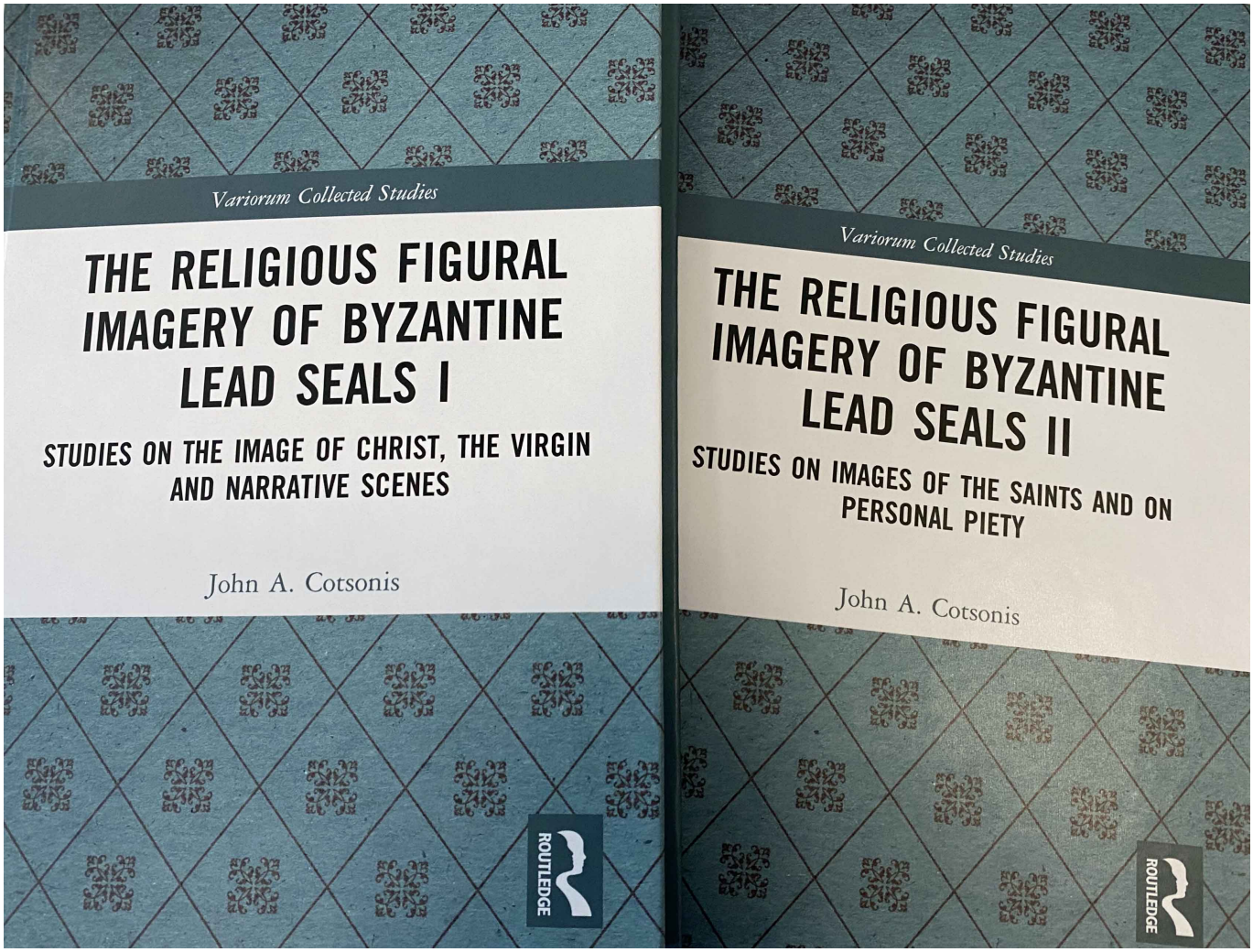
28/04/2020

BISHOP JOACHIM'S SCHOLARLY ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN TWO VOLUMES



The prestigious publishing house Routledge (London) recently announced the publication of a two-volume set in its celebrated Variorum Collected Studies series of all the scholarly articles of Bishop Joachim (Cotsonis) devoted to the study of the sacred imagery of Byzantine lead seals: The Religious Figural Imagery of Byzantine Lead Seals, I: Studies on the Image of Christ, the Virgin and Narrative Scenes; II: Studies on Images of the Saints and on Personal Piety.

As one reviewer noted, for too long Byzantine sigillography did not attract much attention beyond the ranks of the specialists. It was considered an auxiliary area of inquiry that could provide the student of history with useful factual information, most notably with prosopographic data. This outdated view is now largely abandoned, thanks in no small part to the groundbreaking work of Bishop Joachim.

His wide-ranging scholarship on Byzantine seals has opened up a completely new perspective on this material, demonstrating its crucial importance for the study of Byzantine art, society, and religion at large.

Over the course of many years, Bishop Joachim has compiled a huge database of seals bearing religious figural imagery, and has employed this tremendously rich material to explore seals as markers of identity and potent mediators negotiating the relationships among individuals, society, and the sacred. He has investigated such diverse issues as the emergence and dissemination of saints' cults, trends in personal piety, shifts in religious iconography, the interplay between word and image, the intersection of religious devotion and gender, and the social agency of images. The wealth of sphragistic (seal-related) material, moreover, has allowed him to apply statistical methods of analysis and thus to chart trends and developments across a broad chronological and geographical spectrum. Overall, his scholarship has set a model of how to approach seals in more productive ways and will remain an invaluable resource for future research.

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