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**Corporeal Perceptions of the Immaterial
Agency and rhythm in Palaeologan Monumental Painting**

In this paper, I discuss the role of pictorial form in the faithful's experience of the divine through the holy image in the parekklesion of the Chora monastery in Istanbul. In addressing issues related to the experience of the holy image by the faithful inside church space, I discuss the involvement of the body - material and conceptual - in the act of worship and the process of producing meaning. The concept of the icon as space-in-between that unites the human and the divine in a "heaven on earth" and facilitates communication between them is studied here as a result of a certain type of pictorial management of the images of the parekklesion. In order to address the complexity of communicating with the holy image, I examine how the pictorial technique of rhythm mediates and influences the beholder's experience of divine presence. Two images from the Chora parekklesion - the Anastasis and the image of St Theodore Tiro - are studied here within the context of their architectural and iconographic design, their symbolic function, and in relation to the way that the faithful communicates with the divine through them. I argue that rhythm adds a corporeal aspect to image-beholder communication by facilitating the extension of the holy image towards the physical space of the beholder. Through studying the technique of rhythm, I look at how the interaction of the faithful with the icon moves from visual experience to bodily inclusion. With the application of rhythm to the icons of the parekklesion, the beholders, when standing in front of the images, find themselves corporeally enveloped in a virtual cone that emanates from the painting surface and calls for the body's engagement as a whole. In exploring the way that the beholder experiences divine presence through rhythm, I problematise a reading of the icon as an interactional domain that exists between realities - human and divine, visibility and invisibility, immediacy and mediation, past and present - and acts as a link between them in order to enable corporeal communication between Imaged and beholder.