

**CONSTANTINE'S LEGACY: TRACING BYZANTIUM  
IN THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE BRITISH ISLES:  
THE CASE OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL**

Within England's historical world-view, Rome has been in continuous focus since the departure of the legions, whether as role-model (through 'Romanitas'), imperial precursor, or the post-Reformation 'Other'. Constantinople, on the other hand, particularly after the Great Schism, was increasingly seen through later medieval and into early modern times as the seat of a political and social system caricatured as effete and inward-looking. This gave the word 'byzantine' to the English language, meaning tortuous, secretive, conniving. After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 this caricature was compounded with the stereotypical presentation of what was now Istanbul as Turkish, Muslim, Oriental, and therefore itself 'Other', personifying mystery, threat, and decadence. This view intensified through the wars with Turkey (whose climaxes, such as Lepanto and Vienna, impacted on western popular consciousness); the Decline of Venice (an important window on the East); and finally the slow demise of the Ottoman Empire, the so-called 'Sick Man of Europe'.

Before the eleventh century, it was quite another story, and a number of aspects of a significant influence from the Byzantine world on Insular art and religion have been well explored.<sup>1</sup> One thinks of the rich silk, perhaps depicting the nature goddess Atargatis, discovered in St Cuthbert's tomb at Durham, and comparisons made with the 'Quadriga' silk from the tomb of Charlemagne at Aachen. In painted and sculpted religious motifs, the Eastern origins of the depiction of Mary as 'Throne of Wisdom' come to mind, with the Mother of God holding Christ as Sophia on her lap.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, Insular artists adopted the so-called *Maria Platytera*, showing Christ in an escutcheon on the Virgin's torso.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Veronica Ortenberg, *The English Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Cultural, Spiritual, and Artistic Exchanges* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992), esp. pp. 197-217. C. R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1982), hereafter Dodwell, 'Anglo-Saxon Art', remains an authoritative text.

<sup>2</sup> A Byzantine panel painting of the Virgin and Child depicted in this fashion was shown at the conference.

<sup>3</sup> The conference delegates were shown a twelfth-century example, egg tempera on

Depiction of Mary, and other holy characters, in classical arcades is a further idea which reached Britain by the eighth century.<sup>4</sup> Classically-inspired representation of biblical episodes were in vogue at the same time, as far north as Pictland.<sup>5</sup>

Other influences on religion included liturgy, hymns and chants, the practice of pilgrimage, eremitism, and the cult of saints' as developed in the eastern Mediterranean. Sometimes the influence arrived via Rome, but this does not make the ideas any less Byzantine. It has been well said that 'Rome, c. 700, was infused with the culture of Byzantium'.<sup>6</sup> Greek monks in Rome in the mid-seventh-century included Theodore of Tarsus in Sicilia, later Archbishop of Canterbury (602-90), educated at Constantinople and Antioch, and his prior Hadrian (d. 709/10), an African-born, Greek-speaking monk. In 666, when the latter was abbot of Nerida near Naples, Pope Vitalian wanted to appoint him Archbishop of Canterbury, but Hadrian declined. Instead he went to England as adviser to the man chosen in his place on his recommendation, Theodore. Hadrian was for more than forty years director of Canterbury's school, renowned for its teachers and famous pupils. One of them, Aldhelm, thought the education there was not excelled even in Ireland. Both Greek and Latin were taught, as well as computistics, the rules of metre, music, and theology, including biblical exegesis on the Pentateuch and the Gospels of the literal school of Antioch, and Roman law.<sup>7</sup>

There was frequent travel by British monks and clerics in the opposite direction, too. Literally central to this traffic were the Italian lands which long remained under Byzantine rule. Even today there are villages in southern Italy in which Greek is spoken. This is, after all, the area known as *Magna Graeca*. Though most Italian travel for English clerics was only as far as Rome, southern Italy was well trodden by those journeying to Jerusalem and other points east.

It is rarely recognised how much the Byzantine world gave to Britain. Her major dedicatory cults constitute one hugely important legacy, for medieval communities often defined themselves through their local patron saints.<sup>8</sup> Foremost is Mary. She was supposed to have spent her later years in Ephesus, under the care of John the Evangelist, and most of her feasts originated in Constantinople, arriving in Rome with waves of Eastern refugees as well as clerics and traders.<sup>9</sup>

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lime wood, from the Monastery of the Saviour, Yaroslavl. Tretyakov Gallery, Russia, and asked to compare this with the sculpted figure of Mary above the west door at Deerhurst minster, Gloucestershire, dated to *circa* 800.

<sup>4</sup> Mary is shown in this way at Breedon minster, Leicestershire, and the Archangel Gabriel in the same fashion in a probable Annunciation panel, *circa* ?850, also at Breedon.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the *imitatio imperii* of David killing the lion in the guise of a late antique emperor, carved on the sarcophagus of King Oengus of Pictland (732-61), in St Andrews Cathedral, Fife, in modern-day north-east Scotland.

<sup>6</sup> By Dodwell, 'Anglo-Saxon Art'.

<sup>7</sup> David Hugh Farmer, *Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (5th edn, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 5 (Hadrian) and 496-7 (Theodore).

<sup>8</sup> Graham Jones, *Saints in the Landscape* (Stroud, Tempus, 2007), hereafter 'Jones, Saints', pp. 149ff.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the role of Archbishop Proclus of Constantinople (434-46) and the Empress Pulcheria in promoting Mariology and the feast of Mary's Nativity, September 8, is

She is the most frequent titular of churches in England: some 20.19 per cent of those built before 1600 have her as their patron saint. This figure remains similar when only dedications recorded before *circa* 1540 are counted. After All Saints (a cult originating in Ireland around 800) and the Roman civic cult of Peter and Paul, the next most notable in England are those of Michael the Archangel, whose Eastern origins are explored below (5.74 per cent); Andrew, supposedly martyred at Patras in Achaia after missions variously recounted in Bithynia, Cappadocia, Epirus, Galatia, Hellas, Macedonia, Scythia, Thessaly and Thrace, and enshrined in the Church of the Apostles in Constantinople *circa* 357 (5.33 per cent); John the Baptist (4.1 per cent); Nicholas, bishop of Myra (3.5 per cent), and the Apostle James, put to death in Jerusalem (3.34 per cent). Then (following Christopher and Holy Trinity) comes Margaret of Antioch (2.28 per cent). Cults of major significance though of lesser popular attraction include those of the Apostle Bartholomew (1.43 per cent), John the Evangelist (of Ephesus and Patmos) (about 0.75 per cent), Paul of Tarsus (0.56 per cent), and Catherine of Alexandria (0.42 per cent) – the latter hugely more popular as an altar saint, particularly when invoked by young women.

The aggregate total of the cults mentioned, about half of the country's parochial and chapelry dedications, demonstrates how far the devotional landscape of England has been dominated by patronal saints from the Byzantine, not the Roman world. It is the intention of the rest of this paper to explore the roots of Insular devotion to Michael the Archangel in the Byzantine world and as promoted by Constantine himself, an act of political judgement which was an important milestone in the development of the cult as it impacted on clerical and popular minds in the West. The study will close with a call for the further examination of comparable sites of Michael's devotion in south-east Europe, suggesting, for example, an investigation of the archangel's patronage at the birthplace of the Serbian monarchy.

#### *Michael of healing springs*

In the Middle Ages and later, the archangel Michael came to be associated in the West with high places.<sup>10</sup> The Michelbergs of Germany come to mind. In England one of the longest-surviving pilgrimages after the Reformation was to a chapel of St Michael on the summit of Skirrid Fawr mountain near Abergavenny in Monmouthshire. So firm was this association that even today it is conventional among British people to assume that dedications in Michael's honour are generally to be found on hilltops. The explanation is not hard to find. This is the Captain of the Heavenly Host, after all, and the most famous place in

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discussed by Nicholas E. Denysenko, 'The soteriological significance of the feast of Mary's birth', *Theological Studies* 68 (2007).

<sup>10</sup> A short bibliography of studies of Michael is in Graham Jones, 'The cult of Michael the archangel in Britain', in Pierre Bouet, Giorgio Otranto, and Andr Vauchez (eds), *Culto e Santuari di San Michele nell'Europa medievale. Cultes et Sanctuaires de Saint Michel dans l'Europe Médiévale*, Bibliotheca Michaelica 1 (Bari, Edipuglia, 2007), pp. 147-82, hereafter Jones, 'Michael', at p. 147, footnote 2.

Britain associated with the archangel is the monastery of Mount St Michael on the southern coast of Cornwall. However, it is the twin, and in many ways the daughter, of the Abbey of Mont St Michel on the opposite coast of Normandy. The French sanctuary, in turn, seems to have been inspired by two shrines of the archangel in Italy, that on the crag at San Michele in the Val di Susa near Turin, and more importantly on Mount Gargano on the eastern coast of Italy.

Gargano's situation is stunning, when viewed from the coast road of Apulia leading north from Bari, and the pilgrim's arrival is something of an achievement, especially on foot. However, what draws the pilgrim is not the hilltop itself. Rather the destination is a grotto inside the rock, reached by descent from the sanctuary entrance, and the water which drips from its ceiling, collected in a hanging glass, the *stilla*, and retained for the cure of the sick.

The vision of Michael at Gargano which traditionally explained his patronage of the grotto was said to have taken place on the eve of a battle in 663. In this way Michael regained his old status (as heavenly warrior), according to one view.<sup>11</sup> In fact the opposite took place. The archangel gained the patronage of mountain-tops at the expense of a much older connection with healing waters. Through its sacred water, Gargano developed out of a number of ancient sites in Asia Minor and Thrace, some in the hinterland of Constantinople, where Michael was venerated as the patron of healing waters.<sup>12</sup> At these sites, as at Gargano, Michael appears to have supplanted pre-Christian healing ritual and its tutelary figures. The grotto at Gargano is said to occupy a site sacred to Mithras – though this conclusion was made from deduction rather than record.<sup>13</sup> More pertinently, the peninsula also had pre-Christian temples dedicated respectively in honour of the soothsayer Colchas and Podaleirius, one of the sons of Aesculapius the healer.<sup>14</sup> Both offered healing by incubation, a practice known in medieval Wales and a possible use of *porticus* in Anglo-Saxon minsters.

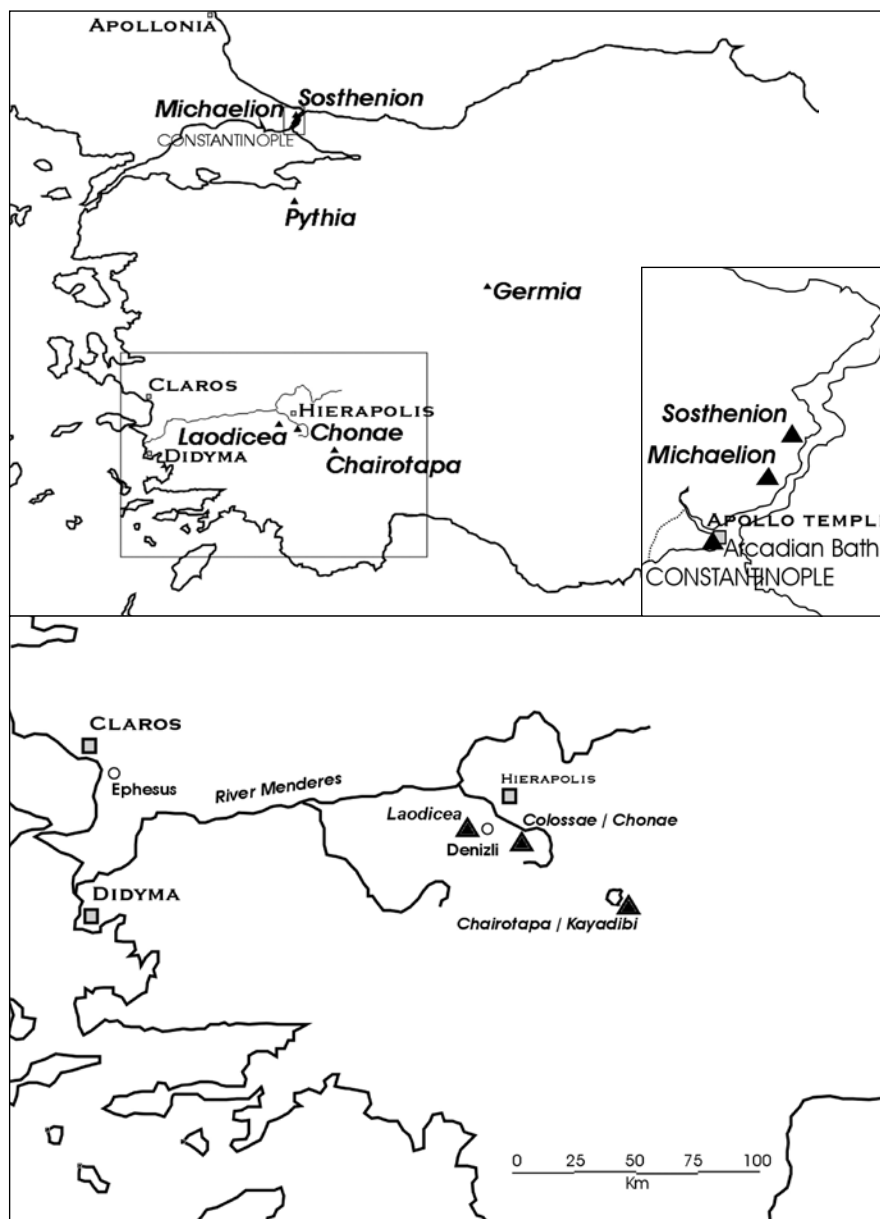
The pilgrimage shrines in Asia Minor and Thrace where Michael was the protector of healing waters are shown in Figs. 1 to 3. Two were in the southern provinces. What became the archetypal shrine was in Phrygia at **Chonae**, modern Khonas or Honaz, on the River Lycus, a tributary of the Maeander (modern Menderes) in the vilayet of Smyrna, about 25km east of Denizli and Laodicea. Chonae took the place of the rich merchant city Colossae, whose ruins are vis-

<sup>11</sup> Frederick G. Holwerk, *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* 10 (New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1911), hereafter 'Holwerk', p. 276. N. Everett, 'The *Liber de apparitione S. Michaelis* in Monte Gargano and the hagiography of dispossession', *Analecta Bollandiana* 120 (2002), pp. 364-91 argues that the *Liber* reflects conflict between the churches of Siponto and Benevento over control of the Gargano shrine and dates from c. 663x750.

<sup>12</sup> V. Saxer, 'Jalons pour servir à l'histoire du culte de l'archange Saint Michel en Orient jusqu'à l'iconoclasme', in I. Vazquez Janiero (ed.), *Noscere Santa: Miscellanea in memoria di Agostino Amore*, I *Storia della Chiesa, Archaeologia, Arte* (Rome, 1985), pp. 357-426.

<sup>13</sup> G. F. Hill, 'Apollo and St Michael: Some Analogies,' *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 36 (1916), pp. 155-7. See now J. C. Arnold, 'Arcadia becomes Jerusalem: Angelic caverns and shrine conversion at Monte Gargano', *Speculum* 75 (July 2000), pp. 567-88.

<sup>14</sup> Rich[ard] Johnson, 'The genesis and migration of the Archangel's cult', *In Progress*, Harper College Department of English Newsletter, 1, issue 1, at <[http://www.harpercollege.edu/libarts/eng/dept/inprogress/ip\\_v1\\_johnson.html](http://www.harpercollege.edu/libarts/eng/dept/inprogress/ip_v1_johnson.html)>, accessed March 11, 2008, hereafter Johnson, 'Migration'.



Shrines of the Archangel Michael (solid triangles and lower-case labels) and of Apollo (grey squares and upper-case labels) in the western area of modern Turkey and the Black Sea, with enlarged maps of the Maeander (Menderes) river basin and the shores of the Bosphorus and Sea of Marmara including Constantinople.

Светилишта Архангела Михаила (црни троуглови и натписи писани малим словима) и Аполонови храмови (сиви квадрати и натписи писани великим словима) у западном делу модерне Турске и приобаљу Црног мора, са увећаним мапама долине реке Меандер (Мендерес) и обала Босфора и Мраморног мора, укључујући Константинопољ.

ible nearby, after the latter was deserted as a result of the success of its rival Laodicea and the pressure of invading Arabs in the seventh and eighth centuries.<sup>15</sup> According to the account of Simeon Metaphrastes, a hermit named Archippos built a sanctuary of St Michael at Chonae, but the people of the area were jealous and dug canals to divert two rivers, hoping to wash it away. Michael answered Archippos's prayers by splitting a rock by lightning to funnel the canals into a single stream, sanctifying the waters which came from the resulting gorge.<sup>16</sup> Khonas indeed has a gorge, the chasm with cliffs up to 20m high which carries the river away from the town. The name Chonae derives from the Greek word for 'funnel' (*chone*).<sup>17</sup> There is also a petrifying river, the Ak Su.<sup>18</sup> Archippos was the name of one of St Paul's companions born at Colossae. Probably on that basis, the Greeks claimed that the vision of Michael took place about the middle of the first century, though the legend appears to have begun to circulate only in the second half of the fifth century.<sup>19</sup> A celebrated church of St Michael at Chonae was destroyed by the Seljuk Turks in the twelfth century.<sup>20</sup> By then it seems that the miracle had taken root in tradition across the Greek-speaking world. A miniature of the event is found in the menology attributed to Basil II (958-1025) at Constantinople, and in frescoes on Cyprus and Crete.<sup>21</sup>

The other southern site, at Yeşilova in Psidia, around 25km south-east of Colossae, is **Chairotopa** (Greek Ceretapa, modern Kayadibi or Karahayit), whose sanctuary is said to have been built by the grateful father of a daughter, mute since birth, who had begun to speak. He had brought his daughter there from their home at Laodicea. Tradition held that the Apostles John and Philip, passing through the village, had prophesied that Michael would show his powers there. Shortly afterwards, the spring began to spout and was found to have miraculous properties.<sup>22</sup> The sick who bathed there, it was said, invoking the Blessed Trinity and St Michael, were cured.<sup>23</sup> It has been argued convincingly

<sup>15</sup> On the Chonae and Chairotopa miracles see G[lenn] Peers, 'Holy man, supplicant, and donor: On representations of the miracle of Archangel Michael at Chonae', *Medieval Studies* 59 (1997), hereafter Peers, 'Chonae', pp. 173-82. See also Johnson, 'Migration'; Holweck, p. 276. A nineteenth-century description of Khonas which remains a useful introduction is in W. M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1895-7, reprinted New York, Arno, 1975), hereafter Ramsay, 'Phrygia', 1, pp. 208-34.

<sup>16</sup> Alfred Max Bonnet, *Narratio de miraculo a Michaele archangelo Chonis patrato. Adiecto Symeonis metaphrastae de eadem re libello* (Paris, 1890).

<sup>17</sup> Pointed out by Leuken and repeated by Johnson, 'Migration'.

<sup>18</sup> S. Pétridès, 'Colossae', in Charles G. Herbermann *et al* (eds), *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 4 (New York, Robert Appleton Co, 1908), hereafter 'CE'.

<sup>19</sup> *Analecta Bollandiana* 8, pp. 285-328.

<sup>20</sup> As reported by Ramsay, 'Phrygia'.

<sup>21</sup> Peers, 'Chonae', citing *Il Menologio di Basilio II* (Turin, 1907); frescoes of circa 1500 in the church of Cosmas and Damian near Palaeochorio in the Troodos region of Cyprus, described by Smiljka Gabelić, 'The iconography of the miracle at Chonae: an unusual example from Cyprus'; and other frescoes at Kántaros, western Crete, and Archáres, central Crete.

<sup>22</sup> Johnson, 'Migration', and Richard F. Johnson, *St Michael the Archangel in Medieval English Legend* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2005), hereafter Johnson, 'Michael', pp. 32-3.

<sup>23</sup> Frederick G. Holweck, 'Michael the Archangel', in CE 10 (New York, Robert Appleton Co, 1911), pp. 275-7, hereafter 'Holweck'; p. 276.

that this was an amalgamation of previously separate Chairotopa and Chonae traditions into a single legend.<sup>24</sup>

North-east from Chonae and Chairotopa is **Germia** in Galatia, with its Myriangeloï baths visited by Justinian (527-65).<sup>25</sup> Germia (Germa or Yërme/ Yürme), modern Gümüşkonak, is a small village in the vilayet and caza of Angora in Eskişehir province, eight km south of Günyüzü, 30km south-east of Sivrihisar and 20km east of the ruins of Pessinus (Pessinonte, on the southern slope of Mount Dindymus and the left bank of the Sangarius).<sup>26</sup> At Germia, whose ancient baths and the ruins of the inn built by Justinian are still to be seen, the emperor went to take the baths in 556.<sup>27</sup> Germia was in his reign entitled Myriangeloï on account of a church dedicated in honour of Michael and the Holy Angels.<sup>28</sup> Germia's healing pool was inhabited by fish, perhaps a component of divinatory services.<sup>29</sup>

A second cluster of Michael's healing waters is centred on the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmara, and brings us to Constantine's part in the diffusion of Michael's cult. South of the Bosphorus, Michael was patron of hot springs at **Pythia**, near Bursa in Bithynia, whose name commemorates worship of Apollo, killer of the Python, the chthonic dragon.<sup>30</sup> The warm baths were popularised by Paulus Silentiarius (*fl.* sixth century CE), a Byzantine poet who flourished during the reign of Justinian. His dimeter iambics figure in a corpus which also includes erotic epigrams and a dedication to Justinian which was recited at the second dedication of the church of [?Hagia Sophia] in 562.<sup>31</sup> Pythia Therma was famous for its church of Michael, but also for the church of Ss. Menodora, Metrodora, and Nymphodora, who doubtless succeeded the ancient nymphs in working cures there.<sup>32</sup>

Though not a source of healing water as such, the church of St Michael at **Katesia** near Daphnousia on the Black Sea coast of Bithynia became famous for miraculous oil. It was built by the patrician Niketas, who attained sainthood after his death in 836. His tomb produced a miraculous oil that was much in demand by locals and travellers.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>24</sup> L. Leuken, 'Michael', in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1998-2005), 4, pp. 369-70 (published in English as Hans Dieter Betz (ed.), *Religion Past and Present* (Boston, Brill, 2000-)).

<sup>25</sup> Cyril Mango, 'The Pilgrimage Centre of St. Michael at Germia,' *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 36 (1986), hereafter Mango, 'Germia', pp. 117-32; [Theophanes the Confessor,] C. de Boor (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* (Leipzig, B. G. Teubner, 1883-5, reprinted Hildesheim, Georg Olms, 1963-5), A.M. 6056.

<sup>26</sup> Ramsay, 'Phrygia'.

<sup>27</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, *op. cit.*

<sup>28</sup> Mango, 'Germia'.

<sup>29</sup> Johnson, 'Migration'.

<sup>30</sup> Poetic inscription of Paulus Silentiarius (*fl.* sixth century CE), see *infra*. See also G. F. Hill, 'Apollo and Michael: Some analogies', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 36 (1916), pp. 155-7.

<sup>31</sup> Holweck, p. 276.

<sup>32</sup> Clive Foss, 'Medieval pilgrimage in Asia Minor', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002), hereafter Foss, 'Pilgrimage'.

<sup>33</sup> Foss, 'Pilgrimage', citing the *Vita* of Niketas the Patrician, ed. D. Papachryssan-

Another shrine of St Michael developed at **Calcedon**, the ancient maritime town opposite Constantinople on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus, and in 451 the seat of the fourth ecumenical council of the Christian Church. Not far from this Michaelion Constantine led his army into battle at Chrysopolis to defeat his rival Licinius.

#### *Constantine's role*

The best known of this northern group of healing places was at Anaplous, a small natural bay on the European shore of the Bosphorus, next to which stood a church of St Michael which was transformed into an important monastery by Emperor Basil II.<sup>34</sup> The church at Anaplous, modern day Istinye, was built by Constantine to replace a temple known as **Sosthenion**, 'the place of salvation' or literally, 'sustaining'. One of the earlier notices of the Sosthenion is that in the *Life* of Daniel the Stylite (409-93), whose pillar stands one mile inland. John Malalas, who lived between *circa* 490 and *circa* 570, retold the story of how Jason and his Argonauts were attacked while passing through the Bosphorus on their way to the Black Sea in search of the Golden Fleece.<sup>35</sup> They eluded the attacking ships, which belonged to a chieftain named Amycus, beached their boat, and went ashore in a sheltered bay 'forested and wild'. There they had a vision of a man with wings like an eagle who promised they would defeat Amycus. When they had done so, they built a temple in which they set a statue of their winged visitor and called it Sosthenion.

Malalas wrote that Constantine, having established his new capital, Constantinople, visited the temple 'to make the shrine safe' for Christian worship, and recognised the statue as 'an angel in the habit of a monk'. The identity of the angel was revealed to him in a dream and he set about adorning the shrine and restoring it in Michael's honour.<sup>36</sup> Further visions of the archangel were reported there, as well as numerous miraculous cures. It has been argued that Michael's statue replaced one of the Greek god Attis,<sup>37</sup> or of the wind god Boreas, venerated in Thrace, the region of northern Greece closest to Constantinople. Boreas was depicted as a fearsome man with wings of an eagle, in a short tunic and with the wings on his back or his feet.<sup>38</sup> Herodotus (*circa* 490-420 BCE) described his help in the Athenian defeat of the Persian fleet. Recent scholarship argues rather that Malalas conflated a description of the Argonauts' statue

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thou, *TM* 3 (1968): 327, 337, 349

<sup>34</sup> Glenn Peers, 'The Sosthenion near Constantinople: John Malalas and ancient art', *Byzantion. Revue internationale des études byzantines* 68 (1998), pp. 110-20, hereafter Peers, 'Sosthenion'.

<sup>35</sup> Malalas based his account on the story told in the third century BCE by Apollonius of Rhodes (Peers, 'Sosthenion', p. 110). See also Johnson, 'Migration'.

<sup>36</sup> Peers, 'Sosthenion', p. 110.

<sup>37</sup> Cyril Mango, 'St Michael and Attis', *Δελτιον Χριστιανικης 'Αρχαιολογικης 'Εταιρειας* 12 (1984), pp. 57ff.

<sup>38</sup> As in the Tower of the Winds in the Roman agora in Athens, first century BCE (Peers, p. 112).



(in a monk's habit, *i.e.* a hood) and that of Constantine's statue of Michael.<sup>39</sup> This suggests that the Argonauts' statue was of Telesphorus, often portrayed in Roman art from the second century CE as the helper of Aesculapius the divine healer, and always as wearing a hooded cloak which often covered his hands. Devotion to Telesphorus may have originated in Thrace.

Another famous shrine of the archangel attributed to Constantine lay at the southern end of the European shore of the Bosphorus at Hestiai, modern-day Arnavutköyü. It was known as the **Michaelion** and was described in the 440s as 'active and successful'.<sup>40</sup> Many miraculous cures by incubation were claimed. Indeed it seems to have been the premier shrine of the archangel on the Bosphorus until overtaken in importance by the Sosthenion.

One should not imagine that all Michael's Byzantine pilgrimage places were associated with water. There was, for example, his shrine at the river crossing of Sykeon in Galatia, where the archangel worked miracles through the cross that had accompanied the emperor Herakleios on his campaigns.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, a famous church of Michael within the walls of **Constantinople** stood at the site of the thermal baths of the Emperor Arcadius.<sup>42</sup> There the synaxis of the archangel was celebrated on November 8, possibly following a practice established in Phrygia. This feast spread over the entire Greek Church, and the Syrian, Armenian, and Coptic Churches adopted it also; it is now the principal feast of Michael in the Orient. Other feasts of St. Michael at Constantinople were October 27, in the 'Promotu' church; June 18, in the Church of St Julian at the Forum; and December 10, at Athaea.<sup>43</sup>

While the influence of the shrine at Colossae can be traced through both the Michaelion of Anaplous and the Sosthenion,<sup>44</sup> Constantine's promotion of Michael's cult had a powerful personal and political importance that sites like the Sosthenion also skilfully reflected. After he had defeated Licinius and achieved the reunification of the empire, Constantine ostentatiously commissioned a painting of himself and his sons surmounted by the cross and standing on top of a serpent representing Satan. The latter was shown pierced by a dart or lance and cast headlong into the sea.<sup>45</sup> The painting was displayed to the pub-

<sup>39</sup> Peers, 'Sosthenion', p. p. 115-6

<sup>40</sup> Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, hereafter 'Sozomen', Bk 2. Ch. 3. An on-line English translation is at <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2602.htm>>, accessed March 12, 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Foss, 'Pilgrims', citing an eleventh-century attestation in Michael Psellos, *Oratio in archangelum Michaelem* in his *Orationes hagiographicae*, ed. E. Fisher (Stuttgart, 1994), pp. 230-56, and E. Fisher, 'Nicomedia or Galatia? Where Was Psellos' Church of the Archangel Michael?', in J. Duffy and J. Peradotto (eds), *Gonimos: Neoplatonic and Byzantine Studies Presented to Leendert G. Westerink* (Buffalo, N.Y., 1988), pp. 175-87.

<sup>42</sup> Holweck, p. 276.

<sup>43</sup> Holweck, p. 276.

<sup>44</sup> For Anaplous, see Sozomen, Bk 2, Ch. 3, Line 8, and for Justinian's restoration of both Anaplous and the Sosthenion, Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, trans. H. B. Dewing (Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1980), Bk 1, Pt 3, Ch. 8, Lines 17-19. Procopius calls the location of the latter shrine Proöchthi, or Brochi.

<sup>45</sup> Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, hereafter 'Eusebius, 'Constantine', Bk 3, Ch. 3. An English text is in *The Church History of Eusebius, tr. with prolegomena and notes by A.C.*

lic in front of the imperial palace portico, explicitly linking Constantine with Michael, Captain of the Heavenly Host, as the emperor had earlier linked himself with Sol Invictus, the invincible sun, and Apollo, whose identification with the sun as Apollo-Helios had become firmly established in the previous century. Indeed the resemblance between Apollo's killing of the Python and Michael's expulsion of Lucifer, identified in Judeo-Christian myth with the Serpent of Eden, would have been very clear to the culturally and religiously diverse audience for which his propaganda was intended.<sup>46</sup> Eusebius commented: 'I am filled with wonder at the intellectual greatness of the emperor, who as if by divine inspiration thus expressed what the prophets had foretold concerning this monster, saying that "God would bring his great and strong and terrible sword against the dragon, the flying serpent; and would destroy the dragon that was in the sea."<sup>47</sup> Ironically, Constantine later forbade 'the setting up of any resemblance of himself in any idol temple, that not even the mere lineaments of his person might receive contamination from the error of forbidden superstition'.<sup>48</sup>

#### *Michael and the healing gods*

There is a further, crucial factor which links Apollo and Michael and helps to explain the arrival of Michael's cult in Italy, at Mount Gargano. Two Greek cities were founded on the peninsula on which the mountain stands, and the Greek geographer Strabo reported that on a hill named Drium were to be seen 'two hero-temples'.<sup>49</sup> Both were places of healing. On the summit was a temple to Calchas, the soothsayer who foretold that the Greeks would fight unsuccessfully for nine years at Troy before taking the city in the tenth.<sup>50</sup> Those who consulted the temple's oracle sacrificed a black ram to Calchas and then slept in its hide, hoping for a cure. The other temple was near the base of the hill, 'and from it', wrote Strabo, 'flows a stream which is a cure-all for diseases of animals'. This temple honoured the burial place of Podaleirius, one of the sons of Aesculapius the healer, and had a long association with healing. Again, incubation in the hides of sacrificed animals seems to have been the practice. The Greek tragedian Lycophron described it as the site of great portents: 'and to men sleeping in sheepskins on his tomb he [Podaleirius] shall declare in dreams his unerring message for all. And healer of diseases shall he be called by the Daunians [Daunia was the ancient name of the peninsula], when they wash the

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*McGiffert. [Followed by] The Life of Constantine, by Eusebius, together with the oration of Constantine to the assembly of the saints, and the oration of Eusebius in praise of Constantine, a revised tr., with prolegomena and notes, by E.C. Richardson (Oxford, 1890). An on-line English translation is Eusebius, Life of Constantine, at <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2502.htm>>, accessed March 12, 2008.*

<sup>46</sup> Johnson, 'Migration'.

<sup>47</sup> Eusebius, 'Constantine', Bk 3, Ch. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Eusebius, 'Constantine', Bk 4, Ch. 16.

<sup>49</sup> The modern edition of Strabo is *Strabonis Geographica*, Scriptores Graece et Latini (3 vols, Rome, Typis Publicae Officinae Polygraphicae, 1963-2000).

<sup>50</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, Book II, ll. 324-32.

sick with the waters of Althaenus and invoke the son of Epiaus [ i.e. Aesculapius] to their aid, that he may come gracious unto men and flocks.<sup>51</sup>

### *The significance of Apollo*

In Greek myth Aesculapius the Healer was son of Apollo and Podaleirius, therefore, Apollo's grandson. Apollo was himself a healer: the sun was naturally recognised as a source of health, and Apollo's many oracular shrines were as much about healing as divination, often involving springs. At **Delphi** on mainland Greece, centre of his cult on the slope of Mount Parnassus north of the Gulf of Corinth, Apollo had killed the Python which lived beside a pool whose vapours enabled the oracle to prophesy. Here the Pythia became filled with the *pneuma* of Apollo, said to come from a spring inside the Adyton. At **Didyma**, the next most famous shrine, modern Didim on the coast of Anatolia just south of the mouth of the Maeander and south-west of Lydian (Luwian) Sardis, oracle-priests claiming descent from Apollo's lover Branchus received inspiration by drinking from a healing spring located in the temple. Likewise, at **Claros** (modern Ahmetbeyli), 45km north of Didyma and 18km north of Ephesus, on the coast just beyond the mouth of the Little Maeander, a holy spring (venerated from as early as the ninth century BCE) gave off a *pneuma*, from which the priests drank. 'Apollo the Healer' was venerated at **Apollonia** on the Black Sea in modern Bulgaria, which in the Constantinian era become Sozopolis, 'city of salvation' (modern Sozopol).

One of the most important cult centres of Apollo was at **Hierapolis**, very close to Denizli and thus in the very same region as the most famous springs of Michael. Here it was discovered recently that spectacular ritual performance at the temple enlarged in the third century CE – the apparent materialisation of divinely-prepared sacrifices – relied on the emission of noxious gases.<sup>52</sup> The explanation is a geological fault, running NNW-SSE for several hundred kilometres and causing the fault escarpment which delimits the right bank of the Menderes River valley on whose plateau the temple is located. A large geothermic field along the fault gives rise to thermal water springs and poisonous gases. It is the cause of the Pamakkale hot springs and petrified waterfalls near Denizli, for example. Indeed, healing springs were a particular feature of Phrygia. The spectacular hot springs at Hierapolis were attributed to the prayers of St Aberkios who was buried there under a stone miraculously transported from Rome.<sup>53</sup> Pilgrims visited the place and it is not impossible that veneration of Aberkios superseded devotion to Apollo, or the archangel. Hot springs still exist at Apameia (modern Sidja), near the sources of the rivers Maeander, Marsyas, Orgas, and Therma (*sic*). A bronze coin of 144x38 BCE from Apameia shows Artemis surrounded by the four rivers' gods.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Quoted by Johnson, 'Migration'.

<sup>52</sup> Sergio Negri and Giovanni Leucci, 'Geophysical investigation of the temple of Apollo (Hierapolis, Turkey)', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 33 (November 2006), pp. 1505-13.

<sup>53</sup> Foss, 'Pilgrims', citing *Synaxarium CP* 153-55.

<sup>54</sup> Barclay V. Head, *British Museum Catalogue of Greek Coins, 25, Phrygia* (London, British Museum, 1906), hereafter 'Head, Coins', p. 667, fig. 314.

The archaeologists' findings at Hierapolis encourage a revisiting of an important aspect of the Michael tradition in this part of Asia Minor – the archangel's emanations. It was said that Michael appeared as 'fire' in the spring at Chonae which 'pagans' wished to divert in order to flood the archangel's shrine. Later he took shape as a pillar of fire 'from heaven to earth'.<sup>55</sup> 'You make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your minsters,' says the psalm appointed for the feast of the Archangel on September 6 – said to be the consecration feast of the church of St Michael on the Salarian Way outside Rome but which also honours *inter alia* his miracle at Chonae.<sup>56</sup> The water in 'the drip' or *stilla* at Gargano was used to extinguish the 'flames of fever'.<sup>57</sup>

Apollo originated as a god of the plague. His arrows, it was thought, carried disease, and therefore prayers to Apollo could invoke health. Through Apollo, the python became the symbol of healing, being transmitted also to Aesculapius and thence in time to the medical profession. In his healing aspect, the Romans referred to Apollo as *Medicus* ('the Physician'), and a temple was dedicated to *Apollo Medicus* at **Rome**, probably next to the temple of Bellona. In the Celtic world, Apollo was venerated as a healer as Apollo-Belenus, in north Italy, parts of Gaul, and Noricum;<sup>58</sup> Apollo-Grannus, a healing-spring god;<sup>59</sup> Apollo-Moritasgus, at Alesia;<sup>60</sup> and Apollo-Vindonnus at Essarois, near Chatillon-sur-Seine in Burgundy, especially as a healer of the eyes.<sup>61</sup> Apollo-Cunomaglus, the 'hound-lord' venerated at a temple in Wiltshire, England, may have been a healer.<sup>62</sup> The epithet of Apollo-Virotutis, worshipped at a number of places in Gaul, appears to be 'benefactor of mankind'.<sup>63</sup>

Constantine was among those alive to the popularity of Apollo and related cults. He had the temple of Aesculapius at Aegia in Cilicia razed to the ground, for example.<sup>64</sup> His motives may have included the tradition that among its priests was the first-century philosopher Apollonius of Tyana, himself venerated and seen as a potential rival to Christ.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Peers, 'Chonae', p. 177

<sup>56</sup> Psalm 104:4, as pointed out by Peers, 'Chonae', p. 177.

<sup>57</sup> Peers, 'Chonae', p. 177.

<sup>58</sup> J. Gourcest, 'Le culte de Belenos en Provence Occidentale et en Gaule', *Ogam* 6 (1954); E. Thevonot, 'Le cheval sacre dans la Gaule de l'Est'; *Revue archeologique de l'Est et du Centre-Est* 2 (1951); 'Temoignages du culte de l'Apollon gaulois dans l'Helvetie romaine', *Revue Celtique* 51 (1934).

<sup>59</sup> M. Szabo, *The Celtic Heritage in Hungary* (Budapest, 1971); E. Thevonat, *Divinites et Sanctuaires de la Gaule* (Paris, 1968); J. de Vries, *La Religion des Celtes* (Paris, 1963).

<sup>60</sup> J. Le Gall, *Alesia, Archeologie et Histoire* (Paris, 1963).

<sup>61</sup> E. Thevonot, 'Le cheval sacre dans la Gaule de l'Est'; *Revue archeologique de l'Est et du Centre-Est* 2 (1951).

<sup>62</sup> W. J. Wedlake, *The Excavation of the Shrine of Apollo at Nettleton, Wiltshire 1956-1971* (London, Society of Antiquaries of London, 1982).

<sup>63</sup> J. de Vries, *La Religion des Celtes* (Paris, 1963); *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* XIII.

<sup>64</sup> Eusebius, 'Constantine', Bk 3, Ch. 56.

<sup>65</sup> Eusebius, *Contra Hieroclem*. For Eusebius' attack on Apollonius as philosopher, see Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 164-7.

*Angel-worship and Michael's lordship of the waters*

It is interesting, therefore, to see Michael, through the efforts of Constantine and others who like him were concerned to Christianise the Greek and Latin lands, assuming the protection of places which previously might have been assigned to the care of Apollo or his healing son or grandson. Such policies had their opponents. Michael's association with healing waters appears to have troubled the Apostles and continued to disturb their successors. St Paul warned his followers at Colossae and Laodicea: 'Let no one rob you of your prize by... worshipping of the angels'.<sup>66</sup> Given the Chonae and Chairotopa devotions, it is unlikely to be a coincidence that the Christians of Colossae were warned against angel-worship both by St Paul and by the Council of Laodicea, *circa* 363. The latter repeated Paul's warning and forbade the practice of angel-worship.<sup>67</sup> The prohibition had little effect, it seems. Some fifty years later Theodoret, in his commentary on the *Epistle to the Colossians*, stated that the 'disease' which Paul attacked 'long remained in Phrygia and Pisidia'. He added: 'Even to the present time, oratories of the holy Michael may be seen among them and their neighbours.'

Scholars suggest that devotion to angels in Asia Minor grew out of Jewish traditions.<sup>68</sup> Certainly the religious practices which St Paul attacked in his Epistle – angel worship being only one – included circumcision and food rituals. Even so, angelology had deeper and more pervasive roots. The description of the Pool of Bethesda in St John's Gospel gives us a first-hand view of how angels were believed to be active at such places: 'An angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pool; and the water was moved. And he that went down first into the pool after the motion of the water was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under.'<sup>69</sup> The so-called *Mysteries of St John the Apostle and Virgin* and other texts contain homilies which specifically associate Michael and water, and in the apocryphal *Book of Enoch*, a text favoured by members of a mystical Jewish sect shortly before, or in the time of Christ, God tells Noah that Michael is in charge of the waters.<sup>70</sup> Michael himself declares that after the Flood, the waters will become the 'fire which burns forever', taken to be the fire of judgement but capable of being read also as an agent of cleansing.<sup>71</sup>

An intriguing conjuncture between Michael's veneration in Phrygia and his lordship of the Flood occurs in the design of a bronze coin dated 148x33

<sup>66</sup> St Paul, Epistle to the Colossians, 2:18.

<sup>67</sup> Council of Laodicea, Canon 35. The synod's decisions are on-line *inter alia* at <<http://reluctant-messenger.com/council-of-laodicea.htm>>, accessed March 11, 2008.

<sup>68</sup> Johnson, 'Migration'.

<sup>69</sup> John 5:4. Christ's healing of the cripple at Bethesda is told in verses 2 to 9.

<sup>70</sup> E. A. W. Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (London, 1913), pp. 233-57, and the 'Encomium by Eustathius, Bishop of Trake', in *Saint Michael the Archangel: Three Encomiums* (London, 1894), pp. 74\*-108\*. For the First Book of Enoch (the episode involving Michael and Noah appears in Chapters 58-69, with Michael's command of waters at 67:12), see Michael A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch* (2 vols, Oxford, 1978) and, based on his translation, H. F. D. Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 169-319.

<sup>71</sup> Johnson 'Michael', p. 13.

BCE from Apameia (mentioned earlier in respect of its hot spring and proximity to four rivers, including the Maeander). This shows a chest or ark (κιβωτος) inscribed ΝΩC, floating on water and containing two figures, and in front the same pair, a man and a woman, and, on the top, a raven (?), and above it a dove flying with a branch in her beak.<sup>72</sup> The numismatist Barclay Head thought it probable that this type was copied from some painting in the city delineating the myth according to which the mountain above the town was Ararat and the Ark of Noah (η Κιβωτος) first rested on the hill of Celaenae, Apameia's predecessor.<sup>73</sup> Alongside this myth was the possible folk-naming by which Apameia gained its nickname η Κιβωτος, 'the chest.' It developed as an important commercial junction where goods arriving by caravan routes from the east were packed into chests to be forwarded to the various seaports such as Ephesus and Pergamum. It has been suggested that the Ark tradition may have been due to a Jewish element in the population – counterparts of the Jewish inhabitants of Laodicea to whose influence has been attributed the angel-worship condemned by Paul.<sup>74</sup>

Indeed, it might be tempting, in view of Michael's lordship of the waters in 1 Enoch and the angel's movement of the waters at the miraculous healing Pool of Bethesda, to explain Michael's veneration in Asia Minor as developing under Jewish influence. Rather, there may have been more than one cultural influence at work, each coming from a different direction. This was a characteristic of the Hellenisation of the Jews and their neighbours and the mingling of ideas from Greece, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and North Africa. For example, in Egypt strong associations had already been made between the Nile and prosperity on the one hand, and the Nile and disease on the other. On the twelfth of every month the Coptic Church still today celebrates a commemoration of the archangel, but June 12, when the river commences to rise, is particularly kept as the feast of Michael *for the Rising of the Nile*. Possibly this change occurred under Jewish influence and it was with the earliest Jewish-Christian community that the Christians of Egypt placed the Nile under Michael's protection. However, the further possibility can not be dismissed that the change happened under Constantine. The emperor's biographer Eusebius described how Constantine dismissed the priests of the Nile at Alexandria. The account of subsequent events comes near to a substitution of Michael's predecessor, whether Hapi or Anuket, by Constantine himself. After the emperor's decree. 'The river, as if the country through which it flowed had been purified to receive it, rose higher than ever before, and completely overflowed the country with its fertilising streams: thus effectually admonishing the deluded people to turn from impure men, and ascribe their prosperity to him alone who is the Giver of all good.'<sup>75</sup>

Jewish angels, like the Christian Evangelists and the earliest images of St Christopher, were given animal heads in their iconography to demonstrate righteousness – and thus wholeness. This custom found its way into medieval repertoires. A Byzantine medallion seen in the nineteenth century bore the image

<sup>72</sup> Head, 'Coins', p. 666, fig. 313.

<sup>73</sup> A myth reported by Ramsay, 'Phrygia', p. 669.

<sup>74</sup> Head, 'Coins', p. 666.

<sup>75</sup> Eusebius, 'Constantine', Bk 4, Ch. 25.

of a dog-headed man in military dress, holding a serpent-staff and balance, and in Greek the inscription, 'Gabriel glorious one, Michael torch-bearer, help!'<sup>76</sup> Such imagery of Michael resonates not only with Jewish representations of righteousness, but also with depictions of the Egyptians' dog-headed Anubis and of the Greeks' Hermes with his serpent-staff. All three were regarded as psychopomps – but the serpents could as well be Apollonian.

#### *Michael as healer in the Middle Ages*

This Byzantine medallion makes a find from the London cemetery of St Mary in Spitalfields all the more intriguing. This was a group of seven gold coins minted in 1509 during the reign of Henry VIII and of a type known as 'Angels' because they carry on the obverse an image of Michael defeating a reptilian devil. (On the reverse is a ship, which had been on the reverse of medieval gold coins since 1344.). The Spitalfields 'Angels' were found in a pit in the demolished remains of a house within the hospital grounds.<sup>77</sup> Such coins were handed out as talismans by the English monarch at a special ceremony to sufferers of the skin disease, scrofula, otherwise known as King's Evil. Coins were pierced, to be worn around victims' necks as an amulet to reinforce the cure.

Both the ceremony and the gold 'Angel' (worth one third of a pound) were introduced in 1465 by Edward IV. Charles I (1625-1649) introduced a version of the coin which bears the inscription AMOR POPULI PRAESIDIUM REGIS ('the love of the people is the King's protection').<sup>78</sup> This reflects the king's concern about popular discontent, justified by the events of the English Civil War which ended in his execution in 1649. One of the last people to be touched for the King's Evil was Samuel Johnson, one of the greatest literary figures of the eighteenth century, who was touched by Queen Anne (1702-1714). The first Hanoverian monarch, George I (1714-1727), abandoned the practice, which was by then regarded as superstitious.

The involvement of Michael in the apparatus for this ceremony clearly had its roots in the belief in Michael's healing powers dating back to antiquity. Such is the power of imagery for the desperately sick or anxious, especially when expressed as amulets. A much earlier example, a bronze pendant showing Michael and dated to the sixth or seventh century, bears words from Psalm 90: '*He that dwells in the help of the highest... [will abide under the protection of God.]*'<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Zofia Ameisenowa, 'Animal-headed gods, evangelists, saints, and righteous men', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12 (1949), pp. 21-45, at pp. 44-5. The medallion was described by P[aulos K.] Carolidis, *Anubis, Hermes, Michael* (Strasbourg, 1913).

<sup>77</sup> *British Archaeology News* (Council for British Archaeology) 67 (October, 2002), online at <<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/ba/ba67/news.shtml>>, accessed March 11, 2008.

<sup>78</sup> Department of Coins and Medals, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Shown on the Fitzwilliam Museum's website at <<http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/coins/coinofthemoment/angel/angel.html>>, accessed November 2, 2005.

<sup>79</sup> Royal Ontario Museum, 986.181.123. For Michael on so-called '*hystera*' pendants, see Jeffrey Spier, 'Medieval Byzantine magical amulets and their tradition', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 56 (1993), pp. 25-62.

Michael's arrival in Britain was undoubtedly aided, if not instituted, as a result of the crediting of Michael by Gregory the Great, the pope responsible for the Augustinian mission to England, with saving Rome from pestilence. Gregory had a vision of the archangel sheathing a bloody sword on Hadrian's Mausoleum, since known as Castel' Sant' Angelo. Michael became a favoured intercessor for the health of cattle, and after him was named Angelica, one of the most famous and widely used medicinal plants in medieval Britain, associated not with the general feast of Michaelmas, September 29, but with his Gargano feast, May 8, when it was expected to be in flower. Furthermore, medieval prayers to Michael had a strongly magical character.<sup>80</sup>

At the mass of St Michael at Salisbury cathedral in the early sixteenth century the following hymn was sung:

‘A chosen band, let us our vows upraise  
With harmony of tuneful harp and lute,  
That so, the glorious wars of Michael ended,  
The incense of our prayers may be accepted  
Upon the golden altar before God;  
To whom in glory sing we Alleluya’

– and the people prayed together:

‘We, trusting in the prayers of St Michael, thy archangel, humbly beseech thee, O Lord, that we may in heart and mind attain unto that which we seek in rendering him honour.’

While such sentiments appear wholly natural within a late medieval English liturgical setting, they take on a deeper, more suggestive character when read alongside the following hymn to Michael, preserved on a scrap of Egyptian papyrus from a date somewhere in the fifth to eighth century:<sup>81</sup>

1 Come, let us bow down  
and let us fall before him  
and let us sing together  
3 While the chorus of angels  
is saying:  
5 Hail, Michael  
the great fu[n]ctionary...  
...  
7 ... exalted image  
forever.  
9 As the entire chorus of angels assists  
they glorify the one who has crowned (them):  
11 ARCHE even of the angels.  
With yo[u], as we raise a song

<sup>80</sup> Duffy, ‘Stripping of the Altars’, pp. 269-70.

<sup>81</sup> University of Pennsylvania Museum, E 16403, translated and discussed by Robert A. Kraft, ‘In praise of Michael the Archangel’ (1998), <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/other/journals/kraftpub/Papyri/Museum%20of%20the%20University%20of%20Pennsylvania/Michael%20Hymn>>, accessed March 11, 2008.



[we] sing a hymn and cry out:  
 14 Holy are you  
 Captain of the entirety (?).

*Michael and baptism*

Michael's patronage of healing waters was long remembered in Asia Minor. Chonae and the miraculous icon in its church was still a pilgrimage destination through to the thirteenth century.<sup>82</sup> Those whose prayers at Chonai are recorded included an emperor, Manuel I, who came there on the eve of the fatal battle of Myriokephalon in 1176, holy men on long peregrinations who became saints, and a young man from Paphlagonia whose name is unknown. The fame of the church was a factor in the town becoming an archbishopric *circa* 860 and a metropolitanate a century later.<sup>83</sup>

Nevertheless, springs were not only visited for healing. They were also natural baptismal places, especially if already held to be holy. Michael's feast on May 8, commemorating his second apparition at Gargano, coincides with the eve of the earliest date in the Easter cycle for Whit Sunday, the feast of Pentecost. From early Christian times Whit Sunday had been, together with Easter (and gradually other festivals too), the conventional time for baptism. Whitsun eve was not only the candidates' day of preparation, but also the traditional time for blessing the font (a custom which long survived). Around the turn of the second century, the theologian Tertullian wrote in his treatise on baptism that an angel was present at the font and prepared its waters. Under this angel's auspices candidates were prepared, by the cleansing of the font, for the reception of the Holy Spirit.<sup>84</sup> Tertullian attached great importance to the blessing of the water of baptism within the baptismal liturgy, which he regarded as having been prefigured, *inter alia*, by the Pool of Bethesda whose waters were supposedly moved by the angel.<sup>85</sup>

The earliest of Britain's Michael churches existed long before May 8 fell out of favour as a date of the archangel's celebration.<sup>86</sup> Both his feasts, May 8 and September 29 (anniversary of the consecration of his first church at Rome), appear in the ninth-century *Old English Martyrology*; both were fixed by Gregory VIII in 1187. Michael's name is inscribed on medieval fonts from France.<sup>87</sup> In

<sup>82</sup> Foss, 'Pilgrimage', describes the shrines visited by a native of Phrygia later known as St Lazaros in the late tenth century, from a text in *Acta Sanctorum*, November 3, cols. 511, 588f., and reference to Chonae in the *Vita* of Cyril Phileotes, ed. E. Sargologos, *Vie de s. Cyrille le Philéote* (Brussels, 1964), chap. 18.

<sup>83</sup> Foss, 'Pilgrimage'.

<sup>84</sup> Tertullian, 'De Baptismate', in *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina, i-ii etc (Turnhout, 1954ff).

<sup>85</sup> Victor Saxer, *Les Rites de l'Initiation Chrétienne du IIe au VIe Siècle: Esquisse Historique et Signification d'après leurs Principaux Témoins* (Spoleto, Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, c. 1988), p. 127.

<sup>86</sup> Jones, 'Saints', pp. 69ff, and 'Michael', pp. 149-52.

<sup>87</sup> I am grateful to Professor André Vauchez for pointing this out to me.

British churches these are normally at the west, a location linked to dedications honouring John the Baptist.<sup>88</sup> However, it is worth noticing that at the west end of St Gall, according to the famous ninth-century architectural plan, one of the towers was to be dedicated in honour of the Archangel. Baptism, in which the Christian ‘dies unto sin’ and acquires the promise of Resurrection through immersion and/or anointing with water and chrism, requires vows of struggle and the rejection of the Devil.<sup>89</sup> The blessing of the font, involving the dipping into its water of the paschal candle, symbolises the crucified Christ’s descent into, and his harrowing of, hell, preparatory to his resurrection. The Easter Vigil liturgy underlines the victory: ‘This is the night in which Christ harrowed hell,’ and earlier, ‘This is the night in which Moses parted the Red Sea and led the Children of Israel to liberty.’ An angel is said to have parted the sea. In some Mediterranean landscapes the tomb is represented by a grotto like the one at Mont Sant’ Angelo on Gargano. Britain has very few such caves – but a great many springs.

Some threads of evidence support the likelihood that Michael’s May festival long influenced Insular ideas about the archangel and his commemoration. May 8 is the day of a famous day of flowers and dancing, the ‘Furry’ or *Feria* (fair) Day, at Helston in Cornwall, where the patron saint of the parish has been Michael. A large stone which lies in the centre of the town, a geological erratic, is said to have been dropped from heaven during a fight between Michael and the Devil. The May devotion here is particularly striking, given that Mount St Michael, only a few miles away, observes rather the feast of Mont St Michel, October 18. It may even explain the occasional commemoration of St Luke’s Day, not otherwise notable in Britain. Supporting the argument here for Michael as a saint of baptismal and healing waters are the places in watery contexts in Britain anciently associated with the archangel. His springs include the one which actually rises inside his church in Rutland at the suggestively named Whitwell (‘white well’), so called by the mid-eleventh century. Then there are the pools by the minsters of Lichfield, founded in the seventh century, and Coventry, known by the tenth, and perhaps also that by Ledbury, Herefordshire, reputed to be the seat of a British bishop. Pre-Conquest riverside mother churches include St Michael-on-Wyre in Lancashire, South Malling in Sussex, and Stone in Staffordshire, and the great many riverine and estuarine churches of Michael in Scotland.<sup>90</sup> The significance of these sites for British history includes their possible use as places of mass baptism during the conversion of the English rulers and their households. They also provide a plausible interface between Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon Christianity.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Statistically positive data collected by Tom Macluskey of West Virginia University links John the Baptist churches with westward orientation at the time of John’s Midsummer Nativity feast (research seminar, Centre for English Local History, Leicester University, 2002).

<sup>89</sup> I am grateful to colleagues at the 2006 Bari conference on sanctuaries of St Michael for this observation.

<sup>90</sup> For these and other sites, see Jones, ‘Michael’, and the indexed references to Michael in Jones, ‘Saints’, esp. pp. 67-82.

<sup>91</sup> Jones, ‘Saints’, pp. 77-9.

*Possible comparative sites in the Balkans*

It seems very likely that similar sites are to be found in various parts of the Continent – including, perhaps, the land of Constantine's birth. Setting aside the dates of Michael's feasts and narrowing attention to places under his patronage which lie on or close to rivers, one immediately thinks, for example, of the cave lavra of the Archangel Michael at Ras, near Novi Pazar.<sup>92</sup> This community of hermits is a significant component of the complex of early religious sites which mark the birthplace of the Serbian kingdom, a Unesco World Heritage Site protected under international convention. The Byzantine basilica of St Peter here has been described as the oldest Christian building preserved in the Balkans,<sup>93</sup> substantially dating from the ninth or tenth century but with foundations dating to the sixth.<sup>94</sup> Danica Popović rightly offers the lavra as an example of the 'desert' sites attractive to communities of hermits across Christendom.<sup>95</sup>

There may be more to be suggested about this site, however. Though its troglodite church of the Archangel dates only from the thirteenth century, the location is typical of other sites across Christendom whose topographical setting was attractive at much earlier periods to pious pilgrims, and those seeking supernatural cures. Caves were indeed a feature of holy communities in Cappadocia, Egypt, southern Italy, and famous Western places such as that of St Martin at Marmoutier near Tours. However, the striking, and to medieval minds probably miraculous character of the site at Ras derives from the way the Crna Reka ('black river'), disappears underground just in front of the monastery and reappears after several hundred meters. The relics of a thirteenth-century ascetic, St Peter of Korisha, attracted pilgrims in much the same way, it might be suspected, that they were drawn by the supposed presence and emanations of Michael at Chonae in the context of a striking topography, its gorge held to have been created by the archangel's miraculous splitting of the rock and unifying of the waters.

When the traditions behind St Peter's shrine at Ras are examined, familiar features appear. As described in a modern account by an Orthodox religious, Peter (b. 1211) and his sister Helena left their home village of Unyemir (present day Uymir) near Peć, to become monks, living in caves on a mountain in the same district.<sup>96</sup> Distracted by visiting relatives they sought a more remote location in

<sup>92</sup> Danica and Marko Popović, 'The cave lavra of the archangel Michael in Ras', *Starinar*, New Series 49, 1998 (1999), pp. 103-30.

<sup>93</sup> 'Serbia. Stari Ras and Sopoćani', report of Unesco, 'State of Conservation of World Heritage Properties in Europe', Periodic Reporting, Cycle 1, Section II Summary (2006), available on-line at <<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/periodicreporting/EUR/cycle01/section2/96-summary.pdf>>, accessed March 8, 2008.

<sup>94</sup> Marko Popović, 'The early Byzantine basilica at Ras', *Starinar*, New Series 48 (1997).

<sup>95</sup> Danica Popović, 'Deserts and Holy Mountains of medieval Serbia: Written sources, spatial patterns, architectural designs', *Recueil des Travaux de l'Institut d'Etudes Byzantines* 44, 2007, pp. 253-78.

<sup>96</sup> The following account is that of Hieromonk Joachim Ross, published on the website of the Diocese of Raska and Prizren at <<http://www.kosovo.net/stpeter.html>>, accessed March 12, 2008.

the Crna Reka region 'near the church of St Peter' but did not find sufficient solitude. They then moved to the mountains overlooking Prizren, close to the village of Korisha (present day Kabash). Left by her brother who took himself to a higher, rockier location, Helena's prayer is striking, for she addresses the mountain's persona: 'Holy Mountain of God. I beg that I find death in you. Although you have graciously received me, I am alone. Have mercy upon me. Accept me here and keep me until I die.' Peter, attacked by demons and in particular by one in the form of a snake, is visited by the Archangel Michael who attacks the snake with his sword and drives it away. Peter's eventual grave at Korisha becomes a place of pilgrimage, and subsequently his remains are reinterred in St Michael's lavra at Ras, except for a relic taken to Constantinople. (Later they were moved again to the church of the Archangel Michael at Kalashin.)

Investigation of similar sites in south-east Europe could yield important results for our understanding of this significant aspect of Constantine's Byzantine legacy to Eastern and Western Europe alike.

Грејем Џонс

#### КОНСТАНТИНОВА ЗАОСТАВШТИНА: ТРАГОМ ВИЗАНТИЈЕ КРОЗ ИСТОРИЈУ И КУЛТУРУ БРИТАНСКИХ ОСТРВА: ПРИМЕР АРХАНГЕЛА МИХАИЛА

У енглеском схватању сопствене историје и културе централно место заузимају компликовани односи са Римом. Рим је у критичним периодима био виђен као архетип енглеског царства. Култура царског Рима - *Romanitas* - инспирисала је англо-саксонске краљеве, а Рим као цивилизатор представљао је снажан узор онима који су направили и водили Британску империју. У неким другим временима Рим је био омражен. Протестантска антипатија према папинству слагала се са националним ривалитетом према директним наследницима Рима, нарочито према Француској и Шпанији. Византија се тешко може уклопити у ову слику. Ипак, историчари уметности истичу византијски утицај на религиозно вајарство и илустрацију књига у периоду стварања енглеске цркве. У том периоду, свештеници и монаси са истока дошли су да помогну у обликовању ове цркве. Чини се да се Византија чвршће усадила у свест енглеских острвских суседа: Велса, Шкотске и Ирске. У једном од претходних радова из ове серије истраживало се колико дуго је име Константин присутно у владарским породицама краљевстава са келтског и пиктског говорног подручја, на пример. Никада није до краја испитано колико се дугује Византији и како се тај дуг може упоредити са ставовима према Риму. У овом раду сугерише се начин за почетак истраживања и наводе се теме које се и саме намећу за разматрање. Значај оваквог пројекта у модерном добу лежи у контрасту између распрострањене енглеске фобије од остатка Европе и лагоднијег односа према Континенту који карактерише ставове Шкотске, Велса и Ирске. Ове теме су у складу са савременим гледиштима оних земаља југоисточне Европе које се још увек хватају у коштац са условима за приступ Европској унији.