

and tensions between factional rivalries among Florentine families and collective civic concerns. The most comprehensive early history of the bridge is Giovanni Villani's *Nuova cronica* (c.1300/20–1348), which steers the direction of much of the study. In chapter 1 Flanigan offers an in-depth analysis of the text, which she compares with the archaeological evidence and other early documentary sources to debunk some of the myths generated by Villani, among them the idea that the bridge dates back to the Carolingian period. Flanigan presents a more reliable chronology of the bridge's early history, from the first permanent structure, in existence since at least the second century, up to 1333.

In chapters 2 and 3 Flanigan presents new archival evidence, especially legislative decrees, which she uses to trace the bridge's reconstruction between 1339 and 1346, which was often disrupted by political turmoil. The author closely analyses the officials and committees responsible for overseeing the repairs as well as their process of election, which she describes as a 'microcosm of the larger Florentine political system' (p.42). At the end of chapter 2 Flanigan briefly addresses the contentious question of the bridge's architect. Past attributions include Giotto, Andrea Pisano and Taddeo Gaddi. She persuasively concludes that the bridge's design was probably directed not by any one architect but by a government-appointed committee, possibly with input from expert consultants, although this remains undocumented.

These detailed sections on the process of construction are complemented by the fourth chapter, which focuses on the materials and techniques involved in late medieval bridge building. Flanigan presents detailed analyses of drawings, measurements, construction methods and architectural features of the Ponte Vecchio and usefully connects her case study to broader construction trends in Florence. She highlights how the selection of particular materials, such as the local *pietra forte* stone, contributed to a 'beautiful and honourable' (*passim*) aesthetic that was consciously pursued in order to visually and materially unite various civic buildings across the city. Throughout the book, references to other architectural projects in Florence, including the Palazzo della Signoria, the Palazzo dell'Arte della Lana and the Palazzo del Podestà, offer valuable comparisons, which extend the monograph's scope.

The extent to which fourteenth-century aesthetic and political theories influenced the way in which the Ponte Vecchio was

integrated into the urban fabric is discussed in chapter 5. The author highlights that architectural order was seen as essential to civic harmony and a reflection of good governance, echoing the ideals depicted in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's frescos in the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena (1338). Chapter 6 explores the concept of architectural order by examining the shops that lined the bridge, beginning with their establishment in 1345, up to their privatisation in 1495. The standardisation of the shops on the bridge – despite the variety of tenants and professions, which is summarised in the chapter's concluding table – is discussed as part of a broader urban strategy to help the government uphold civic order, while also contributing to a cohesive commercial architectural language across the city. In her 'Epilogue' Flanigan traces key moments in the bridge's evolution after 1495, including its sixteenth-century transformations and the addition of the Vasari Corridor, modernisation efforts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the repairs following the Second World War and the flood of 1966.

Flanigan's work distinguishes itself by the integration of visual, documentary and physical evidence and highlights the potential for more extensive research into government-sponsored and corporate models of civic architecture and patronage. As the author observes, this area has traditionally 'received far less attention than artistic patronage by private individuals and families' (p.39). She successfully demonstrates the ongoing relevance of monographic studies that bridge art history, architectural history and urban design, offering a useful framework for future research.

1 See T. Flanigan: 'The Ponte Vecchio: building an urbanized bridge in early modern Florence', unpublished PhD thesis (New York University 2006).

### **Eccentric Renaissance: El Greco, Michaël Damaskēnos, Geōrgios Klontzas**

By Charles Barber. 336 pp. incl. 160 col. ills. (Oxford University Press, 2024), £59. ISBN 978-0-190-2090-0.

by GEORGIOS E. MARKOU

Venetian Candia (modern-day Heraklion in Crete) defied the rigid classifications of the Early Modern period. Just as its citizens had fluid religious identities – freely adhering to both Greek and Latin rites, venerating saints

from either tradition and intermarrying across confessional lines – the art produced there reflects a profound synthesis of diverse traditions. Charles Barber seeks to unravel this artistic inventiveness by looking at three Cretan masters: Domenikos Theotokopoulos, better known as El Greco (1541–1614), Michaël Damaskēnos (c.1530–c.1593) and Geōrgios Klontzas (c.1540–c.1608). Trained in Candia within the Byzantine tradition, their careers took divergent paths: El Greco abandoned the island in 1567 for Italy and later Spain, never to return; Damaskēnos moved between Venice and Candia throughout his career; Klontzas appears to have remained there.

Barber focuses on both written and artistic material from the early 1590s. He acknowledges the study's limited chronological scope but argues that it offers a distinctive and valuable perspective on broader questions of cultural and artistic identity in the period, particularly in relation to how experiences of colonialism, migration, war and plague shaped conceptions and articulations of selfhood. To frame the strategies of these painters, who on the one hand championed established iconographic conventions and, on the other, pushed the boundaries of stylistic and conceptual innovation, Barber employs the term *eccentric*.

The book consists of four chapters. The first examines the well-studied Venetian aristocrat and intellectual Andrea Cornaro (1547–c.1616), and is the only one to focus on a patron rather than a painter. Cornaro serves as a productive case study through which Barber brings together earlier scholarship on the artistic sensibilities and cultural milieu of those who engaged with, influenced and appreciated the work of these three masters. He is particularly relevant to Barber's use of the term *eccentric*, since in 1591 he founded the literary society *Accademia degli Stravaganti* in Candia. The author translates '*degli Stravaganti*' as 'of the Eccentrics' (p.13). However, the Italian *stravagante*, like the Spanish *extravagancia* – a term that appears in El Greco's early biographies, as Barber notes in the introduction – conveys a sense of extravagance and elaboration in both style and persona rather than eccentricity. As such, it captures the deliberate deviation from convention that characterised the work and self-fashioning of the individuals under discussion.<sup>1</sup>

Each of the following three chapters is a case study of one of the artists. El Greco's continuous engagement with the Greek tradition of painting is explored through his marginal annotations in copies of Vitruvius's

*De architectura* and Giorgio Vasari's *Vite*, made during his time in Toledo. In his analysis of these notes, including one in which El Greco draws a parallel between his Greek forebears and the Italian moderns, Barber observes that the artist rejects Antiquity and proposes a Greek-inflected model of progress that is distant from ancient artistic forms. This, he goes on to suggest, may have been a conscious effort to reclaim and redefine a Greek artistic legacy in response to Vasari's dismissal of Byzantine art as crude.

In the third chapter the author demonstrates his iconographic acumen in an analysis of six icons by Damaskēnos. His close and thoughtful reading is insightful, although at times the excessive focus on particular nuances detracts from the broader analysis. One example is his discussion of an icon depicting the divine liturgy (Fig. 4), in which the halo of the Holy Spirit (in the form of a dove) touches that of God the Father. Building on earlier scholarship, Barber presents this as a deliberate theological allusion to contemporary discourses about the dispute between the Eastern and Western Churches over the *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed, which centred on the question of whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son or just the Father.<sup>3</sup> However, one might just as plausibly consider the detail a matter of artistic miscalculation, particularly given the panel's compositional symmetry. The final chapter turns to the well-known *Apocalyptic History* manuscript by Klontzas, completed in the 1590s (Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, Gr.VII,22 (=1466)), which Barber argues was shaped by the experience of plague in Candia in 1592.

The book would have benefited from more careful copyediting. Beyond occasional typographical errors, there are inconsistencies in the translation of well-known terms. For instance, *quadri* is incorrectly translated as 'frames', but just a few lines later is correctly given as 'paintings' (p.14). Similar issues arise with Greek terminology, such as the mistranslation of 'Ο Δείπνος ὁ Μυστικός as the Mystical Supper, instead of the more accurate Last Supper. In addition, the incorporation of recent studies on the social and cultural world of Venetian Candia – such as the work of Patricia Fortini Brown – might

**4. *Divine liturgy*, by Michaël Damaskēnos. c.1591. Tempera and oil on panel, 109 by 87 cm. (St Catherine Museum, Heraklion; © Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Culture, General Directorate of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage; Ephorate of Antiquities of Heraklion).**

have brought valuable perspectives to the fore and further enriched the analysis.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, a more sustained engagement with the rich body of Greek-language scholarship on the artists and issues explored in this volume could have offered additional depth and further enhanced the discussion.<sup>4</sup>

The artistic triad examined in this volume provide an opportunity for a nuanced study of trajectories that are distinct yet intertwined, each shaped by the individuals' respective experiences. Although productively employed by Barber as a framework for interpreting their work, the concept of eccentricity would benefit from further contextualisation to illuminate its significance more fully. The idiosyncrasies of the three artists' work should not be seen as novel expressions of Greek

masters seeking to surpass their predecessors in creativity or deliberately engaging with alternative traditions, but rather as part of a recurring phenomenon within the Mediterranean, one that has ebbed and flowed in intensity over the centuries.

Despite the fact that they date from his years in Toledo, El Greco's intimate and occasionally opaque marginalia demonstrate his sustained engagement with Greek tradition after he left Candia. One might observe a slight imbalance between the chapters and the artists: Damaskēnos and Klontzas remain more firmly anchored within the artistic and cultural milieu of Venetian Candia. Ultimately, this volume highlights the richness and complexity of Greek-trained artists active in Venice's overseas



## Books

territories, adding to the growing body of scholarship on cross-cultural exchange and regional specificity in the Early Modern Mediterranean.

1 According to Giuseppe Boerio, *stravagante* means extravagant, whimsical or wildly imaginative. See G. Boerio: *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano*, Venice 1829, p.639.

2 J. Fleischer: 'The role of icon painting in theological controversies: Michael Damaskinos' Trinity concept', *Akten des XVI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses* II.6, Vienna 1982, pp.291-96.

3 P.F. Brown: 'Ritual geographies in Venice's colonial empire', in M. Jurdjevic and R. Strøm-Olsen, eds: *Rituals of Politics and Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of Edward Muir*, Toronto 2016, pp.43-89.

4 On literary production in Candia see, recently, T. Markomichelaki: 'Εδώ εις το Κάστρον της Κρήτης'. Ένας λογοτεχνικός χάρτης του βενετσιάνικου Χάνδακα, Thessaloniki 2015.

### Stained Glass before 1700 in the Collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the J. Paul Getty Museum (Corpus Vitrearum United States of America, X/I and X/II)

By Virginia Chieffo Raguin. Two vols, 508 pp. incl. 420 col. + 89 b. & w. ill. (Harvey Miller Publishers, London, 2024), €250. ISBN 978-1-912554-71-3.

by JOSEPH SPOONER

The huge losses of medieval stained glass incurred during the Second World War, and the photographic campaigns that documented windows that had been removed for safety instilled a sense of urgency in the need for systematic documentation of medieval glass. In 1952, together with fellow art historians, Hans R. Hahnloser (1899-1974) established the Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi (the corpus of medieval stained glass) at the International Congress for the History of Art in Amsterdam. The project's reach was and remains international. Some European countries (for example, Czechoslovakia in 1975) were able to offer an inventory of their medieval glass in one volume; others (among them Great Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the United States) continue the painstaking work of cataloguing and interpreting the stained glass within their borders. Contacts are also being set up in further countries, including Ukraine, Chile and Luxembourg. With changes in our understanding of the Middle Ages and a desire to include later glass, the committees in some countries now carry out their work under the banner of the Corpus Vitrearum (CV) and adopt different strategies for dealing with their material.

The CV in the USA focuses on glass predating 1700 and publishes series of checklists, occasional papers and monographs. This book by Virginia Chieffo Raguin is the tenth volume in the last category. CV volumes are invariably long in the making – some are the work of a lifetime – and publication of any one is an occasion for celebration. Raguin's lavishly illustrated work is no exception. It is especially welcome as none of the stained glass in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) is currently on display, and less than half of the glass holdings of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (JPGM), are viewable by the public.

The book consists of two volumes. The layout is clear and the production values meet the high standards familiar from Harvey Miller publishers. Volume 1 contains a general 'Introduction to the Los

Angeles collections' and is devoted to the LACMA catalogue; volume 2 comprises the JPGM catalogue, as well as the endmatter, including glossaries, bibliography and index. Each catalogue section is prefaced by an introduction to that collection, which acts as a reminder that stained-glass collections and their display constitute but part of a museum's much broader collecting history. The introduction to LACMA, the holdings of which benefited from the generosity of William Randolph Hearst (1863-1951), sketches the newspaper magnate and politician's life and collecting activities: he made acquisitions with no specific location

5. *Housing the stranger*, after Maarten van Heemskerck. Northern Netherlands, c.1560-70. Colourless glass, vitreous paint, silver stain and lead came, 24.8 by 20 cm. (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles).

