

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In May 1983, at a Dumbarton Oaks symposium on Byzantine medicine, Gary Vikan challenged me to fit the prominent role of incense devotion in the Byzantine stylite cults into my work on these pillar saints. Intrigued, I began to collect citations as I came across them, but other obligations commanded my attention. In the fall of 1991, I finally turned to the question in earnest. I found myself immediately disoriented. Whatever assumptions I had brought about incense— notions of sacrifice, or of transforming matter into spirit—were clearly wrong, off-target, secondary, or of little help in understanding the different kinds of evidence, both material and literary. What struck me instead was the issue of smell itself. Until I could get at that, there seemed little I could do with incense and pillar saints, or any other aspect of late antique incense practice. I had occasion to discuss this puzzle with Peter Brown that fall, who assured me that the project was worth a book, not an article. My debt to these two scholars is immense. Not only did they each, at different times, set this project in motion, but both have continued with unflagging support to encourage me through the tangled route to its completion.

Generous fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the George A. and Eliza Gardner Howard Foundation allowed me to spend the 1993–94 and 1994–95 academic years undertaking substantial research for this book. In different years, Brown University kindly enabled me to engage the help of several excellent undergraduate and graduate research assistants: Michael Foat, Stephanie Downey, Aaron Weiss, Megan Rooney, and Alex Myers all worked

on specific parts of the manuscript with me, and to all I am grateful. An academic leave in 2000–2001 allowed me to complete the bulk of the writing. In the spring of 2001, Samuel Rubenson kindly invited me to spend a week in the peerless hospitality of the Faculty of Theology at Lund University in Sweden. It was a critical time in my writing, and I remain indebted to everyone involved for a week of immeasurably rich scholarly discussion (and astonishing food!).

Brown University has been a marvelous place to undertake this project. My colleagues in the Department of Religious Studies, as well as elsewhere in the university community—above all in the Ancient Studies and Medieval Studies programs—have been unfailingly generous with their own knowledge, encouraging and enthusiastic about the book, and ever supportive during my (many) times of doubt. Colleagues in Brown's ongoing Seminar in the Culture and Religion of the Ancient Mediterranean and in Medieval Circle have read and listened to numerous bits and pieces of the book, always with constructive feedback and suggestions. I am grateful especially to Shaye Cohen (now at Harvard), Ross Kraemer, Saul Olyan, Jock Reeder, Barney Twiss (now at Florida State), Muhammad Qasim Zaman, John Bodel, Mary-Louise Gill, David Konstan, William Monroe, and Joseph Pucci. James McIlwain, from Neurology and Medieval Studies, and Rachel Herz, in Psychology, guided me with invaluable insight through scientific material both ancient and modern. In a league all his own, and to a degree I cannot name, Stan Stowers worked with me tirelessly not only on the seemingly endless array of knots and puzzles, but even more crucially, on how to think about and conceptualize the issues in the broadest sense.

A project of so many years gains more debts along the way than one can properly acknowledge. Many people have sent me interesting olfactory passages they have come across, or have helped when I have encountered textual problems or questions outside my own expertise (and in a book like this one, every chapter seemed to raise the specter of the latter). I have especially appreciated the help of: Joseph Amar, Gary Anderson, Jeffrey Anderson, John Behr, Peter Bouteneff, Sebastian Brock, Elizabeth Clark, Nicholas Constanas, Brian Daley, John Fitzgerald, Elliott Ginsburg, James Goehring, Alexander Golitzin, Sidney Griffith, Susan Holman, Thomas Hopko, Derek Krueger, Thomas Mathews, Bernadette McNary-Zak, Paul Meyendorff, Patricia Cox Miller, Eugene Rogers, Philip Rousseau, Leigh Schmidt, Alice-Mary Talbot, Stephen Thompson, Arthur Urbano, Lucas Van Rompay, and Frances Young.

I am grateful to my fellow scholars of olfactory history, Béatrice Caseau and Constance Classen, who have graciously shared their work with me as well as their love for this oddly compelling subject. Béatrice, in particular, has been an inspiration at every point. I must include Georgia Frank here, as well, who with her explorations of sight and visibility has been my constant companion in the

world of the ancient senses for many years now. Sarah Bassett, Flora Keshgegian, and Constance Furey each with their particular expertise and wisdom helped me with the writing and completion of the manuscript. The bonds of writing partners carry a devotion all their own, and I am profoundly thankful to all three.

Peter Brown has given not only support, but also concrete help, at every stage of this project. He was the first person to read the original manuscript in draft, and has once again welcomed me into the gracious community of his series, *The Transformation of the Classical Heritage*. At the University of California Press, I have profited deeply from not one, but several superb editors: Mary Lamprecht guided me early on, with her trademark clarity, in conceiving and defining the project as a book; Kate Toll bore the burden of midwifery with elegant patience, wit, and incisive wisdom; Laura Cerruti and Cynthia Fulton have carried the final tasks with thoughtful and cheerful efficiency. I thank them all.

In all these instances, shortcomings and stubbornness remain my own responsibility.

Once again, my family has been the source and center enabling me to see this through. My father, James Ashbrook, did not live to see the book finally written, but some of the richest, most satisfying conversations of our life together took place around it. The inspiration of his own scholarship and theological reflection are always with me. My mother, Patricia Ashbrook, has somehow taken up his role while never diminishing the gift of her own singular wisdom. No one has suffered through the hard drudgery of the work, nor shared my profound joys, to the extent of my husband Jim and our daughter Julia Claire. They remain my rock, my refuge, and my firm foundation.

I met George Every in the fall of 1975. I was a new graduate student in the Center for Byzantine Studies at the University of Birmingham, England. George was recently retired from his long career teaching at Kelham College, and newly resident at Oscott College nearby. For the next twenty-eight years, until his death on September 2, 2003, at the age of ninety-four, George played a unique role in my life: teacher, mentor, spiritual guide, *staretz*. I am glad that he was able to read this book in draft, and to know its dedication to his incomparable spirit. It seems a paltry offering in return for the grace of his friendship over so many years. Yet, it suits him. No one brought a more delicious sense of zest and adventure to the study of religion and history than George. Memory eternal, beloved teacher!

Portions of this book have appeared in earlier form as articles in various places. I gratefully acknowledge permission from the publishers to reproduce these materials as follows:

Parts of chapters 2, 3, and 6 appeared in "St. Ephrem on the Scent of Salvation," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 49 (1998): 109–28.

A portion of chapter 2 appeared as "Incense Offerings in the Syriac *Transitus Mariae*: Ritual and Knowledge in Ancient Christianity," in *The Early Church in its Context: Essays in Honor of Everett Ferguson*, edited by Abraham J. Malherbe, Frederick W. Norris, and James W. Thompson (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 175–91.

Part of chapter 3 appeared as "Why the Perfume Mattered: The Sinful Woman in Syriac Exegetical Tradition," in *In Dominico Eloquio/In Lordly Eloquence: Essays on Patristic Exegesis in Honor of Robert Louis Wilken*, edited by Paul M. Blowers, Angela Russell Christman, David G. Hunter, and Robin Darling Young (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 69–89.

Portions of chapter 4 appeared as "Olfactory Knowing: Signs of Smell in the Lives of Simeon Stylites," in *After Bardaisan: Studies on Continuity and Change in Syriac Christianity in Honour of Han J. W. Drijvers*, edited by G. J. Reinink and A. C. Klugkist, OLA 89 (Leuven: Peeters Press, 1999), pp. 23–34.

Part of chapter 5 appeared as "On Holy Stench: When the Odor of Sanctity Sickness," *Studia Patristica* 35, edited by M. F. Wiles and E. J. Yarnold (Leuven: Peeters Press, 2001), pp. 90–101.

For biblical quotations, I have followed the Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted. Absolute consistency in transliterations has been impossible to maintain. In general, I have used the most familiar forms of names and terms, if such forms exist, or the simplest methods of transliterating phonetically. Specialists will not be pleased, no doubt, but I hope this will help others for whom the worlds of Greek and Syriac are further afield.