

CLAUDIA RAPP

BROTHER-MAKING
IN LATE ANTIQUITY
AND BYZANTIUM

Monks, Laymen, and Christian Ritual



Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium

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*Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium: Monks, Laymen,
and Christian Ritual*
Claudia Rapp



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Discharging a debt of gratitude, as a wise person once said, is the only debt that makes one richer. The following pages are a small recompense for the generosity of spirit that I have encountered in the course of this project. If they appear deficient, I hope they will at least present enough material for others to carry the study of this fascinating phenomenon further.

Oxford, on the Feast of Saint Catherine,
November 25, 2014

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations for journals and reference works follow the conventions employed in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. The following are most frequently used:

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
AB	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
AP	<i>Apophthegmata Patrum</i>
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
CFHB	<i>Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae</i>
Dmitrievskij	A. Dmitrievskij, <i>Opisanie liturgitseskich rukopisej, vol. 2</i> (Kiev, 1901; reprint Hildesheim, 1965).
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
EEBS	<i>Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinôn Spoudôn</i>
JÖB	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
JThS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
OCA	<i>Orientalia Christiana Analecta</i>
OCP	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>
ODB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i>
PMBZ	<i>Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit</i>
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
REB	<i>Revue des Études Byzantines</i>

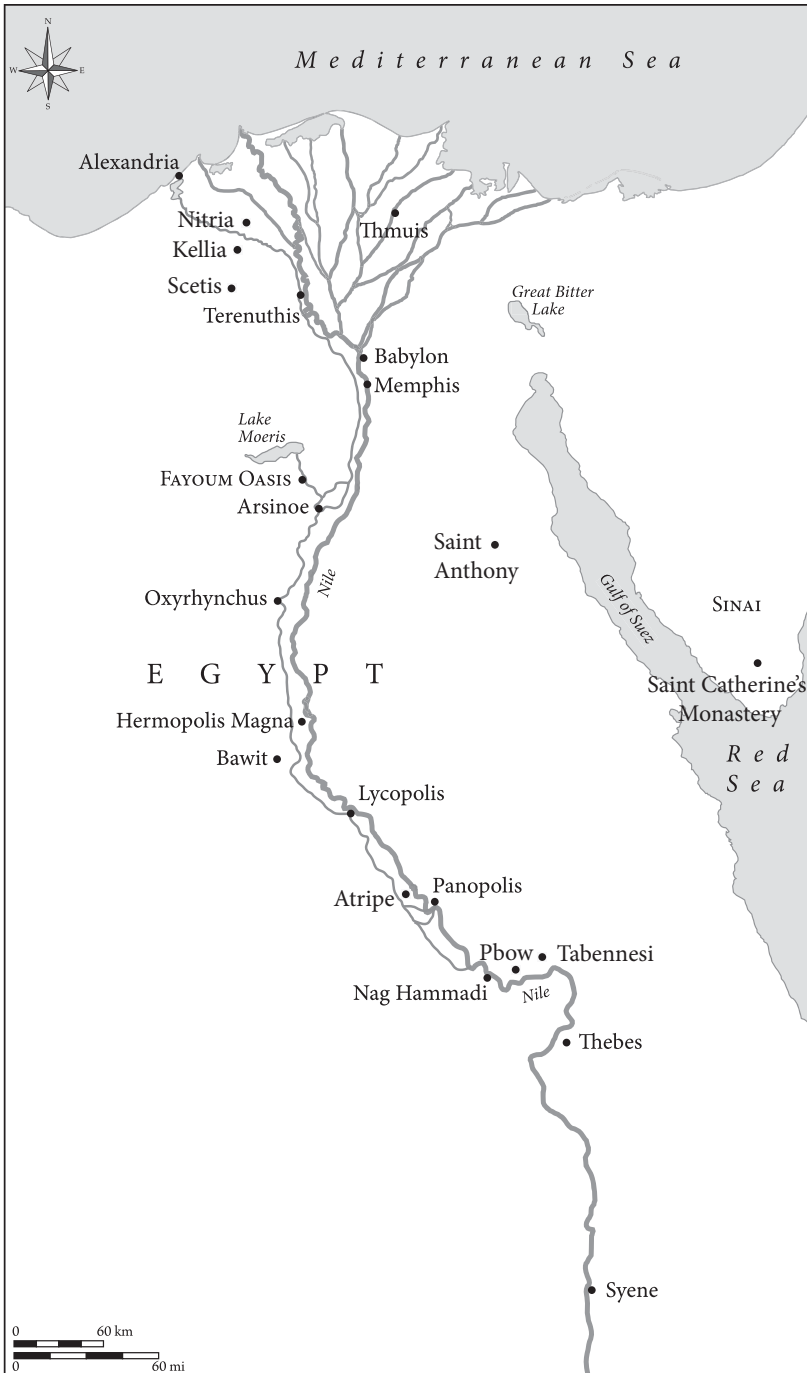
SPELLING AND TRANSLITERATION

Consistence in rendering into English personal names and place names that originally appeared in Greek is impossible to achieve without causing offence to eye and ear of any but the most specialized readership. I have used anglicized forms when they are common (Basil, not Basileios; Heraclius, not Herakleios; Athens, not Athena), and transliterated forms otherwise (Nikolaos, Niketas).

For the transliteration of words or sequences of words, I have adopted the intuitive system of “Greeklish,”¹ with the further addition of a circumflex for long vowels (ô for omega, ê for eta). The only exception is *adelphopoiesis*, which is treated as an anglicized word. On this basis, it will be easy to reconstruct the original Greek for those who are familiar with the language, while those who are not will at least be able to read and recognize relevant words and expressions.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization_of_Greek.

MAPS



MAP 1 Relevant sites in late antique Egypt.



MAP 2 Relevant sites in Byzantium and the medieval Mediterranean.

Introduction

The entry point for this study is the prayers for brother-making (*adelphopoi-esis*), a uniquely Byzantine way to create a relation of ritual kinship. They are first attested in a manuscript of the late eighth century and remain a prominent feature in the liturgical tradition of medieval Byzantium and beyond. Brother-making of this kind, performed by a priest in a church, was commonly practiced among Byzantine men, sometimes also between men and women and between women and women, at all levels of society, not just at the court and among the aristocracy. Yet, there was some degree of uncertainty and unease about this relationship. Church leaders and imperial legislators, while aware of its popularity and fully cognizant of their own collusion, made every effort to distance themselves from it.

This raises an interesting set of questions that take us to the inner workings of Byzantine society. The purpose and application of *adelphopoi-esis* can be studied within three large, and partially overlapping, contexts: within the context of male-male emotional and sexual relations, as a way to formalize a partnership; within the context of ritual kinship strategies, as a way to expand one's family circle; and within the context of Byzantine Christianity, as a way for the church to exercise influence and control. All of these considerations will come to bear, to varying degrees, in the following pages.

Since this material has the potential of becoming a minefield for scholarly disagreement, it may be wise to spell out my own interest in the subject rather than leave it to others to second-guess my motivations. In the twenty years since I first paid attention to the ritual, my own approach to the topic has somewhat evolved. At that time, my abiding interest in the role that living holy men and spiritual leaders, as opposed to dead saints, played in the creation and shaping of communities led me to investigate the role of the baptismal sponsor as

a spiritual guide and companion of the new Christian-in-the-making during the early centuries, when baptism was sought by adults as a result of personal conversion. I was particularly curious about the responsibility and obligations that went along with baptismal sponsorship, whether in the spiritual realm, in the form of assistance to help a penitent sinner regain the path of virtue, or in the social role of the godfather, after child baptism had become the norm. In the Byzantine tradition, the godfather is known as the “coparent” (*synteknos*) of the biological father, and godparenthood (*synteknia*) was, after marriage, the second important strategy to expand one’s kin group in a way that was recognized by the church. Analogous considerations were at work in brother-making, which was a third strategy of ritual kinship, the least onerous of the three with regard to the way it was concluded and the consequences for the next generations. I argued this case in a paper presented in December 1994, at the American Philological Association meeting in Atlanta, entitled “A Different Kind of Parenthood: Baptismal Sponsorship in Late Antiquity.” John Boswell’s book *Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe* (UK title: *The Marriage of Likeness: Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe*) had appeared just a few months earlier, and it seemed clear to me that the evidence he had assembled for *adelphopoiesis* in Byzantium offered ample scope for more detailed study. It emerged that Brent Shaw, a Roman historian, who was also present at the conference in Atlanta, and Elizabeth Brown, a historian of medieval France, were at that time also working on ritual brotherhood in their own areas of specialization, and the result of our extensive collaboration was the “Symposium” of three articles, with a long introduction, in the journal *Traditio*, published in 1997.¹

Since its publication, Boswell’s book has become something of a beacon for some, and a lightning rod for others, in the current discussion over the legal institution and church blessings of gay marriage. The number of responses among scholars and by the concerned and interested public has been accordingly extensive. Tracing them would be a task in its own right, a task that others have made theirs.²

Among the general flurry of reviews and responses that Boswell’s book generated, I was not alone in concluding that the *adelphopoiesis* ritual in Byzantium was not created with the purpose of sanctioning and sanctifying

¹ E. A. R. Brown, “Ritual Brotherhood in Ancient and Medieval Europe: A Symposium. Introduction,” *Traditio* 52 (1997), 261–83; Brown, “Ritual Brotherhood in Western Medieval Europe,” *Traditio* 52 (1997), 357–81; B. Shaw, “Ritual Brotherhood in Roman and Post-Roman Societies,” *Traditio* 52 (1997), 327–55; C. Rapp, “Ritual Brotherhood in Byzantium,” *Traditio* 52 (1997), 285–326.

² Paul Halsall has devoted an entire website, last updated in April 2007, to Boswell’s work and the scholarly and popular responses, positive and negative, it continues to elicit: *People with a History: An Online Guide to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Trans* History. John Boswell Page*. <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/index-bos.asp>. There is now even a Wikipedia article on “*adelphopoiesis*.” It focuses largely on critiques of Boswell’s book: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adelphopoiesis>.

homosexual relationships, as he seemed to suggest, although I stand firm in my conviction that this evaluation of the historical evidence does in no way undermine the legitimacy of seeking recognition for same-sex partnerships in current societies.

In recent years, my attention has been captured by the ecclesiastical ritual and the need to explain its existence. Why was it created in the first place? What are the possible antecedents for prayers to invoke God's blessing on a relationship of two men? Just as the context of spiritual guidance, including baptism, led to the establishment of the role of the baptismal sponsor, which later developed into the social role of the godfather, was there perhaps a similar pattern for *adelphopoiesis*? This led me back to the social world of early monasticism, where recent studies, augmented by archaeological evidence, have shown that, in addition to living as a hermit or in a large organized community, living arrangements for two or three people were not uncommon. This third option, identified as semi-eremitic or semi-anchoretic monasticism, offers the obvious context for the development of prayers to bless two men as they embark on their spiritual journey with mutual support.

The structure of this book is determined by this line of inquiry. It is divided into six large chapters.

The first chapter gives a brief introduction to social structures in Byzantium, beginning with kinship and the family and the possibilities for the extension of kinship through marriage, godparenthood, or adoption. The focus then moves to male-male relations cast within the framework and language of brotherhood. The second part of the chapter deals with friendship both as a social institution and as an affective relationship, and its interpretation by Christian authors. It concludes with a discussion of homosociability in Byzantium and the history of the study of homosexuality inasmuch as it is relevant to the present study. Throughout this chapter, comparative material from other Christian medieval societies is adduced as necessary in order to highlight the particular features of Byzantine brother-making.

The second chapter, augmented by Appendices 1 to 3 at the end, presents the manuscript evidence for the brother-making ritual beginning with the late eighth century, and elucidates the context of its use based on the history of the manuscripts up to the sixteenth century. The prayers were equally available in Constantinople as the countryside, in parish churches as well as monasteries, and seem to have found particular resonance among orthodox Christians in Southern Italy, perhaps as a way to cement friendly relations with neighbors of other faiths. Further insights about the intent of the ritual—or rather, its lack of similarity with the marriage ritual—are gleaned from a discussion of the liturgical gestures and from an analysis of the prayers.

The third chapter addresses the core issue, the question of the origin of the church ritual for *adelphopoiesis*. It makes a case for early monasticism

of the fourth to seventh centuries as the original context for the practice of blessing a bond between two men, making them “brothers.” This entails a detailed study of the different aspects of a close relationship between two monastic “brothers”: living arrangements, prayer assistance, and the sharing of spiritual capital in the process of penance, as well as emotional perils and sexual temptations. Here, the first of four case studies, on the *Life of Symeon the Fool*, is inserted. It depicts the relationship, told by a hagiographical master narrator of the seventh century, between two casual acquaintances who became monks together and were joined to each other through a prayer ritual. Such brotherhoods of two men continued to be a feature of Orthodox monasticism throughout the Byzantine centuries and beyond, as the conclusion of this chapter shows.

The fourth chapter investigates the practice of *adelphopoiesis* among men of the world. It begins by tracing the expansion of *adelphopoiesis* beyond the immediate social context of monasticism, based on a cluster of hagiographical texts of the seventh century. The use of *adelphopoiesis* by monks to generate connections to the outside world was regarded with great concern by monastic reformers. By the middle Byzantine period, *adelphopoiesis* between laymen was well entrenched as one of several available social networking strategies to expand one’s kin group. A second case study presents the relation between the future emperor Basil I and John, the son of the wealthy lady Danelis, in the mid-ninth century, as an example for the employment of the ritual for the purpose of social advancement.

The fifth chapter moves from the description of individual relationships to a study of the prescriptions regarding *adelphopoiesis* by imperial law-givers and ecclesiastical rule-makers. They are unanimous in acknowledging the widespread practice of *adelphopoiesis* through the participation of priests, yet signal their awareness of the dangers it represents, in their view, for the crossing of boundaries between kin groups, social classes, gender, ethnicities, and religions. This is brought to the fore in the third case study, the legal rulings and advice of a bishop-administrator in thirteenth-century Epiros, Demetrios Chomatenos, which shows how men and women of the late Byzantine period interpreted the ritual through their own use.

The sixth chapter presents by way of a postscript further, select evidence for the use of *adelphopoiesis* as a boundary-crossing strategy in post-Byzantine times in the regions of Orthodox Christendom. It is here that the thesis of the book becomes most apparent: Byzantine *adelphopoiesis* was motivated by Christianity and depended on the collaboration of priests, yet did not enjoy official recognition by the church. It can thus serve as an example of a social institution that owed its existence to the people who engaged in it. Institutional control followed behind social practice and was largely confined to first offering and then monitoring the ceremonial.

This book, then, is a very deliberate attempt to treat *adelphopoiesis* within a particular explanatory context. While I make no apologies for that, I have tried to present all the evidence available to me at this point. Others will no doubt draw their own conclusions or add further facets to the picture presented here. My hope is, at the very least, to have contributed to the exploration of Byzantium as a society whose dynamism was to a substantial degree anchored in Christian belief and practice.

Social Structures

A. Brotherhood Language

Brother-making is a literal translation of the Greek noun *adelphopoiesis*. Other variants are *adelphopoiia*, *adelphopoiêsia*, and the related adjective *adelphopoiêtos* for a man who has become another man's "brother." This label is attached to the ritual at the center of this book, which created a lasting bond between two men with expectations of social proximity and mutual support, but without any legal consequences for subsequent generations.

The use of brotherhood language implies an ideal of equality,¹ whereas in existing sibling relations, in all societies, there is always a hierarchy between the elder, stronger and the younger, weaker. Real siblings also compete for their parents' love. In foundation myths and popular tales, sibling rivalry is at least as prominent as brotherly support: In the Hebrew Bible, Esau and Jacob are one example of fraternal strife where both brothers survive, while the competition between Cain and Abel results in fratricide, as does the foundation story of Rome involving Romulus and Remus. Positive New Testament models propagated by later Christian authors are the apostles James and John, the sons of Zebedee, and Philip and Bartholomew; both these pairs are also invoked in the ritual prayers for *adelphopoiesis*.

Brother and sister appellations for men and women who are not siblings have a long tradition in the ancient world, in social and religious contexts.

¹ This finds its application in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, adopted December 10, 1948: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.

Their meaning may be stable, analogous to a title or honorific, or fluid, depending on context. In direct address, they were often used in a particular situation as a relational term, to express notional equality or a claim to affective familiarity, regardless of their kinship relation.² This included husbands and wives or same-sex lovers.³ Men and women in early Christian communities employed the language of brother- and sisterhood as a way to emphasize the equality between them. 1 Peter 2:17, for example, reminds the congregation to “love the brotherhood.” The erasure of social hierarchies in early Christianity had its root in the twofold belief that all Christian men and women shared a common descent from God the Father, and that they shared brotherhood with Christ through the Incarnation.⁴

The goal of the life of Christian prayer and even more so of the ascetic and monastic life, a mystical experience of complete union with Christ, was sometimes conceived as a form of brotherhood. An experienced spiritual guide in the eleventh century gave this advice to his followers: There are seven different stances that one can assume when praying to God, depending on one’s own spiritual state: the lowliest is that of a condemned criminal, then as a debtor, next as a slave, as a paid laborer, as a friend, as a son, and finally, best of all, a position of *adelphopoiêsia* with Christ, when one’s own sins are no longer an obstacle to approaching Him freely.⁵ Here, the gradual diminution of an individual’s distance and inferiority to God is articulated with reference to legal, economic and kinship frameworks, culminating in brotherhood as a relation between equals.

Baptism was the primordial way to join this “family” of Christians and to regard God as one’s father, with the resulting claim on all other fellow Christians within the church as brothers and sisters in Christ. The concept of *hyiothesia*, being adopted as a child of God, had great purchase in early Christianity, with the attending horizontal consequences among the fellow faithful.⁶ A “brother” is anyone who shares in the Christian faith, as long as he is baptized, whether a lay man or a monk. John Chrysostom observed: “For what is it that creates brotherhood? The bath of rebirth (in baptism), the ability to call upon God as Father.”⁷ The two most prominent Christian founding

² E. Dickey, “Literal and Extended Use of Kinship Terms in Documentary Papyri,” *Mnemosyne* 67, no. 2 (2004), 131–76.

³ J. Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe* (New York, 1994), 53–107, passim.

⁴ As stated, for example, by Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* 2. 62, PG 26, col. 280A.

⁵ Nicholas Kataskepenos, *La Vie de saint Cyrille le Philôte, moine Byzantin (†1110)*, ch. 2, ed. and trans. E. Sargologos, *Subsidia Hagiographia*, 39 (Brussels, 1964), 73. This passage is discussed by P. Halsall, “Early Western Civilization under the Sign of Gender: Europe and the Mediterranean (4000 BCE–1400 CE),” in *The Blackwell Companion to Gender History*, ed. T. A. Meade and M. E. Wiesner-Hanks, 285–306 (Cambridge, 2005), 299.

⁶ J. M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of Hyiothesia in the Pauline Corpus* (Tübingen, 1992).

⁷ John Chrysostom, *Homilia 25 in Hebraeos*, PG 63, col. 177A.

fathers, Peter and Paul, are thus often depicted in a fraternal relation of equality (which could also have political undertones), sometimes facing each other, as is prominently seen on gold glass representations of the fourth and fifth centuries.

Monasticism is the one distinct social arena within a Christian framework where kinship terms (“father,” “mother,” “brother,” “sister”) predominate to the present day.⁸ Fraternal language in monasticism implies an essential relation of equality. John of the Ladder, one of the great theorists of monastic spirituality in seventh-century Sinai, includes “co-brotherhood” within the community as one of the key monastic virtues in a spiritual alphabet that he recommends for memorization.⁹ Monastic brotherhood often has a vertical component, when a group of disciples gathered around the same spiritual guide and leader whom they regarded as their “father” or *abba*. The same social structures modeled on paternal and fraternal kinship relations were a feature of the philosophical schools of antiquity and Late Antiquity. Another context for the employment of brotherhood language are confraternities, religiously motivated associations of lay people. All of these contexts will be treated in greater detail below.

Being in a relation to one or several others that is assumed to be equal and equitable and hence conceptualized as fraternal is one matter. *Becoming* a brother is another. It is the act of brother-making that is of central interest to this study, as reflected in the literal meaning of *adelphopoiesis* (*adelphos* = “brother,” *poieô* = “I make”). In the pages that follow, I present the evidence for *adelphopoiesis* in Byzantium and speculate about the origin of the concept, the social practice, and the ritual. The sources sometimes use variants such as *adelphopoiia*, *adelphopoiêsia*, or the adjective *adelphopoiêtos*. Since I am interested in the ritual and its application in Byzantine society, I assume that the employment of these terms to describe a relation between two men also implies that they had been blessed by the prayers.

This linguistically conservative approach trains the focus on a sound basis of evidence, but also entails the exclusion of potentially relevant material on a broader scale. It means that I have considered only those additional instances where a relation is described as displaying all the signs of a close bond between men that would indicate the ritual of brother-making. Tell-tale characterizations are expressions such as the monastic or theological inflection “spiritual brother” (*pneumatikos adelphos*), or the legal term “brother by arrangement” (*thetos adelphos*), accompanied by an indication that this relation originated between the two men involved¹⁰ and there is mention of a mutual agreement

⁸ For a recent comprehensive study, see V. Vuolanto, “Family and Asceticism: ‘Continuity Strategies in the Late Roman World,’” PhD diss., Tampere, 2008. I am grateful to the author for providing me with a copy of his work.

⁹ John Climacus, *Scala Paradisi* (*The Ladder of Divine Ascent*), PG 88, col. 1017, line 14.

¹⁰ This excludes the “brother by arrangement,” whom one acquires when one’s father adopts a male child.

and a lasting bond. Other forms of affirming a brotherhood bond, such as the exchange of blood, or the swearing of an oath—gestures that are often used together, and sometimes with the further addition of an invocation or a prayer—will be considered only if they are relevant to *adelphopoiesis* in the stricter, ritual sense of the word.

In the pages that follow, I explore the whole range of social constellations that form the context and backdrop for our understanding of *adelphopoiesis*. I begin with kinship relations in Byzantium, then linger on confraternities and sworn brotherhoods, and end with examples of brotherhood compacts from the medieval West.

B. Kinship and the Family

Ritual brotherhood follows the model of biological relations. Notional equality is one defining factor. The other is the creation of a legitimate framework within which ease of access is secured. Byzantium was a society where the boundaries between private and public were clearly delineated, at least for the prosperous classes, where space was accordingly gendered and women had very little mobility outside contexts that were defined by either family or church. It was a society where loyalty was a precious commodity, and survival and prosperity depended on support systems. The extended family or kin group was the basic social unit that offered security. In addition to marriage, several strategies were available to expand the kingroup through the careful selection of suitable men and women: adoption, godparenthood, and brother-making.¹¹ It is important to understand their similarities of purpose but difference in application and scope.

Marriage

Marriage united a man and a woman in a socially and legally recognized relationship, with the expectation that they would live in the same household and produce legitimate offspring.¹² As a legal instrument, marriage in Byzantium had a long tradition that was defined by the precepts of Roman law. Christian

¹¹ E. Patlagean, "Christianisme et parentés rituelles: Le domaine de Byzance," *Annales ESC* 33 (1978), 625–36; English translation: "Christianization and Ritual Kinship in the Byzantine Area," in *Ritual, Religion and the Sacred: Selections from the Annales, Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, ed. R. Foster and O. Ranum, 81–94 (Baltimore, MD, 1982).

¹² A. Laiou, *Marriage, amour et parenté à Byzance aux XIe–XIIIe siècles*, Travaux et mémoires; Monographies, 7 (Paris, 1992); Laiou, *Women, Family and Society in Byzantium*, ed. C. Morrison and R. Dorin (Farnham and Burlington, VT, 2011); H. Hunger, "Christliches und Nichtchristliches im byzantinischen Eherecht," *Österreichisches Archiv für Kirchenrecht* 18 (1967), 305–25; reprinted in Hunger, *Byzantinistische Grundlagenforschung* (London, 1973). For a general treatment of

families may have requested an optional blessing by a priest, but it was only in the ninth century that the ecclesiastical ritual for engagement and marriage was fully developed and that it acquired legal force.

Most women and men in Byzantium were married at one point in their lives, with the possible exception of nuns, monks, and eunuchs. This is true also for the men who engaged in brother-making. Since marriage resulted in the joining of two families, it was the male heads of these families who made it their task to identify a suitable partner for their daughters and sons and to conduct the necessary negotiations. Byzantium was a society where women were expected to bring a dowry into the marriage, while the payment of a bride price by the groom is not attested consistently. If it was offered, it was of a lower value than the dowry. Especially at the highest levels of the aristocracy, including the imperial family, where the rights to large amounts of property were at stake, marriages were a matter of serious diplomacy. Marriage had significant consequences for both families. The exclusive right of primogeniture was not applied in Byzantium, so all the children born to the couple could expect to inherit their parents' property, in varying proportions.¹³ Beyond the nuclear family itself, marriage had repercussions for the extended kin group of both husband and wife in terms of determining the future choice of marriage partner. Marriage with a close relative was regarded as incest and strictly prohibited. In the interpretation of Roman law, and its continuation in Byzantium, this meant that marriages were prohibited up to the seventh degree of consanguinity.¹⁴ This affected not only descendants, but also ascendants, so that for example the wife's uncle was not allowed to marry the husband's niece. Such regulations encouraged exogamy on a wide scale, but also had the effect that Byzantine legal experts were frequently consulted in unclear cases.

There was a general expectation that aristocratic families would cast their net of familial ties very widely, and marriage was an obvious way to expand their network. Some rulers became famous for their use of family relations in the service of internal and foreign politics. The founder of the Komnenian dynasty Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118), for example, himself the offspring of a union between members of two different clans, married into yet a third kingroup. Five of his nine children were daughters, and had between them a total of six marriages to scions of prominent families. His daughter Theodora became the grandmother of the subsequent dynasty of the Angeloi. Although

marriage in the middle ages, see J. Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge, 1983).

¹³ A. Laiou, "Family Structure and the Transmission of Property," in *A Social History of Byzantium*, ed. J. Haldon, 51–75 (Chichester, 2009); reprinted in Laiou, *Women, Family and Society in Byzantium*.

¹⁴ Laiou, "Introduction," in *Mariage, amour et parenté à Byzance aux XIe–XIIIe siècles*, 9–20, with a useful diagram on 14.

marriages of members of the imperial family to foreigners were deliberated upon with special care still in the tenth century and accompanied by some anxiety, they became increasingly common in later centuries, especially after the Crusades had brought new neighbors to Byzantium's western and southern borders.

Godparenthood (*synteknia*)

Extension of the kin group could be achieved not only through marriage, but through ritual kinship resulting from baptism. Here, the biological father of a child would select a godparent of the same sex as his daughter or son, who would lend her or his voice to the infant in baptism and take responsibility for the child's Christian upbringing. This relationship is called in Greek "co-parenthood" (the literal sense of *syn* = "together with," *teknon* = "child," i.e., sharing a child in common), the godfather is known as the *synteknos*. The primary relation of importance here is that between the biological father and the godfather of the child. The two men were expected to remain in close contact also at other times and to lend each other mutual loyalty and support. The English designation of "godfather" does not bring out this important facet as well as the German *Gevatter*, the Italian *padrino*, the Spanish *compadre*, or the Modern Greek *koumbaros*. Modern anthropologists thus prefer the term *compadrazgo*. In contrast to marriage, which has a long history, this was a relation that was developed entirely within a Christian framework.¹⁵

Synteknia, like marriage, results in a relationship of extended kinship. It allows free movement of the two men between their two households and the standing invitation to participate in family feasts—occasions to gain access to the female family members who were otherwise sheltered from the eyes of strangers, with all the dangers to their virtue that this might entail. The godparent's responsibility taken on at baptism usually also extended to the moment of marriage of the godchild, when the *synteknos* took on the role of best man. In the Orthodox tradition, this meant the responsibility of holding the wedding crowns during the marital church ceremony. On the grounds that the spiritual relationship created at baptism is at least as strong as a blood relationship, *synteknia* carried the same incest prohibitions as marriage and affected the choice of marriage partners for the descendants. It did not, however, have any effect on the inheritance of property. While the social benefits and legal consequences of joining two families were the same as for marriage, the economic ones were more limited.

Extensive studies by Evelyne Patlagean and Ruth Macrides have drawn attention to the way in which *synteknia* functioned as a supplemental strategy

¹⁵ Pace G. Herman, "Le parrainage, l'hospitalité et l'expansion du Christianisme," *Annales ESC* 52, no. 6 (1997), 1305–38.

for the extension of kinship, often used in conjunction with marriage ties between two families.¹⁶ Some emperors carried the potential to create or strengthen ties of loyalty to an extreme, especially when the child awaiting baptism was the firstborn son and designated successor within a dynasty.¹⁷ The first haircut of a child could have a similar initiatory function, and was often performed in conjunction with baptism. It involved an analogous array of participants who were honored with receiving some of the child's hair. The emperor Basil I celebrated the hair-clipping ritual of his second son, Leo (who would later succeed him as Leo VI) with the participation of military men from the capital and from the provinces. Their numbers were so large that the handkerchiefs in which they received the boy's hair stretched "from the chancel barrier of the said chapel (of St. Theodore) as far as the portico of the Chrysotriklinos."¹⁸

There is one area in which *synteknia* was employed as a hierarchical, paternal relationship and that is in Byzantine interactions with foreign leaders who accepted Christianity and sought baptism.¹⁹ A case in point is the baptism of queen Olga of Kiev in the mid-tenth century, which paved the way for the Christianization of Rus'. It took place in Constantinople and the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos himself served as her godparent.

Adoption

Another instrument to extend one's immediate kin group was adoption. Filial adoption was usually motivated by the desire to gain an heir. It had a long tradition in Roman law and was used in late Roman and Byzantine society as an inheritance strategy.²⁰ Adoption as a legal instrument was "christianized" with a church ceremony at the same time as marriage, in the early ninth century.²¹ The age of the adopted son was irrelevant, which facilitated the integration of adolescent or adult men into one's family. It is difficult to

¹⁶ Patlagean, "Christianisme et parentés rituelles"; R. J. Macrides, "The Byzantine Godfather," *BMGs* 11 (1987), 139–62; reprinted in Macrides, *Kinship and Justice in Byzantium, 11th–15th Centuries* (Aldershot, 2000); and more generally, L. Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950–1100* (Cambridge, 2004), 85–98.

¹⁷ G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003); first published in French as *Empereur et prêtre: Étude sur le "césaropapisme" byzantin* (Paris, 1996), 45–47.

¹⁸ Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De ceremoniis* 2. 23, trans. A. Moffatt and M. Tall, *Constantine Porphyrogenetos, The Book of Ceremonies*, 2 vols. (Canberra, 2012), 2: 622.

¹⁹ On this topic, see most recently W. Brandes, "Taufe und soziale / politische Inklusion und Exklusion in Byzanz," *Rechtsgeschichte / Legal History* 21 (2013), 75–88.

²⁰ R. Macrides, "Kinship by Arrangement: The Case of Adoption," *DOP* 44 (1990), 109–18; reprinted in Macrides, *Kinship and Justice in Byzantium*.

²¹ Leo VI the Wise, *Novella* 24, ed. P. Noailles and A. Dain, *Les Nouvelles de Léon le Sage: Texte et traduction* (Paris, 1944).

gauge how common filial adoption was in Byzantium. It was definitely not entirely arcane, nor was it limited to men who were married. The legislation of Leo VI explicitly allowed childless women and eunuchs to adopt.²² Adoptions were surprisingly frequent in Byzantine high society and court circles, a case in point being the adoption by the emperor Michael III “the Drunkard” (r. 842–67) of Basil, who shared in his feasts and other leisure pursuits and would succeed him on the throne. They also had their use in foreign politics, as in the case of Bela III, the king of Hungary who was adopted by emperor Manuel I Komnenos (r. 1143–80) as a political move.

Fraternal adoption is a less straightforward issue. The *Codex Justinianus* repeats a rescript of Diocletian that mentions its practice in the border regions, but declares it to be invalid within the empire.²³ It does not seem to have been widespread, and the Church took no interest in it. Byzantine theorists of family relations declared it a conceptual impossibility, because it is not possible to “make” a brother for oneself. The only means to acquire a brother as a result of adoption, they explained, is indirect, if one’s father adopts another son. The few narrative sources from Late Antiquity that mention fraternal adoption are at pains to relegate it to the border regions of the empire. It is invoked as an explanatory device for practices such as peace-making under oath, the exchange of blood or of arms, or male-male sex.²⁴

C. Other Forms of Brotherhood and the Significance of Oaths

The kin group was a natural point of reference. In classical antiquity, honored and admired teachers were regarded as “fathers,” their disciples and followers as their “sons,” and thus “brothers” among themselves. Such language signals belonging to a group and at the same time establishes a threshold and boundary that separate this particular group from others. Belonging has its privileges and obligations. It may be an inherited status, but can also be acquired or bestowed. The dividing line can be crossed through a more or less formal act of acceptance or through rituals of initiation. This applies to individual instances of filial and fraternal adoptions as acceptance into a family as much as to the co-optation into larger groups that are conceived as brotherhoods, which it is now time to discuss.

In Late Antiquity, brotherhood terminology was ubiquitous and often vague. Members of Roman associations, such as burial societies or religious clubs, called each other “brother” or referred to the collective membership

²² Leo VI, *Novella* 26 and 27.

²³ *Codex Justinianus* 6.24.7, repeated in the *Basilika* 35.13.17, a compilation of the ninth century (see below, chapter 5).

²⁴ Shaw, “Ritual Brotherhood in Roman and Post-Roman Societies.”

of their association as a “brotherhood.”²⁵ The address “brother” was used to denote a relation of particular closeness, regardless of whether this affection really existed or was merely the product of wishful thinking. The papyrus documentation of pre-Christian and late antique Egypt yields ample evidence for the use of brotherhood language. Husband and wife addressed each other as “brother” and “sister”—a peculiarity of Egypt that may well have its basis in the marriage between siblings or close kin. Holders of the same office would call each other “brother.” A person of inferior status could address a superior of whom he was asking a favor as “lord and brother [*kyrios* or *despotês kai adelphos*].”²⁶ The appellation “brother” could thus also express wishful thinking by staking a claim to equality.

Equality and agreement (*homonoia*), along with friendship (*philia*) and justice (*diakaiotês*) are the intangible values that the earliest brotherhood agreement attested for the Greek world aims to generate. This occurred in Sicily at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third century BCE and is attested in a famous inscription. Apparently, the city of Nakone had suffered strong divisions, and now a carefully calibrated representational system was devised to bring together members of the opposing factions. These men are referred to as “elected brothers [*adelphoi hairatoi*].” The entire process of brother-making (*adelphothetia*) was sealed with a religious ceremony, in the form of a sacrifice of a white goat, that would be repeated annually.²⁷

Colleagues and Brothers

The basic assumption of equality between brothers meant that brotherhood designations were often encountered among people who engaged in the same profession or shared a common goal. Interestingly, the merchant associations and guilds in Byzantium do not seem to have used brotherhood language. The tautological expression “co-brother” (*synadelphos*) was, however, frequently used between high-ranking clergymen, as can be seen, for example, in the letters of John Apokaukos.²⁸ It is still used in modern Greek to denote a colleague.

²⁵ See esp. P. M. Fraser, *Rhodian Funerary Monuments* (Oxford, 1977), 58–70.

²⁶ F. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden* (Berlin, 1925), s.v. *adelphos*, col. 19–20.

²⁷ For a discussion of this text, including an English translation, see N. Loraux, *The Divided City: On Memory and Forgetting in Ancient Athens* (New York, 2002; first published in French, 1997), 197–228. Edition by D. Asheri, based on work by G. Nenci, in “Materiali e contributi per lo studio degli otto decreti da Entella,” *Scuola Normale Superiore, Annali Classe di Lettere e Filosofia* 12, no. 3 (1982), 771–1103, at 776–7, with further discussion on 1040–45 and 1055–67. See also Decreti di Entella VII (Nenci), IG XIV, III Nenci: <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/main>.

²⁸ John Apokaukos used this term with preference for Bonditzes and Ximaras, see *Letters* 57, 74, 76, 81, 100. Also Theophylaktos of Ohrid, *Letter* 61.65, ed. P. Gautier, CFHB 16, no. 2 (Thessaloniki,

Something like corporate solidarity has also been postulated for the eunuchs who formed a distinct social group at the imperial court. On occasion, this translated into joint enterprises: two eunuchs purchased a property outside Rome together, and two other eunuchs made arrangements to share the same tomb, whether out of economic considerations or because of personal attachment remains unclear.²⁹ These are interesting cases of the pursuit of shared interest similar to the known instances of *adelphopoiesis*, even though they do not employ brotherhood language.

The environment par excellence where corporate solidarity and a strong *esprit de corps* were articulated within an exclusively male context was the military. The challenges of warfare, far removed from one's family and kin group, at a time when one's life was constantly on the brink and survival depended on the assistance of others, provided a natural seedbed for homosocial and homophilic relations. It is a well-known phenomenon at all times in history that long after their discharge, veterans experience greater closeness with their mates from the trenches than with their families.³⁰ A prominent example from ancient Greece are the Theban soldiers, discussed at length by Boswell and Davidson.³¹ Within this group, an older and a younger fighter formed pairs who remained close both on the battle lines and in the camp. Fraternal language, however, is absent from the description of these relationships.

In the Byzantine army, brotherhood rhetoric is surprisingly rare. An exception is the *Handbook on Military Strategy* by the general-turned-emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (ca. 912–69), which placed great emphasis on the small

1986). Note also the frequent instances of *synadelphos* in the *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*.

²⁹ M. McCormick, "Emperor and Court," in *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 14: *Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, AD 425–600*, ed. A. Cameron, B. Ward-Perkins, and M. Whitby (Cambridge, 2008), 152.

³⁰ Dick Bowen, a British veteran who had participated in the D-Day landings in 1944 that paved the way for the Allied victory over Hitler's Germany despite devastating casualties, has visited the gravestones on Gold Beach in Normandy every year since then. Pointing to the endless row of grave markers, he explained to a reporter: "These are all my mates. These and these and these." John Lichfield, "All the Dead are my Mates," *Independent on Sunday*, June 7, 2009, 6. Oberstleutnant Philipp von Boeselager (1917–2008) describes in his memoirs the steps that led to his participation in the plot of July 20, 1944, to kill Hitler. In this environment, where loyalty and secrecy were a matter of life and death, his most intimate relation was with his brother Georg, who rose to the rank of colonel of the cavalry. Georg had concluded a pact with three other friends to ensure their burials on German soil, whatever the effort. Philip eventually discharged this obligation on behalf of his brother. After the death of Karl von Wendt in Rzhev in Romania in 1942, he carried his body, in a specially outfitted map box, for eighteen months in order to fulfill his promise. P. von Boeselager, with F. and J. Fehrenbach, *Valkyrie: The Plot to Kill Hitler* (London, 2009), 168–70; originally published in French as *Nous voulions tuer Hitler: Le dernier survivant du complot du 20 juillet 1944* (Paris, 2008).

³¹ J. N. Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love: A Bold New Exploration of the Ancient World* (New York, 2007); published in the United Kingdom as *The Greeks and Greek Love: A Radical Reappraisal of Homosexuality in Ancient Greece* (London, 2007).

unit of the *bandon*, where men who spent all their waking hours together were bound by ties of “kinship and friendship.”³² Nikephoros put his own advice into practice during the Arab siege of Chandax in Crete, when he addressed his soldiers as “brothers and co-fighters.”³³

That the *adelphopoiesis* ritual could be adapted for such a purpose within a military environment, at least in post-Byzantine times, is suggested by the version of the prayers in a single manuscript of the sixteenth century (Appendix 1, no. 59). It assumes that three men are involved in creating the brotherhood bond and, instead of invoking Biblical figures as exemplars, it mentions a triad of military saints, Demetrios, George, and Theodore.³⁴ In Byzantine art, these three are usually depicted in Roman military costume, either on horseback or on foot, individually or in varying constellations, in groups of two, three, or four, sometimes more. Demetrios is often shown together with George, while George frequently appears together with Theodore, who was believed to be his biological brother. The cult of military saints accompanied the imperial revival of the tenth century when Byzantium registered increasing success on the battlefield. A systematic evaluation of the evidence would be a great *desideratum* of art historical scholarship. Suffice it to mention here two iconographic types of particular interest. The first shows two military saints either facing each other or facing the viewer and above them a bust of Christ who extends his arms in blessing over both of them in a gesture usually known from depictions of married couples.³⁵ Equally striking are those post-Byzantine icons that show two military saints, George on the viewer’s left and Demetrios on the right, each on his horse with his arms around the other’s

³² E. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon’s Teeth: Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century* (Washington, DC, 1995), 38–39.

³³ Theophanes Continuatus, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838), 478. I thank Ioannis Stouraitis for this reference.

³⁴ A possible parallel occurs in the Coptic tradition, where a group of three military men of different regional origins, from Anatolia, Arabia, and Persia, is venerated as martyrs of the Diocletianic Persecution. In the narrative, they variously address one another as “brother,” “friend,” and “buddy, comrade” (*socius*): *Martyrium S. Theodori, Orientalis nuncupati, fortis I. Christi martyris, et sociorum eius martyrum, quos dominus ad eundem martyrii agonem invitavit, scilicet S. Leontii Arabis, ac beati Panygiridis e Persarum gente*, in I. Balestri and H. Hyvernât, *Acta Martyrum*, CSCO Scriptores Coptici 3, no. III/1 (Paris, 1908), 30–46.

³⁵ George and Theodore on a Steatite plaque now in Berlin, Staatliche Museen, cf. I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, *Byzantine Icons in Steatite* (Vienna, 1985), pl. 49 (no. 100). George and Demetrios on a sardonyx cameo in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris, cf. E. Babelon, *Catalogue Camées* (1897), pl. XL (342), as mentioned in the *Princeton Index of Christian Art*. Byzantine emperors in the ninth and tenth centuries, when the empire was engaging in military confrontation along its eastern and northern frontiers, placed greater emphasis on military saints. See M. White, *Military Saints in Byzantium and Rus, 900–1200* (Cambridge, 2013), 64–93, esp. 85 for martyr saints in military costume being depicted in groups of two or three, and P. L. Grotowski, *Arms and Armour of the Warrior Saints. Tradition and Innovation in Byzantine Iconography (843–1261)* (Leiden and Boston, 2010), 104–23, on the imperial encouragement of the veneration of warrior saints.

shoulders. Demetrios leans toward George, their cheeks touching, their halos converging, and their glance no longer frontally directed at the viewer.³⁶

Religious Confraternities

Byzantium does not yield particularly rich evidence for confraternities, but they are attested at various moments. Their formation was usually religiously motivated. They were part of the web of relations in a Christianized society in which the Church provided the framework and eventually attempted to control all forms of organization, even if they were spontaneously formed at the initiative of individuals.³⁷ The earliest instances were the *philoponoi* in fourth-century Egypt, but soon such charitable lay associations were also known in Constantinople, under the name of *spoudaioi*.³⁸ A confraternity of men in ninth-century Constantinople acted as a kind of burial society. It was a form of grass-roots organization of the economically and socially disadvantaged who, by pooling their scant resources, were able to provide for each other what, individually, they would not have been able to afford, a decent Christian burial. No paupers' burial in a mass grave for them. The men in this "brotherhood" could be certain that there would be a coffin and a proper funerary cortège to accompany them to their last resting place in a designated and marked grave. The membership obligations did not extend beyond the act of burial. There is no mention of prayers offered on behalf of dead members, comparable to the manner that the *memoria* of the deceased was

³⁶ In 1771, Ioannes the son of Athanasios, son of a family of painters and himself a prolific creator of icons and murals, painted an icon of the Dormition of the Virgin for the church of the Koimesis of Archimadreo in Ioannina which includes in the center of the lower panel a depiction of Saints George and Demetrios, in close embrace, but each on his own horse. On the painter, see E. Drakopoulou, *Hellènes zôgraphoi meta tèn halôsê (1450–1850)*, vol. 3 (Athens, 2010), 333–37. The same iconography is also present, with slight variations, in an icon in the Church of Hagios Nikolaos in the village of Makrino in the Zagori region. I am grateful to Christos Stavrakos for sharing this information with me.

³⁷ H. Leclercq, "Confréries," *Dictionnaire d'archéologie et de liturgie chrétienne*, vol. 3, pt. 2 (Paris, 1914), cols. 2553–60, offers evidence, including two inscriptions from sixth-century Pisidia, for early Byzantine lay associations whose members were known as *spoudaioi* or *philoponoi*. The most recent overall treatment, with further references, is J. Baun, *Tales from Another Byzantium: Celestial Journey and Local Community in the Medieval Greek Apocrypha* (Cambridge, 2007), 371–85.

³⁸ S. Pétridès, "Spoudaei et Philopones," *Échos d'Orient* 7 (1904), 341–48; H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 138–39; E. Wipszycka, "Les confréries dans la vie religieuse de l'Égypte chrétienne," *Proceedings of the Twelfth International Congress of Papyrology, Ann Arbor, 13–17 August 1968*, ed. D. H. Samuel, 511–25 (Toronto, 1970); reprinted in Wipszycka, *Études sur le christianisme dans l'Égypte de l'antiquité tardive*, *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 52 (Rome, 1996); P. Horden, "The Confraternities of Byzantium," in *Voluntary Religion*, ed. W. J. Shiels and D. Wood, 25–45, *Studies in Church History* 23 (Oxford, 1986); E. J. Watts, *Riot in Alexandria: Tradition and Group Dynamics in Late Antique Pagan and Christian Communities* (Berkeley, 2010).

maintained by confraternities in the Latin West and written down in German medieval manuscripts known as “Verbrüderungsbücher.”³⁹

This was not the only kind of confraternity in Constantinople. Equally motivated by Christian charity, but this time directed to others beyond the group, several laymen formed a confraternity at the public baths that were maintained by various churches, to assist the sick and those in need.⁴⁰ A similar kind of confraternity is implied in the priestly prayers of unknown date that are preserved in a manuscript copied in Constantinople in 1027 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Coislin 213; Appendix 1, no. 8). The “brothers” in this group regularly experienced ritual purification in spirit and body, as they stood, naked, in the bath associated with the Blachernae complex dedicated to the Mother of God. The cohesion among this brotherhood was enforced by their joint prayers for those in their group who had died, and for those who were absent, the latter being mentioned by name. The men were expected to embrace each other at two moments in the proceedings. The manuscript even preserves the ritual for the acceptance of new members, the “Prayer to make a brother with regard to the holy bath.” It invokes God’s blessing for the new member’s future service to the weak and the sick.⁴¹ These prayers document a charitable organization of dedicated laymen who formed close bonds of spiritual responsibility for one another, even beyond death. The mention of their own need of purification and the repeated embrace leaves ample room for speculation about the homosocial aspect of their gatherings. In addition to the care of the sick and the dead, confraternities in Constantinople and elsewhere dedicated themselves to the cultivation of particular acts of worship. In the capital, a religious confraternity took care of an icon of the Mother of God (Theotokos) in the Chalkoprateia church. This “service of the brothers” is mentioned in a sermon that was composed in the late tenth or early eleventh century.⁴² A similar practice was observed and described in Constantinople in the eleventh and fifteenth centuries. There are no Byzantine sources for this, only the reports by Western visitors. They

³⁹ G. Dagron, “‘Ainsi rien n’échappera à la réglementation’: État, église, corporations, confrères: À propos des inhumations à Constantinople (IVe–Xe siècle),” in *Hommes et richesses dans l’Empire byzantin*, ed. V. Kravari, J. Lefort, and C. Morrison, 155–82 (Paris, 1991). The statutes of a professional association of Christian men who provided burial and other forms of assistance to each other and celebrated banquets together survives in Syriac, probably from the pre-Islamic period: S. Brock, “Regulations for an Association of Artisans from the Late Sasanian or Early Arab Period,” in *Transformations of Late Antiquity: Essays for Peter Brown*, ed. P. Rousseau and M. Papoutsakis, 51–62 (Farnham and Burlington, VT, 2009). For the West, see J. Autenrieth, D. Geuenich, and K. Schmid, *Das Verbrüderungsbuch der Abtei Reichenau*, MGH, Libri memoriales et necrologia, n.s. 1 (Hanover, 1979).

⁴⁰ P. Magdalino, “Church, Bath and Diakonia in Medieval Constantinople,” in *Church and People in Byzantium*, ed. R. Morris, 165–88 (Birmingham, 1990).

⁴¹ Text in Dmitrievskij, *Euchologia*, 1042–52, *Euchè eis to poièσαι adelphon eis to hagion lousma*, 1051.

⁴² E. Dobschütz, “Maria Romaia: Zwei unbekannte Texte,” *BZ* 12 (1903), 173–214, at 201–02.

commented on the intriguing and colorful sight of men and women forming a weekly procession to accompany with psalmody an icon of the Virgin Hodegetria (“who shows the way”, i.e., by pointing with her hand to the Christ child in her lap) from one church to another where it was to remain until its solemn relocation the following week.⁴³

Groups of pious men and sometimes women dedicated to religious service are also attested outside Constantinople. In eleventh-century Thebes, at that time a prosperous city thanks to the silk industry that made this region an attractive target for foreign raids, a number of women and men, some of them clerics, were joined in the confraternity of Saint Mary of Naupaktos for the common purpose of worship, prayer assistance in times of illness and need, and collective responsibility for burial and commemoration. Their original membership list of 1048 is preserved in a manuscript copy of 1089 and contains the names of clergy, laymen, and women. They called themselves an *adelphotês* (“brotherhood”) and declared their intention to provide for one another in illnesses and funerals, to lend each other prayer assistance, and to avoid strife.⁴⁴ In Epiros, a manuscript copied in 1225 in the region of Ioannina contains a list of names that follows the request for commemoration. Thirty-nine people are mentioned, a quarter of them are religious (priests, monks, a nun), the rest women and men in equal proportion, and several of the names are of Slavic origin. Günter Prinzing made a convincing argument for identifying this group as a religious confraternity, although the manuscript entry lacks any designation of this group, and hence also any kinship language.⁴⁵

The people in these lists were far removed from the splendor of the imperial palace or the fine dwellings of the aristocracy. They are the kind of women and men of middling status who feature as nameless bystanders or as part of anonymous crowds in the narratives of Byzantine historians. They appear more frequently, often equally anonymously, in hagiographical accounts, where they are identified by their respective pathology—the man with a hernia, the woman with a breast tumor—as they sought healing from a holy man or at a famous sanctuary. These religious confraternities attest to people’s resourcefulness in forming associations based on ability and need. They are the same kind of people for whom the prayers in the *euchologia* (prayer books) were written and performed. And it is not too far-fetched to assume that in addition to getting married and acting as godfathers, the men in these communities also exercised the option of forging ties of *adelphopoiesis* to their mutual advantage.

⁴³ K. N. Ciggaar, “Une description de Constantinople traduite par un pèlerin anglais,” *REB* 34 (1976), 211–67; Ciggaar, “Une description de Constantinople dans le Tarragonensis 55,” *REB* 53 (1995), 117–40; Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures, 1435–1439*, trans. M. Letts (New York and London, 1926), 141–42.

⁴⁴ J. Nesbitt and J. Wiita, “A Confraternity of the Comnenian Era,” *BZ* 68 (1975), 360–84.

⁴⁵ G. Prinzing, “Spuren einer religiösen Bruderschaft in Epiros um 1225? Zur Deutung der Memorialtexte im Codex Cromwell 11,” *BZ* 10, no. 2 (2008), 751–72.

Several of our prayer-book manuscripts (*euchologia*) from the orthodox communities in South Italy, which date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, also include on fly-leaves (and thus clearly as a later addition) lists of names, usually in twos or threes, accompanied by the request for prayers for their souls: (Appendix 1, manuscripts nos. 9 and 13). It is possible that these were independent prayer associations of lay people. It is equally conceivable that these manuscripts were kept in a monastery and that people from the surrounding region had their names inscribed in the hope of benefiting in the afterlife from the prayers of the monks. In this instance, these annotations would fit the pattern known from medieval Germany as *Verbrüderungsbücher*.⁴⁶ These are lists of names of laymen, rarely lay women, who joined the monastery in an economic sense, through generous donations during their lifetime or even by naming it as heir to their property, and profited in a spiritual sense, by benefiting from the prayers of the monks for their soul. This is a neat system of exchange of spiritual for monetary capital. In thirteenth-century Calabria, a region where many of the manuscripts containing the *adelphopoiesis* prayers originated, it was common practice for laymen in anticipation of their death to designate a monastic community as their legitimate heir while at the same time joining the monks as a “brother.”⁴⁷ This practice is not well studied for Byzantium, but it is attested, at least once, for Mount Athos in the year 1013, in a donation made by Maria, the widow of John of Thessaloniki, and her husband, Constantine Lagoudes. Maria considers herself to be brought up “practically from my mother’s womb” by the monastery (a striking detail in itself) and wants to retain this association. As they donate extensive properties in Hierissos, wife and husband both expect “from this day forward” to be “united in the spirit” with the monks, “becoming one soul” with them, “and being (monastic) brothers of the Laura ourselves.” The document then confirms that they are inscribed in the *diptycha* of the monastery for commemoration in prayer.⁴⁸

The purpose of all these fraternally conceived communities was the communal exercise of and mutual support in a particular religious practice, whether joint prayers and icon veneration, burial assistance, or posthumous commemoration. They evolved within the framework of the institutional Church, but without any regulation by it, either because they were considered negligible, due to the small number of people involved, or because their

⁴⁶ Autenrieth, Geuenich, and Schmid, *Verbrüderungsbuch der Abtei Reichenau*. Other examples exist for Salzburg and St. Gall.

⁴⁷ P. De Leo, “L’adoption in fratrem in alcuni monasteri dell’Italia meridionale (sec. XII–XIII),” *Atti del 7° Congresso internazionale di studi sull’alto Medioevo: Norcia, Subiaco, Cassino, Montecassino, 29 settembre–5 ottobre, 1980* (Spoleto, 1982), 657–65; see also A. Bébén, “Frères et membres du corps du Christ: Les fraternités dans les *typika*,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 44 (2001), 105–19, at 116–17.

⁴⁸ *Actes de Lavra* no. 17, *Archives de l’Athos* 1, ed. G. Rouilland and P. Collomp (Paris, 1937), 47–50.

purpose was not considered to be of sufficient interest to warrant the establishment of control mechanisms.

Notarized Brother-Making as a Household Strategy outside Byzantium

Brother-making had many advantages, depending on the circumstances of the two people involved. As an extension of kinship, it conferred rights and privileges and facilitated interaction on the model of the family. This had further ramifications, for families were not only groups of people, but also lived in households and thus formed economic entities that were based on ownership of and access to property (land), goods (animals), and services (laborers and servants). In the late middle ages, in Latin documents from Spain, the South of France, and the Adriatic, brother-making appears as a legal instrument that is officially notarized. There is no record of the confirmation of this arrangement in a religious ritual or by the Church, although it may have happened nonetheless.

The motivating factor for such *affrètements* in the Mediterranean in the late medieval and early modern period, from Spain and Southern France to Italy, where they are called *affratellamento*, was the extension of kinship with an aim to profit from legal regulations that facilitate economic exchange between family members. These relations had a utilitarian character and were based on contractual agreements. They gave family status to an arrangement that was entered into voluntarily by heads of households that may or may not have been related. Such arrangements fit into a wide spectrum of household types, from small nuclear families to multigenerational households to several nuclear families of the same kingroup living in the same household. *Affrèment* became available in the late middle ages (the earliest cases date from the eleventh century), gained prominence in the fourteenth century, and is attested until the early eighteenth centuries, as several regional studies have shown.⁴⁹ There is a fundamental difficulty in studying this phenomenon: *affrètements* are known exclusively from legal documents, and find no reflection in contemporary historical narratives. This is in notable contrast to Byzantine *adelphopoiesis*, where, in addition to the rich manuscript tradition of the ecclesiastical ritual itself, we have narrative descriptions and legal prescriptions, but no legal documentation of the practice.

The contracts of *affrèment* from Southern France studied by Allan Tulchin involve two or more individuals who declare their intent to combine their possessions, hold them in joint ownership, and pass them on equitably

⁴⁹ The most recent study is A. A. Tulchin, "Same-Sex Couples Creating Households in Old Regime France: The Uses of the *Affrèment*," *Journal of Modern History* 79 (2007), 613–47, at 618–27, with further references.

to their heirs. This is couched in language that emphasizes their desire to live together as brothers, sharing “one bread and wine.”⁵⁰ Sometimes, a man and woman entered a contract of *affrèment* prior to marriage, which was advantageous if the woman was poor, as it eliminated the need for a dowry. In other cases, two men who were young and unmarried entered into such arrangements. In such instances, the expressions of affection in the contracts may be more than just commonplace phrases, and perhaps point to an emotional attachment between the two men. This assumption gains further support from the evidence of late medieval and early modern burials in the same tomb of two unrelated men, which has been documented for France as well as England. Tulchin thus concludes that these contracts could be used “to formalize same-sex loving relationships.”⁵¹ Of course, whether or not such relationships included a sexual component cannot be known. That is a modern question on which the medieval sources remain silent.

Sicilian Local Customs

Local historians report two occasions in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, respectively, of what they identify as a particular Sicilian custom of sworn brotherhood between two men of the highest echelon of society. The first episode relates to a brotherhood agreement concluded between a Muslim and a Christian, in the year 1072. At the time of the Norman conquest, the Arabs of the town of Castrogiovanni were deliberating how best to defend themselves “whether by deceit or by arms.” One of the most powerful among them, Ibrahim (Brachiem), entered into a pact of adoptive brotherhood with Serlo, the nephew of Count Roger I, “by ear [*per aurum*], as was their custom.” The rest of the story is dramatic: Ibrahim sent gifts to Serlo, addressing him as his “adopted brother,” along with a message alerting him to a planned incursion by a small band of Arabs set on plundering the land. What he did not say was that the number of invading Arabs amounted to 700 knights and 200 foot soldiers. Serlo promptly fell into an ambush when he pursued the seven Arabs that had marched ahead to bait him and he was killed.⁵² The ingredients of this relationship run the whole gamut of what an *adelphopoi-esis* relation might entail: a mutual agreement of brotherhood, gift giving, the exchange of privileged information, the assumption of loyalty and support,

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 622.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 639.

⁵² Geoffrey Malaterra 2. 46, ed. E. Pontieri, *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae comitis et Roberti Guiscardi Ducis fratris eius*, Raccolta dei Storici italiani, vol. 1 (Bologna, 1927), 54, lines 5–6; trans. K. B. Wolf, *The Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of his Younger Brother Guiscard by Robert Malaterra* (Ann Arbor, 2005), 126. A footnote to the Latin text comments that pulling each other’s ear was a Muslim custom. Wolf’s translation “verbally” should be dismissed. I am grateful to Alex Metcalfe for drawing these references to my attention.