ВИЗАНТИЙСКО И ПОСТВИЗАНТИЙСКО ИЗКУСТВО: ПРЕСИЧАНЕ НА ГРАНИЦИ

BYZANTINE AND POST-BYZANTINE ART: CROSSING BORDERS

Martyrdom of Sts Kyrikos and Julitta, 17th century Cretan icon, Icon collection of Bachkovo Monastery, Bulgaria. Photo: Ivan Vanev

Мъченичеството на св. св. Кирик и Юлита, критска икона от XVII в., Иконна сбирка на Бачковския манастир, България. Фотограф Иван Ванев
ИЗКУСТВОВЕДСКИ ЧЕТЕНИЯ
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Edited by
Emmanuel Moutafov
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This volume celebrates the 70th Anniversary of research in Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.
A note from the editors:

The articles in this volume were presented at the International Conference Art Readings 2017 – Old Art Module, organised by the Institute of Art Studies in Sofia between 31 March and 2 April 2017 to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The Conference attracted forty-four participants from Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Romania, and the USA. All submissions have been subjected to a rigorous peer-reviewing process, which allowed a careful and judicious selection for the publication in the Annual. We wish to express our deepest gratitude to the anonymous reviewers for their prompt and thoughtful feedback, and to the contributors for their willingness to work closely with us in order to secure a high level of academic excellence in showcasing the most recent developments in the field of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art Studies.
Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art: Crossing Borders, Exploring Boundaries

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Abstract: The authors reflect on methodological and terminological problems related to the critical fields of Byzantine and so-called Post-Byzantine Art in the Balkans. Departing from the traditional, frequently controversial, issues of continuity and identity, this chapter proposes a more effective conceptual framework, which favours the ideas of multiculturality, hybridity, and horizontal exchange. The present essay also addresses the questions of cultural history, and, especially, of Western influences in Orthodox painting after the 15th century, and it urges that art of any period should be measured against the standards of its own time. More generally, it suggests that the reception of Orthodox Christian art in the Balkans ought also to be considered to fall within the purview of scholars of the Western Renaissance, as well as of Ottoman Studies, so as to ensure fruitful academic dialogue across disciplines.

Key words: classical, Byzantine, Post-Byzantine, Orthodox, Christian, Ottoman, Western, Renaissance, Medieval, Balkans, Pre-modern, methodology, terminology, style.

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The keen contemporary interest in the Eastern Roman Empire that prompted the German historian Hieronymus Wolf in 1557 to coin the term ‘Byzantium’ came as a reflection of the intellectual curiosity and existential anxiety of Wolf’s own times. His was by no means the first Western encounter with Byzantine literary heritage, whose impact had been felt for over a century in Humanist and Renaissance Italy, from where it spread across other European cultural centres, including Augsburg – a free imperial city in Southern Germany, in which Wolf found patronage for his work on Byzantine historiography. The inadvertent upshot of his – otherwise tormented – forays in Medieval Greek literature was Wolf’s inspired nomenclature, which would prove as resilient as the realm it purported to designate – and, probably, just as controversial. Notably, the scholarly appraisal of ‘Byzantium’ changed over time with fluctuations in cultural and historical perceptions: in the seventeenth century, when the European Enlightenment, although fascinated with Byzantine political and court culture, raised doubts over the overall merits of the theocratic Byzantine Empire; in the eighteenth century, when Western intellectuals such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Edward Gibbon took an openly dismissive stance declaring the Medieval Orthodox state feeble, corrupt, and decadent; and, conspicuously, in the nineteenth century, when the development of European Byzantine Studies coincided with the birth of independent Balkan states, whose ideologies ‘nationalised’ Byzantium as a way of detaching themselves from their Ottoman past. These attitudes go a long way towards explaining the reputation of Byzantium as a fraught, but infinitely alluring, academic subject, no less captivating today, but perhaps no longer as divisive.

The undeniable appeal of the subject has elevated Byzantine Studies to a fully-fledged, and ever growing, scholarly field with its own distinct place alongside Classical, Medieval and Early Modern

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Studies. Regrettably, this advancement has not yet been extended to include the reception of (Post-)Byzantine traditions, which still lie open to prejudice and misconception. A revealing case in point is the notion of the uniformity of Post-Byzantine style, and, more generally, art, which rests on the equally problematic understanding that there existed a single Byzantine style prevailing in the entire Medieval Orthodox οἰκουμένη. In fact, Byzantium as a complex amalgam of Roman identity, Christian ideology, and European heritage, with the Greek language providing a further identity marker, requires that a similar concept of dynamic plurality be applied to its visual and material culture. Still, the reception of Byzantine art, from its very beginnings, did little to acknowledge this diversity. The interpretation of Byzantine art as a fixed ‘Greek’ style had been linked with discernibly unfavourable connotations from early on, in the context of the Italian Cinquecento. It first appeared in Giorgio Vasari’s description of the art of Cimabue, as a negative exemplum against which to measure the artistic accomplishments of fourteenth-century Florentine painting. Viewed through the prism of such appraisal, the title of the 2002 exhibition and its catalogue, Post-Byzantium: the Greek Renaissance, presents an incongruous contradiction in terms, going against the grain of the implicit claims that any renaissance of the Byzantine Greek style was both absurd and impossible. But, Vasari’s programmatic statement – evidently ill-informed on Byzantine art – cannot be taken as conclusive in discussions of what constitutes a ‘renaissance’ movement in art. Setting aside the treacherous question of terminology, the core issue, that of the revival of interest in Classical Antiquity, was

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7 The field of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine reception studies is still in its infancy, but it is growing ever stronger: Auzépy, Marie-France (ed.). Byzance en Europe. Saint-Denis, 2003; Kolovou, Foteini (ed.). Byzanzrezeption in Europa. Spurensuche über das Mittelalter und die Renaissance bis in die Gegenwart. Berlin/Boston, 2012; Betancourt, Roland and Maria Taroutina (eds.). Byzantium/Modernism: The Byzantine as Method in Modernity. Leiden and Boston, 2015; Marciniak, Przemyslaw and Dion C. Smythe (eds.). The Reception of Byzantium.


demonstrably more intricate and far more widely considered in the world of fifteenth-century Europe than has been sustained in the traditional tenets of Western art history. One aspect of this broad phenomenon, the contribution of Byzantium to the rediscovery of classical scholarship in the West, is nowadays better understood. Points of contact and mutual influence between Byzantine and Renaissance Art have also been evaluated. Somewhat less familiar to modern scholarly publics is the taste and the rhetorical vocabulary for viewing and describing ancient monuments that Byzantine scholars introduced to Italian Humanists. As well as cultivating the aesthetic appreciation of ancient architecture and decoration of buildings, this influence set the vogue for fostering Hellenic and Roman past in the process of renegotiating one’s own identity – a development that can be as clearly identified in the West as in early Ottoman culture, whose own appropriation of classical (and Byzantine) antiquities represented an attempt to claim the succession and the legacy of the Roman/Byzantine Empire. Classical culture and classical art therefore remained a backdrop against which Medieval and early modern societies constructed their pasts and measured the achievement of their presents. However, this process of creative reimagining did not exclude Byzantium. In the West, for example, Byzantine religious art became part of the incipient culture of art collecting: although much of this is still unknown, some artefacts that survive, provide vivid testimonies to the reception and transmission of works of art well beyond any fixed geographical and historical boundaries. One such example, Bessarion’s Reliquary, a lavish Palaiologan staurotheke bequeathed to the Florentine Scuola

della Carita by the famous Byzantine expatriate, Cardinal Bessarion\(^\text{18}\)(Fig. 1), offers abundant scope for examining the creative processes of cultural memory and social agency in art. More generally, a focus on these processes stands to greatly enrich our understanding of the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art production, and of its impact on wider European culture\(^\text{19}\).

Such fluidity has been fully acknowledged by modern Byzantine scholarship, which regards Byzantium as much more than a uniform polity, making up one empire, one religion, one artistic style and one ethnos\(^\text{20}\). Rather, it views the Byzantine Empire as a political, cultural, and religious – Orthodox Christian – force field, complex by itself, but also creating polycentric spheres of influence, of which one was the Byzantine Commonwealth – the only one, in fact, whose spiritual centre was Constantinople, and which outlived Byzantium’s territorial empire\(^\text{21}\). Misconstruction of this

\(\text{18} \) Schreiner, Peter, Holger Klein and Valeria Polletto (eds.). La Stauroteca di Bessarione fra Constantinopoli e Venezia. Venice, 2017.


\(\text{21} \) Dimitri Obolensky’s concept of the Byzantine

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Fig. 1. Gentile Bellini. Cardinal Bessarion and Two Members of the Scuola della Carita in prayer with the Bessarion Reliquary. Photo credit: The National Gallery, London
influence as emanating one-directionally, from the centre to the peripheries, is the reason why still, even right up until today, the finest Medieval monuments and mural paintings in Serbia, Bulgaria or Macedonia (FYROM) tend to be attributed to metropolitan, i.e. Byzantine painters. By the same token, works of ‘inferior’ quality or some rather less impressive examples of icon painting are commonly classified as products of local, i.e. non-Byzantine, painters. Thus, scholars feel free to label unsigned works of non-Greek, i.e. Bulgarian, Serbian, Armenian workshops as belonging to a subculture within a high culture emanating from a Byzantine, often Constantinopolitan, epicentre. The Boyana Church offers a vivid case in point. The vast array of secondary literature on this monument marks a triumph of Byzantine Studies over nationalism, achieved through debunking the myth of the Boyana painter (Fig. 2) as being of Bulgarian extraction, as well as over the compensatory assumption that this monument signified the advent of the European Renaissance. And yet, in a similar vein, stylistic analyses of the iconographic programme of Boyana have created yet another, equally problematic, myth about a highly accomplished, but otherwise, unknown Constantinopolitan icon painter. Clearly, a more concerted discussion needs to be had regarding the nature of Byzantine style in art, and whether some aspects of this art, particularly those that are understood in terms of ‘translation’ and ‘crossover’, should be nonetheless defined as exclusively Byzantine; and, moreover, whether artistic quality should be thought of as a privilege of the (Greek-speaking) centre alone.

Throughout the fourteenth century, the Balkans was in the grip of an economic, political, military, and religious crisis. At the end of the century, the entire region was divided among numerous smaller polities, whose weakness made them easy prey for the Ottomans. The Ottoman conquest had major consequences for

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22 Penkova, Bisserka (ed.). Боянската църква – между Изток и Запад в изкуството на християнска Европа [Boyanskata tsarkva – Mezdu Iztoka i Zapada v izkustvoto na hristianska Evropa]. Sofia, 2011 (with the bibliography of the monument).

the political, judicial and cultural life of the Christian population. While the Greeks of Constantinople retained some religious autonomy and the right to more substantial representation at the Sublime Porte, the arrival of the new political power changed the fate of the Balkan peoples in a more conspicuous way: although some continuity can be discerned in their demographic, administrative and economic development, in the political and to some extent religious sphere, Ottoman rule entailed a break with the Byzantine past. A strong sense of discontinuity was reflected in the determination with which the Romanian princes in the Wallachian lands claimed the legacy of the Byzantine imperial traditions. Their cultural and ideological self-fashioning was especially visible in their continuous military campaigns against the Ottomans, their sponsorship of efforts to recover Byzantine literary heritage, and the rich iconographic programme that they left behind as founders and benefactors of major Orthodox churches and mon-

Fig. 2. Interior mural decoration of the Boyana church, 13th century, Bulgaria. Photo credit: Ivan Vanev

Elsewhere in the Balkans, however, Christians could not hold governing or even administrative positions (except for vassals in the fifteenth century), and that, in turn, diminished opportunities for the patronage, and, consequently, for the production, of monumental – and secular – art. In cities, Muslims already accounted for about forty percent of the population
text (fig. 3) commissioning their services as icon painters and wood carvers. These itinerant craftsmen introduced new styles – simpler, quicker to execute, adoptive of diverse, also Islamic, influences – into seventeenth-century Orthodox art.

The significance of the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 as a definitive...
Fig. 3. Donor composition, d. 1645: the merchant Panos Arseniou and the former treasurer of the Archbishopric of Pogoniani, Panos Papademetriou. Painted by Demetrius from Grammosta and Ioannes Skoutares. Church of the Holy Apostles, Molyvoskepastos, Epirus, Greece. Photo credit: Theocharis Tsampouras
turning point in the history of the Balkans has been overstated in scholarly literature. This momentous event does not seem to have been universally felt across the entire region, and the emphasis on the date itself runs the danger of misrepresenting a true historical process. The Bulgarian state had disappeared from the political map of Europe sixty years earlier; Serbia capitulated in 1459; Morea in 1460; and Bosnia in 1464. The mountainous regions of modern-day Montenegro and Albania held out much longer, until the beginning of the 16th century. The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans took almost a century to complete, while the decline of the weak states that were subsequently conquered had made itself felt a whole century earlier. The loss of the political centre of Orthodoxy was definitely important, but it was not perceived as quite so momentous by contemporaries – at least not to the extent that the nineteenth- and twentieth-century national historiographies represent. More recently, scholars of the early modern Balkans have started to explore other aspects of this process, such as, for example, a conspicuous lack of hostility in attitudes towards the Turks in the works of Christian authors in the aftermath of the conquest. The notion that these texts ought to have resonated with a nationalist anti-Ottoman ideology is by now outdated and anachronistic. On the contrary, it is being accepted that these sources provide evidence of a positive stance towards the reigning sultans. In the early centuries of Ottoman rule, the sultans were viewed as the natural successors of Byzantine emperors. Even the Orthodox Church found a way of commemorating and praying for the non-Christian, but nonetheless legitimate, Ottoman emperors. A sense of adjustment to the new regime emerges in many genres of Slavonic literature, including brief chronicles, histories and hagiographies. Chronographers, for example, most naturally placed the succession lines of Ottoman lords after the emperors of Constantinople, and would more often than not call them ‘emperors’ rather than ‘sultans’. The attitude towards the Ottomans in the Serbian genealogies is at the very least com-


32 Rakova. България, Сърбия, Византия, 158.

33 Stojanović, Ljubomir. Stari srpski rodoslovi i letopisi. Novi Sad, 1927, No. 858.
pliant: when describing riots in the Balkans, these sources speak about disasters caused by squabbling among the Christians, rather than about their grievances against the conquerors. Thus “… the description of Ottoman history, of the events that shook the Balkans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, is done in a way that allows the Ottomans to be woven into the fabric of the earlier history of the peninsula and to act as the successive rulers of these lands”.

Much as with ‘Byzantine’, the concept of ‘Post-Byzantine’ in art presents problems for modern publics and scholars alike, not least because of the difficulties posed by the vexed questions of identity and continuity. The term itself we owe to the historian and statesman Nicolae Iorga and those who followed in his footsteps. His paradigmatic account of the permanence and survival of Byzantine forms is still loosely employed in art history to describe a period – the centuries of art production that followed the fall of the Byzantine capital—and to define the style of Orthodox art produced after 1453. Iorga’s seminal work has undoubtedly contributed to the progress of ‘Post-Byzantine’ scholarship by reinvigorating existing fields of research, including those of religious iconography and painting, but it has done little by way of proposing any more precise chronology or underscoring shifts in political situations and orientations of its historical actors. In the current state of research, many questions remain open with perhaps the most pressing desiderata being the following two: a reassessment of the interpretations of Post-Byzantine art as inherently derivative and unoriginal, and a study of parallel, diverse, and mutually influential artistic trends that developed in different environments across the Orthodox communities in the Balkans and beyond. Religion is a central issue – high proportion of surviving Post-Byzantine art happens to be religious. This has to do with how religion was practiced, with Orthodoxy being the badge

34 Stojanović. Stari srpski, No 858.
35 Stojanović. Stari srpski, No 858.
38 Spratt. Toward a Definition, 17.
of identity within the Ottoman Empire spilling over into the patronage and commissioning of art. The term that provides some precision in defining the artistic production that catered for the religious needs of the Christians under the Sultans between the fifteenth and the nineteenth century is Orthodox Christian Art of the Ottoman period. The designation ‘Post-Byzantine’ will certainly continue to have a substantial traction, but, rather than being understood literally, it can be used to indicate processes of changes taking place in the Ottoman world, the polyvalent nature of culture and art, and the hybridity that we see as built into the very fabric of the Post-Byzantine world.

Conditions for making Orthodox art after the end of the fifteenth century differed from region to region within the Ottoman Empire. To take the example of Constantinopolitan artisans: some of them probably emigrated to Crete long before the fall of Constantinople in 1453, where they found suitable conditions for perpetuating Byzantine Orthodox traditions in religious painting. Their influence spread over the Ionian islands, and further afield, reaching Venice and Venetian workshops, with which these artists maintained regular contact. They painted icons à la Greca on gold background, elongating the proportions of the figures, depicting garments and architectural landscapes that abounded in fine detail. Such icons were in demand in Western European markets until well into the late sixteenth century (Fig. 4). For the rest of the Balkans,
however, opportunities to communicate directly with Crete, and thereby, indirectly, with Renaissance and Post-Renaissance Italy, were sparse. In other words, most Balkan lands were neither consumers nor producers of the kind of Byzantine-style art that was favoured in the West after the fifteenth century.

On the other hand, some Pre-Modern Orthodox icon painting reveals the artists’ attention to perspective drawing techniques, rendering their artwork much more like a window opening onto a realistic world. Indeed, icons from Crete (Fig. 5) and the Ionian islands often resemble Western images, with their space organised according to the principles of geometric foreshortening. Not until the eighteenth century, however, was this practise methodically applied. When it eventually prevailed, the general appearance changed to the extend that they lost the features that allowed them to be easily recognisable as products of Byzantine or Post-Byzantine art⁴⁰.

The most common element in Medieval/Byzantine and Orthodox/Post-Byzantine art in the Ottoman period is its shared iconographic tradition. This tradition adhered to the conventions of painting, not from life, but integrating distinct notions of space and time into a single plane, with no intention of creating any sense of depth. Looking through the lenses of the Western Post-Renaissance aesthetics, this style can be defined as formulaic, flat, and lacking perspective⁴¹. Along similar lines, it is usually assumed that Western artistic influence was slow to reach the Greek-speaking territories under Venetian control. Such a notion leads to judging Post-Byzantine art as retrograde, as well as to confusing the general patterns of influence, which were by no means one-directional or fixed. The complex socio-political circumstances of the Greek-speaking lands that were successively under Byzantine, (Venetian), and Ottoman rule make it impossible to characterise Post-Byzantine art produced in these territories according to a single style. Even more complicated is the picture within those parts of the Ottoman Empire where the dominant Slavic-speaking population maintained contacts with the Habsburg Monarchy and Russia. A more critical examination of the question of foreign influences and of their reception in Post-Byzan-

⁴⁰ Spratt. Toward a Definition, 14.
⁴¹ These features are typical of most Orthodox painting made outside Crete and Corfu: Gratsiou. Μεταβυζαντινή Τέχνη, 191.
Fig. 5. Martyrdom of Sts Kyrikos and Julitta, 17th century, Cretan provenance, the Icon Collection of the Bachkovo Monastery, Bulgaria. Photo credit: Ivan Vanev
tine art is acutely needed. Moreover, any such discussions need to acknowledge the bi-lateral and reciprocal nature of cross-cultural contacts, and also to consider how networks, connections, and the interacting systems of trade and diplomacy effected artistic changes. Rare are instances that may point to any concerted efforts on the part of one culture to influence another, such as, perhaps, in the case of the presumed impact of Western art. It is well known that translations of Leonardo da Vinci’s *Treatise on Painting* were undertaken by Greek Orthodox painters in the eighteenth century and also, a century later, by their disciples of Slavic origin. Still, the technique of oil painting and the principles of perspective, which had been developed during the Italian Renaissance, began to be applied in the Balkans under the influence of the first professional schools of art in the nineteenth century. Up until then, only sporadic Western-style elements can be identified in Orthodox painting (*Fig. 6*), none of which have been sufficiently studied and understood by modern scholars of Post-Byzantine art.

Elsewhere in the Balkans, until well into the late eighteenth century, some artists, like Constantine from Byzantium/Istanbul (*Fig. 7*), deemed themselves direct heirs of Byzantine traditions without being aware that they were establishing a post-tradition of any kind. In the same vein, theoreticians of Orthodox art as Dionysios of Phourna believed that ‘the end of true painting’ came with the end of the Palaiologan period or the death of the legendary Manuel Panselinos, and accordingly, urged that these authorities should be followed as models of exemplary style in Orthodox painting. Relying on the religious term *Christian Orthodox* when discussing the type of art that is not secular, instead of using the problematic political and ideological designation such as *Post-Byzantine*, would have the additional benefit of preventing generalising assertions and possible misunderstandings in dialogues with experts from other fields.

To date, the term ‘Post-Byzantine’ and its ramifications for the hist-

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Fig. 6. Two scenes from the life of St John the Baptist (Altar screen: The Cycle of Feast), 1869, the Church of Sts Theodore Teron and Theodore Stratelates, Kouklen village, Bulgaria. Photo credit: Ivan Vanev

tory of art have been most comprehensively discussed by Olga Gratziou, who notes that this definition has been used principally by Greek art historians, but does not acknowledge that it was also en vogue in other Balkan countries until well into the 1990s. Emily Spratt has also made important contributions to this discussion.


45 Spratt. Toward a Definition, and eadem. The Allegory of the Holy Communion: An Investigation of a Post-Byzantine Icon Type that Developed on the Ionian Islands during the Period of the Venetian Hegemony. (MS thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, Fall 2007). Spratt presented further discussions of the concept in two conference papers in Michigan (2010) and
Gratziou has rightly pointed out a conceptual problem that occurs as a result of confining Post-Byzantine art to a strictly limited period. It therefore seems useful to identify the chronological framework for which this term is most relevant as well as stressing that twentieth-century and contemporary Balkan historians, literary scholars, and linguists have not dealt with the issue of chronology in any conclusive way. In historic terms, the birth of the Balkan national states and their ideologies in the 19th century was a period when Orthodox Christian communities in the region were renegotiating their relationships with Byzantine legacy, very much based on the perceived importance of Byzantium for their respective national narratives. The disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the final establishment of the modern Balkan states also coincided with the development of European Byzantine Studies, and the upsurge of academic focus on the historical reality of Byzantium. But, that also brought up certain stigmatising and discriminatory rhetoric: until recently, Byzantine legacy in the Balkans continued to be viewed as a modern construct, which only served contemporary political and ideological agendas. However, history written from within the Orthodox tradition has seen a change: the modern Balkan countries and their academias have gradually repositioned both Byzantium and their own past in their proper historical contexts, and the success of these processes bodes well for the future of Post-Byzantine scholarship.

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Budapest (2013).

46 Gratziou. Μεταβυζαντινή Τέχνη, 196.


Serbia gained independence in 1815 with the establishment of the autonomous Paşalık of Belgrade. According to the majority of Greek researchers, the so-called Post-Byzantine period in art ends with the Greek Wars for Independence in 1830\(^{50}\), but it is perhaps easy to intuit why the art of post-secession Greece is not referred to as Post-Ottoman but Modern Greek. The main part of Bulgaria gained independence much later, in 1878. Other large and important regions in the Balkans, like Thrace and Macedonia, remained under Ottoman rule at least until 1912. The local traditions of Orthodox art during the centuries of Ottoman domination continued to be promulgated by the icon workshops of Edirne, Athos, Melnik, Sozopol, Debar, Kepesovo and Galatista. Icons and frescoes, which conformed to the aesthetics of the previous centuries continued to be painted in small villages of the newly independent territories of the Balkan countries. Popular tastes remained the same, despite the political and economic changes. Therefore, in this particular regard, the alignment of political history with the history of religious art is neither methodologically nor factually justified. That is why we have to allow for a more flexible periodization acknowledging that the history of Christian Orthodox art in the Ottoman period continues until the beginning of the twentieth century, or, provisionally, until the 1920’s. This chronology covers the hiatus of 1830–1920 that has remained neglected by art historians; after all, the majority of surviving Christian artefacts in the Balkan Peninsula date back precisely to this era. Questionable quality, vast output, multidirectional influences, and innovations that do not conform to a single tradition, should not be considered as an obstacle to scholarship. Such phenomena hold the key to understanding earlier iconography and, most importantly, the multiple identities of the Balkan nations, their mentalities, and their Oriental-style, two-dimensionalised, visual culture, formed during the complicated but in many ways seminal nineteenth century.

**Postscript**

This essay has been written in two stages: the fully-drafted ideas of one author were in response read, largely against the grain, by the other. This

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approach has proved challenging and stimulating in equal measure: it has provided both contributors abundant scope for crossing borders and exploring boundaries in their respective research fields while inviting a vigorous reassessment of the current state of scholarship as a whole. The preparation of the present volume posed similar demands with still more gratifying results. It has highlighted many intersections and communalities across a wide range of scholarly contributions, and has, auspiciously, showed that interdisciplinary collaborations hold a great promise for the future of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine scholarship.


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Византийско и поствизантийско изкуство: пресичане на граници, навлизане в различното

Емануел Мутафов
Ида Тот

В това уводно есе авторите разсъждат над терминологични и методологични проблеми, свързани с изследването и разбирането на византийското изкуство и т.нар. поствизантийско изкуство на Балканите. Според тях не може да се говори за съществуването на единен византийски стил през Средновековието, особено в съседните на Източната римска империя православни държави. Оттам се поставя под съмнение адекватността на условия термин поствизантийско изкуство за периода XV–XIX в. например в териториите на Османската империя, населявани от българи, сърби, румънци и др. Оспорва се и универсалността на датата 1453 г. като условен край на византийското изкуство с неговите национални варианти на Балканите; коментира се и условната дата за край на периода, която е различна за Гърция, България и Сърбия. В текста се засягат и въпросите за западните и ислямските влияния в православната живопис след XV в. Разглежда се и досегашната дискусия по тези спорни тези, като се предлага терминът Christian Orthodox Art of the Ottoman period, а относно влиянието се предлага феномените на заемки на Изток да се изследват и от експерти по Западен ренесанс, както и от османнисти. Прави се и опит да се опише сложната картина на т.нар. „различия“ между византийското и наследилото го църковно изкуство, както и между западната и източната художествена традиция, набелязва се и сложността в определянето на едно произведение като национално по съвременните критерии за национална принадлежност.

Този текст е писан на два етапа. Представените от Е. Мутафов идеи са прочетени от И. Тот и доработени от нея в качеството ѝ на редактор. Този подход се оказа едновременно предизвикателство и стимул за съавторство, доказвайки, че двамата – изкуствовед и филолог – могат да осъществят заложеното в заглавието на сборника „пресичане на граници“, като „събарят“ преградите в различните професионални полета на своята експертиза чрез предлагането на взаимодопълващи се доказателства на едни и същи научни тези.

Процесът на съставителство и редакция на този том представи подробни нагласи и у останалите автори, а резултатите са още по-вдъхновяващи. Статиите в сборника открояват много взаимодействия и сходства на изворите в широкия спектър от научни приноси на авторите, доказвайки категорично,
че интердисциплиарните колаборации са перспективни за развитието на по-обективната византологична наука и изследванията на православното християнско изкуство през османския период.
Words and Images in Early Christian Inscriptions (3rd–7th Century)

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Abstract. The use of both words and images in the epigraphic medium is already attested in the very first Christian inscriptions (mid 2nd century). This inscriptive habit continued uninterrupted until the end of Late Antiquity (7th century) providing us with an important insight – also corroborated in the works of contemporary historians and Church Fathers – into the transformation of the notion of ‘exposed writings’, associated with inscribed texts that were intended to be seen rather than read.

Key words: Late Antiquity, Epigraphy, Early Christianity, Rome.

In Greek and Roman Antiquity, both words and images appeared as elements of an organized joint communicative stream. In funerary monuments, epitaphs and portraits of the deceased are used together in order to create a long-term memorial of the dead. On painted vases, inscribed words gave identity and voice to the people

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represented on them. In public buildings and monuments, as well as in reliefs and statues, monumental inscriptions display the provisions of the foundation by their texts and by the arrangement and materiality of their writing. From Classical Greece to the height of the Roman Empire in 2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD, inscribed letters and sculpted or painted images each played their respective roles. Although they complemented one another, they still tended to occupy their own distinct space\textsuperscript{3}.

In Rome, the funerary settlement found under the basilica of St Sebastian, along the \textit{Via Appia} (the ancient \textit{Basilica Apostolorum}), preserved the very first examples of epigraphs by Christians of Rome still in their original places: they are dated between the middle of 2\textsuperscript{nd}

and the beginnings of 3rd century. Some of these epitaphs display texts closely associated with images in a manner that differs greatly from the rest of their contemporary epigraphic milieu.

The most ancient inscription in the complex is the epitaph that Μάρκος Ούλπιος Καλόκαιρος dedicates to his mother Σεμπρωνία Ἀγαθούς (Fig. 1,a). In the space below the text, where we cannot detect any Christian reference, a fish is sculpted as swimming through the sea waves. Regardless of the possible meanings of this image, the composition as a whole follows the classical tradition of separating text and image, although only in form; indeed, the presumable relation between the deceased and the image of the fish is not made clear at all.

In the same context, there are also other epitaphs – produced within the first years of 3rd century – displaying the image of the fish, but this time consistently associated with the representation of an anchor (Fig. 1b-c-d). In these inscriptions, the images are not set in a distinct place on the slabs, as was the case with the epitaph of Σεμπρωνία Ἀγαθούς: here the figures share with the text all the available space, constraining the written text to alternate its normative articulation. Evidently, here the images are considered a structural part of the epitaph, whose message is thus expressed by both the words and the figures. This particular feature also occurs among other early Christian funerary inscriptions in Rome: I here refer to the epitaph of Licinia Amias (Fig. 2a), with the unquestionable connection between the representations of two fishes on each side of an anchor and the unique – and somewhat odd – Greek expression Ἰχθὺς ζώντων; and to the two similar inscriptions of Iulia Calliste and Valeria Fotine (Fig. 2b-c), whose Latin texts seem to be in some way “completed” by the final combination of Greek letters and images, the precise meaning of which continues to elude

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4 ICVR, V 12905 [EDB 4294]: Μ(άρκος) Οὐλπ(ίος) Καλόκαιρος Σεμπρωνίᾳ Ἐυσεβηστάτῃ ἐποίησεν ἐνεκείς μνείας ((piscis in undis)).
5 Also considering the epitaph of Τολλία Ἀσκληπιακή, found nearby the Roman catacomb of Hermes, along the via Salaria vetus (ICVR, X 26971 [EDB 13438]), it is really hard to establish an immediate relation between the mentioned deceased woman and the largely prevailing image of the shepherd, bearing the sheep on his shoulders.
6 They are the epitaphs of the Augusti verna Atimetus (ICVR, V 12892 [EDB 781]); of Ancotia Auxesis (ICVR, V 12891 [EDB 780]) and of her mother Ἀγκωτία Ἰρήνη (ICVR, V 12900 [EDB 791]).
7 ICVR, II 4246 [EDB 8818]; now cfr. also Carletti, Carlo. ΙΧΘΥΣ ΖΩΝΤΩΝ. Chiose a ICVR, II 4246 – Vetera Christianorum, 1999, No. 36, 15-30.
modern scholars. Another meaningful case in point is the single – and at first glance inexplicable – word ἰχθύς roughly scratched on a wall in the lowest room in the mausoleum of the Innocentiores, in the same complex of St Sebastian (Fig. 3), in front of the epitaphs discussed above. In this graffito, the image of a crux (in the shape...
of the letter tau) is positioned inside the word itself, between the first two letters. Other examples, from Asia Minor, Greece – or from Roman Africa as in the Hadrumetum funerary mosaic panel found in the area of the so-called catacomb of Hermes (Fig. 4) – illustrate that a shared language, made by both words and images, was used in other 3rd century Christian communities outside of Rome.

2015, 84-85 and footnotes 14-15 mentions there two graffiti with the word ἰχθύς but, actually, there is only one. It seems that Longenecker never saw the monument he mentions.

10 Similar to the discussed inscriptions of Iulia Calliste and Varronia Fotine, the graffiti makes a direct reference to the passage of the Epistle of Barnabas 9, 8: λέγει γάρ· καὶ περιέτεμεν Ἀβραὰμ ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ ἄνδρας δεκαοκτὼ καὶ τριακοσίους. Τίς οὖν ἡ δοθεῖσα αὐτῷ γνῶσις; μάθετε, ὅτι τοὺς δεκαοκτὼ πρώτους, καὶ διάσθημα ποιήσας λέγει τριακοσίους. Τὸ δεκαοκτὼ ἱωτα δέκα, ἦτα ὀκτώ. ἔχεις Ἰησοῦν. ὅτι δὲ ὁ σταυρὸς ἐν τῷ ταῦ ἤμελλεν ἔχειν τὴν χάριν, λέγει καὶ τοὺς τριακοσίους. Δηλοῖ οὖν τὸν μὲν Ἰησοῦν ἐν τοῖς δυσὶν γράμμασιν, καὶ ἐν τῷ τὸν σταυρὸν. “For it (the Scripture) says: “Abraham circumcised eighteen and three hundred men of his household”. What knowledge, then, was given to him? Notice that first he mentions the eighteen and then, after a pause, the three hundred. The number eighteen consists of an Iota (10), and an Eta (8). There you have Jesus (IHCYOY). And because the cross was about to have grace in the letter Tau [‘T’], he next gives the three hundred Tau. And so he shows the name Jesus by the first two letters, and the cross by the other” (English text from The Apostolic Fathers, II ed. and transl. by B. D. Ehrman [Loeb Classical Library, 25], Cambridge (USA) – London, 2005(2), 44-45). The Epistle of Barnabas is dated between the last thirty years of 1st century and the first thirty years of 2nd century AD.

11 MAMA VI, 224 from Apamea in Caria (Turkey).

12 See for example Feissel, Denis. Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de Macédoine du IIIe au VIe siècle. Paris, 1983, no. 80 (from Nea Chalkedon, near Thessaloniki); nos. 116, 118, 119 (from Thessaloniki).


Fig. 3. Rome, via Appia. Necropolis under St Sebastian out-of-the-walls. Mausoleum of the Innocentiores (160–220 CE). ICVR, V 12889 [EDB 778]
The shared language of words and images is noted as a typical feature of Christian practices in the *Octavius* by Minucius Felix, written between the end of 2nd century and the beginning of 3rd century – the same period as our inscriptions. The text by Minucius explicitly states that the Christians “occultis se notis et insignibus noscunt” (“recognize each other by secret marks and insignia”)¹⁴. Among the *notae et insignia* recalled in the *Octavius*, we could identify not only figures as fishes, anchors, doves, shepherds (according to the well-known list given in the contemporary *Paedagogus* by St Clemens of Alexandria¹⁵), but also combinations of words and single letters: obscure to

¹⁴ Min. Fel. *Octavius* 9, 2 (cfr. CSEL 2, 13).
¹⁵ Clem. Alex. *Paed.* 3, 11, 59-60 (SC 158, 123; GCS p. 270): Αἱ δὲ σφραγίδες ἡμῖν ἔστων πελειάς ἢ ἱχθύς ἢ ναῦς σύνωδομοῦσα ἢ λύρα μουσική, ἢ κέχρηται Πολυκράτης, ἢ ἄγκυρα ναυτική, ἢν Σέλεοκος ἐνεχαράττετο τῇ γλυφῇ κἂν ἁλιεύων τις ἢ, ἀποστόλου μεμνήσεται καὶ τῶν εξ ὑδάτων ανασπωμένων παιδίων. “And let our seals be either a dove, or a fish, or a ship scudding before the wind, or a musical lyre, which Polycrates used, or a ship’s anchor, which Seleucus got engraved as a device; and if there be one fishing, he will remember the apostle, and the children
a common audience. These *notae et insignia* – recurrent on Christian gems, even before Constantine – must have been clear signs to initiates of the same religious identity.

It is truly remarkable that the same terms *notare* and *signum* appear one century later in the *De mortibus persecutorum* by Lactantius, in a well-known passage about the *caeleste signum* appeared to Constantine in order to be displayed on the shields of his soldiers before the final battle with Maxentius. Although the “heavenly sign” actually consists of two letters, Lactantius’ passage does not refer to it as a word: consequently, it is not *written* on the shields, it is *delineated* as a mark in order to evoke not only the name of Christ, but also Christ himself (“Christum in scutis notat”: *notare* is not a synonym of *scribere*).

Later on, in the passages of Eusebius’ *Vita Constantini* about the mystical vision of the future emperor, the letters are mentioned not as making up words but as creating a sign. Rather than referring to writing as such, the words represent *visual* communication describing the inscription τούτῳ νίκα strictly connected (συνήφθαι) with the τρόπαιον that appeared to the emperor, in the sky, over the sunlight. Following his vision, Constantine commands that an im-
The “heavenly sign” appeared to Constantine was very probably the Chi/Rho monogram. It should be included among the ancient “secret marks and insignia”, because it has been attested among Christian artifacts (such as papyri, gems and some inscriptions) that predate the references by Lactantius and Eusebius. It appears used essentially as an abbreviation meaning the nomen sacrum of Jesus, the Christ, a compendium scripturae: we find it in some gems

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18 Eus. Vita Const. I, 30: τοῦ σημείου τὴν εἰκόνα φράζει… “… Then he summoned goldsmiths and jewelers, sat down among them and explained the shape of the sign, and gave them instructions about copying it in gold and precious stones”. (English translation reprised from Cameron, Averil and Hall, Stuart G. (eds.). Eusebius. Life of Constantine, 81).

19 Eus. Vita Const. I, 31: Ἦν δὲ τοιῷδε σχήματι κατεσκευασμένον. ὑψηλὸν δόρυ χρυσῷ κατημφιεσμένον κέρας εἶχεν ἐγκάρσιον σταυροῦ σχήματι πεποιημένον, ἄνω δὲ πρὸς ἄκρῳ του παντὸς στέφανος ἐκ λίθων πολυτελῶν κατεστήρικτο, καθ’ οὗ τῆς σωτηρίου ἐπηγορίας τὸ σύμβολον δύο στοιχεῖα τὸ Χριστοῦ παραδηλοῦν ὄνομα διὰ τῶν πρώτων ὑπεσήμαινον χαρακτήρων, χιαζομένου τοῦ ῥῶ κατὰ τὸ μεσαίτατο. “It was constructed to the following design. A tall pole plated with gold had a transverse bar forming the shape of a cross. Up at the extreme top a wreath woven of precious stones and gold had been fastened. On it two letters, intimating by its first characters the name ‘Christ’, formed the monogram of the Saviour’s title, rho being intersected in the middle by chi” (English translation reprised from Cameron, Averil and Hall, Stuart G. (eds.). Eusebius. Life of Constantine, 81).

20 For example, see the epitaph of the bishop Aurelios Glykonides, found in Eumeneia in Phrygia (Isikli, Turkey): SEG 6, no. 201 [ICG 1049] and a ring, found in Brigetio (O-Szoeni, Hungary), now in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (cfr. Spier, Jeffrey. Late antique and early Christian gems. Wiesbaden, 2007, no. 114).


22 The Chi/Rho monogram appear still used with this specific meaning in the graffiti scratched on the so-called “wall g” near the believed tomb of saint Peter under the basilica Vaticana (see their only edition until today: Guarducci, Margherita. I graffiti sotto la confessione di s. Pietro in Vaticano. Città del Vaticano, 1958). Because of their positioning, these graffiti are to be dated within 320-330: more or less contemporary to Lactantius and well before the Vita Constantini by Eusebius. One of them (Guarducci. I graffiti, No. 2) displays in Latin just the same words that

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and inscriptions, as in some graffiti scratched on the so-called “wall g” near the believed tomb of St Peter, under the Vatican basilica in Rome (Fig. 5).

After its adoption as an “official sign” of the Roman imperial power, justified and protected by the God of the Christians\textsuperscript{23}, the Chi/Rho monogram with its different variations – a former secret Christian mark – became the Sign par ex-

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig5.png}
\caption{Rome, Vatican necropolis. (a): some of the graffiti scratched on the so-called “wall g” (from Guarducci 1958); (b): gem (drawing from Spier 2007, no. 151: Perugia, Archaeological Museum – maybe lost)}
\end{figure}


\textsuperscript{23} The “Sign”, as φυλακτήριον, was placed “in the principal apartment of imperial palace itself”, according to the text of Eus. Vita Constantini III, 49: τοσοῦτος δὲ θείος ἐρως τὴν βασιλείαν κατειλήφει ψυχήν, ὡς ἐν αὐτῶς τοῖς ἀνακτόροις τῶν βασιλείων, κατὰ τὸν πάντων ἐξοχώτατον οἶκον τῆς πρὸς τῷ ὀρθῷ κεχυρωμένης φατνίωσες κατὰ τὸ μεσαίτατον, μεγίστου πίνακος ἀνηπλωμένου μέσον ἐμπεπῆχθαι τὸ του σωτηρίου πάθους σύμβολον ἐκ πολυτελῶν λίθων ἐν χρυσῷ πολλῷ κατειργασμένων. φυλακτήριον δὲ δοκεῖ τὸτε αὐτῆς βασιλείας τῷ θεοφιλεῖ πεποιῆσθαι. “So great was the divine passion which had seized the Emperor’s soul that in the royal quarters of the imperial palace itself, on the most eminent building of all, at the very middle of the gilded cofer adjoining the roof, in the centre of a very large wide panel, had been fixed the emblem of the saving Passion made up of a variety of precious stones and set in much gold. This appears to have been made by the Godbeloved as a protection for his Empire” (English translation reprised from Cameron, Averil and Hall, Stuart G. (eds.). Eusebius. Life of Constantine, 140). About this notion of the Chi/Rho monogram, see also Eus. Vita Constantini, I, 29: ἔνθα δὴ ὑπνοῦντι αὐτῷ τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ σὺν τῷ φανέντι κατ’ οὐρανόν σημεῖον ὀφθήναι τούτῳ τῇ καὶ παρακελεύσασθαι, μίμημα ποιημένον τοῦ κατ’ οὐρανόν ὀφθήνος σημείου τούτῳ πρὸς τᾶς τῶν πολεμίων συμβολὰς ἀλεξήματι χορηθαί (“Thereupon, as he slept, the Christ of God appeared to him with the sign which had appeared in the sky, and urged him to make himself a copy of the sign which had appeared in the sky and to use this as protection against the attacks of the enemy”). English translation reprised from Cameron, Averil and Hall, Stuart G. (eds.). Eusebius. Life of Constantine, 1999, 82. Furthermore, see Eus. Vita Constantini, I, 31: τούτῳ μὲν σὺν τῷ σωτηρίῳ σημείῳ πάσης ἀντικειμένης καὶ πολεμίως δυνάμεως ἀμυντηρίῳ διὰ παντὸς ἑχούτω βασιλείας, τῶν τε στρατευμάτων ἀπαντῶν ἑγειταῖ τα τοῦτο ὀρατοματα προσεταττένες (“This saving sign was always used by the Emperor for protection against very opposing and hostile force, and he commanded replicas of it to lead all his armies”). English translation reprised from Cameron, Averil and Hall, Stuart G. (eds.). Eusebius. Life of Constantine, 82. For other significant passages making reference to the notion of the “Sign”, see Eus. Vita Constantini, II, 7; II, 9; II, 16,2.
Fig. 6. (a): Rome, catacomb of Apronianus. Now in Rome, church of St Sabina (4th cent.): ICVR, VI 15602 [EDB 5390]. (b): Cherchel (Algeria). Now in Algeri, Archaeological Museum (4th cent.): CIL, VIII 9591

Fig. 7. (a): Rome, catacomb of St Pancratius: ICVR, II 4298 [EDB 16938]; (b): Aquileia, Museum: CIL, V 8580; (c): Tebessa (Algeria): CIL, VIII 9591; (d): Madrid (Spain), Museo Arqueologico; (e): Trier (Germany), Rheinisches Landesmuseum
cellence, signifying both the Deity and the Empire. From the first decades of 4\textsuperscript{th} century onwards, it ceased to be read as a monogram indicating a sacred word – the name of Christ – but instead it represented an ideogram, immediately recognisable in spite of its complex meaning. The earlier Christian in-group language, from the Constantinian age onwards, was transformed into a publicly legitimat-ed code.

Indeed, in these same decades, the synergy between writing and visual languages found other examples, from the very sophisticated “lettered art” by Optatianus (continued in the long series of the Early Medieval carmina figurata, starting from Venantius Fortunatus) to the common type of Christian funerary inscriptions (Fig. 6). The joining of images and figures with words or their embedding within texts strongly increase in the course of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century, no longer in order to hide, but with the aim of clearly displaying both the religious and social identities of the deceased.

Around twenty years ago, Armando Petrucci, an Italian historian of writing culture, identified the insertion of images, figures and symbols within the space usually reserved only for writing as a feature peculiar to Early Christian inscriptions. According to the data stored in the Epigraphic Database Bari, one quarter of ca 40,000 inscriptions from Christian catacombs in Rome display images or generic non-alphabetical signs. From this evidence, we cannot deduce that using images in inscriptions was a typical and characteristic feature of all Early Christian epigraphs, as suggested by Petrucci, but the fact remains that such an occurrence was very widespread: in Rome (Fig. 7a), Italy (Fig. 7b), Roman Africa (Fig. 7c), and also elsewhere in the West (France, Spain, Germany: Fig. 7d-e).

Images are placed next to the text, at its beginning or its end, but

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24 The celebratory inscription in the figural mosaic on the floor of the Basilica of St Maria, mentioning the bishop of Aquileia Theodorus (who attended the Council of Arles in 314), is one of the first examples of the use of the Christogram in public spaces. The monogram – used absolutely, not as a compendium scripturae – placed in a prominent position as the incipit of the epigraph, dates to the time around 320. About the use of the Chi/Rho monogram on imperial coins, see Carletti, Carlo. Il “monogramma” di Costantino, 240-254.

also *inside* the text, breaking the well-ordered and established ancient pattern: these hybrids force their viewer to change dynamically their reading strategies, switching between the written and the visual code of communication\textsuperscript{26}. The *bulla* of the empress Maria, Stilicho’s daughter and the first wife of the emperor Honorius (she dead in 408), is a clear example of an established synergy between written and visual codes (Fig. 8). The visible composite monogram (made up of an alphabetical Christogram and a figured Stauro-

\textsuperscript{26} “One of the elements of great significance in the graphic texture of the earliest paleo-Christian epigraphy is the insertion by the stone carver of figurative symbols within and in connection with the text sometimes to break it up and sometimes to give it visual rhythm, as it were. (…) These symbols sometimes stand as marginal comment on, or conclusion to, the text, and are sometimes internal to it, with the result that they break the *consecutio*, split it into different and contrasting portions, and give it spatial and formal movement. The outcome is a new and extremely lively complex of signs, no longer arranged in a linear schema, one line above the next, but centering on groups of letters and signs linked in a variety of ways and laid out in deliberately chaotic fashion within a space no longer firmly bounded by a cornice, as in the traditional formal model, but left free, and hence freely occupied. (…) The phenomenon was certainly widespread and uniform throughout the western provinces… What strikes one as the real novelty here is the intrusion into the writing space of an iconographic element made up of densely packed and highly meaningful religious symbols. They helped constitute a wholly religious and self-referential funerary epigraphy, the purpose of which was to give voice to the chorus of the living and the dead, of the witnesses (the martyrs) and the *fratres*, of God and man”. English text reprised from: *Petrucci*, Armando. *Writing the Dead: Death and Writing Strategies in the Western Tradition* (translation by M. Sullivan). Stanford (CA, USA), 1998, 26-27 (Italian original edition: *Petrucci*, Armando. *Le scritture ultime*. Torino, 1995, 37-39).
gram), is made up of engraved letters spelling out the names of the Empress’s family members, who were at the same time the intended readerships of the text written within the gem.

The shared space between words and images can be also explained by spatial reasons: for example, the funerary slabs covering the loculi in the catacombs (Fig. 9a) have only their obverse side to display both the written and the visual memorials of the deceased (not only their portraits, but also other images, for example related to their occupation or age); on portable objects (Fig. 9b), the amalgamation of words and images can be caused by their own small dimensions.

These reasons do not apply to monumental inscriptions in public

Fig. 9. (a): Rome, catacomb of Domitilla. Epitaph of Creste (4th century): ICVR, III 6618 [EDB 22533]; (b): Goldglass from Rome catacombs. Rome, Vatican Library (4th century)
spaces: there, the blending of words and images is, naturally, slower and more gradual, although the theory of such a habit can be found elucidated in the works of some Church Fathers. The incipit of the very first known official Christian inscription in Rome, the now-lost dedicatory epigraph from the Vatican basilica, *quod duce te mundus surrexit ad astra*, completely omits the essential data about the identity of the said *dux*: evidently, the text was intended as a complement to the image, with which it also shared space and context. A further, now lost, commemorative inscription in the *Basilica Vaticana* is fully understood only by considering the accompanying images: the ambiguous phrase “father and son” could be made clear only in conjunction with the portraits of Constantine – the founder of the building – and his son Constantius – the patron, who completed the building work.

The direct link between words and images finds a clear and explicit definition in the first decades of the 5th century, inside the sanctuary for the martyr Felix in Nola (Southern Italy), by the patron of the Martyrium, the bishop Paulinus: according to his own words, both letters and images are explicitly considered as elements of *only one* language: the figural representations are in the service of “explain-

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27 Basil. Caes., *Hom. 19 In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses*, 2 [PG 31, coll. 508D-509A]: Ἐπεὶ καὶ πολέμων ἀνδραγαθήματα καὶ λογογράποι πολλάκις, καὶ ζωγράφοι διασημαίνουσιν, οἱ μὲν τῷ λόγῳ διακοσμοῦντες, οἱ δὲ τοῖς πίναξιν εγχαράττοντες, καὶ πολλοὺς ἐπῆγειν πρὸς ἀνδρίαν ἐκάτεροι. ἂ γάρ ὁ λόγος τῆς ἱστορίας διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς παρίστησι, ταῦτα γραφικὴ σιωπῶσα διὰ μιμήσεως δείκνυσιν. “When often both historians and painters express mainly deeds of war, the one embellishing them onto tablets, they both arouse many too to bravery. The facts which the historical account presents by being listened to, the painting silently portrays by imitation” (English text from Leemans, Johan; Mayer, Wendy; Allen, Pauline and Dehandschutter, Boudewijn. *‘Let us die that we may live’. Greek homilies on Christian Martyrs from Asia Minor, Palestine and Syria (c. AD 350 – AD 450)*, London – New York, 2003, 68). Cf. also Greg. Nyss. *De Sancto Theodoro* [PG 46, 737D]; Nyl. Sinaiit., *Ep. IV*, 61 [PG 79, 557D].

28 ICVR, II 4092 [EDB 17047]: *Quod duce te mundus surrexit in astra triumphans / hanc Constantinus victor tibi condidit aulam.* (“Because with you as leader, the world triumphant arose to the stars / victorious Constantine dedicated this hall to you”): English translation by Dale Kinney, reprised from http://www.learn.columbia.edu/ma/htm/kd/ma_kd_discuss_osp_inscript.htm).

Indeed, we can only speculate about the identity of the *dux* and about the correct interpretation of the term *mundus*, which can be understood as either a noun (as in the translation by Kinney) or an adjective describing Constantine himself (I agree with the latter interpretation).

29 ICVR, II 4094 [EDB 14382]: *Justitiae sedes, fidei donus, aula pudoris. / Haec est quam cernis pictas quam possis et emis omnis / quae patris et filii virtutibus incluta gaudet / auctoreque suum genus laudibus aequat.* (“Seat of justice, house of faith, hall of modesty / this what you see, which all piety possesses / which rejoices, renowned, in the virtues of the father and the son / and equals its author in the praises of his parent”): English translation by Dale Kinney, reprised from http://www.learn.columbia.edu/ma/htm/kd/ma_kd_discuss_osp_inscript.htm).

ing the writing” for the illiterate audience of the pilgrims: the faithful, according to the bishop’s recommendations, can understand the Holy by considering both the figured images and the written words31.

Only some years later, the pope Sixtus III (432–440) marked the dedication of his great basilica to the Virgin on the Exquiline Hill in Rome by two very different mosaic inscriptions. The first one—now lost—was placed on the inner wall of the church façade. It was a long metrical text about the dogma of the Theotokos, just stated by the Council in Ephesus in 43132. The other epigraph is very short and simple: it is still today in its original place, in the middle of the former apsidal arch of the church33. Despite its prominent position, the tabula ansata bearing the dedication of the pope to the plebs Dei (Fig. 10) is actually ‘drowned’ in a deep sea of images that completely enclose the written words. In the contemporary mosaic decoration of the baptistery of Albenga in Northern Italy (Fig. 11), the inscriptions, although positioned in front of the triumphal arch, appear eclipsed by the three-times reverberated, large and impres-

31 “... sed turba frequentior hic est / rusticitas non cassa fide neque docta legendi... propterea visum nobis opus utile totis Felicis domibus pictura ludere sancta... quae super exprimitur titulis, ut litera mon- 

32 ILCV 976: Virgo Maria tibi Xystus nova tecta dicavi / Digna salutifero munera ventre tuo / Tu Geni- 

trix ignara viri te denique faeta / Visceribus salvos edita nostra salus / Ecce tui testes uteri tibi praemia por- 

tant / Sub pedibusque iacet passio cuique sua / Ferrum, flamma, ferae, fluvius saevumque venenum / Tot 

tamen has mortes una corona manet (“Virgin Mary, I, Xystus, I dedicated for you a new building, worthy to your salvific breast. You, Mother who has not known a man, you pregnant while keeping your bowels intact, you gave birth to our Saviour. Here are the witnesses of your womb, they bring to you the prizes, under their feet, the instruments of their own pains: the sword, the fire, the wild animals, the river, and the cruel poison; all they died, but for each one crown remains”).

33 Xystus episcopus plebi Dei (ILCV 975a): “Xystus, the bishop, in favour of the people of God”. 
Fig. 10. Rome, basilica of S. Maria Maggiore, absidal arch. Inscription by pope Sixtus III (431–440): ILCV 975a

Fig. 11. Albenga (Liguria, Northern Italy), baptistery (5th century): ICI, IX, 40

Fig. 12. Kélibia (Tunisia). Now in Tunis, Bardo Museum (5th century): EDCS13500222
sive Christogram with alpha and omega placed on the vault of the building.\textsuperscript{34}

This growing hybridization between words and images achieved by means of shared space, is vividly exemplified by a baptismal font from Kelibia, now displayed in the Bardo Museum in Tunis (Fig. 12), also datable to the 5\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{35}, on which we see no distinction between written and figured space. Writing has become part of the image, and images do not consist only of figures, but also of letters and words – as we can see also in the use of different colors in the letters: they are all considered, unequivocally, signs (according to the proper meaning of the Greek term γραφή).

The notion of the significance of words and images is well expressed by the meaningful change of the relic associated with Jesus preserved in the city of Edessa. The famous letter written by Jesus himself to the king Abgar, mentioned by both Eusebius and Ethe-ria\textsuperscript{36}, in 5\textsuperscript{th} century Syriac 	extit{Doctrina Addai} is substituted by an image: a painted portrait of Christ\textsuperscript{37}. From the second half of 6\textsuperscript{th} century, according to Evagrius of Epiphania (Scholasticus), this man-made image of Christ was replaced by the so-called “Acheiropoietos”, the Holy Face miraculously imprinted on a cloth by the Lord Himself, as was later confirmed by the words of John of Damascus\textsuperscript{38}; this was

\textsuperscript{34} See ICI, IX, no. 40.

\textsuperscript{35} See EDCS 13500222, with previous editions.

\textsuperscript{36} A Greek translation of the Syriac text of the Jesus’ letter is reported by Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. I, 13, part. 5-10); the 	extit{epistula Domini} is referred to as a powerful relic by Egeria in her report of her visit to Edessa on 19-21 April 384 (Ether., Pereg. 19, 8-19 [SC 296, Paris 1982, 206-213]).


\textsuperscript{38} Evagr. Schol. Hist. Eccl. IV, 27 (in PG 86, 2748C8-2749A2): Ὡς δ’ οὖν ἐς πᾶσαν ἀμηχανίαν ἠλθον, φέρουσι τὸν θεότευκτον εἰκόνα ἣν ἀνθρώπων μὲν χεῖρες οὐκ εἰργάσαντο, Αὐγαγός ὃς Χριστὸς ὁ θεός, ἔπει αὐτὸν ἰδεῖν ἑποθεῖ, πεπομφε. Ταύτην τοίνυν τὴν παναγίαν εἰκόνα κατὰ τὴν εἰργασμένην (10) σφίσιν ἐπικλύσαντες διώρυγα ὑδάτω θαυμάζοντες. “They brought the divinely created image, which human hands had not made, the one that Christ sent to Abgar when he yearned to see Him”. Cfr. also John of Damascus, 	extit{Expositio fidei}, 89 (= de fide orthodoxa, IV, 16 [see Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskus, II, besorgt von P. Bonifatius Kotter OSB [Patristische Texte und Studien 12], Berlin, 1973, 206-208, part. 208, II. 50-56): Φέρεται
the well-known “Mandylion”, the relic which remained in Edessa until its transfer in Constantinople in 944.\(^39\)

39 According to the Narratio de imagine Edessena by Constantinus Porphyrogenitus (see PG 113, 423-454). The relic of the Holy Face is ignored by Egeria in her account of her visit in Edessa in 384. Evagrius of Epiphania (536–594) in his H	extit{ist. Eccl.} IV, 27, provides the first mention of the Mandylion: Procopius (490–565), writing about the king Abgar of Edessa, makes note only of Jesus’ letter: cfr. Procop. \textit{De belis, II (de bello Persico)}, 12, 24-27. Maybe an earlier reference to the miraculous Image of the Face of Christ is the “Hymn on the Great Church of Urha”: see Du-
But let us go back to Rome. In the first third of the 6th century, a commemorative metrical inscription was placed by the pope Felix IV (526–530) in the apse of the church dedicated to the Byzantine saints Cosmas and Damian⁴⁰. The epigraph is constituted as an essential part of the communicative streaming that uses both images and words, still occupying separate space following conventions of classical epigraphy (Fig. 13). But, because of its placement along the curve of the apse, the inscription is actually readable only by a very limited audience that can view it in close proximity: that is, only by members of the clergy. The common faithful could perceive from afar the entire decoration, where the celebratory inscription works only as a kind of “written frieze”.

In the same decades, in Byzantine Ravenna, publically displayed writing was also used in churches, but essentially inside the images, mainly in order to identify some of the represented people (Fig. 14a-b): the donors – for example, in St Vitale, the bishops Ecclesius and Maximianus (546–556) – or single saints in the long sequences displayed along the aisles (as in St Apollinare Nuovo). But, in the apse mosaic of St Apollinare in Classe (Fig. 15a-b), the captions of the prophets Moses and Elijah, just as the two epigraphs (one in Greek, other in Latin) structurally related to the central Cross (the ancient ἰχθύς and the new salus mundi), are actually very hard to see and read. The only clearly legible inscription is the caption identifying the venerated martyr: sanctus Apolenaris.

A century later, Rome we can observe the same phenomenon in the apse of the basilica built over the tomb of the martyr Agnes by pope...
Fig. 14. Ravenna (Italy). (a): S. Vitale, apse. Mosaic panel with Justinian and the bishop Maximianus (546–556); (b): S. Apollinare Nuovo. Series of saints along the central aisle, detail (493–526)
Fig. 15. Ravenna (Italy). (a): S. Apollinare in Classe, apse (536–549); (b): detail of the central Cross with the inscriptions ΙΧΘΥΣ and Salus mundi
Honorius in the first half of 7th century (625–638). With its curved dedicatory/honorary inscription\(^{41}\) (Fig. 16) as an essential part of the decoration of the apse, the church seems to recall the 6th century basilica of the Sts Cosmas and Damian; but here the epigraph is hard to read also by the clergy in the presbytery, because it is too high, its text is 12 verses long, and its letters too small to be easily deciphered. As in the Byzantine church of St Apollinare in Classe, the only inscription immediately visible and readable in the decorative schema of the apse is the one positioned over the central image of the martyr: the caption \(s(an)c(t)a\) Agnes.

According to our common notion of writing as a tool to preserve and to transmit information, these epigraphs are not necessary at all: everyone could understand that the central figure in the apse was the martyr commemorated in the church. In contrast, in the Roman church of St Agnes the two represented donors – the popes Symmachus and Honorius – are not identified by any caption.

What is, then, the real raison d'être of these seemingly redundant inscriptions? Evidently these “unnecessary inscriptions” are not inscribed in order to identify the saints, rather, they serve as an essential part of their formal visual representation\(^{42}\). Here, the words have, because they have been written, an authoritative role\(^{43}\) and the

\(^{41}\) ICVR, VIII 20757 [EDB 9577]: ((crux immissa)) *aurea concisis surgit pictura metallis / et complexa simul clauditur ipsa dies / fontibus e niveis credas aurora subire / correptas nubes roribus arva rigans / / vel qualem inter sidera lucem profet etrim / purpureaque pavio ipse colore nitens / qui potuit noctis vel lucis reddere finem / martyrion e bustis hinc repellit ille chaos / / sursum versa nutu quod cunctis cervinur uno / praesul Honorius haec vota dicata dedit / vestibus et factis signantur illius ora / lucet et aspectu lucida corda gerens. “A golden picture arises from specks of metal and daylight itself, shut out [from here], embracing it in it enclosed. Dawn, you could believe, mounts over the gathered clouds as though from snowy fountainheads wetting the fields with dew. Or [you could believe] the sort of light that rainbow will produce among the stars and a purple peacock himself gleaming with color. He who was able to set the boundary of night or light has here beaten chaos back from the tombs of martyrs. Any who once casts an eye overhead sees these votive offerings the bishop Honorius has given. By his garments and offering, his works are signified, as also bearing light [inwardly] in his heart of hearts he shines [outwardly] to the beholder’s eye” (English translation taken from: Thunø, Erik. The Apse Mosaic in Early Medieval Rome. Time, Network and Repetition. Cambridge (USA), 2015, 25).


\(^{43}\) It is interesting that this notion of the captions of the saints’ images was not officially sanctioned in the East before the 8th century: “L’idée que l’image religieuse était sanctifié par le nom du prototype se propaga à partir du VIIIe siècle”: see Sansterre, Jean-Marie. La parole, le texte et l’image selon les auteurs byzantins des époques iconoclaste et posticonoclastes. In: Testo e immagine nell’Alto Medioevo. XLI Settimana di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo (Spoleto, 15 – 21 aprile 1993), Spoleto, 1994, 197-243 (quotation from page 201). The second
images are considered as texts, according to a common notion of *scriptura* and *figura* shared in both the West and the East.

Council of Nicaea in 787 rules that the written name of the saint with its own epithet ἅγιος makes unnecessary the prayer for the consecration of the image of the saint itself [see Mansi, XIII, 269E].


This chronological overview of early Christian inscriptions and of epigraphs, conceived as structural elements of the rich visual programmes in the early Byzantine churches, allows us to conclude that Christians adopted written and visual codes from the very beginning, using a complex but consistent language of signs created from letters, figures and symbols.

Since the period of Early Christianity, words as images, and images as words, were used together not only in order to describe, to define, and to indicate, as in the classical epigraphic habit. They acquired another aim: to evoke the Ineffable.
Epigraphic databases, corpora and editions


EDCS: Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss – Slaby [http://www.manfredclauss.de]


ICI: Inscriptiones Christianae Italiae, Bari, 1985-


SEG: Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum, Leiden – Amsterdam, 1923-

Primary sources

CSEL: Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vindobonae – Lipsiae, 1866-

GCS: Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller. Leipzig – Berlin 1897-

SC: SourcesChrétienes, Paris – Lyon, 1942-

CChrSL: Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina, Turnhout, 1953-


Mansi: Mansi, J. D. Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio. Florentiae – Venetiis, 1757–1798 (1); Paris, 1899-1927 (2); Graz, 1960 (3).


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Tepper, Yotam, Di Segni, Leah. A Christian Prayer Hall of the
Third Century CE at Kefar ‘Othnay (Legio): excavations at the
Слова и образи в раннохристиянските надписи (III–VII век)

Антонио Е. Феле

От епохата на класическата гръцка древност до зенита на римската империя през II в. сл. Хр. изписаните букви заедно със скулптирани или нарисувани образи играят съвкупно хармонично свързана роля, но обикновено в отчетливо обособени пространства. Някои от най-ранните християнски епитафи обаче представлят текстове, ясно свързани с образи по начин, който се различава от настоящия, обичаен, епиграфски подход, като същевременно стават отражение на посоките, засвидетелствани в съвременната им християнска книжнина: напр. произведенията на св. Климент Александрийски, Минуций Феликс Октавий, но и по-късни текстовете на Лактанций и Евсевий, където писаното слово и образите се възприемат като две различни лица на един и същи език.

Често изображенията се поставят край текста, в неговото начало или край, но пък и вътре в него, нарушавайки добре установения древен комуникационен поток: подобни хибридни форми заставят зрителя си да променя динамично ролите си, редувайки разчитането на буквени и визуални кодове на комуникация.

След император Константин и най-вече след Теодосий в монументалните християнски надписи по църкви и на публични места се наблюдава конкуриране между онова и образи, както се отбелязва от някои църковни отци, в целия orbis christianus antiquus. Представата за стойностната идентичност на словото и образа е добре формулирана от съдържателната подмяна на своеобразните Христови реликви в гр. Едеса – от буква, изписана от Иисус до самия му рисуван портрет, който впоследствие става „неръкотворен“ образ на Христовото лице или т.нар. Убрус (Мандилион).

Епитафите, които все повече структурно се свързват с образите,
стават трудни за гледане и разчитане, защото с времето надписите стават украса, а изображенията започват „да говорят“ на вярващите.

Веднъж написани, думите имат авторитетна/водеща роля, докато изображенията постепенно започват да се възприемат като текстове според разпространените представи за *scriptura* и *figura*, съществуващи и на Изток и Запад.
Abstract. Crosses with so-called tetragrams (i.e. four letters or four pairs of letters) are not only attached to monuments, icons and portable objects, but are also found inscribed into Byzantine and post-Byzantine manuscripts. Crosses with tetragrams are commonly placed at the beginning of manuscripts and texts respectively as well in other positions. They have multiple roles: crosses with tetragrams protect the object against evil, they safeguard its existence, and, in addition, they occasionally function as a decorative device. This paper presents an overview of crosses with tetragrams in Byzantine and post-Byzantine manuscripts, and it aims to discuss this cultural phenomenon as a whole.

Key words. cryptograms, tetragrams, Byzantine inscriptions, icons, manuscripts, liturgy.

I. Einleitung

ΦΧΦΠ (= Φῶς Χριστοῦ φαίνει πᾶσιν „Das Licht Christi leuchtet allen“) – die Kombination dieser vier Buchstaben stellt eines der am weitesten verbreiteten byzantinischen Tetragramme dar. Wie be-
Tetragramme sind auf allen möglichen Materialien und Oberflächen erhalten: Man findet sie auf Fresken, sie sind auf Ikonen gemalt, sie sind in Metalle und Stein – mitunter als Graffiti – geritzt, sie sind aus Ziegeln geformt, die in Kirchen- und Stadtmauern eingefügt sind, und sie sind gelegentlich auch in Handschriften eingetragen.11

Wie bereits ausführlich festgehalten, üben Tetragramme in Kombination mit dem Kreuz vor allem folgende Funktionen aus: Sie stellen für das Objekt, auf dem oder in dem (im Falle von Codices) sie angebracht sind, Schutz dar; gleichzeitig sind sie aber auch apotropäisch, indem sie Feinde bzw. allgemein das Böse abwehren.13 Darüber hinaus drücken sie, insbesondere in Zusammenhang mit kaiserlichen Stiftungen, die Präsenz Christi aus.14 An Stadtmauern nach außen gerichtete Epigramme haben zunächst eine apotropäische Funktion, indem sie – wie andere Inschriften auch – Feinden gegenüber schon allein aufgrund ihrer Präsenz Abwehr signalisieren. Sie üben aber auch eine Schutzfunktion aus, nämlich sofern, als sie im Zusammenspiel mit anderen Inschriften Stabilität und Unversehrbarkeit garantieren, und sie sind Symbol der imperialen Macht.


II. Kreuze mit Tetragrammen in byzantinischen und postbyzantinischen Handschriften

Kreuze mit Tetragrammen wurden aber nicht nur auf Mauern, Ikonen und sonstigen Objekten angebracht, sondern auch in byzantinische und postbyzantinische Handschriften geschrieben. Man trifft in Codices an verschiedenen Positionen, auf die im Folgenden eingegangen wird, auf bekannte Tetragramme, für die gesicherte Auflösungen vorliegen, aber auch auf seltene Tetragramme, für die keine eindeutigen Auflösungen vorhanden sind.

Um die vielfältigen Funktionen von Kreuzen mit Tetragrammen in Handschriften darzulegen, sei im Folgenden auf einige wenige Belege eingegangen21. Abschließend werden grundsätzliche Gedanken zur Wirkung und Funktion von Tetragrammen in Handschriften festgehalten.

II.1 Kreuze mit Tetragrammen am Beginn von Handschriften bzw. am Beginn von Texten


23 Die folgende Beschreibung basiert auf dem Studium eines Mikrofilms der Handschrift, der sich im Besitz der Abteilung Byzanzforschung, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, befindet.
Kreuzzeichens, d.h. oben – unten – links – rechts, zu lesen, wobei dies den Betrachter in der Tat dazu einladen könnte, das Kreuzzeichen zu machen. In den Zwickeln des Kreuzes ist IC XC N KA zu entziffern. Außerhalb befinden sich vier weitere Buchstaben, die (vom Betrachter aus gesehen) links oben beginnend entgegen dem Uhrzeigersinn zu lesen sind; dabei handelt es sich um das erwähnte Tetragramm ΤΚΠΓ, wenngleich der Buchstabe links oben, an dem offenbar korrigiert wurde, eher wie ein Π aussieht. Das von den genannten Tetragrammen begleitete Kreuz erfüllt, auch wenn es von einer späteren Hand gestaltet wurde, folgende Aufgabe: Es markiert den Beginn der eigentlichen Handschrift, d.h. des Werks des Germanos, da auf den vorangegangenen Seiten (von verschiedenen Händen ausgeführte) Troparia, verschiedene Notizen, mathematische Probleme und der Beginn der Apostelgeschichte angeführt sind.24

Ein prominentes Beispiel für ein Kreuz, das den eigentlich Beginn des Codex einleitet, stellt auch das aufwändig gestaltete, eine ganze Seite einnehmende Kreuz mit dem Tetragramm IC XC NI KA auf f. 2r der um das Jahr 900 zu datierenden Prachthandschrift Cod. Vat. Reg. gr. 1, der berühmten Bibel des Leon Sakellarios, dar.25 Sowohl das Kreuz im Coislianus als auch jenes in der Leon-Bibel üben aber auch eine Schutzfunktion für die Handschrift bzw. für den Text, den sie einleiten, aus.


Σταυρὸς φύλαξ ἄριστος ἑδραία σκέπη
teίχος ὁχυρόν, δαίμονας ταρβοῦν ὀπλον'
ἐστώς ἐν ἀρχῇ βιβλίου τοúde σκέπει
didouς ἄρωγον χείρα τῶ κεκτημένω.

24 Lagopates. Γερμανός ὁ Β´ πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως-Νικαίας, 130-131.
Das Kreuz, bester Hütter, sicherer Schutz,
ASTE Mauer, Dämonen scheuende Waffe.
Am Beginn dieses Buches stehend schützt es
und reicht dem Besitzer eine hilfreiche Hand²⁶.


²⁹ Von Džurova Les codices unici, 69 falsch gelesen als ΜΣΑΠ und aufgelöst als Μαρτύριον Σταυροῦ Λύστατος Πάνιων.

³⁰ Walter, Christopher. IC ΧC NI KA, 211.

Erwähnenswert ist auch eine weitere Handschrift aus dem Dujčev-Zentrum in Sofia, nämlich jene mit der Signatur D. gr. 212. Der in das Jahr 1378 zu datierende Codex, ein Evangelienlektionar, enthält zu Beginn der Evangelien jeweils ein ganzseitiges Evangelienporträt sowie ein ebenfalls ganzseitiges Kreuz mit Tetragrammen, wobei die Miniaturen, die nach Axinia Džurova in das späte 11. oder frühe 12. Jahrhundert zu datieren sind, nachträglich eingefügt wurden. Während sich die Evangelienporträts auf den Folien 2v (Johannes), 60v (Matthäus), 154v (Lukas) und 271v (Markus) befinden, sind die Kreuze mit den Tetragrammen auf der jeweils nächsten Verso-Seite angebracht, nämlich auf f. 3v ΦΧΦΠ, auf f. 61v IC XC NIKA, auf f. 115v ΣΔΦΤ und auf f. 272v ΑΠΤΧ.

Auf den auf die Kreuze folgenden Recto-Seiten beginnen dann die jeweiligen Evangelientexte. Die Kreuze samt den Tetragrammen leiten somit die Evangelien ein, stehen an deren Spitze und üben eine quasi-Schutzfunktion für die darauffolgenden Texte aus. Die sonst nicht belegten Tetragramme ΣΔΦΤ und ΑΠΤΧ wurden von Džurova in der Form Σωτηρίας δῶρον φωτὸς τίμημα und Ἅγιον Πάσχα τοῦ Χριστοῦ aufgelöst; Gamillscheg plädierte bei ΑΠΤΧ zuletzt für Ἅγιον Πάσχα Τάφος Χριστοῦ als Auflösung, wobei er unter „Heiliges Osterlamm – Grab Christi“ einen Hinweis auf die Verbindung von Tod und Auferstehung Jesu sah. Diese Interpretation ist inhaltlich zulässig, und auch formal ist Τάφος vor τοῦ der Vorzug zu geben, da die Buchstaben eines Tetragramms stets ein Nomen, Verbum, Pronomen oder Adjektiv einleiten, jedoch nie einen Artikel.

II.2 Kreuze mit Tetragrammen an anderen Positionen in Handschriften

Der Cod. Dujčev gr. 272 diente bereits als Beispiel dafür, dass Kreuze und Tetragramme nicht nur am Beginn von Handschriften, sondern auch an anderen Positionen zu finden sind.


Unterhalb ist ein Vers zu lesen, der das Kreuz mit dem Kopisten der Handschrift in Verbindung bringt:

Σταυρὸς ὁδ᾽ ἐστὶ τῶν γραφόντων τὸ σθένος.

Das Kreuz hier ist die Kraft der Schreibenden37.


Ein besonderes Beispiel für die Verwendung von Tetragrammen stellt der um das Jahr 1300 zu datierende, auf Zypern entstandene Cod Par. gr. 1391 dar, der in erster Linie kaiserliche Rechtstexte überliefert, die teilweise in einem volkssprachlichen zypriotischen

Das Kreuz kann nicht nur den Beginn einer Handschrift bzw. eines Texts markieren, sondern kann auch am Ende eines Codex stehen.

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Ein weit verbreiteter Kopistenvers lautet auch: Σταυρῷ πεποιθώς τερματίζω τὴν βίβλον („Dem Kreuz vertrauend beende ich das Buch“)\(^\text{44}\). Auf dem letzten Folio (f. 185\(^\text{r}\)) des in das 12. Jahrhundert zu datierenden Cod. Par. gr. 440, einer Handschrift mit zahlreichen Werkes des Dionysios Areopagites\(^\text{45}\), befindet sich ein von einer späteren Hand in einfacher Strichzeichnung hinzugefügtes kleines Kreuz, das nach oben hin – in fast blasphemischer Weise – mit einem Gesicht und einer Art Kapuze darüber versehen ist\(^\text{46}\). Die in die Zwickel des Kreuzes eingeschriebene Inschrift ist schwer zu deuten: Es könnte sich um die Abwandlung des bekannten IC ΝΙ KA handeln, wobei nur νη (?) κ(ά) einigermaßen deutlich zu lesen ist. Darunter befindet sich das gängige Tetragramm ΦΧΦΠ, hier etwas erweitert als φ χυ φ π wiedergegeben. Ebenfalls darunter ist (wahrscheinlich) das Tetragramm ζ ζ δ πτ zu lesen, das auch sonst in der Form ζζΔΠΤ belegt ist, wobei ΠΤ als Einheit zu sehen ist\(^\text{47}\). Dies erinnert an das Design von sogenannten „Geisterkreuzen“\(^\text{48}\).

Der Beleg im Cod. Par. gr. 440 ist Hinweis darauf, dass Kreuze mit Tetragrammen nicht nur prunkvolle Gebilde, sondern auch einfache Zeichnungen des Kopisten oder eines Benutzers der Hand-


\(^{46}\) Online zugänglich unter http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10722183x/f188.item.


\(^{48}\) Dazu oben S. 64.
schrift sein können. In diesem Fall geht es nicht darum, einen Betrachter der Handschrift mit dem Tetragramm zu konfrontieren, sondern es ist der Kopist (oder ein späterer Benutzer) selbst, der sich ganz persönlich Schutz durch das Kreuz und die begleitende Inschrift erhofft.

III. Abschließende Bemerkungen

Wie gezeigt werden konnte, war die Motivation, Kreuze mit Tetragrammen in byzantinischen Handschriften anzubringen, eine vielfache: Kreuze und Tetragramme markieren den Beginn einer Handschrift oder eines Textes, bieten Schutz, wehren das Böse ab und verdeutlichen die Präsenz Christi. Sie sind aber auch im Inneren von Handschriften zu finden, indem sie von einem Text zum anderen überleiten oder in prunkvoller Ausstattung einen neuen Text, wie etwa im Cod. D. gr. 212 des Dujčev-Zentrums in Sofia das nächste Evangelium, einleiten. Da auch Kopisten auf den Schutz von Kreuzen und Tetragrammen vertrauten, fügten sie diese in Handschriften an verschiedenen Stellen ein. Kreuze (mit Tetragrammen) haben aber auch dekorativen Charakter: Sie sind Bestandteil des Layouts einer Handschrift, was wiederum allgemein an die Relevanz des Designs von Inschriften für die Wirkung im Raum erinnert49.

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„Христовата светлина озарява всичко“ – форма и функция на кръстовете с тетраграми във византийските и поствизантийските ръкописи

Андреас Роби

Кръстове с т.нар. тетраграми (с четири букви или с четири двойки от буквени знаци) се свързват не само със стенописи, икони или преносими предмети, но могат да се открият и изписани във византийски и поствизантийски ръкописи. Кръстовете с тетраграми най-често се разполагат в началото на ръкописите или текстовете, но се срещат и на други места в тях. За автора те имат мултифункционална роля: кръстовете с тетраграми предпазват предмета от злото, те охраняват съществуването му, но и понякога служат и като декоративно средство. Тази статия предлага обзорен поглед върху кръстовете с тетраграми във византийските и поствизантийски ръкописи, поставяйки си за цел да дискутира целия културен феномен на тяхното съществуване и функция.
Between Princes and Labourers: The Legacy of Hosios Christodoulos and his Successors in the Aegean Sea (11th–13th Centuries)

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Abstract. This paper aims to explore the influence gained by the monastery of Patmos in the Aegean Sea in the 11th–13th centuries, during which its properties became symbols of imperial patronage and the foci of settlements linked to the local Church and to agrarian communities. This gradual concentration of power offers the opportunity to read into the landscape of other Aegean islands under its influence, and define identities in the region. These issues have been approached through both religious monuments and surviving mural decoration, which constitute a visual vocabulary open to interpretation.

Key words: Medieval Patmos, Cos, Leros, Kalymnos, Dodecanese, frescoes.

By the late 10th century imperial Byzantine control had been re-established in the Aegean. In this context, the central administration invested in outpost monasteries and churches on several of the islands in order to foster political, economic, ecclesiastical and cultural links with the provinces.

This paper aims to explore the influence gained by the monastery of

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Patmos in the Aegean Sea in the 11th–13th centuries, when its properties became symbols of imperial patronage and the foci of settlements linked to the local Church and to agrarian communities. This gradual concentration of power offers the opportunity to look into the landscape of other Aegean islands under the influence of Patmos and define identities in the region. These issues have been approached through both religious monuments and surviving mural decoration, which constitute a visual vocabulary open to interpretation.

In the ‘transitional’ period between the late 7th and the 10th century, the Aegean had been seriously affected by the breakdown and fragmentation of the Mediterranean “system”. A dearth of information concerning the region in contemporary histories, and modern scholarly interpretations dominated by the preoccupations of particular authors, have left the available archaeological evidence floating in a vacuum. Generalisation has often led to the establishment of views that may not even be valid for particular regions.

Up to the 10th century, the central government was generally interested in the operational potential of the fleet, but its maintenance was not seen as beneficial to the population of the nautical themes, at least in the short term. The islands were only mentioned in relation with raids, naval battles and rebellions – incidental information that is not particularly useful here.

In 961 the reconquest of Crete, a triumph for the Empire, recovered control of the Aegean, restored the safety of sea-lanes and enabled the repopulation of coastal settlements. The defeat at Mantzikert in 1071 initiated another period of raids, which were nonetheless repulsed without the depopulation of the islands. By 1081 cultural investment, political instability and the multiplication of offices and privileges had led to the reduction of state revenues. Economic and political advantage required access to officials in the capital. By this means Hosios Christodoulous established the monastery of St John the Theologian on Patmos, at a period when the central authority could only offer mild palliatives for the pressing needs of the provinces2, while constantly rising taxes drove peasants into serfdom3,

3 Hendy, Michael. Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire (1081–1261). Washington D.C.,
as the documents of Patmos amply illustrate.

When absent on campaign, Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) relied on his relatives, most notably his mother Anna Dalassene, for control of the capital. Her role, severely criticized by historians, seems to have been decisive in dealing with domestic instability. She was a patron of Hosios Christodoulos and their interactions were a key factor for administrative developments on the islands.

In 1079, after many wanderings, Christodoulos left the monasteries of Latros under Turkoman pressure and for a while settled in Strovolos, a coastal town of Asia Minor. There, he was warmly received by the monk Arsenios Scenourios, a scion of a noble Coan family, who prompted him to cross the sea and found a monastery on Cos. In 1080 Christodoulos was already established on Cos, in his monastery dedicated to the Virgin on the rocky hill of Pyli. This was, in his own words, “an uninhabited” place, and part of the extensive properties of Arsenios. Christodoulos' charismatic personality attracted donations by monks, like Nikon Askepes and Arsenios Scenouris, who offered him land on Mount Dikaios before April 1079, and laymen, like the Kavallouris siblings. However, he soon grew disillusioned. After he delivered in person a petition to Constantinople, he quit his foundation on Cos, and in 1087 he obtained by chrysobull the island of Patmos. In addition to this island, he received Partheni and Temenia on Leros, largely farm lands, and half of the castle of Panteli as well as the island of Leipsoi. In exchange, Christodoulos turned over to the imperial treasury the property he had acquired in Strovolos and Cos.

Around August 1088 the Hosios was settled in Patmos, where he began the construction of his monastery of St John (Fig. 1), which, after difficult early years, would develop into a major religious centre. Ties between this institution and the imperial capital were always strong, and the visits of its monks to the city were regular. Indeed, from its foundation in 1088, the monastery enjoyed imperial status,

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1969, 54-55.


6 The imperial chrysobull was followed by the *pittakia* of Alexios I and his mother, see Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά εγγράφα, 40-54, 327-335.
as shown by the term σεβασμία μονή, which was most often used in the imperial chrysobulls.

From the 11th to the 13th century, the monastery developed special ties with a number of other islands through the acquisition of property.
Relation between the monastery and its dependencies in the islands

Documents show that there were often tensions between the monastery and its subjects. The welfare of these subjects was never much of a priority for the monastery as an institution, since imperial foundation, endowments and protection guaranteed its privileges. This advantage pushed its indifference towards the inhabitants to extremes, and mitigation was only sought on the grounds of charity or through interpersonal relations. Christodoulos in his *Rule* had ordained that all candidate monks should be rejected if their sole motive was to avoid extreme poverty. He felt that safeguarding his monks from sexual temptation was much more important than the needs of monastic laymen. Thus, when he founded the monastery (it should probably be considered a *coenobium* with independent anchorites rather than a *lavra*), against the recommendation of the Emperor Alexios, he refused to allow laymen to settle on Patmos in order to preserve his own ideal – traditional poverty and coenobitic monasticism. A shortage of labour forced him to reconsider and, soon, lay families settled on Patmos. However, laymen were restricted to the northern part of the island and permitted to visit their families only at weekends; in cases of violation, severe penalties were to be imposed. These prohibitions were so strict that it is still unclear whether in case of danger women and children could seek refuge within the walls of the monastery. In any case, these prohibitions did not outlive Christodoulos himself.

The “urban noise” that supposedly drove Christodoulos from Cos

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11 Cf. comparison of the Patmian rule with other typika, *Karlin-Hayter*. Christodoulos, 570-571.

may not have been the actual reason for his leaving the island. Although the Coans had welcomed him with gifts, which his monastic community accepted gladly, it seems that his building activities caused property disputes with the locals. Similarly, as early as 1089, the monastery came into conflict with the humble peasants of Leros, when the monks demanded exclusive use of the land they were granted, depriving the locals from their communal rights. The same happened with the inhabitants of the fortress of Panteleli, forcibly removed to Lepida. In this case, the intervention of the empress-mother herself was sought in order to settle the dispute and persuade inhabitants to resign from their rights. Eventually, the differences between the monks and the laity for the use of land at Partheni and for the relocation to Lepida were reconciled. In the 10th and 11th centuries, oppressed farmers often had to confront monastic communities for their rights and the monastery of St John was not an exception.

These conflicts, detailed in the documents, were not the only ones caused by Christodoulos. Differences between the monastic community, landowners and local bishops on Cos also figure in the archives. Furthermore, after the praktikon for the suburbs of Leros and Leipsoi was drawn by the notary Ioannis Anzas, acting under the order of Eustathios Charsianeites, strategos and pronoites of Samos, a new praktikon was added by the notary Ioannes Theolog-

16 See for instance the letter of 1263, Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, Maria. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα της μονής Πάτμου. Β’, Δημοσίων λειτουργών. Athens, 1980, 191 ff. In a sigillium of 1267 (MM. 6, 221-224) in which the patriarch enumerates the injustices oppressing the monastery of Spondon, though he is actually espousing the views of the monastery. The controversies between the monastery and the bishops of Kos are clearly illustrated in the release of Michael Vatikiotis (1271) and the document of Andronikos II Palaiologos (1290), Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 198 ff. Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 310-312.
ites. The new *praktikon* granted the monastery more estates in the same region for pasture. This increased the monastery’s claims and rights although the *Hosios* had repudiated most of them in his will. The confrontational, albeit charismatic, personality of Christodoulos\(^\text{17}\), left people with mixed feelings\(^\text{18}\). The view that “Christodoulos was not prepared to withdraw from the world himself; the world had to be excluded”\(^\text{19}\) best describes his aspirations.

Charitable obligations were intentionally omitted by Christodoulos himself because, as he stated in his *Rule*\(^\text{20}\), the struggle for the survival of the monastic community was so arduous that it left no room for such work. This was certainly true in the 11\(^{\text{th}}\) century, but attitudes did not change in the course of the 12\(^{\text{th}}\) century, when the monastery was prospering through highly profitable business ventures, when produce carried to markets by its own ships free of dues and the revenues from dependencies scattered over the Aegean islands, Asia Minor and Crete contributed to its enrichment. The accumulation of wealth is reflected in the building programmes, improvements and embellishment of the initial constructions\(^\text{21}\) and in a list of treasures looted around 1220 by Latin pirates\(^\text{22}\).

Usually, the laymen mentioned in the documents are treated as property by the monastery and the State or are related to resettle-

\(^{\text{17}}\) His inflexible character is evident in the disputes with his monks when he left Cos, and a little later in Patmos, or when he left for Euboea. His flight from Latros was probably due to the hostility of the monks, see *Codicil*, MM. 6, 31.8-10, 19-21 and 87. He was also accused of misconduct and embezzlement at Latros, of which he was acquitted by archbishop Nikolaos III Grammatikos in 1087, *Ragia*, Ef. Ένα άγνωστο μοναστικό κέντρο στη Δυτική Μικρά Ασία. Thessaloniki, 2008, 83-88. On the disputes of Christodoulos and his monks, *Vranoussi*, Έγ. Τα αγιολογικά κείμενα του οσίου Χριστοδούλου. Athens, 1966, 92, 94-96.

\(^{\text{18}}\) Cf. the local tradition on Leros that Cristodoulos was actually expelled due to his “monkish greed”, see *Oikonomopoulos*, Demetrios. Λέμεικα, ήτοι Χαρογραφία της νήσου Λέρου. Athens, 1888 (Leros, 2002), 17, n. 1, 103. If indeed Patmos was ecclesiastically subordinate to Leros in Late Antiquity, something reversed by the monastery, tension between Patmos and Leros might antedate Christodoulos, see Destephen, Sylvain. Prospopographie chretienne du Bas-Empire, Prospopographie du diocese d’Asie (325-641). Paris, 2008, 268, 383.


\(^{\text{20}}\) *Karlin-Hayter*. Christodoulos, [575-576].


ment or tax exemptions\textsuperscript{23}. The monastery intervened on their behalf in the matter of the \textit{strateia}, the obligation to serve in the army, as mentioned in a document of 1089. Christodoulos requested an exemption for his subjects on the island who had joined the army the previous year. In exchange, he proposed an equal number of men to be recruited from his former estates on Cos, although the latter were public property\textsuperscript{24}. The only benefit the natives received from the monastery was protection from raiders: from a document of 1307 we learn that the monastery had redeemed from pirates and resettled 39 Patmian \textit{villani} and 39 more people to its \textit{metochion} of St John the Theologian at Stylos in Crete\textsuperscript{25}.

\textbf{The expansionist drive of the monastery}

The main objective of the monastery had always been the increase of its holdings, which undoubtedly greatly affected the inhabitants of the areas involved, from the least serf to the most prominent ecclesiastical leader. This can be traced in the writings of Christodoulos who, although settled on Patmos by 1088, had brought with him various documents of Latros, which he had left in 1079. Not only did he continue as the \textit{protos} of Latros until 1087\textsuperscript{26}, but he also extended assistance to them; he kept some of the books he had brought with him by permission of the patriarch Nikolaos III\textsuperscript{27}. This caused a series of problems for the monastery of Stylos at Latros, because along with the manuscripts official documents concerning its everyday administration were also removed\textsuperscript{28}. Christodoulos hoped that

\textsuperscript{23} Cf. the 11\textsuperscript{th}-century grant by Alexios I regarding four peasants exempt from the tax to each of the three estates of the monastery on Leros, \textit{Vranoussi}, Era. Κεκυρωμένη συλλογή επισήμων εγγράφων της εν Πάτμο μονής εις ειλητόν του ΙΑ αιώνος. – Συμμείκτα, 1966, 107-108. This exemption was augmented by the 1145 grant of Manuel I by six more, to a total of 18 peasants, \textit{Vranoussi}. Κεκυρωμένη, 109.

\textsuperscript{24} Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, Βυζαντινα ἕγγραφα, 76-79.6, n. 54.

\textsuperscript{25} MM. 6, 390; Saint-Guillain. L’Apocalypse, 773-774.

\textsuperscript{26} As shown by the \textit{sigillum} of Nicholas Grammatikos (MM. 6, 30-31).

\textsuperscript{27} He took great care to salvage the manuscripts of Latros after the Turkish occupation of the region, having them carried to Constantinople by boat, MM. 6, 87, 13-31. Christodoulos states in the \textit{Codicil} that some of those books were bought during his abbacy at Stylos. Eventually, the patriarch allowed him to keep those that were not lavishly decorated, but it seems that he actually held onto some of the latter, as the 12\textsuperscript{th} century inventory includes illustrated manuscripts, chrysobulls and documents of the monastery of Stylos. If we believe Christodoulos, those should have been handed over the Patriarchate or to the monastery of Stylos after its reconstitution, see Ragia. Ένα άγνωστο, 89, 92.

\textsuperscript{28} Ragia. Ένα άγνωστο, 266.
some day he might either return there or annexe the Latran monasteries to the institution of Patmos and he eventually sent back to Latros the documents concerning its holdings. Likewise, although he had willingly received the barren island of Patmos, he never ceased to aim for the re-acquisition of the dependencies of Strovilos and Cos. It is no coincidence that several documents from the latter were also taken by Christodoulos to Patmos. In a most telling citation in his Codicil, the Hosios bids his charistikarios Theodosios Kastrisios to take care of the monastery of Kastrianon, despite the fact that he no longer owned it. The desire to regain the Coan privileges never left him and he wrote the Codicil only to request from emperor Alexios I the recovery of the properties he had ceded to the State. As far as Strovilos is concerned, when Christodoulos was in Cos, he had providently attracted lavish donations, among others that of the vestarch Constantine Cavalloures and his sister Maria, of doubtful value in view of the Turkoman advance in Asia Minor. Christodoulos was equally provident on behalf of the Patmian monastery, although the pursuit of his plans there materialized in a chrysobull by Andronikos Palaiologos in 1329. By this time the island had been conquered by the Hospitalliers, but apparently the monks still hoped that this unfortunate political situation could be overturned.

The Komnenoi had tried to contain and regularize monastic privileges, and here the case of Patmos is fairly instructive. In the 12th century, the prohibition of fresh grants by Alexios I Komnenos was observed by his successors, despite the rising reputation of Patmos. Provisioning and cash rather than new estates alleviated the difficulties, which were undoubtedly encountered. The terms of the 1088 grant were violated in 1196, when Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203) granted to Patmos a metochion on Crete. The prosperity of

30 Vranoussi. Τα αγιολογικά, 66.
31 Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά εγγράφα, 7*-8*.
32 Vranoussi. Τα αγιολογικά, 147, n. 4; Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά εγγράφα, 38*, 114.
34 Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά εγγράφα, n. 17.34-40.
35 Smyrlis. La fortune, 175-176.
36 MM 6, 132, n. 36.
the 12th century and the economic growth of the monastery began with the chrysobull of 1197, which freed its ships of custom dues. This seems to have had the effect of not only strengthening communications with the monastery’s dependencies, but also advancing its commercial interests37. In the turbulent 13th century, Patmos annexed the monastery of St George Dyssikos at Phygela between 1201 and 1216. The metochion of Pyrgos, and probably the monastery of Kechionismeni at Palatia (Miletus) followed in 121638. Successive petitions of abbot Germanos brought Patmos more metochia on Cos in 125839.

The concentration of private wealth at the expense of the State, common throughout the period, is clearly described in the release act of Stylos, the Cretan metochion, to the monastery40: its inalienable status as an imperial estate was lost when it was turned over to the locals and was then granted in perpetuity to a pronoiarios. After the latter’s death, the estate came into hands of the local governor along with its revenues, both of which were lost forever to the benefit of Patmos.

The lengths to which the monastery would go in order to take over estates and other monasteries are revealed in forged documents like the sigillium of the exisotes Joseph Pagkalos. According to this text, while Christodoulos was still living, that is before 1093, the monastery was allegedly using the revenues from its metochion, the monastery of Spondon in Cos41. The Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos used that document to cede Spondon to Patmos between 1254 and 1264. Yet, when Christodoulos was granted the island of Patmos, he had

38 Nystazopoulou, Maria. Ο επί του Κανικλείου και η Εφορεία της εν Πάτμω Μονής. – Σύμ.μεικτά 1966, No. 1, 81; Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 86*-87*, 94*-95*.
41 Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 241.1-4, mainly 244-246. After 1259, Michael IX Palaiologos confirmed forged titles or claims by granting to the monastery several estates which the latter never had possessed, Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 241.
agreed to return to the fisc the Virgin of Kastrianon, a monastery he had founded, along with the rest of his estates on Cos. They did not include a metochion at Asphendiou, where the monastery of Spondon is located. Additionally, in another false chrysobull of 1087, forged soon after 1453\textsuperscript{42}, the monastery of Kastrianon was mentioned as the property of Patmos, reflecting either wishful thinking or an already established and arbitrary seizure, the latter very attractive as a possibility if we consider how many of its metochia actually came into the possession of Patmos\textsuperscript{43}.

The cultural impact of the Patmian monastery

It is useful to investigate Patmos before the time of Christodoulos. Observations will be strictly limited to possible initiatives, concerning the foundation and embellishment of its metochia. Christodoulos’ writings and Vitae imply that the island was completely deserted when the Hosios got there. However, cross-checking the sources easily shows this as untrue for Patmos\textsuperscript{44}. It is most likely simply a hagiographic topos. The 8th-century lead seal of a certain Epiphaniatos, abbot of a monastery on Patmos\textsuperscript{45} indicates that other institutions existed long before the foundation of the Theologos. It follows that there were inhabitants on the island. From the limited corpus of architectural members found on Patmos, some marble pieces may be dated to the 11th century\textsuperscript{46}, before the three-year sojourn of Christodoulos there. This points to the same conclusion. Their provenance, although unknown, is likely to be the oratory which,

\textsuperscript{42} Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 157.
\textsuperscript{43} Kollias. Οικισμοί, 294. The forged chrysobull could possibly be related to two other suspicious chrysobulls of 1326 and 1331 which maintained that the construction of buildings in the castle of Pyli by the bishop of Cos was irregular, Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 37, 170. From time to time the bishops of Cos were in dispute with the monastery, see Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, n. 70 (1271), 189-205. During that period the relations of Patmos with the Bishops of Leros fluctuated; besides bishop Nikolaos attested in 1082 and 1089, see below, the cultured “pro-Patmian” Bishop of Leros Constantios was among the ratifiers of the will of the Abbot Theoktistos of Patmos (1158); served as intermediary of the monastery according to documents; and also donated books, portable icons and vessels to its library, see Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 202-205.
\textsuperscript{44} Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 37*.
according to the enumerator Nikolaos Tzantzzes, stood on the ruins of the imposing Early Christian basilica of the island. Given the pressing need for residential quarters and fortification, these pieces are unlikely to belong to an embellishment of the catholicon church by its founder. More importantly, these decorative elements do not form a coherent group with their few companions dated to the 12th century and thus cannot be assigned to his direct successors either.

Besides, the mention of a sanctuary screen in the Hypotyposis for the enthronement ceremony of the abbot may reflect the ritual that was in use rather than a specific marble sanctuary screen set up for this purpose in the catholicon of Patmos. If such a screen did indeed exist, it would have been composed of spolia from the basilica and the eukterion, unless those marbles had been brought to Patmos from its satellite islands. Whatever the case, apart from a screen colonette of exquisite 12th century workmanship, the rest are of merely moderate quality, inappropriate at least for the first half of the 12th century; the view that “they were commissioned to workshops from the Capital, as notable works...” must be rejected.

The catholicon of Patmos, built by Christodoulos, belongs to the four column variant of the cross-in-square plan. It is a building of humble intentions, frugal, quite small and the work of masons of limited ability. Scholars have noted its spare and rustic air, at a period when other rather ambitious cross-in-square churches were competing in refinement and elaboration. His earlier Cos foundation, the Kastrianon monastery, was similar in construction. Christodoulos, devoted to his books and the holy icons he carried about, although exposed to artefacts of high artistic merit in his visits to Constantinople, remained indifferent to them. On Patmos he was responsible for the catholicon, the cistern beneath, the timber-roof refectory, a number of cells in the south wing, and a large part of the walls.

47 Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 39.
48 Kyrillos Voinis. Ακολουθία Ιερά του Οσίου και Θεοφόρου Πατρός ημών Χριστοδούλου. Athens, 1884, 91-92.
49 This piece is exhibited in St Nikolaos ho Geros, in Chora Patmos, Kefala. Inside the Holy Chancelli, forthcoming.
Major building programs were launched by his successors. In the prosperous 12th century, the Patmian monastery mostly renovated and embellished existing structures. Examples of such projects include the narthex, perhaps also the exonarthex and the two chapels of Christodoulos and Leontios52. To Arsenios (1185–1203 or 1206), the most distinguished of the abbots of Patmos, dedicated to the enhancement of the reputation of the monastery, should be ascribed the building programmes carried out during his time in office and the expansion of estates and privileges. Works of art of unparalleled importance, like the sophisticated murals of the Chapel of the Virgin or those in the Cave of the Apocalypse and perhaps the first phase of the Refectory, graced his abbacy. His frequent visits to Constantinople probably point to the provenance of the artists employed in his projects. However, the available evidence does not support the notion that he was responsible for similar activity in the dependencies on the other islands53. It should be remembered that his building activities might have predated his accession to the abbacy, possibly to as early as 1176. According to the Vita of his predecessor Hosios Leontios54, he was the latter’s spiritual son, being appointed oikononos and head of the monastery when Leontios was away.

Was the exceptional quality of the works executed at the monastery accompanied by work of similar ambition at the metochia? It has to be admitted that it would be difficult to believe that Christodoulos, or any of his successors, intended to establish monasteries on the other islands for any other reasons than the production of an agricultural surplus. Until the end of the 13th century, new construction on behalf of the monastery was rare, with a few exceptions55 such as the Asomatos monastery on Patmos, founded by abbot Savvas after his resignation in 1127/2856.

53 Mouriki. Οι τοιχογραφίες, 258. See also the view that buildings were erected or restored by the monastery in Leros, Michaelidou, Maria. Παλαιοχριστιανική βασιλική στο Παρθένι της Λέρου. In: Ιωνίας Άκρον, τόμος αφιερωμένος στη μνήμη του Δ. Οικονομοπούλου. Athens, 1993, 12.
55 Cf. the buildings in the metochion of Pyrgos in Asia Minor in the 13th century, see Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 94*.
56 Vranoussi, Era. Σάββας καθηγούμενος της μονής Πάτμου, Χρονολογικά και προσωπι-
Of the island of Leros, the communities of Temenia and Partheni were granted to Christodoulos in 1087. But are there any buildings, which could be ascribed to Christodoulos and his successors before the end of the 13th century? We possess detailed accounts for both

Fig. 2. Leros. The suburb of Partheni

γραφικά ζητήματα. – Hellenika, 1966, No. 19, 224, suggests that these were quite distant from the monastery, presumably where the kathisma of Evangelismos is today, where surviving buildings are much later.
Temenia and Partheni, but none of these buildings can be dated to the period between the 11th and 13th centuries. At Partheni, the landscape remained unchanged from antiquity to the present as habitation had always been scarce and located exclusively on the shoreline (Fig. 2); its agricultural character was left unaltered until the 1980s. Recent archaeological excavation of the Early Christian basilica and settlement has identified with reasonable confidence even the potistikon, a wide, masonry ‘well’ recorded in the release praktikon, whose opening was supported by four arches. At Temenia, the existing houses, tower and church of the Virgin and a church of Sts Anargyroi, decorated with murals and a marble templon, had all been recorded in detail in the 11th century. In the 13th-century reports, no additions were made by the apographeis, presumably because everything had already been covered by earlier documents.

Besides Leipsoi and part of Leros, the monastery is likely to have

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57 Michaelidou. Παλαιοχριστιανή, 9-65, with topographical information.
58 Unpublished.
59 Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 54-55. The location of the tower and church are unknown. The church of Hagioi Anargyroi is heavily restored, see Kollias. Ιστορικές πληροφοριές, 18-19.
60 Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 165-166, 185-186.
owned the islets of Pharmakousa, Arkioi and Agathonisi. These were arid for the most part, but nonetheless able to support flocks of sheep on their mountainous slopes. The most prominent monument on Leipsoi is the Middle Byzantine church of the Virgin of Charos, of a transitional variant of the cross-in-square plan. Its special features include the low pendantive dome and the sanctuary, cut off from its eastern corner bays that are today used as autonomous chapels. It is highly likely that the church predates the grant to Christodoulos, as specialists have proposed for it a construction date between c. 950 and 1050. However, no attempt has been made to look for fresco decoration, which might confirm this. On the other hand, although the church was omitted from the release report of the pedantic enumerators, where only the Church of St Nicholas is mentioned, it should be noted that there seems to have been a lost separate document – possibly more detailed – for the island of Leipsoi. No other buildings that could be ascribed to an initiative of the monastery exist. The only piece of work that could possibly be regarded as a Patmian gift is the 14th-century two-sided icon of the Virgin Hodegetria/St. John the Theologian and Hosios Christodoulos (Fig. 3).

As far as the islets are concerned, no buildings dating from the period of Christodoulos and his successors are known. The huge granaries preserved on Pharmakousa, Arkioi and Agathonisi are linked to the 6th century transport of the annona. Presumably, the monastery needed these small islands for its active, tax-free fleet that could, in peacetime, use their depots in its regional and insular network. Such an interpretation would underline the dynamism of the monastery through the highly profitable transportation of its goods.

The catholicon Christodoulos built at Kastrianoi, Cos, his first stop after Strovilos, was dedicated to the Virgin (Fig. 5). Central to Christodoulos’ plan was the establishment of a monastery with cells and enclosure. The church was a single aisled squat building built by

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\[61\] Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 51-52; Smyrlis. La fortune, 73, n. 73.
\[62\] Kollias. Σχεδίασμα, 33.
\[63\] Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. Βυζαντινὰ ἔγγραφα, 63.
\[64\] Katsioti, Angeliki, Παρατηρήσεις στην τοπική λατρεία αγίων στα Δωδεκάνησα. – Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά, 2012, No. 25, 667, fig. 1.
masons of limited ability with cheap materials, incorporating numerous spolia\textsuperscript{66}. His description of it as “ναόν...περικαλλή τε καὶ ωραιότατον...”, an example of the eulogistic manner frequent in Byzantine literature, may be an attempt to enhance his own work. Archaeological survey of the area has brought to light recycled sculptures, datable to the Middle Byzantine period, suggesting that the Kastrianon is earlier than the advent of Christodoulos at Pyli\textsuperscript{67}. Unfortunately, the surviving murals of the church are of no use for dating purposes as the earliest layer, a fresco of the Virgin and Child flanked by two angels, is variously dated either to the 12\textsuperscript{th} or the 13\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{68} and may be a commission by an unknown donor - possi-
bly an abbot of the Kastrianon – executed by an itinerant workshop (Fig. 6). It is impossible to identify it as a sponsorship of Patmos, since the latter did not then own the Kastrianon.

According to the Codicil, Christodoulos is thought to have founded a castle at Pyli69; this is an exaggeration, since it has been proven70, that there was already a fortress there, which he presumably repaired. After these properties were handed over to the state, its officials took measures to improve the defence of the site and a new complex with a gate was added between c. 1100–1130. Scholars believe that the gatehouse was constructed by an important imperial official71. Its masonry with the recessed brick technique, often used

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69 MM. 6, 88.
71 Tsouris, Το κάστρο, 372-373, expresses his doubts as there are no other building phases that can be identified and thinks he may have been the extremely active general and pronoites of Samos Eustathios Charsianeites who belonged to the millieu of Anna Dalassene.
in the Capital, indicates the presence of the central government no matter how problematic and fragmented the latter might have been; in Pyli it acted promptly and efficiently.

The systematic efforts of the monastery to regain rights on Cos, and through them to farmland, only bore fruit in the second half of the 13th century, under the versatile abbot Germanos (before 1258 to 1280), a close friend of patriarch Arsenios. However, the internal crisis caused by the Arsenite schism (1259–1310) drove a lot of monks out of Patmos and the rest were unable to hold on to the Coan properties, with the exception of the small _metochion_ of the Saviour. By 1292, when order was restored, all properties and goods had been seized by the locals who took advantage of the disfavour into which the monastery had fallen.

Concerning the artistic aspect of the Coan possessions, at the mountainous village of Zia in the region of Asphendiou, a church of the four-column variant of the cross-in-square plan has been identified as the _catholicon_ of the Spondon monastery. This was granted to Patmos along with its estates in 1258 by a _sigillium_ of Patriarch Arsenios. Spondon had a long autonomous existence before its annexation by Patmos. Later repairs and a complete renovation in 1919 prevent further investigation of its development. According to 20th century scholars, it was probably painted before the advent of the Patmian monks, in spite of what their documents suggest. Revisiting the

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74 According to the brief chronicle of the monastery, Kollias. Οικισμοί, 257-259. See also Gerolymatou. ‘A propos, 392–394, who dates the Spondon monastery to the 12th century; but that does not exclude an earlier dating for the _catholicon_.

75 Kappas, Michalis, Η εφαρμογή του σταυροειδούς εγγεγραμμένου στη μέση και την ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο. Το παράδειγμα του απλού τετρακιόνιου/τετράστυλου, ΑΠΘ, unpublished PhDiss. Thessaloniki, 2009, 234-235, n. 72, associates the monument with the intensive building activity of the 11th century, which was further boosted under Alexios I. The mention of the Spondon monastery in the Patmos document of 1258 is a _terminus ante quem_ for its existence. Kollias. Οικισμοί, 299.

76 According to Gerola, Giuseppe. I monumenti medioevali delle Tredici Sporadi, Parte seconda. – Annuario della regia scuola archeologica di Atene e delle missioni italiane in Oriente, 1914, No. 2, 46.

77 MM. 6, 193, n. 72.
sources has revealed that the pretended contributions to Spondon by the monastery of Patmos were merely ammunition serving their campaign to acquire the catholicon officially. The concession, however, was inactive from 1263 to 1292, when Patmos was in disarray.

Patmos’ Coan possessions were again augmented when the Empress Theodora, spouse of Michael VIII Palaiologos, transferred to them the monastery of Christ the Saviour at Mount Dikaios. This has been identified with a small monastery founded and owned by Arsenios Scenouris, a companion and benefactor of Christodoulos.

78 According to Kollias, Οικισμοί, 301, in a handwritten catalogue of the monastery dated 1200 and in a library loan note of 1229 or 1244 it is mentioned that: “εδόθησαν εις την Κω εις το μετόχιον βιβλία δέκα”. Thus a metochion was already in existence before the year 1229 or 1244, but which one was meant is uncertain.

79 Mastoropoulos, Georgios. Ταύτιση (;) του επί του Όρους Δικαίου της Κω μονυδρίου Αρσενίου του Σκηνούρη (11ος αι.). In: Ιστορία, Τέχνη και Αρχαιολογία της Κω, Α’ Διεθνές Επιστη-
The earlier cruciform church was abandoned and the cistern converted into a chapel, to which the surviving sculptural decoration of the 11th–12th century (spolia?) was incorporated. Even though the decoration and the building of the cruciform church cannot be attributed to Patmos, the same cannot be said of the fresco decoration of the conch where the painting of a Deesis survives.

Another monastery associated with Patmos before 1292 is the Dormition of the Virgin at Alsos. The Alsos monastery was situated in

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**Fig. 7.** Cos. Alsos catholicon. A fresco fragment of a Bishop

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80 Mastoropoulos. Ταύτιση, fig. 20-24, 26, 28.
81 Probably after 1263 as Gerolymatou. ‘Α propos, 397, suggests. However, Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 2, 232, thinks that the evidence is inconclusive for such a postulation before 1292, when the act of Patriarch Athanasius citing the Alsos as property of the monastery was issued.
the grove of the Asklepieion and its remnants were swept away during the excavations at the beginning of the 20th century. The argument for this association is that the Alsos monastery was first granted to Spondon and then, through it, to Patmos. However, the records of its abbots put this into question. A remarkable reconstruction of its history has shown that the monastery was of great importance before being ceded to Patmos as, before 1271, some of its abbots became bishops of Attaleia and a certain Gerasimos from

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83 *Gerolymatou, `A propos, 389.*

84 *Gerolymatou, `A propos, 387-399.*
Alsos was Bishop of Leros in 1282\textsuperscript{85}.

The *catholicon* of Alsos was built before 1241\textsuperscript{86}. Arguments placing the foundation of the church between the 10\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} centuries, based on the architectural elements\textsuperscript{87} are ill-supported, since many of them may have been *spolia*\textsuperscript{88}. Besides, in the document, named

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{85} Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 234.

\textsuperscript{86} According to the monastery chronicle attached to the *Deesis* document of the peasants of Cos (1288) which cites the empress Irene (†1241), spouse of the emperor John III Vatazes. On the monastery, Kollias. Οικισμοί, 299-301; Gerolymatou. `A propos, 389.


\textsuperscript{88} Besides, according to Militsi, Τμήματα, 423, fig. 1, the cubical capital found there was meant to support a dome while the *catholicon* is single-aisled and barrel-vaulted. Even though these sculpted members have been dated to the first half of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century, they do not constitute an ensemble.
\end{footnotesize}
Deesis ton epoikon tes Co, the Spondon monastery (c. 1050–1100) is acknowledged as older than that of Alsos. A fresco fragment of a bishop from Alsos (Fig. 7) which bears stylistic affinities to the remains of the fresco of the Holy Fathers in the church of St John the Theologian at Lakki on Leros (Fig. 8), probably executed by the same hand, assists our understanding of its history and the possible intervention of Patmos.

A parenthesis is needed at this point to disentangle the relations of the fresco decoration of Alsos with that of the imposing three-aisled domed basilica at Lakki on Leros (Fig. 9). Recent restoration has revealed an inscription on a marble lintel, stating that it was built as an Episcopal church by one Bishop Nikolaos, in 1082. In its earliest phase it had no murals: its walls and openings were decorated by tile courses on both faces. In the 13th century the church, perhaps after an earthquake, was drastically remodelled, acquiring vaulted roofing and a dome. Judging from the fragments of the fresco decoration, which survive mostly in the north aisle dedicated to Hosios Christodoulos, the painted program was of a special character, some of its features traceable to the iconographic program of the Patmos Refectory. The same features are also present in the fragment with the bishop from the now lost decoration of Alsos.

Are there links other than stylistic associating the remaining prelate of Alsos with those of St John the Theologian at Lakki? A Gerassimos, Bishop of Leros, had previously in 1222 been abbot of the then independent Alsos. He was a cultured man with an impressive network of contacts including churchmen, nobles of the exiled empire and even the Empress Irene (1222–1241). He may also have been responsible for the decoration of the catholicon. Conversely Neilos, the ambitious Bishop of Leros (c. 1258) who, having accumulated considerable power, sought to abolish the self-government of Patmos, may also have been among the sponsors. The fragment

89 Citation in Katsioti. Επισκόπηση, 295.
91 The style of those frescoes recalls some Rhodian monuments: the first layer of St Phanourios (1210–1220), the 13th century layer (1240–1250) of the catholicon of the Archangel Michael at Thari, Laerma, see Kefala, Konstantia. Οι τοιχογραφίες του 13ου αιώνα στις εκκλησίες της Ρόδου, Christian Archaeological Society e-press/1. Athens 2015, passim.
92 As cited in Δέησιν των εποίκων της Κω, Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 234.
93 Vranoussi, Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 94*, 68; Vranoussi, Era. Πατριαρχικά έγγραφα της Πάτμου
from Alsos and the frescoes of Lakki share common features with the second layer of the Patmos Refectory, which probably reflects the assimilation of artistic developments in the Byzantine Empire of Nicaea by independent workshops. Albeit imbued by spiritual and doctrinal subtleties also encountered in the murals of the monastery, these paintings express, in all likelihood, the aspirations of abbots and local bishops collaborating with local landowners. Thus, even though the paintings of Alsos and Lakki are related to those of Patmos, this is the result of an indirect process, and not evidence of Patmian initiatives.

The oral tradition concerning churches connected to Patmos, even unsupported by the written sources, should not be neglected, as it may contain historical clues or reveal artistic links. As evidence is lacking, it is likely that monastery acquired them through the usual method of forged documents. Some of the oldest churches of the region belong to this group, such as St John the Theologian at Lakki94, mentioned above, or the Holy Apostles on Kalymnos.

Only a couple of indications show that the monastery was active in Kalymnos: a book donation to an anchorite on Kalymnos might possibly signify he was a protégé of the monastery95; also, the sigillum of 1263 of Leo Eskamatismenos, enumerator of Rhodes and the Cycladic islands, mentions property of the monastery on Kalymnos96.

Local tradition relates the foundation of the Holy Apostles, the most important monument of Kalymnos97, a tetrastyle variant of the cross-in-square plan, dated c. 950–1000, to Christodoulos himself. Assumptions98 that a series of additions belong to the second half of the 12th century, are not supported by the surviving architectural evidence or the study of the painted decoration; the late 12th-century painting of the apostle Peter99 or that of the mid-13th century with

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94 Vranoussi. Τα αγιολογικά, 107, n. 1, where popular traditions for the foundation of church by Christodoulos are cited.
95 Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 88*-89*.
96 Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 191-197, no. 69.
98 Kappas. Η αρχιτεκτονική, 65.
99 Katsioti, Angeliki, Archontopoulos, Theodoros. Το παρεκκλήσιο της οικογένειας των Αρμε-
the Virgin Hodegetria\textsuperscript{100} have no affinities with contemporary layers at Patmos. The annexation of Leros and Kalymnos by the Nicene Empire in 1249 under Vatatzes, and their administrative reorganisation in 1254, for which purpose was sent an *apographeus* and *exisotes* named Constantine Diogenes\textsuperscript{101}, make it plausible that the mid-13\textsuperscript{th} century murals may have had state sponsorship.

Finally, we turn to the possessions of the monastery in the region of Stylos at Apocoronas on Crete, beyond the Dodecanese. There are references in the documents to gifts of produce and later to a *metochion*, both of which were crucial for the survival of the monastery. These should be identified with the Stylos possessions granted to Patmos by Alexios I\textsuperscript{102}. The importance of the Cretan *metochion* endured thanks to the warm relations the monastery maintained with the Venetian masters of Crete as well as with the Nicene emperors\textsuperscript{103}. The structural remnants of the *metochion* consist of the twin-nave church of St John the Theologian and St Nicholas, a complex of granaries, and four successive buildings, heavily altered and therefore of uncertain date. The church\textsuperscript{104}, located at the northwest end of the settlement, could in all probability be identified with the one mentioned in a list of book loans from Patmos of the mid-13\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{105}, where it is noted that the monastery had sent three books ‘*eis ton Psychron’*, obviously meaning the *metochion* of Stylos\textsuperscript{106}.

The site now occupied by the north nave of the church was once occupied by a single-aisled church. Excavation has brought to light the foundations of at least two successive churches. The surviving

\textsuperscript{100} Kollias. Σχεδίασμα, 37, fig. 5; Kaisiati. Επισκόπηση, 280-281, fig. 69b.
\textsuperscript{103} Saint-Guillain. L Apocalypse, 771-773.
\textsuperscript{104} Briefly mentioned in Andrianakis, Michalis, Giapitsoglou, Konstantinos. Χριστιανικά μνημεία της Κρήτης. Heraklion, 2012, 360-361.
\textsuperscript{105} Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 216.
\textsuperscript{106} As Kallivretakis. Το μετόχι, 100, concludes.
building has an older part, the south wall of the north church (the Theologos nave) with paintings of the mid-13th century. Between 1271 and 1280, according to the now lost dedicatory inscription, a narthex was added and decorated. Part of the church was remodelled in the first half of the 15th century; according to the dedication, the monk Nikodemos added the south St Nicholas nave then.

It is hard to trace any affinities between the mid-13th century layer of the north nave and the contemporary murals of Patmos due to their bad state of preservation107. However, the head of St Peter

107 Andrianakis, Giapitsoglou. Χριστιανικά μνημεία, 360-361. Nothing relevant is mentioned for the painted decoration (1271–1280) of the narthex. Suggestions for the mural painting are confused as in Gallas, Klaus, Wessel, Klaus, Borboudakis Manolis. Byzantinisches Kreta. Munich,
from the scene of the Baptism of Christ (Fig. 10) recalls the same figure from the Communion of the Apostles, Patmos (1230–1240)\textsuperscript{108}. An initiative from Patmos for the decoration of the Cretan *metochion* church using a local workshop is very likely, but taking into account the nearby church of St Nicholas at Kyriakosellia (1230–1236)\textsuperscript{109}, it would be better justified to connect such high quality work with the presence of the expeditionary forces of John III Doukas Vatatzes\textsuperscript{110} in the Aegean and Crete: it is no coincidence that John III was a keen supporter of the monastery.

So far, some economic, social but mostly artistic phenomena until the end of the 13\textsuperscript{th} century, possibly connected to the monastery of Patmos and its possessions, have been explored. Works initiated by Christodoulos himself were modest, but in the 12\textsuperscript{th} and 13\textsuperscript{th} centuries Patmos expanded in every possible way thanks to competent abbots who profited from the goodwill of emperors and patriarchs. However, their estate management was profit-oriented.

The same tendency is detected in the relations of the monastery with the local bishops. Its efforts to gain *metochia* and churches were often successful, thanks to the acumen of its leaders. Clearly, the monastic ideal was not a priority when the chance arose to augment its properties to the detriment of local communities.

If the 13\textsuperscript{th}-century murals detailed above were not sponsored by the monastery, the Nicene Empire would be the most likely source of patronage\textsuperscript{111}. Taking into account the political network developed by the Laskarids, we should consider the likelihood of state investment in the islands. The artists of Nicaea could be employed either


\textsuperscript{110} Katsioti, Επισκόπηση, 277-278; Acheimastou-Potamianou, Myrtali. Στο Θάρι της Ρόδου. Athens, 2006, 111-112; Kefala. Οι τοιχογραφίες, 59-90.

\textsuperscript{111} Artistic relations with the Empire of Nicaea have not yet been fully explored. See mainly Kefala. Οι τοιχογραφίες, 273-300.
by the Laskarid and Vatatzes clan or from the nobility, who courted the goodwill of the powerful monastic communities, which in turn served as as outposts of the Empire. It seems that much of the artistic production of the 13th century, possibly in a higher proportion than in the preceding 12th, should be attributed to an external initiative, which, nonetheless, had interests in common with the monastery.

Cases such as the decoration of Lakki and Alsos may reflect rivalries between monastic communities and the local ecclesiastical leadership. This rivalry was exacerbated by the voracious appetite of the monastery for the acquisition of churches or lesser monastic foundations, provoking the distrust and hostility of local officials. From the 11th century onwards, the monks, who had succeeded in becoming spiritual guides of the emperors, were a real threat to the reputation and role of local bishops. Nevertheless, this did not prohibit easier interactions between the venerable monastery of Patmos and churchmen or state officials, because the artistic inspiration of Patmos served as the point of reference *par excellence* both ideologically and spiritually.

112 It is well known that the bishops of the neighbouring islands tried to subjugate the monastery, *Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 64*-67*, 94*.
## Appendix

### Abbots of the monastery of Patmos until the end of the 13th century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbot</th>
<th>Reign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hosios Christodoulous</td>
<td>April 1088 – 16 March 1093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Iasitis</td>
<td>after 1094 – before 1118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Neophytos]</td>
<td>before 1127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savvas</td>
<td>before 1118–1127 (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoktistos</td>
<td>c. 1127–1157/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosios Leontios</td>
<td>1157/8–1176 (or 1183)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Epiphanios]</td>
<td>1176–1183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arsenios</td>
<td>1183–1203 or before 1206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euthymios</td>
<td>1206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(? ) Neophytos from Cappadocia</td>
<td>1214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikodemos</td>
<td>1229 (?) 1244 (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germanos</td>
<td>1256 (?), before 1258–1280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregorios</td>
<td>1307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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113 According to Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 59*-60*, 82*, 91*, 98*, 113*.
114 According to Tsougarakis. The life, 196, n. 67.1.
115 According to Tsougarakis. The life, 196, n. 67.1, no abbot Epiphanios existed.
116 Tsougarakis. The life, 208, dates the abbacy of Arsenios to 1186 – before 1206.
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Между статута на господари и слуги: влиянието на св. Христодул и неговите последователи върху егейските острови XI–XIII век

Ангелики Кациоти

Манастирът „Св. Йоан Богослов“ за своето съществуване през повече от девет столетия запазва водещата си роля в историята на Егейско море и по-специално на Додеканезите. Богатият архив на обителта позволява да се черпиат данни за историята и обществото, за икономиката и изкуството през епохата, когато в столицата всеки се е стремял да си осигури дял в благополучието или да влияе върху политическите събития.

След дълго странстване Христодул напуска през 1079 г. манастирите на Латрос, където служи като монах до нахлуването на турците, и се установява за малко в Стровилос, πόλιν παραθαλάσσιαν (крайморски град) на малоазийския бряг. Там бива приет от своя познат, монаха Арсений Скинурис, произхождащ от знатно семейство от о. Кос, който го мотивира да построя манастир върху негов имот. Действително, през м. март 1080 г. Христодул основава монашеската обител Кастриани върху скалистия хълм Пилион на незаселен, както го определя, терен от имота на Арсений. Светецът бързо обаче се разочаровал, отишъл в Константинопол и поискал с императорски хрисовул през 1087 г. да му се даде о. Патмос заедно с Липсу и προάστια (предградията) Партени и Темения, както и половината от крепостта Пандели на о. Лерос. Получавайки тези владения, светецът връща на империята имотите си на о. Кос.

В тази статия се прави опит за изследване на отношенията на манастира с егейските острови, на които обителта притежава имоти през XI–XIII в. Впоследствие се описва състоянието на островите преди и след появата на светеца, както и през периода, в който се изявяват неговите наследници. Иследват се и въпроси, свързани с художественото влияние на манастира, и се предлагат наблюдения върху последиците от това влияние върху неговите метоси.

Харизматичната, но и конфликтна личност на светеца предизвиква смесени чувства у жителите на районите, които владее. Подобно е поведението и на неговите следовници. Връзките на манастира с метосите протичат в спорове със селяните и местната църква, в насилствени изселвания и конфискации посредством намесата на държавата. Основна грижа за манастира става събирането на състояние и привилегии чрез непривични способы и в повечето случаи в уцъбр на империята, което се превръща в явление,
белязало съществено всички обитатели на островите – от феодалния селянин до водачите на местния клер.

Обект на изследване впоследствие става и влиянието на инициативата, осъществявана от патмоския манастир, върху основаването и украсата на църквите по островите, където обителта притежава метоси.

Скромните строителни инициативи, предприети на първо време от светеца в манастира Кастриани на о. Кос, а след това и в католикона на Патмос, са огледало на номадския, неспокоен характер на Христодул, който по всяка вероятност е уважавал иконите и свещените книги, които събирал по време на странстванията си, заради което, пристигайки на Кос и Патмос, полага известни усилия за тяхното непретенциозно приютиване. Очевидно, че при честите си посещения в Константинопол Христодул не обръща внимание на високите естетически тенденции в столицата. За разлика от тези първи произведения на изкуството, лишени от особено качество, които просто задоволяват практически нужди на манастира в Патмос, действията на следващия игумен Арсений (1185–1203 или 1206) са далеч по-бластрящи, без обаче да са съпоставими с друга по-сериозна художествена активност в метосите. През XII и XIII в. имотите и влиянието на Патмос се разрастват неимоверно заради просветените игумени на манастира, които намират подкрепата на императори и патриарси за увеличаване на своята власт.

Според авторката художествената активност от XIII в., доста повече в сравнение с тази от XII в., се дължи на фактори, чужди на манастира, въпреки засвидетелстваните амбиции на братството. Това обаче не означава, че патмоският манастир престава да диктува тенденции в развитието на държавния и църковния живот, тъй като тази обител никога не спира да играе веднеша роля в идеологията и духовността на Византия.
Essay on a Visual Perspective of Medieval Writing

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Abstract. This paper aims to explore the visual and epigraphic properties of medieval writing as well as considering writing medium, technique, and communicative status. The boundaries between different auxiliary disciplines in Medieval Studies (paleography, epigraphy, numismatics, sigillography) have created separate categories of writings and scripts within the writing culture of the Middle Ages, even if the letterforms, functions, and types of writing actually do not differ from one medium to another. A strong case for removing the disciplinary boundaries rests on the facts that writing was executed by scribes sharing training, tools and know-how, and that the iconic value of script and its visual aspects were activated primarily in the display of letters regardless of the variations in the content of the text, in its location, or its linguistic form. “Epigraphic” forms are used in manuscript tituli; “manuscript” abbreviations are found in stone inscriptions; seals show “epigraphic” mise en page; calamus-like features are inscribed on coins... Beyond the obvious inaccuracy of terminology, what do those commonalities between written objects show? How could we address the porosity of medieval literacy?

Key words: Paleography, Epigraphy, Literacy, Digital Humanities, Jean Mal- lon, Medieval Studies.

1 This text summarizes the talk given in Sofia, in April 2017. It is based on my exploration of the two footages of Jean Mallon’s movies quoted in the last section of this article. I wish to express my gratitude to Marc Smith for providing me with a copy of these movies.

2 Vincent Debiais (PhD in Medieval History in 2004) is a senior research associate at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (France), Centre d’études supérieures de civilisation médiévale, University of Poitiers, where he leads the research team preparing Corpus des inscriptions de la France médiévale. He has published on Medieval Epigraphy and Art History, and has recently completed his “Habilitation à diriger les recherches” on the relationships between text and image in Romanesque works of art, and on Latin Ekphraseis (La croisée des signes, Paris, 2016).
Introduction

Medieval writing possesses a fundamental visual dimension that is evident both in the forms and shapes of lettering in manuscripts or inscriptions, and in the content of the texts. Thus, the products of writing must always be considered as objects, i.e. material entities defined by their form, area, location, material, and technique. While such an approach does not preclude the need for a paleographic analysis, inscribed objects also belong to medieval visual culture. Moreover, we should bear in mind that these two categories, written culture and visual culture, have been produced by heuristic necessities of medievalism and that, as such, they do not necessarily correspond to medieval practices that often mixed and merged one with the other. Following in the footsteps of Augustine, who established the “first semiotics” of letters as essential elements, Isidore of Seville states that each letter possesses a sound, but also a name, as well as a form. According to this grammarian, none of these three components is arbitrary; rather, they can be explained by the meaning of the letter and the function of the alphabet in the shaping and knowledge of the world as it has been created by God in principio. Viewed in this way, writing in the Middle Ages, and especially during the Carolingian times, signified a visual and material forma generating the content of language and its capacity to reproduce knowledge, wisdom, and the divine will. Such a visual dimension of writing can be clearly observed for example in the cloister of Moissac (France, ca. 1100) where a complex epigraphic compositi-

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tion has been inscribed on the abacus of a capital decorated with vegetation representing an image of nature created by God (Fig. 1). The inscription forms a “string of letters” by first reproducing a complete Latin alphabet, then a graphic construction combining the first letter of the alphabet with the last one, the second letter with the penultimate one and so on (AX, BV, CT...), and finally the beginning of a psalm (DEUS IN DOMINE TUO SALVUM). The visual features and the location of the inscription on the vegetal sculpture

Fig. 1. Moissac (France), cloister. Alphabetic capital (c. 1100). © CIFM/CESCM

8 Cazes, Quitterie. Le cloître de Moissac, chef-d’œuvre de la sculpture romane. Toulouse, 2001; Corpus des inscriptions de la France médiévale [from now on CIFM] 8, TG 28, 153-154, ill. 152-155.
harmoniously merge the concepts of Creation and writing, and produce a synthetic image of the two modes of existence in the world: 1) the form, and 2) its translation in written language.

The alphabetical capital in Moissac challenges the disciplines of Medieval Studies in their ability to analyze such visually and textually rich objects. How can we define what is displayed in the cloister? How can we characterize the actions that have shaped this piece of stone? Has the capital been inscribed? Has it been sculpted? Should one distinguish the act of writing from that of decorative carving? In what follows, this paper will briefly discuss medieval objects, considering both their decorative and epigraphic features, in order to measure the indomitable character of writing during the Middle Ages and its propensity to escape modern methods of analysis. Such a focus does not shed any new light on the material under scrutiny but instead points out to the methodological constraints of modern medieval scholarship. Ultimately, it invites a return to, and focus on, the evidence provided by the objects themselves.

Material and image

Medieval manuscripts are filled with vivid compositions showing the blurring of semiotic boundaries between letters and iconic signs. Many initials depicting animal or vegetable figures cannot be described by the traditional vocabulary of paleography and their ductus, i.e. the sequence of lines and curves designing the letter, cannot be viewed in isolation. As a matter of fact, these initials rather belong to the field of art history; they are studied by scholars working on miniature and illumination (and generally not by paleographers), without questioning the semiotic nature of these signs that “look like” images, and are studied as such. Scholars often omit to note that the implementation of color, the in-depth treatment of the surface of the parchment, and a meaningful relation of the letter with the entire page produce a visual and material trace as the result of the writing process: that by engaging in this process, medieval scribes and illuminators compose a form designed, staged, and set in motion on the writing surface (Fig. 2).

Tracing alphabetical signs consists either of adding material onto a surface (producing chromatic shifts or contrasts, in most cases) or of removing material from a surface (in the case of inscriptions, for ex-
ample). Thus, alphabetical traces should not be considered only as drawings that do not alter the surface, but also as forms and products of mechanical actions transforming blank or virgin materials into inscribed objects⁹. The visual and formal dimension of writing is not, therefore, derived from the fact that the letter can be formed

from images or that it can itself receive images, but rather that it resulted from shaping and modeling material, and thus from changing its nature. For example, the initial $B$ in the opening words *Beatus vir* in Carolingian psalters is often traced with a compass matching geometric proportions employed in the contemporary, often illuminated, manuscripts of music theory. (Fig. 3)\textsuperscript{10}. Such a mechanical and theoretical display shows the highly graphic and visual design of the $B$ in the psalter, and more generally of alphabetical signs; it also demonstrates how well trained the scribes were, and how and closely engaged in such complex writing processes. If text and image merge within the same composition, both share the physical and visual dimension. The letter does not only allow the fixation of language but also gives it a meaningful shape.

Such a formal conception of writing and the subsequent attribution of aesthetic properties to its shape go a long way towards explaining why many medieval works of art combine alphabetical and iconic signs, letters and images\textsuperscript{11}. This rarely happens for the sake of explaining or commenting on the image by means of words – names and sentences – but more frequently as a way to build a single visual object in which writing crosses the border of linguistic constraints to serve the narrative and sense of the image. This is the case, for example, with the inscription on the outer edge of the tympanum of the old church of Mervilliers (France, 12\textsuperscript{th} century)\textsuperscript{12}. The sculpted group above the door is a donor scene with the patron, who is a knight, and St George (Fig. 4). On the right-hand side, a scribe is also showed recording a transaction on a piece of parchment placed on a writing table. The inscription, carved in relief, gives the identity of the characters and describes the legal action as it is represented in the sculpture: RENBAULDUS MILES MICHI CONTULIT EJUSQUE HERES GAZAS PRESENTES UT HABERET SINE CARENTES\textsuperscript{13}. The end of the text is placed on the scribe’s ta-


\textsuperscript{12} Voyer, Cécile. *Le geste efficace: le don du chevalier au saint sur le tympan de Mervilliers (XII\textsuperscript{e} siècle).* – Aurell, Martin (dir.). *Chevalerie et christianisme aux XII\textsuperscript{e} et XIII\textsuperscript{e} siècle*. Rennes, 2011, 101-122.

\textsuperscript{13} Translation: Renbauldus the knight and his heir, brought me these treasures, so he can himself obtain unlimited treasures.
ble and his stylus touches the last letter, as if he were rendering it in both media, stone and parchment. The inscription recording the legal process relates to the very structure of the image: it encloses, delineates, and separates the scene just as the official document issued at the time served as a legal framework for the act of donation. There is thus a deliberately wide-ranging semiotic arrangement on the tympanum: the record of the act of donation as it is fixed in...
the sculpture references the composition of the document as it is represented in images and in writing. Here, it is impossible to distinguish between the visual and verbal aspects of writing, and it would be futile to attempt any such distinction. Carved in stone, they act in unison to convey the complex message of the legal process of donation.

Medieval writing thus functions as a “system”, evoking all the aspects of the material display of the word (its shape, sound, location, meaning...). This is the reason why similar formal arrangements and *mise en page* can be found on very different media in the visual culture of the Middle Ages. These similarities should not collectively be considered as the products of copying, influence or imitation¹⁴; they also reflect the existence of shared graphic practices mobilizing the verbal and material elements of writing regardless of the surfaces on which they feature, but according to the demands of communication in diverse contexts and the choices of the *scriptores*. Many examples could be listed here, such as: epigraphic lettering in the titles of manuscripts; manuscript layout in the epigraphic domain.

and *vice versa*; mandorla-shape of writing in sculpture and in seals… These similarities will remain difficult to notice and study as long as different scholarly disciplines examine them separately, and work independently using their respective tools and methods. Today, it seems appropriate – and, more importantly, possible – to consider that a global science of writing could assess these phenomena, not only in terms of their similarity/dissimilarity, but in terms of what they mean within medieval literacy. This idea is by no means new: already in 1982, the great paleographer Jean Mallon called for such an approach by stressing the fundamental importance of the ways in which writing has been displayed in a physical space, as evidence for such a universal practice. At the point where visuality and materiality meet, writing transcends the limits of our respective disciplines and invites a consideration of the letter as a *forma*, such as it has been defined by Isidore of Seville.

**Letter as a forma**

In the top most register of the scene of donation on the tympanum of Mervilliers, Christ holds in his right hand an open book inscribed with the letters alpha and omega. According to the ontological definition of God in the Book of Revelation, in which the Judge defines himself as a *littera* (*Ego sum alpha and omega*), the two Greek letters should not be written on the Book of Life containing the name of the elected ones. It is, however, a common feature of Western art, of which Mervilliers is but one example. This placement and distance from what should be a “literal” image of the Apocalypse strip the alphabetic signs of their linguistic essence. The letters are no longer meant to be pronounced. They become an iconic sign, a formal attribute participating in the visual constitution of an iconographic type. In the *maiestas Domini*, the book, the mandorla, the throne, the clouds, and the letters constitute the visual index of the divine, and its ethereal presence in this world.

The formal dimension of such letters emphasizing their visual and

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16 Rev 3:5: He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
symbolic value has been more thoroughly studied in historiography in relation to the insular production of manuscripts and luxurious liturgical books in the Carolingian period; here, the alphabetic component of the sign seems to disappear into the ornamental ensemble. The letter is above all a geometrical or floral composition; blurred in the abundance of colors, patterns, motives, and shapes; it becomes a monumental living object, fixed in a form marking and harmonizing the entire manuscript. When deployed on parchment, the letter is both a sign and an object in its own right, both subtracted from and included in the book. In many well-known manuscripts of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* by Beatus of Liebana for example\(^{18}\), Greek letters alpha and omega frame the text of John’s vision and his gloss by Beatus. The Girona Beatus (copied and illuminated in the monastery of San Salvador de Tábara, Spain, ca. 975) shows undoubtedly the most monumental version of these letters\(^ {19}\). In folio 19, Christ sits on a throne placed on the horizontal bar of a gigantic alpha drawn in the form of a capital *A* (*Fig. 5*). The letter is richly embellished with tree, plant and flower motifs: it is the letter of life. Two birds feeding on the stem placed vertically above the throne reinforce this reading. The letter thus provides a structure for the page. On both sides of the monumental *A* the quotation is inscribed from Rev 1: 8: *Ego sum alpha and omega*. In the inscription, the *A* has the same form as the monumental letter. There are therefore three complementary, rather than redundant, modalities to represent Christ on this page: the image of the enthroned king, which anticipates the image of the f. 107r, the form of the monumental letter, and the quotation of Rev 1:8. In the Girona Beatus, the monumental omega is placed in f. 284v, after closing paragraph, on the page of the colophon. Just as the omega concludes the alphabet, it marks a boundary between the end of John’s Vision and the beginning of the commentary. In the five manuscripts of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* showing monumental versions of the alpha and omega, the two letters scale the definition of Christ’s alphabetic dimension down to the manuscript: the book is Christ himself, as the exegesis of the Book of Revelation constantly reminds the reader\(^ {20}\). Writing should therefore


\(^{20}\) On the exegesis of the Book of Revelation, see *Christe*, Yves. L’Apocalypse de Jean. Sens et
not only be considered as an image because it possesses a strong visual dimension, as, for example, in Irish manuscripts or in the copies of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, but because its visual and formal qualities comprise the meaning of what has been written. In liturgical books, the initial *T* of *Te igitur* has the shape of a cross because it opens the Canon of the Mass in which Christ’s sacrifice is commemorated (Fig. 6); the initials *V* and *D* of *Vere dignum* combine an open form (*V*) and a closed ductus (*D*) because this design brings together the two natures of Christ. In this context, writing becomes iconic and its meaning emerges from the form of letters.

The fact that a figurative capacity lies in the form of the letter implicitly suggests that the iconography of writing exists; it also implies a fruitful and necessary synergy between art history and paleography. The potential to extract additional linguistic meaning from a graphic composition is obvious, particularly if focusing on the choice of graphic types and fonts. The use of imperial Roman capitals in the epitaph of Pope Hadrian I (died in 785) – remarka-
ble evidence of antiquarian palatine tastes – produces a Carolingian “image” in the heart of Rome. The iconography of writing can also be seen in the choice of colour: the use of gold for the angel’s words in *The Annunciation* by Van Eyck (dated 1434-1436) associates the salutation of the Incarnation with the light coming from outside the painting. It can be based on the layout of the text on the page: the format of the stone slab, the density of lines, and the number of abbreviations transforms the inscription mentioning the rights granted to the city of Étoile-sur-Rhône into a true diplomatic document. Although it has no actual legal function or effect, it imprints the image of a stone charter into the visual landscape of the city (Fig. 7). The content of the text, its vocabulary and prosodic features do not disappear in the above-listed examples; nor can they be said to be secondary in the perception of the objects in so far as the conditions of their reception in the Middle Ages are largely unknown. We must however note that this attachment to the image of the text – the *form* of writing, created by its *visual* effect – is at the heart of the epigraphic choices made by medieval patrons, scribes or stone cutters who always consider the interaction between the form and the character of writing and its surroundings. Consequently, medieval writing often crosses the boundaries of the alphabetical system by which it is governed.

On the cover of book held by the apostle Thomas carved on the façade of the church of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard (France, c. 1180), an inscription gives the following Biblical quotation (Fig. 8): NISI VIDEREO IN MANIBUS EJUS FIXURAM CLAVORUM AND MITTAM DIGITUM MEUM IN LOCUM CLAVORUM AND MANUM IN LATUS EJUS NON CREDAM. The text is inscribed in the space between the apostle’s fingers, just as on the books engraved at Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. In the last line, however,


24 CIFM 16, D 30, 135-137, ill. 88.


26 Jn 20:25: Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.
Fig. 6. Paris (France), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gélone Sacramentary-BnF, ms. lat. 12048 (8th c.), fol. 143v. © BNF Paris
the alphabetical signs are inscribed on the cloth covering the hand holding the book (this is the only sculptural evidence of such an iconographic feature). It is tempting to interpret the inscription on the cloth as a sign of incompetent ordinatio: by failing to write on or between the fingers of the figure, the sculptor would have lacked epigraphic space at the bottom of the book. It would be tempting, but probably not convincing, to offer the management of space as an explanation for this composition. It would, however, be difficult not to link the forma of the inscription and the visual importance of the gestures of touching and gripping with the contents of the text. How could we not consider that the device of the book is here as a means of combining writing, as the narrative of a dramatic event, and the anatomical details of the fingers? How can we not recognize in the motif of the book the figure of Christ seized by Thomas’s left hand near his body, and venerated by his right hand in his yearning of the divine? In the case of this sculptural composition, writing only acts as a system in its material, object-like, and formal dimension, and in the content of the text and the image. In Saint-Gilles-du-Gard and in every other medieval sample of lettering, writing produces an artefact, a product of the encounter between a surface and a gesture.
Writing as gesture

When considering the Middle Ages, the relationship between gesture and writing – between a letter and a body – can be approached in many ways. The content of the colophons in which the scribes describe the suffering endured during copying, the pain of their muscles, the fatigue of their bodies, constitutes a promising and exciting dossier. The form of the letter results from the trace left by the movement of a writing instrument, from a kinetic relationship between the surface and the actor, and from a choreographed embellishment of the language. The ductus, the order and the direction of each stroke makes up the index of this movement binding the product, the actor, and the process of writing in one shape (forma) of a letter. This creative and anthropological dimension takes writing outside the limits of the auxiliary sciences of Medieval Studies (epigraphy, paleography, heraldry...), and institutes it as a historical object, and therefore a historical subject.

Jean Mallon, a French paleographer, who died in 1982, was the first to draw our attention to the ductus as a fundamental product of writing gestures. In addition to his vast scholarly output, Jean Mallon wrote and directed two documentaries: La Lettre in 1937, a visionary account of the evolution of writing seen through the scribes’

body and gestures; *Ductus* in 1976, a kind of testament summarizing all his thoughts on the subject. The two films show an evolution in Mallon’s thinking, but also in his understanding of the concept of the written form. If in *La Lettre*, the written trace is ontologically linked to the hand producing it (Fig. 9), *Ductus* offers a vision of the “life of the letter”, a life on its own terms, in which the sign is autonomous, independent from the surface and gesture (Fig. 10). It becomes a pure object, and Mallon’s movie makes the letters move and live in the same way the scribes’ hands in the Middle Ages did. Between the two documentaries, there is an undeniable aesthetic shift that departs from the realm of paleographic discipline and its approaches. The letter as a product of an ancient *ars*, as an object of history, returns to its artistic dimension because it is a *forma* shaped into a material: what the parchment or the stone were for the Middle Ages, the medium of film was for Jean Mallon. In this shift, which resembles a restitution of the semiotic essence of the letter, writing persists as a visual work of art. Paleography, on the other hand, disappears as a goal in its own right; it is only a tool. In the preface to the collection of his articles, a few months before his death, Jean Mallon called for the creation of a universal science of writing not to advance paleography but to replace it, because all these objects, all these letters are “pure history”\(^{28}\).

**Conclusion**

Ultimately, medieval writing could be the subject of a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approach. Specific methods would then have to be applied to facilitate the study of letters, and the specialists of different fields would pass the texts through the sieve of their own research questions. It would give us all the opportunity to know more or understand better what writing meant in medieval culture, and to find new words or concepts to describe the shape of letters and the scribal gestures. The development of Digital Humanities and computer-based paleographical

\(^{28}\) *Mallon, Jean*. De l’écriture. Recueil d’études publiées de 1937 à 1981. Paris, 1986: “It is essential to lay the foundations for another science, the science of all extern characters of all the monuments which, without any exception nor distinction of language, show some written records, on any sorts of materials, whether hard, soft, flexible, or stiff, long-lasting in every case where they lasted […]. We should stop quartering the objects of this science with no name, somewhere in between epigraphy, papyrology, paleography, and codicology.”
Fig. 9. Screenshot of Jean Mallon’s documentary *La Lettre*

Fig. 10. Screenshot of Jean Mallon’s documentary *Ductus*
analysis in the last ten years have completely transformed this field of research, making descriptions more objective and accurate, and finding beyond the variation of shapes and scripts some constants in medieval literacy. Simultaneously, the interpretation of scripts by optic recognition systems and factorial approaches have led paleographers to elaborate on the forms of letters according to their textual or cultural contexts, taking them as shapes or visual objects and not only resulting from particular gestures. This trend makes Jean Mallon’s intuitions so modern, and it helps us to perceive writing as it was perceived during the Middle Ages, i.e. as an object. In Christian Orthodox practices that define God as logos and littera, writing is a matter of theology; its use, however pragmatic, contains some transcendence; its result, whatever the content, always includes the essence of the sacred that links scripture and the Scriptures. The crossing of boundaries results from insubordination and breaching of discipline. Medieval scholarship, especially when it questions the ultimate practices of medieval culture, such as writing, art or liturgy, must also exhibit the same noncompliance. Only in that way would we begin to understand the true status and deep meaning of complex graphic objects.

29 The bibliography on this topic is vast. See, among others, Stokes, Peter. Digital Approaches to Palaeography and Book History: Some Challenges, Present and Future. – Frontiers in Digital Humanities 2:5 (2015); see also the websites presenting the purposes and results of the ORIFLAMMS project (http://oriflamms.hypotheses.org/) and the DigiPal project (http://www.digipal.eu/).
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Опит върху визуалната перспектива на средновековното писане

Венсан Дебие

Тази статия изследва визуалните измерения на средновековните писмени практики в Западна Европа. В нея се предлага тезата, че буквите са възприемани от писачите като азбучни знаци, но най-вече като форми, появяващи се в резултат от конкретен жест върху или в материала. Подобна формална и материална концепция за писането предразполага към „размиване“ на границите между отделните дисциплини в медиевистиката – палеография, кодикология, епиграфика, сигилография (сфрагистика)…, което подпомага разбирането на уникалния и сложен подход към феномена на писането. Съчетавайки прозренията на големия френски палеограф Жан Мало и методите на дигиталната хуманитаристика, статията предлага някои нови разсъждения върху средновековната визуална и писмена култура.
The Inner Portal
of St Mark’s Basilica in Venice
between East and West

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Abstract: Above the main door of the inner portal of St Mark’s Basilica in Venice there is a 16th century mosaic of St Mark in episcopal robes. This figure has been considered an invention of the mosaicists who renovated this part of the church during the Renaissance, when the Medieval decorations were changed. Nevertheless, after reconsidering local ideology, the inscription above the mosaic and the function of this part of the church, it is possible to demonstrate that this mosaic was renovated conserving the previous iconography, respecting the original decorative plan of the portal.

Key words: Byzantine Art, Western Art, Byzantine Mosaic, Renaissance Mosaic, Byzantine Iconography.

This paper focuses on the Renaissance mosaic of St Mark in episcopal robes placed above the main entrance in the narthex of the Dogal Chapel of Venice (Fig. 1), rebuilt in 1063, under Doge Domenico Contarini, according to the Chronicle of Stefano Magno. This mosa-
ic, set in a gilded background, is placed in an apse above two rows divided into many niches (Fig. 2). In the row below the apse there are mosaic figures of the Virgin and Child between the Apostles. In the lower row, are placed the four Evangelists. These two rows received mosaic decoration in the late 11th or early 12th century. In the opinion of the influential art historian Otto Demus, the current portrait of St Mark was a later addition which did not correspond to the original decorative composition of the church. The main argument used by Demus, followed by other scholars, was that it would be inconceivable for a Byzantine artist to place a portrait of St Mark above the figure of the Virgin and Child. Only the Pantokrator could be placed in this position. In the first part of the paper, this statement is put under discussion. In Early Christian and Byzantine Art, the figure of Christ is depicted above the main gates of the churches, whilst local saints are often to be found above lateral, minor doors, forming a precise hierarchy. However, on occasion the icon of the patron saint of a church is found placed above the main entrance. Even if the architecture and the use of mosaic decoration laid out by Byzantine artists in St Mark’s Basilica is still considered a copy of eastern models, in particular the copy of the Holy Apostles church (Apostoleion) in Constantinople, there are elements in this church which innovated away from Byzantine tradition and took into consideration local religious needs. In the second part of this paper the local western elements are considered in order to demonstrate that even if the main mosaicist was a Byzantine, a claim which Liz James has placed under fresh scrutiny, there are also western elements that have previously been ignored. First: the frequent use of the figure of the patron saint above the gates of this church, which serves as a Cathedral church annexed to the Dogal Palace. Second: the Latin inscription above the mosaic of St Mark, restored in the 16th century, is a copy of an earlier medieval inscription. The paper finishes with a discussion about the role of the mosaic of St Mark’s figure in the liturgical and funereal function of the space over which it commands.

Above the main inner entrance of the Dogal Chapel, is the standing figure of St Mark in episcopal robes, orant and pointing towards


the central bay of the narthex, completed in 1545 by the brothers Francesco and Valerio Zuccati (Fig. 1). They had probably employed a cartoon, a large and very detailed drawing used to create paintings, frescoes and mosaics, drawn by their friend Tiziano Vecellio (Fig. 2).

The role of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century figure of St Mark in this location was an important one, as the inner portal was used as the main entrance for the public processions into the Cathedral, when all citizens and important guests such as Emperors, Popes and Ambassadors, were invited to participate in religious feasts and civil events held there. Between the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, the mosaic of St Mark was thought by some as the “most unforgetable, noble, perfect figure ever made in mosaic, in the opinion of everyone in every part of the world”\textsuperscript{6}. There are now two main theories about the origins of St Mark mosaic. The first one is by Ettore Merkel\textsuperscript{7}, Professor of History of Modern Art


\textsuperscript{6} Sansovino, Francesco. Venetia città nobilissima et singolare. Venezia, 1581, I, 98.

\textsuperscript{7} Merkel, Ettore. I mosaici del Cinquecento veneziano. Prima parte. – Saggi e memorie di storia dell’arte, 1994, No. 19, 73-140, 130.
in Venice, who asserted that the mosaic was a copy of a 12th century figure, which in turn replaced the original image of the Pantokrator. The second theory was put forward by Otto Demus and Renato Polacco, who thought that the actual mosaic was finished after a campaign of reconstruction which subverted the original architectural structure of the portal and its decorative plan by opening the large lightwell, called the “pozzo”, corresponding to the central bay of the atrium, once covered by a vault built in the 12th century. Demus and Polacco agreed that the original inner portal was lower than the current one and decorated by a mosaic of the Pantokrator placed at the top of the arrangement, above the Apostles and the Virgin Mary and Child, as shown by the 13th century mosaic above.

the door of St Alypius on the western façade of the church (Fig. 3)\textsuperscript{10}. They came to this conclusion because of the hierarchy of the figures: only Christ Pantokrator could stay in this honoured position, in the lunette above the main inner door (Fig. 4), like in the catholicon of Hosios Loukas.

There is a long textual and symbolic tradition which assigns the figure of Christ to this particular position\textsuperscript{11}. Such examples include Christ as a Good Shepherd in the lunette above the entrance of the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia\textsuperscript{12}, in Ravenna and Christ tred-

ing on the snake and the lion in the mosaics above the door of the Archiepiscopal Chapel of Ravenna\textsuperscript{13}, where he shows an open book in which it is written that he is the way and the truth and the life (John 14: 6), enhancing the symbolic meaning of the gate as a \textit{transitum} toward salvation. In the illumination of the folio 2v (= p. 4) of the \textit{Codex purpureus Rossanensis}, Christ himself opens the doors to the wise women holding the lamps, leaving the foolish outside the Garden of Eden (Matthew 25: 1-13)\textsuperscript{14}.

Byzantine church doors were meant to represent

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Venice, St Mark, western atrium, main inner portal, first row, mosaic, detail, St Mark the Evangelist}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Deichmann}. Ravenna Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes, 199-204.

From this point of view, it is not difficult to understand the presence of the Virgin Mary above church doors post-Iconoclasm. She is depicted in this position in the frontispiece of the Lectionary in the Vatican Library, ms. Vat. Gr. 1156 (f. 1r) of the 12th century; in the paintings of the Panagia Asinou (Cyprus); in the mosaics on the western wall of the church of Santa Maria Assunta in Torcello (Venice), a few amongst many examples. Above the doors, it

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17 Piano, Natacha. I mosaici della cattedrale di Torcello: l’interazione fra architettura e iconogra-
is also possible to find other intercessors between the earthly and heavenly dimensions. This role could be assigned to a patron saint of a church, like for example at St George of Kurbinovo\textsuperscript{18}.

In the above scholars’ opinions\textsuperscript{19}, it is necessary to consider that the

\textsuperscript{18} Hadermann-Misguich, Lydie. Une longue tradition byzantine. La décoration extérieure des églises. – Zograf, 1977, No. 7, 5-10.

\textsuperscript{19} Demus. The mosaics of S. Marco, 21; Polacco, Renato. La basilica d’oro. Venezia, 1991, 31-32, 204.

Fig. 7. Venice, St Mark, western atrium, main inner portal, door of Leo da Molino, panel, St Mark the Evangelist with the donor
portrait of St Mark (end of the 11th c. – beginning of 12th c.) was already present in the portal in one of the niches in the first register of the exedra (Fig. 5). They thought that the double portrait, one on the apse, the other on the niche, was evidence that the later Renaissance mosaic was an invention, which subverted the original decorative program. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider that this repetition of Mark’s portrait is perhaps not an unusual exception in the church, as shown by the sheer number of the portraits of St Mark in the Dogal Chapel. In total, there are currently 44 portraits of the Evangelist, but that number is probably an incomplete one and the true, original number would have been higher.

Considering only the portraits above the gates of the Dogal Chapel, St Mark appears above five doors. In the vestibule of the atrium, in front of the inner entrance, there are four images of Mark: two on the exedra20 (Figs. 1 and 5), one in the “pozzo”21 (Fig. 6) and one on the door of Leo da Molino (1117)22 (Fig. 7). Another portrait stands near the Virgin in the northern atrium (Fig. 8), above the Madonna’s door (also called St John’s door)23, in front of the St Alypius’ door, where the lunette was decorated with the mosaic depicting the traslatio corporis of Mark in the basilica24 (Fig. 3). The mosaic of Mark giving a blessing is above the door in the southern transept25 (Fig. 9). This door directly connected the church with the palace and was used by the Doge and their families. Mark replaced John the Baptist in the Deesis mosaic (13th century) above the main exit (Fig. 10), where the open book held by Christ declares his role as the gate for salvation, and reminds us that the door of the church is the transitus for the eternal life in the heavenly garden: “Ego sum ostium per me si quis introierit salvabitur et pascua inveniet” (John 10:9)26.

20 Andaloro, Maria. Da Villa Urbani, Maria et alii. San Marco. Basilica patriarchale in Venezia. I mosaici, le iscrizioni, la Pala d’Oro. Milano, 1991, 149-150, fig. 3 and fig. without number on the left.
21 Andaloro, Da Villa Urbani, et alii. San Marco, 152, fig. 7a.
23 Andaloro, Da Villa Urbani, et alii. San Marco, 178, fig. 8
24 Andaloro, Da Villa Urbani, et alii. San Marco, 209, fig. 4.
25 Andaloro, Da Villa Urbani, et alii. San Marco, 103, fig. 4.
26 “I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture”. Andaloro, Da Villa Urbani, et alii. San Marco, 121.
The ubiquitous presence of St Mark’s portrait in the basilica, especially above the doors, suggests that between the 11th and 13th centuries his cult was considered as a gate to Christ, and his mercy was necessary to obtain salvation. From a Byzantinists point of view which considers Byzantine iconography as the model for the Dogal chapel, it is difficult to reconcile the high position assigned to St Mark in the church with a standard model of Byzantine iconographic practices.

St Mark’s Basilica is decorated with more than 8000 m² of mosaic on a gilded background, like the most beautiful Byzantine churches, but it is vital to remember that the Dogal Chapel is not an Orthodox church. It used the Latin Catholic liturgy27. The iconographic compositional design of the church takes Early Christian mosaic decorations from Rome and the Northern Adriatic traditions as a model28. The iconography celebrates the heritage of Peter in the Italian peninsula and the role of St Clement, St Hermagoras and St Mark in converting the population, as shown in the main apse decoration in St Mark’s Basilica, with the help of the local saints represented in the transept29. Of course, there are some interesting elements derived from Byzantine Art, which were considered useful for the local ideology and incorporated into it. The mosaics of the church often show the portraits of the four Evangelists among the twelve Apostles, as in the portal, where St Mark, Luke, Matthew and John are in the lower row, and Philip, Simon, James, Peter, Paul, Andrew, Thomas and Bartholomew are in the second row. This is evidence that the mosaicists used the Greek list of the Apostles where the Evangelists are included30. In Venice, the use of this list was very significant. During the 11th century, the relics of St Mark and St Luke (in the church of St Justine in Padua) were amongst the most

Fig. 8. Venice, St Mark, northern atrium, Madonna door (also called St John door), lunette above the door, mosaic, The Virgin and Child between St Mark and St John

Fig. 9. Venice, St Mark, southern transept, lunette above the door, St Mark the Evangelist blessing

Fig. 10. Venice, St Mark, central nave, western main door, lunette, mosaic, Deesis with Christ between St Mark and the Virgin Mary
important conserved in the North-Eastern area of Italy and became the building-blocks of local devotion and identity.

The comparison with the mosaic of the Pantokrator above the inner door of the narthex of the catholicon of Hosios Loukas, already shown by Otto Demus in 1931, is an interesting one, but it is vital to examine the mosaics in their context; taking into account the inscriptions as well as the rituals and the architecture of the buildings in which they are displayed. This part constitutes the last paragraph of this contribution, in which I propose a new reading of the inscription above the monumental image of St Mark (Fig. 1). As the inscription demonstrates, the Renaissance mosaic of St Mark conserves the shape and the memory of the earlier Medieval one.

On the extrados of the arch of the semicircular space where the figure expansis manibus of St Mark is standing, there is an inscription with a metric composition, which corresponds to a double hexameter called leonine verse. Leonine verse was a type of versification, which rhymes in the middle, common to Latin verse in the 11th and 12th centuries.

The original medieval inscription was copied by the Zuccati brothers when they completed the mosaic in 1545. The fact that the Zuccati’s preserved this important and integral part of the original mosaic was not recognized by earlier scholarship of the mosaic. They considered the inscription to be a later addition, not a copy of a medieval prototype, just as they had with the actual image of St Mark.

The inscription from the 16th century written in capital letters was an invocation divided into two hexameters, separated by a rounded dark blue piece of glass. It says: ALAPIS MARCE DELICTA PRECANTIBUS ARCE UT SURGA[N]T PER TE FACTORE SUO MISERANTE. The internal rhyme underlies the salvific action of the Patron Saint with the invocation Marce-arce, which means “Oh Mark, remove the sins from those who are praying, so that they resuscitate through you thanks to the mercy of their creator”.

There are two problems with the word alapis, which must be read àlapis. It is a plural Ablative of the word àlapa, which means “slap”.

Nevertheless, the word àlapis does not fit in at this point, because in hexameter it is necessary that the first accent falls on the second syllable. Maybe this is the reason why this short verse, attested in literary sources from the 17th century, is corrected in the Grant Allen’s guide of Venice of 1902 as A-lapis33. This solution corrects the right metric of the hexameter, but it makes no sense once translated, because it is incorrect from a grammatical point of view34.

Even if scholars have already found that mosaicists made some mistakes when copying the medieval inscriptions during the 16th century, nobody has considered before this word as a corruption. All scholars working on this material from 1604 to 1984 accept this form35, which was also curiously omitted from two important volumes on the mosaics of St Mark published in 199136, whose author does not translate this word.

A solution for correcting the verse might be to consider that the original words in the incipit of this hexameter were A LAPSIS not ÁLAP- PIS. A LAPSIS means “from the fallen” or “from the dead”. In the hexameter, this works because of its rhythmic features and it makes sense considering the funeral function of the atrium of the Dogal Chapel. From the 11th century, the narthex of the church served as a burial place for the Doges and their families37, who hoped for resurrection guaranteed by the patron saint. Moreover, this part of the Cathedral played an important role in the Easter procession of the Visitatio sepulcri, which precedes the celebration of the resurrection of Christ who guarantees the salvation of all believers38. The funeral compositional design is confirmed by the other 16th century mosaics carried out by the Zuccati brothers which decorate the pozzo. The

33 Allen, Grant. Venice. Grant Allen’s historical guides books to the principal cities of Europe treating concisely and thoroughly of the principal historic and artistic points of interest therein, New York, 1902, 262.
34 It should be a lapide (a + ablative).
38 Cattin, Giulio. Musica e liturgia a San Marco, 32. See also: Rankin, Susan. “Quem queritis” en voyage in Italy. In: Wulf Arlt, Giulio Cattin (eds.). Itinerari e stratificazioni dei tropi, 177, 309.
mosaics are placed inside the vestibule in front of the inner portal, where there are other leonine verses, too. They show the Death of the Virgin, The Crucifixion and the Entombment of Christ, iconographies clearly coherent with the funeral function of this part of the atrium.

The frequency of St Mark’s portrait above the doors in the Dogal Chapel demonstrates the importance of local ideology in the mosaics of this Cathedral. Saint Mark was the saint who guaranteed Venetian fortunes in the Mediterranean and, at the same time, was the Patron who provided the gate for the Salvation of the Doges and their families buried in the narthex. To celebrate the church which represents the power of the Venetian State, which also conserves the relics of the patron saint, the Doges had used Early Christian models and the Byzantine tradition of mosaic decoration, but the decorative design of its composition only in part corresponds to the methods of Byzantine artists, as already demonstrated in the architecture and the sculptures of this church. The Latin inscription combined with the 16th century figure of St Mark above the inner door of the narthex conserves the original medieval plan, copying the previous iconography, renovating its style, and remaining coherent with the original funeral function of the narthex.

40 See note 26.
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Вътрешната порта на „Сан Марко“
във Венеция между Източна и Запада

Валентина Кантоне

Тази статия е посветена на част от резултатите от проучване, реализирано от Университета в Падуа, което беше координирано от автора. Мозайките в параклиса на дожите във Венеция, посветен на св. Марко, тук са преосмислени във всякакъв аспект като материали, техника, иконография, надписи, литургия и архитектурен контекст. Статията представя изводите от този подход към мозаичната декорация, като търси отговори, свързани със значимостта на вътрешната порта в базиликатата „Сан Марко“ в граничната й роля между византийската традиция и западното изкуство, фокусирана в изображението на св. Марко в молитвена поза над входа и придружаващия го надпис.

Въпреки че през периода XVI–XVIII в. портретът на св. Марко е възприеман като „най-незабравимата, изискана и перфектна фигура, правена някога с мозаична техника, по мнението на всеки от всички краища на света“, през XIX в. изображението се приема за непохватно подобие на оригинала.

Византолозите смятат за сигурно, че мозайката, представяща Пантократор, първоначално е била разположена в най-висока част на портала, над апостолите и св. Богородица с младенеца. Причината да достигнат до това заключение е йерархичното достойнство на фигурите: само Христос Вседържител би могъл да се изобрази на това място, както е например в католикона на „Осис Лукас“, т.е. в люнета, над централния вход на нартекса. По тази причина в раннохристиянските и ранновизантийските църкви Христос се изобразява над основния вход на храмовете. Над тях се разполагат и портрети на Дева Мария, на местни светци, следващи прецизна йерархия.

Въпреки това не бива да се забравя, че параклисът на дожите не е православна църква. На място се отслужва латинска грегорианска литургия, а иконографската програма отбелязва поява на св. Петър на Апенинския полуостров, както и ролята на св. Климент, св. Херма̀гор и св. Марко в покръстването на местното население. Това е държавноцерковен параклис, който би трябвало да изразява локална идеология и нейното отстояние от византийската култура. Чрез анализа на промяната в надписа на мозайката и архитектурния контекст, сред който мозайките съществуват, авторът показва, че фигурата на св. Марко, независимо от ренесансовия си стил, запазва спомена за оригиналната декоративна програма, която е резултат от иконографски хибриди между източната и западната традиция, вкупом ангажирани да отбележат ролта на св. Марко в параклиса на държавниците – архитектурна метафора на венецианската мощ и идентичност.
Images and Texts across Time: 
The Three Layers of Mural Paintings in the Church of St George in Sofia

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Abstract. With a history stretching back about sixteen centuries, the church of St George in Sofia is one of the most emblematic landmarks of the city. The three mural layers represent the leading trends in the Byzantine art of the period when they were created: from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. This study offers a new interpretation of the epigraphic data from the scrolls of the saints, which are depicted in the second layer. By analyzing the relevant literary sources – wherever possible – the study reveals the importance of these texts for the spiritual aspirations of their reading publics.

Key words: Byzantine art, wall painting, Byzantine epigraphy, Greek inscriptions.

The church of St George in Sofia is one of the oldest structures with a central plan in the territory of Bulgaria. The church is a monumental brick building on a square foundation with four semi-circular arches.

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niches at the corners of the square and a large rectangular niche on the eastern wall; when it was converted into a church, the niche became an altar apse. The upper part of the building is shaped as a cylinder (the actual rotunda) with a diameter of 9.5 m; it is completed with a semi-spherical dome. The total height of the church is about 14 m (Fig. 1).

The initial function and the dating of the building is still under discussion. According to some scholars, it was constructed as a Roman bathhouse between the second to the beginning of the fourth century. They regard the remains of a hypocaust system found in the course of excavations as evidence in support of their theory. Others believe that the building was originally a cult structure – a martyrion or a baptisterion, – dating from the first half of the fourth century, and that the system of the rectangular pools were not a hypocaust but there for ventilation and drainage purposes. The earliest pub-
lication on the subject is by Bogdan Filov, but he mainly focuses on the architecture and the architectural context of the monument. André Grabar accepted Filov’s conclusion that the original function of the Rotunda was as a bathhouse. He noted that the dedication to St George could have been influenced by the round church with the same dedication in Thessalonica, although the original function of the two differed, making the similarity of the architectural design purely accidental.

The exact time when the building started to be used as a church is unknown. The first two layers were discovered during restoration work completed in 1971. Until then, only the third layer of the mural paintings and a few older fragments, previously published by B. Filov, were known. Following this stage of restoration, several further studies were published, revealing data about the newly found mural paintings.

The most recent study on the church of St George was carried out by Asen Kirin. His opinion was that the Rotunda of St George is the oldest standing structure in the city of Sofia (ancient Serdica). Built in the early 300s C.E., the structure has been in nearly continuous use for sixteen centuries. Originally a part of a Roman bath, by the second half of the fifth century it was converted into a church. This church served Serdica as its cathedral between the fifth and the sixteenth century, when it was converted into a mosque. The Rotunda became a church again in 1878.

At the time of its construction in the early fourth century, the Rotunda was part of a large architectural complex that comprised the imperial palace in Serdica. In all likelihood, this was the residence of Emperor Constantine the Great during his lengthy stays in Serdica.
at different times between 316 and 321 C.E. The late antique imperial palace in Serdica is virtually unknown and has never received sufficient attention from scholars.

In her latest book, Ani Dancheva-Vasileva presents key data on the early history of Serdica. Based on an analysis of all source data, as well as of scholarly views, the author made the following assumption: “A number of historians believe that the Episcopal church of Serdica Triaditsa that initially contained St John of Rila’s relics was indeed the church of St George, the Rotunda…” And further on: “… after four centuries, upon their return to Sofia, the holy relics will be deposited in the Church of St George. One could assume

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Fig. 2. The first layer of the mural paintings

that the temple where the relics were deposited the first time would be used again to house them for seven days before their delivery to Rila Monastery”.

A general description of the murals in the church can be found in L. Mavrodinova and M. Tsoncheva’s publications.

The first layer of the mural paintings consists of the images in the drum and in the large semi-spherical dome (Fig. 2). These represent six angels as a part of a composition of heavenly forces adoring Christ, whose figure was probably at the top of the dome (the exist-

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ing image belongs to the third layer and dates back to the fourteenth century).

For five of the angels’ images, only the lower part survives; on the last image, the face is preserved and it is exquisitely painted (Fig. 3). Insofar as we can judge from the present state of the wall painting, the color range was generally light and pastel – light blue, light brown, light grey, light pink.

The faded images of four prophets adorn the wall between the windows. Three of them are better preserved: Jonah (judging by Filov’s photograph), John the Forerunner and a third prophet that remains unidentified. Modern scholars unanimously attribute these figures to the eleventh century, but their opinions differ regarding the more precise dating within the eleventh century. We strongly believe that the imposing monumental features of the figures; the marked relief of the forms; the heavy folds of the drapery that enhance the bodies’ stereometric element, and above all the archangel’s face, with its exquisite beauty and modeling, all correspond to the classicizing style in Byzantine Art such as can be found in the eleventh-century mosaics in Daphne near Athens, Greece.

The wall paintings from the second layer include images of church feasts and several figures in full length. Above all, there are eight figures of prophets, depicted two by two between the windows of the drum. L. Mavrodinova has published a study focusing on the prophets’ images from the first and second painting layers of the church.

Below the figures of the monks on the western wall, fragments of a donor’s composition are preserved; its upper part consists of a figure in bishop’s garments holding the model the church and is of particular interest. The donor in this layer of the mural painting could be the Bishop of Serdica. The large circular inscription in Greek at the base of the drum also belongs to this layer. It is very likely that the name of the Bishop of Serdica was also mentioned in it, but this does not survive in the present state of preservation.

E. Pezopoulos and K. Konstantopoulos have provided a more complete reading of the inscription, revealing that in reality it is a piece

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of poetry composed in the iambic meter. The poetic topoi identified by Pezopulos indicate that the author of the epigram was well acquainted with the works of Middle Byzantine Constantinopolitan literature.10

After the completion of the general restoration of the church and its wall paintings, it became clear that the iconographic program of the second wall-painting layer was not changed much in comparison with the first one, as the fragments of images and haloes respectively of prophets and monks from the first layer can be distinguished beneath the frieze with the prophets on the drum and the monks above the western entrance. Restoration provided evidence that the first layer was removed before applying the decoration of the sec-

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ond layer. However, the dome base with the angel-painted frieze was not decorated anew at that period of time, as the wall paintings of the third layer from the fourteenth century cover the angels’ figures directly. Apparently, the dome was partially destroyed and rebuilt in the period between the first and the third painting of the church.

The images of the Holy Virgin and of Archangel Gabriel that constitute the composition of the Annunciation were depicted on both sides of the altar apse, while the remaining feast scenes are situated, two by two, in the four niches of the church. The Dormition of the Virgin scene is situated on the southern wall, and the scene of the Crucifixion on the northern one.

The images of the four Evangelists belong to the same layer, as well as the full-length images of five holy monks that occupy the entire area above the entrance on the western wall. Four of the monks hold scrolls with inscriptions; the latter have still not been deciphered properly in scientific publications (Fig. 4). At present these images lack identifying inscriptions; it has not been established with certainty whether such inscriptions were written at all and the subject is still debatable, as the upper section of almost all the images is damaged.

The first attempt to read the four inscriptions on the scrolls of the full-length images of the monks was made at the beginning of the twentieth century (1901) by Eftim Sprostranov. In his comments on E. Sprostranov’s readings about 30 years later, Bogdan Filov concluded that Sprostranov was wrong, and that the inscriptions were unreadable.

The third attempt to decipher the inscriptions was made by Ivan Dujčev, who identified the second monk from south to north as St Arsenius the Great; however, he could not identify with certainty the monk displayed to the north of Arsenius. He suggested that it could be St Euthymius the Great.

Irina Kandarasheva has published the most recent publication regarding the monks’ identity that also contains some observations about the inscriptions; her contribution is the discovery of the text of the inscription on St Anthony the Great’s scroll in the famous Painter’s Manual of Dionysius of Founa. Accordingly, Kandarasheva has suggested that the first figure in the row is St Sabbas the Sanctified, and that the fifth belongs to St John Kalybites. However, her assumptions have been based on stylistic parallels with the Bachkovo Ossuary and Boyana Church, and not on a detailed analysis of the epigraphic data, which lay outside the scope of her study.

After these, there have been no further publications of the four inscriptions nor have their literary sources been identified, in spite of the vital significance that such an investigation would have for a proper interpretation of this epigraphic material. The present contribution aims to fill the gap in this regard.

The southernmost monk (or the first figure from left to right when looking in west direction) is depicted holding a scroll (Fig. 5), which reads as follows:

Diplomatic transcription: + καλὸν φαγῖν κραία κὲ πυῆν

Fig. 5 The scroll of the first monk (scroll Nr. 1)

ücken κὲ μὴ ἐν καταλαληὲς σάρκας ἀδελφῶν.

Edited text: Καλὸν φαγεῖν κρέα καὶ πιεῖν οἶνον, καὶ μὴ ἐν καταλαλαίαις σάρκας ἀδελφῶν.

Translation: It is better to eat meat and drink wine and not to eat the flesh of one’s brethren through slander.¹⁵

The source of the text is the well-know work, the *Apophthegmata Patrum* or *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, more specifically – the section listing the sayings of St Hyperechius.¹⁶

Such an attribution could lead to the conclusion that the depicted monk is St Hyperechius.

Here, an important note should be made concerning all similar cases of problematic identification associated with images of prophets and saints: in the case of missing or obliterated identifying inscriptions, the process of identification is possible only through the interpretation of the texts on the scrolls or in the open books that the figures hold. Even if the sources of these texts are properly identified – a difficult task in itself – the saints’ identity could still remain uncertain, as the same source-text could be displayed on the scrolls of different saints. Such discrepancies between image and inscription have been observed in Byzantine art, yet they grow significantly in number during the Post-Byzantine period.¹⁷

For instance, although rarely used in inscriptions, the above-mentioned text is written in Old Church Slavonic on St Mark of Thrace’s scroll on the façade of the church *Resurrection of God* in the monastery of Sucevița.¹⁸


¹⁶ Περὶ τοῦ ἀββᾶ Ὑπερεχίου, De abbate Hyperechio, PG 65, col. 429 C: Εἶπε πἀλιν· Καλὸν φαγεῖν κρέα καὶ πιεῖν οἶνον, καὶ μὴ φαγεῖν ἐν καταλαλαίαις σάρκας ἀδελφῶν.


In general, this phenomenon is an element of a more complex issue; namely, the accurate attribution of a text to an author and the significance of this attribution in the particular church, the particular region and/or the particular period. In essence, such research questions are inevitably associated with two other important aspects of medieval culture: anonymity and literacy.19

However, the names of the second and the third monk from south to north are written precisely on the scrolls that they hold: on them, we read the names Ἀρσένης (in the Vocative case) and Ἐυθύμιος (in the Nominative case) respectively.

The name Ἀρσένης has led I. Dujčev to conclude that this scroll belonged to the figure of St Arsenius the Great. The monk holds a scroll with the following text (Fig. 6):

Diplomatic transcription: + Ἀρσέ[ν]ης δὶ ὅν ἐξῆλθες ἐκ τοῦ βίου φεῦγε σιῶπα ἡσύχαζε καὶ σώζου.

Edited text: Ἀρσένιε, δὶ ὅν ἐξῆλθες ἐκ τοῦ βίου φεῦγε, σιῶπα, ἡσύχαζε καὶ σώζου.

Translation: Arsenius, why have...
you left the world? Flee, be silent, be at peace and save yourself! (TsV²⁰).

This text also comes from the Apophthegmata Patrum, but here the inscription is a combination of two sentences that cannot be found together verbatim in the literary source. The first sentence quotes the words of St Arsenius talking to himself toward the end of his life²¹, and the second is a command given to him by God at the beginning of his ascetic deeds²².

The text on the scroll held by the third monk in the row begins with the name Εὐθύμιος. This should be regarded as a direct invitation to the reader to properly identify the saint’s image. The saint’s name is not syntactically connected to the rest of the inscription, as is the case with St Arsenius the Great’s scroll. The text reads as follows (Fig. 7):

Diplomatic transcription:

1. Εὐθύμιος· εὐθυ στῆτε
dakry(ein) χαίρετε δὲ
2. TOY : –

+ Εὐθύμιος· εὐθυ στῆτε
dakry(ein) χαίρετε δὲ

Fig. 7. The scroll of St Euthymius the Great (scroll Nr. 3)

²⁰ Translations with the initials ‘TsV’ throughout the article are done by Tsvetan Vasilev.
²¹ Note: The underlined words are present both in the inscription and in the sources. Ὅτι δὲ ο λόγος τοῦ γέροντος ἦν· Ἀρσένιε, διὸ ἐξῆλθες; λαλήσας, πολλάκις μετεμελήθην, σιωπήσας
de οὐδέποτε. PG 65, col. 105 C. Translation: The old man used to say to himself: ‘Arsenius, why have you left the world? I have often repented of having spoken, but never of having been silent.’ (Ward. The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, 18).
²² Κύριε, ὀδήγησόν με πώς σωθῶ. Καὶ ἦλθεν αὐτῷ φωνὴ λέγουσα· φεῦγε, σιώπα, ήσύχαζε, αὕτη γάρ εἰσιν αἱ ῥίζαι τῆς ἀναμαρτησίας. PG 65, col. 88 B. Translation: ‘Lord, lead me in the way of salvation.’ And a voice came saying to him, ‘Arsenius, flee, be silent, pray always, for these are the source of sinlessness.’ (Ward. The sayings of the Desert Fathers, 9.)
Euthymius: Stop crying immediately, but be happy instead, as his hope lies in the Lord (TsV).

In the story of St Euthymius’s life, compiled by hagiographer Symeon Metaphrastes, St Euthymius gathered his disciples and followers when he was about to die; he prophesied the day of his own death, consoled them and appointed a new abbot. At his funeral “the suffering because of the loss of Euthymius was the cause of much lamentation.” Thus, the inscription could be regarded as advice towards the lamenting crowd, and an allusion to the saint’s salvation – the ‘hope’ in the Lord.

It is tempting to assume that this particular inscription could allude to another saint’s salvation – namely, the most highly revered Bulgarian saint, St John of Rila, whose wonderworking relics were initially brought to the town of Sredets, and may have been placed in the church of St George for some time during the reign of Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes (1067–1071). This, of course, is only a speculation based on the fact that, to our best knowledge, the text on St Euthymius’ scroll has not ever been recorded in any other church either in this period or at any time later, as well as on the influential content of the message, which may have been directed toward the Christian crowds that sought consolation, guidance, healing and help from St John of Rila.

If the above assumptions are not true, the admonition on St Euthymius’ scroll could be regarded as a source of inspiration for the faithful in their hope of salvation, conveying a universal message resonating strongly even today. The fourth monk to the north holds a scroll with the following text (Fig. 8):

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23 Πάσι μὲν οὖν τὸ πάθος τῆς Εὐθυμίου στερήσεως, πολλῶν δακρύων αἴτιον ἦν. PG 114, col. 692 A.

24 The author of one of the oldest stories of St John’s life is Γεώργιος ὁ Σκυλίτζης, an official and governor of Sredetz in the late 12th century during the reign of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180); according to his own account, he was miraculously cured with the help of the saint’s relics. By his account the Emperor himself was cured of a disease by St John’s relics with help from the local bishop. For further reading, see Zlatarski, Vasil. Георги Скилита и написаното от него житие на св. Иван Рилски [Georgi Skilita i napisanoto ot nego zhitie na sv. Ivan Rilski]. – Buletin de la societe historique à Sofia, 1933, Vol. XIII, 49-80.
Fig. 8. The scroll of the fourth monk (scroll Nr. 4)

Diplomatic transcription: ἤδον τὰς πα|γίδα(ς) τοῦ δη|αβόλου ἡπ[λω]μένας | κα(ὶ) στενάξ(ας) | τ(ίς) ἄρα δ(ε?)

Edited text: Εἶδον τὰς παγίδας τοῦ διαβόλου ἡπλωμένας καὶ στενάξας· Τίς ἄρα δ(ε?)

Translation: I saw the snares that the devil spreads out and (I said) groaning: “Who…?” (TsV).

The source of the text is a saying attributed to St Anthony the Great in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, which safely confirms the identification of the saintly figure, especially because this text is more ‘stable’ and standardized, as well as being commonly attested in other churches on the scroll of the same saint. This allows us to concur with the conclusion already been made by other researchers that...
the monk is indeed St Anthony the Great; moreover, this leads us to propose the identity of the remaining two saints from this group as St Arsenius and St Euthymius.

St Anthony is regarded as the father of monastic life and the first monk to go to live in the desert; he was the leader of the so-called Desert Fathers, the most prominent ascetic figure of fourth-century monasticism in Egypt.

St Arsenius the Great was also an Egyptian monk from the same period, another of the Desert Fathers.

St Euthymius is regarded as the father of Palestinian monasticism, so it is no surprise that the three monks are usually depicted together. The fact that St Hyperechius is also one of the Desert Fathers from the fourth century probably justifies his inclusion within this group.

Returning to the inscription, the source-text is rendered with omissions, which prove extremely helpful in recreating the process of transferring the source-text to the inscription, or in other words – in discovering the ‘transfer’ of the literary text to the church wall, where it assumes the role of an inscription with a completely different expressive function. Despite the syntactic simplification – the omission of the adjective πάσας, the verb εἶπον, and the phrase ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς – the content and the main idea of the original text are entirely alive and discernible for the reading recipient.

The level of the Greek language in the four inscriptions discussed here contributes to an easier comprehension by the audience. An oral pronunciation is detected on the basis of certain language characteristics such as:

1. Itacism
   <H> = <I> in δημαβόλου, ἐλπής; scriptio inversa in ἕ;
   <Υ> = <Ι> in πυῆν; scriptio inversa in ἱσίχαζα[ι];

2. Isochronism
   <Ο> = <Ω> in σῶζον, σιόπα;

3. Monophthongisation

27 Regarding the problem of readability and visibility of the medieval inscriptions, see: Eastmond, Antony (ed.). Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World. Cambridge, 2015.
<Ε> = <ΑΙ> in κέ; καταλαληές; scriptio inversa in κραία;
<Η> = <ΕΙ> in πυήν; ἤδον;
<Ι> = <ΕΙ> in φαγῖν; scriptio inversa in βείου;
<Υ> = <ΟΙ> in ύνον.

Lastly, the content of the texts written on the scrolls of the four monks reveals their powerful message and their intransient Christian value: the true meaning of fasting and the power of words (scroll Nr. 1)28, of earnest prayer uttered in silence (scroll Nr. 2), of the future salvation (scroll Nr. 3), and of the first and foremost virtue: humility (scroll Nr. 4).

The frescoes of the second layer in the Church of St George represent the most typical features of wall painting between the twelfth and the thirteenth century with regard to both their iconography, as well as their style, and all authors are unanimous about their dating. The linear-rhythmic structure of the compositions and the psychological expression of the images – which, according to researchers, express the tragic pathos and the dramatic tension of the times, – link these wall paintings with the greatest monuments from the Late Komnenian period. This trend is visible in monuments from the second half of the twelfth century, namely on the wall paintings of churches such as St Panteleimon at Nerezi, commissioned by one of the Komnenos family, the church of the Virgin Mary at Lagoudera in Cyprus, and elsewhere.

The best-preserved wall paintings in the church can be found in the third layer of the murals. It includes the images of prophets with scrolls and the image of Christ Pantokrator, dating from the 1380s, prior to the Ottoman conquest of Serdica.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that the wall paintings in the Church of St George from the period between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries are in line with the leading trends of their time and possess high artistic qualities. Together with the influential message of the inscribed texts, discussed in this article, they contribute significantly to the status of the Rotunda of St George as a monument of culture of national significance.

28 Cf. Jesus Christ’s words in the Gospel of Matthew: It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles (Matt. 15:11 NRSV).
Abbreviations

DF Διονυσίου τοῦ ἐκ Φουρνά ἐρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης, ἐκδιδομένη ὑπὸ Ἀ. Παπαδοπούλου-Κεραμέως, ἐν Πετρούπολει, 1909.


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Изображения и текстове във времето: трите стенописни слоя в църквата „Св. Георги“ в София

Елка Бакалова
Цветан Василев

Ротондата „Св. Георги“, една от най-старите постройки в България с центричен план, и до днес запазва положението си на важна културна средищна точка в модерна София и е автентично свидетелство за значимостта на града като епископски център през Средновековието. По някои въпроси, свързани с паметника, все още няма достатъчна яснота, като например: кога сградата започва да функционира като християнски храм, каква е точната датировка на трите запазени стенописни слоя и др.

В настоящата статия въз основа на иконографски и стилов анализ предлагаме нашата гледна точка за датиране на стенописите, представяме прочит и интерпретация на епиграфския материал в свитъците на четири монашески фигури от втория живописен слой, изобразени на западната стена на наоса, а също и нови идеи за идентифициране на някои от монашеските изображения, доколкото наличните данни на средновековен език позволяват това.

Със своите езикови особености представените гръцки надписи предоставят ценна информация за нивото на образованост на пишещите и посетителите на храма в рамките на конкретния хронологичен период на изписване на втория стенописен слой. Анализът на литературните източници на надписите показва връзката им със средновековни византийски аскетични съчинения, което разкрива литературните предпочитания и вкусове както на средновековните зографи, така и на поръчителите на стенописната декорация.
The Balkans
and the Renaissance World

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Abstract. This text discusses relations between the Balkans and the Renaissance world and argues the case the question: Did the Balkans have a Renaissance? Answering yes, this paper calls for a new, changed optic, and an updated methodological approach in viewing the known facts. It presents just a few of many examples from the Balkans, mostly surviving in elements of visual culture, and examines them in the context of the cross-cultural and trans-cultural interactions, connectivity, migrations and social networks, and (self)fashioning of identities in the early modern world.

Key words: Renaissance, Balkans, methodology, Katarina Kotromanić Kosača, Andronika Kastrioti, Angelina Branković, Sandalj Hranić Kosača.

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears…
O judgment! Thou art fled to brutish beasts, and men have lost their reason. Bear with me"

William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar
Speech of Marc Anthony at Caesar’s funeral

The words of Shakespeare are here to solicit the reader’s patience as I attempt to present the issue of relations between the Balkans and
the Renaissance world. Opening a discussion on a subject seemingly contradictory by the standards of the traditional, positivistic art historical method (or, for that matter, of the method of humanistic sciences in general) is, ipso facto and per se, a crossing of borders, this time of traditional concepts and discipline rules. This, as we all know, is as much a question of history as of historiography.

From the viewpoint of that traditional, although now increasingly obsolete but in places still steadfast, historiographic approach, paradoxically most persistent in the historiography produced in the Balkans, the Renaissance, as defined in the Romanticism-infused lines of Jacob Burckhardt², is a pivotal period in European history. It is perceived as the birth of a typically European (read Western European) individualism, secularism, rationalism, and ethics. As such, it has implicitly paved the way for (Western) European economic prosperity and military might from that point on, into the modern period. In the visual sphere, accordingly, it is viewed as not only a set of formal features based on direct emulation of the Golden Age of Classical Antiquity, but as the visual proof and testimony, the warrant for a value system, the presence of which would indicate civilization itself while its absence would disclose a shameful savageness and lack of culture. This inherently colonial and orientalizing approach is even more augmented once applied to the Balkans perceived as the necessary “other” of Western Europe³.

However, in contemporary Western historiography, the questioning of such views of the Renaissance began with William Bouwsma’s 1978 address to the American Historical Association⁴. Twenty years ago, Caroline Walker Bynum talked about the last Eurocentric generation of historians⁵, while Thomas Da Costa Kaufmann published his study on the art and culture of Central Europe from the Renaissance through the Enlightenment, presenting to the English


⁴ Bouwsma, William. The Renaissance and the Drama of Western History. – American Historical Review, 1979, No. 84-1, 1-15.

reading public and Western audience its works of art and visual culture that had long been forgotten and/or misinterpreted. A recently published volume, *Byzantine Art and Renaissance Europe*, discusses the cultural and artistic interaction between the Byzantine east and Western Europe, from 1204 to the flourishing of Post-Byzantine artistic workshops in Venetian Crete during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the formation of icon collections in Renaissance Italy, and presents the art of Post-Byzantine icons as an integral part of the European Renaissance.

A distinguished Renaissance scholar, one of the foremost authorities in the field, Peter Burke has recently introduced the term and concept of hybridization. In his opinion, thanks in part to its flexibility, the concept of hybridization offers scholars the opportunity of a fresh approach to one of the central problems in the study of history, and that of the Renaissance in particular, the problem of the relation between change and continuity, and, I should add, visuality and identity. Burke points out that, although the Renaissance is most often perceived as a Western European phenomenon, the process of hybridization is often most clearly visible in Moscow or Lviv, for instance, or outside Europe altogether in Mexico or Arequipa, while its traces may also be found in India, China and Japan in the age of early globalization. As for periodization, Burke envisages a Renaissance that begins in the fourteenth century and did not so much as end but rather disintegrated in the first half of the seventeenth. This chronological framework and Burke’s proposed approach to observing the Renaissance could be beneficial to our reassessment of relations of the Balkans and the Renaissance world.

Thus, the question “Did the Balkans have a Renaissance?” or the issue of the Balkans and the Renaissance world is more that of re-

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6 *DaCosta Kaufmann*, Thomas. Court, Cloister, and City: The Art and Culture of Central Europe, 1450–1800. Chicago, 1995. This work focuses on works of art from Germany, Poland, Hungary, and other Central European states.

7 The contributors examined the routes by which artistic interaction may have taken place, and explore the reception of Byzantine art in western Europe, analyzing why artists and patrons were interested in ideas from the other side of the cultural and religious divide; *Lymberopoulou, Angeliki and Rembrandt Duits* (eds.). Byzantine Art and Renaissance Europe. London and New York, 2013.


9 *Burke*. Hybrid Renaissance, 8.

10 *Burke*. Hybrid Renaissance, 8.
covering the Renaissance in the Balkans not so much by physically seeking the new evidence but by seeing the old evidence in a new light, observing the Balkans not as mere provider of exotic data, but within the framework and horizon of broader issues and phenomena of the early modern world\(^\text{11}\). In this paper, I shall present and propose for further investigation within such a methodological framework just a few of many cases from the Balkans, mostly surviving in elements of visual culture, and examine them in the context of the cross-cultural and trans-cultural interactions, connectivity, migrations, social networks, and (self)fashioning of identities in the early modern world.

**Connectivity through exile. Networks of noble women**

With the progress of the Ottoman conquests and the gradual disintegration of the Byzantine world, and especially after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and of the Morea and Trebizond in 1461, Italian cities such as Rome, Florence, Padua, Bologna, Milan, and, above all, Venice became destinations for Greek nobles and intellectuals from the Byzantine Commonwealth and the Balkans who hoped to find security in the West\(^\text{12}\).

Notwithstanding the Greek exiles, including members of the imperial Palaiologos family\(^\text{13}\), on this occasion I shall concentrate on the fate of noble women from the Balkan principeds, who themselves forged links between the Balkans and the Renaissance world, not simply by the chance of forced migration, but rather through connectivity and networks within their own sphere, through their *habitus*, both official and personal; through their dynastic ties and diplomatic alliances.

Let us start with Katarina Kosača Kotromanić (1424/25 – October 1478), the penultimate Queen of Bosnia, married to the Bosnian King Stjepan Tomaš. She was the daughter of Stefan Vukčić Kosača and Jelena Stracimirović Balšić who in turn was the daughter of

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\(^{12}\) *On migrations of Greek nobility after the fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Ottomans see Harris, Jonathan. Greek Emigres in the West 1400–1520. Camberly, 1995.*

Balša III Stracimirović. Thus, on her mother’s side, Katarina was the great granddaughter of Jelena Lazarević Balšić who in turn was the daughter of prince Lazar Hrebeljanović. Once Bosnia was conquered by Mehmet the Conqueror, the dowager queen found refuge, first in Dubrovnik and finally in Rome. She died there as a Franciscan tertiary in 1478, and was buried in the Church of St Maria in Aracoeli. Her children, Sigismund and Katarina, with whom she desperately tried to reunite, were taken to Istanbul and converted to Islam. Both her Serbian Orthodox roots and her adopted Catholic identity are best revealed in the bilingual inscription on her original funerary monument, written both in Old Church Slavonic and in Latin. In 1590, her remains were transferred from the original tomb in the presbytery to the space in front of the altar, by the north pillar, on which her funerary slab now stands in a vertical position (Fig. 1).

Dressed in her royal garb, she is portrayed as a queen with the coat of arms of her father and her husband on either side of her head, in the fashion of contemporary funerary representation of rulers from Western Europe.

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Andronika Donika Kastrioti (1428–1505/6) was a descendant of the Arianiti and Muzaka families, and the wife of Djuradj Kastrioti Sken-derbeg, who from 1443 to 1468 led the Christian resistance to the Ot-toman conquest in the Balkans, later becoming commander-in-chief of the crusading forces of pope Pius II. Donika was born in 1428. Her father was Gjergj Arianiti Komnenos, whose domain reached to the

Fig. 2. Donika Kastrioti’s icon of the Virgin, Monastery of the Holy Trinity, Valencia
east of today’s Bitola. Her mother was Maria Muzaka, of the Muzaka family, whose domain lay in the southwestern part of central Albania. Skanderbeg married Donika at the Orthodox monastery of Ardenica in Lushnje in Albania, after the Treaty of Gaeta with Alfonso V and the Kingdom of Naples, in 1451. After the Ottoman conquest of Albania, the Kastrioti were given lordships/patents of nobility(?) in the Kingdom of Naples, where they obtained a feudal domain, the Duchy of San Pietro in Galatina and the County of Soleteto in the province of Lecce. Donika’s and Skanderbeg’s only child, Gjon Kastrioti II, married Irene Branković Palaiologina, the daughter of Lazar Branković, Despot of Serbia. In Naples, she resided at Castel Nuovo and spent the rest of her days between the south of Italy, Sicily and Spain, becoming a close, personal friend of Juana, wife of Ferdinand I of Aragon. Upon her death in 1505, her body was transferred to the monastery of the Holy Trinity in Valencia, and laid to rest in a tomb near the holy icon of the Virgin Refuge of Sinners, which she is said to have brought to Spain (Fig. 2).

Her sister, Angelina (1440–1520), was married to the Serbian Despot Stefan Branković, and is venerated as holy mother Angelina in the Serbian Orthodox Church. Following their Balkan exile, Stefan and Angelina soon moved to their own castle in Belgrado in Friuli, near Udine, where the blind despot passed away in 1476. Ten years later, having accepted the invitation extended by King Matthias Corvinus, the widowed Angelina, carrying with her the relics of Despot Stefan Branković, together with her children, Đorđe and Jovan (the future bishop Maksim), moved first to Hungary, to Srem. From there, she went on to Wallachia in 1504, only to return to Srem several years later.

Amongst the most significant contributions of Angelina Branković was her foundation of a number of churches and monasteries in Srem, which include the Church of St Luke in Kupinovo, the first of her residences in Hungary, where she deposited the relics of Despot Stefan Branković; the monastery at Obed, and her endowments on

the Holy Mountain of Fruška Gora. Foremost among these is the monastery of Krušedol (Fig. 3), founded between 1509 and 1514; the new Studenica i.e. Ravanica of the Branković family in exile, the center of cult, state-ideology and dynasty, and the ultimate repository of the relics of several members of the holy Branković family, Despot Stefan the Blind, Despoina Angelina and Bishop Maksim, all of which remained there until the Ottomans besieged and burned down of the monastery in 1716\textsuperscript{18}.

It is important to note that both Angelina’s sons were born and

\textsuperscript{18} Erdeljan, Jelena. A note on the ktetorship and contribution of women from the Branković dynasty to cross-cultural connections in late medieval and early modern Balkans. – Zbornik za likovne umetnosti Matice srpske, 2016, No. 44, 61-72, with bibliography.
raised in exile, in the Veneto in Italy. Later on, in Hungary and Wallachia, they were regarded by the majority of the Serbian population of Srem as direct descendants of ancient Serbian rulers. They combined enjoying all the privileges of the Hungarian nobility of the day with the life of Renaissance court culture, having received the title of Despot by Matthias Corvinus of Hungary, whilst being well aware of the ecclesiastical and state traditions of their own patrimony. Together with their mother, Angelina Branković, they continued the kettorship of the Branković family over the Athonite monasteries Chilandar, St Paul, and Esphigmenou, and established and developed the cult of the blind Despot Stefan Branković in the tradition of the Serbian Orthodox Church.  

Angelina, a devout Orthodox, was also a patron of several shrines of universal Christian saints in the Catholic West. She donated a now lost luxuriously embroidered phelonion or shroud studded with pearls and precious stones for the relics of St John the Merciful in Bratislava and a shroud for the relics of St Symeon the God-bearer in Zadar.

Medieval feudal lords and/or Renaissance noblemen? The (self) fashioning of the Balkan elite in the Early Modern Period

In many aspects the lifestyle, networks of power, business and banking transactions, as well as the (self) fashioning of the Grand Duke of Bosnia, Sandalj Hranić (1370–1435) appear to be very similar to the lifestyles and manners of conduct of contemporary potentates from Italy or anywhere else in the Renaissance world. Sandalj Hranić inherited the lands and title of his celebrated uncle, the Serbian Vlatko Vuković, and thus ruled over a vast land, rich in natural resources and strategically significant, stretching across the upper course and valley of the Drina as the well as the Lim River valley, parts of Zeta i.e. the south east Adriatic coast and hinterlands, including the city of Novi, the future Herceg Novi, and parts of Konavle in the envi-


rons of Dubrovnik. He later extended his domain to include parts of Hum, all the way to the Neretva River, as well as the city of Budva and its hinterland, while the city of Kotor was also a part of his circle of influence. Recognizing him as *Budue et Zentedominus*, the Venetians granted him the citizenship of the Serenissima, which was later, in 1411, enhanced to the status of Venetian nobility. In 1429, Venetian documents mention him as owner of a *palazzo* in the city.

Honors and privileges were granted to Sandalj in many cities on the Adriatic coast, as well, in 1406 he held a palace in Zadar and in 1423 a house in Kotor, but no other city bestowed on him more gifts and honors than the city of Dubrovnik. By the end of his life, he had four houses and a cellar in Dubrovnik and land holdings within the territory of the Republic of Dubrovnik, including the island of Šipan. Documents from the Archive of Dubrovnik dating from 1407–1409 mention the existence of Sandalj’s residence or *domus*. As of 1419, and throughout the 1420’s and 1430’s, until Sandalj’s death in 1435, this house, located in the very heart of the city, by the Prince’s palace and across the square from the Cathedral of Dubrovnik, was enlarged and adapted into a new and visually striking architectural structure which marked the cityscape. Like most of Dubrovnik, it was devastated by the earthquake of 1667. In addition to some written and visual testimonies; detailed archival documents; drawings and *vedutas* of Dubrovnik from the centuries predating the earthquake in the seventeenth century, a carved basin of the cistern in the courtyard of Sandalj’s residence, dating from the 1420’s also survives as a material relic of the once lavish original furnishing of the *domus*. The basin is decorated with the heraldic crest of the Kosača family, and is today in the lapidarium of Društvo prijatelja.

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21 In his third marriage, Sandalj was married to the widowed Jelena Balšić, daughter of Serbian prince Lazar Hrebeljanović, sister of despot Stefan Lazarević who was a vassal and an ally of King Sigismund. For a monograph study on Sandalj Hranić see *Kurtović*, Esad. Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača. Sarajevo, 2009, with sources and extensive bibliography. Cf. also *Kalić*, Jovanka (ed.). Istorija srpskog naroda. Druga knjiga. Doba borbi za očuvanje i obnovu države (1371–1537). Beograd, 1982, 231-239.

22 *Grujić*, Nada and Danko Zelić. Palača vojvode Sandalja Hranića u Dubrovniku. – Analii Dubrovnika, 2010, No. 48, 47-132, especially 52, with bibliography and sources.

23 *Kurtović*, Esad. Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača, 335-406, a chapter entitled “Ekonomski profil, kultura, vjera” focusing on the financial position, culture, and religious issues related to Sandalj Hranić.

24 *Grujić*. Palača vojvode Sandalja Hranica u Dubrovniku, passim, with excerpts from relevant sources in Latin kept at the Archive of Dubrovnik.

dubrovačke starine in the city (Fig. 4)\textsuperscript{26}.

All the features of this sculptural piece are unmistakably Renaissance in form, motif and styling, even in the most formalistic sense of the word.

The process of the refurbishing of Sandalj’s Dubrovnik residence, especially after the sale of his part of the region of Konavle to the Republic in 1419, was fully financed and managed by the authorities of the Republic, as a sign of honoring the Grand Duke and upholding him as the most trusted, strategic ally of the city\textsuperscript{27}. This

\textsuperscript{26} Grujić. Palača vojvode Sandalja, 49-50, 71, 74-75.

\textsuperscript{27} Sandalj Hranić was recognized as the foremost strategic ally of Dubrovnik, granting it safety and safekeeping its interests in clashes with the powers wrangling over control of the east Adriatic, the Hungarians, the Venetians, and feudal lords from Bosnia. On the Konavle transaction see Kurtović, Esad. Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača, 376. Cf. also id., Motivi Sandaljeve
complex and meticulously documented process included the uniting into one three separate buildings given as a gift to the Duke by the city authorities and standing at the most prominent location in the city. The gold and the azure for its embellishment was imported from Venice, some used also for the well-documented making of luxurious furnishings for this residence in Dubrovnik.

The open pavilion which graced the top floor of the building, called a balatorio or liago, as it was referred to in a 1425 document from Dubrovnik, was a unique, exceptional and innovative example in the urban architecture of the city in its day. In Italy and the Renaissance world, especially in the Mediterranean, such covered yet open pavilion structures were both warrants of a more comfortable living conditions in towns packed with houses lining the narrow streets and status symbols of larger houses and palaces. Its construction was certainly a demanding task. At the close of 1422, the municipality officials in charge of construction were ordered by the highest-ranking authorities of the Republic to charge the magister Bonino da Milano with the commission. Bonino, from Lombardy where he was also schooled, was a sculptor and architect and is, perhaps, best known for the making of Orlando’s pillar in Dubrovnik and of the sculptures of the facades of the cathedral of Šibenik. The Annunciation, a free-standing sculpture group atop the roof of the south transept of that church, is created in early Renaissance fashion.

According to a contract kept in the Archive of Dubrovnik, in 1422 Bonino da Milano was also commissioned to produce a large cimereum, i.e. a great gilded heraldic coat of arms, complete with shield, helmet, crest and cloak. It was placed on the east façade of Sandalj’s residence, facing the sea and visible to all ships approaching Dubrovnik. Sandalj’s coat of arms, painted in expensive colors and gold, and hung between the supports of the pavilion atop his resi-

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28 Grujić. Palača vojvode Sandalja, 74-77.
29 The term liago comes from the Greek word heliacon, a place exposed to the sun, see Grujić. Palača vojvode Sandalja, 66-68, with sources.
30 Grujić. Palača vojvode Sandalja, 66, 68.
32 Grujić. Palača vojvode Sandalja, 89.
dence, as a clear symbol of power, social impact and his noble identity. Similar coats of arms could be seen in the city’s loggia, marking the presence of visiting nobility, often on their way to the Holy Land.

At the beginning of February 1426, a special ceremony was dedicated to Duke Sandalj and Duchess Jelena in Dubrovnik, when they attended the feast of St Blaise, the city’s patron saint. Their desire to build a church in Dubrovnik themselves was, unfortunately, never realized. To a considerable degree, the self-awareness, individuality, and independence displayed by Sandalj Hranić, which was meticulously documented by his own professional chancellery, were sustained and nurtured by the rewards that the Grand Duke gained from the privileges granted to him by the city of Dubrovnik following the Konavle transaction of 1419. He was allowed to invest money in its financial market for an annual interest rate of five percent. Even the ink used by the chancellery at Sandalj’s court(5) was of the same quality and equal to that of the highest offices of the Republic of Dubrovnik itself.

The citation from Shakespeare at the beginning of this paper was there not only as a general reference to the period discussed above, but also as a reminder that all of us who study and write about the past are, in fact, countrymen, for, in the words of L. P. Hartely, “the past is a foreign country, they do things differently there” (The Go-Between). This contribution to an assessment of one segment of the past of the Balkans is not, nor can it be at this stage, exhaustive or definitive. It is meant mostly as a reminder that we should be ready to investigate it with a methodological readiness to perceive its cultural dynamics, manner of (self-)fashioning and elements of visual culture with an unclouded optic and against the backdrop of the premodern world in a broader sense, not just limited to its geographic surroundings and the often negatively intoned connotations ascribed to it in historiography.

33 Grujić. Palača vojvode Sandalja, 83, 89.
34 On Sandalj’s official (and last) visit to Dubrovnik upon invitation of the Republic’s authorities see Grujić. Palača vojvode Sandalja, 84, 101, with sources. On his (unrealized) plans to build a church in the city see Kalić. Istorija srpskog naroda, 536.
35 Kurtović, Esad. Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača, 376.
36 On the functioning of Sandalj’s chancellery, the issuing and safekeeping of his documents in Dubrovnik, and the official seals see Kurtović, Esad. Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača, 378-379.
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Балканите и ренесансовият свят

Йелена Ерделян

Текстът представя и подновява дискусията за връзките между Балканите и ренесансовия свят, поставяйки отново въпроса: Имало ли е Ренесанс на нашия полуостров? В спор със сменянетата, нова гледна точка, както и с подновения методологичен арсенал по отношение на добре известните факти статията представя само няколко от многото балкански казуси, които често са възприемани като прикрити елементи на визуалната култура, но са плод на транскултурни и кръстопътни взаимодействия, на взаимосвързаност, миграции и социални мрежи, както и на самоопределяне на идентичността в зората на модерната епоха. В този методологически контекст авторът представя живота и ктиторската дейност на Катарина Косача Котроманич, кралица на Босна, на Андроника Доника Кастриоти, съпруга на Джурадж Кастриоти Скендербег, и на неговата сестра Ангелина Бранкович, омъжена за сръбския деспот Стефан Бранкович, почитана като „светата майка Ангелина“ от сръбската православна църква, както и на Сандали Хранич Косача, могъщ благородник от Босна в края на XV в. В много аспекти неговият живот, връзки, работа и банкови операции, а също и самоочувствието му са доста близки на манiera на съвременните му благородници от Италия и по целия ренесансов свят.
Panagia Eleousa in Great Prespa Lake: 
A symbolic artistic language at the Beginning of the 15th Century

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Abstract: The text concerns the cave church of Panagia Eleousa on the shore of the Great Prespa Lake near the contemporary Greek borders, which was decorated in 1409–10. The study focuses on two parameters: A. the written epigraphic material, which is connected to the history of the monument and to its patrons, and B. the unusual external and internal mural decoration with symbolic themes and motifs with protective and apotropaic connotations. Both reveal metaphysical semiology linked to the political ideology and to theological beliefs of an unstable period.

Key words: Prespa, 15th century, inscriptions, donors, apotropaic messages, cryptograms.

The isolated rock cut monastery of Panagia Eleousa in the Lake Great Prespa in Greece constitutes an important cave church among a group of eight situated between the modern states of Greece and Albania. It was erected as part of a small monastic community, whose one enclosure and cells still exist in traces. The donor’s inscription bears the date 1409–10. This was a turbulent period for the
remnants of the Byzantine Empire, and especially for the already subjugated region of Macedonia. Yet it is also the period subsequent to the defeat of the sultan Bayezid I in Ankara and the reign of Manuel Palaiologos (1391–1425), who never gave up the idea of the renovation of the Empire³. Due to this new Geopolitical situation, the conditions of the subjugated Christian population under the Ottomans were relaxed, and hopes for the overturning of the political order had appeared. As a consequence, an augmentation in the erection and renovation of churches in the broader area of Prespa, Kastoria and Ochrid could be observed during the first decades of the 15th century⁴.

The area belonged to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Achris (Ochrid), which maintained a harmonious relationship with the Patriarchate of Constantinople⁵. The officially Greek-speaking Archbishopric, which administrated both Greek and Slavic bishoprics, as a factor of unification of the area, had undertaken to protect Christian populations under the Ottomans. The conditions are reflected in an epistle of Patriarch Neilos in 1384: “Πάσχομεν γάρ υπὸ τῶν Τούρκων … πλὴν ἔχομεν πᾶσαν ἐλευθερίαν, ὡστε καὶ γράμματα δέχεσθαι καὶ ἀντιγράφειν καὶ ἐπιστέλλειν καὶ χειροτονεῖν καὶ πέμπειν ἐπισκόπους, ὅπου βουλόμεθα καὶ πάντα καὶ ἀκωλύτως τὰ ἐκκλησιαστικὰ καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν τόπων τῶν ἁσεβῶν”⁶.

The painted inscription on the roof beam of the Panagia Eleousa is also illustrative of political conditions. It occupies two rows, though


⁶ Though suffering from the Turks... we have all freedom in receiving and copying and dispatching epistles and consecrating and sending bishops, wherever we wish and every ecclesiastical duty without obstacles within the land of the impious. Snegarov, Ivan. История на Охридската архиепископия – патриаршия [Istorija na Ohridskata arhipspiskopija – Patriaršija], 2, Sofia, 1932 (1995), n. 1.
it is actually articulated in four iambic dodecasyllabic verses\textsuperscript{7}. Its content is based on the Paracletical Canon of the Bread Fraction\textsuperscript{8}, yet certain alterations made to the text can be explained with reference to historical circumstances at the beginning of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century in Macedonia.

+Ὑψωσον τὸ κέρας Χριστιανῶν κρατούντ(ων)/
tὰ σκῆπτρα, βασιλέων τῶν εὐσεβῶν καὶ/
σῶσον, ἐλέησον τὸν οἶκον μέχρι τέλους/
dιὰ τῆς [σῆς] εὐσπλαχ(νίας), Κ(ύρι)ε\textsuperscript{9}.

It is about a clear invocation calling for divine help and support for Christian rulers. The emperor Manuel Palaiologos was representing the crumbling Byzantine Empire and the Serbian rulers the remains of the kingdom of Serbia. In addition to these figures, we might also infer a local maintenance of the memory of the previous ruler of the area Kral (king) Vukašin. His name is anachronistically referenced in the donor inscription of the church in the hellenized form “afthentis Vlukasinos”, thirty-eight years after the battle of Maritza (Tzernomiano) and his consequent death\textsuperscript{10}. Especially, the phrase “+Ὑψωσον τὸ κέρας χριστιανῶν... βασιλέων” finds a visual parallel in the figure of Kral Marko with imperial insignia, and a horn in his right hand, in Markov Monastery. Here he is presented together with a posthumous depiction of his father Kral Vukašin\textsuperscript{11}.

\textsuperscript{7} The inscription was first transliterated by N. Moutsopoulos (Moutsopoulos, Nikolaos. Βυζαντινά μνημεία της Μεγάλης Πρέσπας. In: Χαριστήριο εις Αναστάσιον Κ. Ορλάνδον, Β. 2, Athens, 1964, 152) and then by G. Subotić (Subotić, Gojko. Ohridska slikarska škola XV veka. Beograd 1980, 37, n. 35), though with faults and omissions. For a new transcription and approach see: Paissidou, The hermitage, 305-306, fig. 3.
\textsuperscript{8} The original text of the Canon is: “Ὑψωσον κέρας χριστιανῶν ὀρθοδόξων καὶ κατέπεμψον ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς τὰ ἐλέη σου τὰ πλούσια / τὸ μέγα σου ἔλεος” (Rise up the horn of the orthodox Christians and consign to us your abundant mercies/ your abundant compassion).
\textsuperscript{9} “Rise up the horn of the pious Christian kings who hold the scepters save and show mercy for the House until the End through Thy compassion”.
\textsuperscript{11} Kotso, Dimtché. La peinture murale en Macédoine jusqu’à la fin du XIV\textsuperscript{e} siècle. In: Le trésor artistique de la Macédoine. Skopje, 1984, 171. For the date of the Markov Monastery see Djurić,
The rich inner mural decoration of the church will not concern us here. What makes the wall paintings of the building as exceptional is the external painted imitation of brick masonry. A plethora of motifs with apotropaic connotations integrate the conventional function of the holy place with a more personal mode of protection against evil powers and any kind of threat. This type of decoration is therefore examined together with the rich epigraphic material.

In the present case the quality of the depicted subjects depends on the visibility and accessibility of each surface. Thus, the more sophisticated execution of the western façade is obvious (Fig. 1). The painted imitation of cloisonné brick masonry recalls similar practices at the churches of Kurbinovo and in Serbia, or the original ceramic motifs at Kastoria and Ochrid 12. A six-rayed star or a schematized Christogram dominates the summit of the pediment. On a lower zone, near the northwestern corner, a human mask with well-depicted details suggests a strong apotropaic connotation 13. Human masks in mural decoration are unknown from the broader area, though sculpted human masks are found in the churches of Prespes, Apollonia and Serbia 14.

Also forming part of the decoration of the western façade are four ex-voto painted inscriptions, in which the three donors of the church are commemorated. Written in a bold red, they express prophylactic and eschatological rhetoric. The letter forms allude to Byzantine brick inscriptions. The inscription on the pediment refers to an anonymous panhypertimos donor (Fig. 1):

Δέησης τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θ(ε)οῦ πανηπερτίμου κτήτορος 15.


12 Paissidou. The hermitage, 307-308 (with relative bibliography).


15 “The prayer of the servant of God panhypertimos ktetor”: The inscription has been faulty transliterated by Miljukov (Miljukov, Pavel N. Hristianskija drevnosti Zapadnoi Makedonii. – Iz-
The ktetor can be identified as “kyr Savvas the most honorable among the priest-monks” (“τιμιώτατο ἐν ἱερομονάχοις”). He is the

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vestija Russkago Arheologitsheskago Instituta v Konstantinopol, 1899, No. IV.1, 60) and by Pelekanidis (Pelekanidis, Stylianos. Βυζαντινά και μεταβυζαντινά μνημεία της Πρέσπας. Thessaloniki, 1960, 127-128) and correctly by Moutsopoulos (Moutsopoulos. Μεγάλη Πρέσπα, 148-150).
first patron to be mentioned in the inner donor inscription\textsuperscript{16}, and he is also depicted in the donor representation as the elderly figure to the right of the Virgin\textsuperscript{17}. The title “panhypertimos” refers to a monk who holds the dignity of dikaiophylax and anagrapheus\textsuperscript{18}.

The second supplication in iambic dodecasyllabic verse (though with metric irregularities very common for the Byzantine epigram of the late period\textsuperscript{19}), refers anonymously to all the donors of the hermitage (Fig. 2):

\begin{quote}
Ω Χ(ριστ)ὲ μου φιλατε τοὺς ὧδε κτήτ[ορας]\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

Two other fragments of inscriptions refer nominally to the two other donors, Varlaam and Iakovos, who are also both mentioned to the inner donor inscription (Fig. 3-4):

[Βαρλ]αὰμ κτήτορ or [Βαρ]λὰμ κτήτορ\textsuperscript{21}

and () [Ι][α][κό β\textsuperscript{22}

All four inscriptions-supplcations occupy places near openings or corners\textsuperscript{23}. Their contexts and locations reveal invocative and protective purposes.

On the south surface, the morphological and aesthetic features are simpler and their rendering rougher (Fig. 5). Yet, there are many motifs likewise painted in red that imitate brick work. These include eight-rayed stars and suns connected to magic, apocalyptic and eschatological texts\textsuperscript{24}, crosses and the Greek letter Χ symboliz-

\textsuperscript{17} See also Paissidou. The hermitage, 303-304, 311.
\textsuperscript{19} For relevant irregularities see Kominis, Athanasios. Το βυζαντινόν ιερόν επίγραμμα και οι επιγραμματοποιοί. Athens, 1966, 55, 162.
\textsuperscript{20} “O my God preserve the hereupon kteores”: For previous transliterations see Pelekanidis. Μνημεία της Πρέσπας, 127.Moutsopoulos. Μεγάλη Πρέσπα, 150.
\textsuperscript{21} Moutsopoulos transliterated the inscription as ΑΜΚΤΗΤΟΡ or ΠΑΜΚΤΗΤΟΡ without comments (Moutsopoulos. Μεγάλη Πρέσπα, 145, fig. 5, 4).
\textsuperscript{22} The word corresponds to the full name Iakovos, one of the three donors referenced on the inner donor inscription.
\textsuperscript{24} Lampakis, Georgios. Υπόμνημα περί των χριστιανικών αρχαιοτήτων της Ελλάδος.
ing Jesus, and many schematized human masks. Most impressive and rare is a pair of eyes with a nose protecting against the envious and malign eyes\textsuperscript{25} (Fig. 6) and also a cross crowned by a human

mask. Circles divided into four or eight triangular dotted portions refer to schematic depiction of the liturgical bread, the Eucharistic symbol par excellence. The Greek letter “Ψ” either in vertical or in overturned position refers to a trident, an apotropaic object, as all the pointed implements used for repelling the evil power.

The letter “Ψ” simple or double, as an end of the cross, as a trident or an anchor, constitutes the principal decorative subject of the eastern façade and of the conch of the Bema (Fig. 7). On the same façade, circles with a dot at the center can be interpreted as schematized eyes. Their apotropaic symbolism is strengthened by their placement on the walls of the sanctuary.

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27 Deonna. Le symbolisme, 180-182.

28 The motif of the simple or multiple homocentric circles with a dot is known from the early Christian period used on many materials and especially near the entrances of the buildings with apotropaic connotation (Dauterman-Maguire, E. Maguire, K., Duncan-Flowers, M. J. Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House. University of Illinois, 1989, 5-7).
On the north façade, whose visibility is restricted, six painted motifs in irregular positions are depicted in red. A red serpent moves westwards with an open mouth, where five circles decorated with cross and dots can be interpreted either as liturgical loaves or masks (Fig. 6). Their placement near the northwest corner can be explained through their apotropaic function.

Inside the cave church, secular themes are depicted on the surface of the built altar, such as bird-like masks, snakes, a demon mask with snake-like horns and a double-headed eagle. These recall textile and ceramic decoration with monstrous fantastic creatures (Fig. 9). They are depicted in free sketch by the use of red and black colours on a white board. Their unusual abundance on the holiest place of the church emphasizes their apotropaic function while simultaneously alluding to the textile that conventionally covers the altar. This practice can be attributed to the preference of the donators and the painter. Teratomorphic motifs and their magical power inherited from ancient tradition were not rejected in medieval ecclesiastical art, in which they played a secondary role. In fact, the medieval

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29 See above footnote n. 25.
The theme of the double-headed eagle and its presence on the altar is connected to the political ideology of the period that represented the hope for the revival of Byzantium. In this specific case, it is related to the desired victory of the Christians, in the manner that is vividly expressed on the roof beam inscription. The famous emblem of the double-headed eagle used by the Komnenian and the Palaiologan dynasty gradually became equivalent to the existence of the emperors and of the Empire itself. It was also used by local rulers such as Cesar Novakos, despot Liveros, by the royal Serbian family and by the Lazarević. In the broader area it is found in the Panagia of Tzertzikon (Cer-

world was familiar with them. The theme of the double-headed eagle and its presence on the altar is connected to the political ideology of the period that represented the hope for the revival of Byzantium. In this specific case, it is related to the desired victory of the Christians, in the manner that is vividly expressed on the roof beam inscription. The famous emblem of the double-headed eagle used by the Komnenian and the Palaiologan dynasty gradually became equivalent to the existence of the emperors and of the Empire itself. It was also used by local rulers such as Cesar Novakos, despot Liveros, by the royal Serbian family and by the Lazarević. In the broader area it is found in the Panagia of Tzertzikon (Cer-

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32 For relevant bibliography see Paissidou. The hermitage, 306.
ske)\textsuperscript{33}, in Golem Grad\textsuperscript{34} and in the church of St George at Godivje\textsuperscript{35} during the early period of the Turkish occupation. The depiction of the double-headed eagle in the hermitage may also be seen on a minuscule rendering on the sheath of St Demetrius’ sword, the


\textsuperscript{34} Bitrakova-Grozdana. Golem Grad, 120, fig. 93.

\textsuperscript{35} Subotić. Ohridska, 29, fig. 4.
protector saint of the byzantine army par excellence.

The strongest apotropaic symbol of all was the cross. Two flourishing crosses symbolizing the tree of life with cryptograms and the symbols of the Passion decorate the door posts of the Panagia Eleousa. The cross to the south is decorated with the lance, the reed, the sponge and the crown of thorns alluding to soteriological connotation of the cross of Golgotha (Fig. 10). A rich variety of cryptograms surround it; Ι(ησοῦ)ζ – Χ(ριστό)ζ/ Ν(ι) – Κ(α), Φ(ως) – Χ(ριστός)/ Φ(αίνει) – Π(άσι) Χ(ριστός) Χ(αρίζει) Χ(άμι) Χ(ριστιανοίς), Ε(λένη) Ε(κ Θεού) – Ε(ύρημα) Ε(δόθη). [Στὸλος] Στ(αυρὸς) Δ(αιμόνων) Πτ(ῶσις) – Π(αράδεισος) Γ(έγονε). For the acronyms Ξ – ΤΥ, we propose the completion as Ξ(ύλον) στ(αυροῦ) – [υἱοῦ] Θ(εο)ῦ.

The depiction of the cross with the acronyms of ecclesiastical formulae as a prophylactic sign constitutes an old practice. In monumental painting it is found from the 13th century, especially developed in the church of Perivleptos in Ochrid. Similar examples exist in Thessaloniki, in Kastoria and in the broader Macedonia. The origin of the motif should be attributed to the artistic milieu of the Palaiologan renaissance in Thessaloniki. The emphasis on soteriological and apotropaic qualities and the wide range of acronyms from the end of the 13th century onwards should be attributed to the

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influence of a monastic and especially hesychastic milieu. In the case of the Panagia Eleouusa we should take into account that the church was to be used as a burial place for donors and for the members of the monastic community.

The painter of the church, the priest-monk Ioannikios, addresses his personal prayer by using a soteriological invocation written in two verses. The first can be divided into two iambic 7/syllable parts:

Ἄληπτε θεαρχία, ληπτὸν με ὄντα, σῶσον/
Ἰωαννίκιος ἱερομόναχος καὶ ζωγραφῶν

The inscription is aligned on the same vertical axis as the depiction of St Parascevi, a saint connected to funerary themes, and with the Rising of Lazarus, a subject that symbolizes the victory over the death.

In conclusion, in the mural decoration of Panagia Eleouusa we face a rare instance of sacred symbols, such as crosses, crosses with the cryptograms, the Christogram, the liturgical bread and the eagle, in combination with magical symbols such as eyes, serpents, zoomorphic or demon like masks, and the anchor-like or trident Ψ. In the Byzantine world such intermingling of Christian beliefs and pagan magical notions knew a long course, originating in the


ancient world and gradually being incorporated in Christian life and art\textsuperscript{43}.

The painted signs are combined with an emphatic use of votive inscriptions and bilingual symbolism of good and evil. They function not only as apotropaic signs but also as symbols of an epoch and a strength, which should resist towards the oncoming end, since the evil powers and the demons are assimilated to political enemies.

Therefore, the religious and metaphysical semiology is combined with political reality through the ecclesiastical ideology of this period of transition. Signs are used as a metaphoric language of the sinking Empire and consequently of the Church in danger. It is a dialogue between the human and the divine, where the second determines the destiny of the first. It forms a cultural dialogue that bridges the ancient, the medieval and the emerging post-medieval world. The political turmoil of the era created the necessary conditions for cultural change. The hermitage of Panagia Eleousa of the beginning of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century constitutes an authentic, unofficial and unique creation of the place and the people, who had transformed art into a visual invocation towards the “unconceivable divinity”. The protagonists of this expression are four monks, Savvas, Iakovos, Varlaam and Ioannikios, the patrons and the painter, who were responsible for the unique visual argument of the hermitage of Panagia Eleousa.

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Богородица Елеуса на Голямото Преспанско езеро: символичният художествен език от началото на XV век

Мелина Паисиду

Изолираният скален манастир на св. Богородица Елеуса на голямото Преспанското езеро в днешна Гърция е построен като част от малка монашеска общност през 1409/10. Периодът на изграждането му съвпада с времето след поражението на султан Баязид I при Ангора (Анкара) и с управлението на Мануил Палеолог (1391–1425), романтичния мечтател за възстановяването на византийската империя на Балканите. Регионът на Преспа попада в юрисдикцията на Охридската архиепископия, която в този период се ангажира с инициативата да защитава християните, намиращи се под османска власт. В близост до Преспанските езера – в Костур и Охрид – се строят и подновяват през първите десетилетия на XV в. други църкви, заради което манастирът „Богородица Елеуса“ се възприема като част от тази програма за обнова. Малката църква на обителта има богата стенописна украса отвътре, но обект на това изследване е външната декорация и богатият епиграфски материал, които превръщат паметника в изключителен пример за стенна екстериорна украса. Четирите външни стени на църквата са украсени с многобройни рисувани орнаменти, символи и надписи в ярък червен цвят, които свързват функцията на храма като свято място с индивидуалния изказ на вярващия срещу злите сили и всякакъв вид опасности. Тяхното качество зависи от видимостта и достъпността на всяка повърхност, заради което най-майсторска е украсата на западната фасада, където е изрисувана зидария, напомняща църквите в Курбиново и в днешна Сърбия, както и оригиналната керамична декорация от храмове в Костур и Охрид.

В стенната декорация на „Богородица Елеуса“ се наблюдава рядко за епохата съвместяване на сакрални символи и магически знаци. Във Византия взаимодействието между християнството и езическите магически практики е разпространено и води началото си от Античността. Усещането за магия е било възприето в християнството като конкуренция на чувството за вяра и светост. Рисуваните символи в църквата „Елеуса“ се комбинират с емфатичната употреба на вотивни надписи и биполярния символизъм на доброто и злото. Те функционират като апотропейни знаци и като символи на епохата, която се противопоставя на настъпващата злощастен край. Затова религиозната и метафизическата семиология е корелирана с политическата реалност.
чрез църковната идеология на този преходен период, използвайки общ метафоричен език в разпадащата се империя. Тази корелация оформя културен диалог, който посредничи между античния, средновековния и бедстващия късносредновековен светоглед.
Un cycle hagiographique peu étudié de la peinture extérieure moldave: 
La vie de saint Pacôme le Grand

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Abstract. The present study is focused on a less studied hagiographic cycle of Moldavian exterior painting: The Life of St. Pachomius the Great. This cycle is rare in Christian painting and it should not be confused with the frequent images of St. Pachomius alone or of the Apparition of the Angel to St. Pachomius. Thus, in the sixteenth century in Moldavia, the cycle of the life of St. Pachomius was preserved only in the exterior paintings of the monasteries of Humor and Sucevița. Research has shown that the last scene in the life of St. Pachomius of Sucevița was inspired by a similar scene painted about half a century earlier, in 1547, on the northern wall of St. George’s Church in the Monastery of Voroneț. It is true that in Voroneț this scene illustrates (incorrectly) a sequence of the life of Saint Anthony, whose hagiography, as evidenced by literary sources, does not include the odd episode with the lifting of the oak leaf.

Mots-clés: Antoine le Grand, monastère de Humor, Pacôme le Grand, églises peintes du nord de la Moldavie, monastère de Sucevița, monastère de Voroneț.

Cette recherche porte sur un cycle hagiographique peu étudié de la peinture extérieure moldave: La vie de saint Pacôme le Grand. Elle a été motivée par un regret et une perplexité. Le regret fut exprimé par le célèbre byzantiniste français André Grabar dans son étude Deux

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images tirées de la Vie de saint Pacôme. Il concernait l’impossibilité de lire l’inscription slave de la dernière scène préservé du cycle de la vie de Saint-Pacôme de la peinture extérieure de Sucevița. La perplexité est en revanche le premier sentiment qui a saisi l’auteur de cet article lorsque – grâce aux moyens optiques modernes, inaccessibles au savant français dans les années 60e et 70e du siècle dernier – on a finalement réussi à lire l’inscription en question. On a alors constaté que, bien que l’épisode est effectivement inspiré par l’hagiographie pacômienne (il s’agit de la levée par les démons d’une légère feuille de chêne aux moyens de leviers et de poulies afin d’inciter la saint à rire), le nom du personnage en question est Antoine et non Pasôme, comme on l’avait précédemment supposé. Les recherches ultérieures ont montré que la dernière scène de la vie de Saint-Pacôme de Sucevița est inspirée par une scène similaire, peinte environ un demi-siècle plus tôt, en 1547, sur le mur nord de l’église Saint-Georges du monastère de Voroneț. Il est vrai qu’à Voroneț, cette scène illustre (d’une manière incorrecte!) une séquence de la vie de saint Antoine, dont l’hagiographie, comme en témoignent les sources littéraires, n’inclut pas le drôle d’épisode “avec l’élévation de la feuille de chêne”. Cette confusion/fusion dans l’illustration des hagiographies d’Antoine et de Pacôme nous a incité à examiner en parallèle les cycles des vies de ces deux grands champions du monachisme égyptien.

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En préambule, nous avertissons le lecteur que cette étude vise exclusivement les cycles peints de la vie de saint Pacôme. Ces cycles sont rares dans la peinture chrétienne et ils ne doivent pas être confondus avec les images fréquemment rencontrées de saint Pacôme solitaire ou de l’apparition de l’ange à saint Pacôme. Ainsi, au XVIe siècle en Moldavie, le cycle de la vie de saint Pacôme n’est conservé que dans les peintures des monastères de Humor (1535) (Fig. 1) et de Sucevița (1596) (Fig. 2). Dans la peinture bulgare, nous n’avons qu’une seule icône tardive, à partir de 1824, de Kristiou Zakhariev3, avec quatre scènes de la vie du saint réparties dans les quatre coins du champ central de l’icône.

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L’hagiographie de saint Pacôme, fondateur du monachisme cénobi-lique, appartient à l’immense corpus de la littérature pacômienne, dans diverses versions manuscrites (plus tard imprimées) en plu-sieurs langues : en grec, en copte, en latin, en syriaque, en arabe, en slavon etc.⁴

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Dans l’église de la Dormition de la Vierge du monastère de Humor (1535), le cycle de la vie de saint Pacôme est situé dans la partie orien-tale de la façade nord (Fig. 1). Il occupe les registres supérieurs du

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⁴ Voir l’Annexe.
mur situé entre les absides nord et est du bâtiment. Ce cycle, dont seulement quatre scènes ont été conservées, deux d’entre elles étant sérieusement endommagées, est flanqué à l’est et à l’ouest par l’immense image de l’Église triomphante, connue également sous le nom de Prière de tous les saints. Au registre supérieur, les images préservées du cycle sont celles de Saint Pacôme devant saint Palamon (sans texte explicatif slavon) et L’ange apparaissant sous les traits d’un moine à saint Pacôme (image pratiquement perdue). Au second registre du cycle, l’image de gauche nous montre la scène de l’Envoi du portier pour accueillir la sœur de saint Pacôme (Fig. 3). Le texte explicatif slavon donne “Voici venir la sœur de Pacôme” et confirme cette identification. L’image de droite du même registre nous montre saint Pacôme devant un groupe de religieuses. L’inscription explicative slavonne de cette scène a été complètement détruite. Mais la comparaison avec des scènes analogues et mieux conservées du monastère de Suceviţa indique qu’il s’agit ici de La transmission aux religieuses de l’ordre de la vie monastique ou bien de La nomination de la sœur de Pacôme comme abbesse du couvent des religieuses.

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Au monastère de Suceviţa (1596), La vie de Pacôme commence au deuxième registre de la façade nord par l’image du Baptême du saint. Ce registre comprend encore huit scènes illustrant des épisodes de l’hagiographie pacômienne: L’ange apparaissant dans un rêve à saint Pacôme, Saint Pacôme venant chez saint Palamon, L’ange apparaissant sous les traits d’un moine à saint Pacôme, Saint Pacôme envoie le portier pour saluer sa sœur, L’envoi du vieux prêtre Pierre pour visiter la sœur de saint Pacôme, Saint Pacôme envoie le même vieux prêtre Pierre chargé de prendre soin du couvent nouvellement créé par la sœur du saint, une image d’un paysage montagneux (sans inscription et partiellement cachée par le toit du porche ouvert de l’église), Les monastères fondés par saint Pacôme. La conservation des fresques est assez bonne et la lecture des inscriptions slavones de ce registre ne pose pas de difficultés.

Le second registre consacré à la vie du saint (le troisième de la façade) commence avec la scène de l’Inclinaison de l’oratoire (Fig. 4). Nous voyons saint Pacôme en prière et un groupe de moines qui tentent d’incliner à l’aide de cordes le clocher d’une église. La Vie du saint nous dit que le bienheureux Pacôme bâtit un oratoire dans son monastère; il lui fit des portiques, il éleva des colonnes avec des briques,
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Fig. 3. L’église de la Dormition de la Vierge du monastère de Humor. L’envoi du portier pour accueillir la sœur d’après la chair de Saint-Pacôme

Fig. 4. L’église de la Résurrection du Seigneur du monastère de Sucevița. L’Inclinaison de l’oratoire
Fig. 5. L'église de la Résurrection du Seigneur du monastère de Suceviţa. La double représentation de Saint-Pacôme.

Fig. 6. L'église de la Résurrection du Seigneur du monastère de Suceviţa. La découverte par Saint-Antoine du vieux ermite Paul de Thèbes et le repas apporté aux deux saints par un oiseau.
il l’ordonna avec soin. Ce travail lui parut à son goût parce qu’il l’avait bâti avec grande beauté. En méditant, il comprit par la suite que c’était par l’opération du démon qu’il avait admiré la beauté du bâtiment; il prit donc une corde, l’attacha aux colonnes qui s’inclinèrent et tombèrent avec toute la construction. Il dit alors aux frères: “Voyez à ne pas vous préoccuper d’ornir les œuvres de vos mains; ayez plutôt pour souci que la grâce de Dieu et son don se trouvent dans l’ouvrage de chacun de vous, de crainte qu’au moment où l’esprit s’abaisse à chercher des louanges pour son travail, il ne devienne la proie du démon!”

La scène suivante au même registre montre un paysage montagneux avec saint Pacôme en prière. Le texte de l’inscription slavone “La prière de saint Pacôme” confirme cette interprétation de l’image. Comme le paysage est peu détaillé et comme le texte de La vie de Pacôme abonde en épisodes où sont mentionnées les prières, il est difficile de déterminer avec précision à quel passage du texte correspond l’image.

Dans la troisième et dernière scène de ce registre, saint Pacôme est présenté deux fois (Fig. 5). Tout d’abord nous voyons le saint à droite d’un monastère, entouré par plusieurs groupes de moines, certains debout, d’autres à genoux et en prière. Dans la même scène, sur la surface de la fresque qui est au-dessus du toit du petit porche latéral de l’église, on voit un groupe d’anges accompagnant le jeune Christ qui se dirige vers saint Pacôme. Ce dernier, représenté pour la deuxième fois, porte le nom “Pacôme” inscrit au-dessus de sa tête. Il est clair qu’il s’agit ici du passage suivant du récit hagiographique de la vie du saint: “Alors que le dévot priait, deux anges se tenaient devant lui; et parmi eux était un jeune homme d’une beauté indiscutable, brillant comme la lumière du soleil et ayant sur sa tête une couronne d’épines. Et les anges, soulevant Pacôme de la terre, lui dirent: Puisque vous avez demandé la miséricorde du Seigneur, la voici: Dieu de Gloire, Jésus-Christ, Fils unique du Père, qui a été envoyé dans ce monde et a été crucifié pour vous, et qui porte cette couronne d’épines sur sa tête!”

Le dernier registre (le quatrième de la façade nord et le troisième présentant des scènes de la vie du saint) est le plus difficile à interpréter

6 Vieţile sfinţilor, 340-341.
Fig. 7. L’église de la Résurrection du Seigneur du monastère de Sucevița.
La tentation du saint par le démon Tagara

Fig. 8. L’église de la Résurrection du Seigneur du monastère de Sucevița.
La levée de la feuille de chêne
et soulève bien des questions. Dans ce registre se produit une intrusion étrange et difficile à comprendre de scènes tirées de la vie de saint Antoine dans les images de la vie de saint Pacôme et vice versa. Cette insertion est visible à partir de la première scène du registre où l’inscription et l’image montrent à la fois (et sans aucun doute) qu’il s’agit de l’épisode bien connu de la découverte par saint Antoine du vieil ermite Paul de Thèbes (dans sa grotte du désert) et du repas apporté par un oiseau aux deux saints (Fig. 6).

La scène suivante montre le même saint se dirigeant vers les montagnes. Devant le saint se trouve un hideux démon ailé qui gesticule frénétiquement (Fig. 7). L’inscription slave nous fait savoir que le nom du démon est “Tagara”. Dans l’histoire des débuts de l’église moldave, on connaît un imposteur grec dont le nom était Tagara et qui se présentait comme patriarche de Constantinople. Mais il est peu probable que les concepteurs du programme iconographique ou les peintres de Sucevița aient entendu parler de lui. Selon une autre hypothèse, le nom Tagara est une forme corrompue du nom de l’archaïque divinité protobulgare Tangara. Dans les écrits chrétiens, les cas sont fréquent où les anciens dieux païens sont identifiés avec des démons. La disparition de la consonne nasale “n” dans le nom propre Tangara est probablement dû au fait que, dans le grec byzantin, le groupe consonantique “ng” est écrit par une lettre gamma doublée. Dans un mot comme “Tangara”, prononcé de façon similaire en grec et en slave, la formule “ΤΑΓ(Γ)ΑΡΑ”, avec la deuxième lettre “Γ” superposée est envisageable, cette lettre pouvant disparaître plus tard.

La troisième et dernière scène du registre illustre l’épisode où les démons, à l’aide de quelques cordes et de poulies, soulevant une légère feuille de chêne dans le but de faire rire le saint (Fig. 8). Le récit hagiographique de la vie du saint décrit cet épisode de manière suivante: “Or le diable voyant qu’il ne l’aurait plus attraper, ny faire entrer en

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7 Popovici, Euseviu. Istoria bisericească universală și statistica bisericească: De la împlinirea Schismeui între biserica de Apus și biserica de Răsărit până în prezent (1054–1910). Ed. a 2-a, București, 1927, 64.
8 Iliev, Alexandr. Тангра и болгары. Духовное пространство древних и средневековых болг [Tangra i bolgary. Duhovnoye prostранство drevnih i srednevekovых bolgar], In: Тенгрианство и эпическое наследие народов Евразии: истоки и современность [Tengrianstvo i epicheskoye nasledye narodov Evrazii: istoki i sovremennost], 2013, Ulan-Bator, Mongolia / http://tengrifund.ru/tangra-i-bolgari.html
9 Par exemple: le mot “ange” prononcé comme “Anguélos” est orthographié “ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ” (en grec – “αγγέλος” et en slavon “АГГЕЛЪ”.

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melancholie, pensa qu’il l’attraperait du côté de la joie, puis qu’il s’estoît ry de la première embuscade. Il s’en va doncques attacher grande quantité de grosses cordes à une feuille d’arbre, et se mirent plusieurs démons à ces cordes, comme pour tirer avec une grande violence; crians et suans, comme s’ils eussent eu grande peine. Le bon saint levant les yeux, et voyant cette folie, se représente Nôtre Seigneur crucifié en l’arbre de la Croix: eux voyans que le saint s’appliquoit au fruit de l’arbre; et non à la feuille, s’en allèrent tous confus et honteux. Il y a temps de rire, et temps de ne pas rire: comme aussi temps de parler et de se taire, comme nous monstra ce glorieux saint en ces tentations...”

On a pu constaté que, bien que l’épisode est effectivement tiré de l’hagiographie pacômienne, le nom du saint dans l’image est Andonie (Antoine) et non Pacôme, comme on l’avait précédemment supposé (Fig. 9). De plus, l’inscription explicative slavonne a démenti l’une des principales idées de l’article d’André Grabar11 (basée sur une interprétation insolite du texte slavon de l’hagiographie du saint), idée selon laquelle à Sucevița on avait volontairement inversé le protagoniste qui devait être incité à rire, Pacôme étant substitué par l’un des démons. Les recherches ultérieures ont montré que la dernière scène de La vie de saint Pacôme de Sucevița est inspirée par une scène similaire, peinte environ un demi-siècle plus tôt, en 1547, sur le mur nord de l’église Saint-Georges du monastère de Voroneț (Fig. 10). Il est vrai qu’à Voroneț cette scène illustre (d’une manière incorrecte) une séquence de la vie de saint Antoine, dont le dossier hagiographique, comme en témoignent les sources littéraires, ne comprend pas l’épisode comique de la levée de la feuille de chêne.

Conclusions

1. Le cycle de saint Pacôme, peint sur les façades des églises de la Dormition de la Vierge de Humor et de la Résurrection du Seigneur de Sucevița, illustre des épisodes inspirés dans leur ensemble par les textes hagiographiques slavons de la vie du saint et, en particulier, par celle du Grand Menaion avec les vies des saints pour le mois de mai.

Fig. 9. L’église Saint-Georges du monastère de Voroneț et l’église de la Résurrection du Seigneur du monastère de Sucevita. Les inscriptions slavonnes avec le nom de Saint-Antoine dans les scènes “La levée de la feuille de chêne”

Fig. 10. L’église Saint-Georges du monastère de Voroneț. La levée de la feuille de chêne
2. Les inscriptions explicatives slavonnes des illustrations du cycle de la vie de saint Pacôme de Suceviţa ne répètent pas littéralement les textes hagiographiques slavons. Ces inscriptions sont des titres ou des commentaires pour des images concrètes du cycle de la vie et des miracles de saint Pacôme; elles ne sont en aucun cas des fragments narratifs extraits littéralement de l’hagiographie du saint.

3. L’intégration dans l’hagiographie illustrée pacômienne des scènes de la vie de saint Antoine a lieu seulement dans la quatrième rangée d’images de la décoration de la façade nord de Suceviţa. Si, comme dans l’exemple erroné des fresques de Voroneţ, les concepteurs et les peintres de Suceviţa ont associé la levée de la feuille de chêne à l’hagiographie de saint Antoine, et non à l’histoire pacômienne, il en résulte que la moitié ouest de la façade nord de l’église contient (sous le cycle des illustrations du livre de la Genèse) non pas un, mais deux cycles hagiographiques: celui de saint Pacôme – dans les deuxième et troisième rangées d’images – et celui de saint Antoine – dans la quatrième rangée. De tels cas sont présents dans la peinture des façades des églises moldaves du XVIᵉ siècle: ainsi à Voroneţ, sur le mur nord, sous trois registres de la vie de saint Antoine, nous avons une rangée entière d’images, composé de six scènes, qui dépeint le cycle de la vie de saint Gérasimos du Jourdain et du lion guéri par ce saint.
Annexe

Les sources sur la vie de saint Pacôme sont les suivantes (dans l’ordre approximatif de leur connaissance en Occident)

la *Vita sancti Pachomii abbatis Tabennensis*, texte latin dû au moine Denys le Petit (début du VIe siècle), qui est la traduction latine d’une *Vie* grecque antérieure (*Patrologie latine* de Migne, t. 73, col. 229-272);

une *Vie grecque* attribuée traditionnellement (mais faussement) à Syméon le Métaphraste (*la Vie métaphrastique*), traduite en latin par Gentien Hervet sous le titre *Vita sancti Patris nostri Pachomii*, traduction publiée notamment par Lorenz Sauer (*Laurentius Surius, De probatis sanctorum vitis*, Cologne, 1617, t. III, p. 195 sqq.); cette *Vie métaphrastique* est en fait composée d’une *Vie* de Pacôme lui-même suivie d’épisodes de la vie de ses disciples. La comparaison avec le texte de Denys le Petit montre qu’elle se fonde sur le même modèle, mais en l’amplifiant considérablement;


une collection de récits séparés publiée par les Bollandistes sous le titre *Paralipomena de SS. Paccomio et Theodoro* (loc. cit., p. 44-53, trad. lat. p. 333-345), suite de récits analogue à l’*Histoire lausitique*, avec mêmes titres et même disposition des matières, probablement extraite de la *Vie* suivante ou de son prototype;

une *Vie du bienheureux Pacôme* en grec conservée dans un manuscrit de Paris du Xe siècle (Paris. gr. 881 ; éditée par François Nau, *Patrologia Orientalis*, t. IV, fasc. 5, n°19, Brepols, Turhout, 1981);

une *Vie de Pacôme* se trouvant dans un manuscrit palimpseste provenant du Mont Athos, où elle a été transcrite au XIVe siècle sur un texte sous-jacent du VIIIe siècle, manuscrit démembré et incomplet dont certains feuillets se trouvent à Paris (suppl. gr. 480), d’autres à Chartres (ms. n° 1754);

les extraits d’une *Vie de Pacôme* cités par Nicon de la Montagne Noire (XIe siècle). Il s’agit apparemment de la *Vie* précédente;

une *Vie syriaco* très ancienne, présente dans des recueils du VIIe siècle (notons le *Paradisus Patrum* réalisé par le moine nestorien Enanjésus du couvent de Beth ‘Abhé pour le catholicos


une version arabe publiée et traduite par Émile Amélineau (Annales du Musée Guimet, ibid., p. 337-712), compilation récente;

il faut y ajouter les récits de l’Histoire lausiaque, de Palladios (§ 32), en principe le plus ancien document, mais en fait cette compilation de récits a été très tôt complétée sans qu’on puisse distinguer ce qui vient de Palladios lui-même. En fait, l’ensemble de ces documents semble être le produit de compilations successives de trois sources remontant au IVe siècle : 1. une Vie de Pacôme (en grec) ; 2. une Vie de Théodore (son disciple le plus célèbre) ; 3. un recueil d’Ascetica (c’est-à-dire d’épisodes tirés de la vie des ascètes).

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Dans la littérature slavonne, les textes dédiés à saint Pacôme sont entrés encore à l’époque pré-mongole. Ainsi, de la collection de manuscrits Ouspensk (frontière du XIIe et du XIIIe siècle) fait partie le texte intitulé “La vie de notre père Pacôme, qui était au début de l’image des moines”. Comme l’a démontré le philologue-médiéviste russe Oleg V. Tvorogov12, ce texte ne concerne pas directement les différentes variantes de la vie de saint Pacôme, car il s’agit d’une traduction des chapitres 32-34 de l’Histoire lausiaque de Pallade, chapitres qui parlent non seulement de saint Pacôme et des monastères fondés par celui-ci, mais aussi au sujet des couvents des nonnes et des événements qui s’y ont déroulés, ainsi qu’au sujet de la vie de l’ascète Pitirim (en traduction slave: Pitirim).

Quant au récit hagiographique proprement dit du saint, il faut noter que, dans l’histoire de la littérature slavonne étaient connus (tous ou en fragments) plusieurs versions de La vie saint Pacôme. La plus ancienne semble être la traduction slave du texte latin, attribué à Denys le Petit (Vita Sancti Pachomii Abbatis Tabennensis). Les traductions slavonnes de la Vie de saint Pacôme inclue dans le Grand Ménaion pour le mois de mai ont

été compilées à partir de multiples sources. Cette hagiographie
slavonne a été faite sur la base de plusieurs fragments des rè-
glements monastiques pacômiens (traduit en latin par saint
Jérôme), du chapitre sur Pacôme et les tabénissiotes de l’Histoire
lausiaque de Pallade et du texte grec de la vie du saint, – texte –
attribué, à tort, à Siméon le Métaphraste.

La version roumaine de la Vie de saint Pacôme est une traduction
fidèle de ce récit hagiographique slavon, compilé à partir de
plusieurs sources grecques et latines. Pour cette raison, dans la
version slavonne et ensuite dans ses traductions roumaines on
trouve à la fois l’épisode avec la levée de la feuille de chêne ainsi
que l’épisode de l’inclinaison de l’édifice; or, en grec, en latin ou
en copte, ces deux épisodes ne sont jamais unis dans la même
version du texte de la vie du saint.
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Житието на св. Пахомий Велики – една малко проучен агиологичен цикъл в живописта на Молдавия

Константин Чобану

Обект на настоящото изследване е слабо проучваният агиологичен цикъл „Житие на св. Пахомий Велики“ в молдавската стенна живопис. Този цикъл се среща рядко в християнската иконография и не би трябвало да се бърка с често разпространените самостоятелни изображения на св. Пахомий и сцената „Ангел се явява на св. Пахомий“. В молдавското изкуство от XVI в. житийният цикъл на св. Пахомий се съхранява в екстериорната украса на манастирите Хумор и Сучевица. Това изследване показва, че последната сцена от „Житието на св. Пахомий“, изобразена в Сучевица, е вдъхновена от аналогична композиция, появila се вероятно половин столетие по-рано, или през 1547 г., на северната фасада на църквата „Св. Георги“ в манастира Воронец. Истина е, че в манастира Воронец споменатата сцена (неправилно!) илюстрира „Житието на св. Антоний“, чиято агиография, както свидетелстват литературните източници, не включва в себе си страниния епизод с „Вдигането на дъбовите листа от демоните“. 
Post-Byzantine Wall Paintings in Euboea: The Monastery of Panagia Peribleptos at Politika

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Abstract: The wall paintings of the seventeenth century church of Panagia Peribleptos at Politika on Euboea were possibly produced by a local workshop. Rigorously executed, and with complex conceptual and spiritual content, the paintings permit an examination of the monument in the context of contemporary monumental painting, both on the island and in the wider region. Moreover, we may also explore the largely unknown Post-Byzantine artistic production of Euboea, which maintained the tradition of the great Theban painters of the preceding century.

Key words: Metrophanes, Justus, Eleutheroupolis, Bibloupolis, Katelano, Kontaris, Skripou.

A. The history

The Byzantine monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin, also known as Panagia Peribleptos (Fig. 1), may be found in central Euboea. The monastery has been the focus of research since the 1930s. Anasta-
Orlandos was the first to look into the architecture and decoration of this monument, and also into the issues associated with the name of the monastery. In the late 90s Charalambos Bouras studied the sculpture and the pavement of the catholicon and established a link between the foundation of Panagia Peribleptos on Euboea, and the famous monastery of Hosios Loukas in Boeotia.

In its long history, the catholicon underwent several stages of build-

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3 Orlandos. Περιβλέπτος, 175-184.
5 About the history of the monastery see Mamaloukos, Stavros, Pinatsi, Christina. Συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία για το καθολικό της μονής Περιβλέπτου στα Πολιτικά της Εύβοιας. – Αρχείον Ευβοϊκών Μελετών, 2007, No. 37, 71-82.
ing work, mainly during the Post-Byzantine period, which altered its original architectural form. Based on the new research findings, Stavros Mamaloukos and Christina Pinatsi argued in 2007 that the catholicon in its present form belongs to a single building phase. On the grounds of both epigraphic and architectural evidence, this phase can be dated back to the 17th century, confirming 1668 (Fig. 2) – a date that appears on the dedicatory inscription – as a terminus ante quem.

Fig. 2. The monastery of Panagia Peribleptos at Politika, Euboea. The dedicatory inscription

6 Mamaloukos, Pinatsi. Συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία, 74-75.
7 Mamaloukos, Pinatsi. Συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία, fig. 21.
B. Architecture-Decoration
The building in its present form is a cross-in-square church of the semi-complex four-columned type, rectangular in plan⁸. The *catholicon* is decorated with remarkable wall paintings that occupy the dome and the drum, the walls and the vaults of the *prothesis* and the Sanctuary, and also the upper part of the *templon*. The remaining surfaces of the building had never been painted, as the construction details indicated us. In its present state, the building and its mural decoration show extensive signs of damage caused by a destructive earthquake and, more recently, by a fire.

C. Conservation and restoration work
In recent years, extensive restoration and conservation works have been undertaken thanks to private sponsorship, under the super-

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⁸ *Mamaloukos, Pinatsi.* Συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία, 72-74.
vision of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Euboea. The conservation work was carried out under the direction of Ioannis Spanos, and was completed at the end of 2015.

D. The iconographic programme

The wall paintings of Peribleptos, preserved in relatively good condition, include – apart from liturgical themes – a large number of scenes from the broader Christological Cycle (Fig. 3) and also from the iconography of the Virgin Mary. Numerous individual figures, prophets and saints, complete the iconographic programme.

A narrow zone stretches along both lateral walls of the Sanctuary, with scenes of the Divine Liturgy, as an extension of the Communion (Fig. 4), with the Heavenly Liturgy of Angels carrying the Body of Christ in procession. In the lower registers, a further four hier-
archs are shown, from right to left: Hierotheos⁹, Dionysios the Areopagite¹⁰, John Kaloktenis and Germanos. Moreover, four co-officiating Fathers leaning forward in the direction of the Sanctuary are represented on the intrados of the arches, between the Sanctuary and the parabemata: Clement and Metrophanes of Constantinople decorating the north intrados, and Justus of Eleutheropolis with John of Bibloupolis occupying the south one (Fig. 6-9).

Finally, the Post-Byzantine templon is constructed in accordance with the wooden ones¹¹ (Fig. 5). Three horizontal registers are defined. Byzantine marble panels are placed in the lower zone. Across the middle register are wall-painted figures of saints or compositions serving as despotic icons, and over the original marble epistyle there extends a Great Deesis with 17 figures. It should be noted that the entire mural decoration of the templon had been overpaint-

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⁹ Delehaye. Synaxarium. 103.
¹¹ Mamaloukos, Piniasi. Συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία, 73, fig. 1, 7.
ed. During the conservation work, it was confirmed that the original frescoes were preserved in their entirety. It was therefore deemed necessary to remove all the overpaintings of low quality. Indeed, after the removal, it became clear that the original wall paintings of the temple were stylistically linked to those of the Sanctuary and may therefore also be dated to 1668.

E. Observations on iconography

Having presented the iconographic programme of Peribleptos, certain stylistic and iconographic observations need to be pointed out. The inscriptions, although often spelled phonetically, are marked by a strong decorative character. A similar decorative feature is also evident in the way that the garments have been rendered. Garments are decorated with gems and pearls, and embroidered with vegetal and geometric motifs in various combinations. It should be noted that some of these decorative elements are rendered in relief – a technique that also appears on some of the inscriptions and on the halo of the Pantokrator within the dome.

The iconographic programme, whose vibrant and rich composition lays emphasis on liturgical and dogmatic themes, also features numerous figures of prophets and, chiefly, Fathers of the Church. In fact, more than fifteen hierarchs are represented in the Peribleptos, including some figures of local eminence, such as John Kaloktenis, and also some hierarchs who are not frequently encountered in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine painting.

The depiction of Hierotheos, the bishop of Athens, in a prominent position, is a case in point. According to his vita, Hierotheos was present in the Dormition of the Virgin. The venerable father is consistently, although not frequently, depicted in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine painting. Sometimes in the Dormition of the Vir-

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gin\textsuperscript{16} and occasionally as a co-officiating hierarch\textsuperscript{17}, whereas his martyrdom is seldom depicted\textsuperscript{18}.

Germanos\textsuperscript{19} and John Kaloktenis, a further two holy figures depicted in the Peribleptos, lived later. Germanos I\textsuperscript{20} may be identified on

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{16} Aceimastou-Potamianou, Myrtali. Οι τοιχογραφίες της Μονής των Φιλανθρωπηνών στο νησί των Ιωαννίνων. Athens, 2004, 133, fig. 123.
\textsuperscript{17} Millet, Gabriel. Monuments de l’Athos, I, Les peintures. Paris, 1910. pl. 256.2. Orlandos. Μονή Δαφνίου, 89-93. fig. 21, 23.
\textsuperscript{18} Aceimastou-Potamianou. Μονή των Φιλανθρωπηνών, 139, fig. 96.
\textsuperscript{19} Delehaye. Synaxarium, 677-680.
\textsuperscript{20} Papadopoulo-Kerameus. Εξημνεία, 155.
\end{flushleft}
He is perhaps most famous as the Patriarch of Constantinople deposed during the Iconoclastic period, but was also a distinguished author and hymnographer.

On the other hand, Kaloktenis, the eminent Metropolitan of Thebes, lived in the 12th century. Being a man of spirit and action, held in high esteem for his deep theological knowledge, he became especially popular with the people of Thebes for his many activities as a

public benefactor to the city. He was canonized after his death and appears in the monumental painting of the wider region, where his memory still lives on.

Metrophanes, the first bishop of Constantinople, worked together with Constantine the Great on establishing the glorious churches that embellished the new capital (Fig. 6). His depiction in the Peribleptos is rare in Byzantine painting in which he is usually shown in expanded representations of co-officiating hierarchs.

In contrast to these generally well-known or locally distinguished figures, the presence of Justus of Eleutheropolis and John of Bibloupolis remains difficult to explain (Fig. 8, 9). In the Acts of the Apostles Justus is referred to as Joseph Barsabbas. He was renamed Justus when he was elected to take over Judas’s place in apostolic ministry. Justus later became Metropolitan of Eleutheropolis near Jerusalem (Fig. 9).

Even fewer attestations are available concerning John of Bibloupolis. He is mentioned, like Justus, only in the list of the seventy Apostles (Fig. 8). Bibloupolis is identified with the ancient city of Byblos in Lebanon, which together with the city of Botrys constituted a Metropolitan See administered by the Patriarchate of Antioch. So far, I have not traced any other iconographic parallel, although reference to this toponym can be found in the well-known Hermeneia.

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27 Constantinidis, Emmanouil. Ελευθερόπολις, Θρησκευτική και Ηθική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια, No. 5. Athens, 1964, 569-570.
of Dionysios of Phourna. Finally, Clement, portrayed on the arch of the prothesis, whose the accompanying inscription mentions only his name, can be securely identified with Clement of Alexandria, one of the founders of the Orthodox Christianity in that city (Fig. 7).

30 Papadopoloulos-Kerameus. Ερμηνεία, 153.
The placement of these figures on the intrados of the arches between the bema and the *parabemata*, facing each other, suggests that these ought to form a coherent group. Indeed, Metrophanes, Clement, John and Justus share some common characteristics: they all lived during the early centuries of Christianity and may be considered representatives of the four ancient Orthodox Patriarchates, following their ecclesiastical rank, namely of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Based on this observation, it can be deduced that besides the Fathers of the Church who form part of the conventional iconography of the apse, the mural programme of Politika gives emphasis to the great figures of Orthodox Faith, who contributed to the establishment, consolidation and expansion of the Eastern Church, locally as well as more generally. One may infer from such an iconographic programme not only a deep knowledge of these distinguished figures of the Church, but also of the major theological issues related to their activities. This suggests that the person who devised the programme of the Peribleptos came from a cultured environment, possibly from the monasteries of the island.

**Style**

Stylistically, the wall paintings at Politika can be attributed to at least two different workshops. The scenes depicting the miracles of Jesus and the zone with the half-length saints in the *prothesis* were possibly produced by a later workshop (Fig. 10).

In these scenes the figures are short, marked by the flat rendering of the flesh and lacking distinctive facial features. Drapery here is likewise plain, whereas the narratives scenes themselves are infused with intensity betraying a strong interest in the depiction of details, but also a naive stylistic tendency.

The decoration of the Bema, the *templon*, the *prothesis* and the dome, were all rendered by an earlier workshop. Based on the epigraphic evidence mentioned above, all may be securely dated to 1668 (Fig. 2-9).

In these wall paintings the figures are taller and leaner. Solemn expressions on their faces, modeled with dark players of underpaint and accentuated contours, emanate a sense of holiness. The forms are articulated while the postures and the gestures are elegant. By
contrast, the garments are flatter with few drapery folds despite the rich embroidered decoration. The compositions are rather plain, symmetrically arranged, and mainly conform to known types from Cretan art (Fig. 3).

These mannerisms are associated with renowned Theban painters of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century such as Frangos Katelanos\textsuperscript{32} and the Kontari\textsuperscript{33} brothers. Similar stylistic features may be traced in other monuments of the wider region whose decoration is dated to the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, for example the mural paintings of the church of St Nicholas at Korakies (Euboea)\textsuperscript{34}.

Even closer correspondence may be seen between the 1668 mural paintings of the Panagia Peribleptos at Politika and the Post-Byzantine wall paintings of the monastery of Panagia Skripou in Orchomenos, particularly with regard to the iconographic rendering of the figures as well as their stylistic qualities\textsuperscript{35}. Such a direct link between the two sets of paintings lead us to the conclusion that both may be attributed to a single workshop that was active in Boeotia and Euboea during the second half of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century.

The wall paintings of the Panagia Peribleptos at Politika on Euboea were possibly therefore produced by a local workshop. Rigorously executed, and with complex conceptual and spiritual content, the paintings permit an examination of the monument in the context of contemporary monumental painting, both on the island and in the wider region. Moreover, we may also explore the largely unknown Post-Byzantine artistic production of Euboea, which maintained the tradition of the great Theban painters of the preceding century.

\textsuperscript{32} Chazidakis, Drakopoulou. Έλληνες ζωγράφοι, 76-79.
\textsuperscript{34} Unpublished.
\textsuperscript{35} Ieronymos, Böotia, 84-86, fig. 75-112.
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*Mamaloukos, Stavros, Pinatsi, Christina.* Συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία για το καθολικό της μονής Περιβλέπτου στα Πολιτικά της Εύβοιας. – Αρχείον Ευβοϊκών Μελετών, 2007, No. 37, 71-82.


Поствизантийски стенописи на остров Евбея: манастирът „Св. Богородица Перивлепта“ в с. Политика

Андромахи Кацелаки

Близо до историческото селище Политика в централната част на о. Евбея се намира манастирът „Св. Богородица Перивлепта“. Католиконът от типа на сложния четириколонен вписан кръстовиден храм с купол е бил преустроен през османския период и не е запазил оригиналния си план. В по-ново време пък сериозни земетресения и скоростърен пожар са също оказали своето влияние върху състоянието на църквата.

Във вътрешното пространство стенописната украса е датирана без съмнения от посветителния надпис в проскомидийната ниша през 1668 г.

Стенописите на „Перивлепта“, съсредоточени днес в купола и олтара, включват литургични и евхаристийни сюжети, сцени от Христологичния и Мариологичния цикъл, както и множество самостоятелни фигури.

Особен интерес представлява изборът на представените тук йерарси. Шестима отци на църквата са изобразени в свода на олтара: св. Кирил Александрийски, св. Атанасий Велики, св. Йоан Златоуст, св. Василий Велики, св. Григорий и св. Спиридон. Други четирима йерарси се появяват във върху страничните стени на олтарното пространство: св. Йеротей, св. Дионисий Ареопагит, св. Йоан Калоккенис, митрополит на Тива, както и св. Герман. Още четирима отци пък са зографисани в отворите за комуникация на олтара със страничните ниши на север: св. Климент Охридски, св. Митрофан Константинополски, а на юг – св. Иуст Елефтерулуски и св. Йоан Вивлиулуски. Съвършени последните четири персонажа, се разбира, че всички са живели в ранохристиянския период и представляват четирите най-стари православни патриаршии, при съставящи тук в йерархичния им ред: Константинополска, Александрийска, Антиохийска и Йерусалимска.

Според горното наблюдение може да се изкаже тезата, че в с. Политика са изобразени йерарси, които с делото си са допринесли за основаването, укрепването и разширяването на източната църква, избор, който се дължи на една особено образована среда, вероятно състояща се от монаси на острова.

Стилистично стенописите в с. Политика могат да се припишат на две различни ателиета. На първото, което вероятно е и по-новото, принадлежат изображенията на Христовите чудеса, както и реда на допоясните светци в
протезисната ниша. Тези стенописи в народен стил демонстрират наративна склонност и представят интерес по отношение на дetailите от действителността.

На второто и по-ранно датираното ателие се приписва украсата на олтара, на иконостаса и на апсидата в протезиса, както и на купола, датирани през 1668 г.

В тези стенописи се разпознават художествени похвати, свързващи се пряко със зографи от Тива от XVI в. като Франгос Кателанос и братята Кондарис. Особени сходства обаче се забелязват със стенописната украса в с. Политика и в манастира „Св. Богородица Скрипу“. Директната релация между Перивлента и Скрипу ни отвеждат до хипотезата, че и двата паметника биха могли да се припишат на художествената продукция на едно и също ателие, което работи в Беотия и на Евбея през втората половина на XVII в.
A Unique 15th Century Donation to Vatopedi: A Pair of Wood-carved Lecterns*

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In memory of my father

Abstract: The topic of this paper is the pair of impressive wood-carved lecterns kept in the new sacristy of Vatopedi monastery on Athos. The style of their decoration, their historical context as well as available written sources all strongly suggest that the two masterpieces were created in Crete in the mid-15th c.

Key words: Mt Athos; Vatopedi; Cretan woodcarving; Palaiologan Art; Venetian Art.

Objects in focus

A pair of wood-carved lecterns (117x48 cm), both unusual for their type and unique for the artistic quality and peculiarity of the deco-

* I wish to express my deepest gratitude to abbot Archimandrite Ephrem and the whole brotherhood for granting me permission to take and publish photographs of the lecterns, and to use unpublished written sources from the monastery’s archive; I am especially obliged to the sacristan father Iosef for his generous help and patience during my research. I would like to thank Emmanuel Moutafov for his kind invitation to participate at the Conference and the warm hospitality in Sofia. I am also grateful to my friends and colleagues Angeliki Katsioti, Nikos Mastrochristos and Nikos Siomkos for their useful remarks, but also to Vangelis Maladakis and Fani Seroglou for their valuable help in editing the English text.

I Dr. Dimitrios Liakos works at the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chalkidiki and Mt Athos (Ministry of Culture and Sports/Greece). His interests include Byzantine and Post-Byzantine sculpture, woodcarving, minor art, epigraphy, opus sectile pavements and Athonite archives.
ration, is currently kept in the new sacristy of Vatopedi monastery on Athos (Fig. 1, 2).

Each lectern is composed of octagonal body with twenty-four incorporated panels standing on eight short legs. On each face three panels are surrounded by a wood-carved frame adorned with acanthus leaves. Tendrils terminate in leaves, acorns and pomegranates (Fig. 3, 4). The panels constitute a different iconographic program in each lectern (see Appendix): in the first one (lectern I) the cycle of the Akathistos Hymn is presented (inscriptions: A ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ Ο ΕΥΑΓ[ΓΕΛΙC]ΜΟΣ Μ(ΗΤΗ)[Ρ Θ(ΕΟ)Υ, Β ΒΛΕΠΟΥΣΑ Η ΑΓΙΑ Ε[Α]ΥΤΗ, Γ ΓΝΩΣΙΝ Α[ΓΝΩΣΤΟΝ ΤΝ[ΩΝΑΙ], Δ ΔΥΝΑΜΙΔΤΟΥΤ ΥΨΙΟΤΟΥ, Ε ΕΧΟΥΣΑ ΘΕΟΔΟΧ[ΟΝ]Ν, Ζ ΖΑΛΗΝ Ε[ΝΔΟΘΕΝ] ΕΧΩΝ, Η ΗΚΟΥΝΟΙΠΟΙΜΕΝΕΝ, ΘΕΟΔΡΟΜΟΝ ΑΣΤΕ[ΡΑ], Ι ΙΔΟΝ ΠΑΙΔΕΣ ΧΑΛΔ[ΑΙΩΝ], Κ ΚΗΡΥΡΕΣ ΘΕΟΦΟΡΟΙ, Μ ΜΕΛΑΝΟΝΤΟΣ ΣΥΜΕ[ΩΝΟ]ΟΝ, Ν ΝΕΑΝ ΕΔΕΣΕΝ ΚΤΗΣΙΟΝ, Ξ ΞΕΝΟΝ ΤΟΚΟΝ ΙΑΟΝ[ΤΕ]ΟΝ, Ο ΟΛΟΣ ΗΝ ΕΝ ΤΗΣ ΚΑΤΩ, Π ΠΑΣΑ ΦΥΣΗ ΑΓΓΕΛΟ[Ν], Ρ ΡΥΤΟΡΑΣ ΠΟΛΗΦΘΟΓ[ΓΟΥ], Σ ΣΩΣΑΙ ΘΕΑΩΝ ΤΟΝ [ΚΟΣΜΟΝ], Τ ΤΕΙΧΟΣ ΕΙ ΤΩΝ ΠΑΡΘΕΚ[ΩΝ], Υ ΥΜΝΟΣ ΑΠΑΣ ΗΤΤΑΤΕ, Φ [ΦΩΤΟΔΟΧΟΝ ΛΑΜΠΑΔΑ[Α], Χ ΧΑΡΙΝ ΘΕΛΗΝ ΑΝΤΣΟΥ ΦΑΛΝΜΑΤΩΝ], Ψ ΨΑΛΛΟΝΤΕΣ ΣΟΥ ΤΟΝ ΤΟΚΟΝ, Ω ΠΑΝΗΜΝΗΤΕ ΜΗΤΕΡ ΤΕΚΟΥΣΑ} (Fig. 3, 5). In the second (lectern II), twelve panels are adorned with intersecting circles or semi-circles (Fig. 6), one panel is not preserved, and on the rest, ten religious scenes were carved.


3 The dimensions are different in each zone (upper zone: 25x13 cm, middle zone: 29x13 cm, lower zone: 30x13 cm).

Seven scenes derive from the Old Testament: Diviner Balaam (ΒΑΛΑΜΑ Ο ΜΑΝΘΗΣ)⁵ (Fig. 7), the Hospitality of Abraham (Η ΦΙΛΟΞΕΝΙΑ)⁶, the Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace (ΤΡΕΙΣ ΠΑΙΔΕΣ)⁷ (Fig. 4), Nathan’s Re-buke and David’s Repentance (Η ΠΡΑΟΤΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΔΑΙΤΙΟΔΟΤΟΥ, Nathan’s scroll: ΚΥΡΙΟΙ ΑΦΙΕΡΩΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΠΟΜΟΝΩΤΟΥ, ΗΜΑΡΤΙΚΑ ΤΩ ΚΥΡΙΩ), Jacob’s Ladder (Η ΚΛΙΜΑΧ ΤΟΥ ΙΑΚΩΒ)⁹, the Holy Bramble (Η ΑΓΙΑ ΒΑΤΟΣ)¹⁰ (Fig. 8) and Daniel in the Lions’ Den (ΔΑΝΙΗΛ)¹¹. Furthermore, the Annunciation (ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟ)¹².

⁶ On the iconography, Koukiaris. Τα θαύματα – εμφανίσεις, 32, 106-111.
⁷ On the iconography, Koukiaris. Τα θαύματα – εμφανίσεις, 37, 138-142.
¹⁰ On the iconography, Papamastorakis, Titos. Η ένταξη των προεικονίσεων, 318, note 18; Koukiaris, Silas. Τα θαύματα – εμφανίσεις, 34, 123-124.
¹¹ On the iconography, Koukiaris. Τα θαύματα – εμφανίσεις, 37, 143-144.
¹² On the iconography, Papastavrou, Hélène. Recherche Iconographique dans l’art Byzantin.
Theotokos as the True Vine
[Θ(ΕΟΤΟ)ΚΕ ΣΥ ΕΙ ΑΜΠΕΛΟC Η ΑΛΗΘΕΙΝΗ]13 and the Apostles Peter and Paul carrying the model of a church (ΠΕΤΡΟC ΠΑΥΛΟC)14 (Fig. 9) are depicted. Monkeys were carved on the legs of both lecterns (Fig. 10).

These two impressive artworks have attracted travelers and scholar monks since the 17th century. Ioannis Komnenos, Arkadios of Vatopedi and Porfirij Uspenskij mention them in their accounts15; Arkadios and Uspenskij also note

Fig. 2. Vatopedi; lectern II

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13 This is a rare iconographic version of the theme “Christ the Vine”, Mantas, Apostolos. The Iconographic Subject “Christ the Vine” in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art. – ΔΧΑΕ, 2003, No. 24, 353; the accompanying inscription in the panel can be connected with the epithet of the Theotokos as “True Vine” in the Akathistos Hymn (Χαίρε Άμπελος Αλήθινη...), Aspra-Varvardaki. Οι μικρογραφίες, 39-40.

14 On the origin and the expansion of the theme see below note 47.

the monastic tradition, according to which Andronikos Palaiologos, Despotes of Thessaloniki (1408-1423), endowed the lecterns to Vatopedi.

Up to now, the lecterns have not been sufficiently studied. Some very short reports focus only on the enumeration of the scenes and the monastic tradition with reference to the patron. Based on this tradition, some scholars have claimed that the lecterns were created in Thessaloniki during the period of Andronikos’ reign; it has been also assumed that they were produced in Venice. Nevertheless, after thorough consideration of the style of the wood-carved decoration, and taking into account the historical context and the written sources, it seems that these hypotheses should be reconsidered.

Stylistic Features and Dating

Frame

In the frames, the floral ornaments have been executed in high, exergue, relief and were partially coloured. The contours of the acanthus leaves and sprouts have been rendered either with vertical or oblique edges. The overall execution is elaborated with meticulous attention to details. Both technique and style associate them with analogous wood-carved elements of the 14th and 15th century Venetian artworks, as those created by Lorenzo Veneziano and Fra Angelico, as well as the 15th century woodcarvings from Crete, like the altar screens of the Holy Apostles church in Adromili (Sitia) (ca.

16 Uspenskij, Porfirij. Pervoje Putešestivije, 33; Arkadios, Vatopedinos. История тис мони Ватопеди (unpublished), 277; Theophilos Vatopedinos. Χρονικον, 104.
17 See above, note 2.
19 Melvani. Ο Δεσπότης Θεσσαλονίκης, 423, note 33.
1415)\textsuperscript{21}, the catholicon of Valsamoneron monastery (aisle of St Phanourios) (ca. 1431)\textsuperscript{22} and the royal doors from St George Aportianon church in Patmos (the painting is attributed to Andreas Ritzos)\textsuperscript{23}. The same artistic trend is also reflected in some sculptures of Late Gothic churches, as those above the central entrance of St Sophia in Nicosia (first quarter of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century)\textsuperscript{24}. A sculpted marble capital (15\textsuperscript{th} century) from Herakleion\textsuperscript{25} echoes the same trend. Furthermore, although it is rather uncertain whether the ornament’s colouration belongs to the initial phase, similar polychromy is found in both the 14\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} century woodcarvings\textsuperscript{26} and sculptures\textsuperscript{27}.


\textsuperscript{22} Gerola. Monumenti Veneti, 352, (fig. 390). I wish to express my thanks to the Director of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Herakleion Vassiliki Sythiakaki and to my colleagues Eleni Kanaki and Maria Mari, who provided a photograph of the templon.

\textsuperscript{23} Chatzidakis, Manolis. Εικόνες της Πάτμου. Athens, 1995, 61-62 and pl. 80, fig. 11.


\textsuperscript{25} Gerola. Monumenti Veneti, 286 (fig. 355).


\textsuperscript{27} See for example the sculpted Virgin with the Christ Child from St Stefan church in Banjška monastery, now kept in Sokolica monastery, Kosovo [Faith and Power, 84-85, No. 41 (M. Šuput)], the sculpted decoration of the triple-light window of the eastern church’s apse of the catholicon in Kalenić monastery [Stevović, Ivan. Sacral Building in Moravan Serbia. In: D. Vojvodić, D. Popović (eds.). Sacral Art of the Serbian Lands in the Middle Ages. Belgrade, 2016, 432 (fig. 354)] and the facade in St Sophia, Trebizond (Eastmont, Antony. Art
**Iconography**

In all twenty-four panels of each lectern a particular technique is applied, namely thick wooden parts, coloured (blue or red), were impacted, and above those the wood-carved panels were inset. The authentic wooden part of the arched space above the representation of Peter and Paul has been lost⁵⁸, thus it remains unclear whether the dedicatory inscription was written on it. The scenes, thirty-three in total, follow Byzantine iconographic types⁵⁹. The panels were carved in a dexterous manner. The figures are executed in high relief, with smooth outlines. The overlapping levels, but also the distribution of the garments’ folds, rendered with dense and wide incisions, either angular or curved, create a sense of volume. The haloes are uplifted in the contours. The facial features of many holy figures are markedly similar.

High relief technique is wide-

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⁵⁸ Τhe current one was added after conservation works.
⁵⁹ See above, notes 4-14.
spread both in woodcarving and sculpture, but also in minor arts (metalwork, steatites etc.) dated to the Palaiologan era. Moreover, haloes with uplifted contours are frequently found in sculpture, as the fragmentary relief with the depiction of Archangel Michael (14th century), probably of Nicaean origin, or the marble icon with a donor portrait (1496) in the shipyard of Vatopedi, as well as in minor-scale artworks of the 14th and 15th century, like in the upper additional part (dated to the 14th century) of the steatite icon with the Deposition from Iveron monastery. Voluminous figures, the folds of whose garments are rendered with wide incisions, characterize a variety of 15th century artworks, such as a woodcarved icon (1456), now in Moscow, or the metallic panels with the Annunciation attached on the main entrance doors of the catholicon at Vatopedi. In addition, the

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30 See, for example, Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, Ioli. Byzantine Icons in Steatite. Wien, 1985, 46-49; Melvani, Nicholas. Late Byzantine Sculpture. Turnhout, 2013, 35; Tsigaridas, Euthymios. Ανάγλυφες εικόνες σε ξύλο από την Καστοριά και την περιοχή της. – ΔΧΑΕ, 2016, No. 37, 89 (fig. 1, 2), 91 (fig. 3).
33 Liakos, Dimitrios. Steatite icon with the Deposition at the monastery of Iveron on Mt Athos. – Zograf, 2010, No. 34, 67 (fig. 3).
sacred figures’ faces may be compared to others in Late-Byzantine woodcarvings.

This type of Late Gothic frame consisting of torque columns supporting a semi-circle or ovigal arch is a common feature of 14th and 15th century Venetian art, and also of so-called Italo-Cretan productions. The intersected circles or semi-circles recall similar patterns derived from Middle-Byzantine woodcarvings and are also found in

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36 See for example the wood-carved icon of St Clement at Ohrid, Tsigaridas. Ανάγλυφες εικόνες, 90, 91 (fig. 3), with older bibliography.


38 Bouras, Charalambos. The Olympiotissa Wood-carved Doors, Reconsidered. – ΔΧΑΕ,
various artworks (illuminated manuscripts, sculptures etc.) dated to the 14\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{39}. The naturalistic rendering of the vine in the Theotokos icon is very close to marble decorations from the late 13\textsuperscript{th} until the 15\textsuperscript{th} century that come from regions under the Venetian rule, like Euboea and Crete\textsuperscript{40}.

Venetian influences are also echoed by the wide brimmed hats (\textbf{Fig. 5, 7}), which recall the \textit{skiadion}, a type crafted during the 14\textsuperscript{th} century in the West\textsuperscript{41}; according to written sources, this type of hat was widespread in Late Byzantium and was worn by all upper class people\textsuperscript{42}. Similar hats, frequently depicted in Italian paintings dated to the 14\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{43}, are also found in Cretan icons and wall paintings\textsuperscript{44}, as well as in Latin manuscripts dated from the same period\textsuperscript{45}.

Finally, as far as I am aware of, the monkeys carved on the legs are not found in other woodcarvings. However, analogous depictions are known from other artworks, as the Codex Constantinopolitanus Seragliensis 35, copied in Euboea (1461), written originally in 14\textsuperscript{th}-century Constantinople\textsuperscript{46}.

\textsuperscript{39} Ćircović, Sima. I Serbi nel Medioevo. Milano, 1992, figs. 121, 170.
\textsuperscript{40} Kitsiki-Panagopoulos, Beata. Cistercian and Mendicant Monasteries in Medieval Greece. Chicago – London, 1979, 134-136; Gratziou, Olga. Αναζητώντας τη γλυπτική των Βενετών στην Κρήτη. Ένα πρόγραμμα καταγραφής έργων γλυπτικής της Βενετικής περιόδου. In: Olga Gratziou (ed.). Γλυπτική και Λιθοξοϊκή στη Λατινική Ανατολή, 13\textsuperscript{æ} – 17\textsuperscript{æ} αιώνας. Herakleion, 2007, 190 (fig. 12).
\textsuperscript{41} Parani, Maria. Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11\textsuperscript{th}–15\textsuperscript{th} centuries). Leiden – Boston, 2003, 70-71.
\textsuperscript{43} Barachini, Clara, Castelnuovo, Enrico (eds.). Il Camposanto di Pisa. Torino, 1996, fig. 51; Gordon, Dillian. The Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings, 289.
\textsuperscript{45} Velmans, Tania. Une illustration inédite de l’Acatiste et l’iconographie des Hymmes Liturgiques à Byzance. – Cahiers Archéologiques, 1972, No. 22, 143 (fig. 13).
\textsuperscript{46} Μεσαιωνικές Ιστορίες Ζώων. Διήγησης των Τετραπόδων Ζώων και Πουλολόγος (ed.}
The iconographic theme of Peter and Paul carrying the model of a church was created in the artistic environment of Venetian Crete and likely, as it was suggested, by the painter Angelos Akotantos in the second quarter of the 15th century. This may reflect accommodating conditions defined by the Union of the Western and Eastern Churches, effected at the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438-1439. This, in combination with the comparanda explored above, leads me to suggest that the lecterns could be dated to around the middle of the 15th century.

**Provenance**

A question then arises as to the artistic centre in which the lecterns were created. Some scholars have suggested Thessaloniki; their key argument is the monastic tradition according to which Andronikos Palaiologos, Despotes of Thessaloniki donated the lecterns to Vatopedi. This proposal seems to be very weak. The written sources inform us that the town was in decline from the last decades of the 14th century onwards. During the first half of the 15th century, the population and its economic power were dramatically reduced. Moreover, beginning in the 14th century the Ottoman threat caused many elite families to donate their property to Athonite

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48 In this chapter all translations are my own.

49 See above, note 16.

monasteries. Many such families abandoned the city shortly before 1430 and moved to Constantinople or other regions, like Serbia. The phenomenon is mentioned by Ioannis Anagnostis (these who left Thessaloniki many years ago and before the siege...) He also describes the decline of Thessaloniki in 1430 in contrast to its past splendour (And those that previously Thessaloniki ensured to the citizens and the legendary wealth, while now, as it didn’t require, all became vain and poorly reconstructed). There were therefore very few potential patrons in mid-15th century Thessaloniki who might have been able to commission such elegant masterpieces. It is my belief that activity of such workshops ceased at this time.

The synchronism reflected by the coupling of Late-Byzantine art with Venetian elements in the lectern’s decoration suggests that they could have been carved in a region where artistic trends of both Venice and Byzantium were absorbed. Venice, Constantinople and Crete provide examples of such centres, in which Byzantine and Venetian artists had already coexisted for some centuries.

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54 ...τοὺς πρὸ μακρῶν ἐτῶν καὶ τοῦ συγκλεισμοῦ τὴν Θεσσαλονίκην ἀπολιπόντας καὶ μετοικήσαντας..., Anagnostou, Ioannou. Διήγησις περί τῆς τελευταίας αλώσεως τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης. Μονωδία επί τη αλώσει της Θεσσαλονίκης (ed. J. Tsaras). Thessaloniki, 1958, 54.


56 On various aspects of this phenomenon and its historical background, see Oikonomides, Nikolaos. Hommes d’affaires grecs et latins à Constantinople (XIIIe–XVe siècles). Montréal – Paris, 1979; Nicol, Donald. Byzantium and Venice: A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations. Cam-
Unfortunately, the preserved woodcarvings dated to the first half of the 15th century are few. Even the available written sources are mainly concerned with the activity of painters and their movements during

bridge University Press 1988, 212-227;

Fig. 9. Vatopedi; lectern II; panel; Peter and Paul carrying the model of a church
Moreover, literary allusions to woodcarvers (who were active in the same period, yet to an unknown extent) are dated to the second half of the 15th century onwards. The aforementioned iconography of Peter and Paul carrying the model of a church seems to exclude the possibility that the lecterns came from Venice. The appearance of this scene in the medium of wood carving is highly unlikely to predate the painting of Angelos Akotantos that is generally accepted to be the prototype for the composition. Akontanos’s work is associated with Crete in the second quarter of the 15th century, but this artist seems to have followed the traditions of Late Byzantine Constantinopolitan art. It is very risky to assume that the motif of Peter and Paul with the model of a church might have spread to Venice so fast. Rather, its presence may suggest a milieu, in which painting was especially prominent as well as allowing a diffusion of similar themes and styles through other artistic media.

Artistic production reflecting such a syncretic style was not unknown in Palaiologan Constantinople. Unfortunately, Palaiologan wood carvings from the city have not been preserved, and written

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57 See below, notes 64, 67, 68.
58 The earlier mention concerns the woodcarver Nicolaus Barbarigo, who is referenced in a document dated 1492, Cattapan, Mario. Nuovi elenchi e documenti dei pittori in Creta dal 1300 al 1500. – Θησαυρίσματα, 1972, No. 9, 209.
61 Only the two surviving fragmentary 14th century woodcarvings, kept both in Walters Art Gallery [Walters Art Gallery, Catalogue. Early Christian and Byzantine Art. An Exhibition held at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore 1947, 37 (No. 87)] and in State Hermitage Museum [Banck, Alisa. Byzantine Art in the Collections of Soviet Museums. Leningrad, Moscow, 1985, 326, No. 287; Pińtıński, Yuri, et all (eds.). Sinai, Byzantium, Russia. Orthodox Art from the Sixth to the Twentieth Century. St Petersburg, 2000, 142, B19 (V. N. Zaleskaya)] were created, in my opinion, in Constantinople. They both prove the close connection between sculpture and woodcarving in the Palaiologan era [see the similar acanthus leaves decorating the tomb of Michael Tornikis (died ca. 1328) and his wife, The Kariye Djami, Vol. 1, 1966–1975, 276-280; Hjort, Øystein. The Sculpture of Cariye Camii. – Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 1979, No. 33, 250-255]. Al. Banck has proposed that the two parts belong to the same work of art (triptych?); however, my careful inspection of available photographic evidence suggests that the holy figures have not been executed in the same technique. Ćorovic-Lubjinkovic, Mirijana. Les iconostases en bois sculpté du XVIIe siècle au Mont Athos. – Hilandarski Zbornik, 1996, No. 1, 122-123, fig. 1, suggest that the
sources are scarce\textsuperscript{62}. Besides, sculpture was in decline from the late 14\textsuperscript{th} century onwards\textsuperscript{63}. On the other hand, this artistic trend was particularly widespread in Venetian Crete, driven in part by the migration of many Constantinopolitan painters to the island from the 14\textsuperscript{th} century onwards\textsuperscript{64}. Despite the fact

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that few Cretan woodcarvings have survived from the first half of the 15th century⁶⁵, similarities between the floral ornaments in the frames of the lecterns and Cretan artworks are apparent; moreover, the latter foreshadow the elegant woodcarvings created in Crete from the mid-15th and mainly the 16th century onwards⁶⁶.

I therefore suggest that the lecterns could not have been carved either in Thessaloniki or in Venice, as formerly proposed, but in mid-15th century Crete by an ambitious artist, who had assimilated both Palaiologan and Venetian art. Although evidence concerning woodcarving and the activity of woodcarvers in Crete at this time is limited, the coexistence of other Byzantine and Venetian artists, particularly painters, from the late 14th century onwards is well attested by both written sources and extant artworks⁶⁷. In addition, 15th century Cretan painters were famous for their dual capacity, namely to create artworks either in Byzantine style (in forma Graeca) or in a mixed one bearing strong Italian influences (in forma a la Latina)⁶⁸. So why should not the same apply to woodcarving?

⁶⁵ See above, notes 21-23.
**Patronage**

I come now to the last crucial question, that of the patron. The monastic tradition mentioned above would have the lecterns be the gift of Andronikos Palaiologos, Despotes of Thessaloniki (1408-1423). However, my dating of the lecterns to the period after Andronikos’ death in 1429 suggests that this was not the case.69

Apart from this, it is noteworthy to comment shortly on this monastic tradition and to evaluate its reliability. Documents confirm that Andronikos supported Vatopedi financially. Several artworks are inscribed with his name; an icon with the depiction of Apostles Peter and Paul70 and an embroidered flag, reported by the traveler John Covel though no longer surviving.71 Porfirij Uspenskij mentions one additional object.72 However, oral monastic tradition attributes a far greater number of artifacts to his patronage. These include the monumental cross, which has stood behind the holy altar of the catholicon since at least the mid-19th century (the so-called cross of St Constantine)73, a chalice (the so-called kratetera)74 and an

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70 Tsigaridas, Euthymios, Loverdou-Tsigarida, Katia. Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου. Βυζαντινές εκόνες και επενδύσεις. Mount Athos, 2006, 213-214, 350-367; Tsigarida-Loverdou. Thessalonique, 249-250. Melvani, Nicholas, The fate, 50, has suggested that the icon was endowed to Vatopedi in 1421; he has connected the donation to a document signed in 1421 (for the document see Arkadios, Vatopedinos. Αγιορειτικά Ανάλεκτα εκ του Αρχείου της Μονής Βατοπεδίου. – Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς 1919, No. 3, 333).


72 Uspenskij, Porfirij. Pervoje Putešestivije, 33; Millet, Gabriel, Pargoire, Jules, Petit, Louis. Recueil, 25, No. 74 and pl. II. 2. It is not clear how many embroidered flags were donated to Vatopedi by the Despotes Andronikos Palaiologos. The flag that Uspenskij describes is adorned, as he mentions, by a double-headed eagle with two orbs, bearing the dedicatory inscription Ἀνδρόνικος Δεσπότης, as well as four lions holding swords; also, it bears an unreadable inscription. If this flag was the same with the one mentioned in the unpublished cod. Vatop. 293 (f. 50v: βημόθυρον διὰ μαγκάνου, μετὰ χρυσοῦ ἀετοῦ...), the codex would also mention that it bore a dedicatory inscription, but this is clearly not the case.


embroidered mitre. Andronikos' benefactions are generally mentioned in an unpublished document signed by the monks in 1425; nevertheless, there is no reference to the donation of the lecterns. In the absence of secure documentary evidence it is prudent to doubt the orally transmitted account.

The attribution of impressive or luxury artworks to the patronage of Byzantine emperors and other dignitaries was a common topic in the oral Athonite tradition of the 18th century onwards, inspired by the Patria (patriographic traditions) first composed in the 16th century. They appear in the period immediately subsequent to the Ottoman occupation, and, in my opinion, served to underline the link between the monasteries and their Byzantine past. The phenomenon is therefore not exclusive to Vatopedi, but may be observed in the traditions of many other Athonite monasteries, such as Iveron. Here we find the so-called sakkos of emperor Ioannis Tsimiskis, dated to the second half of the 16th century. Likewise, at Chilandar,

75 Unpublished. It is kept in the new sacristy. On stylistic grounds, it could be dated to the 15th–16th century.

76 The document (Inventario Number in the archive: Γ183) will be published in Actes de Vatopedi III. I am grateful to Prof. Kostis Smyrli for allowing me access to his unpublished material. According to the document, Andronikos continued his benefaction to Vatopedi during his short residence in Mystras just after 1423: Ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ αὖθις ἔστειλε πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ Μωρέως καὶ ἑτέρας ἀπείρους εὐεργεσίας καὶ χάριτας καὶ τῶν προτέρων μείζονας, ἦτοι σκεύη ἀργυρὰ καὶ πέπλα ἱερὰ καὶ ἑτέρα οὐκ εὐαριθμητα... It seems likely that the famous jasper, commissioned by the Despotes of Mystras Manouel Kantakouzenos Palaiologos (1349–1380) for a church he founded, could have been sent to Vatopedi from there by his brother, former Despotes Andronikos; for another hypothesis on the jasper’s acquisition of Vatopedi, see: Liakos, Dimitrios. Λόγια πρόσωπα και λόγιο περιβάλλον στο Άγιον Όρος (14ος–18ος αι.): η δυναμική τους στην τέχνη. In: Άγιον Όρος και Λογιοσύνη. Thessaloniki, 2014, 256, note 6.


the so-called chalice of Stephen Dušan, dated to the 16th century, at Xeropotamou the so-called panagiarion of empress Poulcheria, of the 14th century, with an 18th century revetment. The oral tradition of Vatopedi includes some demonstrably false information derived from other sources; I cite, for example, that Ioannis Kantakouzenos withdrew to Vatopedi, where he was tonsured and died. This information seems to have originated with the historian Doucas, perpetuated by Du Cange (this story has been exploited and diffused by the monks themselves, who will still repeat it); however, reliable written sources, such as the Cod. Marcianus Gr. 408, consider such information untrustworthy.

The Andronikos narrative was also repeated by Porfirij Uspenskij, who notes in his essay that he read this information in a chronographic account of 1570, which is not preserved today. However, we ought to be cautious about any unconfirmed information given by Uspenskij, since many references in his essay are unfounded, and he would repeat monastic traditions without checking them. In some cases, he liked to visualize them. The most representative example is the fictitious inscription of the so-called painter of Protaton, Manuel Panselenos, which Uspenskij noted, citing the account written by the painter Dionysios of Phourna (who himself repeated older oral tradition) and had misinterpreted the liturgical inscription written in Prothesis. It has since been demonstrated that Protaton
was painted by Michael and Eutychios Astrapas\(^{88}\).

Therefore, it is apparent that the question of the lectern’s patron remains open. It it will probably never be answered. The only certain fact is that this elegant commission was expensive and presupposed financial capacity. It could be easy, and even attractive, to connect these two artworks to the Late Constantinopolitan aristocracy, however, the real question is whether they could have commissioned such pieces in a stressful, turbulent period around the end of the Empire. Besides, documents of this period kept in the monastery’s archive, which could shed light on this topic, remain unpublished.

Thus, another hypothesis seems to arise: could the lecterns have been commissioned by an active abbot of the monastery, as in many other cases\(^{89}\)? During the Late Palaiologan period, Vatopedi was most likely the only Athonite monastery with economic strength. This is demonstrated by written sources and dedicatory inscriptions, which give evidence for construction activity\(^{90}\), and for the income of the dependencies and benefactions from Serbian dignitaries in the first half of the 15\(^{\text{th}}\) century\(^{91}\). In this framework, the lecterns could have been commissioned for the renewal of the ecclesiastic furniture of the catholicon. Besides, the fact that the catholicon was dedicated to the Theotokos is directly linked to the iconography of the lecterns. The predominant themes of the iconography are the Akathistos Hymn, the Annunciation, the Prefigurations of Theotokos\(^{92}\), like the Holy Bramble, the Thee Youths in the Fiery Furnace


\(^{92}\) On the cycle of the Theotokos’ Prefigurations, Mouriķi, Doula. Αἱ βιβλικαὶ προεικονίσεις τῆς Παναγίας εἰς τὸν τρούλλον τῆς Περιβλέπτου τοῦ Μυστρά. – Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον, 1970, No 25, Α’ Μελέται, 217-251; Papamastorakis, Η ένταξη τῶν προεικονίσεων, 315-327.
and Jacob’s Ladder. In addition, the depiction of Peter and Paul could be associated with the veneration of the Apostles at Vatopedi in the first half of the 15th century, as is attested by written sources.

**Conclusions**

The lecterns were carved in the twilight of Byzantium, just before or after the Fall, in a period from which extant material is extremely limited. They serve as an invaluable example of the largely unknown tradition of Palaiologan woodcarving. The tradition was transferred from Constantinople to a new thriving region, Venetian Crete, through the migration of the artists. In other words, the lecterns could be recognized as border-crossing masterpieces, the result of a syncretism that characterizes the entire culture of Venetian Crete from the 14th century onwards.

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94 Arkadios. Αγιορειτικά Ανάλεκτα, 333.

Appendix
The Iconographic Programs of the Lecterns

**Lectern I**

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1. Diviner Balaam
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3. Hospitality of Abraham
4. Geometrical theme
5. It is not preserved
6. Geometrical theme
7. Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace
8. Geometrical theme
9. Geometrical theme
10. Annunciation (Theotokos)
11. Geometrical theme
12. Theotokos as the True Vine
13. Geometrical theme
14. Annunciation (Archangel Gabriel)
15. Geometrical theme
16. The Apostles Peter and Paul holding the model of a church
17. The Rebuke of Nathan and the Repentance of David
18. Geometrical theme
19. The Jacob’s Ladder
20. Geometrical theme
21. The Holy Bramble
22. Geometrical theme
23. Daniel in the Lions’ Den
24. Geometrical theme
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Едно уникално дарение на манастира Ватопед от средата на XV век: два резбовани аналои

Димитриос Лякос

В новата ризница на манастира Ватопед се пазят два висококачествени резбовани аналои. Те имат осмоъгълен корпус, оформен от вертикали и хоризонтални елементи с флорална декорация, които представят двадесет и четири правоъгълни табла. Върху тези плоскости са резбовани изображения, които съставляват различна за всеки от двата аналои иконографска програма: върху първия аналой е представен цикълът на Акатиста, а върху втория са изваяни сцени от Стария Завет, Благовещение, св. Богородица „Лоза истинска“, Св. св. Петър и Павел, държащи модел на църква, както и геометрични мотиви. Върху ниски крачета, върху които стъпват аналоите, са изобразени маймуни.

Двете произведения на църковните приложни изкуства са известни в литературата, но не са публикувани досега адекватно. Според манастирската легенда тези аналои са дарени от солунския деспот Андроник Палеолог (1408–1423). Относно произхода им съществуват предположения, че тази утвар е изработена в Солун или във Венеция.

В статията се изказва различно мнение за мястото на изработка и дарителя на аналоите въз основа на анализ на резбованата украса чрез проследяване на писмените извори и историческия контекст.

Растителните мотиви по вертикалните и хоризонталните поврхности на аналоите имат видимо сходство с подобни паметници от Венеция и о. Крит от XV в. Освен това в резбованите изображения се забелязва смесване на мотиви от палеологовото и венецианското изкуство на същото столетие. И ако към всичко по-горе се има предвид фактът, че изображението на ап. Петър и ап. Павел с модел на храм в ръка се появява в критското изку-
ство през втората четвърт на XV в. (вероятно като нововъведение на Ангелос Акотадос), може обосновано да се предположи, че двата ватопедски аналоя са изработени на владения от венецианците Крит към средата на XV в.

Дуалистичността, долавяна в тяхната украса, е резултат от климата, оформен в художествената ситуация на о. Крит през XV в., където съживяващите византийски и венециански майстори още от предходния век, създавайки една продукция със „смесен” стил.
Between Loyalty, Memory and the Law: Byzantine and Slavic Dedicatory Church Inscriptions Mentioning Foreign Rulers in the 14th and 15th Centuries

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Abstract. The article focuses on the change in dedicatory formulas of foundation inscriptions, which were commissioned by noblemen, members of the clergy, and monks during the second half of the 14th and the 15th century, in which the names of Byzantine, Serbian, or Bulgarian emperors were substituted with the names of local, non-Byzantine rulers. It considers cases from the territories of Macedonia, Epirus, and Thessaly, and tries to discover the reasons behind this shift in dedicatory formulas.

Key words: epigraphy, ecclesiastic foundations, Epirus, Macedonia, nobility, clerics.

The structure of medieval dedicatory inscriptions was quite conservative and tended to accept change slowly. As a consequence, as Byzantine culture spread through the Balkans, Byzantine practices
and patterns of inscribing were borrowed by Serbian and Bulgarian cultures.

The content of prose church dedicatory inscriptions in the Greek and Slavic languages was almost identical. Barring minor differences, the donor inscriptions consisted of three basic narrative elements, such as:

1) Symbolic and verbal invocations, and the indication of the church patron;

2) Donors’ names, their social status, family relations, and measure of contribution;

3) Dating according to the indication, references to secular/eclesiastical authorities, lists of donations, and final maledictions.

Each of these elements had its established place in the texts, in a similar way to the structure of Byzantine/Slavic charters. The mentioning of regnal authorities by the church founders served several purposes, such as the expression of political affiliations; an indication of founders’ sources of rights and wealth, as well as of power to whose legal jurisdiction the donor belonged; the designation of ethnic origin or religious position, and other political, economic, and personal reasons.


4 Stanojević, Stanoje. Studije o srpskoj diplomatičkoj invokaciji. – Glas Srpske Kraljevske akademije, 1912, No. 90, 68-113.


Scholarly debate on medieval epigraphy has extensively discussed cases where the commissioners preferred to name an ideal rather than a real political power, like the 14th- and 15th-century Cretan Greek villagers, who although under Venetian domination referred to Byzantine emperors. However, both Byzantine and Slavic founders tended to do the opposite, namely, to substitute the official, but not empowered Byzantine, Serbian, or Bulgarian authorities with the names of more immediate, local lords. This strategy was even more confusing since the language and wording of dedicatory inscriptions followed established Greek/Slavic patterns (including the denomination of the action of ruling such as αὐφθεντεύβοντος, βασιλεύοντος, ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας, вь дьни), replacing just the name of a sovereign.

These cases of political conformism can only be observed during times of immediate crisis and turmoil. Unstable political circumstances prevailed in the Balkans during the second half of the 14th and the 15th centuries. Three empires, the Byzantine, Serbian, and Bulgarian, clashed, due to a combination of unwise leadership; noble unrest, and the external Turkish threat. The trend of substituting the name of a Byzantine emperor with a foreign ruler first started amongst the Greek population of Macedonia and Thessaly, along the borders of the expanding Serbian state, as a consequence of King Stefan Dušan’s conquests of 1334–1345. The loyal subject of the Serbian emperor, despot Jovan Oliver, whose career rocketed from the lowly rank of veliki sluga to that of despot, placed the

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name of his lord in both Slavic and Greek inscriptions, commemorating the completion of St Archangel’s monastery in Lesnovo (Cat. 2). Although this bilingual strategy seemed unusual, it could easily be explained by the presence of Greek-speakers in Northern Macedonia. A similar strategy may have been applied by the commissioners of a group of Greek dedicatory inscriptions associated with the renovation of the Eleousa Church in Mesembria (1342) by Symeon Synaden(?), a Greek relative of the Bulgarian Emperor Ivan Alexander¹⁴ (Cat. 1). In these two cases, the use of Byzantine formulas and language simplified the understanding and recognition of contemporary political realia by the Greek population, as well as exhibiting the linguistic preferences of the commissioners.

Nevertheless, the later Greek subjects of the Serbian Empire followed exactly the same pattern; the names of Dušan’s successors, his son Uroš and half-brother Simeon, who ruled over Thessaly¹⁵, became the reference points for ecclesiastic patrons from Ohrid, Kastoria and the monasteries of Meteora (Cat. 3-6)¹⁶. The Serbian

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¹⁵ On the position of Emperor Uroš, see Ostrogoski. Serska oblast, 3-19; for Simeon’s position – Mihaljičić. Kraj, 17-20; Soulis. The Serbs and Byzantium, 115-117, 120-122.

¹⁶ An inscription of debated provenance from Trikkala bearing the formula “ἐις τὴν ἡμέραν

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Fig. 1. Dedicatory inscription above the entrance on the western wall, Parekklesion of St. Gregory, Peribleptos Church, Ohrid, 1364 (Cat. 5)
rulers, being Orthodox, provided support for the Greek clergy\textsuperscript{17} and introduced bi-ethnic social and legal policies\textsuperscript{18} in the conquered territories. These factors simplified, to a great extent, the replacement of Byzantine rule with a foreign one in the official documents and in public media, such as dedicatory inscriptions.

Moreover, for the Greeks who remained in Macedonia after the fall of the Serbian empire and faced the advancing Ottomans\textsuperscript{19}, continued Serbian rule was a preferred option. This nostalgia caused the appearance of an anachronistic reference\textsuperscript{20} to King Vukašin\textsuperscript{21} (1365–1371) in the dedication of the Elousa Hermitage (1409) on the Prespa Lake (\textit{Cat.} 12) built by Greek monks.

After the disintegration of the Serbian Empire, Macedonia, Thessaly, and Epirus became a battleground for numerous conflicts between numerous local lords of different ethnic origins (i.e., Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian, Albanian, Italian\textsuperscript{22}), who claimed territories of different size with overlapping borders. In this turbulent political climate and with the absence of a central authority, nobles and church officials chose various different strategies to prove their legitimacy; express their political affiliation, and place themselves under the protection of greater powers. Some of the members of the nobility, such as voevoda Michael Therianos (\textit{Cat.} 14) and kesar Novak\textsuperscript{23} (\textit{Cat.} 7), incorporated references to higher ranking aristocrats in their dedications inscriptions, who had vested them with the titles and offices which


\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Soulis}. The Serbs and Byzantium, 60-85.


\textsuperscript{21} On Vukašin as a king and co-ruler of Emperor Uroš, see: \textit{Soulis}, The Serbs and Byzantium, 96-97; \textit{Ostrogorski}, Serska oblast, 8-12; \textit{Mihaljičić}. Kraj, 94-147.


\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ferjančić}, Božidar. Sevastokratori i kesar u srpskom carstvu. – Zbornik Filozofskog Fakulteta, 1970, No. 11/1, 268.
had brought with them authority, lands and wealth in exchange for their loyalty. These higher ranking nobles could be Latins, like Carlo Tocco (Cat. 14), or Serbs, such as King Vukašin (Cat. 7).

In churches at Mali Grad and Monodendri, foundations of kesar Novak and voevoda Michael Therianos respectively, the idea of being appointed to power was viewed with the upmost importance by the commissioners, since they preferred to be depicted in their court-dresses, accompanied by inscriptions underlying their titles, surrounded by family members in hierarchical order, and invested with power by the blessing hand of God himself\textsuperscript{24}.

A possible compromise between loyalty to both local and central

\textsuperscript{24} Bogevska, Saška. Les églises rupestres de la région des lacs d’Ohrid et de Prespa, milieu du XIII\textsuperscript{e} – milieu du XVI\textsuperscript{e} siècle. Brepols, 2015, 357-462 with previous bibliography; for Michael Pherianos, see Acheimastou-Potamianou, Myrtali. Η κτητορική παράσταση της μονής Αγίας Παρασκευής στο Μονοδέντρι της Ηπείρου (1414). – ΔΧΑΕ, 2003, No. 24, 231-242.
authorities are examples where both are mentioned. An example of this strategy was made by Demetrios Xenos who, in the external inscription of his Chrysopege Church (Cat. 15), mentioned Sir Palamede Gattilusio25 as the governor of the city of Ainos, while in the interior dedicatory inscription recorded “the rule of our most devout and friends of Christ, emperors, Manuel and Helen” and the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Joseph26. However, such a compromise could work only in places where the local authorities recognized, even nominally, the supremacy of the Byzantine Emperor, and tried to establish personal ties with him, as it was the case of sir Palamede, who insisted on his Palaiologan ancestry27.

27 Wright, Christopher. The Gattilusio Lordships and the Aegean World 1355–1462. Leiden,

Fig. 3. Dedicatory inscription above the entrance on the western wall, Christ Zoodotos Church, Borje, 1389/90 (Cat. 11)
Church officials also relied on the financial support and military protection provided by regional lords. Therefore, the dedicatory inscriptions of foundations, erected or restored by priests or bishops (Cat. 8-11), bore names of secular local authorities, regardless of their ethnic origins (Albanian – Cat. 8-10; Cat. 11 – unknown) and obscure titles. The four foundations in Ohrid, Elbasan, Kastoria, and Borje that have been considered in this paper were built after the battle of Maritza (1371)\(^{28}\), which drastically changed the political and ethnic landscape of Macedonia and Epirus. The provinces were divided into small landholdings held by minor lords which faced constant raids from Albanian tribes\(^{29}\). Exploiting the power vacuum, a few Albanian leaders established an informal power over important cities, such as the great župan Andrea Gropa in Ohrid (Cat. 8)\(^{30}\), Charles Thopia in Kroja\(^{31}\) or the Mouzaki family in Kastoria (Cat. 10)\(^{32}\). These newcomers were not distinguished by titles and, therefore, simply called themselves “πανευγενεστάτους” (Cat. 10), “πρώτος” (Cat. 9), or “αὐτάδελφος πανευτυχέστατος σεβαστωκράτορος” (Cat. 11). Despite this, they provided sufficient

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2014, 114-128.
28 About consequence of the Maritza battle, see: Mihačić. Kraj, 183-192.
29 Soulis. The Serbs and Byzantium, 123-133.
31 Soulis. The Serbs and Byzantium, 143-145.
funds for churches and created a semblance of order and stability. They were the ones who most resembled, even if it was only approximately, the notions of what authority looked like and should be and were therefore honoured in the inscriptions.

Finally, in the 15th century, in the territories conquered by the Ottomans, some members of Orthodox nobility became Turkish mounted troops сипахи (sipahi33) or community leaders кметове (kmetove34), and through such a strategy preserved their status, possessions, and religion. Probably, some of them could have afforded to restore ruined ecclesiastic foundations, as it was in the case of Dragalevtsi Monastery (Cat. 17), while others built family churches after becoming monks (Cat. 13 and 18). In any case, after a change in political and social circumstances, these Orthodox people recognized the Ottoman rulers and officials as the legal supreme power that could invest its subjects with their offices and wealth. Consequently, the names of sultans (Cat. 13, 17-18) took the place once occupied by the Christian emperors in the conservative formula of dedicatory inscriptions35.

The references to authority in the dedicatory inscriptions considered in this essay illustrate the diverse reasons for the substitution of the names of Byzantine or Slavic emperors for references to foreign rulers, local lords, and Ottoman authorities. These reasons varied from political and economic opportunism to expressions of loyalty. However, as a conclusion, I would like to answer a question concerning the narrative pattern employed by the commissioners, namely, why were these inscriptions written in Greek and why did they use precise formulas for indicating the imperial power?

During the period under scrutiny, the northern Greek regions became a place of cohabitation of the Greeks, Serbs, Albanians, Italians, and of the Turks, who raided the Balkans36, increasing the ethnic diversity of the region. It seems that Greek became a lingua

34 Such as kmet Konstantin who renewed Zrze Monastery, see: Stojanović. Zapisi, 63.
35 Though, all the examples examined here are Slavic, similar changes occurred amongst the Greek nobility of Asia Minor, see: Hasluck, F. W. Christianity and Islam under the Sultans. Oxford, 1929, 381; Laurent, Vitalien. Note additionnelle: L’inscription de l’église Saint-Georges de Bélisérana. – Revue des études byzantines, 1968, No. 26, 367-371.
franca, a link language, for all these peoples, at least as long as they kept Greek as the main administrative language\textsuperscript{[37]}, used it in court and for such public media as dedicatory inscriptions.

The Byzantine formulas denoting authority were easily recognized by readers and, therefore, brought a rapidly understood clarity to a person’s status. At the same time, the memory of the once-great Empire of Romans drove some new rulers to contest the imperial title, while others tried to imitate it. Therefore, the noble and ecclesiastic founders could use comparisons with Byzantine emperors for the purpose of flattering new authorities and paying homage to their policies. However, for the commissioners, the presence of a superior power guaranteed their own legitimacy and status. Moreover, for the church authorities, a ruler was important not only as a provider of economic benefits, but also as proof of God’s benevolence, and the name of a sovereign was an integral part of any orthodox liturgy, which always included prayers on behalf of the ruler\textsuperscript{[38]}. Thus, substituting the names of Byzantine, Serbian, or Bulgarian emperors with the names of local, non-Byzantine, rulers was the best way of legitimizing the new political and social order within the conservative vocabulary and structure of medieval Balkan epigraphy.


1. Eleousa Monastery, Mesembia (1342)

...βασιλεύοντος τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου μεγάλου βασιλέως Ἰω(άννου) τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου βασιλέως Μιχαήλ τοῦ Ἀσάνη... κάγω ὁ περιπόθητος καὶ γνήσιος θείος τοῦ πανυψηλοτάτου τοῦ βασιλέως Ἰω(άννου) Ἀλεξάνδρου ἀνεκαίνισα τόν πάνσεπτον καὶ θείον ναὸν....

[ἐπὶ τῆς] βασιλείας Ἰω(άννου) Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ Μιχαήλ τοῦ Ἀσάνη ὁ περιπόθητος θείος αὐτῶν Σαμοθλευστός....


2. Archangel Michael’s Church, Lesnovo (1349)

...δι’ ἐξόδου τοῦ πανευτυχεστάτου δεσπότου Ιωάννου τοῦ Λύβερί. καὶ τῆς πανευτυχεστάτης βασιλείσης Μαρίας τῆς Λυβερίσης καὶ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῶν, Κράικου καὶ Δαμιανοῦ. ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας Στεφάνου καὶ Ἐλένης, καὶ τοῦ ὑιοῦ αὐτῶν κράλη τοῦ Οὐροσι...


3. Taxiarches’ metropolis, Kastoria (1359/60)

...δι’ ἐξόδου τοῦ πανευτυχεστάτου δαιμονίου Ιωάννου τοῦ Δαμιανοῦ καὶ κτήτωρος Δαμιανοῦ συμεών τοῦ Παλαιολόγου Αμαίνοντος τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Στεφάνου καὶ τοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Διούκα...

Drakopoulou. Η πόλη, 95-96.

4. The Virgin’s Church, Zaum (1361)

...δι’ ἐξόδου τοῦ πανευτυχεστάτου καΐσαρος Γούργουρα καὶ κτήτωρος ἁνιστηρινής δὲ παρὰ τοῦ πανευτυχεστάτου ἐπισκόπου Διαβόλασι ναοῦ καὶ πρωτοθρόνου καὶ Γρηγορίου καὶ κτήτωρος Στεφάνου τοῦ Οὐροσιο...
5. Parekklesion of St Gregory, Peribleptos Church, Ohrid (1364)

...διὰ συνδρομῆς καὶ ἐξόδου τοῦ πανιερωτάτου ἐπισκόπου Δαβώλεως Γρηγορίου ὢτοι Σελασφόρου. ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας Στεφάνου τοῦ Οὐρέσι, Αρχιερατεύοντος δὲ τῆς Πρώτης Ιουστινιανῆς τοῦ Πανιερωτάτου Αρχιεπισκόπου Γρηγορίου...

Grozdanov. Ohridsko zidno, 122.

6. The Virgin’s Church, Doupiane, Meteora (1367/8)

...διὰ σ(υν)δρομ(ῆς) κ(αί) ἐξόδου τοῦ τημειωτάτου ἐν Ἱερομονάχοις κύ(ρ) Νείλου κ(αί) πρῶτον τ(ῆς) σκήτης Σταγ(ῶν) κ(αί) καθηγουμένου τῆς σεβασμῆς μονῆς Δουπειάνου. Βασιλεύβ(ων) τοὺς δὲ τοῦ εὐσεβεστατοῦ ἢμ(ῶν) βασιλέως κύ(ρ) Σιμεὼν τοῦ Παλαιολόγου κ(αί) αὐτοκράτορ(ος) Ρομαϊών Ρομανεί(ῶν) τοῦ Βεληκασίνου...


7. The Virgin’s Church, Mali Grad (1368/9)

...παρὰ τοῦ αὐφθέντου αὐτοῦ πάνευγεστάτου κέσαρος Νοβάκου ἠγουμενέβῶντος δὲ Ἰωνᾶ (μον)αχ(οῦ). Αὐφθεντεύβ(ων) τοὺς παν(ψ)ηλοτάτου κραλή(ος) τοῦ Βεληπασινοῦ...


8. Small St Klimentos Church, Ohrid (1378)

...διὰ συνδρομῆς ἐξόδου τὸ κ(αί) κόπου οἰκείου τοῦ θεοσεβαστάτου ἐφέως Στεφάνου τοῦ Προφήτου’ ἐπικρατούσης τῆς λαμπρὰς πόλεως ταύτης Αχρίδας θεοσώστου τοῦ πανέγυγεστάτου αὐθεντοῦ ἢμῶν μεγάλου ξουπάνου κύρ Ανδρέα τοῦ Γρώτα...
9. St John Vladimir’s Church, Elbasan (1381)

☩ Χρῆ γινώσκειν ὅτι ὁ ναός οὕτως ἐκατελύθη ἀπὸ σεισμοῦ παντελῶς ἕως ἡμέρας αὐθεντεύοντος πασῆς χώρας Ἀλβάνου πανυψιλότατος πρώτου Κάρλας ὁ Θεώπιας ἀνεψιός δε καὶ αἵματος ρῆγας τῆς Φραγγίας. …

Popa, Theofan. Të dhana mbi princët mesjetarë shqiptarë në mbishkrimet e kishave tona. – Buletin i Universitetit shtetërot të Tiranës, 1957, No. 11/2, 186-188.

10. St Athanasios Mouzaki’s Church, Kastoria (1383/4)

… παρὰ τοὺς κτιτόρους ήγου(ν) τοὺς παν[ευ]γενεστάτους κυ(ρ) Στώϊα κ(αί) Θεοδώρου τοῦ Μουζάκη . κ(αί) τοῦ ἕν Ιέρο(μον)άχ(οις) Διονυσίου . αὐθεντεύοντ(ων) δὲ τ(ῶν) αὐτ(ῶν) αὐταδέλφ(ῶν) πα[ν]ευγενεστάτους κυ(ρ) Στώϊα. καὶ κυ(ρ) Θεοδώρου τοῦ Μουζάκη. ἀρχιερατ[εύ]οντος δὲ τοῦ πανιεριοτάτου ἐπισκόπου κυ(ρ) Γαβριήλ κ(αί) πρωτ[οθρόνου]…

Drakopoulou. Η πόλη, 95-96.

11. Christ Zoodotos Church, Borje (1389/90)

…παρὰ τοῦ κτίτορος τοῦ πανιεροτάτου ἐπισκόπου [κυ] Νήμφωνος αὐθεντεύοντος δὲ τὸν Ἀμ[ηρ]αλάδαν. αὐταδέλφος πανευτυχέστατος σεβαστωκράτορος Ἠωάνης καὶ πανυψιλότατος δεσπότης κύρ Θεοδώρου…

Đurić. Mali Grad, 42.

12. The Eleousa Hermitage, Megale Prespa (1409/10)

…διὰ σήνδρομίς κόπου τε κ(αί) ἡξόδου τοῦ τιμιοτάτου ἐν ἱερομονάχ(οις) κύρ Σάβα κ(αί) κύρ Ἰακόβου κ(αί) Ἡραλάμ π(ὸν) κτιτόρον. Αὐθέ<n>της ὁ Βλουκασήνος.


13. The dedicatory inscription of Stylian, the Monk from Šumen (1412)
14. The Church of Hagia Paraskeve, Monodendri (1414)

... δι’ ἐξόδου (τε) κ(α)ὶ παληρόσεως, τοῦ εὐγ(ε)νεστ(ά)του κυρίου Μηχ[α]ὴλ Βωηβώνδα του Θερϊανοῦ. ἢν δέδωκεν ἐν τῷ νῷ [...].κ(α)ὶ τῆς γενεὰς κ(α)ὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ κ(α)ὶ πάντων τῶν Βεζητζηνῶν κηρονόμων κητορόν μικρὸν τ(ε) κ(α)ὶ κηρονόμων ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ πανυψιλοτ(ά)του δεσπότου ἡμῶν Κάρουλα τοῦ Δουκῶς...

Acheimastou-Potamianou. Η κτητορική παράσταση, 233.

15. The Church of Theotokos Chrysopege at Ainos (1422/3)

...ἀνηγέρθη ἐκ βάθρων παρ’ ἐμοῦ Δημητρίου τοῦ Ξένου, τηνικαῦτα κρατοῦντος τῆς θεοσώστου πόλεως Αἴνου τοῦ ύψηλοτάτου ἡμῶν αὐθέντου σὺρ Παλάμιδες Φραντζέσκου Γατελιούζου τοῦ Παλαιολόγου...


16. The church of the Virgin, Dragalevtsi (1476)

...πολίτευσαν κύριον Θεοτόκον τοῦ Στράτου τοῦ Σεραμίου τοῦ Μιχαήλ Βεζητζηνοῦ του Θερϊανοῦ μεταπετάσας με τοῦ παπίγιον τοῦ Μιχαήλ Βεζητζηνοῦ του Θερϊανοῦ και τῆς μοιράς του Θεοτοκού τοῦ Βεζητζηνοῦ του Θερϊανοῦ...

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17. St Demetrius’ Church, Boboshevo (1488)

...πολίτευσαν τοῦ εὐγενοῦς Νεκταρίου τοῦ Αθανασίου τοῦ Θεόπνικου και τοῦ Γεώργιου τοῦ Σεραμίου τοῦ Μιχαήλ Βεζηтζηνοῦ του Θερϊανοῦ και τοῦ Παλάμιδα τοῦ Θερϊανοῦ τοῦ Μιχαήλ Βεζητζηνοῦ του Θερϊανού...

Balaschev. Slovenski nadpisi, 208.
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No. 2, 125-181.

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primo periodo della dominazione Veneziana a Creta. Alcune
osservazioni in merito alla questione dell’identità culturale,
In: Gherardo Ortalli (ed.). Venezia e Creta. Atti del Convegno

Tyutyundzhiev, Ivan and Pavlov, Plamen. Българската


Между лоялността, паметта и закона: византийски и славянски посветителни надписи от църкви, упоменаващи чуждоземни владетели от XIV и XV век

Анна Адашинская

Като всички византийски и славянски обществени/публични текстове, структурата на посветителните надписи се характеризира с консерватизъм, оставяйки малка възможност за нововъведения или промени, като запазва стриктен описателни правила, отнасящи се до инвокации, ктитори, датиране и упоменаване на владетели. Последният елемент, а именно отнасянето към светската власт, е бил свързван с политическата принадлежност на ктиторите и тяхното желание официално да получат покровителство и да бъдат „облечени“ с титли и положение. Въпреки това, в контекста на отслабващата централна власт, византийските и славянските ктитори в своите надписи се стремят да подменят имената на официалните византийски, сръбски и български владетели с имената на по-преки, местни господари. Независимо от това, езикът и думите на посветителните надписи продължават да следват усъвършенстваната гръцка/славянска традиция, замествайки само името на суверена. Това са случаи на политически конформизъм, които могат да бъдат наблюдавани само във времена на кризи, когато се сблъскват три владения (византийско, сръбско и българско). Тенденцията за подмяна на имената на византийските императори с тези на местни властници може да бъде проследена в Сръбското кралство и Българското царство по времето на Стефан Душан и Иван Александър. Там аристократи са използвали посветителните надписи, за да популяризират своите владетели сред гръцкоговорещите общности.

По-късно същата схема е била използвана от наследниците на Душан, от неговия син Урош, от неговия полубрат Симеон и крал Вукашин, управляващи различни части на Сръбското кралство и Византийската империя. Техните имена стават отправна точка в посветителните надписи на местните гръцки ктитори, подмествайки упоменаванията на византийските власти. Това приемане на сръбските крале може да се е случило благодарение на двуетническите и правни политики, насочени към интегрирането на гръцкото население под сръбско управление.

След разпадането на Сръбското кралство, Македония, Тесалия и Епир стават бойно поле на много от местните владетели с различен етнически произход. Благородниците, като ктиторите на Мали град и на църквите в Моюдендри, се обръщат към по-висшестоящите от тях, за да легитимират своите титли и
благосъстояние.

Възможен компромис в лоялността към представителите на местната и цен-
транална власт е упоменаването на двама суверени, т.е. на местния и визан-
тийския, в различните надписи към един и същи паметник. Тази стратегия
избира Димитриос Ксенос, намиращ се под властта на Паламеде Гатилузио,
когато също така искал да укрепи своите културни и политически връзки с
Палеолозите.

Църковните власти, които разчитат на финансова подкрепа и военна защита
от местните владетели, пренебрегват низшия произход на албанските пред-
водители на кланове, които идват на власт в градските центрове след загубата
на Сърбия в битката при Марица (1371 г.). Имената на тези нови господари се
появяват в надписите, изписани по време на тяхната власт и ознаменуващи
единственото възможно управление.

През XV в. на завладените от турците територии някои представители на пра-
вославната аристокрация стават турски спахии и кметове, запазвайки по този
начин своя статус, имущество и религия. В тази си позиция те имат възмож-
ност да възстановяват църква или да строят параклиси, но тяхното добруване
зависи от благосклоността на султана. Следователно тези представители на
дребната аристокрация приемат османското управление и имената на сул-
таните заемат мястото на някогашните християнски царе в консервативната
формула на посветителните надписи.

В заключение подчертавам важността на гръцкия език, бидейки балканска-
та lingua Franca в среда с етническо разнообразие. Също така посочвам как
може да бъде разпознат статутът на управника, ако името му е вплетено в
познатите за четящия формули, като подчертавам важността на царските
имена при отслужването на литургии. Въпреки това смятам, че припозна-
ването на местните владетели с византийските императори би могло да бъде
следствие от политически и икономически опортиунизъм, както и истинска
преданост и признание към властта и достойнствата на новите управници.
The Illustrated Slavonic Miscellanies of Damascenes Studite’s *Thesauros* – a New Context for Gospel Illustrations in the Seventeenth Century

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**Abstract:** Looking at the older tradition of illustrating the South Slavonic Gospel manuscripts, which was rather poor with regard to themes and iconography, one becomes aware of the late adoption of a common narrative cycle, representing Christ’s life, miracles and parables in the so called *damaskini*. These seventeenth-century books with their miniatures, however simplified and naïve, went a long way towards extending the limited range of Gospel illustrations that had dominated the artistic representations of the preceding decades and centuries.

**Key words:** *damaskin*, iconography, liturgy, miniature, Adzhar, Kostenets, Rila.

A survey of the extant illustrated South Slavonic Gospels predating the fifteenth century amounts to a rather brief story. Except for the Old Slavonic (Old Bulgarian) Glagolitic Codex Assemanianus, the...
Serbian Miroslav Gospel, a lectionary dating to ca 1180s\(^3\), and the Bulgarian Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander of 1356\(^4\), all remaining Gospel books are adorned solely by portraits of the evangelists.

A similar situation persisted in the period between the fifteenth and the end of the seventeenth century, when the conquered Balkans were part of the Ottoman Empire. None of the miniatures in the old Gospels was ever repeated in the later manuscripts. A pattern which withstood the test of time was that of the headpiece, itself drawing on Byzantine prototypes, featuring the image of the evangelist writing, as can be seen in the Gospels of Ivan Alexander and the Serbian Patriarch Sava (1365–1375)\(^5\). This developed into a standardized, so-called Kratovo headpiece\(^6\), which was widespread in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Gospel manuscripts produced in the territories of present-day Bulgaria, Serbia and Macedonia. As to the full-page portrait miniatures, for the most part, they were simplified replicas of distant Palaeologan and late Palaeologan models\(^7\). The rare narrative cycle of (the second) Beočin Gospels\(^8\) only confirms the rule. Therefore, the late appearance of miniatures treating New Testament subjects, which had for many centuries been depicted by both Western and Eastern Christian artists, could be seen as an example of ‘border-crossing’ if manuscripts, lacking any pictorial embellishment up to the seventeenth century, are considered.

\(^{3}\) Several initials in this manuscript are pictorial; for the manuscript, see: Otašević, Dušan, Rakić, Zoran, Špadjer, Irena (eds.). The World of Serbian Manuscripts (12th–17th Centuries). Belgrade, 2016, 234-240.


\(^{5}\) Otašević, Dušan, Rakić, Zoran, Špadjer, Irena (eds.). The World of Serbian Manuscripts, 282-286.

\(^{6}\) Named after priest Ioan of Kratovo, a prominent sixteenth-century copyist; their distinctive feature is the adoption of certain Islamic ornaments in the frames around the images; for its adoption see Kotseva, Elena. Украсата на българските ръкописи през XV–XVII век [Ukrasata na balgarskite rakopisi prez XV–XVII vek]. In: Traditsiya i novi cherti v balgarskoto izkustvo. Sofia, 1976, 74-75.

\(^{7}\) Moussakova, Elissaveta. Late Medieval South Slavonic Illumination in the Byzantine Context. – Art Studies Quarterly, 2017, No. 1, 35-44.

\(^{8}\) AD 1565/1567; one of the rare examples for such miniatures, see: Harisijadis, Mara. Минијатуре и орнаменти Октобиха Р. 64 Градске библиотеки у Загребу [Minijature i ornamenti Oktoihah R. 64 Gradiske biblioteke u Zagrebu]. – Zbornik za likovne umetnosti, 1968, No. 4, 283; see Rakić, Zoran. Српска минијатура XVI и XVII века [Srpska minijatura XVI i XVII veka]. Belgrade, 2012, 116, 117, 205-210, ill. 27, 28, 55, 135.
The shift to a new kind of visuality is best demonstrated by the so-called *damaskini*, Slavonic manuscripts which comprise or which are based on Damascenes Studite’s *Thesauros*, a collection of moralizing sermons written in vernacular Greek. It was soon recognized as a book suitable for preaching and, maybe later, for private reading, as well as a stimulus for the diffusion of the vernacular into early-modern Bulgarian religious literature\(^9\). Its first, so-called archaic or Sredna-Gora translation, made in the second half/late-sixteenth century in Church Slavonic, was revised in the same literary centre in the next century. From the revised version stemmed several groups of the contemporary *damaskini* written in the vernacular\(^10\). The *damaskini* of the revised archaic group were among the most richly illustrated manuscripts of the seventeenth century, even though their pictures were of rather mediocre workmanship\(^11\). The village of Adzhar (today Svezhen) in Sredna Gora, near Karlovo is regarded as the main production centre for illustrated liturgical books, and in particular of *damaskini*\(^12\). In 1686 the most prominent Adzhar men of letters, the priest and *daskal* Nedyalko and his son *daskal* Filip, signed the *Adzhar Damaskin*\(^13\) (Fig. 1). *Daskal* Nedyalko’s handwriting has been identified in the *Kostenets Damaskin* of the second half of the seventeenth century\(^14\). On the basis of its script, or-

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10 For a most recent textual analysis, re-examining the relations of the *damaskini* of the archaic and vernacular versions see: Mladenova, Olga. Vernacularization of Bulgarian Literacy in the Seventeenth Century. – Canadian Slavonic Papers (forthcoming).

11 Single images decorate some of the *damaskini* of the New-Bulgarian (the vernacular) version.


13 Saint-Petersburg, Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences cod. 24.4.32 (Sreznevskiy Coll. No. 79).

14 Musakova, Elisaveta. Илюстрации на два български дамаскина от XVII век [Ilyustratsiiite na dva balgarski damaskina ot XVII vek]. – Izkustvo, 1983, No. 7, 28-34; Doncheva-Panayotova, Adzharski knizhovnitsi [Adzharski knizhovnitsi], 58; cod. ЦИАИ 503, in the Church-Historical
Fig. 1. Adzhur Damaskin, The Fall of Man, f. 88r
nament and pictures, the contemporary *Rila Damaskin* has also been attributed to both the father and the son\(^{15}\). Hereinafter the three manuscripts will be referred to as *A*, *K* and *R* respectively.

Since Damascene’s sermons were composed to celebrate the most important Christian holidays, the narrative cycles of illustrations in the three *damaskini* rely on a well-established exegesis and iconographical repertoire. Judging by their choice of subjects, the majority of illustrations in *K*, *A*, and *R*, present the most basic ‘inventory’ of headpiece- and full-page-miniatures illustrating Christ’s life, his miracles and parables: Annunciation (*R*), Presentation (*K*, *R*), Theophany (*A*, *R*), Healing of the Paralytic (*Fig. 2*), Healing of the Blind Man (*Fig. 3*), Christ and the Samaritan Woman (*Fig. 4*) (*A*, *K*, *R*), Transfiguration, Raising of Lazarus, Entry to Jerusalem (*A*, *R*), Crucifixion (*A*), Lamentation (*A*, *R*), Resurrection/The Harrowing of Hell (*A*, *R*) (*Fig. 5*), Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene (*K*, *A*) (*Fig. 6*), Myrrhbearers (*R*) (*Fig. 7*), Incredulity of Thomas (*Fig. 8*) (*A*, *R*), Ascension (*R*), Pentecost (*A*)\(^{16}\). Those scenes which are based on Old Testament stories also follow established patterns (*Fig. 1*).

The artists, that is, the scribes themselves in all the three manuscripts, did not search for models in the older Slavonic or Byzantine Gospel manuscript traditions, nor did they borrow from the rich pictorial repertoire found in the Byzantine manuscripts of the homilies of the Church Fathers, a genre to which the *damaskini* belong\(^{17}\). Instead, as generally happened with the late medieval South

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\(^{15}\) Doncheva-Panayotova. Аджарски книжовници [Adzharski knizhovnitsi], 83; her previous conclusion favoured *daskal* Filip alone, *Idem*. Аджарски книжовници-илюстратори от XVII век [Adzharski knizhovnitsi-ilyustratori ot XVII vek]. Veliko Tarnovo, 1998, 48 (not quoted further). The manuscript is kept in the Rila monastery library, cod. PM 4/10. On criticism of Doncheva-Panayotova’s opinion see Musakova. Илюстрациите [Ilyustratsiite], 34; Radoslavova.

\(^{16}\) Only Second Coming/Hetoimasia in *A* and Adam and Eve Expelled from Paradise in *A* and *R* rely on other biblical sources. The saints’ images fall outside the scope of this paper.

\(^{17}\) In its content and rhetorical strategies Damascene’s *Thesauros* agrees in every respect with the Byzantine tradition of the festal homilies; on the latter see: Cunningham, Mary B. The Reading of Sermons in Byzantine Churches and Monasteries. In: Angeliki Lymberopoulou (ed.). Images of the Byzantine World: Visions, Messages and Meaning. Studies Presented to Leslie Brubaker. Farnham, 2011, 85: ‘Another notable feature of the middle and late Byzantine homiletic tradition is the preponderance of festal sermons that survived... the chief purpose of festal homilies is...’
Fig. 2. Kostenets Damaskin, Healing of the Paralytic, f. 149v
Slavonic illumination, the source is once more to be found in the books printed for the Slavs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their woodcuts not only offered a fusion of familiar images and a novel stylistics, but established reproduction and standardization as a valuable artistic device. The most representative were the editions of the Venetian printers, but other printing houses in present-day Serbian, Romanian and Ukrainian towns and monasteries also supplied the manuscript illuminators with suitable models. In fact, the turning point at which narrative illustrations appeared in the headpieces and full-page miniatures of the Orthodox South Slavonic handwritten books for daily use in the service and for private prayer – horologia, triodia, menaia, and octoechoi – was the advent of South Slavonic early-printed books. In fulfilling their patriotic yearning to support the religious life and thus to raise the national consciousness of the Orthodox people within and outside the Ottoman Empire, the printers carefully selected iconographic patterns from the post-Byzantine and the Creto-Venetian artistic vocabulary. Easy to print, easy to grasp by the readers and expected to appeal to them, these condensed pictures belong to the type of ill-

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20 Kotseva. Украсата, 74-75.


22 Their iconography, unbiased towards the separation of Eastern and Western Churches, and the revival of ‘syncretic iconographic models’ in a time of confessional controversy are commented by Kotseva. Украсата, 74, 69.
Fig. 3. Adzhar Damaskin, Healing of the Blind Man, f. 201r
Fig. 4. Kostenets Damaskin, Christ and Samaritan Woman, f. 159v
lustration Kurt Weitzmann once named ‘liturgical’ or ‘lectionary’. While a number of miniatures in A represent faithful copies of the illustrated Triodion-Pentecostarion printed by deacon Coresi in Târgovişte (Romania) in 1558, the sources of the other two manuscripts are still not identified. The two identical miniatures – Resurrection/The Harrowing of Hell and Myrrhbearers – in R and in the Octoechos No. 64 of 1685 of the Public Library in Zagreb hint at a common, possibly printed model (Fig. 9, 10). The origin of both manuscripts remains uncertain, in spite of some suggestions of the Lesnovo monastery as provenance for the Octoechos, and Adzhar village for R. Their pictures, together with similarities of the ornament and rendering of the figures, and, to some extent, of the script and orthography, indicate a probable common place of origin, or close contacts between the scribes. As to the images in K, rendered in a naive, not to say primitive, manner, it is evident that while their artistic idiom is that of the prints, they do not depend on any particular model.

Who were the beholders of these pictures of Christ’s life, drawn

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24 Doncheva-Panayotova. Аджарски книжовници [Adzharski knizhovnitsi], 137; I would only disagree with her statement that the Lamentation and Ascension miniatures in R ‘exactly reproduce’ two of its prints. My gratitude is to Ralph Cleminson for his helpful remarks and for turning my attention to the correct dating of the edition, registered in Bianu, Hodoș. Bibliografia Românească, 31-43 as ‘c. 1550’; for recent references see for example Erich, Agnes. Arta ornamen

25 Noted in my MA thesis (‘Украса на българските дамаски от XVII век [Ukrasa na balgarskite damaskini ot XVII vek]’, defended in 1981) but omitted in Musakova. Илюстрациите, where only the reference is given: Harisijadis. Миниатюре, 282-296 + ill. 1–16; for the codex see also Rakić. Српска миниатюра, 292-294, il. 255-257.

on the pages not of a Gospel but of a moralizing book of sermons? The colophon in A (f. 219r) testifies to its donation to the church of St Theodore Tyro in Panagyurishte by a group of ktetores who bought the book from daskal Nedyalko27. Some scholars suggest that the seventeenth-century damaskini of both archaic and vernacular versions best fitted a parochial use28 but we do not know whether this illustrated copy was ever displayed, or whether its reading and viewing remained a privilege of the priests. For the two other copies, R and K, there is no information about their commissioners or purpose.

Even though unclear, the context of the viewer gives an idea about the new dimensions of the impact on the beholder of the New Testament pictorial narration, especially if another feature of it is considered – the inclusion of explanatory inscriptions in the compositions. While sporadically inserted in R and A, the inscriptions are the most extensive in K, being developed into dialogues between the protagonists (Christ and the Samaritan) or into a story retold (Healing of the Paralytic, The Harrowing of Hell, Christ and Mary Magdalene, Incredulity of Thomas). It is well known that the interplay between pictures and written words of central importance to the Christian understanding of images29. In our case the simplicity of the images, which makes a sharp contrast with the author’s rich and emotional rhetoric, is adequate to the intention of the sermons in so far as their modernized language and the enlightening, educational purpose are born in mind. If the example of the Christ and the Samaritan in K is taken, the respondent’s mind focusses on the holiday, commemorating the event, by means of several excerpts from the Gospel (John 4:6 – retold, and part of the verses in John 4: 29-30). The ‘mute image which could speak from the walls’ (after Gregory of Nyssa) is literally made to speak and thus, without trig-

27 See the full text of the colophon in Doncheva-Panayotova, Аджарски книжовници, 158.
28 Radoslavova, Dilyana. Етрополският книжовен център: проблеми и перспективи на изследванията [Etropolskiyat knizhoven tsentar: problemi i perspektivi na izsledvaniyata], In: Etropolskata knizhovna shkola i balgarskiyat XVII vek. Sofia, 2011, 73. Petkanova, Donka. Народното четиво през XVI–XVIII век [Narodnoto chetivo prez XVI–XVIII vek]. Sofia, 1990, 7, presumes that the first damaskini particularly, i.e. the archaic ones, were used for preaching in church.
Fig. 5. Rila Damaskin, Harrowing the Hell, f. 177r
Fig. 6. Kostenets Damaskin, Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene, f. 138r
Fig. 7. Rila Damaskin, Myrrhbearers, f. 212v
Fig. 8. Adzhar Damaskin, Incredulity of Thomas, f. 151r
gering a subtle exegesis but by echoing the voice of the preacher, the explanatory inscriptions enhance the pictures' sovereignty in confirming of the 'glorious good news about the Christ'\textsuperscript{30}. The very presence of texts to be read within and with the picture, certainly not suitable for reading aloud to an audience, suggests the private possession of $K$.

Such a situation, in which an imagery built on the Gospels narration proved its effect through a moralizing book of sermons, became possible in a political atmosphere in which ecclesiastical figures sought to defend the confessional identity of their Christian flock within the Ottoman Empire. This raising of consciousness, formed by political, social, economic, dogmatic, ecclesiological and other issues, is too complicated a matter to be treated here. Instead, I would only refer to the clash of views on defending the Christian self-identity. The Confession of Faith (1629) of the Ecumenical Patriarch Cyril Lucaris, who sought the solution in reconciliation with the Calvinist Protestant Church, inflamed a series of Church councils and orthodox, though also contradictory, expositions of faith. In 1638 the Council in Constantinople condemned Lucaris and his Confession; in 1640 Peter Mogila, Metropolitan of Kiev, wrote his \textit{Expositio fidei}, endorsed, despite its Catholic tint, by the Council of Jassy (1642) at which Lucaris was condemned once again. The Synod convened by Dositheos II Notaras, Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1672, rejected any further attempts at reformulation of Orthodox teachings and strengthened Orthodox beliefs against both the Protestant Reformation and Catholicism; Lucaris' authorship of Confession was contested as a Calvinist forgery\textsuperscript{31}. One way towards achieving the goals of the Orthodox church authorities was to enlighten both the clergy and the congregation regarding the soteriological mission of the Orthodox faith and teaching, and another, to regulate the everyday service as a guarantee of righteous life, leading to salvation. In this light, the illustrated \textit{damaskini}, though looking like a humble relative of the imposing decorative programs of certain sixteenth-and seventeenth-century churches, make another true witness to the aims and means of Orthodox Christian propaganda\textsuperscript{32}. Never-

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{30} 1 John 2:16.
\bibitem{31} This historical outline is compiled from various generalizing sources.
\bibitem{32} At that time it was less prompted by a fear of Islamisation than by the threat posed by the vigorous Catholic and Protestant Churches, see, for example: \textit{Ribolov}, Svetoslav. The Orthodox
theless, their impact should not be overestimated regarding their limited number, concentration in one scribal centre, and probable commission on special occasions.

The extent to which Orthodox scribes and artists forged an approach to liturgical texts that was simultaneously innovative and archaizing is best witnessed by the Zagreb Octoechos and the Festal Menaion of dascal Philip, both dating to the late seventeenth century. They remain unique examples in the entire history of the South Slavonic manuscript illumination. Here we find an appropriation by service books of a biblical illustrative cycle that suited their purpose as tools for catechetical teaching and moral instruction. The radical change of the ‘social status’ of the liturgical books and, correspondingly, of their artistic attire, is reflected by the execution of some of them as deluxe copies. The transformation of what was commonly an ordinary design into a mark of piety and prosperity of donors (and owners) affected the damaskini as well, especially if, along with the pictures, one takes into consideration the occasional application of gold, as in the case of the illumination of R, and of the Elena Damaskin, a manuscript whose quality of execution and lavish decoration testify to considerable scribal and ornamental excellence.

The manuscript illustrators rediscovered a repertoire of images that had previously been only incidentally applied and only in the context of Gospel books. They thereby sent a message directly affecting the viewer who, whether priest or lay owner of a damaskin, was

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33 Registered with inv. No 6252 in the Veliko Tarnovo Metropolitan library, now of unknown location. For its full-page miniatures, illustrated headpieces and marginal miniatures, some of which are of amusing profane character and others – still unsolved riddles, see Doncheva-Panayotova, Adzharski knizhovnitsi [Adzharski knizhovnitsi], 61-64.


Fig. 9. Zagreb Octoechos, Myrrhbearers, f. 86r
recognized by contemporary Church officials as insufficiently literate. The reader was not expected to read through a sophisticated visual interpretation of a literary work. Why later vernacular miscellanies of sermons, which became so numerous over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, were not illuminated (with only one exception), is therefore puzzling. However, this must be left as a potential subject for further research.
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Илюстрираните славянски сборници, съдържащи „Съкровище“ на Дамаскин Студит – нов контекст за евангелските илюстрации през XVII век

Елисавета Мусакова

Славянските ръкописи, широко известни като дамаскини, съдържат преводния текст на „Съкровище“ (1558), сборник от поучителни проповеди, съставен от Дамаскин Студит и написан на говоримия гръцки език. Неговото съчинение се оказва изключително продуктивна литературна форма за поучение и катехетично образование както на „простия народ“, така и на не особено грамотното свещеничество, както се вижда от запазените преводи и преработки на съчинението от втората половина/края на XVI в. и през XVII в. и от по-късните сборници с прибавени други слова към само част от дамаскиновите. Дамаскините бележат явление, специфично за българската литературна традиция, като особено важна е ролята на дамаскинската проповед за модернизирането на езика и въвеждането на новобългарския в религиозната литература. Ръкописите, съдържащи преработката на т.нар. архаичен превод, които са преписвани в Аджарското книжовно средище към края на XVII в., представят най-богато илюстрираните ръкописи от епохата – дамаскини, наред с други богослужебни книги. На фона на сравнително ограничения иконографски репертоар на ръкописното южнославянско Евангелие до края на XIV в., а и по-късно, илюстрирането на дамаскините със сцени, типични за украсата на евангелия във византийската традиция, е разгледано като пример за „преминаване на границите“. Изработени без особено майсторство, миниаторите в Аджарския, Костенечкия и Рилския дамаскин (последният с несигурен, но възможен средногорски произход), следват модели, вече зададени в славянските първопечатни книги. Именно там започва илюстрирането на евангелски теми на книгите за ежедневно богослужение, чието изработване и разпространение от страна на печатарите е подтикнато от желанието им да спомогнат за засилването на националното самосъзнание на православните християни в Отоманската империя и извън нея. Дамаскините се появяват в сложни политически, икономически и верски контекст на усиленото съперничество между православието, протестантството (калвинизма) и католицизма през XVII в., така че освен текстовете, техните опростени илюстрации – в някои случаи съпроводени с обяснителни текстове, са подходящо средство, служещо на православната пропаганда. Авторът обръща внимание,
че въпреки казаното, ролята на илюстрираните дамаскини не бива да се преувеличава, тъй като техният брой не е голям и вероятно са били поръчвани по специални поводи, а също и поради факта, че през следващите два века внушителният брой сборници със смесено съдържание от дамаскински тип, остават – с едно изключение – отново без украса.
Jovan Četirević Grabovan – an 18th Century Itinerant Orthodox Painter. Some Ethnic and Artistic Considerations

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Abstract: The paper presents new insights into some ethnic and artistic circumstances in the life and work of painter Jovan Četirević Grabovan in Slavonia and northern Croatia during the last quarter of the 18th century. His probable origin as an Aromanian from what is now eastern Albania can be seen as crucial for the development of his business connections, due to extensive, mainly trade-related, migrations of his fellow countrymen to the southern provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy. Their significant financial and consequently cultural influence in the Orthodox communities of the region greatly contributed to Četirević’s success and, to some extent, determined the iconographic and stylistic traits of his painting.

Key words: Jovan Četirević Grabovan, Aromani, Serbian religious painting – 18th century.

The biography and extensive Balkan and East European travels of painter Jovan Četirević (Çetiri) from Grabova in eastern Albania have attracted the attention of researchers since the beginning of the
20th century. This scholarly interest is probably in part the result of the many and far-reaching journeys undertaken by this artist during the 18th century – modern Albanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian and Serbian scholars alike have posed questions as to his ethnic origins, his artistic training and the iconographic characteristics of his painted works. They have also investigated the ways in which Četirević established his connections in Orthodox communities in this wide, culturally and confessionally disparate, European region. In spite of the significant amount of pioneering research that has been generated on this painter’s life and work, this essay argues for the necessity of a fresh outlook, which would move beyond the “national”

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approaches that have hitherto dominated Četirević scholarship. It proposes a new line of investigation, which takes into consideration the “channels” through which the artist moved, and which – the present essay posits – were determined mainly by contemporary confessional and ethnic circumstances.

Četirević (Četirević), the Serbianised variant of his last name that he probably coined himself, left much information about his own life and work, mainly in surviving inscriptions on icons and iconostases he painted (Figs. 1, 2), and in biographical notes he wrote on the margins of the manuscript copy of his painter’s manual – the Hermeneia Zographikes. However, entirely in keeping with the custom among Balkan Orthodox Christians in the 18th century of not specifying one’s ethnicity, Četirević never made any mention of his ethnic or national affiliation. On several occasions in his inscriptions he explained his origins mainly in geographic (“from the town of Grabova” or “now an inhabitant of Osijek”), and, more importantly, in confessional and church jurisdictional terms. In 1775, on the iconostasis in the church in Orahovica in Slavonia, he stated

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5 Četirević left several variants of his surname written and/or painted in Church-Slavonic: четиригиг, четиръ, чатиръ, чатиръ, четирлевичъ, четиревичъ. For variants he wrote in Greek also see Todić. Skica za portret, 358.

6 Jovanović. Jovan Četirević Grabovan, 200-209; Todić, Skica za portret, 355-389. It needs to be stressed that Četirević’s painter’s manual is written in Greek. The biographical notes he wrote on its margins are almost entirely in Greek language too, as cited and commented by Moutafis, Ioannes Tsetiris from Grabovo, 218-221. Greek was the language of “daily use” of the Aromani in the south of Balkans; their mother tongue was not written during the 18th century. Nandriș, John. The Social Being of the Aromâni; the Vlahs of the Balkans and their Predilection for the Book. In: Travaux de symposium international le livre. La Roumanie. L’Europe, Tome 4: la quatrième section: Latinité Orientale, Bucharest, 2010, 15; cf. Zef, Mirdita. Vlasi, polinomičan narod. – Povijesni prilozi, 2007, 33, 263-264.

that he was born in the “Ochrid Eparchy”\(^8\). Confessional affiliation as “Christians” was the dominant mode of group self-identification among Četirević’s countrymen who found themselves scattered over the wide territories of the Ottoman Balkans and Habsburg Monarchy\(^9\). Although not conclusively, it can be proposed that Jovan Četirević was ethnic Aromanian (Vlach or Tsintsar)\(^10\). Some recent linguistic and ethnological researches of his native village strongly suggest that it was almost exclusively inhabited by Aromanians until the third quarter of the 18\(^{th}\) century\(^11\). The migrations of Grabovans, as well as of other “Christians” from towns and villages in the area of Moschopolis, Elbasan and Korće, and their subsequent settlement in the Habsburg Monarchy, would decisively determine Četirević’s sojourns in the second half of the 18\(^{th}\) century.

The nature of Četirević’s early travels after 1736, before the final settlement in Osijek in Slavonia, probably in 1771\(^12\), makes it likely that he planned to lead a life typical of an 18\(^{th}\) century enterprising Aromanian professional: taking long and distant trips in search of work, and making intermittent visits to his family back in his native village. The trading networks of his fellow countrymen established in the Balkans and in Eastern and Central Europe opened channels for his connections, engagements and further recommendations. Unfortunately, this first part of Četirević’s professional life, marked mainly by his travels to Wallachia and Moldavia and by his returns to native Grabova, remains largely unknown. It is worth noting that his final crossing to the Habsburg lands came in 1769, when

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\(^8\) Jovanović. Jovan Četirević Grabovan, 204; Todić. Skica za portret, 358.


\(^10\) The arguments for his Greek ethnicity were elaborated by Moutafov. Ioannes Tsetiris from Grabovo, 217, 227. Later considerations, mostly due to exploration of Četirević’s associations after his settlement in Osijek, speak in favour of his Aromanian ethnicity. Todić. Skica za portret, 359.


\(^12\) Todić. Skica za portret, 364.
he brought his whole family to Novi Sad\textsuperscript{13}, and that this move coincided with the first sack of Moschopolis by the Turks, an event that traumatized and scattered its Aromanian inhabitants and immediately thereafter acquired the aura of their national doomsday\textsuperscript{14}.

The role of Aromanian traders and their families in the establishment and subsequent economic strength of the Orthodox community in Osijek in eastern Slavonia (Croatia) during the 18\textsuperscript{th} century is well documented\textsuperscript{15}. They were the main financial contributors to the building and decoration of the Orthodox church of the Assumption of the Virgin in Osijek’s lower town, built after 1756. It was one of the first baroque Orthodox churches in Slavonia and for a short time the cathedral of the Pakrac-Slavonian Bishopric\textsuperscript{16}.

The iconostasis in the church was painted in 1761 by Janko Halkozović (or Halkozo, as his surname also appears in

\textsuperscript{13} Todić. Skica za portret, 361-364.
\textsuperscript{14} Popović. O Cincarima, 66; cf. Bardu. La aromânnii din localitatea Grabova, 21.
sources), probably another Aromanian. Četirević came to Osijek a decade later, following his stay in Novi Sad, where Halkozović permanently resided. Family ties caused Četirević’s relocation, since his brother Anastas, a trader in “Austrian goods”, bought a house in

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Osijek in 1765. Četirević’s first big engagement, the painting of the iconostasis (Figs. 3, 4), choirs and the bishop’s throne in the church of the Virgin in the Slavonian town and trading post of Orahovica, probably came as a result of the acquaintances and connections he made after settling in Osijek.

The largest Orthodox monastery in the region – Orahovica (Fig. 6), also had important ties to, and even property in, Osijek. The parochial church in Orahovica was under the monastery’s jurisdiction, and Četirević mentioned the hegoumenos’ name in the inscription on the iconostasis. But, more importantly, archival sources allow us to appreciate the influence of the Orthodox traders from his homeland in the Orahovica parish proper. Četirević’s inscription on the iconostasis stated the name of the church tutor – Konstantin Dimčović. In the list of “Turkish” merchants in Virovitica County, issued by the Habsburg customs in 1777, he was registered as Kosta Dimčović, a merchant born in Moschopolis. Another merchant from Moschopolis, named only as Georgije, was probably a major financial contributor to the church building in Orahovica, since he earned the honour to be buried by the western portal in the narthex when he died in 1777. As to Četirević himself, after finishing the job in Orahovica in 1775, he started working on a series of iconostases in northern Croatia, first in the Lepavina Monastery, then on iconostases in villages with strong Orthodox communities in the regions of Koprivnica, Križevci and Bjelovar in northern Croatia, where he worked until 1785. Koprivnica was an important destination for Orthodox settlers since the 17th century. During the 18th century their number increased; in contemporary sources they were registered as “Greek” (Graccum) merchants of different ethnic provenance. The Orthodox population of Koprivnica was ob-

19 Kučeković. Umetnost Pakračko-slavonske eparchije, 71.
20 Some corrections in the Old-Church-Slavonic text, re-cited here, were made by Emmanuel Moutafov in his capacity of an editor for this volume.
22 Kučeković. Umetnost Pakračko-slavonske eparchije, 71.
24 Petrić. Koprivnica, 179.
structured in their efforts to erect a church in the city centre for most of the 18th century, and only managed to obtain permission and build the church in 1791–1794. Preserved documents concerning the plights to the state authorities of the “Greek” merchants from the trading town of Križevci show that in the mean time they were using the church in the nearby village of Vojakovac, where Četirević had painted the iconostasis in 1782. The trading town of Slatina in Slavonia was also a hub for Orthodox merchants from the southern Balkans. Četirević painted the iconostasis there, probably also due to the fact that his countrymen from Moschopolis were the most numerous traders in this town. Indeed, it is possible to find evidence of the settlement of merchants from his native Grabova in the nearby small town of Voćin. We can estimate their influence among the Orthodox in Slatina and the surrounding region by Četirević’s inscription on the iconostasis of the church – after a long series of inscriptions in Church-Slavonic and in the Cyrillic script, here he reverts to Greek, stating his profession and residence in Osijek.

It seems that this situation was a result of a favourable attitude of Habsburg authorities towards the settlement of “Turkish” or “Greek” merchants, as they were denoted in contemporary documents, in Slavonia and northern Croatia during the 18th century. The economy of this region was not stable and trade was particularly underdeveloped. The social class of merchants was weaker than in other parts of the Monarchy inhabited by Orthodox population. In many market towns of the region “Turkish” merchants were the only people practicing a trading profession. As archival sourc-

28 The inscription was written in Greek language but in Cyrillic script: κυρ (probably χείρ) ιωάννης γατιρ γραβοβανς κε(τ)ηγραφαδ εκ πολες εσεκι 1785. Jovanović. Jovan Četirević Grabovan, 209. Unfortunately, its characteristics could not be verified because the entire iconostasis was destroyed in the Second World War; cited after: Todić. Srpski slikari, Vol. 1, 288.  
29 The common terms denoting Orthodox traders from Ottoman dominions, used by Habsburg administration during the 18th century, were: Graeci quaestores, Graeci, Graccum, Griechiche Handelsleute, turcici quaestores, turcici negociatores, Türkische Handelsleute. Gavrilović. Prilog istoriji trgovine, 5.  
es show, the large majority of them were, from the beginning of the century, migrating primarily from Moschopolis, but also from Kozani, Grabova, Sipiska and other villages inhabited by Aromani. They created small but tight-knit colonies, and their fierce commitment to Orthodoxy was, in many cases, the driving force behind the prosperity of the Orthodox Church municipalities throughout the region. Although many of them were of Aromanian ethnicity, in the Habsburg Monarchy during the 18th century they were subjected to

32 Popović. O Cincarima, 23.
intensive assimilation into the Serbian majority and the jurisdiction of Serbian Orthodox Church, i.e. the Metropolis of Karlovci.\(^{33}\)

Inscriptions in the Greek language found on icons painted by Jovan Četirević can be considered indicators of his Aromanian (or indeed Greek) countrymen living in Slavonia and northern Croatia, and of their roles as patrons or purchasers of his works. It is worth noting that most of his painted inscriptions in Greek can be found on portable icons, probably largely originating from the sphere of private devotion.\(^{34}\) Another indicator of Četirević’s Aromanian clientele could be the choice of particular saints that he painted, whose cults were strong among the Aromanians in the South Balkans, and particularly in the Archbishopric of Ochrid. Unfortunately, many

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34 The full list of Četirević’s surviving portable icons is yet to be compiled. One of those with Greek inscriptions, representing the Coronation of the Virgin, belongs now to the Orthodox Church in Hungarian town of Miskolc, where the influence of the Orthodox population from the Southern Balkans (including Aromani) was very prominent during the second half of the 18th century. Četirević signed it: Χ(ε)ιρ δε Ιωάνου Γραμποβάνου 1773, as cited by Todić. Srpski slikari, 1, 290; cf. Nagy, Marta. A magyarországi görög diáspóra egyházművészeti emlékei 1. Iknok, ikonostázionok, Debrecen, 1998, 123-125.
of them are now lost and known only indirectly through earlier descriptions or photographs. In 1777, Četirević painted the vita icon of St Jovan Vladimir with Greek inscriptions. It has been suggested that the icon was probably done for one of his countrymen from the vicinity of Elbasan or the Ardenica Monastery, where the saint’s relics were venerated. Until the Second World War the icon was in the possession of the Serbian Orthodox church in Virovitica in central Slavonia. Todić. Skica za portret, 370; Pavlović, Leontije. Kultovi lica kod Srba
ened among the Orthodox population in the Habsburg Monarchy when Hristofor Žefarović included the saint’s image in Serbian *Stematographia*, in 1741. A year later, in Vienna, Žefarović made a separate graphic vita icon of St Jovan Vladimir that might have been known to, and used by, Jovan Četirević. The famous Ardenica Monastery vita icon of the saint painted by Constantine in 1739 could also have been the model for Četirević’s painting in Slavonia. Another lost icon of Četirević but fortunately known from photographs, belonged to the Orahovica Monastery. The popular Virgin Kykotissa was represented together with three-quarter figures of saints Michael, Athanasios and Naum of Ochrid with Church-Slavonic inscriptions (Fig. 8). But, the well-known text on the scroll in Christ’s right hand (Is. 61,1; Luc. 4,18) was written in Greek, reinforcing the transfer of thaumaturgic potential of the Athonite original. As far as we know, this is the only baroque version of the Kykotissa known from Slavonia and northern Croatia from the 18th century. The selection of saints accompanying the Virgin, especially St Naum, strongly indicates the patron of the icon as yet another from Četirević’s homeland. His high reputation in the Orahovica Monastery may be the reason why the brethren entrusted him with the repainting of the left wing on the inner side of the triptych icon depicting Virgin with saints and Serbian Sts Simeon and Sava (Fig. 7), dating from the first half of the 16th century, and probably origi-

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36 Žefarović, Hristofor. Σтематографїа… [или] Изображение орёхій Илирических/автором Павломъ Ріттеромъ Вʹ дїалектѣ Латйнскомъ изданное На свѣтъ... На Славено Сербскїі Язікъ Преведенное..., Vienna 1741, 8.
Fig. 9. Jovan Četirević, Saint John the Forerunner, despotic icon on the iconostasis in Veliki Poganac (Northern Croatia), 1779
nating from the Chilandariou Monastery\textsuperscript{42}.

The pre-eminence of Jovan Četirević as a painter favoured by the Orthodox communities in Slavonia and northern Croatia in the last quarter of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century was facilitated by connections he made along ethnic and confessional lines, as was probably the case also with his occasional travels and works in Hungary\textsuperscript{43}. But, his entrepreneurial spirit greatly contributed to this status – he, with his collaborators, offered a full service to his clientele – complete painting of the icons and decorative painting of the iconostasis and church furniture, and we know that he employed a wood carver as well\textsuperscript{44}. Somewhat traditional iconographic features of his iconostases and his distinctive style, due to his initial training in the Greek tradition, also contributed to his popularity among the Orthodox population in the areas constantly under pressure to yield to the Church Union\textsuperscript{45}. Četirević’s works can be seen as a sort of counterweight to elaborate baroque schemes introduced into this territory by Ukrainian painter Vasilij Romanovich in the mid-18\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{46}. However, the two had an important common feature – the extensive use of Biblia Ectypa of Christoph Weigel\textsuperscript{47}. It is known that Jovan Četirević had his own copy of this famous volume, and relied heavily on its illustrations (Figs. 4, 5)\textsuperscript{48}. We can not tell for certain where or when Četirević acquired an Ectypa copy – his four-year “Moscovite” sojourn (1746-50), undertaken in order “to study painting”, might be considered pivotal for his adoption of the Western baroque iconographic templates. He probably went to Kiev Pechersk Lavra\textsuperscript{49}. Painters educated here favoured the Ectypa\textsuperscript{50}. Some preliminary assumptions, yet

\begin{itemize}
\item[42] The triptych was one of the most prized possessions of the monastery in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century and permanently displayed in front of the iconostasis. Kučeković, Aleksandra. Manastir Orahovica u Slavoniji. Zagreb, 2007, 140-143, ill. 68.
\item[44] Kučeković. Umetnost Pakračko-slavonske eparchije, 150-152.
\item[45] Kučeković. Umetnost Pakračko-slavonske eparchije, 274.
\item[49] Todić. Skica za portret, 360.
\item[50] Stošić, Zapadnoevropska grafika, 38-40.
\end{itemize}
to be confirmed, about Četirević’s subsequent travel to Moldavia and work in the town of Roman in 1755, suggest that he might have started using the Ectypa graphic illustrations very early on in his career\footnote{Sabados, Marina I. Catedrala Episcopiei Romanului, Roman, 1990, 104-106.}.

As far as we know, Jovan Četirević was the most sought after painter from the south of the Balkans in the Orthodox communities in Slavonia and northern Croatia in the second half of the 18th century. He developed a successful career, even a kind of monopoly. At what point his career came to an end is still not precisely known, but he probably died sometime after his last recorded iconostasis in Kula in Bačka in 1787 (aged around 70)\footnote{Todić. Skica za portret, 376.}. No reliable clues as to his activity after this date exist, although there have been suggestions that he returned to Albania and worked there for another quarter of a century\footnote{Moutafov. Ioannes Tsetiris from Grabovo, 225.}. The painter Jovan Četiri from Grabova, whose works date from the last two decades of the 18th century, is almost certainly the namesake of our Četirević. He may even be a member of his extended family, which produced several painters in the 18th and 19th centuries\footnote{Todić. Skica za portret, 358-359.}. He developed his painting style with more pronounced post-Byzantine features and less contact with the contemporary baroque stylistic tendencies characteristic of Orthodox painters active in the Habsburg Monarchy\footnote{Tourta (ed.). Icons from the Orthodox Communities of Albania, 184-191.}. The comparison of some of the best works of Jovan Četirević (Fig. 9) and those of his later namesake make this quite clear. Jovan Četirević’s two sons were also active as painters in Slavonia, but neither was as successful as their father – Nikolas is recorded working in their resident city of Osijek up until 1824, and Constantine was probably the one who was favoured by his father and who inherited his business connections, along with his precious copy of Biblia Ectypa\footnote{Gavrilović, Slavko. Ispisi iz stare arhive srpske crkvene opštine u Oseku (18-19 vek). – Receuil des travaux sur les Serbes en Croatie, 2009, No. 7, 458; Todić. Skica za portret, 376-377; cf. Todić, Srpski slikari, Vol. 1, 299.}. 

\footnote{Sabados, Marina I. Catedrala Episcopiei Romanului, Roman, 1990, 104-106.}
\footnote{Todić. Skica za portret, 376.}
\footnote{Moutafov. Ioannes Tsetiris from Grabovo, 225.}
\footnote{Todić. Skica za portret, 358-359.}
\footnote{Tourta (ed.). Icons from the Orthodox Communities of Albania, 184-191.}
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Византијско и поствизантијско изкуство: пресичане на границе


Ševo, Ljiljana. Crkva Rođenja Svetog Jovana Preteče u Stonom


Žefarović, Hristofor. Στεματογραφία... [или] Изображение орызг Иллярическихъ / авторомъ Паюломъ Риттеромъ В’ діалектъ Латинскомъ изданное На свѣтъ... На Славено Сербскїі Языкъ Преведенное..., Vienna, 1741.

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 Йован Четиревич Грабован – еден пътуващ зограф от XVIII век. Етнически и художествени значения

Александра Кучекович

Пресичащата културните граници значимост на живота и творчеството на зографа Йован Четиревич Грабован в изследването на художествените взаимодействия на Балканите и в Централноевропейския район от втората половина на XVIII век е заявена още от началото на XX век с вниманието, което получава в научни изследвания на международно ниво. Макар че той е задълбочено изследван, един съвременен поглед върху етническите и религиозните обстоятелства в творческото му развитие в Славония и Северна Хърватия в последната четвърт на XVIII век разкрива нова информация, свързана с неговите връзки и „канали“, по които той се е придвижвал. По презумпция арумънският му произход е смятан за един от ключовите фактори на неговия успех като предпочитан зограф в православните общности на Славония и Северна Хърватия, където по-голямата част от градовете и търговските средища през XVIII век са с подчертано арумънски елементи. Финансовото влияние върху сънародниците на Четиревич, което идва от района на Москополи, както и от останалите, преимуществено арумънски области на Южните Балкани, при превръщането на православните общности в прилежащи на Хабсбургите територии допринася значително за неговата популярност и достъп до скъпо платени поръчки, които гореспоменатите общности могат да предлагат. Иконографските и стилови предпочитания в неговата работа също могат да бъдат видени в контекста на посочените обстоятелства. Той постига симбиоза между традиционно поствизантийски и барокови елементи в резултат на художествения опит, който придобива, както и на пътуванията си, простирящи се от Гърция до – вероятно – Киево-Печерската лавра, като създава един съвършен визуален продукт за православна общност, съществуваща в преимуществено католическа среда.
Painters of Western Training Working for Orthodox Patrons – Remarks on the Evidence of Late-medieval Transylvania (14\textsuperscript{th}–15\textsuperscript{th} Century)

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Abstract. The article deals with the question of medieval painters trained in the West, who decorated murals in Eastern-rite churches and who received their commissions from Orthodox patrons. It focuses on two case studies – the mural decoration of the sanctuaries of the Orthodox churches in Strei (first half of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century) and Hălmași (late-14\textsuperscript{th} – early-15\textsuperscript{th} century) – coming from the Voivodate of Transylvania and the Kingdom of Hungary, respectively, regions where Orthodox Romanians lived alongside Catholics but under the Latin rule of the latter. Such context led to the emergence of frequent phenomena of hybridization in the sphere of religious art.

Key words: church decoration, religious iconography, Byzantine painting, Catholic painting, artistic hybridity, patronage.

The southern area of the Voivodate of Transylvania and the south-western counties of the Kingdom of Hungary, respectively, represented during the Middle Ages regions where several ethnic and confessional groups coexisted\textsuperscript{2}, each of them bringing into play

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\textsuperscript{2} Pop, Ioan-Aurel. The Ethno-confessional Structure of Medieval Transylvania and Hungary
their own cultural and religious traditions. Under the Hungarians' Latin rule, Orthodox Romanians lived together with Catholic Hungarians, Szeklers, and Saxons, creating a long-lasting conviventia which generated many cultural contacts with the 'other'. These frequent encounters have left meaningful traces in the religious art of both confessional groups.

Orthodox patrons had a complex relationship with Western art, often commissioning builders who were active on nearby Catholic sites. These masters created religious edifices with prevailing Western appearance for their patrons, but which, in fact, served the Orthodox rite. Accordingly, the churches of Orthodox Romanians in 14th- and 15th-century Transylvania often have rectangular sanctuaries separated from the nave by built iconostases; their architectural structures are dominated by tall western towers, and their windows and portals are decorated with Gothic stonework.

Most of the time, Orthodox patrons entrusted the mural decoration of their rural churches to painters of Byzantine tradition who – as their work attests – unevenly mastered their craft. Regardless of their abilities, these painters’ diverse skills and techniques were acquired somewhere within the Eastern/Orthodox world. Given their peripheral position in relation to the center(s) of Byzantine art and their integration into a Latin state, these painters also proved to be highly receptive to themes and motifs typical for Western/Catholic iconography.

3 This conventional term designates the Romance-speaking people living in medieval Transylvania, and it does not refer to present-day Romanian national identity. There are no self-referential sources of this people, to whom others referred to as “Vlachs”. On Romanian cultural specificity during the Middle Ages, see: Panaitescu, P. P. Perioada slavonă la români și ruperea de cultura Apusului. In: Silvia Panaitescu (ed.). Interpretări românești. Studii de istorie economică și socială. Bucharest, 1971, 28-49; Pop, Ioan-Aurel, The Romanians as a Border People during the Middle Ages. Between Slavonianism and Latinity. – Eurolimes, 2008, No. 5, 21-27.


Given the multicultural and bi-confessional situation of Transylvania and Hungary during the Late Middle Ages, it is not surprising that borders – understood both artistically and confessionally – were often easily crossed in the field of religious art. Subsequently, one can find a significant number of cases where Western painters worked for Orthodox patrons or, vice versa, painters of Byzantine tradition working for Catholic commissioners. In the text that follows, I shall briefly discuss two instances of this paradigm, emphasizing the most striking cases of artistic hybridity. A comprehensive analysis, as well as a discussion of the latter model will be the subject of another paper.

The church in Strei (Hunyad County), built sometime after 1300 and serving the local Orthodox community, was probably dedicated to St Nicholas and decorated with frescoes sometime during the first half of the 14th century by a workshop that employed several painters. Judging by their linear-narrative manner, all of them received their training in a Western milieu, where they acquired formal features specific for a provincial, early-Gothic style unevenly mixing elements of Romanesque-Gothic, Italian Trecento, and even Byzantine style. In an attempt to adapt their modest skill and knowledge to the requirements of their Orthodox commissioners, this eclectic workshop created a hybrid iconographic programme, which combined Western and Byzantine themes and motifs. However, to a great extent the painters retained the iconographic layout specific to Catholic sanctuaries, which seemingly did not pose a great challenge to be understood by their Orthodox patrons (Fig. 1).

The painters represented Christ in Glory (Maiestas Domini) in a mandorla supported by two angels on the eastern webbing of the quadripartite rib vault. The same depiction could usually be found in...
a similar position in Catholic churches across medieval Hungary\textsuperscript{8}, but it was in fact an iconographic solution occurring predominant-

ly in Transylvania’s Orthodox churches. The customary image of the Virgin with the Child in the sanctuary’s conch was sometimes replaced by that of the Pantokrator in Byzantine churches without a dome, or in religious edifices built in the eastern periphery of Byzantium (e.g., Cappadocia or Georgia). In Transylvania, however, the Pantokrator type, occurring only in Densuş, was usually dropped in favor of the types of Maieastas Domini or Christ in Glory. In Strei, medallions with busts of Old Testament Prophets are portrayed on the intrados of the triumphal arch, whereas standing figures of apostles are shown conversing and holding each of their own attributes on the side walls. Both types of depictions are encountered in the sanctuary of many Hungarian Catholic churches, displaying similar iconographic arrangements and compositional devices.

Following most likely their Orthodox commissioners’ request, the Western painters in Strei depicted holy bishops in the sanctuary’s lowermost register (Fig. 1-4), as was customary in the altar space of Byzantine churches. Five out of six figures of holy bishops are identified by inscriptions in Old Church Slavonic which give their names and are placed next to their heads: St Callinicus (of Constantinople), St John (Chrysostom), St Cyril (of Alexandria or Jerusalem), St Peter


14 Drăguţ. Iconografia picturilor, 15-17, 63, 80.

Fig. 2. Sts Cyril and Peter flanking the model of a Romanesque church, lower register of the eastern and southern walls of the sanctuary, Orthodox church in Strei.

Fig. 3. Sts John and Cyril flanking the Man of Sorrows, lower register of the eastern wall of the sanctuary, Orthodox church in Strei.

Fig. 4. Model of Romanesque church, St Nicholas, and supplicant Grozie, lower register of the southern wall of the sanctuary, Orthodox church in Strei.
(of Alexandria), and St Nicholas. However, the Church Fathers are dressed in Latin episcopal vestments composed of albs and chasubles decorated with Latin crosses; some of them wear mitres and hold either closed or open books (Fig. 2-4). Four of them stand on the side walls next to the models of Romanesque churches with two western towers, whereas the remaining two flank the symbolic depiction of the Man of Sorrows depicted in the sanctuary’s axis (i.e., below the eastern window and above the former altar table). The symbolic image of the Melismos typical of Byzantine sanctuaries was most likely unknown to these Western-trained painters, who replaced it with another depiction endowed with strong Eucharistic meaning, namely, the Man of Sorrows (Fig. 3). The Eucharistic component of this representation prevailed in the Latin West ever since the transfer of this iconography from Byzantium to the West. This is most likely the reason why the Western-trained painters in Strei, unfamiliar with the Byzantine depiction of the Melismos (i.e., the symbolic image of the Transubstantiation occurring during the Liturgy and representing the sacrificed Christ as a naked baby on the altar or on a bowl-shaped paten), resorted to their own (Catholic) iconography of the Eucharist (i.e., the Man of Sorrows). Subsequently, having been requested by their Orthodox patrons to represent in the sanctuary a symbolic image of the Transubstantiation, the Western-trained painters in Strei came up with a literal version of it, namely, the depiction of a sacrificed, wounded Christ placed actually above the medieval altar table of the sanctuary (now vanished).

16 For the holy bishops’ identifying inscriptions, see: Popescu, Tugearu. Biserica ortodoxâ, 268-270.


19 The white, trapezoidal area without paint below the image of the Man of Sorrows marks the place where the medieval altar table was originally attached to the wall.
Equally peculiar is the integration of the lay supplicant Grozie into the sanctuary’s register of Church Fathers (Fig. 4). He is dressed according to the Western fashion, makes a prayer gesture typical for the Catholics (i.e., hands joined in front of his chest), and stands next to St Nicholas. The supplicant together with the holy bishop, who is depicted in the proximity of one of the four idealized church models, recalls remotely the iconographic layout of Byzantine votive compositions. This was probably another result of the Western painters’ attempt at adjusting their existing patterns to new Orthodox circumstances, even though the inclusion of laymen in the register of the Church Fathers and, moreover, in a size comparable to that of the holy bishops would have hardly been possible in the most sacred space of Byzantine sanctuaries.

20 For the recent discussion on the image, see Năstăsoiu, Dragoș Gh. The Social Status of Romanian Orthodox Noblemen According to Donor Portraits and Church Inscriptions. In: Nicolae-Șerban Tanașoca, Alexandru Madgearu (eds.). Études Byzantines et Post-Byzantines. Bucharest and
The decoration of the sanctuary and triumphal arch of St Nicholas Church in Hălmagiu (Zarând County) was commissioned by jupan Moga and his brother from a workshop, which seems to have been trained in a Central-European artistic milieu (Fig. 5). Its provincial, late-Gothic manner deriving from the so-called “School of Friul” has close parallels with the murals of a significant number of Hungarian Catholic churches, which were painted at the turn of the 14th and 15th century. The iconographic program of the sanctuary

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21 For the monument’s literature, see: Porumb, Dicționar de pictură, 185. The most comprehensive study on the murals is: Cinchea-Buculei, Ecaterina. L’ensemble de peinture murale de Hălmagiu (XVe siècle). Iconographie et fondateurs. – Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes, No. 1, 1984, 3-25. For historical data on the settlement’s noble owners, see: Rusu and Hurezan, Biserici medievale, 97-105.

22 Stylistic analogies in Prioteasa, Elena Dana. Medieval Wall Paintings in Transylvanian Orthodox Churches and Their Donors. PhD diss., Central European University, Budapest, 2011, 149, fig. 7.56-7.61.
in Hălmagiu is closely related to that of the sanctuary of St Nicholas Church in Ribiţa (Zaránd County), another religious foundation patronized by Romanian Orthodox noblemen and which had its sanctuary decorated probably in 139323. Iconographically, the two sanctuaries in Hălmagiu and Ribiţa, respectively, are similar in their selection of themes and their distribution on church walls. Whereas the sanctuary in Hălmagiu was decorated by a workshop composed most likely of Western-trained painters, the sanctuary in Ribiţa was undoubtedly decorated by painters of Byzantine tradition. Judging by the similarity between the iconographic programs of both the sanctuaries in Hălmagiu and Ribiţa, the Western painters of the former church followed more closely the directions set out by their Orthodox commissioner/iconographer, even though they relied partly on more familiar iconographic solutions.

In Hălmagiu, the apocalyptic vision of Christ in Glory shown blessing with two hands in-between the Sun and Moon is placed on the barrel vault of the rectangular sanctuary24 (Fig. 6). The busts of the Old Testament Prophets who foresaw Christ’s Second Coming are depicted in the medallions on the vault’s western side25 and flank the Agnus Dei in the apex26. Eucharistic and eschatological symbol alike, this image appears rarely in Byzantine iconography, and, if it does, it occurs only under Western influence27. This was possibly

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23 For a reevaluation of the murals’ various dating hypotheses (1393, 1404, 1407, 1414, 1414/5, and 1417, respectively), see Năstăsoiu, Dragoş Gh., Adashinskaya, Anna. O ipoteză privind datarea picturilor murale ale bisericii Sf. Nicolae din Ribiţa în lumina unor informaţii noi. In: Ioachim Lazăr, Florin Dobrei (eds.). Cultură şi spiritualitate în comuna Ribiţa (jud. Hunedoara). 600 de ani de la atestarea bisericii “Sfântul Ierarh Nicolae” din Ribiţa (1417) şi 25 de ani de la reactivarea Mănăstirii Crişan (1992). Cluj-Napoca and Deva, 2017, 54-92; a revised, English version of this study is going to be published this year in Museikon. For the secondary literature on the frescoes, see Porumb. Dicţionar de pictură, 336. The murals’ uncovering and restoration is not completed yet, so the ensemble lacks a comprehensive study. Cincheza-Buculei, Ecaterina. Ipoteze şi certitudini în frescele descoperite la Ribiţa. – Ars Transsilvaniae, No. 5, 1995, 85-92; Prioteasa. Medieval Wall Paintings, passim.

24 For this iconography, see: Belting-Ilmu, Christa. Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts. Stuttgart, 1992; Poilpré, Anne-Or.ange. Maiestas Domini: Une image de l’église en Occident (V–IXe siècle). Paris, 2005. In Ribiţa, the image on the vault is largely destroyed, but remaining traces of a crucifer halo indicate that here, too, a representation of Christ was initially painted.

25 Streisângeregiu, Strei, and Ribiţa offer direct analogies.

26 The composition in Ribiţa is partly whitewashed and partly damaged, so one can no longer be certain what was depicted on the arch’s apex.

Fig. 7. Unknown holy bishop, lower register of the northern wall of the sanctuary, St Nicholas Orthodox Church in Hălmăgiu
the case with Hâlmagiu, too, as the Lamb of God was placed in a similar, lofty position and Old Testament-themed setting in many Catholic churches of medieval Hungary. Witnesses and disseminators of Christ’s redemptive work, the Evangelists in Hâlmagiu and Ribița, represented in the postures of sitting and writing, are depicted in the proximity of the *Maiestas Domini*. Their placement on the sanctuary’s vault betrays yet another connection with Western iconography. This time, however, the model was adapted rath-

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29 Analogies in Prioteasa, Medieval Wall Paintings, 154-155, figs. 7.54-7.56, 7.58-7.66.
er than being directly followed, as it is a regular feature of Catholic iconography that the Latin Church Doctors are represented seated at their writing desks and not the Evangelists. The Evangelists are usually represented only through their symbols, and are often depicted in the company of the Latin Doctors.\footnote{Direct analogies in Chyžné, Rákoš, Rimavské Brezovo, Mălâncrav; when alone on the vault, the Evangelists are depicted only through their symbols (e.g., Kraskovo and Poniky). Dvořáková, Krsá, and Stejskal, Stredoveká mal’ba, 107-112, 131-132, 135-136, 139-40; Drăguţ, Vasile. Picturile murale din biserica evanghelică din Mălîncrav. – Studii şi Cercetări de Istoria Artei. Seria Artă Plastică, No. 1, 1967, 87, 89.} For obvious reasons, the Latin Doctors are absent from the vaults of the sanctuaries of the Orthodox churches in Hălimagiu and Ribiţa, but the Evangelists are represented instead, seated at their writing desks, that is, in the Latin Doctors’ usual hypostasis for Catholic iconography.

In the sanctuaries of Hălimagiu and Ribiţa, whose iconographic
programs display striking similarities despite their execution by Western and Byzantine painters respectively, the side walls are decorated with the holy bishops shown frontally, blessing, and holding inscribed scrolls or closed books (Fig. 7-8). In Hălmagiu, five of the six holy bishops dressed in Western liturgical vestments, including the alb, chasuble, and pallium, are identified by inscriptions in Old Church Slavonic offering their names: St Sylvester, St Clement, St John Chrysostom, St Basil the Great, and St Nicholas31 (Fig. 7). Dressed instead in the Eastern episcopal attire composed of the omophorion and either a simple sakkos or the polystavrion, only two of the six holy bishops in Ribiţa are currently identifiable (Fig. 8). They are Sts Basil and Nicholas, who occupy the same place as their namesakes in Hălmagiu. In both sanctuaries, a deacon (St. Stephen in Ribiţa) joins the Church Fathers on the eastern side of the southern wall. He is unusually close to the archangels with censers, who flank the Melismos in the sanctuary’s axis32 (Fig. 9). The patron of the two churches, St Nicholas, is similarly placed on the western side of the southern wall, and he stands in both cases next to a chalice placed on an altar table, in the lower part of which the bent figure of Arius is falling down33 (Fig. 8). The painters used the compositional scheme of the Vision of St Peter of Alexandria, but substituted the figure of the Alexandrian bishop with that of St Nicholas, transferring upon the holy bishop of Myra the Eucharistic and anti-heretical stance of the composition34. Trained in different traditions, the painters of the two sanctuaries created similar, highly original, and unparalleled representations. This supports the idea that a creative and specific iconographic canon existed in Orthodox Transylvania at the turn of the 14th and 15th century and, moreover, reinforces the idea that the Western-oriented workshop in Hălmagiu followed

31 Cincheza-Buculei. Ensemble de peinture, 8.
32 Only the altar table has survived in both cases. On the upper register of the sanctuary’s eastern wall, there are seraphs/cherubs above the archangels’ figures. Cincheza-Buculei. Ensemble de peinture, 8; Cincheza-Buculei. Ipoteze și certitudini, 89-90.
33 The partially-preserved inscription in Hălmagiu contains an invocation of the Holy Trinity, Cincheza-Buculei. Ensemble de peinture murale, 10; additionally, the recently-uncovered inscription in Ribiţa features also Arius’ name.
Fig. 10. Holy Apostle Bartholomew, lower register of the northern wall of the sanctuary, St Nicholas Orthodox Church in Hâlmagiu
closely the recommendations of their Orthodox iconographers.

Additionally, near by the *prothesis* niche in Hălmagiu, there is the depiction of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew, who is oddly represented as a naked, flayed man holding his skin on a staff, i.e., according to his Western iconography. This depiction was often encountered in Catholic churches across medieval Hungary, where the saint was venerated as the patron of animal-skin processing crafts and a protector against skin diseases and nervous disorders. The image is not unique in the context of Orthodox Transylvania, as this hypostasis of the holy apostle appears also in St Nicholas Church in Densuş (Hunyad County). This iconographic transfer from the West to the East occurred during the Late Middle Ages in other Orthodox territories found under Latin rule: St Bartholomew’s Western iconography appeared, thus, in several Orthodox churches of Venetian-ruled Crete. As cultural contact zones, both Catholic-ruled Crete and Transylvania experienced broadly comparable social, political, and confessional circumstances, and one should not be surprised if the hybridity of their religious art brings them together, too. In Hălmagiu, however, St Bartholomew’s sacrifice acquired an Eucharistic emphasis by being placed next to the *prothesis* niche, rather comparable to the significance of this holy apostle’s figure in the Western/Catholic iconography across medieval Hungary.

As it could be seen from the two case studies that have been put forward in this essay, when painters trained in the West worked for Orthodox patrons, they showed the tendency towards maintaining the general iconographic layouts specific for Catholic cult spaces.

This did not pose too great a challenge for the understanding of the Catholic iconography by the Orthodox faithful, as both Catholic and Orthodox systems of sanctuary decoration in late-medieval Transylvania shared a significant number of iconographic features (e.g., the selection and arrangement of scenes in the sanctuary’s upper side). The obvious formal differences between the visual traditions of the West and East proved to be unimportant, as they did not hinder, nor alter significantly the religious content meant to be communicated. Trying to meet the unfamiliar demands of commissioners belonging to a different confession than their own, the Western-trained painters followed two paths when making the decoration of the sanctuary’s lower register. They either adjusted their previously-learned patterns in order to meet the expectations of their Orthodox commissioners (e.g., the Vir Dolorum replacing the Melismos, the holy bishops with the models of Romanesque churches, or the pseudo-votive composition in Strei), or followed closely the directions prescribed by the Orthodox iconographers (e.g., the iconography of the sanctuary in Hâlmagiu reflecting faithfully the iconography of the sanctuary in Ribiţa or vice versa). Even when they took the latter path, they observed the prescriptions in their general lines and made sure to communicate the meaning they were supposed to. However, they allowed themselves certain variations, whenever they were not specifically instructed to do otherwise or when their innovations didn’t change radically the iconographic content of a program (e.g., the holy bishops’ Western and Eastern vestments in Hâlmagiu and Ribiţa, respectively). During these processes of “negotiation of meaning”, the Western-trained painters often adapted their iconographic and formal vocabulary, in order to respond to the requirements of the particular worship space they had to decorate or to their commissioners’ devotional sensibilities and demands. These processes of adjustment sometimes led to the phenomena of hybridization in the sphere of religious art, phenomena which, on the one hand, challenge traditional, art-historical labeling (i.e., Western versus Eastern/Byzantine or Catholic versus Orthodox) and, on the other hand, indicate that borders, understood either artistically or confessionally, are not so much dividing lines as they are, in fact, meeting points.
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Художници със западна школовка, работещи за православни поръчители – бележки върху данните от късносредновековна Трансилвания (XIV–XV век)

Драгош Нъстъсою

През Средновековието южните и югозападните части на Войводство Трансилвания и Унгарското кралство са райони, в които съжителстват по няколко конфесионални групи, всяка от които има своя културна и религиозна традиция. При управлението на латините православните румънци (власи) живеели с унгарци католици, шеклери и саксонци, като тяхната conviventia генерира чести взаимодействия, а това оставя дълбoki следи в религиозното изкуство и на двете религиозни групи. Православните дарители имат сложна релация със западното изкуство, възлагащи често поръчки на строители, които работят в съседните земи с католически градове, като в резултат на това създават религиозни сгради със „западен“ облик. Въпреки че православните ктитори подрастват украсата на своите църкви на майстори, работещи във византийската традиция, тези художници проявяват висока степен на възприемчивост по отношение на сюжети и мотиви, характерни за западната/католическата иконография. А може да се добави, че православните дарители предоставят на западни ателиета да украсят техните религиозни сгради със стенописи.

Тази статия се фокусира върху два характерни казуса – стенописната украса на православните храмове в съседни области: в Стрей (област Хуняд, Войводство Трансилвания) и в Хълмаджю (област Заранд, Кралство Унгария), изпълнени през първата половина на XIV в. и между късния XIV в. и ранния XV в. При декорирането на олтарното пространство на тези православни храмове двете западни ателиета се принуждават последователно да пригодят своя иконографски и формален изказ, за да отговарят на изискванията на това специфично култово пространство или на чувствителността на поръчителите. Това „нагаждане“ често води до хибридиизация на явленията в областта на църковното изкуство, което бяга от обичайните си категории, и представлява предизвикателство за традиционното изкуствоведско етикетиране на познатите ни опозиции: византийско/източно versus западно или православно versus католическо.
The Scene of the Road to Calvary in St George’s Church in Veliko Tarnovo

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Abstract: The study focuses on a rare iconographic type of Pilate’s Escort from the scene of the Road to Calvary in the nave of St George’s Church in Veliko Tarnovo. It highlights some peculiarities of the image by comparing it to a number of examples from the central region of the Balkans dating to the 15th–17th centuries. The study also includes several iconographic types of the scene that were used by icon painters at the end of the 16th and in the beginning of the 17th centuries.

Key words: post-Byzantine painting, iconography, the Road to Calvary, Pontius Pilate’s scroll, Archbishopric of Ochrid, Theban painters, Monastery of Kučevište

According to the founder’s inscription, the nave of St George’s Church in Veliko Tarnovo was painted in 1616 by anonymous painters. The composition the Road to Calvary is located on its western wall (Fig. 1). It represents a combination of two episodes from the

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Gospel narrative: Christ Helkomenos and Pilate’s Mounted Escort. The present study focuses on the episode of the escort led by Pontius Pilate accompanying Christ on the way to his crucifixion. In this part of the scene one of the high priests holds a scroll with a text that imitates Arabic writing (Fig. 2); quite an extraordinary detail, particularly considering that commonly the Roman prefect himself carries the scroll, and that its textual content reveals his account on what is happening at that particular moment.

The distinct features of the scene from the church in Veliko Tarnovo become clear in the context of the development of this particular episode in Orthodox art in the Balkans. Moreover, such an overview allows us to distinguish several iconographic types of the image that have not been the subject of study so far.

In contrast to the episode Christ Helkomenos, whose first iconographic attestations date back to the Early Christian period\(^3\), Pilate’s Mounted Escort does not emerge as an element of the Christ’s Passion cycle before the fourteenth century. It depicts the episode of Pilate ascending the Calvary in order to install the inscription ‘Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews’ in Hebrew, Latin and Greek (John, 19:19 – 22). This composition is believed to originate from the Quattrocento compositions of the groups of horsemen leaving the gates of Jerusalem on route to Calvary\(^4\). The episode emerges in Orthodox art approximately at the same time, in the mural decoration of the Dečani Monastery (1348)\(^5\) and the Lesnovo Monastery (1347/8)\(^6\). In both cases the episode of Pilate’s Mounted Escort is a

\(^3\) For the typology of the scene with examples from different periods see Millet, Gabriel. Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'évangile aux XIV\(^e\), XV\(^e\) et XVI\(^e\) siècles d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mont-Athos, Paris, 1960, 362-379; Katselaki, Andromachi. Ο Χριστός ελκόμενος επί σταυρού. Ευκονογραφία και τυπολογία της παράστασης στη βυζαντινή τέχνη (4\(^ο\) αι.–15\(^ο\) αι.). – ΔΧΑΕ, 1996–1997, No. 19, 170-181.

\(^4\) Images from the 14\(^{th}\) and the 15\(^{th}\) century in Western European art can be found in: Leventis, Antonis. Η σκηνή του εφίππου Πιλάτου στη ζωγραφική Βαλκανικών ναών (14\(^ο\)–18\(^ο\) αιώνα). – Ηπειρωτικά Χρονικά, 1997, No. 32, 56-62, ill. 2-9. Leventis' article includes a detailed description of the best known examples from monuments on the Balkans from the 14\(^{th}\)–18\(^{th}\) centuries. A great number of the images from the beginning of the 17\(^{th}\) century, which are included in the present study, are not covered in Leventis' article. Examples of Western European painting can be found also in: Stefanov, Pavel. Сцената “Носене на кръста” от наоса на църквата “Рождество Христово” в Арбанаси [Stsenata “Nosene na krasta” ot naosa na tsarkvata “Rozhestvo Hristovo” v Arbanasi]. – Art Studies Quarterly, 2004, No. 3, 15-21.


\(^6\) Millet, Gabriel, Frolow, Anatole. La peinture du Moyen Age en Yougoslavie (Serbie, Macédoine
secondary element that complements the content of the scenes from the Passion cycle, without being inextricably bound to the episode of Christ Helkomenos. In these compositions Pilate, accompanied by a few Jews (most probably the high priests), is depicted in the background of the main scene, against a landscape. The image of Pilate’s Escort in Lesnovo is partially damaged; on that in Dečani, however, none of the horsemen holds a scroll.

In the first century of Ottoman rule, the theme is still included in the repertory of the mural-painting workshops decorating churches on the territory of the Arch-

Fig. 1. St George’s Church in Veliko Tarnovo (1616). Photo: N. Haralampiev

7 The episode in Dečani is Christ Refuses to Drink Vinegar with Gall; in Lesnovo it is The Road to Calvary.

Fig. 2. St George’s Church in Veliko Tarnovo – a detail of the scroll
bishopric of Ochrid⁸. It is found in the following churches: Dormition of the Theotokos in Zeugostasi, in the vicinity of Kastoria (1432)⁹; St Nicholas in Vevi (1460)¹⁰; the churches of Leskovec Monastery (1461)¹¹, Dragalevtsi Monastery (1476)¹² (Fig. 3) and Matka Monastery (1496)¹³; and the St Nicholas Magaliou church in Kastoria (1505)¹⁴. Based on the substantial number of examples, we can assume that in this period the episode Pilate’s Mounted Escort is associated with the scene Christ Helkomenos in particular. In contrast to the examples from Dečani and Lesnovo, the episode is depicted more frequently in the foreground of the composition; however, Pilate’s Escort appears smaller in size than Jesus Christ and the other figures represented in the scene. This ‘size deformation’ of the figures is a reference to the secondary role this episode plays in the afore-mentioned monuments from the Palaiologan period, and it provides evidence for a continuity of earlier artistic tradition in the first century of Ottoman rule. Even in this early stage of the development of the scene, Pilate holds an open scroll in his hands. In both examples of the text of the scroll that survive today (in the church in Zeugostasi and in St Nicholas Magaliou), it bears the words of vindication of the Roman prefect ΑΘΩΟΣ ΕΙΜΙ ΕΚ ΤΟΥ ΑΙΜΑΤΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ (‘I am innocent of the blood of this just person’) (Matthew, 27:24). In the 16th century, the images in these churches from the territory of the Archbishopric of Ochrid serve as a model that was imitated numerous times by painters working on

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⁸ The scene is depicted also in the Romanian monuments that have been strongly influenced by some of these paintings (Harlau, Moldovita, Dobrovat, Humor). These examples have been presented with bibliography in: Pàissidou, Melachroini. Οι τοιχογραφίες του 17ου αιώνα στους ναούς της Καστοριάς. Συμβολή στη μελέτη της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής της δυτικής Μακεδονίας. Athens, 2002, 91, ref. 604.

⁹ Tsigaridas, Eythimios. Συμβολή στη χρονολόγηση των τοιχογραφιών του ναού της Κοιμήσεως της Θεοτόκου στο Ζευγοστάσι Καστοριάς. In: Φίλια Έπη εις Γεώργιον Ε. Μυλωνάν. Τ. ΙΙΙ. Athens, 1989, 335, ill. 83b-84a; Sisiou, Ioannis. Οι σκηνές των Μεγάλων Εορτών και των Παθών στο ναό της Παναγίας Ζευγοστασίου Καστοριάς. – Niš & Byzantium XIV, 2016, Niš, 409, ill. 8.

¹⁰ Subotić, Gojko. Охридска сликарска школа XV века [Ohridska slikarska škola XV veka]. Beograd, 1980, fig. 70, ill. 60; Pàissidou, Melina. The Frescoes of Agios Nikolaos at Vevi: A Landmark in the Monumental Painting of 15th Century in Western Macedonia. – Egnatia, 2007, No. 11, 120-121, fig. 7.

¹¹ Subotić. Охридска сликарска школа, fig. 79.

¹² Subotić. Охридска сликарска школа, ill. 86.

¹³ Subotić. Охридска сликарска школа, fig. 112.

¹⁴ Pelekanidis, Stylianos. Καστορία Ι. Βυζαντινά τοιχογραφία. Πίνακες. Thessaloniki, 1953, ill. 168a,b.
commission in its diocese, as well as by those influenced directly by the tradition in this region. Such an example can be found in the work of the icon painter Ioan of Gramosta who painted the murals of St Nicholas church in the Monastery of Toplica (1536/7)\textsuperscript{15}. A distinctive feature of his composition (Fig. 4) is the background of the riding horsemen, which consists of an uninterrupted line of rocky ridges, while the fortified walls of Jerusalem are not depicted at all. The text on Pilate’s scroll is copied from the earlier monuments. These two features serve as the main distinguishing features of almost all paintings that can be attributed to this Ochrid-Kastorian

\textsuperscript{15} The village of Grammosta falls within the diocese of the Archbishopric of Ochrid. For the painting from Toplica see Spahiu, Jehona. 
iconographic type. Further examples that are closest to the scene from the Monastery of Toplica are the images from Temska Monastery (1576)\textsuperscript{16} (Fig. 5) and St Petka’s Church in Vukovo (1598)\textsuperscript{17}. This type can be observed also in the frescoes of the following churches: in Strupetski Monastery (end of 16\textsuperscript{th} c.)\textsuperscript{18}; in Lomnitsa (1607/8)\textsuperscript{19}; St Nicholas in Shelcan (1625)\textsuperscript{20}; in Riljevo, close to Prilep (1627)\textsuperscript{21}; in the Church of the Theotokos in the Agioi Anargyroi district in Kastoria (1634)\textsuperscript{22}; and even in the monastery in Damandrio on the Island of Lesbos (second half of 16\textsuperscript{th} c.)\textsuperscript{23}. The uninterrupted fortified wall that replaces the rocky landscape background in St Nicholas Church in Plati (1591)\textsuperscript{24} and in the Monastery of Oreoec (1595)\textsuperscript{25} suggests that the images belong to the same model, as this background is still lacking in detail and the text of the scroll remains the same\textsuperscript{26}.

In the second quarter of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century the scene is adopted and reproduced by some of the most talented masters of post-Byzantine art together with other themes distinctive of the Ochrid-Kastorian group of monuments dating to the 15\textsuperscript{th} century. These painters came from Thebes, and they executed the fresco decorations of the highly significant monuments from the region of Ioannina in Epirus; hence they are recognized in art history as members of the Epirus school\textsuperscript{27}.

\textsuperscript{16} This reference is based on my own observations; I could not access L. Pavlovic’s monograph on the monastery: \textit{Pavlović, Leontije. Манастир Темска [Manastir Temska]. Smederevo, 1966.}

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Floreva, Elena. Средновековни стенописи. Вуково 1598 [Srednovekovni stenopisi. Vukovo 1598]. Sofia, 1987, 77-80, ill. 51.}

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Kisyova, Margarita. Стенописите в старата църква на Струпетския манастир [Stenopisite v starata tsarkva na Strupetskiya manastir]. – Art Studies Quarterly, 1998, No. 4, ill. on p. 15.}

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ševo, Ljiljana. Манастир Ломница [Manastir Lmnica]. Beograd, 1999, 113-114, ill. 45.}


\textsuperscript{21} The frescoes here are the work of Linotopites painters: \textit{Tourta, Anastasia. Οι ναοί του Άγιου Νικολάου στη Βίτσα και του Άγιου Μηνά στο Μονοδένδρι. Προσέγγιση στο έργο των ζωγράφων από το Λινοτόπι. Athens, 1991, 31-32, ill. 118a.}

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Paissidou. Οι τοιχογραφίες του 17\textsuperscript{ου} αιώνα, 96, ill. 49b.}

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Gounaris, Georgios. Μεταβυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες στη Λέσβο (16\textsuperscript{α}-17\textsuperscript{η} αι.). Athens, 1999, 67-68, ill. 49.}

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Paissidou Melachrini. Ζητήματα μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του 16\textsuperscript{ου} αιώνα από την περιοχή των Πρεσπών. In: Ζητήματα μεταβυζαντινής ζωγραφικής στη μνήμη του Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη. Athens, 2002, 188, ill. 20.}

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Mašnić, Mirjana. Манастир Ореоец [Manastirot Oreoe]. Skopje, 2007, 48-49, fig. 48, ill. 20.}

\textsuperscript{26} Only the text of the scroll from the church in Plati survives today.

\textsuperscript{27} There is substantial literature on these painters and their decorations. Here we will mention only \textit{Stavropoulou-Makri, Angheliki. Les peintures murales de l’église de la Transfiguration à
Fig. 4. St Nicholas Church in the Monastery of Toplica (1536/7). Photo: I. Vanev

Fig. 5. St George’s Church in Temska Monastery (1576). Photo: I. Vanev
In contrast, the Cretan painters who worked on Mount Athos and in the Meteora during the same period did not include this scene in their repertory. The Theban painters, on the other hand, paid special attention to the depiction of Pilate’s Escort. In some of their fresco programmes, this episode’s role becomes equally important to that of the remaining scenes from the cycle, and it is framed separately from the composition Christ Helkomenos\(^\text{28}\). The Theban painters added new elements to the iconographical scheme of the episode – its main feature becomes a back-facing Pilate heading the group of horsemen\(^\text{29}\). Another typical feature of the Epirus model are the fortress gates, which are given a prominent place in the composition. Without exception, one of the horsemen and his horse is depicted at the precise moment of exiting the Jerusalem fortress, in some instances as viewed from the side, and in others – from a frontal point of view\(^\text{30}\). Another distinctive feature of these images is the content of the scroll held by Pilate. The words inscribed on it are a precise visualization of the testimony in the Gospel of John (19:17-22). Thus in the scenes painted by members of the Epirus school we read the following: ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΝΑΖΩΡΑΙΟΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΕΩΝ\(^\text{31}\). In the composition from the Monastery of St Nicholas Philanthropinon\(^\text{32}\), the two lines following the common text in Greek – ο βασιλεύ[ς] των Ιουδαίων, – are filled with undecipher-

\(^{28}\) As is done in the following monasteries: St Nicholas Dilios and Eleusa in Ioannina, Varlaam in Meteora, Transfiguration in Veltsista (present-day Klimatia).


\(^{30}\) For example in the Monastery of St Nicholas of Philanthropinon: Acheimastou-Potamianou, Myrtali. Η μονή των Φιλανθρωπιστών στο νησί των Ιωαννίνων. Athens, 1983, 83-86, ill. 10b, 54; or in St Nicholas Dilios Monastery: Liva-Xanthaki, Theopisti. Οι τοιχογραφίες της Μονής Ντίλιου. Ioannina, 1980, 69-72, ill. 29.

\(^{31}\) With insignificant variation this text is found in the monasteries of Philanthropinon, St Nicholas Dilios, Transfiguration in Veltsista, Varlaam in Meteora and in the church of St Demetrios in Veltsista; see Acheimastou-Potamianou. Η μονή των Φιλανθρωπιστών, 85, ref. 647. The scroll from St Demetrios Church in Veltsista has not been published – our observations come from field research.

\(^{32}\) On dating the murals in the nave see the interpretations of Acheimastou-Potamianou. Η μονή των Φιλανθρωπιστών, 21-34, as well as of Semoglou, Athanasios. Ο εντοίχιος διάκοσμος του καθολικού της Μονής Μυρτιάς στην Αιτωλία (φάση του 1539) και η θέση του στη ζωγραφική του Α’ μισού του 16ου αιώνα. – Egnatia, 2001–2002, No. 6, Thessaloniki, 185-238.
able symbols, which – according to M. Acheimastou-Potamianou who has studied the monument, – probably represent the additional inscriptions in Latin and Hebrew that the Evangelist mentions. The same detail is present also in the Varlaam Monastery in Meteora (1548) (Fig. 6).

The influence of this new iconographical model is already evident in the art of some painters after the middle of the 16th century, for example in the frescoes in St Athanasius (St. Nicholas) Church in Šiševo (1565), produced by an anonymous painter. A rare example

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33 Acheimastou-Potamianou. Η μονή των Φιλανθρωπηνών, 85, ref. 647.
34 There is still no monograph on this monument, a true representative of the art of the Theban painters.
35 J. Novakovic does not mention this scene in her article on the work of the artistic workshop that has produced the frescoes; see Nikolic-Novakovic, Jasminka. Црквата во Градовци и една slikarska rabotilnica od vtorata polovina na XVI vek vo okolinata na Skopje [Crkvata vo Gradovci i edna slikarska rabotilnica od vtorata polovina na XVI vek vo okolinata na Skopje].
of the distribution of the ‘Epirus type’ in the Bulgarian lands is the image from the church of the Dormition of the Virgin in the village of Priboy (17\textsuperscript{th} c.)\textsuperscript{36} (Fig. 7). Painters from some of the workshops, originating from the village of Linotopi, also adhere closely to the elaborate artistic style of the Theban master painters. For example, a certain Michael and his son Constantine consecutively ran a workshop that was active for a long period in the region of Epirus\textsuperscript{37} (Fig. 8).

To summarize, we can distinguish two main iconographical types of the episode of Pilate’s Mounted Escort in the Central Balkan


\textsuperscript{37} The main scholarly work on the painters is the following book: Tourta. Οι ναοί του Αγίου Νικολάου στη Βίτσα, as well as the newer study by Tsampouras, Theocharis. Τα καλλιτεχνικά εργαστήρια από την περιοχή του Γράμμου κατά τον 16\textsuperscript{υ} και 17\textsuperscript{ύ} αιώνα. Ζωγράφοι από το Λινοτόπι, την Γράμμοστα, τη Ζέρμα και το Μπουρμπουτσικό. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Thessaloniki, 2013. For examples from the region, painted by members of the workshop, see Karamperidi. Η Μονή Πατέρων, 159-161, ill. 116, 272, 238.
Peninsula in the post-Byzantine period: the first is used mostly by painters working on the territory of the Archbishopric of Ochrid; the second is the version created by the Theban painters and subsequently recreated far outside the borders of Epirus.

In comparison with the preceding period, the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century was a time when many painters’ workshops were active and productive. Quite often they did not sign their work. The problem of their identification is complicated further by the syncretism of their painting style: in their repertoire the same painters include models that were used by different
schools from the middle of the 16th century, together with the preceding models from the end of the 15th century, as well as from the Palaiologan period. In such a complex environment the typology of the scene that is suggested in the current study could contribute for determining the origin of the painters that worked on a particular fresco programme. In combination with a number of other iconographic features this typology could serve as one of the markers, hinting at the place where the painters received their education, or indicating the region where they were hired most frequently.

Could the image from St George’s Church in Veliko Tarnovo belong to one of the two iconographical types mentioned earlier? And what would that association reveal about the origin or the place of education of the painters that worked in Tarnovo in 1616? In the scene, recreated by the painters in St George, the body of the last horse from the escort is depicted halfway through the gates of the Fortress of Jerusalem – a feature that is typical for the Epirus school. At the same time, Pilate is not facing backwards; this sets the image apart from this iconographical type, and makes it more similar to the Ochrid model. There is another detail that is not found in either of the aforementioned models: the scroll – traditionally held by Pilate – is in the hands of one of the high priests. Even more extraordinarily, the text on the scroll does not correspond with either version; the scroll from the church in Veliko Tarnovo contains symbols that are neither Cyrillic nor Greek, with elements and lexemes in Arabic; these, however, do not form a coherent text. It should be noted that this is not a case of Pseudo-Kufic ornamentation, as the purpose of the scrolls is to convey particular information; in other words, in their essence they have semantic value (even when their content is unclear, as is the case here), whereas Kufesque in Christian art has a mainly decorative function.

An earlier example of imitated text on Pilate’s scroll can be found

38 My deepest gratitude goes to Dr Anka Stoilova, archivist-Arabist at the Oriental Collections Department of Sts Cyril and Methodius National Library for her help with the inscription. We could presume that the painters are familiar with examples of Arabic writing, they can imitate it but they are hardly transcribing an existing text. Besides, there are some elements from the Greek writing on the scroll.

39 On this topic see: Orlova, Maria. О некоторых декоративных приемах в стенописи собора Рождества Богоматери Антониева монастыря в Новгороде (1125) [O nekotorykh dekorativnykh priyemakh v stenopisi sobora Rozhdestva Bogomateri Antoniyeva monastyrya v Novgorode (1125)]. – Art Studies Quarterly, 2010, No. 1, 3-11.
Fig. 9. Holy Archangels Church in the Monastery of Kučevište (1591) (An. Serafimova)

Fig. 10. Detail of the scroll from the Monastery of Kučevište
on the frescoes in Yashunski Monastery St John the Baptist (1524) in the vicinity of Niš; however, in iconographical terms the episode of Pilate’s Escort there differs from all images known at present, so it will not be discussed here. The closest parallel to the scene from Veliko Tarnovo can be found in the Monastery of the Holy Archangels in the vicinity of Kučevište (1591) (Fig. 9). Here the scroll is once again held by one of the horsemen, and its inscription is an imitation of text (Fig. 10); the last of the horsemen, coming out of the fortress, is depicted only halfway visible passing through the gate. Certain similarities with these images can be found also in the scenes from Pustinja Monastery (1622), as well as in Monastery of the Holy Apostles in the Patriarchate of Peć (1633/4); hypothetically, they could also be ascribed to this peculiar type.

It is not easy to interpret the painter’s decision to fill the scroll with an imitation of Arabic writing. The fact that the painters in Veliko Tarnovo – who beyond doubt spoke Greek, – omitted the Greek text that is present in the scene from the Philanthropinon Monastery, as well as from the Varlaam Monastery, reveals that this is not a modification of the Epirus model of Pilate’s Escort. Furthermore, in the scene from Veliko Tarnovo – same as in the scene from Kučevište, – the scroll is not in Pilate’s hands but in those of one of the horsemen from the escort, i.e. the meaning of the text must be different both from Pilate’s vindication (in the Ochrid-Kastorian type), as well as from the depiction of the Gospel narrative (in the Epirus type). We believe that the unique iconographic similarities between the images in the two churches suggest the existence of a common model that was rarely used in the post-Byzantine period on the Balkans.

According to the scholar Aneta Seraimova – who studies the Monastery of Kučevište – the authors of the frescoes in the nave were

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40 No special research has been carried out on this monument, and the image has not been published. The scene is extraordinary also because the episode Pilate’s Escort has been added to the scene Crucifixion, and not the scene The Road to Calvary. For some information about the monastery and the frescoes see Rakocija, Miša. Jašunjski manastir Sv. Jovana. [Jašunjski manastir Sv. Jovana.]. In: Mанастири и цркве јужне и источне Србије [Manastiri i crkve južne i istočne Srbije]. Niš, 2013, 113-115.
educated on the territory of the Archbishopric of Ochrid\(^{44}\). She believes that this scene in particular follows the ‘Kastorian model’, and its closest iconographic parallels can be found in the church of St Athanasius (St Nicholas) in Šiševo (1565), and in St Nicholas Šiševski Monastery (1630)\(^{45}\). As we have demonstrated, both suggestions are inconclusive.

The clarification of the main iconographical models of the scene and thence the specification of the type, used in St George’s Church in Veliko Tarnovo, aimed to take us one step closer to identifying the origin of the painters who worked here. The general study of the painting style, used in the church,\(^{46}\) led us to the suggestion that the painters were most frequently hired from Thessaly, as their iconographical repertory was influenced most prominently by the mural decorations in the region attributed to the famous Dzordzis from Crete\(^{47}\). But this scene is not observed either in the repertory of the Cretan painters, or in that of Dzordzis. However, this can only partially account for its divergences from the two main types. The unusual iconography of the episode, along with a few other distinctive features of the repertory of the painters working in Veliko Tarnovo\(^{48}\), provide evidence that the latter followed models that are not typical for the Balkans; their origin – as well as their authors’ – is yet to be determined and clarified.

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\(^{44}\) Serafimova. Кучевишк манастир, 306.

\(^{45}\) Serafimova. Кучевишк манастир, 83. The painting from the Monastery of Šiševo has not been published.

\(^{46}\) Kolusheva. Църквата „Св. Георги“, 188.

\(^{47}\) Several fresco paintings from Thessaly are also attributed to Dzordzis from Crete and members of his workshop, besides their works on Mount Athos – namely, the main churches of the monasteries of Metamorphosis (The Great Meteoron) (1552) and Roussanou (1560) in Meteora, as well as St Vissarion Monastery (Doussikou) (1557) in the vicinity of Trikala. A detailed bibliography about research on Dzordzis’ work can be found in: Perrakis, Ioannis. Συγκριτικές εικονογραφικές παρατηρήσεις στα έργα του Θεοφάνη και του εργαστηρίου του Τζώρτζη, σε παραστάσεις του Χριστολογικού κύκλου. In: Ανταπόδοση. Μελέτες βυζαντινής και μεταβυζαντινής αρχαιολογίας και τέχνης προς τιμήν της καθηγήτριας Ελένης Δελιγιάννη-Δωρή. Athens, 2010, 370, ref. 2. See also: Anastasiopoulos, Aleksandros. Οι τοιχογραφίες του Καθολικού της Μονής Ρουσάνου των Μετεώρων. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Thessaloniki, 2010.

\(^{48}\) Kolusheva. Църквата „Св. Георги“, 244.
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Сцената Пътят към Голgota
от църквата „Св. Георги“
във Велико Търново

Мария Колушева

В наоса на църквата „Св. Георги“ във В. Търново (1616) е представен популярият в поствизантийското изкуство епизод на Конницата на Пилат като част от сцената Пътят към Голgota. В текста е обърнато внимание на няколко интересни иконографски детайла от изображението, които го отличават от повечето известни примери от периода. За да бъдат открени по-ясно особеностите на епизода от търновската църква, в изследването са набелязани два основни иконографски типа на сцената, използвани от зографите в края на XVI и началото на XVII в., които досега не са били предмет на специално проучване. Единият от тях е утвърден в Охридско-костурския регион през XV и XVI в., а другият е разработен на зографите, изпълнили стенописите на редица важни църкви и манастири в района на Епир през XVI в. Вариантът, представен в църквата „Св. Георги“ в Търново, не съвпада с нито един от разгледаните иконографски типове. Най-близък негов паралел е известен от църквата на Кучевишкия манастир (1591). Сходствата между двете изображения показват съществуването на общ модел, рядко прилаган през поствизантийския период на Балканите. Заедно с още няколко характерни особености в репертоара на зографите, работили в Търново, той е свидетелство за следването на редки за Балканите модели, чийто произход все още не е установен и предстои да бъде изясняван.
Abstract. The text summarises what is known about the Gerov-Antikaros family from academic literature, providing new information about them. It follows the relationships between the two branches of the Gerov-Antikaros family, examining the way in which the unconventional trade of glyptics (gemstone carving, antikarstvo in Bulgarian) has made its way to Master Dimitar, giving the family a double-barrelled surname. It studies Kosta Gerov’s activity as a teacher and icon-painter, as well as the current state of his heritage of a painter.

Key words: Dimitar Gerov-Antikar, Bulgarian Revival art, painting, iconography.

Има една група зографи и техните паметници, които доскоро не привличаха интереса на историците на изкуството, а работата им бе определяна като слаба и незаслужаваща внимание2. Нещо повече – това изкуство се смята за накърняващо националното ни самочувствие3. Това мнение нанесе безвъзвратни загуби, а и днес продължава да причинява много щети на паметниците от

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3 Каменова. Наивистични стенописи.
тази група. Изкуството, разпространено най-масово през втората половина на XIX в., понякога е занемарено целенасочено, защото е смятано за упадъчно и неестетично. Напоследък се събяда ин- терес и към този тип паметници, но за съжаление, в изкуствозна- нието няма установена терминология по този въпрос. Най-често, за да се обозначат паметниците от този тип, се използват терми- ните „примитив“, „наив“, а майсторите, изработили тези памет- ници, се наричат „нешколувани“.

Паметниците, определяни като примитивни, са разнородни по особеностите на иконографските им програми и стила на рабо- та. Това своеобразие е продиктувано от различните исторически основания на поръчките и изпълнителите за промяна в стила и репертоара на стенописите. Сложната ситуация в края на XIX в., слабият контрол от страна на църковната администрация, динамично развиващото се общество в свободните земи и възрожденският дух, усилил се след връщането в границите на Османската империя на част от земите, чиито жители имат българско етническо самосъзнание, образуват един вакуум и стенописа в храмовете, запазена дотогава за големите енорийски и манастирски църкви, се разпространява и в по-малките селища. „На- ивът е представа на гражданина за селското...“4, но в контекста на тези паметници той се превръща в представа за „градското“, или по-точно в представа за „високото“. Взимайки предвид спе- цификата на двата термина и тяхното взаимно допълване, смя- там за уместно да използвам термините „примитив“ и „наив“ като синоними и изцяло в техния позитивен аспект. Струва ми се най-подходящо определението на Ернст Гомбрих за прими- тива – като термин, изразяващ възхищение, а не снизхождение5.

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Един будещ възхищение даскал и зограф е самоковчанинът Коста Геров. Коста Геров е част от самоковския род Герови с прозвището Антикарови, което явно е възприето и от нашия зограф. В спомените на днешните потомци на семейството съ- ществува преданието, че родът се е преселил от Македония, но

5 Gombrich, Ernst. Примитивното в изкуството [Primitivnoto v izkustvoto]. – Лик [Lik], 1979, No. 16, с. 5.
подробности на са запазени. До момента изследване на рода Герови/Антикаръв не е правено. Васил Захариев публикува статия за Димитър Антикарв през 1930 и 1958 г. Асен Василиев дава сходни сведения за Димитър Антикарв, но публикува и по-обширна статия за Коста Геров. Сведенията, публикувани от Васил Захариев и Асен Василиев, са в основата на настоящата публикация. Към известните вече сведения ще добавя и информацията от един неподписан лист, съхраняван у наследниците на Антикаръв, наименован „История на фамилия Антикарв“.


8 Ръкописът ми бе предоставен от г-н Владимир Антикарв, потомък на Димитър Геров-Антикарв. Изказвам специална благодарност за предоставяне ръкопис и цялостното съдействие.
Фиг. 2. Храм „Св. Петка“ в с. Чуйпетълово. Бог Отец дава имена на животните

Фиг. 3. Храм „Св. св. Петър и Павел“ в с. Кралев дол. Възпоменателен надпис
Най-ранният познат ни представител на фамилията е Атанас Геров⁹ – кръчмар и бояджия на шаяци¹⁰, за когото знаям, че е имал двама синове – Димитър и Костадин.

Димитър Атанасов Геров-Антикар (1815–1904) според Асен Василицев е единственият у нас майстор гравьор на скъпоценни и полукъсоценни камъни. Този занаят той е възприел от своя вуйчо йеродякон Йосиф от Хилендарския манастир. Вуйчото на малкия Димитър е пътувал на Изток чак до Деда¹¹ и Йемен, където се смята, че е усвоил гравьорския занаят. Семейното предание твърди, че той е бил иконописец, сведение, което не е потвърдено с факти до този момент. В годините на Гръцкото националноосвободително въстание (1821–1830) настъпили неспокойни дни за Света гора и йеродяконът се завърнал в родния Самоков. Там той си припомнил умението да изработва „антики“ и си направил примитивен „струг“, който е запазен и до днес – част е от постоянната експозиция на градския музей в гр. Самоков. Името на йеродякон Йосиф се среща сред спомоществователите на „Христоитията“ на Райно Попович.

Димитър Геров е учили занаята от своя вуйчо, а след неговата смърт е наследил както инструментите, така и клиентите му, а те са били заможни търговци, занаячии, еснафи, манастирски братства, църковни настоятелства. С подобни на изработваните от Антикаровци печати са подпечатвани молбите на църковните общини до Цариград за признаване на църковна независимост от Вселенската патриаршия, за строеж или възстановяване на храмове, както и всякакви други молби до столичната администрация. При Антикаровци учи и синът на Никола Карастоянов – Анастас, който при длъгия си принудителен престой в Белград¹², за да се издържа, е изработвал печати от пиринч пред входа на Висшата школа в града.

Освен печати за общии, настоятелства и сдружения Дими-

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⁹ Коста Геров изписва името си в различни варианти, от там и два и различното изписване сред авторите, писали по темата.
⁰ Zahariev. Димитър Атанасов Геров-Антикар.
¹¹ Град в Саудитска Арабия на Червено море, докъдето са транспортирани поклонници-те, търпели на хадж в Мека и Медина.
¹² Докато Анастас Карастоянов е в Белград, за да закупи букви за семейната печатница. Поради избухналите междудинастични борби неговото завръщане в Османската империя е било затруднено и той прекарва дълго време в столицата на Сръбското княжество.
тър Антикар е изработвал и венчални пръстени за заможните жители на Самоков. Сред клиентите си Антикарят имал както християни, така и мюсюлмани, вторите си носели скъпоценни и полускъпоценни камъни, закупени от Мека по време на хаджи-лъка. Най-предпочитаният материал бил ахатът (акът камик)\(^{13}\). Поръчките очевидно са били много, а и добре платени. Майсторът антикар е изработвал по 7-8 по-прости антики на ден, а от по-сложните – по 3-4 на ден. Заплащало се от 10 до 20 грош на според големината и сложността на антиката.

Поръчките майстор Димитър записвал в тефтер с дата, име на клиента, заплатена сума, както и отпечатък на антиката от сажди. Сред най-предпочитаните изображения е женската фигура, права или седнала (Атина Палада и/или Нике), а също така хар-

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\(^{13}\) Zahariev, Димитър Атанасов Геров-Антикар, 93.
пии, конници, кентаври, ероси, театрални маски, двуглави орли, гълъби. Често се срещат и инициалите на притежателя на гемата. Сред притежателите на пръстени печати, изработени от Антикаровци, е и прочутият самоковски зограф Захарий. Освен пръстени печати по поръчка Димитър Антикар е изготвял и такива, които е отнасял на най-прочутите панаири: Узунджовския, в Ески Джумайя и др., където е продавал всичко и е получавал от турските търговци нови поръчки. Поръчвали му пръстени чак от Моравия.

Майсторът антикар Димитър Геров се ползвал с уважение сред жителите на Самоков, името му се среща, също както на неговия вуйчо Йосиф, сред спомоствователите на книги и в църковните кондики. Името му е записано в кондиката от 1857 до 1880 г. на храма „Успение Богородично“. Бил е избиран за училищен настоятел и за касиер на земеделческата каса. След Освобождението на България интересът към изработваните от Димитър Антикар пръстени е измествен от евтината фабрична продукция. Майсторът изработва последния си пръстен с два чифта очила през 1885 г. 14

Средата на XIX в. Димитър се жени за Елена Хаджийска от с. Костенец и двамата имат 5 деца: Никола (1857), Атанас (1859), Марийка (1865), Катерина (1874) и Анна (1882). В семейните спомени той е запомнен като много консервативен и недалновиден. Не е можел да повярва, че новоизбраната столица на княжество-

то ще остане в София – град, много по-назад от Самоков, Русе или Търново, и при изселването на турците, макар и да е разполагал със значителни средства, закупил имоти в Самоков, а не в София. Димитър Антикар умира на 89-годишна възраст на 1 октомври 1904 г. Връщайки се от млекарницата, бил нападнат от градския бик, който му счупил ребра, което става причина за смъртта му според семейната хроника.

Нито едно от децата на Димитър Антикар не наследява неговия занаят. Синът му Атанас е помагал на баща си в последните години при обработката на камъните, но не е продължил с това занимание. За Атанас се знае, че е бил учител в Самоков и Берковица. В Берковица е имал изява и като актьор.

15 История на фамилия Антикарови (ръкопис).
Дъщеря му Катерина се омъжва за Йеротей Сирманов (22 юни 1861 г., Габрово – 15 септември 1954 г., Пловдив), който достига до чин генерал-майор. Ген. Сирманов се е занимавал с фотография. Наред с многобройните фотографии от времето на Балканските и Първата световна война до нас са достигнали и много фотографии на семейството, включително на неговата съпруга Екатерина Антикакова-Сирманова. За дъщерите на майстор Димитър, Марийка и Анна, няма запазена информация.

Родът е продължен и до днес от най-големия му син Никола Антикаков (р. 1857), който е бил сред доверените лица на Георги Бенковски, на когото е препоръчал верни за българската кауза.

16 Потомци на Йеротей Сирманов не открит. През 1958 г. Васил Захариев посвещава своя статия на стоматолога Васил Геров, „помък на голямия майстор Димитър“. Това свидетелство ни подсказва, че част от семейството също запази фамилията Герови.
хора от Самоков. След Освобождението учи в Санкт Петербург. Заради заслугите му в Сръбско-българската война през 1886 г. получава капитански чин, майор от 1888 г., а през 1909 г. е награден с медал „За независимостта на България 1908“.

* * *

Вторият син на Атанас Геров – Костадин (Коста) Атанасов Геров-Антикаров, е роден в Самоков през 1831 г. Умира в същия град на 28 юли 1905 г. Работи като бояджия при баща си, но когато минава 20-тата си година, започва да изучава живопис при Йоан Иконописец – учи заедно със сина на Йоан Никола Образописов. Работи в населените места предимно по-горното течение на река Струма, като най-дълго време прекарва в село Студена – важно транспортно средище през XIX в. с множество ханове, а до средата на века работи и видна (мадан) за преработка на желязна руда. Наличието на подобни доходоносни предприятия е създало благосъстояние сред местните жители, а това води до възможност и развитие на все по-родолюбива дейност сред местните първенци. За пръв път в селото е имало учител през 1873/74 г., казвал се е Стойчо, наследен от Коста Геров през 1874 г. Работи в селото 4 години, а след известно прекъсване – и през 1881–1884 г. Преподава предимно четмо, и то по взаимо-учителната метода. Калемите, врху които пишели учениците, сами си намирали по-време на излетите, които учителят правел по южните склонове на Витоша. Класът му достигал до 40 души. В него имало момчета и момичета от съседните села. От разговорите на Асен Василиев със сина му Михаил Геров научаваме, че по време на учебните си часове той шиел дрехи. Освен на чет-
Византийско и поствизантийско изкуство: пресичане на граници

Мо и писмо К. Геров наблягал на историята, като преподавал по Петър Сапунов, на географията (землеописание) и смятането, като таблицата за умножение била изучавана под формата на песен. Учениците му знаели всички песни на Добри Чинтулов и е запомнен като голям родолюбец, призоваващ към революция селото. Това е и причината да бъде прекъсната учителската му кариера. Местен първенец разяснил на османската управа значението на Чинтуловите песни. Основал и вечерно училище, в което занимавал по-възрастните жители на Студена с приказки и смешки, свързани с тогавашните недъзи на обществото. По негово време започва да се отбелязва и празникът на българските просветители св. св. Кирил и Методий.17

Фиг. 9. Храм „Св. Николай“ в с. Широки дол. Покров Богородичен

Учителята и рисува в селата Попово (1880) и Кладница (1885), заплащането му като даскал било скромно – 21 грош (една бяла меджидия) на година, а храна му носели самите ученици. Така през зимата учителствал, а през лятото рисувал в местния храм. Запомнен е като скромен, сладкодумен и добър певец. Според Асен Василиев той е работил в селата Дрен, Доспей (1868), Чуйпетльово (1865), Боснек и Кралев дол (1867), Студена (1869, 1878, 1884), манастира „Св. Крал” (1877), Попово (1880), Кладница (1885), Калкас (1891/92), Църква (1892/93), Крапец, манастира „Св. Панталеймон”, Горна Дикания, Широк дол, Мошино, Драгодан, Трекляно, Бобошево (1888), Просокомидията на митрополитската църква в Самоков и Радуил (1897). Според спомените на Михаил Геров, цитирани от Асен Василиев, той ходил да работи и в Търновско, включително в Плаково, но авторът не открива там следи от неговата работа, аз също не открях. През последните години обстойно проучих съвременното състояние на живописното наследство, оставено ни от Коста Геров, а то е следното: в селата Дрен, Горна Дикания, Трекляно и манастира „Св. Панталеймон” няма следи от неговата работа, а и трудно можем да допуснем, че е работил в тях. Според Виктор Банов той е майстор строител на храма в село Калкас, но информацията е спорна. В с. Доспей има следи само от стенописи, но може да се допусне с висока степен на сигурност, че те са негови (фиг. 1). В съавторство с други (неизвестни) зографи работи в селата Чуйпетльово (фиг. 2), Кладница (фиг. 7), Широк дол (фиг. 9) и един съвсем малък фрагмент в храма „Успение Богородично” в гр. Бобошево (фиг. 10). Храмовете в селата Попово, Крапец, Калкас и Мошино, Пернишко, днес не съществуват. Те са под водите на създадени в средата на ХХ в. водоеми или просто са били разрушени, без да бъдат документирани предварително. В село Драгодан стенописите са от друга група зографи. Безспорно, 

18 Vasiliev. Български възрожденици. 
19 Vasiliev. Български възрожденици, 470. 
20 Теренното проучване проведох през лятото на 2015 г. Изказвам специална благодарност за помощта на отец Ангел (протосингел на Софийската митрополия), доц. д-р Константин Вълчев и г-жа Мина Топузова. 
22 Dimitrov, Vladimir. От национални герои към светци или за живописта в църквата в село
негови ансамбли са запазени в селата Боснек, Кралев дол (фиг. 3 и 4), Студена (фиг. 5), Църква (фиг. 8) и Люлинския манастир „Св. св. Кирил и Методий“ („Св. Крал“) край кв. Горна баня, София (фиг. 6).

В част от паметниците са запазени подписите на зографа. В Кралев дол (фиг. 3) той се подписва като Костадин Анастасов Геров, а в Студена (фиг. 5) се подписва Костантин А. Антикаров. Надписите, включително начините на изписване на личното му име, ще коментирам в отделен текст, тук се спирам на факта, че с течение на времето той все по-често започва да използва името Антикаров.

Димитър Геров-Антикаров и неговите наследници възприемат прозвището на майстора на антики като фамилно име, нещо, напълно нормално при формиране на именната система на възрожденските българи. Коста Геров, който не се занимава със същия занаят и е бил 15 години по-млад от брат си, очевидно постепенно възприема вече утвърденото прозвище на по-големия и с уважавана професия брат Димитър. От публикуваните от Асен Васили-

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Фиг. 10. Храм „Успение Богородично“ в гр. Бобошево. Св. Петка
ев надписи в манастира „Св. Крал“, които днес не са запазени, синът на Коста Геров, Михаил, се подписва със старото фамилно име Геров. Явно той не е възприел новата фамилия Антикаров, нещо, което са сторили и други от потомците на този заслужаващ по-задълбочено изследване възрожденски род23.

В настоящия текст си поставих за цел да обобщя известното до сега за фамилията, от която произхожда самоковският зограф Коста Геров-Антикаров и по-големият му брат Димитър Геров-Антикаров, един от малкото майстори, владеещи занаята за обработка на полускъпоценни камъни и изработване на печати по нашите земи. Статията е първата стъпка в посока документиране и проучване на цялото творческо наследство на Коста Геров-Антикаров – даскал и зограф, работил в последните години на Българското възраждане. Чрез цялото творческо наследство ще се допълни картината на възрожденското изкуство в района на Пернишко.

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During the period of the Bulgarian National Revival, representatives of the Bulgarian intelligentsia sought to revive Bulgarian historical memory and to create a national mythology in order to bolster national pride and enhance their status among the general public and the members of their own communities. In the process of shaping the national identity, a particularly important role was ascribed to national legends, which provided a sense of legitimacy within the communities as well as beyond. Gradually, a national history was developed with a strong mythical element.

The oeuvres of 19th-century icon painters have not been sufficiently explored. Some of their works are only now being rediscovered by modern scholars, while others seem to be irretrievably lost. Kosta Gerov Antikarov (1831–1905) was a teacher and icon painter, who worked in the second half of the 19th century. In the places, where he worked, he was remembered as a ‘patriot’ and a ‘remarkable man’. Between the Feasts of St Demetrios and St George, he typically worked as a teacher: he taught his pupils, both boys and girls, revolutionary songs by Dobri Chintulov, conducted evening courses for adults, removed Turcisms from common use in the Bulgarian language, and introduced the celebration of the Feast of Sts Cyril and Methodius. He also joined the struggle against Deli Matei, Bishop of Samokov.

During school holidays, Kosta Gerov Antikarov devoted himself to painting churches. His role as a progressive educator is abundantly in evidence in his artistic legacy. The repertory of his church murals is the focus of the present study, including both his secular and religious subjects, by which he aspired to rekindle and reinforce a sense of national identity among the Bulgarian people.
Religious and National Mythmaking:
Conservation and Reconstruction
of the Social Memory

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Abstract. This essay examines the notions of otherness; the making of a past, and
the shaping of a national/religious/cultural identity, using the example of the vil-
lage of Nea Karvali as a case study. The village was founded in the mid-1920s in
northern Greece by Orthodox Christian Turkish-speaking refugees from the vil-
lage of Gelveri in Cappadocia, Turkey. This study focuses on a series of religious
and national myths that were created to secure honourable past for the group; to
preserve and reconstruct its social and cultural memory, and, ultimately, to facili-
tate the community’s process of integration into the new social environment.

Key words: Cappadocia, Gelveri – Karbala, Nea Karvali, St. Gregory of Nazianzus
(the Theologian), collective memory, national identity, ethnic myth.

The conservation and reconstruction of the social and cultural me-
mony of a group, through the transmission of religious and national
myths, has been extensively analyzed from multiple angles in the
context of both small and large communities. Taking full advantage

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Ranger, Terence. The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge, 1989; Fen-
tress, James, Wickham, Chris. Social Memory. Oxford, 1992; Alvarez-Pereyre, Frank (ed.). Mi-
of recent scholarship in this field, the present study focuses on the notions of otherness, of making of a past, and of shaping a national/religious/cultural identity, as applied in the case of the village of Nea Karvali, founded in the mid-1920s in northern Greece by Orthodox Christian Turkish-speaking refugees from the village of Gelveri in Cappadocia, Turkey.

Gelveri (actually Güzelyurt) was an important Christian center in western Cappadocia. The area was highly populated during the Early-Christian period, even though very few monuments survive from then. Among the best-preserved examples, Kızıl Kilise (the Red Church), probably dating back to the 5th century, may have been the funerary chapel of Gregory of Nazianzus (Fig. 1). Gelveri has been associated with the place mentioned as Karbala in written sources, where Gregory of Nazianzus, one of the three Hierarchs, also known as Gregory the Theologian, spent part of his life during the 4th century (Fig. 2). The saint’s relics were believed to be kept and venerated in the village’s main church, which was dedicated to him (Fig. 3). Later, during the 9th–11th centuries, the abundance of rock-cut monuments testifies to the prosperity of Cappadocia.

The Christian populations continued to live in Cappadocia after the battle of Matizikert (1071) and the Seljuk conquest of Asia Minor, as
attested by a number of 13th century rock-cut monuments⁹ and the
Ottoman census records of the 15th and 16th centuries¹⁰. Towards the
second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, Gel-
veri enjoyed a period of prosperity (from about 1840 to 1914), like
many Cappadocian villages at that time. The male members of the
community migrated en masse to Constantinople or other important
cities in search of work, from where they were able to send money
back to their families which funded the building of elegant hous-
es (Fig. 4), as well as big churches, public buildings and important
schools, such as the parthenagogeion (school for girls, currently used
as a hotel), (Fig. 5). During that period, the village was inhabited
by around 300 Muslims and 3,000 Orthodox Christians who were
Turkish-speaking, but demonstrably conscious of their Byzantine

⁹ For a comprehensive presentation of the 13th century monuments: Jolivet-Lévy, Catherine. La
¹⁰ Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Irene. La géographie historique de l’Anatolie centrale d’après les re-
gistres ottomans. – Comptes Rendus de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1982, 470-
502; Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Irene. Les Bektaşî à la lumière des recensements ottomans (XVᵉ–XVIᵉ
past and a certain Hellenic national identity\textsuperscript{11}.

The period of prosperity suddenly ended in 1922, with the defeat of the Greeks by the Turkish army. The \textit{Exchange of Populations} (1923) resulted in the obligatory simultaneous removal of Greeks and Turks, who were classified according to their religious affiliation, from Turkey to Greece and \textit{vice versa}\textsuperscript{12}. All Christian inhabitants of Gelveri (about 500 families, or 3,000 people) were \textit{Karamanlides}\textsuperscript{13}. They were forced to collectively migrate from Cappadocia to northern Greece. In 1924, after several months of preparations, the villagers of Gelveri left their homeland, having been allowed to take with them only their personal and valuable belongings, and accompanied by an important number of icons, religious utensils and furnishings of the churches, as well as the relics of their patron saint, Gregory the Theologian. After a long trip by boat, the majority finally settled in northern Greece, at 12 kms east of the city of Kavala, in a swampy land that was granted to them by the Hellenic state, which had to organize the reception of almost 1.5 million refugees. On that land, in the mid-1920s, the village of Nea Karvali was founded, under the strain of unsanitary conditions, poverty and psychological pressure\textsuperscript{14}.


\textsuperscript{12} In the aftermath of the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–1922, there was a mutual expulsion of around 1.5 million Anatolian Orthodox Christians from Turkey to Greece, and of fewer than 400,000 Muslims from Greece to Turkey. It is important to draw attention to the fact that the Convention classified Greeks and Turks according to religious affiliation. As a consequence, many Greek Muslims (living in Greece and speaking little or no Turkish) were classified as Turks and were forced to leave their homes. Similarly, many Turkish-speaking Christians from north-eastern Anatolia and Cappadocia were classified as Greeks and were expelled to Greece. On the historic and social context of that period: Svoronos, Nicolas. Histoire de la Grèce moderne, Paris, 1972, 84-98; Chatziisif, Christos (ed.). Ιστορία της Ελλάδας του 20ού αιώνα, vols. A, B: Οι απαρχές 1900–1922. Athens, 1999.

\textsuperscript{13} The \textit{Karamanlides} were Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians who wrote in Turkish but with Greek characters, known as \textit{karamanlidika}. See recently, with the previous literature on the subject: Balta, Evgenia, Kappler, Matthias (eds.). Cries and Whispers in Karamanlidika Books. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Karamanlidika Studies (Nicosia, 11\textsuperscript{th} – 13\textsuperscript{th} September 2008). Turcologica No. 83. Wiesbaden, 2010.

\textsuperscript{14} According to oral testimonies, the number of people settled in Nea Karvali reached 2,500, of whom about 1,000 died of malaria during the first years: Karatsa, Καππαδοκία: Ο τελευταίος ελληνισμός, 332, footnote 820. According to the census carried out by the National Statistical Office of Greece, by May 1928 there were 1,090 inhabitants.
Process of integration and the notion of otherness

Group feeling was an important safeguard of the community’s unity at this time. Refugee groups in particular show a strong tendency towards remembering and recreating, as a priority, the characteristics of their place of origin in their new homeland\(^5\). The word “Nea” (new, in Greek) preceding the name of the village Nea Karvali, responded to the group’s need for keeping a direct link with the past and thus retaining its own cultural, ethnic and local identity. In response to a similar requirement, priority was given to the erection of the new church of St. Gregory the Theologian in the very centre

\(^{15}\) Halbwachs, La mémoire collective, 132, 133; Bastide, Roger. Mémoire collective et sociologie du bricolage. – L’Année sociologique, 1970, No. 21, 86.
Fig. 3. The church of Haghios Grigorios Theologos in the village of Gelveri, Cappadocia, Turkey

Fig. 4. Detail from the exterior decoration of a private house in Gelveri, Cappadocia, end of 19th century

Fig. 5. Gelveri, the parthenagogelion (school for girls, currently used as a hotel), end of 19th – beginning of 20th century
of the village (Fig. 6), where the patron saint’s relics would be kept, together with the icons and sacred utensils brought from the old village in Cappadocia. Through the conservation of relics and religious objects as guarantors *par excellence* of antiquity, authenticity and respect for stable traditional values, the church of Nea Karvali assumed the privileged and almost exclusive role of becoming the vessel of the entire community’s collective memory\(^{16}\).

As regards religious affairs, the integration process was not very difficult, because the Greek “host culture” and the Cappadocian “guest culture” were of the same Orthodox Christian religion. Nevertheless, the notion of otherness remained quite strong for the community members during their first decades in Greece. The main reason was that they were *Karamanlides* and, despite their Christian religion, their mother tongue was Turkish. Because of their Turkophony, the indigenous Greeks greatly despised the newcomers and called them “Turkish spawns” (*Tourkosporoi*), holding them in

\(^{16}\) On this subject: *Halbwachs*. La mémoire collective, 162. See also: *Augé*, Marc. Génie du paganisme, Paris, 1982, 38 (where the author reminds us of the function of religion, according to Durkheim, to act as a source of solidarity and identification for the individuals within a society).
contempt. The male members of the community were obliged to learn Greek as soon as possible in order to find jobs, while children were integrated by acquiring fluent command of Greek at school. On the contrary, women learned Greek less quickly and not very well because they rarely worked outside of the village; even today the oldest ones still feel more comfortable speaking Turkish, confirming that language offers to those who share it a feeling of cohesion and of being part of a group. Learning Greek helped the social integration of the refugees, and it was the only way to improve their professional and financial situation. The State too considered education very important: it acquired a public character and became free and compulsory, providing a very effective means of diffusing official ideology and promoting national unity among the different populations of the country.

Along with learning Greek, the Cappadocian immigrants tended to modify their family names by “Hellenizing” them, so that they could be better adapted to the language of their new settlement. Erasing any distinctive signs of their foreign origin, they tended to faithfully translate the meaning of their surnames from Turkish into Greek, and to replace the termination –oğlu (deriving from the Turkish oğul = son of) by –idis, –adis or –opoulos, which were common in Greek\textsuperscript{17}.

One of the main axes for investigating the integration of a group within its social environment is the study of matrimonial connections. Research in the archives of the Nea Karvali community shows that village endogamy was the main characteristic during the first years in of new settlement. Nevertheless, the situation changed after the World War Two, when marriages between refugees and people outside of their community proper became much more frequent.

A number of convergence points can be detected between the Cappadocian “guest culture” and the Greek “host culture”, and it is not surprising that they seem to be contradictory to each other. On the one hand, the community instinctively showed a tendency to withdraw into itself, and realized the importance of maintaining their

\textsuperscript{17} Just to name several examples, the surname Kayaoğlu was transformed into Petridis (kaya in Turkish and petra in Greek mean stone, rock); Boyacoğlu was turned into Vafeiadis (boyacı and vafeas mean painter in Turkish and Greek respectively); Osmanoğlu (osmanlı meaning the man who makes himself respected, who terrorizes his entourage, in Turkish) became Gennaiopoulos (gennaios means brave, in Greek).
traditions and preserving a ‘proper’ identity. On the other hand, the group became conscious of the need to be promptly integrated into the “host culture”, and to acquire a social identity conforming to their new social environment. Nevertheless, the reception of the immigrants was quite hostile and their integration into Greek society was a difficult process. In that context, various attempts were made in Nea Karvali to ensure a respectable past and reconstruct the group’s social memory, in order to endow the community with a common ancestry and prove that its members were direct descendants of important religious (i.e. Christian) and national (i.e. Greek) ancestors. Since they were treated as “Turkish spawns”, they invented and disseminated a mythology about their religious and ethnic origins, to demonstrate that they were both sufficiently Christian and sufficiently Greek.

Myths are patterns in the form of narratives which do not principally explain the world, but define the place of a group or a nation within it. From a psychological and psychiatric point of view, myths are fundamental in giving meaning and importance to human existence, and confidence to people’s lives. They are often invented in a time of crisis or turmoil, when it is important to build unity among the members of a group and create a national identity. Telling myths about a common past is crucial in binding societies together and forging a collective identity within a group of people. “To be member of a community is to share its myths.”

Religious mythmaking

As was mentioned before, Gelveri was associated with Karbala, where St. Gregory the Theologian lived and officiated as a priest, so the saint is considered to be a kind of religious and spiritual

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20 May. The Cry for Myth, 45.

21 See, the extensive article in two parts in the newspaper “Anatoli” published by the Cultural Association of Nea Karvali: Loukidis, Ioannis D. Μια σύντομη βιογραφία του Γρηγορίου του Θεολόγου. – Ανατολή, June 1990, No. 4, 2/ September 1990, No. 7, 4.
cestor of the community\textsuperscript{22}. Nowadays, in Nea Karvali, various legends refer to the miraculous foundation of the saint’s church in Cappadocia\textsuperscript{23}, and to important miracles performed by the saint for the salvation of the group\textsuperscript{24}. Moreover, several pseudo-scientific arguments claim the authenticity of St. Gregory’s relics that are nowadays displayed for veneration\textsuperscript{25}. Every inhabitant of Nea Karvali is even nowadays able to narrate these legends, which are so widely reproduced to make very many people confused, believing that they do not tell stories about 5\textsuperscript{th}- or 10\textsuperscript{th}-century Cappadocia, but about real events that happened in 20\textsuperscript{th} century Nea Karvali. These legends are very well rooted in the collective memory of the group, indicating that the social memory does not reproduce real facts, but it rather reshapes and reconstructs the historic past, according to the community’s needs. As Maurice Halbwachs notes, the faculty of reproducing a specific memory is not to find it again, but rather to reconstruct it: it is fiction rather than truth, inaccurate and incomplete\textsuperscript{26}.

The Feast of St. Gregory of Nazianzus is celebrated on January 25\textsuperscript{th}, a public holiday and one of the most important days in the religious and social calendar of Nea Karvali, which has evolved into a ma-


\textsuperscript{23} According to oral traditions, faithful people carrying the relics of St Gregory on a camel in Early Christian Cappadocia decided to build a church on the spot where the animal would stop. Even though they did not like the place “indicated” by the camel, it was impossible to make the animal move. Finally, a source of holy water (\textit{haghiasma}) emerged and they were thus convinced to build the church where it still stands today in the Cappadocian village.

\textsuperscript{24} As for example, the miracle during a terrible storm or a big fire that happened while the refugees were travelling by boat from Turkey to Greece, in 1924. It is worth saying that similar and stereotyped miracles have also been reported by other refugee groups that traveled to Greece by ship at that time. On that phenomenon, which is frequently observed: Belmont, Nicole. Mythes et croyances, 31.

\textsuperscript{25} According to historical sources, St Gregory’s relics were transferred to Constantinople during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetos (10\textsuperscript{th} century): Flusin, Bernard. Le Panégyrique de Constantin VII Porphyrögênète pour la translation des reliques de Grégoire le Théologien (\textit{BHG} 728). – Revue des études byzantines, 1999, No. 57/1, 5-97. According to the local tradition, which is trying to demonstrate that the relics never left Karbala, the imperial envoys visited the village in search of the saint’s relics, but the local people lied and gave them some other human remains instead of the real relics. In addition, the alleged existence of three sets of relics, of St. Gregory and his family respectively, is considered as the irrefutable proof that the saint’s authentic relics are still kept in Nea Karvali, instead of some of the other places in the Christian world that also claim to possess them.

\textsuperscript{26} Halbwachs, Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire, 92, 95, 112. Two chapters of this book are of great interest for the present study: “La reconstruction du passé” (83-113) and “La mémoire collective des groupes religieux” (146-177).
 majors regional pilgrimage center. During the celebrations that last for three days, a religious procession is followed by a huge crowd of the faithful, with the participation of the representatives of the religious and political authorities. The saint’s relics are exhibited for public veneration, while ill people and paralytics sleep in the church for three nights (incubation), in the hope of experiencing a miraculous healing. This series of rites and religious practices contribute to conceptualizing the myth and guaranteeing its transmission from one generation to another. Given the lack of historical evidence, the religious myth has been necessarily supported with material evidence, such as the saint’s relics; that is why it is very important for the community to prove that these are the authentic relics, in particular because there are several other places in the Christian world that also claim to possess the relics of the saint.

### Ethnic mythmaking

The concept of ethnic or national identity is inescapably connected with myths. A national myth is a legend or fictionalized narrative which might over-dramatize true incidents, omit important historical details, or add details for which there is no evidence; or it might simply be a fictional story that no one considers as literally true, but which contains a significant symbolic and credible meaning so as to be true to an ethnic or national group.

Language is considered to be one of the main vehicles of ethnic and cultural identity. In the case of Nea Karvali, its members’ embarrassment of its Turcophone past has led this community to create an ethnic myth in order to prove its Greek identity. So, the group argues that its origins hark back to the time of Alexander the Great’s expedition in Asia, and as a consequence, the ancient Greek hero par excellence is considered to be the community’s blood ancestor.

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27 On the importance of material evidence for conserving social memory: Halbwachs. La mémoire collective, 53; Belmont. Paroles païennes, 81; Bahloul, Joëlle. La maison de la mémoire, Paris, 1992, 217.


regardless of the historical fact that Alexander bypassed Cappadocia entirely. A similar tendency of establishing a direct link with a glorious antique past can be detected among several Greek/Cappadocian authors of the 19th century. According to them, despite the fact that the Greek language was forcefully replaced by Turkish in certain regions of Cappadocia, the local customs recalled those of Antiquity. Moreover, the use of wooden spoons in traditional Cappadocian dances seems to be reminiscent of the use of crotals by Cappadocian virgins, as described by Pausanias. Both examples are considered to guarantee the uninterrupted continuity between classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages in the case of Cappadocian communities\textsuperscript{30}.

At the time of the Exchange of Populations (1923), the population of Greece was estimated at around 5 million and the arrival of almost 1.5 million refugees must have seemed very threatening to the native citizens of Greece, because the immigrants were mainly seen as potential claimants for scarce lands and jobs. During the first decades of the immigrants’ settlement, the indigenous Greeks treated them as foreigners and “Turkish spawns”, in a profoundly insulting and humiliating way. The refugees from Asia Minor, Constantinople, Smyrna, Cappadocia and Pontus felt very proud of having preserved their ethnicity and religion for many centuries under Ottoman and Muslim rule. In their own words, they felt more Greek than the Greeks and more Christian than the Christians in Greece, because they considered themselves as direct descendants of Alexander the Great and spiritual heirs of St. Gregory the Theologian. The feeling of otherness provoked the community of Nea Karvali into demonstrating a religious and ethnic “purity”, through the transmission of religious and national myths that have gradually been incorporated into the group’s collective memory. In this regard, the local Cultural Association (\textit{Στέγη Πολιτισμού Νέας Καρβάλης}, founded in 1981) has played an important role in “keeping the memory alive” through various activities, such as the creation of the \textit{Historic and Ethnographic Museum of Greek-Cappadocian Culture} in 1995\textsuperscript{31} (Fig. 7); a series of publications; free courses of


\textsuperscript{31} The museum presents artifacts of Cappadocian origin, such as ancient statuettes, pottery
traditional dances; the organization of an annual folk-dance festival and of an international conference; the official participation in religious rituals (especially those concerning St. Gregory the Theologian and its relics), as well as the organization of trips to Cappadocia as a kind of modern pilgrimage to the native land. The above-mentioned activities in Nea Karvali are perfectly in line with the notion that the collective memory is conserved and transmitted through myths and rituals that remind the group of its identity, and that the social memory of a community consists of reconstructions (and not faithful reproductions) of the past under the society’s control.

and coins, icons and liturgical utensils, books in Karamanlidika, as well as carpets and kilims, traditional costumes and music instruments of the 19th–20th century.
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Религиозно и национално митотворчество: съхранение и реконструкция на социалната памет

Андониос Цакалос

Преносът на религиозни и национални митове допринася за съхранението и реконструкцията на социалната и културна памет на общността, която се състои от реконструкции (не от верни репродукции) на миналото под контрола на социума. Този етюд се фокусира върху понятията за другост, върху правенето на миналото и върху формироването на национална/религиозна/културна идентичност, както те се появяват в село Неа Карвали, Гърция. Селището е основано в средата на 20-те години на ХХ в. в Северна Гърция от турскоговорещи православни християни, бежанци от с. Гелвери в Кападокия, Турция. През първите десетилетия на тяхното заселване местните гърци ги третират като чужденци и като „турски изчадия“ заради това, че говорят турски език. По тяхно мнение обаче, изселниците от Гелвери се приемат за повече гърци от самите гърци, както за по-християни от християните в Гърция, защото се смятат за директни потомци на Александър Велики и духовни следовници на св. Григорий Назиански Богослов. Усещането за „другост“ кара общността в Неа Карвали да демонстрира религиозна и етническа „чистота“ чрез преноса на религиозни и национални митове, които постепенно се инкорпорират в колективната памет на групата. В това отношение местното културно дружество играело важна роля за „за съхранение на живата памет“ посредством различни дейности (изложби, публикации, фестивали, конференции и екскурзии).
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ВИЗАНТИЙСКО И
ПОСТВИЗАНТИЙСКО ИЗКУСТВО:
ПРЕСИЧАНЕ НА ГРАНИЦИ

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CROSSING BORDERS

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