

Notes on Byzantine Art and Culture in Italy and Especially in Rome



Analecta Gorgiana

255

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Arthur Frothingham



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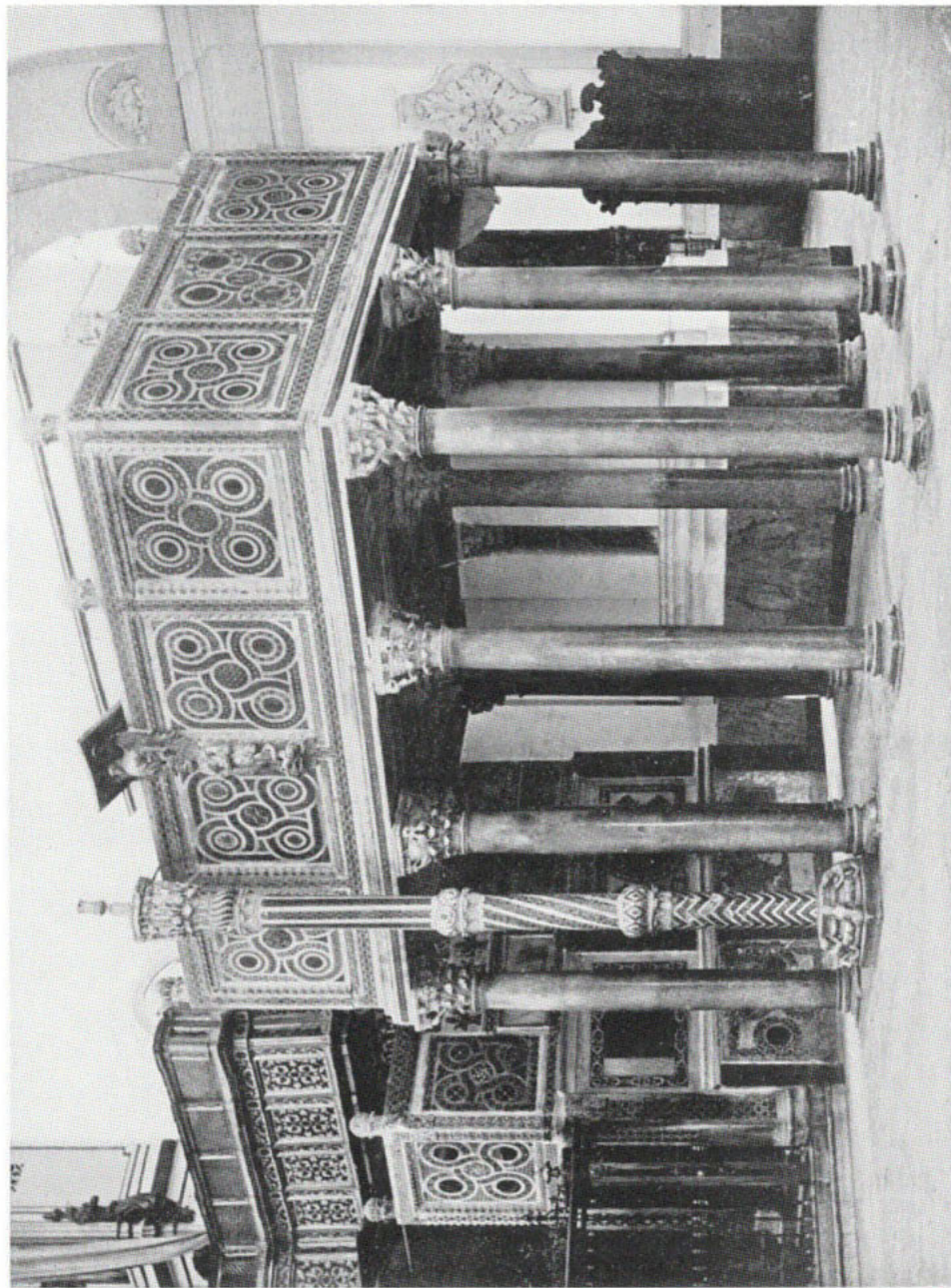


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LARGER PULPIT AND PASCHAL CANDLESTICK IN CATHEDRAL, SALERNO.
(XIII Century)

NOTES ON BYZANTINE ART AND CULTURE IN ITALY AND ESPECIALLY IN ROME.

[PLATES XIII, XIV, XV.]

In a recent number of the JOURNAL¹ I published whatever evidence had come to my notice of the presence of Byzantine artists in Italy during the Middle Ages, evidence based on artists' signatures and on literary sources, without reference to style. I then expressed the belief that such evidence could never prove entirely satisfactory, because the custom of signing their works was not prevalent among Byzantine artists, especially during the early part of the Middle Ages, and because the literary evidence appears to be extremely scanty. The two other methods employed to ascertain whether a work of mediæval art is or is not Byzantine in character have been: (1) the comparative study of Eastern and Western iconography, extremely important but still in its infancy; (2) a judgment based upon artistic style—a method still charged with the personal equation, and rendered extremely insecure from the general lack of a clear acquaintance with the real character, the variations and the limits of the Byzantine style.² A foundation for this acquaintance must be laid through the combined study of all the branches of Byzantine civilization that are fundamentally connected with the Fine Arts;³ and this means much

¹ *A.J.A.*, ix, pp. 32-52: *Byzantine Artists in Italy from the VI to the XV cent.*

² A good example of the insufficiency of this method is the discussion that has taken place regarding the frescoes of the XI century in S. Angelo in Formis near Capua. According to KRAUS—the foremost German authority on Christian Archaeology—these frescoes mark the close of Western Carlovingian art as contrasted to Byzantine, and he compares them to the frescoes at Reichenau (*Jahrb. d. k. preuss. Kunstsamml.*, Bd. xiv, Heft 1-3). CARL FREY, on the contrary, sees in the S. Angelo frescoes the work of the pure Byzantine school (*Deutsches Wochenblatt*, Oct. 12 and 19, 1893); so does ED. DOBBERT, in the *Repert. f. Kunstwiss.*, 1892.

³ An excellent Byzantine bibliography is given by KRUMBACHER in his *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur* (Munich, 1891), on pp. 27-32.