

XVIII THE STRUCTURE OF BYZANTINE AND EUROPEAN
ICONOCLASM
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WHILE Byzantine Iconoclasm has received much attention from scholars, European Iconoclasm, until very recently, has been a surprisingly neglected phenomenon.¹ Byzantinists have been prepared to explore the implications and significance of Iconoclasm generally, for both doctrinal history and for the history of art, and have not shrunk from arguing tenaciously about its genesis, motivation and scope. But the same cannot be said for European historians: Iconoclasm in post-Byzantine Europe still awaits adequate comprehensive treatment. Outbreaks of Iconoclasm in Europe have not always been minor and isolated events. In the Reformation it swept countries like England, Germany, France and the Netherlands – to say nothing of Eastern Europe – with a vigour that was as great as anything in the eighth and ninth centuries, and with a polemical backing that was perhaps greater. But the issues it raises parallel those of Byzantine Iconoclasm. Even the arguments against images were entirely derivative. Nothing could be more misleading than to insist on the absence of a connection, either in fact or in spirit, between the Iconoclasm of the eighth and ninth centuries and that of the Reformation.²

An attempt will be made here to point to some of the manifold similarities that link these phenomena. There are structural similarities as well, and it is in the framework of these that one may also consider such events as the *bruciamenti* of Savonarola's Florence and the Iconoclasm of the French Revolution. A useful analysis of Iconoclasm, both in general and in particular, may be achieved by considering the problems raised under the following headings. Each poses questions which must be asked in the case of almost all Iconoclastic activity and which provide a basis for comparison between widely distributed events. The aim is to discover ways in which individual outbreaks may cast light on each other, and to point to those general features of both Byzantine and European Iconoclasm which are characteristic of the phenomenon as a whole. While some of the questions have been frequently raised, others have often been overlooked: few of them can be considered entirely apart from the others.

Theory

It would be an impossible task to survey everything that was written against images. It would also be a dull one: the variations in the interpretation of the second commandment are endless, and so are the squabbles about how images could or could not reflect the immaterial, divine aspect of the Godhead. One side would say that the only true image of God was man, while the other claimed that one could have images precisely *because* Christ was the incarnate image, *eikōn*, of the divine.³ Did the honour paid to an image refer to its prototype, or were Christian images really no better than pagan idols? These are the questions that recur, from the very first writers on Christian imagery onwards.⁴ It is unnecessary to deal with Eusebius' letter to Constantia, the writings of Epiphanius of Salamis, Hypatios' rebuttal of Julian of Atramytion, and the *horoi* of the Iconoclastic Councils of 754 and 815 here, because all of these have already received much attention in the literature.⁵ They are worth enumerating, however, because every one of the arguments that appears in them reappears, with appalling monotony, in the writings of the Reformation critics of images – from

1. The only attempt to provide an overall view is the brief and inadequate work by J. van Vègh, *Die Bilderstürmer: Eine kulturgeschichtliche Studie* (Strasbourg, 1915). A useful collection of essays on selected manifestations is M. Warnke, ed., *Bildersturm. Die Zerstörung des Kunstwerks* (Munich, 1973). Some regional studies have appeared, but none is as comprehensive as J. Phillips, *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England, 1535–1660* (Berkeley, 1973).

2. The insistence appears in Martin, *History*, 272.

3. See note 10 below.

4. For the sources, see now Hennepf, *Textus*. An excellent selection of sources, with good translations, appears in Mango, *Art*, 3–190. For the pre-Byzantine period especially, these may be supplemented by W. Elliger, *Die Stellung der alten Christen zu den Bildern in den ersten vier Jahrhunderten* (Leipzig, 1930), and H. Koch, *Die altchristliche Bilderfrage nach den literarischen Quellen* (Göttingen, 1917).

5. For Eusebius' letter itself, see PG, 20, cols 1545 ff.; on the possibly spurious writings of Epiphanius of Salamis, see K. Holl, "Die Schriften des Epiphanius gegen die Bilderverehrung," *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, II (Tübingen, 1928), 351ff. For Hypatios of Ephesus and Julian, see F. Diekamp, *Analecta Patristica*, OCA, 107 (1938), 127ff., and Kitzinger, *DOP*, 8 (1954), 94–5 (note 33), 138; and for the *horos* of the Council of 754, see Mansi, XIII, col. 208ff. (read out and refuted by the Council of 787), and Anastos, "754," 177ff.; for that of 815, partially preserved in the *Refutatio et Eversio* of the Patriarch Nikephoros, see Alexander, *DOP*, 7 (1953), 58ff. The evidence for the religious views of the Iconoclasts comes largely from these councils, and also from the *peuseis* of Constantine V, extracted from Nikephoros, *Antirrhethici*, PG, 100, cols. 206–534 text in Ostrogorsky, *Studien*, 8ff. cf. *Anthology* A5, A6, B13, C18, C19 and D22.

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Zwingli and Calvin right down to the vernacular publicists.⁶ Obviously their utilisation of the sources varies, but there is not a new argument, nor even a new emphasis, between them.

The important – and useful – difference is that whereas most of the Byzantine arguments against images are only preserved in the writings of those who rebut them, the Reformation writings have come down to us in their original form. The method of argument is always the same: the marshalling of vast numbers of older sources, some authentic and some spurious, and innumerable quibbles about their validity. The same Christological arguments appear, the same charges of idolatry (although in the Byzantine discussions the emphasis on this varies), the same parallels with pagan practices, and the same insistence on the uncircumscribable and unmaterial nature of God.⁸ Images (after all made only of wood and stone) work miracles which are quite improbable, it is claimed, and relics are held to be an overestimated – and over-supplied – commodity.

All the technical points recur, and a livelier writer like Calvin makes fun of the distinctions between concepts such as *proskynesis latreutikē* and *schetikē*, between *latreia* and *douleia*.⁹ Then there is the delicate matter of the meaning of *eikōn*. Apart from the metaphysical, man-oriented and Word-oriented interpretations of that term,¹⁰ some writers claim that the only true image of Christ is the Eucharist,¹¹ while others hold that the only image which should be tolerated is the Cross itself. In the Reformation, it is true, one finds more sweeping denials than previously of the intercessory abilities of the saints (man can communicate directly with God), so images of the saints are given short shrift.¹² But at the same time – in the Reformation as much as in Byzantium – the virtues of the saints are described as living images; and there is a call for their imitation in place of mere devotion to representations of them. We find this call from Amphilochios of Ikonion in the fourth century down to the Modern Devotion of the Netherlands in the fifteenth century.¹³ Luther is the most tolerant of Reformed writers. Melancthon simply sees them as *adiaphora* (unless they are abused), Zwingli allows the painting of historical scenes outside churches, and Calvin is critical of almost all religious imagery.¹⁴ The popular writers, from Ludwig Hätzer in 1522¹⁵ onwards, right until Didericus Camphuysen in the seventeenth century,¹⁶ tend to be much more critical than the major reformers. They would do away with all portraits, all tomb imagery, all representations on coins, seals and other purely secular objects¹⁷ – to say nothing of pornographic images in domestic or public places.¹⁸

In this respect, there is some divergence from the Byzantine polemic. Many of the later critics were, after all, popular writers, presenting their ideas in vernacular form. They were not always clerics. It was through them, and through preachers from the thirteenth century on, through Savonarola, to the field preachers of the Netherlands, that theological ideas filtered down into the

6. In contrast with the Byzantine writers, the Reformation critics have received little attention. There are, however, the two essays by Hans Freiherr von Campenhausen, "Die Bilderfrage in der Reformation," in *Tradition und Leben – Kräften der Kirchengeschichte* (Tübingen, 1960), 392ff., and "Zwingli und Luther zur Bilderfrage," in W. Schöne, ed., *Das Gottesbild im Abendland* (Witten-Berlin, 1960), 139–172. I have dealt with the minor writers and vernacular publicists in my unpublished Oxford D.Phil. Dissertation, *Iconoclasm and Painting in the Netherlands, 1566 – 1609* (1972), 32–104 and 136–169. On Zwingli, see C. Garside, *Zwingli and the Arts* (New Haven, 1966); and on Calvin, see L. Wencelius' not wholly adequate *L'Esthétique de Calvin* (Paris, 1937).

7. The charge of idolatry, made at the Council of 754, for example was abandoned at the Council of 815. See note 67 below.

8. See especially the *peuseis* of Constantine V, in Ostrogorsky, *Studien*, 8ff.

9. As in the *Institution de la Religion Chrétienne*, ed. F. Baumgartner (Paris, 1888), 54. The distinctions are between the veneration due only to God and the relative veneration of images (προσκύνησις λατρευτική σχετική), and between the reverence which is reserved for God alone and that which is paid to saints (λατρεία δουλεία). Υπερδουλεία, the special veneration paid to the Virgin, is a further complication satirized by Calvin.

10. For a full discussion with sources, see Ladner "Concept," 3–34.

11. See now Gero, *BZ*, 68 (1975), 4–22.

12. Even Claudius of Turin, discussed in Martin, *History*, 262–6, had criticized the concept of the intercession of saints, and, like Erasmus much later, the excessive importance attached to going on pilgrimages. For Erasmus' views on art generally, see E. Panofsky, "Erasmus and the Visual Arts," *JWarb* 32 (1969), 200–227. In almost every Reformation treatise, both for and against images, the cult of images is inextricably associated with that of saints. Vicious criticisms may be found, for example, in J. Veluanus, *Der Leken Wechwyser*, in *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica*, IV (The Hague, 1906), 287–376; and biting satire in P. Marnix van St. Aldegonde, *Vraye Narration et apologie des choses passées au Pays-Bas touchant le fait de la Religion en l'an MDLXVI*, reprinted in J.J. van Toorenebergen, ed., *Philips van Marnix, Godsdienstige en Kerkelijke Geschriften*, I (The Hague, 1871), 35–115; and even as late as J. Lydius, *Den Roomschen Uylen-Spiegel* (Amsterdam, 1671). Vigorous pleas on behalf of the cult of saints occur very frequently, but amongst the Reformation treatises specifically devoted to them, see, for example J. Cochlaeus (recte Dobneck), *De sanctorum invocatione, & intercessione, deque imaginibus . . . liber unus* (Ingolstadt, 1544), specifically countering the views of Bullinger; J. Hessels, *Tractatus pro invocatione sanctorum* (Louvain 1562, 1564, 1568); and J. Garetius, *De sanctorum invocatione liber* (Ghent, 1570).

13. See Anastos "Ethical Theory," 151–160; cf. *Anthology* A7. For similar notions in the Reformation, see the works by Hessels and Garetius cited in the preceding note.

14. See H.F. von Campenhausen, "Die Bilderfrage in der Reformation" on all of these.

15. L. Hätzer, *Ein Urteil Gottes . . . wie man sich mit allen gotzen und bildnissen halten sol* (Zurich, 1523).

16. D. Camphuysen, *Stichtelyke Rymen* (Amsterdam 1641).

17. An early critic of all these, who practised what he preached, was Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt. See his *Von Abahung der Bylder und das keyn Bedtler unter den Christen seyn sollen*, reprinted in H. Leitzmann, ed., *Kleine Texte für theologische und philologische Vorlesungen und Übungen*, (Bonn, 1911), 74.

18. These came under fire from Catholic critics as well, such as Anna Bijns, Martin Donk (Duncanus) and also from Erasmus. See note 129 below.

popular imagination. Theological argument does bear a direct relationship to Iconoclastic practice. Whatever the motivation of the individual iconoclast, he could always justify his action by appealing to some semblance of theological thought. One tore down images, it was often claimed on the spot, not because one was excited or greedy for gain, but because of the idolatrous connotations of images.¹⁹

Motivation

At this stage one must consider Iconoclasm itself, and the Iconoclastic act. The scope of this subject is too broad to permit analyses of specific outbursts, but a number of questions immediately arise. In the first place, one simply asks: Why do men destroy images? That, in many ways, is a question which goes beyond the bounds of historical analysis, but it would beg too many questions to ignore the element of fear in men's attitudes towards images, and to overlook the associated problem of the magical properties supposed to inhere in them. Kitzinger's brilliant study of the Cult of Images before Iconoclasm provides a model analysis of the hold of the image on the popular imagination in a particular period,²⁰ and it is helpful to assume with him that the common denominator of beliefs and practices which attribute magical properties to images is that the distinction between the image and the person represented is to some extent eliminated.²¹

I suggest that there is an unspoken and possibly unconscious awareness of this in that favourite argument of all defenders of images, taken out of context from St. Basil and used from his time on until the sixteenth century and after, that the honour paid to an image passes to its prototype.²² There is no question that when image and prototype become fused, images become prone to the abuses that characterize man's behaviour towards them. This is why images themselves and not only what they represent, work miracles. When one considers this along with the fact that it is usually only *holy* images, consecrated in one way or another, which work miracles, it is not surprising to find a potentially explosive situation. "As long as images remain in the sculptors workshop," claimed an anonymous but frequently reprinted Netherlandish Calvinist, "they can do no miracles – until they are brought into the Church . . ." ²³ And here one remembers the tale of the man who, having failed to receive a cure at the shrine of Cosmas and Damian, shouted that they were impostors with no power to do any good.²⁴

In moving on to the broader aspects of the motivation to destroy images, it is important to distinguish between destruction and removal ordained from above, and spontaneous attacks from below. These are often concomitant phenomena, and frequently the orders from above simply provide the initial impulse, giving free rein to the expression of popular antipathy. Iconoclasm can be ordained by the ruler, as in Constantinople, and in England under Henry VIII, Edward VII and Elizabeth, or by a person or group temporarily in power, as in Florence in the 1490s,²⁵ in Münster during the Anabaptist uprising,²⁶ by the Long Parliament once again in England,²⁷ and during the French Revolution.²⁸ It often, almost always, has a significant political dimension. Although the question of the motivation of Byzantine Iconoclasm is a vexed one, even there it seems safe to say that it goes hand in hand with a reassertion of imperial authority.²⁹ Images are symbols of a deposed ruling class, as in Florence and the French Revolution, or of a hated one, as in the Netherlands in 1566, where field preachers and the middle nobility group together to provoke and then organize that great iconoclastic outburst which marks the beginning of the revolt against Spain.³⁰

19. See note 58 for an instance of the rejection of a monetary reward in return for an image. When asked whether justification for the breaking of images could be found in the Gospel, one of the Iconoclasts at Brill simply replied "dattet zoo behoorde ende dat de hoer van Babilon moest vallen," quoted in I.M.P.A. Wils, "De Reformatie en Beeldenstorm in den Briel," *Haarlemse Bijdragen*, 56 (1938), 410.

20. Kitzinger, *DOP*, 8 (1954), 83–150.

21. *Ibid.*, 101.

22. ἡ τῆς εἰκότος τιμὴ ἐπὶ τὸ πρωτότυπον διαβαίνει. The whole paragraph, intended to serve as an illustration of the unifying image relation of the Son to the Father in the Trinity, may be found in St. Basil's *De Spiritu Sancto*, 18, 45, in PG, 32, col. 149C, and is well discussed by Ladner, "Concept," 3ff., as well as its relationship with other similar texts, see *Anthology B9*.

23. "Want die beelden so langhe als sy in den beeltsnijders winkel zijn, so en connen sy gheen miraculen doen, tot der tijd dat dese fijne ghesellen ghebrocht hebben in haer hoerachtiche kercke," Anonymous, *Den Val der Roomsche Kercken*, in *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica*, I (The Hague, 1903), 406.

24. ἐπιθέτας ἀποκαλῶν τοὺς ἁγίους καὶ μηδεμίαν ἐνέργειαν εὐεργεσίας κεκτημένους ἀλλὰ μάτην καὶ ἐκ τῆς προλήψεως τῆν δόξαν τοῦ δύνασθαι παρὰ Θεῶν ἔχοντας. L. Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1907), 145.

25. For a recent study of Savonarola's activity, see H. Bredekamp, "Renaissancekultur als 'hölle': Savonarolas Verbrennungen der Eitelkeiten," in Warnke, ed., *Bildersturm*, 41–64, with references to the older sources.

26. Now thoroughly analysed in M. Warnke, "Durchbrochene Geschichte? Die Bilderstürme der Wiedertäufer in Münster, 1534/5," in Warnke, ed., *op. cit.*, 65–8.

27. All the English phenomena are discussed in Phillips, *The Reformation of Images*.

28. See S. Idzerda, "Iconoclasm during the French Revolution," *AHR*, 60 (1954), 13–26.

29. See A. Grabar, *L'Empereur dans l'art byzantin* (Paris, 1936), 166ff., and the just modifications made by Kitzinger, *DOP*, 8 (1954), 128, with further references there.

30. For a good survey of this subject, see M. Dierix, "Beeldenstorm in de Nederlanden in 1566," *Streven*, 19 (1966), 1040–1048.

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There is another aspect of motivation which is frequently mentioned in the anti-image polemics but all too often discounted as a real impulse to Iconoclasm. That is the resentment of the populace, especially in times of economic stress, against the expense represented by images. Such feelings are exploited by the polemicists, who repeatedly harp on the disgraceful wealth expended on making fine statues, paintings and other liturgical accessories, when the money could have been more usefully expended on clothing the poor – all of whom, after all, had been created in God's own image.³¹ Here is another instance where Iconoclastic theory and practice converge.

Other conditions of stress, too, may help trigger Iconoclasm. Once the abuses and theological weaknesses of images are made clear, it is not difficult to suggest that the blame may be laid on them for various aspects of God's wrath, such as military setbacks – especially when images fail to fulfil their expected apotropaic or palladian function.³² But what of the immediate impulse for image destruction, the spark that lights the fire? Sometimes it is not particularly useful to think in these terms, as when those in authority decree a particular day on which the systematic destruction of image is to commence.³³ But often there is an individual action, both when Iconoclasm is ordained and when it is an act of rebellion, which breaks the spell of an image and which may release a whole range of pent-up emotions. One can think of many cases ranging from early Byzantium to the people who mocked and then pelted Antwerp's patron image of the Madonna after she had been carried round the city's streets in the annual procession on 22 August 1566.³⁴ In Antwerp and Wittenberg these individual acts are immediately followed by inflammatory sermons denouncing images.³⁵ Such instances provoke more widespread acts of Iconoclasm, giving courage, it would seem, to men suddenly made to realize the helplessness of images previously supposed to have had superhuman and supernatural powers.

Participants

Good accounts are given by the chroniclers of the actual destruction of images. We know in many cases from them what instruments were used, and how images in relatively inaccessible positions were brought down. For the Reformation we have some illustrations, in painting and engraving, showing Iconoclasm in action.³⁶ We also know about the people who participated, and here it is possible to be misled by the sources. The violent wave of Iconoclasm in the Netherlands was long thought to be an outburst of popular anger against a repressive regime, but it is now clear that it was organized by field preachers and some of the lower nobility.³⁷ Hired men often took the lead and showed the way to further destruction.³⁸ The participation of clergymen and monks who had convinced themselves of the wrongfulness of images is well documented from Byzantium to the Reformation and the French Revolution. During the Byzantine Iconoclastic periods we know that there were Iconoclastic monks and monasteries.³⁹ In the reign of Edward VI a Bishop Nicholas Ridley not only preached against images but actively encouraged the destruction.⁴⁰ Many lapsed clerics participated in the destruction in the Netherlands,⁴¹ even though hounding of the clergy usually went hand in hand with Iconoclasm.⁴²

31. These arguments, going back to St. Bernard, may be found from Luther and Zwingli right down to the popular writers of the Reformation. Cf. St. Bernard in the *Apologia ad Gallielmum Sancti Theoderici Abbatem*, PL, 182, cols. 915f.: "Fulget ecclesia in parietibus, et in pauperibus eget" etc. For Zwingli, see his *Ein Antwort Valentin Compar gegeben*, *Corpus Reformatorum Huldrych Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke* (Berlin-Zürich, 1905ff.), IV, 146. Luther discusses the problem from this socio-ethical point of view in his Sermon on Indulgences already: *Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, I (Weimar, 1883), 246. The vigorous popular view is expressed by Veluanus, *Der Leken Wechwyser*, 288–90, 296, cf. von Campenhausen, "Die Bilderfrage," 103–5.

32. Or could setbacks have been regarded as punishment for that root evil, the sin of idolatry, into which humanity had lapsed? See the ὄρος of 754 in Hennepf, *Textus*, 62, no. 205, cf. *Anthology* C19. There were always the many parallels which could be drawn with the idol worship of the Old Testament apostate kings.

33. As when the newly constituted Calvinist City Council of Antwerp ordered the Cathedral to be closed on 19 June, 1581, and in the course of the next three days had all the altarpieces systematically removed, see F. Prims, "De Beeldstormerij van 1581," *Antwerpiensia 1940* (Antwerp, 1941), 183–9. But many other similar cases may be found, from Zurich in 1523 to the towns newly run by Calvinist councils throughout the Flemish provinces between 1579 and 1581.

34. For a detailed account of what happened, and a full bibliography, see R. van Roosbroeck, *Het Wonderhaar te Antwerpen, 1566* (Antwerp, 1930). It is worth noting here how often miraculous or traditionally venerated images are at the centre of the storm, from the ἀειροπόνηται of the Byzantine Empire to the sculpted wooden Madonna of Antwerp.

35. In Antwerp by the fiery Herman Moded, see early chronicles like F. G. V. (= G. V. van Loon and F. G. Ullens), *Antwerpsch Chronykje, sedert den jare 1500 tot het jaar 1574* (Leiden, 1743), 87, for graphic accounts; in Wittenberg by Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, on whom see M. Barge, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt* (Leipzig, 1905).

36. E.g. above Erhard Schön's *Klagrede der armen verfolgten Gotzen und Tempelbilder* (ca. 1530), and F. Hogenberg's illustration in M. Aitsinger, *De Leone Belgico* (Cologne, 1588), and in many subsequent editions.

37. The extensive literature on the subject reviewed by Dierix, *op. cit.*, 1040–8.

38. Cf. A. C. Duke and D. H. A. Kolff, "The time of troubles in the County of Holland, 1566–7," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 3 (1969), 316–337.

39. Cf. Gero, *Byzantion*, 44 (1974), 39–40.

40. On Ridley, see Jasper Ridley, *Nicholas Ridley* (London, 1957).

41. Cf. Dierix, *op. cit.*, 1043; but examples are too frequent in the Netherlands to be listed here.

42. On the hounding of the clergy, see below, p. 173.

Perhaps even more surprising is the participation of artists themselves: one can only wonder at what must have passed through their minds as they turned their backs on the very concept which sustained their livelihood. During one of Savonarola's *bruciamenti*, Fra Bartolommeo and Lorenzo di Credi are supposed to have consigned some of their works to the flames;⁴³ in the Netherlands van Mander recorded that Joos van Lier gave up painting altogether because of the strength of his religious beliefs;⁴⁴ and even though artists were attacked for not recording the great events of the French Revolution, "no group seemed more anxious to join the iconoclastic crusade than the artists themselves."⁴⁵ Soon after the opening of the National Convention, David himself demanded that the effigies of kings and cardinals in the Academy's school in Rome be destroyed.⁴⁶ Such examples are worthy of attention not only because of modern idealistic notions about the integrity of artistic endeavour. There are indications that artists like these gave some thought to the problem of pursuing their calling in times when the validity of their productions was being undermined.⁴⁷ Some gave up painting altogether.

Modes of Destruction: Mutilation and Deconsecration

The next question to ask, perhaps, is: In what ways were images damaged or destroyed? This is one of those aspects of Iconoclasm in progress which can be particularly illuminating about attitudes towards images, and which has been a little neglected in scholarly research on the topic. On many occasions one is told exactly what part of the image was destroyed, and it is clear that wholesale destruction was not always the aim. The aim is to render images powerless, to deprive them of those parts which may be considered to embody their effectiveness.⁴⁸ This is why images are very often mutilated rather than wholly destroyed. Once deconsecrated they lose their power: they are deprived of their holiness. For that, they need only be removed from the context of the consecrated.

Relief sculptures and vessels embossed with figures are scraped down,⁴⁹ the heads of saints broken off and the Infant Christ removed from the arms of the Virgin, which are then amputated,⁵⁰ or her crown taken away. When John the Grammarian is removed to a monastery after the restoration of Orthodoxy, he displays his continued devotion to his principles by having the eyes of a picture cut out;⁵¹ in Münster the standards of medieval justice are purposefully applied to effigies by depriving them of their extremities or appropriate sense organs.⁵² There too, images of the upper classes and of members of the previous administration, from bishops to court and treasury officials, have their heads defaced to emphasize the anonymous equality of the new order.⁵³ In East Stoneham an image of St. Thomas Becket is turned into a female saint at the behest of Henry himself.⁵⁴ Inscriptions are removed, seals destroyed. Obviously, when Iconoclasm is subsumed under attacks on imperial or royal power, images which personify it come under particular fire.⁵⁵ Opponents of Elizabeth slashed her portraits, defaced her arms, even hanged her effigies.⁵⁶ It is surprising that Basil's explanation of the nature of Christ in terms of the honour paid to images of the Emperor was not more frequently used as a polemical resource for attacking both images of

43. G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' piu eccellenti Pittori, Scultori e Architettori* (Florence, 1879), IV, 178f.

44. C. van Mander, *Het Schilderboek* (Haarlem, 1604), fol. 257 r.

45. Idzerda, "Iconoclasm in the French Revolution", 21.

46. *Loc. cit.*

47. Cf. the case of Joos van Liere cited above, as well as B. Deneke, *Albrecht Dürer* (Exhibition Catalogue, Nürnberg, 1971), 199, on the Beham brothers and George Pencz.

48. A good discussion in Warnke, "Durchbrochene Geschichte," 91 ff. (note 25 above), under the heading *Deformationsformen*.

49. Cf. *Scriptor Incertus de Leone*, PG 108, col. 1036; *Vita Nicephori*, PG 100, col. 141A; for the scraping of images off walls, cf. the *Vita S. Stephani iunioris*, PG, 100, cols. 1112-13, and Nicephorus, 76, translated in Mango, *Art*, 152-3.

50. Warnke, "Durchbrochene Geschichte," 83.

51. Theophanes Continuatus, PG, 109, col. 172.

52. Well analysed in Warnke, *op. cit.*, 93-4.

53. But cf. Warnke's assertion that "Die Standeszeichen müssen erhalten bleiben, wann das Standesbewusstsein sich als gebrochen darstellen soll," Warnke, *op. cit.*, 93.

54. T. Borenius, "Some further Aspects of St. Thomas of Canterbury," *Archaeologia*, 83 (1933), 182. One might perhaps note here that much earlier Wyclif had attacked Becket on two grounds: 1) for his defence of the temporal powers of the church, and 2) because of his association with the pilgrimages, legends and miracles at Canterbury, all aspects of image worship always set upon by its critics. See J. Davis, "Lollards, Reformers, and St. Thomas of Canterbury," *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, 9 (1963-4), 1-15.

55. Brown, *EHR*, 346 (1973), 11, points out that "disrespect for the imperial image released a very real charge of feeling." For attacks on images of the emperor and bishops, especially in the eastern Empire, see R. Browning, "The Riot of 387 in Antioch," *JRS*, 13 (1952), 20; and K. Majewski, "L'Iconophobie et la destruction des statues des dieux et des monuments des souverains dans le monde gréco-romain," *Archaeologia*, 16 (Warsaw, 1965), 63ff. On the other hand, imperial antipathy towards images of Christ may to some extent have sprung from the fact many such images had been accorded honours traditionally due to the imperial image, as, say, in the case of the Christ of Camuliana: on this see E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder* (Leipzig, 1889), 6 ff. See also the perceptive discussion of this subject by Kitzinger, *DOP*, 8 (1954), 90, 122.

56. Examples collected in R. Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 1963), 40.

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Christ and of the Emperor.⁵⁷ In fact, assaults on the two by no means always go together.

Distinctions and Discrimination

At this point one may move on to the question of discrimination, another inseparable aspect of Iconoclastic activity. Which images are singled out for destruction and which ones left alone? Such questions, when answerable, provide what are perhaps the most positive clues to the motives of Iconoclasts – and those motives are not always easy to isolate when considered from the point of view of chroniclers and theorists alone. There are, admittedly, occasions when the fury of Iconoclasts knows no bounds, and every image is destroyed – even when monetary rewards are offered to individual iconoclasts to refrain from doing so, as in the Netherlands in the 1560s.⁵⁸ But this is the exception rather than the rule.

Julian of Atramytion was apparently prepared to leave paintings, whilst confining his iconoclastic impulses to sculpture.⁵⁹ In general, sculpture is regarded as more harmful than paintings. The Council of 754 gave special warning against the indiscriminate destruction of sacred vessels and vestments decorated with figures.⁶⁰ Such warnings are often given, but in practice they tend to be lost in the general conflagration. During the reign of Constantine V representations of birds, beasts and plants were spared, and even horse races, hunts and theatrical scenes.⁶¹ Later medieval critics specifically censured such scenes,⁶² but even in the Reformation they were allowed to stand. The fate of painted organ wings varied: sometimes they were attacked along with everything else, but on other occasions they escaped the wrath of the Iconoclasts, presumably because they were not regarded in the same class as devotional imagery.

Such seeming inconsistencies characterize much Reformation Iconoclastic activity; they can also illuminate the aims of the Iconoclasts. Despite the fact that his followers got out of hand, Zwingli was prepared to preserve historical scenes outside churches.⁶³ In Münster, in keeping with their view of the role of the Emperor, the Anabaptists left the royal images and arms alone,⁶⁴ even though the effigies of local officials and the nobility were ruthlessly assaulted. At first, tomb sculptures were left intact in England, by royal ordinance, but during the Puritan revolution they too were destroyed.⁶⁵ In addition to their theological objections to images, the Puritans were determined to do away with the signs of royalty;⁶⁶ royalty itself, on the other hand, recognized the threat that was posed to the bases of its power by excessive Iconoclastic activity.

But discrimination between what is to be destroyed and what not may be made on the basis of other criteria. These too should be explored more thoroughly than they have been, for they may tell us not only about Iconoclastic attitudes towards images, but also about the depth of convictions. At the Council of 815, when the charge that images were idols was abandoned,⁶⁷ it was decided to tolerate pictures placed in high positions. The reason given then was a surprisingly permissive one: that painting might fulfil the purpose of writing. It was argued that paintings in higher positions would not permit the gross acts of adoration accorded to lower ones and that they would provide useful illustrations of Christianity.⁶⁸ Such a reason would not have been acceptable to any but the most moderate of subsequent Iconoclastic movements, and it is difficult to think of any later case in which images were ordered to be retained on the basis of their elevated position, except of course when it was impracticable to pull them down – or the means to do so too expensive. On the other hand, when it was decided that some paintings could be left, it was on conditions such as closing the

57. For the full text from Basil, see the source cited in note 22 above. Athanasios had also used the simile of the image of the emperor, but in his case in order to show the relationship of Christ's divinity to the image: 'Ἐν γάρ τῇ εἰκόνι τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἡ μορφή τοῦ βασιλέως ἐστὶ καὶ ἐν τῷ βασιλεῖ δὲ τὸ ἐν τῇ εἰκόνι εἶδος ἐστίν.' *Απαράλλακτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐν τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ βασιλέως ὁμοιότης. Ὡστε τὸν ἐνορῶντα τῇ εἰκόνι ὄραν ἐν αὐτῇ τὸν βασιλέα ...* 'Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐν ἑσμεν. ἐγὼ γάρ ἐν ἐκεῖνῳ εἰμί. κακῆος ἐν ἐμοί ...' *Oratio III contra Arianos*, 5, PG, 26, col. 332A; cf. *Anthology* B10.

58. Van Mander, *op. cit.*, (note 44 above) fol. 244v, records how a woman offered the Iconoclasts in Warmenhuysen in North Holland one hundred pounds for a Crucifixion altarpiece by Pieter Aertsen; but the offer was refused and the painting was smashed to pieces.

59. P.J. Alexander, "Hypatius of Ephesus: A note on image worship in the Sixth Century," *HThR*, 45 (1952), 177 ff. See also Kitzinger, *DOP*, 8 (1954), 90 (note 33), 131.

60. Permission had first to be obtained from the Patriarch and Emperor; Mansi. XIII.329 D – 332 D.

61. *Vita S. Stephani iunioris*, PG, 100, col. 1120.

62. See Bernard of Clairvaux, *Apologia ad Guillelmum*, 914 ff. For a fifth century criticism of such decorations, see St. Nilus of Sinai's letter to Olympiodorus, in which he disapproves of distracting the faithful with animal hunts, fishing, birds, plants and reptiles, in PG, 79, 577–80.

63. See the *Short Christian Introduction*, in *Huldrych Zwingli's Sämtliche Werke* (cited in note 31 above), II, 658, 19–20.

64. Warnke, "Durchbrochene Geschichte," 83.

65. Phillips, *The Reformation of Images*, 117, 194.

66. Although already in the reign of Edward VI Bishop Gardiner had expressed the fear that the destruction of religious images might lead to that of the symbols of royalty as well: S. Gardiner, *Letters*, ed. J. Muller (Cambridge, 1933), 272–6.

67. Cf. Alexander, *DOP*, 7 (1953), 41.

68. *Epistola Michaelis II ad Ludovicum* in MGH, Legum Sectio III, ii/2, ed. A. Werminghoff (1908), 479. The parallel between painting and writing was, of course, used throughout the Reformation, 1) as part of the argument in favour of images; 2) as a basis for censorship, on which see below.

wings of altarpieces, as in Zwingli's Zurich.⁶⁹ But such a proviso bespeaks an unexpectedly deep concern either for the preservation of works of art or for the avoidance of unnecessary vandalism. The latter concern, indeed, features in most cases of official Iconoclasm, from the Council of 754 on.⁷⁰

The Saving of Works of Art

Some discrimination, therefore, was exercised, and some images saved as a result. But conscious efforts to save works of art are themselves another concomitant of Iconoclastic outbreaks. There are always zealous clergy who get wind of the impending events and manage to hide some objects in time. They hide them in unlikely places, move them to safer or out of the way locations, or even take them to their own homes.⁷¹ The same applies to all sections of the local populace: there almost always seem to be one or two zealous individuals who show their concern for works of art in this way. Some, as has been seen, may offer financial inducements to Iconoclasts to forego the destruction of an image or images.⁷² When the feeling is intense, however, such offers tend to be rejected. In Florence it is claimed that a Venetian merchant unsuccessfully bid 20,000 Gulden for the contents of Savonarola's last great bonfire.⁷³ In the Netherlands, where Iconoclastic activity was very intense in both the 1560s and the 1580s, many of the greatest works of art – including the Ghent altarpiece⁷⁴ – were saved as a result of the foresight of concerned members of both clergy and laity. It is as well to remember, when assigning corporate responsibility for Iconoclasm to particular sections of the populace, that such lines of social demarcation, if there are any at all, tend to remain remarkably fluid. Monks may be pro-image and be persecuted for their beliefs, or they may set upon images; the poor may erupt into a group display of anti-image feeling or they may protectively ward off the assailants of images; and so on.

But to return to the savings of works of art. Even aesthetic considerations may prevail. In 1793 a member of the Monuments Commission (which had been instrumental in eliminating much imagery) recommended that a sceptre from the tomb of St. Denis be preserved as an example of fourteenth-century goldsmiths' work.⁷⁵ If one took into consideration objects preserved for didactic purposes, (those things which are regarded as memorials and instructive symbols of an order already overthrown or about to be overthrown), one would have to include such phenomena as Hitler's exhibitions of *Entartete Kunst*.⁷⁶ But twentieth century Iconoclasm comes outside the purview of this survey. It is worth noting, however, that even the Louvre was opened to the public in 1793 with the intention of housing those proscribed symbols of royalty, feudalism and superstition which had been specifically preserved for their didactic possibilities.⁷⁷

The attack on associated objects

Attention has so far for the most part been confined to images. But any student of Iconoclasm will know that it is not only images which are attacked on these occasions. Before moving on to the immediate aftermath of Iconoclasm, he must ask himself: What else is destroyed when men take down images? Some things are obvious, but they are worth dwelling upon.

Almost all liturgical accessories can be attacked, and objects like altar hangings and vestments, if they are not actually destroyed, are removed for use in more mundane contexts. In England in the 1540's private parlours are supposed to have been hung with altar cloths, and tables and beds covered with copes.⁷⁸ In such cases we may see, if we like, the final stage in the deconsecration of holy objects; we are entitled to speak here of their 'demystification.' From the days of Byzantine Iconoclasm onwards, candles and incense have been rejected by all enemies of religious imagery.⁷⁹ Both feature extensively in the writings of the Reformation polemicists, and it is universally agreed, even by those who are tolerant towards some imagery, that candles and incense are unnecessary

69. Garside, *Zwingli and the Arts*, 152 (cited in note 6 above).

70. See above, note 60, and below, note 000.

71. Often the case in the Netherlands: for the saving of Cornelis Enghelbrechtsz' Marienpoel altarpieces, see van Mander, fol. 210v. For other examples, see also F. Prims, "Altaarstudien," *Antwerpiensia* 1939 (1940), 397, and E. van Autenboer, "Uit de geschiedenis van Turnhout in de 16de eeuw. Voorbereiding, uitbarsting, en gevolgen van de Beeldenstorm," *Taxandria*, 40/41 (1968-9), 1-276, both drawing on extensive archival material.

72. See note 58 above.

73. Admittedly recorded in the highly unreliable Pseudo-Burlamacchi, *La vita del beato Ieronimo Savonarola* (Florence, 1937), 131. The size of the bid may be exaggerated, but there is no reason why one like this should not have been made.

74. The vicissitudes and saving of the Ghent altarpiece during the Netherlands Iconoclasm is fully documented: see E. Dhanens, *Het Retabel van het Lam Gods in de Sint Baudouin katedraal te Gent* (Ghent, 1965), with all the relevant archival data. For the best contemporary account, see M. van Vaernewyck, *Van de beroerliche tijden in de Nederlanden en voornamelijk in Ghendt*, 1566-8, Ghent University Library, MS. G. 2469, fol. 29v.

75. Idzerda, "Iconoclasm during the French Revolution," 24.

76. On these, see now B. Hinz, *Die Malerei im Deutschen Faschismus: Kunst und Konterrevolution* (Munich, 1974).

77. Although the destruction of Christian and royal images still continued outside the museum, Idzerda, *op. cit.*, 24.

78. Phillips, *op. cit.*, 68-9.

79. See, for example, the *horos* of 815, in Alexander, *DOP*, 7 (1953), 58 ff; *Anthology* D22.

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adjuncts to worship.⁸⁰ The reasons for their rejection are clear: they distance the worshipper even further from the essentials of devotion, they stand in the way of direct communication with the sacred: in short, they are utterly superfluous embellishments. In Byzantium it is possible that lights and incense before religious images were regarded as objectionable because such things had been accorded to the *imperial* images ever since the fifth century, if one may trust Photios' excerpt from Philostorgius.⁸¹

It is also instructive to look at the destruction of books, if only because this is a characteristic of both Iconoclasm and Orthodoxy. Not only liturgical books (in other words those which are intimately associated with the role of images within Christian worship) but also books which purvey the wrong ideas, can be destroyed. In the latter case the grievance is somewhat different to that held against images. One of the many constantly reiterated arguments against images was that they *misled*, rather than *instructed*, the illiterate.⁸² But there was concern about those who could read as well. One should also not forget that, for the illiterate, books embody a mystery which in many cases must have bordered on the magical. Let us look at some instances of book destruction associated with Iconoclastic activity. Under Constantine V books were destroyed.⁸³ It may be that books such as *The Sayings of the Fathers* were burnt because from them the monks at least partially derived their hold on their charges.⁸⁴ Great quantities of books were consigned to the flames of Savonarola's *bruciamenti* – placed immediately below the images which rested on top of those great pyres.⁸⁵ Such bonfires – in which liturgical vessels were also melted down in order to give the proceeds to the poor – were not a new phenomenon in Italy. Preachers like Bernard of Siena and Robert of Lecce had burnt books in Milan, Bologna and Ferrara, along with images of their authors.⁸⁶ Full scale Iconoclasm in Münster was preceded by a week-long burning of books, muniments and seals in front of the Cathedral.⁸⁷ That served the additional function of doing away with all records of the privileges of the usurped class and the documentation of their authority. After the death of Mary in 1559, books were burnt along with copes and vestments, even though they were not mentioned in the parliamentary injunctions on images.⁸⁸ As always, the zeal of the populace gave a wide interpretation to the official decrees, and often far outstripped their real intent. In the Netherlands all the chroniclers record the loss of precious manuscripts, and the ripping out of pages, if they were not burnt. After the assassination and apotheosis of Marat, French Iconoclasm proceeded apace, and there too charters were burnt along with armorial bearings.⁸⁹ Even books with the fleur-de-lys on their bindings were thrown to the flames.⁹⁰ Book burning is part of a wider phenomenon, however, and not always within the bounds, strictly speaking of Iconoclasm, although it is undoubtedly an Iconoclastic activity.

Now one may turn to a larger class of objects: buildings. They are often attacked after images have been pulled down, but they are not usually destroyed. A variety of motives characterizes the attack on buildings. They may be used as hospitals, barracks and even prisons. Once stripped of their images and whitewashed they may be converted and used for new forms of religious service. It is noteworthy that although the polemicists frequently call for the levelling of the finest buildings, on the basis of their purported similarity with pagan temples,⁹¹ this did not usually occur. There are many examples. The call to level religious buildings to the ground was particularly strong in Münster, but there too they were mostly preserved, even if they lost towers, porches and other parts. Abbeys were used for housing the poor; the more ostentatious chapels were mined for their stone: so, for that matter, were cemeteries and parts of the cathedral, in order to fill up gaps in the walls and in the stone fortifications of the city. All the towers were knocked down, except one which

80. The examples are many: cf. Veluanus, *Der Leken Wechwyser*, 288–90, and in the *Justification* of Angelus Merula, available in I.M.J. Hoog, ed., *Verantwoording van Angelus Merula* (Leiden, 1897), 21.

81. Cited and discussed by Kitzinger, *DOP*, 8 (1954), 91–2, with a further discussion on page 98.

82. Since images were traditionally regarded as the books of the illiterate. Stemming from Gregory the Great (see the letters *Ad Serenum Massiliensem Episcopum*, in *S. Gregorii Papae I cognomento Magno Opera Omnia*, VIII (1771), 134, 242) and passed down through Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, this latter argument occurs in almost every pro-image writer of the Reformation – seemingly without the realization of how easily it could be turned against them (although some added the proviso that what was forbidden in books should also be forbidden in paintings, for this very reason). Cf. J. Molanus, *De Historia sanctarum imaginum et picturarum* (Louvain, 1594), 31.

83. For a report on this by Leo, Bishop of Phocaea, to the Council of Nicaea, see *Mansi*, XIII, col. 185.

84. Cf. Brown, *EHR*, 346 (1973), 33.

85. See Bredekamp, "Renaissancekultur als 'Hölle'," 57.

86. *Ibid.*, with sources.

87. Warnke, *op. cit.*, 80, 90.

88. Phillips, *op. cit.*, 117.

89. Idzerda, *op. cit.*, 17.

90. *Ibid.*, 18.

91. But even Orthodox writers felt that the filling of churches with excessive and/or indecorous decorations rendered them liable to criticism on the basis of their similarities with "paganism." Cf. for example, A. Catharinus, *Disputatio de cultu et adoratione imaginum, in Enarrationes . . . in Quinque priora capita libri Genesios. Adduntur plerique alii Tractatus et Quaestiones* (Rome, 1552), cols. 143–4.

remained, to be used as a lookout post.⁹² Such use of building materials extended even to the bells: in England they were melted down to make cannon, and so was the bronze in French monuments, in order to defend the newly defined *Patrie*.⁹³ In England, as later in the French Revolution, churches and surrounding buildings were sold to local lessees as quarries. Thomas Cromwell himself used the stone from the Crutched Friars for repairs to the Tower of London.⁹⁴ When the stripped buildings were not used as churches they were often used as private houses. Some monastic buildings provided convenient storehouses for businesses.⁹⁵ Roofing lead was eagerly sought and roof timbers then used as fuel for melting the lead.⁹⁶ The Lord Mayor of London petitioned Oliver Cromwell to use lead from the roof of St. Pauls to make water pipes, then in short supply. The nave of St. Paul's itself was used as a cavalry barracks, with stabling for up to 800 horses, and so on.⁹⁷

Throughout Europe during the Reformation Catholic buildings were stripped bare and turned into Protestant conventicles. Even when there was some measure of toleration, as in Antwerp later in the 1580s, walls were built in the middle of a single building to provide two separate places of worship.⁹⁸ In France the churches were converted to Temples of Reason.⁹⁹ But there too some of the noblest monuments were sold and later used as quarries, such as the great Abbey Church of Cluny.¹⁰⁰



Thus far we have been dealing with inanimate objects – whatever degree of life may have been believed to inhere in them. But people too are persecuted and attacked in the wake of Iconoclasm. One thinks especially of the monastic orders, often seen to be proponents of images, if not actually on their side. The case for Leo III's and Constantine V's persecution of the monks may recently have been exaggerated, but there is no question that they did persecute them.¹⁰¹ Monks encouraged the superstitious practices associated with images, monasteries were the repositories of great numbers of them, and monks were their greatest supporters. They even produced them. Brown may have overstated his thesis, but there is some truth in the suggestion that monks, like icons, were attacked because their holiness was consecrated, as it were, from below.¹⁰² The sources of their power, therefore, were seen as potential threats, and had to be demystified. That is why Constantine attacked the monastic *schema* and Michael Lachanodrakon paraded the monks in his theme in the garb of a bridegroom.¹⁰³

Indeed, the Byzantine situation may be taken to be paradigmatic. Perhaps the most extensive post-Byzantine anti-monastic policy was Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries, motivated by political reasons and reasons of expediency as much as by a concern for religious reform.¹⁰⁴ Iconoclasm followed shortly after. Elsewhere in the Reformation images were taken down and monks immediately run out of town – if they had not already fled. They are frequently mocked and made the subject of jest. They are stripped of their holiness. In addition to all this the morals of monks were as frequently open to suspicion as those of artists.¹⁰⁵ When Iconoclasm occurs people are no longer afraid to give expression to these suspicions: indeed, they are used as the pretext or the basis for such attacks as we have been discussing.

Substitution and replacement

Once one has seen what happens when Iconoclasm takes place, one must return to images themselves and consider another question which casts light on the phenomenon: What replaced the images which were effaced, destroyed, or removed? From the very beginnings of Iconoclastic polemic there is an important emphasis on the priority of the Word; and so texts may be used to

92. All well discussed in Warnke, *op. cit.*, 71, 78.

93. Phillips, *op. cit.*, 68 and Idzerda, *op. cit.*, 16.

94. E.J. Davis, "The Transformation of London," in R.W. Seton Watson, ed., *Tudor Studies* (London, 1924), 306.

95. Phillips, *op. cit.*, 69; *ibid.* 63 ff., gives a good analysis of the uses to which buildings were put after the Henrician reform.

96. *Ibid.*, 68.

97. *Ibid.*, 197–8.

98. See A. Monballieu, "De reconstructie van een drieliuk van A. Th. Key bestemd voor het hoogaltaar van de Antwerpsche recolletenkerk," *Jaarboek, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen* (1971), 91–104.

99. Idzerda, *op. cit.*, 17 ff.

100. See F.L. Bruel, *Cluny 910–1910. Album historique et archéologique* (Macon, 1910).

101. Although, as Gero, *Byzantium*, 44 (1974), 27, points out, this is better attested for the reign of Constantine V than that of Leo III. Cf. Brown, *EHR*, 346 (1973), 30, for example, and his broad statement that "Iconomachy in action is monachomachy."

102. "For both were, technically, unconsecrated objects . . . he (the monk) was holy because he was held to be holy by his clientele, not because any bishop had conferred holy orders on him," Brown, *op. cit.*, 21.

103. Theophanes, 446.

104. See also G.W.O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), and J. Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971).

105. In England the monastic visitors at the time of the Dissolution noted in their findings both sexual misconduct and superstitious veneration of relics: Phillips, *op. cit.*, 129.

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replace images. But not always: there is a whole variety of possibilities. All but the most extreme Iconoclasts are prepared to tolerate the cross, although it too is open to a number of superstitious practices. The crucifix, for obvious reasons, is less frequently tolerated. Symbols of royal power replace religious imagery, and many groups allow non-anthropomorphic imagery. During the reigns of Leo III and Constantine V the famous Christ on the Chalke Gate was replaced by a cross, with an inscription in verse beneath it.¹⁰⁶ The Life of St. Stephen the Younger records how Constantine turned the Church of the Virgin at Blachernae into something which looked like an aviary: he scraped down the representations of Christ's miracles and substituted mosaics of birds, beasts, and ivy.¹⁰⁷ Other of Constantine's crimes against images are recorded with a sort of disapproving enthusiasm. He replaced the representations of the Six Ecumenical Councils in the Milion with a portrait of his favourite charioteer racing, and so on.¹⁰⁸

What all of these stories confirm, however, is that Constantine's antipathy towards art in general was by no means as all-embracing as that of many of the later European Iconoclasts. He shows little of the moralistic fear of *sensibilia* that characterized the writings of the more fervent polemicists. They insisted that God's Word was his true image, that the Word alone sufficed to lead man up to Him. In England and the Netherlands, Biblical texts, especially the Ten Commandments, were painted on the whitewashed walls as well as on already painted altarpieces.¹⁰⁹ There is a fascinating passage in Carel van Mander on the subject. He records that a Crucifixion by Hugo van der Goes was spared by the Iconoclasts because of its art. But since the church in which it stood was to be used for Protestant preaching, he says, it was taken to a painter to have the Ten Commandments written on it in gold letters on a black ground. And van Mander reproaches that painter for wishing to spoil so fine a work.¹¹⁰ Fortunately the overpaint could later be removed, and many present-day restorers, both here and on the continent, will testify that such inscriptions can occasionally be removed to reveal the painting beneath.

In the reign of Henry VIII the royal arms replaced the holy rood; and similarly those of Elizabeth, which appeared on rood screens all over the country.¹¹¹ But Elizabeth – as Francis Yates has shown – appropriated to her own image many of the symbols traditionally associated with the Virgin Mary.¹¹² As suggested above, the possibilities when it came to alternative forms of imagery were manifold. The West Cheap Cross in London, already defaced in the reign of Elizabeth, was transformed by the Puritans into a harmless image. For the Cross, they substituted a pyramid, and for the statue of the Virgin a half-naked image of Diana.¹¹³ At first one is inclined to think that they did this simply because pyramids and Dianas were not idolatrous in the Christian sense, but it seems more likely that they intended to make a pointed parallel with pagan customs. In Zurich, Hans Leu the Elder's panel representing Christ and the patron saints of the city in front of a topographical representation of it was removed from the Chapel of the Twelve Apostles in the Great Minster in 1524. But it was not destroyed: Christ and the saints were simply painted over with reproductions of those parts of the city which their images had covered.¹¹⁴ Panoramic views are perhaps the most harmless form of decoration of all. Whenever a church was inaugurated as a Temple of Reason, busts of Marat replaced those statues which had stood there before.¹¹⁵ All such replacements of Christian imagery, from Constantine V till the present, represent vigorous assertions of newly established or freshly affirmed political power.

Lulls and Relapses

At this point in the discussion it may be useful to consider one of the stronger testimonies to the persistence of anti-image feeling. Iconoclasm may in due course abate or be quelled, and Orthodoxy re-established. But it is not uncommon to find a relapse, and renewed outbursts give expression to still smouldering sentiments. Byzantium itself provides one of the most notable examples. Leo V rejects the Council of Nicaea and Eirene's restoration, and he initiates a new policy of Iconoclasm (harking back to the first period), which is then continued by Michael II and

106. The inscription beneath the second cross is recorded by Theodore the Studite in PG, 99, 476; see *Anthology* E24.

107. *Vita S. Stephani iunioris*, PG, 100, col. 1120.

108. *Ibid.*, col. 1172; cf. R. Cormack, VI above, p. 38.

109. Phillips, *op. cit.*, pl. 24b, reproduces a photograph of the base of the rood screen of St. Marys Priory in Binham, Norfolk, whitewashed and painted over with texts from Tyndales translation of the New Testament. See also pl. 29b for the painting of the text of the Decalogue on the exterior of a triptych at Preston, Suffolk.

110. Van Mander, *op. cit.*, fol. 204.

111. See Phillips, *op. cit.*, 88, 119, 128–9, 138, for examples, as well as for other instances of replacement.

112. Francis Yates, "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea," *JWarb.*, 10 (1947), 27–82.

113. Aylmer Vallance, *Old Crosses and Lych Gates* (London, 1920), 102–6.

114. Garside, *Zwingli and the Arts*, 112 (cited in note 69 above).

115. Idzeta, *op. cit.*, 17.

Theophilos. In England after the Marian interlude, Elizabeth gradually renews the Henrician and Edwardian antipathy; Laud then tries to bring back the images, but his policies fail to withstand the Puritan onslaught. In Antwerp, the *Beeldstorm* of 1566 lasts only a short while before the re-establishment of Orthodox services, but in 1581 there is a second outbreak of Iconoclasm.¹¹⁶ Although it is outwardly quieter than the first, it is a great deal more systematic.

There is no doubt that everyone concerned is aware of the possibility of such relapses, including those who are responsible for restoring images during the lulls, the brief interludes of Orthodoxy. This accounts for the many examples found of temporary and makeshift images in such times. Evidence of these may be found, for example, in the guild account books preserved in Netherlandish archives. When not of wood such images are on canvas, and instances are known where the wings of an altarpiece are simply painted on a wall, to be easily whitewashed when next threatened.¹¹⁷ In England during the reign of Mary "many parishes showed scepticism as to the stability of the revived regime and the unwanted expense of providing images that later might be declared illegal by erecting painted canvas to take the place of the carved figures on rood screens. At Ludlow in Shropshire the great rood was replaced by a makeshift painting of the Crucifixion on boards,"¹¹⁸ and there are many further examples. And how justified such apprehension was! Interim periods such as these hardly inspire confidence in the worth of the aesthetic object: both artist and patron are inhibited by the continual threat of further destruction.

Ambiguity of attitude

As soon as one considers diffidence of this kind, one finds further ambiguities in the periods of Iconoclasm. Ambiguity of attitude, therefore, is the next question to explore. People are never sure why they should do away with images, and not even the theorists are sure. And is it not to be expected that people should waver when called upon to assail objects in which supernatural forces were thought to inhere, or, at the least, objects which were invested with all sorts of undefined powers? Then bring in aesthetic considerations, and one can see how attitudes could be confused or ambiguous. It must have been made worse when people were called upon to distinguish between images singled out for destruction and those which were not. A few simple examples of ambiguity in the behaviour of people who had decided or been forced to be Iconoclasts will suffice.

Many examples could be found in England, where there had always been considerable ambiguity over what constituted acceptable imagery, but even the behaviour of Elizabeth was hardly consistent. She ordered a crucifix for the royal chapel at the very time when its use was supposed to be illegal. The bishops objected, and though a cross was substituted for a crucifix, the chapel retained its images.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, she roundly reproached the Dean of St. Paul's for having placed a new service book with engraved illustrations on her seat. After reminding the Dean of her aversion to idolatry, and singling out the "cuts resembling angels and saints, nay, grosser absurdities, pictures resembling the Holy Trinity," she asked of him, "Have you forgot our proclamations against images, pictures and Romish relics in the Churches?"¹²⁰ But one suspects that such a divergence between private practice and public policy must have been common enough amongst those who ruled. There is no need to insist here on the grip that image devotion retained on men's minds, even when it was officially renounced.

During the prelude to and aftermath of the worst Iconoclasm of the French Revolution there was a great deal of hesitation and ambiguity. In 1791 Barère wrote that "the revolutions of an enlightened people conserve the fine arts," while in the same month the journal *Revolutions de Paris* observed that "the statues of kings and queens in our cities are not the work of the people, but of courtesan ministers," and called for their destruction.¹²¹ Under such circumstances it is not surprising that people should waver between Iconoclasm and the preservation of an artistic heritage. Once the spark had been lit, however, such aesthetic considerations did not matter to those who were determined to do away with the monuments of despotism and feudalism. Still, in the newly converted Temples of Reason, number six of the revised version of the Ten Commandments read: "Thou shalt cultivate the fine arts: they are the ornament of the state."¹²² But even after it was

116. Prims, "De Beeldstormerij van 1581," 183-9 (cited in note 32).

117. For an interesting example in Malines, see A. Monballieu, "De Muurschildering van de Visverkopers in de Kerk van Onze Lieve Vrouwe over de Dijle te Mechelen." *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Kring voor Oudheidkunde, Letteren en Kunst van Mechelen*, 69 (1965), 60-76.

118. Phillips, *op. cit.*, 109.

119. *Ibid.*, 126.

120. J. Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion and other various occurrences in the Church of England during Queen Elizabeth's Happy Reign*, 1 (Oxford, 1824), 408-10.

121. Both quoted in Idzerda, *op. cit.*, 15.

122. *Ibid.*, 23.

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agreed that objects of historical or artistic value should not be destroyed but taken to the newly established museums, the *conventionnels* could not control Iconoclasm for at least another two years.¹²³ Once latent anti-image sentiment is allowed to be freely expressed, there is not much that can be done to restrain it. When men's fear of the power of images is broken in the heat of Iconoclasm, it takes some time and effort before that feeling seeps back into the imagination. That is why every Iconoclast leader gives generally unsuccessful warnings against the indiscriminate destruction of images. Men cannot distinguish between images in the heat of the moment, and there is always the temptation to theft on such occasions, despite the institution of severe penalties against it. The Council of 754 forbade the wanton destruction of vessels and vestments decorated with figures; all alterations had to have the assent of the patriarch or emperor; and secular officials were warned against robbing churches on the pretext of destroying images.¹²⁴ Such injunctions may be taken as typical of most periods of Iconoclastic activity. Despite the fact that Iconoclastic leaders always threatened to punish those who exceeded the stated bounds, and often did so – as in France, Germany, England, The Netherlands, Switzerland – their followers refused to know where to stop.

The Orthodox Reaction: Supervision and Censorship

Before concluding, it is necessary to consider an important aspect of the reaction to Iconoclasm. To put it briefly, a certain form of rigoristic and moralistic zeal had characterized the attitude of the church towards imagery since its earliest days. This is what might be termed the Iconoclasm of the Orthodox, and if it is not Iconoclasm in the narrowest sense, it is certainly anti-art. One may refer not only to grave reservations about the dangers of images, as were expressed by early writers like Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Lactantius and Epiphanius of Salamis,¹²⁵ but also to suggested and actual restrictions such as those imposed by the Council of Elvira and the Quinisext Council of 692.¹²⁶ Images could be mere distractions of the senses, or incitements to concupiscence, or simply historically inaccurate – as when painters represented St. Peter with short hair and St. Paul as bald.¹²⁷ Standards of what might be called decorum fluctuate, and it is according to such standards that restrictions are imposed. The feeling that art corrupts morals is expressed in a multitude of ways, and with that may be linked the recurrent criticism of artists themselves.

In post-classical times it extends from Justin's assertion that, amongst their other vices, artists slept with their models, to French Revolutionary objections about the looseness of their morals,¹²⁸ to modern notions of bohemianism. In the Reformation, Catholic writers constantly rebut the assailants of religious imagery by asking why they do not first get rid of the disgracefully profane subjects they have in their own homes, to say nothing of public places.¹²⁹ Various ways are then devised of controlling such problems, and more restrictions imposed. In the Middle Ages rigoristic tendencies increase. St. Bernard wanted stained glass, paintings, mosaics and inlaid work to be banned from Cistercian churches.¹³⁰ He objected to precious materials not only because the money spent on them could better be spent on the poor, but also because they aroused admiration rather than true piety: they were mere distractions of the senses.¹³¹

123. *Ibid.*, 25.

124. Mansi, XIII, cols. 329D – 332D.

125. For all these, see Elliger, *Die Stellung der alten Christen*.

126. The thirty-sixth canon of the Council of Elvira (ca. 306), one of the councils which Calvin (*Institution de la Religion Chrétienne*, ed. Baumgartner, 718) played off against the Council of Nicaea, read, "Placuit picturas in ecclesia esse non debere nec quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur": cf. G. Bareille, "Elvire, Le Concile d'" in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, IV (1911), cols. 237–297. The eighty-second canon of the Quinisext Council of 692 (the Trullan Synod), while not by any means objecting to the principle of religious imagery, nonetheless insisted on the replacement of representations of Christ as a lamb, see Mansi, XI, 977 ff. Canon 100 raises objections to pornographic imagery; cf. *Anthology* B15.

127. A specific objection made by Erasmus in the *Christiani matrimonii Institutio*, in *Desiderii Erasmi Opera Omnia*, ed. J. Clericus (Jean Leclerc) (Leiden, 1703–6), V, 696F – 697A.

128. Justin, *Apologia*, I, ix, 4. Idzerda, *op. cit.*, 20, refers to opposition to the inclusion of the fine arts in the education of children – because the arts corrupted morals; the lax morals of artists were adduced as proof. Superstitious suspicion of a related sort may be found in the objection of many of the pro-image writers of the sixteenth century to artists who worked on Sundays and other holy days; cf. Molanus, *op. cit.*, Book III, chap. 71: *Admonitio ad pictores de non pingendo diebus sacris*.

129. Even secular writers, like the poet Anna Bijns, accused the Iconoclasts of destroying what aroused devotion while allowing the depiction of which aroused unchastity "after the manner of the heathen." In their own homes they had unedifying and immoral representations of Cupid, Lucretia, and Venus: *Refereinen van Anna Bijns*, ed. A. Bogaers en W.L. van Helten (Rotterdam, 1875), 106, 118, 124. This sort of reproach had first been made by Clement of Alexandria, but was popularized in the Reformation period by Erasmus, and rendered topical by the controversialists. For Clement of Alexandria, see his *Exhortation to the Heathen*, chap. 4, in A. Robert and J. Donaldson, eds., *The Ante Nicene Fathers*, II, *Fathers of the Second Century*, revised by A. Cleveland Coxe, (1969), 189. For Erasmus' reproach, see *Opera*, V, 719B–E, and for one of the polemicists, see also M. Donk (Duncanus), *Een cort onderscheyt tusschen Godlijke en afgodische beelden* (Antwerp, 1579), fols. Biv, recto and verso: "Waerom en gaen wy dan niet eerst ons eygen huysen reyn maken, etc". 130. cf. J. Bilson, "The Architecture of the Cistercians," *AJ*, 66 (1909), 190 ff. See also St. Bernard's comments in the *Apologia ad Guillelmum*, PL, 182, col. 912ff.

131. "Quid putas, in his omnibus quaeritur? poenitentium compunctio an intuitum admiratio?" *Ibid.*, 913.

But perhaps the most dramatic and serious form of the restrictive tendencies of the church is represented by its attitude towards books. After the Index of 1248's proscription of not only heretical books but also Jewish, pagan and scientific works, book burnings followed all over Europe.¹³² these may be regarded, for a start, as the forerunners of Savonarola's great bonfires. All such phenomena are worth noting because one of the standard reactions to Iconoclasm is to impose restrictions on imagery. Once the abuses of art have been highlighted to such a degree that they become the pretext for Iconoclasm, then they at least must be eliminated, and it is necessary to tighten the controls upon art and image-making.

After the first period of Byzantine Iconoclasm, the Acts of the Council of Nicaea made it clear that the Church had to decide what could be represented.¹³³ The same insistence on the ecclesiastical supervision of artistic activity was made by the Council of Trent's decree on religious imagery,¹³⁴ a decree which was itself passed, only at the very final session of the Council, because of the pressing need to formulate an official stand on images in response to recent outbreaks of Iconoclasm in France.¹³⁵ In the Netherlands a whole spate of Catholic works on images appeared immediately after the first Iconoclasm there.¹³⁶ They all insisted again on ecclesiastical supervision, and, amongst all the restrictions, would themselves do away with images they regarded as unacceptable. They came dangerously close to proposing Iconoclasm on the grounds of Orthodoxy. Even in Italy, during the Counter Reformation, there was a large body of writers who, on the basis of the Tridentine decrees, called for the suppression of secular elements in religious subjects.¹³⁷ The vast question of objections to images on the basis of decorum or the need for fidelity to proper sources and so on has received a good deal of attention elsewhere.¹³⁸ Gilio da Fabriano rejects artistic styles – like Michelangelo's – which he regards as incapable of doing justice to the spiritual significance of religious themes.¹³⁹ One finds writers who are primarily concerned with a detailed account of abuses, and someone like Paleotti can actually provide a series of complex categories of the acceptable and unacceptable which amount to nothing less than an Index of proscribed images.¹⁴⁰

Consequences

Thus, in the reaction to Iconoclasm, there lurks another form of antipathy towards images. It is perhaps one of the more depressing consequences of Iconoclasm, and although Iconoclasm sometimes had positive results in terms of the art that was produced afterwards, its effect was as frequently stifling. In the Netherlands after Iconoclasm, for example, there is a palpable loss in confidence on the part of both artist and patron, who are reluctant to produce or commission works which are ever liable to attack at the hands of those who are against images. And then, as soon as images are restored, official supervision inhibits artists: they become unsure not only of *what* to represent, but also of *how* they should represent things. On the other hand, scholars have generally viewed the artistic consequences of Byzantine Iconoclasm in a positive light¹⁴¹ – and it did not, admittedly, produce as great a restrictive reaction as later. It is probably safe to say that from Byzantine Iconoclasm onwards, Iconoclasts are at least as much in favour of art as Iconodules – with just a very few exceptions.¹⁴² We can no longer be as certain as Ghiberti was when he blamed the Byzantine Iconoclasts for putting an end to art for six hundred years.¹⁴³ This is one of the great paradoxes of Iconoclasm, and it leads to further paradoxes. Implicit in the Orthodox attitude towards images is the belief that in some way or another they partake of the supernatural. But dare one say that the Iconoclasts stripped images of the supernatural association altogether? The mere fact that they felt compelled to do away with some, if not all, of them suggests that they realized that they could not. This is the problem that must concern anyone who is aware of the hold of the image on the imagination.

132. H. Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages* (London, 1911), I, 554f; III, 612ff. For the sixteenth century indices, see F.H. Reusch, ed., *Die Indices librorum prohibitorum des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 1886).

133. Τῶν ζωγράφων ἐφεύρεσις ἢ τῶν εἰκόνων ποίησις· ἀλλὰ τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας ἔγκριτος θεομοθεσία καὶ παράδοσις in Mansi, XIII, 252. See also Grabar, *Iconoclasm*, 259.

134. "Haec ut fidelius observentur, statuit sancta synodus, nemini licere, ullo in loco vel ecclesia, etiam quomodolibet exempta, ullam insolitam ponere val ponendam curare imaginem, nisi ab episcopo approbata fuerit" etc., *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta* (Bologna-Freiburg im Breisgau, 1962), 752.

135. See H. Jedin, "Entstehung und Tragweite des Trienter Dekrets über die Bilderverehrung," *ThQ*, 116 (1935), 142–182, 404–428.

136. These are too numerous to mention here, but for a selection, see P. Polman, *L'élément historique dans la controverse religieuse du XVII^e siècle* (Gembloux, 1932).

137. Well discussed in A. Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy, 1450–1600*, (reprint London, 1968), 103–6.

138. *Ibid.*, especially 110 ff.

139. G.A. Gilio da Fabriano, *Due Dialogi . . . degli errori de' Pittori* (Camerino, 1564), now available in P. Barocchi, ed., *Trattati d'Arte del Cinquecento*, II (Bari, 1961).

140. G. Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane* (Bologna, 1582). Latin translation (Ingolstadt, 1594). On this aspect of Paleotti's work, see P. Prodi, *Il Cardinale Gabriele Paleotti*, II (Rome, 1967), 527–562, and cf. P. Prodi, "Ricerche sulla teorica delle arti figurative nella Riforma Cattolica," *Archivio Italiano per la storia della Pietà*, 4 (1962), 123–212.

141. See even C. Diehl, *Manuel d'Art byzantin* (Paris, 1910), 352.

142. They are not against art as such, but rather against all attempts to invest the figurative with any form of holy signification.

143. L. Ghiberti, *Commentari*, II.i, in J. von Schlosser, *Lorenzo Ghiberti's Denkwürdigkeiten* (Berlin, 1912).