.

Kitzinger, Ernst. *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd–7th Century*. Faber and Faber, 1977.

Kristensen, Troels Myrup. "Miraculous Bodies: Christian Viewers and the Transformation of 'Pagan' Sculpture in Late Antiquity." In *Patrons and Viewers in Late Antiquity*, edited by Stine Birk and Birte Poulsen, Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity (ASMA) 10, 31–66. Aarhus University Press, 2012.

Lavan, Luke. "Memorial and Oblivion in Late Antiquity: the Testimony of Spolia in City Walls." In *Burial and Memorial in Late Antiquity: Thematic Perspectives*, edited by Luke Lavan, 1:383–393. Brill, 2024.

Lazaropoulos, John. *A Further Partial Collection from among the Saint's Numerous Miracles, The Hagiographic Dossier of St Eugenios of Trebizond in Codex Athous Dionysiou 154: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Commentary and Indexes*. Translated by Jan Olof Rosenqvist. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1996.

Lowry, Ward Heath. *The Islamization & Turkification of the City of Trabzon (Trebizond), 1461–1583*. The Isis Press, 2009.

Lynch, Finnis Blosse Henry. *Armenia, Travels and Studies. The Russian Provinces*. Vol. 1. Longmans, Green, and co., 1901.

Mango, Cyril. "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): 55–75. https://doi.org/10.2307/1291190.

Mango, Cyril. "St. Michael and Attis." *Deltion Tēs Christianikēs Archaiologikēs Etaireias* 12 (1986): 39–62. https://doi.org/10.12681/dchae.946.

Martin, Therese. "The Development of Winged Angels in Early Christian Art." *Espacio, tiempo y forma. Serie VII, Historia del arte* 14 (2001): 11–29. https://doi.org/10.5944/etfvii.14.2001.2373.

Mauskopf-Deliyannis, Deborah. *Ravenna in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Mēliopoulos, Iōannēs. "To naidion tēs Agias Annēs." *Neos Poimēn: Mēniaion theologikon periodikon* 3, no. 5 (1921): 261–85.

Millet, Gabriel. "Les monastères et les églises de Trébizonde." *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 19 (1895): 419–59. https://doi.org/10.3406/bch.1895.3650.

Millet, Gabriel. "Mission à Trebizonde en 1893. Étude détaillée de quelques églises." In *Byzantine Painting at Trebizond*, edited by Gabriel Millet and David Talbot-Rice, 21–92. G. Allen & Unwin, 1936.

Ousterhout, G. Robert. *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands*. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Panou, Eirini. *The Cult of St Anna in Byzantium*. Routledge, 2018.

Papadopoulou-Symeonidou Parysatis. *Trapezous: ē polē sto fōs tou politismou tēs: istoria, koinōnia, mnēmeia, architektonikē*. University Studio Press, 2011.

Papadopoulou-Symeonidou, Parysatis. *Trapezous: ē polē stēn deisa tou metaschēmatismou tēs. Istoria, Koinōnia, Politikē, Dioikēsē, Architektonikē, Poleodomia, Politismos*. Ekdotikos Oikos Stamoulē, 2020.

Papalexandrou, Amy. "The Church of the Virgin of Skripou: Architecture, Sculpture and Inscriptions in Ninth-century Byzantium." PhD diss., Vol. 1, Princeton University, 1998.

Papalexandrou, Amy. "Conversing Hellenism: The Multiple Voices of a Byzantine Monument in Greece." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 19, no. 2 (2001): 237–54. https://doi.org/10.1353/mgs.2001.0023.

Papamichalopoulos, Kōnstantinos. *Periēgēsis eis ton Ponton*. Typografeion tou Kratous, 1903.

Peers, Glenn. *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium*. University of California Press, 2001.

Plantzos, Dēmētrēs. *Oi Archaiologies tou Klasikou. Anatheōrōntas ton Empeiriko Kanona*. Ekdoseis tou Eikostou Prōtou, 2014.

Prieto-Domínguez, Oscar. "On the Founder of the Skripou Church: Literary Trends in the Milieu of Photius." *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013): 166–91.

Procopius of Caesarea. *Buildings*. Translated by Henry Bronson Dewing and Glanville Downey. Loeb Classical Library. Harvard University Press, 1940.

Rhoby, Andreas. *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Stein nebst Addenda zu den Bänden 1 und 2: Byzantinische Epigramme in Inschriftlicher Überlieferung*. Vol. 3.1–2. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historischen Klasse, Denkschriften (ÖAW) 474. Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung 35. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014.

Samouilidēs, Chrēstos. *Odoiporiko ston Ponto: taksidiōtiko*. Diogenēs, 1979.

Samouilidēs, Chrēstos. *Ē autokratoria tēs Trapezountas: Ta 257 chronia tou Ellēnikou Mesaiōnikou Kratous tōn 21 Komnēnōn autokratorōn tou Pontou (1204–1461)*. Ellēnika Grammata, 2007.

Saradi-Mendelovici, Helen. "Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): 47–61. https://doi.org/10.2307/1291617.

Saradi, Helen. "The Use of Ancient Spolia in Byzantine Monuments: The Archaeological and Literary Evidence." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 3, no. 4 (1997): 395–423. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12138-997-0008-4.

Savvidēs, Alexios. "Thema Chaldias." In *Ē Mikra Asia tōn thematōn: ereunes panō stēn geographikē physiognōmia kai prosōpographia tōn vyzantinōn thematōn tēs Mikras Asias (7os–11os ai.)*, edited by Vasilikē Vlysidou, Eleōnora Kountoura, Stelios Lampakēs, Tēlemachos Louggēs, and Alexios Savvidēs, 287–97. Institouto Vyzantinōn Ereunōn, 1998.

Savvidēs, Alexios. "O vyzantinos Pontos stēn periodo apo ton 4o aiōna m.Ch. eōs tēn idrysē tou kratous tōn Megalōn Komnēnōn." In *O Vyzantinos Pontos (4os–15os aiōnes m.Ch.): istorikes symvoles*, edited by Alexios Savvidēs, 11–47. Addendum 30. Archeion Pontou, 2013.

Sharp, Stephen Roger. "The Outside Image: a Comparative Study of External Architectural Display on Middle Byzantine Structures on the Black Sea Littoral." PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2010.

Sinclair, Alan Thomas. *Eastern Turkey: An Architectural and Archaeological Survey*. Vol. 2. The Pindar Press, 1989.

Talbot-Rice, David. "Notice on Some Religious Buildings in the City and Vilayet of Trebizond." *Byzantion* 5 (1930): 47–81.

Talbot-Rice, David. "The Messel Expedition, 1929. A Survey of the Monuments." In *Byzantine Painting at Trebizond*, edited by Gabriel Millet and David Talbot-Rice, 95–177. G. Allen & Unwin, 1936.

Topalidēs, Panaretos. *O Pontos ana tous aiōnes*. N. p., 1929.

Triantaphyllidēs, Periklēs. *Ē en Pontō ellēnikē phylē: ētoi ta Pontika ē prosetethēsan kai logoi tines en Trapezounti ekphōnēthentes. Ek tou typographeiou Laz.* D. Villara, 1866.

Us, Özlem. "Trabzon Azize Anna (Küçük Ayvasıl) Kilisesi." MA thesis, Ordu University, 2023.