PREFACE

This study of Byzantine iconophile thought of the eighth and ninth centuries has been undertaken with special reference to John of Damascus (c. 665–c. 749), Theodore the Studite (759–826), and the patriarch Nikephoros (758–828). It was these three theologians who were mainly responsible for developing the iconophile defence of religious images during the two periods of Byzantine iconoclasm (726–787 and, again 813–843). Our study focuses on the historical development of the thematic preoccupations of these iconophiles, and how their preoccupations relate to iconoclast thought.

The main texts selected for analysis are the *Three Orations* of John of Damascus, the *Three Antirrhetici* of Theodore the Studite, and the *Three Antirrhetici* of the patriarch Nikephoros. These texts have been chosen because they were thought to be the most representative, in terms of systematic presentation, of their iconophile writings. However, reference is made to other published texts of theirs where appropriate. In the case of Nikephoros, the choice of a suitable text is complicated by the fact that virtually all of his theological output is concerned with the refutation of the iconoclasts. We have followed previous scholars in judging the *Three Antirrhetici* to offer the essential elements of Nikephoros' thinking on images.

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