Introduction

The modern country of Lebanon preserves an important medieval and post-medieval legacy of standing churches and Christian religious art. After their discovery by western scholars in the 19th century, the art of the churches only attracted limited scholarly attention until about 100 years later, when they began to be studied in detail. Now a variety of studies have appeared on the churches and their art, including several books (Nordiguian and Voisin 1999 and subsequent new editions; Cruikshank Dodd 2004; Immerzeel 2009; Zibawi 2009) and numerous articles in both print and online. This article seeks to provide an overview of the studies of these monuments, first discussing the origins of the study of these churches and the viewpoints of the different scholars who have approached the material, and then examining some of the surviving monuments. The churches discussed here date to what can be most accurately termed as a high medieval period of the 12th-13th centuries AD, when Lebanon was under the rule of the Crusaders. Nevertheless, while the region was under Crusader control, there is a growing recognition that the monuments that were produced were local art that was influenced from a variety of sources. Post-Crusader material will not be discussed, although it should be noted that the country also possesses important Christian art from the subsequent periods. The article will not only examine the standing architecture, but also the wall paintings, which have been the subject of considerable attention on the part of scholars in recent years. Further, other Christian religious items that would have been found or still can be found in the churches, such as icons, will also be treated here, particularly as a number of scholars have related the different art forms to each other. It is by examining all forms of

1 I would like to that Mat Immerzeel of Leiden University for his assistance with this article and May Davie for providing me with copies of articles that would not have otherwise been available to me.
2 University of Chicago.
Christian art surviving in Lebanon from this period that we can come to a better understanding of how and why this material was produced, as well as how the studies of this material has evolved through time. It can also help provide new ideas for further research, in addition to the valuable work of documentation, restoration, and interpretation that has been occurring since the end of the 20th century.

**History of Study of Churches in Lebanon: Initial Studies**

There have been a number of works that have now appeared which have greatly contributed to our knowledge of churches in Lebanon. Different aspects have been examined, such as the architecture or decoration of the churches. One area that has been of particular interest is the wall paintings. Lebanon is a country that has a large number of wall paintings, even though many are now in poor condition. The wall paintings that have gained the most attention are those that date between the 12th-13th centuries found in what was the Crusader county of Tripoli between Jbeil/Byblos and Tripoli (Hélou 1999: 13, no.1; Badwi 2000: 60; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 4; Immerzeel 2003: 266-267; Immerzeel 2009: 7; Zibawi 2009: 27).

As more of the country is explored, further wall paintings have been uncovered and new ones continue to be found. In 1997, for example, Sader published 22 churches with wall paintings (see below), but now at least 27 are known. This means that there are more wall paintings preserved here than anywhere else in the Middle East as Syria has approximately 10 paintings, Palestine has 5, Egypt has 15, and Cyprus has 13 (Nordiguian 1998: 68; Hélou 1999: 13, no.1; Immerzeel 1999: 99; Immerzeel 2003: 266-267; Immerzeel 2004a: 31; Immerzeel 2004b: 7). New wall paintings continue to be discovered in the course of restorations and other churches have had their wall paintings restored (Nordiguian 2005: 163; Nordiguian 2009: 436-450; Hélou 2010b: 137). Nevertheless, wall paintings have disappeared since their initial discovery at the end of the 19th/beginning of the 20th century, there have also been poor restorations, and some wall paintings are poorly preserved (see Fig. 1) (Virolleaud 1924: 118; Nordiguian 1998: 67; Rousseau 1998: 28-29; Immerzeel 1999: 118; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 4, no. 5; Hélou 2007a: 53-54; Immerzeel 2009: 7, 101-102; Nordiguian and Voisin 2009: 434-444, who records destruction at the church of Rashkida between 1999-2009). The large number of wall paintings in Lebanon is nonetheless offset by the fact that almost none of them come from metropolitan areas and therefore our picture of wall painting in the region is necessarily incomplete (Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 6, 21).

Scholars did not explore the rich heritage of churches in Lebanon in detail until the end of the 20th century. Initial visitors to Lebanon in the 19th century were primarily interested in the Classical ruins of Baalbek and its cedar trees rather than
its churches of Christian art (Exhibition Catalogue 1986: 12, 19; Khatib 2003: 55-56). John Stuart Stuart-Glennie famously abandoned his travelling companion, the noted historian Thomas Buckle, in Damascus to die of fever, so that he could visit the ruins of Baalbek, an action that caused considerable distress amongst Buckle's friends (Stuart-Glennie 1875: 484-487; Huth 1880: 248-253, 256; St. Aubyn 1958: 99-101). European and American missionaries were interested in the local Christian community (Masters 2001: 44; Khalaf 2002: 14-44), but there was more limited interest in the churches themselves (see, for example, Exhibition Catalogue 1986: 39). One reason for this neglect may have been due to the fact that many of the churches were located in the mountains in Lebanon. Therefore, travel between the mountain areas and the lowland settlements were limited due to the terrain (Akarhi 1993: 7). This inaccessibility may have also led to their preservation for future generations (Cruikshank Dodd 2001b: 69; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 6).

An appreciation of wall paintings in the churches in Lebanon began thanks to the work of Ernest Renan (1823-1892), who wrote his work *Mission de Phénicie* (1865-1874), as a result of his work in Lebanon in 1860, which was published in 1874. Although he had been sent to Lebanon to look for Phoenician remains by Napoleon III, he nevertheless focused his attention also on the wall paintings of
churches in Lebanon. He noted that they appeared to be Byzantine in style and represented an interesting sideline to art of this period (Renan 1874; For Renan see Aumasson 1993: 8, 11, 64-77). Emanuel Rey (1813-1916) also noted the existence of the wall paintings in the 19th century (Rey 1883), but it was not until the early 20th century, that more studies started to appear. Camille Enlart (1862-1927), who was concentrated more on architecture and who generally was not interested in anything that was not Crusader (Enlart 1923; Enlart 1925-1928; De Vaivre 2006). He did discuss some of the wall paintings, as did Henri Lammens (1862-1937), who had more of an interest but still did not discuss them in a large amount of detail (Lammens 1913: 83-90; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 4, no. 5, 6 For history of wall paintings studies in general see Badwi 2000: 62; Badwi 2001: 73; Nordiguian and Voison 2009: 209). Indeed, Nordiguian has suggested that at least in some cases, that Renan and Lammens did not actually visit all the churches they described personally due to the fact that their information about what was actually represented on the wall paintings of the churches was inaccurate and incomplete (Nordiguian 1995-1996: 102, no. 13). It is possible, however, as their descriptions were observations, that they simply included what they thought was important or interesting. Another scholar who did not personally visit the churches in Lebanon was Charles Diehl (1859-1944), a noted Byzantine art historian. He studied water color paintings from Bahdeidat (see below), which had been made by an artist known as Tutundjian for Villoreaud (it is not clear if this was Leon Tutundjian, who later became a the famous surrealist artist). He recognized the paintings in Lebanon as being “Byzantine” and connected them to the wall paintings that are found in Cappadocia in Turkey (Diehl 1927: 1927; Sader 1997: 50; Badwi 2001: 75). None of these scholars studied the wall paintings or the churches in a large amount of detail, however. In contrast to these more summary studies, Brossé worked on the paintings from the grotto of Mar Marina (see below) in considerable detail, publishing black and white photographs of the paintings and the inscriptions (Brossé 1926).

**Multicultural View: Studies of the late 20th/early 21st Century**

After the initial work at the beginning of the 20th century, the number of studies of churches in Lebanon diminished. The frescoes from a church in Beirut were identified in the 1940s (Lauffray 1946-1948; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 374-378; Immerzeel 2009; 121; Zibawi 2009: 78-29) and Coupel published the architectural and sculptural decoration from three churches in 1941 at about the same time (Coupel 1941). In 1962, Tallon wrote an article looking at one of the churches in some detail and listed a number of churches with descriptions (Tallon 1962). The publication of an exhibition of the icons in the Sourcek Museum held in the 1960s, included an
article by Nasrallah looking at the history of wall paintings in the region, discussing both narrative sources and the actual paintings themselves. His discussion of paintings from Lebanon was rather limited, but his discussion of the non-western sources regarding Christian wall paintings in general was valuable as it emphasizes the fact that the local population was aware of wall paintings in churches (Nasrallah 1969).

In 1970, Tallon wrote an article looking specifically at the church at Bahdeidat (for more on this church see below), but it was written in Arabic and did not appear in French until 1996, meaning it was largely inaccessible to western scholars who did not know the language (Tallon 1996). But other than these studies, it was not until the 1990s that the churches began to be studied in more detail (Héloü 2010b: 136-137).

Part of the reason for this gap in the scholarly discourse of Lebanese churches comes from the difficulties of the civil war. This was not the only reason, however. Even scholars who were aware of the existence of the churches and their wall paintings, such as Leroy, simply dismissed the paintings as being not interesting enough to study (Leroy 1964: 83; Héloü 1999: 24, no. 44; Immerzeel 2004a: 31; Immerzeel 2009: 1). As recognition of the importance of these paintings has increased (Héloü 2010b: 136-137), however, many scholarly studies have now focused on the wall paintings. There is a growing recognition that the wall paintings of Lebanon are part of a multi-cultural koine that operated within the eastern Mediterranean in the medieval period. Therefore the art shows is complex and shows Syriac, Byzantine and Romanesque elements (Badwi 2000: 60; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 6). The frescoes of Lebanon occupy a peculiar place in the Byzantine tradition and it can be challenging to separate out what is Byzantine and what is Syriac as the two traditions coexisted (Immerzeel 2003: 269; Héloü 2008: 25).

In addition to the print publications, there are a number of other resources for the study of Lebanese churches. There is the Paul van Moorsel Centre for Christian Art and Culture in the Middle East in Leiden named for the late Paul van Moorsel (one of the pioneers in the study of Coptic art), with an extensive library and slide collection that is particularly strong in Egyptian, Lebanese, and Syrian Christian art. There are also on-line resources. There is a website devoted to the churches of Lebanon, which has been established by the Association pour la Restauration et l’Étude des Fresques Médiévales du Liban (AREFML) (Héloü 2007a: 54) (http://fresquesliban.com). This website contains a list of different churches and includes bibliography and color photographs demonstrating the restoration of various monuments, as well as in some cases, detailed descriptions of the wall paintings (see below). The website also includes a list of the scholars involved and their cv’s with publications, as well as articles online (Jabre-Mouawad 2005), meaning that they are widely accessible. The AREFML has also restored a number of churches (Immerzeel 2009: 112-113; Nordiguien and Voisin 2009: 434). Another website devoted to
churches is Architecture religieuse du Patriarcat Orthodoxe d'Antioche (ARPOA) (http://www.balamand.edu.lb/ARPOA.asp?id=11306&fid=2025) that has documented the architectural patrimony of the Greek Orthodox patriarchate of Antioch. This includes pictures of churches, their interiors, and architectural plans. Other online websites with resources on Lebanon include the Journal of Maronite Studies (MARl), which has some studies of churches with online photographs (http://maroniteinstitute.org/). The Index of Christian art also contains a comprehensive list of photographs, primarily in color, of the wall paintings, but this service is available to subscribers only (http://ica.princeton.edu/)

**Studies of Churches**

A number of works have now appeared which provide examinations of large numbers of the churches in Lebanon including the books by Sader, Nordiguian, Cruikshank Dodd, Immerzeel, and Zibawi (Zibawi 2009: 29-30; Hérou 2010b: 136-137), as well as the articles by Hérou and Immerzeel. The previous works mentioned above had simply studied a few churches or aspects of those churches rather than a full overview (Immerzeel 2009: 5). The earliest of these books was written by Sader, whose work remains useful, although its conclusions have been superseded by other works and the quality of some of the photographs is less than ideal (Immerzeel 2009: 6). The book does, however, represent the first attempt at providing an overview and catalogue of all of the churches and is therefore useful for this reason. Further, Sader also provided excerpts from works that are hard for scholars outside Lebanon to obtain, such as Liban Souterrain, as well as citing a number of previous studies, including works in Arabic (Sader 1997: 50, 217-226), which are either very difficult to obtain or difficult for western scholars to access.

It is the conclusions of Sader, however, that are more problematic. Sader suggested that the churches were primarily western in influence and tried to find connections with western art, despite the fact that other studies have demonstrated that the churches were constructed by the local population for their own use (see below). Specifically, while Sader acknowledges that the churches are Byzantine in style, he argues that they were built by Crusaders and decorated by them. As sources for this conclusion he cites Enlart, who had argued that the churches were built or modified by western artists who had come to the Holy Land on pilgrimage. This may also explain why he incorrectly identified saints such as St. Francis of Assisi or St. Bernard in different wall painting programs (Sader 1997: 43, 46-51, 53, 108, 259-260), a suggestion that has not been followed by later scholars. Other observations, however, have been confirmed by other scholars, such as the observation that there are similarities between some Lebanese and Cypriot wall paintings (see below) (Sader 1997: 50, 168, no.1).
Despite any issues with his conclusions, Sader's work is richly photographed (even if the colors were not always well printed) and he discusses many churches in detail, including some that were not well preserved, illustrating all of them (Sader 1997: 135, 137, 141, 143-144, 165-168, 178-180, 191, 194-196).

Nordiguian and Voisin contributed an important work to the discussion of painted churches with their lengthy book that examined both castles and churches, thereby documenting two of the major standing monuments that have survived from the medieval period. The majority of this lengthy book focused on the churches, which was written by Nordiguian and this is divided into two parts: church architecture and church painting. When he examines the church architecture, Nordiguian notes that our knowledge has not progressed very much since the studies of Enlart (see above). This section provides color photographs of the interior and exterior of the churches, ground plans and exterior drawings. It also notes issues such as elements documented by Enlart that have now disappeared and also gives historical drawings and photographs to show how the buildings have deteriorated over the centuries. He also gives brief descriptions of many of the churches. The village churches are examined at the end of the architecture discussion and are divided into single and double nave churches. The architecture discussion concludes with a discussion and documentation of cave churches and hermitages (Nordiguian and Voisin 2009: 122-204). After the architecture discussion, attention is turned to the decoration of the churches. After a brief discussion of the history of the study of the wall paintings and a discussion about the richness of the Lebanese cultural heritage, Nordiguian discusses the Byzantine style of the paintings. Color photographs of the wall paintings follow and the large format of the book means that the reader can view them considerable detail. The decoration discussion and photographs are divided into types of iconography based upon their location in the church (such as the Deisis) and iconography that does not have a specific location in a church (such as the Nativity or Baptism of Christ) (Nordiguian and Voisin 2009: 209-360). This is followed by an alphabetical guide to churches and castles in Lebanon, which contains a short description of the building (Nordiguian and Voisin 2009: 363-417). While it was originally published in 1999, the work has subsequently been reprinted twice, most recently in 2009, with the addition of five churches that have been restored (Nordiguian and Voisin 2009: 437-450). This addition demonstrates the fluidity of our understanding of the churches in Lebanon and shows that in a span of 10 years, five new churches were discovered. This also suggests that there are more churches waiting to be found by scholars in the future. In addition to this book, Nordiguian has written numerous articles on both painted churches as well as the architecture of other churches, such as the church of the Forty Martyrs at Yanouh (Nordiguian 2004), church of Mar Yuhanna Chaqf at Hardine (Nordiguian 2011) and the Christianization
of other churches for which he provided plans and photographs of the church buildings (Nordiguian 2009).

In 2000 and 2001, Badwi wrote articles that looked at both the architecture and wall paintings. He divided the churches into cave or semi-trogloidyic churches, as well as those built with one or three apses. As the time that Badwi was writing, only a few articles had appeared and presumably he did not see Nordiguian and Voisin's book. Therefore, he correctly pointed that the majority of the churches have not been studied in great detail. He also noted that one can see the presence of Syriac, Byzantine, Cypriot, and Romanesque influences in the paintings (which he divides into different styles) and that some of the material can be compared to Cappadocia (Badwi 2000: 62-63; Badwi 2001: 72, 74, 76). Badwi suggested that there was a common Syriac style with Byzantine influences and that there are “common elements of these iconographic wall paintings which belong to the common heritage of the church of Antioch” (Badwi 2000: 67, Badwi 2001: 81). Badwi also suggested that there was a considerable correlation between the miniatures and the wall paintings (Badwi 2001: 80-81).

Nordiguian and Voisin's book was helpful to the discussion of churches in Lebanon but a true overview, according to Immerzeel, had to wait until the work of Cruikshank Dodd (Immerzeel 2009: 6). Cruikshank Dodd, who has worked on paintings in Syria as well as Lebanon, compares the style of paintings in Lebanon not only to Syria but also to paintings in Palestine, Cyprus, Cappadocia, and the Balkans. The Byzantine influences that can seen in the wall paintings are similar to those from the Comnenian period and indicate that the painters were familiar with types of Byzantine art. She suggests that the iconography of the 12th century is connected with Constantinople and one can see connections with Cyprus. The Byzantine connections came to Lebanon in this period via these two regions, but after 1204, the region was cut off from Constantinople and therefore the painters began to draw upon the older, local Syrian traditions. This meant that the Lebanese paintings began to resemble Syrian paintings from Syria. In addition, there were also influences from the Crusaders and Palestine. But there were not a lot of different types of scenes found in Lebanon (Cruikshank Dodd: 31-32, 102-103. See also Cruikshank Dodd 2001a: 112-114). She notes, as did earlier authors, the similarities of some of the paintings to Cappadocia, the Byzantine empire and Cyprus, as well as a Syrian style. In addition to these styles, she also suggests the presence of European painters, based on the similarities to the Mount Sinai icons, which have previously been identified as Crusader or Cypriot (Cruikshank Dodd 1990: 89-99). As has now been demonstrated, however, these icons were actually painted by local artists in Lebanon and there is therefore no need to attribute some of the wall paintings at churches such as Ma'ad, Amiun, and Eddé to Europeans any longer (see below).
Cruikshank Dodd's book provided a detailed discussion of the churches, including a catalogue of all the churches known to have wall paintings, with photographs, architectural plans, and bibliography. In addition to the catalogue of all the churches, her work also gave a detailed discussion of different aspects of the churches. This includes a discussion of the subjects depicted in the wall paintings and their iconography and demonstrated the similarities between the decorative programs of different churches. She notes, for example, the fact that when the paintings are preserved in the main apse, in six instances (2/3 of total churches where painting in the apse survives) it is decorated with the Christ in Majesty (Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 32-33). Further, she discussed various issues about the churches including the selection of the saints that appeared in wall paintings and previous studies of the churches. Cruikshank Dodd's book was therefore extremely comprehensive although many of the photographs in the book were unfortunately in black and white (Cruikshank Dodd 2004). She also provides transcriptions of all of the inscriptions and discussed the different languages in some detail. She suggested both here and elsewhere that churches with Greek inscriptions date to the 12th century but in the 13th it was abandoned in favor of Syriac (Cruikshank Dodd 1997-1998: 258).

At the same time that the book of Nordiguian and Voisin first appeared, Hélou wrote her initial article on wall paintings that provided one of the earlier surveys of the different paintings, although she did not discuss all of them in great detail. This has been followed by further articles on different aspects of the wall paintings and icons (for the icons, see below), as well as links to Syriac manuscripts (Hélou 2010a: 299). She noted that the paintings dated to the time of the Crusades but were not painted by the Crusaders, but rather by the local Christians, who built and decorated their own churches. The architecture of the churches was usually simple and sometimes would show Romanesque influence (Hélou 1999: 13, nos. 2, 5-6). Hélou has termed this type of Romanesque architecture in local style as “roman-Levantine” and notes that it was constructed by the local population rather than the Crusaders themselves. This Crusader influence in architecture can be seen at other churches such as Eddé, Rashkida, and Ma'ad (Hélou 2003a: 114, no. 10; Hélou 2008: 29-30; Hélou 2009: 7, 9-10). The wall paintings, on the other hand, are connected in their selection of iconography to Cappadocia, Georgia, Egypt and Armenia and to the eastern part of the Byzantine empire in general (Hélou 1998: 39-46; Hélou 1999:15, Hélou 2010a: 292, 294). She divides them into two types: paintings that show a more marked Byzantine influence, as well as those that are byzantinizing but painted in a more eastern tradition. There appear to have been several workshops or schools that operated in Lebanon in this period and their style is clearly different from Byzantine or Cappadocian art. They can be linked to Syrian paintings, particularly Qara and one can speak about medieval Syrian art (Hélou 1999: 20-21, 24; Hélou 2010a: 294, 299, 307-308).
In addition to this overview article, Hélou has also written several short articles on different subjects (see below) and also published several illustrated books on the different painted churches in Lebanon intended for a more popular audience (see Hélou 2010b: 137). She studied the churches in two short books examining two different areas: region of Jbeil and Batrun and in the north of the country. Despite the fact that they may have been intended for the wider public, these books still documents the local Byzantine-Syriac and Byzantine traditions of wall paintings. It provides a good overview of the churches in Lebanon as well as color pictures of wall paintings (Hélou 2007a: 18, 20, 23, 27, 30, 38, 40-42, 44, 47, 49; Hélou 2008: 9-11, 39-40, 42, 45-46, 56, 61, 66). She also provided descriptions of some churches in another popular book, this time in a description of churches in the Antiochene Orthodox patriarch. One again, this provides detailed descriptions and photographs of different churches (Hélou, Slim, et al. 2007: 326, 334, 362-366, 373, 375-276).

Immerzeel has also dealt with the wall paintings in considerable detail, looking at paintings in both the modern countries of Lebanon and Syria in his numerous articles and several books. Some of his work has dealt with specific themes in the wall paintings, specifically the depiction of warrior saints or the connection between wall paintings and icons (see discussion below) but he has also published a number of valuable overviews of all the churches, in both articles and his recent book (Immerzeel 1999; Immerzeel 2000; Immerzeel 2004b: 8, 10-14; See catalogue of churches in Immerzeel 2004a: 53-56). As the review of Hélou of his 2009 book has noted, he studies the wall paintings in meticulous detail and therefore has been able to identify differences between the different paintings and begin a discussion of different styles. In 2000, he published a list of Lebanese wall paintings with a description of the different scenes depicted, which saints or other individuals were depicted and where. Inscriptions and their languages were mentioned, as well as a bibliography. Although the architecture of the churches was not discussed, plans based upon Sader's work (Sader 1997) were published with locations of the wall paintings indicated (Immerzeel 2000).

In his book, Identity Puzzles, Immerzeel examines the material in considerable detail building on his previous work on the subject, to create a substantive overview of not only the wall paintings themselves, but discussions of identity and patronage as well as wall paintings and icons themselves as they must be placed in their context with other forms of art (Immerzeel 2009: 7. See also ter Haar Romeny et al 2010: 29-33). In addition, the book includes thorough discussions of different churches in Lebanon including not only the major and better known churches, but also some of the ones where little has remained (Immerzeel 2009: 99-100, 114-115). However, Immerzeel states, “compiling an inventory of churches with scant traces would contribute to statistics rather than to new insights.” (Immerzeel 2009: 114). The book
contains an impressive number of color photographs, which greatly assists in appreciating the wall paintings as they are explained to the reader.

Immerzeel comes to similar conclusions as Hélou about the style and iconography of the wall paintings in the churches. Although the iconography is heavily influenced by Byzantine art, some styles are closer to Byzantine art than others. The paintings that were painted in a more Byzantine style generally have Greek inscriptions and were focused in the Melkite area in the north. The paintings that show a more local Syrian style tend to be found in the Maronite and Syrian Orthodox region. There are exceptions from the two types of painting styles, however, and evidently the Melkite artists worked for Maronites. Some artists produced a style that combined both Syrian and Byzantine characteristics. It is difficult to identify the denominations of the churches in the medieval period as there is nothing distinctive about the paintings or the saints selected to indicate this. Some churches have inscriptions written in both Greek and Syriac. Further, the subject matter chosen in the wall paintings is similar to that found on the periphery of the Byzantine empire although the arrangement of the wall paintings generally follows Byzantine models. One can see interactions between the two schools as they share similar iconography and working practices (Immerzeel 2009: 117-118, 142, 144-146, 156, 170, 173. See as Immerzeel 2004a: 35-36; Immerzeel 2004b: 18-26, 28-30, Fig. 2; ter Haar Romeny et al 2010: 29-33). The identity of the donors also does not help us better understand the interaction between style and denomination however as the donors are almost always anonymous, even though some are dressed in a manner which could mean they were Frankish elites or Melkites, even if the Franks probably did not sponsor entire painting programs (Immerzeel 2009: 92, 103, 106-108, 157, 162-163, 165, 178. See also Immerzeel 2004a: 43; Immerzeel 2004b: 14, 16-17). Nevertheless, as Hélou has pointed out, Immerzeel's detailed study of the different wall paintings allows him to point to similarities and differences between the different styles, beginning to identify which churches are similar to each other (Hélou 2010b: 137-139).

The increasing scholarly interest has meant that there is now interest in publishing more popular books articles such as those written by Rousseau and Westphalen (Rousseau 1998; Westphalen 2000) and the book written by Zibawi (Zibawi 2009: 29-79). Zibawi's book provides an overview of the state of the wall paintings in Syria and Lebanon, descriptions of some of the churches, as well as many color photographs that demonstrate the importance of these frescoes. The descriptions are quite general, however and does not discuss issues such as individual artists (see below) or place the material in its context with paintings from other regions, with a few exceptions in the descriptive part of the book (Zibawi 2009: 56). In the last chapter of the book, Permanence byzantine, he does discuss issues of style as it relates to both Lebanese and Syrian wall paintings. He notes that the painting found in both
places is clearly byzantiniizing and that there are two types of painting found: local painting that was influenced by Byzantine and was a creation of eastern periphery of the Byzantine empire (the dominant style) and a style that was influenced by Comnenian art. But he believes it is very difficult to separate them from each other. After briefly discussing the style of the paintings, he turns to other areas where Byzantine influence can be seen, specifically icons and manuscripts (Zibawi 2009: 142-173, Hélou 2010b). The book is well referenced, however, meaning that a reader can go to find the more detailed studies if they are interested to do so.

As has become clear from this overview, the majority of studies focused on wall paintings or the wall paintings and architecture, but there have also been overviews of architecture only. Ziadé has studied rural chapels and created an architectural typology of the 17 chapels in the Jbeil region, identifying them as types A-D, although the chapels have no regular plan. As she noted, the chapels are generally dated to the 12th century, but their actual date is unclear as rural chapels have been very little studied. These chapels would have been too small to serve the local community entirely (Ziadé 2005-2006: 172-173, 177). This study is important because, combined with the architectural work of Nordiguian (see above) it points to the potential of architectural studies to further understand Lebanese churches, even those that are not decorated with paintings.

Studies of individual churches

As there have already been a number of overview studies of the churches of Lebanon, this article will not seek to duplicate this work and describe every single church that has been studied. Rather, it will discuss churches and different subjects that have received considerable scholarly attention and constitute an important part of the studies of medieval churches in Lebanon.

Church of Mar Tadros at Bahdeidat

The church of Mar Tadros at Bahdeidat (Fig. 2) is one of the best preserved churches with wall paintings in Lebanon. As a result, it has received a great deal of attention on the part of scholars (Hourani 1997; Sader 1997: 65-75; Immerzeel 1999: 102-103; Badwi 2000: 63; Badwi 2001: 76-78; Cruikshank Dodd 2001b; Westphalen 2000: 489; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 338-360; Hélou 2007a: 11-16; Zibawi 2009: 30-37), even during the periods when wall paintings were not studied in as much detail. It is seen as being “a key monument for the study of wall paintings in Lebanon” (Immerzeel 2009: 101). Despite the fact that the wall painting scheme is largely intact (Cruikshank Dodd 1997-1998: 264; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 339), there have still been difficulties in the restoration and preservation of this monument. Sader
reported that Charles Diehl apparently saw a fresco of the Dormition of the Virgin, now destroyed, and that there is a report in the Académie des Inscriptions et des Belle Lettres in Paris (Sader 1997: 75; Badwi 2000: 75). More recently, the church itself has been subject to unsympathetic restoration on the part of an amateur and has resulted in some destruction. The church is also important because it was painted by the same individual, who is anonymous, but who is now known as the “Master of Bahdeidat.” This artist painted in the local Syrian byzantinizing style (see above) in the 13th century that has certain similarities to wall paintings in Cappadocia and Syria (Hourani 1997; Héloü 1999: 17; Badwi 2000: 63; Cruikshank Dodd 1997-1998: 269; Cruikshank Dodd 2001: 65; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 229; Immerzeel 2009: 104-105). This particular style was popular in Lebanon and other paintings in churches have been identified by art historians as being painted by him personally (Mar Charbel at Ma‘ad, Mar Saba at Eddé, and Mart Shmuni at Hadchit) or those painted by followers in the same style (Saydet Naya at Kafr Shleiman, Mar Elias in Blat (Fig. 3), Mar Elias at Kafr Qahel, and Mar Sem‘an at Sakiyat Khait (Badwi 2000: 62; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 343; Héloü 2007a: 25, 27; Immerzeel 2009: 111-114, 118, 120; Héloü 2010a: 307).

The iconography of the church includes not only New Testament but also Old Testament images: Abraham sacrificing Isaac and Moses receiving the tablets. According to Héloü, Old Testament scenes are somewhat rare in eastern art and may be a continuation of the early Christian tradition when such Old Testament depictions were more popular (Héloü 1999:16-17). Cruikshank Dodd, states that such Old Testament scenes were well known in Byzantine art and are found in the art of the Byzantine periphery, such as in Cyprus, Syria, and Egypt, and again are a continuation
from older models (Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 56-57). In this context it is interesting to note that Lassus discovered very damaged wall paintings near Antioch in a hermitage that included a depiction of an Old Testament scene (the hospitality of Abraham). As he did not publish the piece, it makes it impossible to date or compare to the material here (Lassus: 281-282, 302, no. 4). Dodd has also suggested that the way that Gabriel is holding his hands may be similar to ancient Egyptian art via Coptic art, although it could also be linked to influences from Palestine (Cruikshank Dodd 2001: 63; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 58-59). The continuation of themes from Early Christian art is something that she has emphasized in her work (Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 101), but the continuation with ancient Egypt seems unlikely. In addition to the paintings pointing to a possible link to an earlier period, the church itself may have been built on the site of a Greek temple. There are Greek inscriptions that were built into the walls of the church and the altar is a re-used tombstone (Cruikshank Dodd 2001: 61; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 338).

A donor was painted on the church and Immerzeel has suggested that the donor standing below St. George is a Latin. This is based upon his costume, which is a gown with one red half and one blue half, and he suggested that it was a Frank but there is nothing else in the church to argue that this was the case. Almost all of the inscriptions
in the church were in Syriac except for one in Greek and in 1256, the church was known to be Syrian Orthodox (Kassis, Yon and Badwi 2004: 36, 40; Cruikshank Dodd: 343; Immerzeel 2009: 103-105; Hélou 2010b).

**Church of Mar Saba at Eddé**

Another church that has received considerable attention is the church of Mar Saba at Eddé (Fig. 4) (Sader 1997: 125-135; Immerzeel 1999: 108-111; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 280-291; Nordiguian and Reveiron 2001-2002), which has been studied in detail in an article by Hélou (Hélou 2003b). The church is unusual amongst the Lebanese churches because it is much more substantial that many of the churches where wall paintings have been preserved. It is one of the better preserved Crusader churches in the area and was built in the 12th century on the basilica plan, which shows Romanesque influence. The paintings date to a later period. In contrast to Bahdeidat, however, the paintings are done by different artists and at different times. The frescoes in the church can be divided into two groups. The first group includes a depiction of the Crucifixion and the Dormition of the Virgin and saints. The frescoes are painted in a late Comnenian style that can be compared to paintings to Cyprus, the Balkans, and the periphery of the Byzantine empire suggesting a date of the late 12th/early 13th centuries. Despite similarities to elsewhere in the Byzantine periphery,

One of the reasons that Cruikshank Dodd wished to date the Dormition to a later period is due to the fact that the Maronite Historian, Patriarch Stephan al-Duwayhi (1629-1704), provides a date of 1261/2 for a now lost inscription above the Dormition. This inscription records that the decoration of the church was interrupted due to military activity at this time. But other art historians have found her dating of the wall painting problematic. Rather, they have connected this date to another group of frescoes in the church that depict warrior saints and a Virgin and child. These were made by the Master of Bahdeidat at a later period that the earlier layer of paintings. Therefore, they could have been made at the date recorded by the Maronite historian. If true, this provides a date for Bahdeidat, Ma'ad and the other paintings made by the Master of Bahdeidat and their followers (Hélou 1999: 19; Hélou 2003b: 412-414; Immerzeel 2004b: 28; Hélou 2007a: 33, 37-38; Immerzeel 2009:110-111). The only difficulty is that we must assume that the recording of the now lost inscription was reliable and that it refers to the second layer of painting. It is possible, however, that it might be referring to something else entirely that has not survived.

*Mar Charbel at Ma'ad*

The church of Mar Charbel (Fig. 5) has a basilica plan (said to be of Romanesque influence) and an earlier church of the 6th century was built on the remains of a Greco-Roman temple. This is also the case at the churches of Amiun, Bziza, and Kafr Shleiman (Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 317), and may also be the case at Bahdeidat (for a comprehensive discussion of the Christianization of pagan temples see Nordiguian 2009, see also Chausson and Nordiguian 1996 for a discussion of the pre-Christian inscriptions at the site). The 6th century church re-used material from the temple and was then subsequently enlarged in the 12th or 13th century (Cruikshank Dodd 1997-1998: 267; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 317). As has already been noted, the wall paintings from the church of Mar Charbel have a connection to Bahdeidat and other wall paintings. Art historians have identified two different layers of wall paintings at the church, but the first layer is only visible where the second layer has flaked off. The preserved part of the first layer depicts saints with names in Syriac, while the second layer depicts the Dormition of the Virgin and donors, in addition to depictions of other saints with inscriptions in Syriac and Greek, which are similar to the Master of Bahdeidat. Both of the layers look very similar to each
other and date to the second part of the 13th century. It has been suggested that the Crusaders may have been responsible for the second layer of painting in the church, based upon writing of Patriarch Stephan al-Duwayhi. The historian described how in the later part of the 13th century a Frank buried his daughter in the church and he also restored the church roof. On the other hand, the second layer of wall paintings may have been made through local patronage with the Franks helping to restore the church. The donor who is depicted in the second layer is a priest, and it has been suggested that he is Maronite (Héloü 1999: 17-18. no. 21; Immerzeel 1999: 103-104; Héloü 1999-2000: 141, 143-146, 148-149, 152; Héloü 2007a: 23; Héloü 2008: 40, 42; Immerezeel 2009: 106-108, 162). Additionally, Nordiguian has also argued for Latin influence, based on similarities with the miter of one of the saints and a Syriac inscription that he claims identifies one of the figures as Opizio dei Fieschi, the Latin patriarch of Antioch (Nordiguian and Voisin 2009: 443-444).

The difficulty once again with the church at Ma'ad is that there is nothing to indicate that the donors were Franks rather than local elites. While the story recorded in al-Duwayhi is suggestive, it does not prove that the church was reconstructed in this period due to Crusader support. The presence of Syriac and Greek inscriptions would tend to argue far more for local involvement in the church than Crusader. Nevertheless, Cruikshank Dodd suggests that the Dormition of the Virgin was a favorite scene for the Franks and that it was made for the dead girl and the donor depicted in the church is the girl's father, who apparently has taken a vow and become a priest (presumably after he had his daughter) (Cruikshank Dodd 1997-1998: 267). Once again, however, there is no evidence to identify the donor with anyone other than a priest, as he is anonymous.
Church of Mar Sarkis and Bakhos at Kaftun: Frescoes and Icon

The church of Kaftun (Fig. 6) is triple-nave in the Romanesque style, although it is much simpler than the usual Romanesque churches in Europe (Héloü 2003a: 114, no. 10; Héloü 2008: 29-30; Héloü 2009: 7, 9-10). In the course of recent restoration of the church, two layers of frescoes of a high quality were discovered (Waliszewski and Chmielewski 2005; Chmielewski and Waliszewski 2007a; Chmielewski and Waliszewski 2007b; Waliszewski, Juchniewicz, and Gomiak 2007a; Waliszewski, Juchniewicz, and Gomiak 2007b; Immerzeel 2009: 94-95). The two layers were painted in different styles within a few years of each other (or perhaps even at the same time), both in styles that echo the Byzantine tradition although the inscriptions written in Greek, Syriac and Arabic point to the multicultural milieu in which this church functioned. The earliest level of painting depicts of the Communion of the Apostles and although it is based upon Byzantine traditions of the 12th century, the painting dates to the 13th century. It has been suggested that it was painted by an artist or artists who were Byzantine and fled from Constantinople in 1204 (Immerzeel and Héloü 2005: 457-458; Héloü 2008: 34; Héloü and Immerzeel 2007b: 315-316; Héloü 2009: 9-11, 13-14, 16-19; Immerzeel 2009: 97-98; Héloü 2010a: 303). The second level has a very different style, which although it still has links to Byzantine art, is done in a very local manner, with subjects that are common in places on the periphery of the empire (Héloü and Immerzeel 2007b: 315-316; Héloü, Slim et al 2007: 305; Héloü 2008: 31, 33; Héloü 2009: 21-22; Immerzeel 2009: 97-98; Héloü 2010a: 303, 305-306). Kaftun seems have been painted by interacting artists who decorated various churches within the region (Immerzeel 2009: 133).

The church of Kaftun has proved to be a key site in Lebanon for our understanding of art in this period. This is due not only to the newly discovered wall paintings, but also the double-sided icon from the church in Kaftun, the only medieval icon to survive in Lebanon. The style of the icon is similar to the wall paintings as the style was influenced by Byzantine art but painted in the local tradition. The Arabic, Greek, and Syriac trilingual inscription on the icon also places it within the multicultural landscape of Lebanon. Importantly, however, the icon has considerable similarities with those from Mount Sinai (Héloü 2003a: 113-114; Immerzeel 2003: 271; Immerzeel 2003-2004: 181; Héloü with Immerzeel 2006: 65; Immerzeel 2007a: 67-70, 73-76; Héloü, Slim, et al. 2007: 292, 301-302; Héloü 2009: 22; Immerzeel 2009: 98, 125, 127, 139; Zibawi 2009: 154-156). Hunt and Folda had already suggested that some icons were painted in the county of Tripoli (Hunt 1991; Folda 1992), while Héloü noted the similarities in style between wall paintings and the icons of St. Catherine (Héloü 1999: 22; Immerzeel 2004a: 29; Immerzeel 2007a: 70; Héloü with Immerzeel 2006: 65; Immerzeel
2009: 128), but detailed studies of the icon from Kaftun and the discovery of the wall paintings there has meant that now the evidence for this connection has increased considerably.

It is clear that the icons of Kaftun and the Sinai can be linked stylistically to the frescoes in Lebanon. On the basis of the analysis of the Kaftun icon and by linking the style its painting to wall paintings, both Hérou and Immerzeel have argued that some of the icons in St. Catherine Sinai are actually Syro-Lebanese that are inspired by Byzantine tradition but painted in a local style and have links to frescoes. The icon of Kaftun and several of the frescoes from the church were painted in the same hand. In addition, it was this individual who also painted icons in the Sinai (Immerzeel 2003: 272-273; Immerzeel 2004s: 43, 52; Hérou with Immerzeel 2006: 53-72. 58-59, 61; Hérou 2007b: 25-27; Hérou and Immerzeel 2007b: 316-317; Hérou, Slim, et al. 2007: 308; Immerzeel 2007a: 76-82; Hérou 2008: 34, 61; Hérou 2009: 7, 24, 26-28; Immerzeel 2009: 131-133; Hérou 2010a: 296, 303, 305-306; ter Haar Romeny et al 2010: 34;). Further analysis by these and other scholars are likely to yield more results (Immerzeel 2009: 139) but the situation does appear to be “complex” (Nelson and Lawson 2006: 251, 253, Cat. no. 50).

Fig. 6: Photograph of painting at Mar Sarkis and Bakhos, Kaftun (Photograph by Mat Immerzeel)
It has been suggested that the icons come from different parts of Syria (Hé lou with Immerzeel 2006: 3: 70) and Hé lou identifies two schools of icons: Syrian school of the mid-13th century and Cypriot Byzantine art (Hé lou 2003a: 120). The link with Cyprus should not be considered surprising. It is possible to see similarities between Lebanon and Cyprus, as both regions had Byzantine art that absorbed Latin influences and produced a distinctive local style. One can see links between the artists of Cyprus and Lebanon in both icons and wall paintings. The icons from Mount Sinai have certain stylistic aspects in common with Cyprus that could suggest the artists who painted them were educated there (Hé lou Chronos 2003a: 116; Immerzeel 2004a: 50-51; Hé lou with Immerzeel 2006: 67; Hé lou 2007b: 29; Immerzeel 2007a: 82). In Lebanon itself, Cypriot saints are depicted in wall paintings (Immerzeel 2009: 111-112) and one can see links between Cypriot and Lebanese art in the wall paintings (see below).

The Church of Mar Phocas at Amiun and Related Churches: Deir Saydet Hammatur at Kousba and Deir es-Salib at Hadchit

The architecture of the church of Mar Phocas (Fig. 7) is typical Crusader Romanesque of the mid-12th century, but it is likely that the masons were local (Hé lou 2008: 9-11. For an architectural discussion of the church see Coupel 1941: 46-52). Although the paintings are not well preserved, the evidence indicates that there were two styles and painters present at the church. The first layer of paintings is in a very Byzantine style connected to churches in Cyprus, which provide an approximate date for the paintings to the end of the 12th century/beginning of the 13th century. The later phase of painting is in a more Syrian style connected to the church of Deir Saydet Hammatur (Fig. 8), the icon of Kaftun and icons from the Sinai. One reason that the church has garnered a certain amount of attention is because the kneeling donor is named (Philip, written Greek) and there is also be
another female donor whose name is Maria (Cruikshank Dodd 1997-1998: 258-259, 262; Hé lou 1999: 22-23; Immerzeel 1999: 105; Immerzeel 2000: 6, 10, Figs. 4-5; Hé lou 2003a: 124-125; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 93, 159-163; Immerzeel 2004b: 10, 24-25; Hé lou 2008: 10-11, 13; Immerzeel 2009: 89, 91-91; Hé lou 2010: 299-300, 302; Zibawi 2009: 56; Hé lou forthcoming). Cruikshank Dodd’s suggests that the donor is a Frank seems to based on the idea that there are parallels with the iconography of the church and churches in Palestine, including Jerusalem, the possible western style of some of the paintings, and the location of the church (Cruikshank Dodd 1997-1998: 259-260, 262; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 39-41). She does not consider the idea that Philip (she does not recognize the Ma(ria) is also a donor), might be a local elite, as Immerzeel does. Immerzeel suggests that the two are probably elites and must have been influential individuals, but he does not specifically state that they must be Franks or Melkites although he argues that the church may be a Crusader foundation (Immerzeel 2009: 92).

As discussed by Cruikshank Dodd, and others, Cypriot influences can be seen in other churches related to Amiun, such as the church at Deir Saydet Hammatur in Kousba. Its paintings are similar to the Amiun paintings of the late 12th/early 13th century and again have the connections to Cyprus. These paintings are also similar
to other paintings found in the Byzantine periphery such as in Cappadocia. One angel painted in the church is, however, later and can be connected to the icons and other frescoes. The church is multicultural which reflects the cosmopolitan nature of the society with Crusader architecture and Byzantine paintings in the local tradition (Nordiguian 1998: 85-86; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 209-210; Hérou 2008: 51-56; Hérou 2010a: 300, 302). Another church nearby that also shows similar connections to Cypriot wall paintings and a connection to Amiun are the paintings from Deir es-Salib (Fig. 9). This church has inscriptions in both Greek and Syriac and depictions of saints, Annunciation, and the Virgin, but these are badly preserved. It is this group of paintings that shows the similarity to Amiun, while a Crucifixion on the wall is seemingly older and connected to similar scenes in Cappadocia (Hérou 1999: 21; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 89, 92, 251-253; Immerzeel 2009: 118-119). Once again, as in the case of the churches painted by the Master of Bahdeidat and groups of followers, it suggests that certain churches were painted by the same groups of artists, which would not be surprising.

Grotto of Mar Marina

The majority of the churches that have been of great interest to scholars have been the ones with well preserved wall paintings. The grotto of St. Marina (Fig. 10),
however, was considered interesting because it preserved Latin inscriptions, the only church in Lebanon discovered so far to do so (Nordiguian 1999: 61; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 19; Immerzeel 2004b: 8; Hélou 2008: 38). Unfortunately, it has since been destroyed, which means that Sader, for instance, simply quoted the description that Brossé provided of the monument (Sader 1997: 146, 149, 157-164; Immerzeel 2003: 270). The paintings were already poorly preserved in the 1920s when they were recorded by Brossé (Brossé 1926). Now that the paintings have been destroyed, they must be reconstructed on the basis of Brossé and Cruikshank Dodd’s work. The wall paintings consisted of two layers: one layer with Greek inscriptions and another layer with Latin inscriptions, although the painting was Byzantine in tradition (Brossé 1926: 32-45). Nevertheless, Immerzeel suggests that the calligraphy looks western. Additionally, there was a commentary to one of the scenes that records a reference to the Speculorum Puerorum. While Brossé suggested that this is a reference written by Isembard in the 11th century, Immerzeel points that it does not document the scene that it shows. He suggests that the artist who painted the scenes and the artist who added the inscriptions were different people and did not attempt to correlate the two. He argues that they artists were not familiar with the Speculorum Puerorum and therefore this is why there was confusion (Immerzeel 2009: 85-86, Fig. 10. See also Brossé 1926: 42).

Church of Sayyidet Naya at Kfar Shleiman

The church of Sayyidet Naya (Fig. 11) has attracted the attention of a number of art historians because of its unusual iconography. The church has been described in two separate articles by Nordiguian and in an article by Peers, as well as in the general overviews on Lebanese churches (Nordiguian 1995-1996; Nordiguian 2005-2006; Peers 2007). The church has a number of different subjects on its paintings, including a bust of Christ with Greek inscriptions, a Deisis, and a Virgin and child (which is a subject more commonly found in Lebanon rather than Greek. The main area of interest, however, has been in a wall painting depicting a figure with a bow on one
side, separated from what appears to be some sort of stag or antelope, with a cross and Greek inscription. Nordiguian has suggested that the archer may be St. Eustace, while Cruikshank Dodd does not identify him with any particular individual. Her interest is rather in the iconography itself as she notes that this type of iconography does not have any parallels in Byzantine art and suggests that it was made by a foreigner. She links the picture to possibly Crusader manuscripts and suggests certain parallels with Sicily and the Balkans. Peers also links the motifs to western influence (in particular Italian) and iconography. He believes that determining the identity of the figure is complicated, however, as it likely had different meanings for different audiences (Nordiguian 1995-1996: 3-7; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 87, 307-308; Nordiguian 2005-2006; Peers 2007: 47, 50; Nordiguian and Voisin 2009: 351). Immerzeel links the painting in this church with the Master of Bahdeidat, although he believes that it was not done by his hand (Immerzeel 2009: 114). The Greek inscription written on in the bars of the cross reads set between the archer and the stag, however, is interesting from a grammatical point of view. The inscription reads IC XC NH KA rather than the correct Greek that should be IC XC NI KA. This replacement of the I by the H is due to iotacism in Greek (Alpi 1995-1996: 16-17).
Studies of Different Subjects

In addition to the studies of individual churches and overall studies of iconography and style, there have been several separate studies on certain subject matters that are treated separately in articles. In these studies, there are several themes that appear. The first is that of the connection between Lebanon and other parts of the Byzantine periphery. Following Velmans, who has studied the Deisis in the eastern periphery of the Byzantine empire in detail and connected the Lebanese Deisis depictions with elsewhere on the Byzantine periphery, Hêlou's articles on the depictions of the Deisis in Lebanon emphasized the fact that it was popular in this period in places such as Cappadocia, Armenia, Georgia, and Egypt rather than Byzantium itself. Further, the selection of the Deisis in Lebanon can be seen as a continuation of paleo-Christian art, when it was particularly popular (see above). She also looks specifically at the decoration in the apse and the different types of iconography that are found there, including the Deisis, but also the Anastasis and the Galaktotrophousa (Velmans 1980-1981; Velmans 1994; Hêlou 1998, especially 38-47; Hêlou 1999; Hêlou 2006: 33; Nordiguian and Voisin 2009: 219). Such studies are important because they help us to understand the decorative programs of the churches, even those so many of them are now incompletely preserved (for an overall discussion of placement of iconography in the churches see Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 31-88. See also Nordiguian and Voisin 2009: 219-281). Another motif that frequently appears in the Byzantine periphery are the rider saints and Lebanon is no exception. Immerzeel, in particular, has devoted several articles to the appearance of these saints and convincingly shown that not only are they representative of a wider phenomenon in the east with the connection to wall paintings, but that they are also comparable to icons from the Sinai. Once again, he signals the fact that these warrior saints are a continuation from the paleo-Christian period (Hêlou 1999: 19; Hêlou 2003b: 412-413; Immerzeel 2003; Immerzeel 2003-2004; Immerzeel 2004a: 31-32. For a detailed discussion of the issues with the icons of equestrian saints involved see also Immerzeel 2009: 127-128, 132-133, 137-140). All of these studies, supported by similar statements in the overviews of the paintings, point to the fact that the Lebanese wall paintings should be seen as part of the eastern edge of the Byzantine periphery and show a continuation with earlier forms of Christian art.

But other subjects, such as the depiction of Byzantine fathers of the church, largely follow Byzantine models (Immerzeel 2007c: 186-187, 189-190) or they are thought to follow Byzantine models, such as at Kaftun (see above). There is always the question, however, of whether or not the Byzantine influence was direct or came via another intermediary (Martens-Czarnecka 2001: 283; Martens-Czarnecka 2005: 172).
There are similarities to paintings in the Balkans that have been identified in paintings in Lebanon. The painting of the Communion of the Apostles from Kaftun, for example, is very similar to the paintings from the Balkans, in particular from Mileševa in Serbia. Serbian paintings of this period are said to have been composed with the help of Byzantine artists from Constantinople, suggesting that the paintings in Lebanon may have been made by an artist from Constantinople or Thessaloniki (Immerzeel and Hé lou 2005: 457-458; Hélou and Immerzeel 2007b: 315-316; Hélou 2008: 34; Hélou 2009: 9-11, 13-14, 16-19; Immerzeel 2009: 97-98; Hélou 2010a: 303). The only difficulty with the connection between Constantinople or Thessaloniki and the fresco at Kaftun is that the frescoes from those regions are for the most part not preserved. Although many art historians working on Serbian paintings have suggested that Byzantine artists were either responsible for these paintings or worked with local artists, there is no actual evidence from the frescoes that they did so. 13th century Balkan painting is often taken as being representative of Byzantine imperial painting from this period but this is difficult to prove. It is certainly the case the artists did move around the Byzantine empire and also outside of it (Grishin 2006: 382) but the extent that actual artists from Byzantium worked in Lebanon is difficult to determine.

One area that has not been studied in as great detail as some other subjects are the inscriptions. Inscriptions have been found at various churches and the Syriac inscriptions have been studied in an article by Kassis, Yon, and Badwi, who identified several different types of Syriac inscriptions in churches in Lebanon (Kassis, Yon, and Badwi 2004: 36). The inscriptions varied from being written vertically and horizontally next to the figures of saints and in scrolls held by angels or written on the scenes themselves. They are also written in variety of styles (serto and estrangelo) (Kassis, Yon, Badwi 2004: 36). Badwi gives a list of the Syriac inscriptions that are found in the different churches (Badwi 2001: 80) and in her catalogue Cruikshank Dodd provides transcriptions of all of the inscriptions (Cruikshank Dodd 2004). One interesting issue, however, that is not discussed is the actual Greek inscriptions and how grammatical Greek is when the inscriptions are longer than simply the name of the saint. At the church of Mar Elias en-Nahr at Kafr Qahel in the Koura, there are Greek and possibly Syriac inscriptions. It is the Greek inscriptions that are interesting, however, because the Greek is misspelled and has awkward phrasing (Nordiguian 1999: 55, 58-59, 60-61; Cruikshank Dodd 2004: 181, no. 4. For Greek inscriptions in general see pp. 17-18). The implications of this are that the individual who wrote the inscriptions knew imperfect Greek. This would argue that the person involved is once again likely to be a local artist rather than a Byzantine one.
Conclusion

Despite the large number of articles that have appeared at the end of the 20th/beginning of the 21st century about the wall paintings of Lebanon (and doubtless more will appear before this article appears in print), areas for future study remain. While some churches have received considerable scholarly attention, others have not been studied in as much detail. Some of the churches have wall paintings that have not been preserved in great detail (whether due to destruction or that fact that they are now covered or have yet to be restored). The discovery of the wall paintings of Kaftun clearly indicates that there is considerable work still to be done and it is likely that more wall paintings will be discovered as churches are restored. Other churches are not as well known because they are not decorated with paintings and have not been studied. When the churches of Lebanon are discussed today, the focus is primarily on the wall paintings rather than the architecture. This is perhaps not surprising. The wall paintings themselves are of great art historical interest and this has therefore been the most important aspect of study. But this has meant that there has been a tendency to concentrate on the “Byzantine” or “Syrian” features of the art rather than on the western European architecture. The churches of Lebanon are hybrids: western European architecture influenced by Romanesque styles with Byzantine style art that may be more Byzantine or more local, depending on the church and the artist. The question as to why the local Syrians chose to build their churches in a western European style rather than a local or Byzantine style is an issue that has yet to be addressed, particularly since Crusader patronage seems to have been limited.

Further research of archival materials may also reveal more information about churches. The work done on the wall paintings of Mar Marina, for example, demonstrates quite effectively what can be done with materials for which no other evidence now remains. It is unfortunate that Camille Enlart's watercolor drawings of material from the Levant has not been located along with his watercolor drawings of Cypriot wall paintings (De Vaivre 2006), but this may occur in the future. If the watercolors of the now disappeared Dormition of the Virgin from Bahdeidat still exist in the archive of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, it would also be very interesting to examine them. Further studies of historical photographs, drawings, and other materials may yet yield evidence for now disappeared frescoes or entire churches. The churches of Lebanon remain a unique and valuable resource for scholars studying eastern Christian art in the eastern Mediterranean. As the wall paintings become better known and understood, it is hoped that this will continue to lead to further studies and more discoveries to help our understanding of the region and its context.

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