



Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Book of Job: A Preliminary Study of the Miniature Illustrations - Its Origin and Development

S. Papadaki-Oekland

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Of all the Old Testament books, the Book of Job remains acutely contemporary today. Written between the 6th and 3rd c. B.C., it deals with subjects such as the presence of evil in the world, misery, the quest for justice, faith, and the behavior of people when they face sudden twists and turns of life. It seems that the ancient text had been illustrated in the Early Christian period due to its fascinating novel-like narrative style. In her own study on the Book of Job, Stella Papadaki-Oekland probes into all the Byzantine illuminated manuscripts of the illustrated Greek text. The number of miniature illustrations included in these fifteen manuscripts, dating from the 9th to the 16th century, comes to more than 1800 of which 2/3 of the about 380 illustrated herein are previously unpublished manuscript images. The book is an unabridged version with minor changes of Papadaki-Oekland's Inaugural Dissertation at Heidelberg University (1979) and is published posthumously by her daughters, Helen-Aina and Astrid-Zoe -in homage to Byzantine Art. The book is of invaluable importance due to its methodological approach. As the leading art historian Hans Belting points out, the study of Stella Papadaki-Oekland calls in question Kurt Weitzmann's rigid theory about the process of the Byzantine illuminated manuscripts production. This remains the most complete and comprehensive study about the Book of Job in Byzantine art.

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