

Preface

It is somewhat unusual, but by no means unprecedented, for the Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art to be given by a scholar who is not a historian of art. As students of medieval thought, Jacques Maritain, the first Mellon Lecturer (*Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, 1952), and his fellow Thomist, Etienne Gilson (*Painting and Reality*, 1955), were as a matter of fact closer to my own scholarly field than they were to art history. But they devoted their Mellon Lectures to the correlation between their philosophical reflections and the issues of aesthetics. Coming at some of the same issues from the perspective of the medieval Greek tradition rather than the Latin, I have been able to take advantage of the theological-philosophical literature produced by the Iconoclastic controversies, which addressed many of those questions more explicitly than Western Scholasticism did. I have also benefited greatly from the work of the other scholars listed in my bibliography, including in particular distinguished Byzantinists Western as well as Eastern. Above all, I have come to recognize yet once more in the course of this study how much I owe my late mentor in Byzantine and Russian theology, Father Georges V. Florovsky.

In placing the Byzantine dispute over the legitimacy of icons into the framework of the history of Christian theology, I have needed to draw lines of development both backwards and forwards, but chiefly backwards into the doctrinal history of the patristic era. Rather than identifying at each juncture the scholarly discussions of that history to which a reader may want to turn for more detail, I have included such discussions in the bibliography, including some of my own, especially my five-volume history of the development of Christian doctrine, *The Christian Tradition*. The tables of contents and indexes of such works will make it possible to learn about

the history of the trinitarian and christological doctrines by means of which all the various parties in the Iconoclastic controversies formulated their positions on the question of images. Also with the interest of the reader in mind, I have transliterated all words in the Greek and Cyrillic alphabets, and in the bibliography and notes have tried to concentrate as much as possible on works of scholarship that have appeared in Western languages. Most of the biblical quotations are from *The New English Bible*; translations of other works, where they exist, are indicated in the notes (although I have sometimes adapted or revised them), while the remaining translations are my own.

It was J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery of Art, and Henry A. Millon, Dean of its Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, who invited me to deliver the Mellon Lectures. The hospitality and friendship that they and their colleagues at the gallery extended to me throughout the preparation, delivery, and publication of the lectures will stay with me always, as will the gracious reception accorded me by my Sunday afternoon audiences in Washington. Over the past several decades I have learned much from my visits to the Dumbarton Oaks Center, where at various times Francis Dvornik, Ihor Ševčenko, John Meyendorff, Giles Constable, and William Loerke have shared with me their profound understanding of Byzantine culture, as has my Yale colleague, Deno Geanakoplos. On my visits to such past and present centers of Eastern Orthodox iconography as Turkey, Greece, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria I have had the opportunity to see the icons in their native habitat. And I owe a special debt of gratitude to the Cleveland Museum of Art, custodian of the *Icon of the Virgin*: to its Director Emeritus, Sherman Lee, who gave me my first opportunity to become acquainted with the icon; to its current Director, Evan Turner, who facilitated my correspondence and my visits; and especially to Anne E. Wardwell, Curator of Textiles, who answered my many questions and arranged for me to obtain photographs of the tapestry. As a joint publication of Princeton University Press and Yale University Press London, this book has received the tender loving attention of Eric Van Tassel and Elizabeth Powers at Princeton and of John Nicoll and Faith Hart at Yale in London.