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**ВИЗАНТИЙСКО
И ПОСТВИЗАНТИЙСКО ИЗКУСТВО:
ПРЕСИЧАНЕ НА ГРАНИЦИ**



**BYZANTINE
AND POST-BYZANTINE ART:
CROSSING BORDERS**

ART READINGS

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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Ephrem and the whole brotherhood for granting me permission to take and publish photographs of the lecterns, and to use unpublished written sources from the monastery's archive; I am especially obliged to the sacristan father Iosef for his generous help and patience during my research.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.

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ration, is currently kept in the new sacristy of Vatopedi monastery on Athos² (Fig. 1, 2).

Each lectern is composed of octagonal body with twenty-four incorporated panels³ 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 Hymn⁴ is presented (inscriptions: Α ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ Ο ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΤΗΣ ΜΟΝΟΤΗΡ Θ(ΕΟ)Υ, Β ΒΛΕΠΟΥΣΑ Η ΑΓΙΑ Ε[Α]ΥΤΗ, Γ ΓΝΩΣΙΝ ΑΓΝΩΣΤΟΝ ΓΝ[ΩΝΑΙ], Δ ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΥΨΙΣΤΟΥ, Ε ΕΧΟΥΣΑ ΘΕΟΔΟΧ[ΟΝ], Ζ ΖΑΛΗΝ Ε[ΝΔΟΘΕΝ] ΕΧΩΝ, Η ΗΚΟΥΣΑΝ ΟΙ ΠΟΙΜΕΝΕΣ, Θ ΘΕΟΔΡΟΜΟΝ ΑΚΤΕ[ΡΑ], Ι ΙΔΟΝ ΠΑΙΔΕΣ ΧΑΛΔΑΙΩΝ, Κ ΚΗΡΥΡΕΣ ΘΕΟΦΟΡΟΙ, Μ ΜΕΛΛΟΝΤΟΣ ΣΥΜΕ[ΩΝΟΣ], Ν ΝΕΑΝ ΕΔΕΙΞΕΝ ΚΤΗΣΙΣ, Ξ ΞΕΝΟΝ ΤΟΚΟΝ ΙΔΟΝΤ[ΕΣ], Ο ΟΛΟΣ ΗΝ ΕΝ ΤΗΣ ΚΑΤΩ, Π ΠΑΣΑ ΦΥΣΗΣ ΑΓΓΕΛΟ[Ν], Ρ ΡΥΤΟΡΑΣ ΠΟΛΗΦΘΟΓ[ΓΟΥΣ], Σ ΣΩΣΑΙ ΘΕΛΩΝ ΤΟΝ [ΚΟΣΜΟΝ], Τ ΤΕΙΧΟΣ ΕΙ ΤΩΝ ΠΑΡΘΕ[ΝΩΝ], Υ ΥΜΝΟΣ ΑΠΑΣ ΗΤΤΑΤΕ, Φ [ΦΩΤΟ]ΔΟΧΟΝ ΛΑΜΠΑΔ[Α], Χ ΧΑΡΙΝ ΔΟΥΝΑΙ ΘΕΛΗΣΑΣ Ο[ΦΛΗΜΑΤΩΝ], Ψ ΨΑΛΛΟΝΤΕΣ ΣΟΥ ΤΟ[Ν ΤΟΚΟΝ], Ω ΠΑΝΗΜΝΗΤΕ Μ[ΗΤ]ΕΡ Η [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.

2 The lecterns have so far attracted only limited scholarly attention: *Nikonanos*, Nikolaos. Τα ξυλόγλυπτα. In: *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου. Παράδοση – Ιστορία – Τέχνη*, Vol. II. Mount Athos, 1996, 542-544; *Treasures of Mt Athos*. Thessaloniki 1997², 296-297, No. 8.1 (N. Nikonanos); *Loverdou-Tsigarida*, Katia. Thessalonique, centre de production d'objets d'arts au XIV^e siècle. – *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 2003, No. 57, 253; *Eadem*. Les oeuvres d'arts mineurs comme expression des relations du Mont Athos avec l'aristocratie ecclésiastique et politique de Byzance. In: George Galavaris (ed.). *Athos, La Sainte Montagne. Tradition et renouveau dans l'art*. Athens, 2007, 88; *Le Mont Athos et l'Empire byzantin. Tresors de la Sainte Montagne, Exhibition Catalogue* (Petit Palais). Paris, 2009, 230, No. 114-115 (N. Nikonanos); *Melvani*, Nicholas. Ο Δεσπότης Θεσσαλονίκης Ανδρόνικος Παλαιολόγος και το Άγιον Όρος. In: *Το Άγιον Όρος στον 15^ο και 16^ο αιώνα*. Thessaloniki, 2012, 423 and note 33; *Antonaras*, Anastasios. Arts, Crafts and Trades in Ancient and Byzantine Thessaloniki: Archaeological, Literary and Epigraphic Evidence. Mainz, 2016, 79.

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

4 Stanza 11 is not preserved. On the iconography of the Akathistos Hymn see *Patzolt*, Alexandra. *Der Akathistos Hymnos. Die Bilderzyklen in der Byzantinischen Wandmalerei des 14. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart, 1989; *Aspra-Vardavaki*, Maria. Οι μικρογραφίες του Ακαθίστου στον κώδικα Garrett 13, Princeton. Athens, 1992; *Spatharakis*, Iohannis. *The Pictorial Cycles of the Akathistos Hymn for the Virgin*. Leiden, 2005.

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 Rebuke and David's Repentance {Η ΠΡΑΟΤΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΔΑ[ΥΙ]Δ, Nathan's scroll: Κ(ΥΡΙΟ)C ΑΦ/ΙΛΕΝ ΤΟ/ [ΑΜΑΡΤΗΜΑ ΣΟΥ], ΗΜΑΡΤΙΚΑ ΤΩ Κ(ΥΡΙ)Ω: Kingdom II, 12, 13}⁸, Jacob's Ladder (Η ΚΛΙΜΑΞ ΤΟΥ ΙΑΚΩΒ)⁹, the Holy Bramble (Η ΑΓΙΑ ΒΑΤΟΣ)¹⁰ (Fig. 8) and Daniel in the Lions' Den (ΔΑΝΙΗΛ)¹¹. Furthermore, the Annunciation (ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΜΟΣ)¹²,



Fig. 1. Vatopedi; lectern I

5 On the iconography, *Koukiaris*, Silas, Archimandrite. Τα θαύματα – εμφανίσεις των αγγέλων και αρχαγγέλων στη Βυζαντινή τέχνη των Βαλκανίων. Athens – Ioannina, 1989, 34, 124-126.

6 On the iconography, *Koukiaris*. Τα θαύματα – εμφανίσεις, 32, 106-111.

7 On the iconography, *Koukiaris*. Τα θαύματα – εμφανίσεις, 37, 138-142.

8 On the iconography, *Koukiaris*. Τα θαύματα – εμφανίσεις, 36-37, 135-138.

9 On the iconography, *Papamastorakis*, Titos. Η ένταξη των προεικονίσεων της Θεοτόκου και της Ύψωσης του Σταυρού σε ένα ιδιότυπο εικονογραφικό κύκλο στον Άγιο Γεώργιο Βιάννου Κρήτης. – ΔΧΑΕ, 1987-1988, No. 14, 318, note 22; *Koukiaris*. Τα θαύματα – εμφανίσεις, 33, 117-121.

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



Fig. 2. Vatopedi; lectern II

Theotokos as the True Vine [Θ(ΕΟΤΟ)ΚΕ ΣΥ ΕΙ ΑΜΠΕΛΟΣ Η ΑΛΗΘΕΙΝΗ]¹³ and the Apostles Peter and Paul carrying the model of a church (ΠΙΕΤΡΟΣ ΠΑΥΛΟΣ)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

et occidental du XI^e au XV^e siècle l'Annonciation. Venise, 2007; *Varalis*, Ioannis. Παρατηρήσεις για τη θέση του Ευαγγελισμού στη μνημειακή ζωγραφική κατά τη μεσοβυζαντινή περίοδο. – ΔΧΑΕ, 1996–1997, No. 19, 201–220; *Mantas*, Apostolos. Η ένταξη της παράστασης του Ευαγγελισμού στο εικονογραφικό πρόγραμμα του βήματος μεσοβυζαντινών ναών της Ελλάδας. In: Β' Συνάντηση Βυζαντινολόγων Ελλάδας και Κύπρου. Εισηγήσεις – Ερευνητικά προγράμματα – Περιλήψεις ανακοινώσεων. Athens, 2000, 194–195.

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 Ἀμπελος Ἀληθινή...*), *Aspra-Var-davaki*. Οι μικρογραφίες, 39–40.

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

15 *Kommenos*, Ioannis. Προσκυνητάριον του Αγίου Όρους του Αθωνος. Snagon, 1701, Karyes, 1984 (reprinted), 51; *Uspenskij*, Porfirij. Pervoje Putešestvije v afonskije monastiri i skiti, čast' II. Otdelenije vtoroje, 1848 god. Moskva, 1880, 33; *Theophilos Vatopedinos*, Proegoumenos. Χρονικόν περί της Ιεράς και Σεβασμίας Μεγίστης Μονής Βατοπαιδίου Αγίου Όρους. – Μακεδονικά, 1972, No. 12, 104.

the monastic tradition, according to which Andronikos Palaiologos, Despot of Thessaloniki (1408-1423), endowed the lecterns to Vatopedi¹⁶.

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 Thessaloniki¹⁷ during the period of Andronikos' reign¹⁸; it has been also assumed that they were produced in Venice¹⁹. 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 Angelico²⁰, 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. Ιστορία της μονής Βατοπαϊδίου (unpublished), 277; *Theophilos Vatopedinos*. Χρονικόν, 104.

17 See above, note 2.

18 On Despotes Andronikos Palaiologos see *Tsaras*, Jean. La fin d'Andronik Paléologue dernier despote de Thessalonique. – *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, 1965, No. 3, 419-43; *Schreiner*, Peter. Chronologischen Untersuchungen zur Familie Kaiser Manouels II. – *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1970, No. 63, 285-299; *Sideras*, Alexander. New Quellen zum Leben des Despotes Andronikos Palaiologos. – *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1987, No. 80, 3-15; *Trapp*, E. and others (eds.) *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit* (cd-version). Vol. 9. Wien, 1976–1996, 21427.

19 *Melvani*. Ο Δεσπότης Θεσσαλονίκης, 423, note 33.

20 *Gordon*, Dillian. *National Gallery Catalogues. The Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings*. Vol. 1. London, 2003, 16; *Guarnieri*, Christina. Le polyptyque pour l'église San Giacomo Maggiore de Bologne dans l'oeuvre de Lorenzo Veneziano. In: *Autour de Lorenzo Veneziano. Fragments de polyptyques vénitiens du XIV^e siècle*. Milan, 2005, 60 (fig. 68), 61 (fig. 69), 65 (fig. 76).



Fig. 3. Vatopedi; lectern I (detail)

1415)²¹, the catholicon of Valsamon-eron monastery (aisle of St Phanou-rios) (ca. 1431)²² and the royal doors from St George Aporthianon church in Patmos (the painting is attributed to Andreas Ritzos)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 14th century)²⁴. A sculpted marble capital (15th century) from Herakleion²⁵ 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 14th and 15th century woodcarvings²⁶ and sculptures²⁷.



Fig. 4. Vatopedi; lectern II (detail)

21 Gerola, Giuseppe. *Monumenti Veneti nell'isola di Creta*. Vol. 2. Venezia, 1908, 353 (fig. 393).

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.

23 Chatzidakis, Manolis. *Ευκόνες της Πάτμου*. Athens, 1995, 61-62 and pl. 80, fig. 11.

24 Andrews, Justine. *Santa Sophia in Nicosia: The sculpture of the Western Portals and its Reception*. – *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 1999, No. 39, 63-80.

25 Gerola. *Monumenti Veneti*, 286 (fig. 355).

26 See for example the shrine of Stefan Uroš III Dečanski, Evans, Helen (ed.). *Byzantium. Faith and Power (1261-1557)*. New York, 2004, 114-115, No. 59 (D. Popović).

27 See for example the sculpted Virgin with the Christ Child from St Stefan church in Banjska 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. Voivodić, D. Popović (eds.). *Sacral Art of the Serbian Lands in the Middle Ages*. Belgrade, 2016, 432 (fig. 354)] and the façade 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 lost²⁸, thus it remains unclear whether the dedicatory inscription was written on it. The scenes, thirty-three in total, follow Byzantine iconographic types²⁹. 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-

and Identity in Thirteenth Century Byzantium. Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond. Birmingham, 2004, 65). Also, Pedone, Silvia. Bizanzio (ri)colorata: tecniche, effetti e problemi aperti. In: Il colore nel Medioevo. Arte simbolo tecnica. Tra materiali costitutivi e colori aggiunti mosaici, intarsi e plastica lapidea. Lucca, 2016, 87-101.

28 The current one was added after conservation works.

29 See above, notes 4-14.



Fig. 5. Vatopedi; lectern I; panel; Akathistos Hymn; Stanza 23



Fig. 6. Vatopedi; lectern II; panel; geometrical theme



Fig. 7. Vatopedi; lectern II; panel; the Diviner Balaam

spread both in woodcarving and sculpture, but also in minor arts (metalwork, steatites etc.) dated to the Palaiologan era³⁰. 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 origin³¹, or the marble icon with a donor portrait (1496) in the shipyard of Vatopedi³², 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 monastery³³. Voluminous figures, the folds of whose garments are rendered with wide incisions, characterize a variety of 15th century artworks, such as a wood-carved icon (1456), now in Moscow³⁴, or the metallic panels with the Annunciation attached on the main entrance doors of the catholicon at Vatopedi³⁵. In addition, the

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).

31 *Firatli*, Neziha. *La sculpture Byzantine figurée au Musée Archéologique d'Istanbul*. Paris. 1990, 80, No. 135.

32 *Liakos*, Dimitrios. *Τα λιθανάγλυφα του Αγίου Όρους* (PhD Thesis., Vol. 1. Thessaloniki, 2000, 23; *Idem*. *Η μεταβυζαντινή γλυπτική στο Άγιον Όρος*. – Μακεδονικά, 2003, No. 33, 206 (fig. 1).

33 *Liakos*, Dimitrios. *Steatite icon with the Deposition at the monastery of Iveron on Mt Athos*. – *Zograf*, 2010, No. 34, 67 (fig. 3).

34 *Nikolaeva*, Tatjana. *Drevnerusskaja melkaja plastika XI-XVI vekov*. Moskva, 1968, fig. 54.

35 On stylistic grounds, I believe that the Annunciation's panels [*Loverdou-Tsigarida*, Katia. *Βυζαντινή μικροτεχνία*. In: *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου, Παράδοση – Ιστορία – Τέχνη*. Vol. II. Mt Athos, 1996, 497-499; *Taddei*, Alessandro. *Le Porte Bizantine in Grecia*. In: Antonio Iacobini (ed.). *Le Porte del Paradiso. Arte e tecnologia bizantina tra Italia e Mediterraneo*. Roma, 2009, 548] were made when the entrance was reconstructed in 1426, as indicated by the inscription

sacred figures' faces may be compared to others in Late-Byzantine woodcarvings³⁶.

This type of Late Gothic frame consisting of torque columns supporting a semi-circle or ovi-gal arch is a common feature of 14th and 15th century Venetian art, and also of so-called Italo-Cretan productions³⁷. The intersected circles or semi-circles recall similar patterns derived from Middle-Byzantine woodcarvings³⁸ and are also found in

on the lintel, Millet, Gabriel, *Pargoire*, Jules, *Petit*, Louis. *Recueil des Inscriptions Chrétiennes de l'Athos*. Paris, 1904, Thessaloniki, 2004, 14-15, No. 46; *Mamaloukos*, Stavros. The buildings of Vatopedi and their patrons. In: A. Bryer (ed.). *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism*. Birmingham, 1996, 117; at the same time the cornice above the door-frame was also repaired, *Liakos*, Dimitrios. The Byzantine bell-tower in Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos (1427); the sculpted decoration and its significance. – *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 2015, No. 65, 156. *Loverdou-Tsigarida*, Katia. Βυζαντινή μικροτεχνία, 499 dates the Annunciation icons to Late-Byzantine or early Post-Byzantine period.

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

37 *Pallucchini*, Rodolfo. *La pittura veneziana dei Trecento*. Venezia-Roma, 1964, fig. 615; *Murano*, Michelangelo. Paolo da Venezia. The Pennsylvania State University Press. University Park – London, 1970, pls. 31-32; *Vassilaki*, Maria. *Εικόνα της Γλυκοφλούσας του Μουσείου Μπενάκη* (αφ. Ευρ. 2972): *προβλήματα της έρευνας*. In: Maria Vassilaki (ed.). *Byzantine Icons. Art, Technique and Technology*. Herakleion, 2002, 204, 208-209 (fig. 1, 3), 210 (fig. 5).

38 *Bouras*, Charalambos. *The Olympiotissa Wood-carved Doors, Reconsidered*. – *ΔΧΑΕ*,



Fig. 8. Vatopedi; lectern II; panel; the Holy Bramble

various artworks (illuminated manuscripts, sculptures etc.) dated to the 14th and 15th century³⁹. The naturalistic rendering of the vine in the Theotokos icon is very close to marble decorations from the late 13th until the 15th century that come from regions under the Venetian rule, like Euboea and Crete⁴⁰.

Venetian influences are also echoed by the wide brimmed hats (Fig. 5, 7), which recall the *skiadion*, a type crafted during the 14th century in the West⁴¹; according to written sources, this type of hat was widespread in Late Byzantium and was worn by all upper class people⁴². Similar hats, frequently depicted in Italian paintings dated to the 14th and 15th century⁴³, are also found in Cretan icons and wall paintings⁴⁴, as well as in Latin manuscripts dated from the same period⁴⁵.

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 14th-century Constantinople⁴⁶.

1989–1990, No. 15, 28, 29 (fig. 1-3).

39 *Ćircović*, Sima. I Serbi nel Medioevo. Milano, 1992, figs. 121, 170.

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^{ος} – 17^{ος} αιώνας. Herakleion, 2007, 190 (fig. 12).

41 *Parani*, Maria. Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th centuries). Leiden – Boston, 2003, 70-71.

42 *Spatharakis*, Iohannis. The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts. Leiden, 1976, 138; *Piltz*, Elisabeth. Le costume officiel des dignitaires byzantins à l' époque paléologue. Uppsala, 1994, 75-76; *Kiousopoulou*, Tonia. Στοιχεία της βυζαντινής ενδυμασίας κατά την ύστερη εποχή τα καπέλα. In: Christine Angelidi (ed.). Byzantium Matures. Choices, Sensitivities, and modes of expression (eleventh to fifteenth centuries). Athens, 2004, 192.

43 *Barachini*, Clara, *Castelnuovo*, Enrico (eds.). Il Camposanto di Pisa. Torino, 1996, fig. 51; *Gordon*, Dillian. The Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings, 289.

44 *Chatzidakis*, Manolis, *Borboudakis*, Manolis. Εικόνες της Κρητικής τέχνης από τον Χάνδακα ως τη Μόσχα και την Αγία Πετρούπολη. Athens, 1992, 42 (fig. 10); *Vassilaki*, Maria. Καθημερινή ζωή και πραγματικότητα στη Βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη: η μαρτυρία των τοιχογραφημένων εκκλησιών. In: Ενθύμησις Νικόλαου Μ. Παναγιωτάκη. Herakleion, 2000, 68, fig. 11; *Eadem*. Cretan Icon-Painting and the Council of Ferrara/Florence (1438/39). In: Maria Vassilaki (ed.). Studies on the Painter Angelos, his Age and Cretan Painting. – Benaki Museum Journal, 2013–2014, No. 13-14. Athens, 2017, 123-125.

45 *Velmans*, Tania. Une illustration inédite de l' Acathiste et l' iconographie des Hymnes Liturgiques à Byzance. – Cahiers Archéologiques, 1972, No. 22, 143 (fig. 13).

46 Μεσαιωνικές Ιστορίες Ζώων. Διήγησις των Τετραπόδων Ζώων και Πουολόγος (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 1438-1439⁴⁷. 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*⁴⁸

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, Despot of Thessaloniki donated the lecterns to Vatopedi⁴⁹. 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 onwards⁵⁰. 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

H. Eideneier). Herakleion, 2016, 225. My thanks go to Vangelis Maladakis for drawing my attention to the illumination.

47 *Baltogianni*, Chrysanthi. Εικόνες, Συλλογή Δημητρίου Οικονομοπούλου. Athens, 1985, 95, No. 162. *Vassilaki*, Maria. A Cretan Icon in the Ashmolean: the Embrace of Peter and Paul. – *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 1990, No. 40, 405-422; *Semoglou*, Athanasios. Το ομοίωμα της εκκλησίας του Χριστού στη Σύναξη των Αποστόλων Πέτρου και Παύλου και η διαδικασία της «μετουσίωσης». In: I. Varalis (ed.). Το πρόπλασμα στη μεσαιωνική αρχιτεκτονική (Βυζάντιο, ΝΑ Ευρώπη, Ανατολία). Thessaloniki, 2009, 67-68; *Vassilaki*, Maria. Cretan Icon-Painting, 119-120. On the Council of Ferrara-Florence and the political consequences see Gounaridis, Paris. Πολιτικές διαστάσεις της Συνόδου Φεράρας-Φλωρεντίας. – *Θησαυρίσματα*, 2001, No. 31, 107-129.

48 In this chapter all translations are my own.

49 See above, note 16.

50 *Laiou*, Angeliki. Η Θεσσαλονίκη, η ενδοχώρα της και ο οικονομικός της χώρος στην εποχή των Παλαιολόγων. In: Βυζαντινή Μακεδονία 324–1430 μ. Χ. Thessaloniki, 1995, 194; *Necipoğlu*, Nevra. Sources for the Social and Economic History of Late Medieval Thessaloniki and Their Significance for Byzantine and Ottoman Studies. In: *South East Europe in History: the Past, the Present and the Problems of Balkanology*. Ankara, 1999, 106-107; *Eadem*. The Aristocracy in Late Byzantine Thessaloniki: A Case Study of the City's *Archontes*. Late 14th and Early 15th Centuries. – *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 2003, No. 57, 133-151; *Matschke*, Klaus-Peter. Bekergungen zur Stadtgeschichte Thessalonikes in Spätbyzantinisches Zeit. In: L. Hoffmann (Hrg.). *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie. Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und kultur*. Wiesbaden, 2005, 433-444.

monasteries⁵¹. Many such families abandoned the city shortly before 1430 and moved to Constantinople⁵² or other regions, like Serbia⁵³. The phenomenon is mentioned by Ioannis Anagnostis (...*these who left Thessaloniki many years ago and before the siege...*)⁵⁴. 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*)⁵⁵. 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 centuries⁵⁶.

51 *Oikonomides*, Nikolas. The Properties of the Deblitzenoi in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries. In: A. Laiou (ed.). *Charanis Studies*. New Brunswick, 1980, 176–198. See also, *Necipoğlu*, Nevra. The Aristocracy in Late Byzantine Thessaloniki, 79-80; *Melvani*, Nicholas. The Fate of the Palaiologan Aristocracy of Thessaloniki after 1423. In: V. Stancović (ed.). *The Balkans and the Byzantine World before and after the Captures of Constantinople, 1204 and 1453*. London, 2016, 42-43.

52 I note the cases of a certain ecclesiastical tax-collector, John Argyropoulos and Makarios Makres, who moved to Constantinople a few years before the Ottoman occupation of Thessaloniki, *Kugeas*, Sokratis. Notizbuch eines Beamten der Metropolis in Thessalonike aus dem Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts. – *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1914, No. 23, 143-163; *Argyriou*, Asterios (ed.). *Μακαρίου του Μακρή συγγράμματα*. Thessaloniki, 1996, 18-21; *Bianconi*, Daniele. *Tessalonica nell'età dei Paleologi: le pratiche intellettuali nel riflesso della cultura scritta*. Paris, 2005, 237; *Melvani*, Nicholas. The Fate of the Palaeologan Aristocracy, 44-45.

53 As Thomas Kantakouzenos and John Rhosotas did; see *Ferjančić*, Božidar. *Vizantinci u Srbiji prve polovine XV veka*. – *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta*, 1987, No. 26, 193-197; *Nicol*, Donald. The Byzantine family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100–1460: A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study. Cambridge, 1968, 182-184; *Necipoğlu*, Nevra. *The Aristocracy in Late Byzantine Thessaloniki*, 149-150.

54 ...τούς πρὸ μακρῶν ἐτῶν καὶ τοῦ συγκλεισμοῦ τὴν Θεσσαλονικὴν ἀπολιπόντας καὶ μετοικήσαντας... *Anagnostou*, Ioannou. Διήγησις περὶ τῆς τελευταίας αλώσεως τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης. Μοναδία ἐπὶ τῆ αλώσει τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης (ed. J. Tsaras). Thessaloniki, 1958, 54.

55 *Καὶ ἂ πρὶν μὲν ἐκόμα τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ πλούτῳ τῷ θρυλουμένῳ, νυνὶ δέ, ὡς μὴ ὄφειλε, φροῦδα γεγένητο πάντα καὶ κακῶς ἀνεσκεύαστο*, *Anagnostou*, Ioannou. Διήγησις, 70.9-14. In the following lines, 72.18 mentions: *theater aforesite prosperous* (θέατρον πρότερον εὐδαίμων). See also, *Kaltsogianni – Kotzambasi – Paraskevopoulou*, Eleni – Sofia – Iliana. *Ἡ Θεσσαλονίκη στη Βυζαντινὴ Λογοτεχνία. Ρητορικά καὶ Ἀγιολογικὰ Κείμενα*. Thessaloniki, 2002, 77.

56 On various aspects of this phenomenon and its historical background, see *Oikonomidès*, Nikolas. *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins à Constantinople (XIII^e-XV^e 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; *Laiou*, Angeliki. Venice as a center of trade and of Artistic Production in the Thirteenth Century. In: H. Belting (ed.). *Il Medio Oriente e l'Occidente nell'arte del XIII secolo*. Bologna, 1982, 11-26; *Eadem*. Venetians and Byzantines: Investigation of Forms of Contact in the Fourteenth Century. – *Θησαυρισματα*, 1992, No. 22, 29-43; *Georgopoulou*, Maria. Late Medieval Crete and Venice: An Appropriation of Byzantine Heritage. – *Art Bulletin*, 1995, No. 77.3, 479-496; *Eadem*. Venice and the Byzantine Sphere. In: Helen Evans (ed.). *Byzantium. Faith and Power (1261–1557)*. New York, 2004, 489-494; *Maltezos*, Chrysa. Η Κρήτη κατά τη διάρκεια της περιόδου της Βενετοκρατίας (1211–1669). In: N. Panagiotakis (ed.). *Κρήτη. Ιστορία και Πολιτισμός*. Vol. 2. Crete, 1988, 105-161; *Eadem*. Η Βενετία των Ελλήνων. Athens, 1999; *Vassilaki*, Maria. Από τον “ανώνυμο” Βυζαντινό καλλιτέχνη στον “επώνυμο” Κρητικό ζωγράφο του 15^{ου} αιώνα. In: M. Vassilaki (ed.). *Το Πορτρέτο του καλλιτέχνη στο Βυζάντιο*. Herakleion, 1997, 171-172; *Eadem*. Byzantine Icon Painting Around 1400: Constantinople or Crete? In: L. Jones (ed.). *Byzantine Images and Their Afterlives. Essays in Honor of Annemarie Weyl Carr*. Ashgate, 2014, 169-179; *Constantoudaki-Kitromilides*, Maria. A fifteenth century Byzantine icon-painter working on mosaics in Venice. – *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 1982, No. 32/5, XVI Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress (Wien, 4 – 9 Oktober 1981), Akten II/5, 265-269; *Eadem*. Conducere apothecam, in qua exercere artem nostrum: το εργαστήριο ενός Βυζαντινού και ενός Βενετού ζωγράφου στην Κρήτη. – *Σύμμεικτα*, 2001, No. 14, 291-299.



Fig. 9. Vatopedi; lectern II; panel; Peter and Paul carrying the model of a church

this period⁵⁷. 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 onwards⁵⁸.

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. Akotantos'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 art⁵⁹. 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 Constantinople⁶⁰. Unfortunately, Palaiologan wood carvings from the city have not been preserved⁶¹, and written

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. – *Θησαυρισματα*, 1972, No. 9, 209.

59 *Varalis*, Ioannis. The Painter Angelos in Constantinople? Answers from the Pantokrator Icon at the State Pushkin Museum, Moscow. In: Maria Vassilaki (ed.). *Studies on the Painter Angelos, his Age, and Cretan Painting*. – Benaki Museum Journal, 2013–2014, No. 13–14. Athens, 2017, 79–88.

60 *Underwood*, P. (ed.) *The Karye Djami*. Princeton, 1966, vol. 1, 122–123, 292–295, vol. 2, pls. 152–153, vol. 3, pls. 548, 549; *Constantoudaki-Kitromilides*, Maria. Ἐνθρονή Βρεφοκρατούσα και ἄγιοι. Σύνθετο ἔργο ἰταλοκρητικῆς τέχνης. – *ΔΧΑΕ*, 1993–1994, No. 17, 294–295, note 34; *Liakos*, Dimitrios. Ἡ δωροδοσία στις μονές του Αγίου Ὄρους τον 15^ο και 16^ο αἰώνα: το τεκμήριο της μεταλλοτεχνίας. In: *Το Άγιον Όρος στον 15^ο και 16^ο αἰώνα*. Thessaloniki, 2012, 314–315.

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; *Piatnitsky*, Yuri, et al (eds.). *Sinai, Byzantium, Russia. Orthodox Art from the Sixth to the Twentieth Century*. St Petersburg, 2000, 142, B119 (V. N. Zalesskaya)] 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. *Corovic-Lubjinkovic*, Mirjana. *Les iconostases en bois sculpté du XVII^e siècle au Mont Athos*. – *Hilandarski Zbornik*, 1996, No. 1, 122–123, fig. 1, suggest that the

sources are scarce⁶². Besides, sculpture was in decline from the late 14th century onwards⁶³. 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 14th century onwards⁶⁴. Despite the fact



Fig. 10. Vatopedi; lectern I; leg; monkey

fragments come from the epistyle of a templon. It has been considered with no further argumentation that the two wood carved pieces came from Athos, see *Sotiriou*, Georgios, La sculpture sur bois dans l'art byzantin. In: Mélanges Charles Diehl, II. Paris, 1930, 172; this opinion was expressed by *Nikonanos*, Nikolaos. Βυζαντινά ξυλόγλυπτα στο Άγιον Όρος. In: Άγιον Όρος. Φύση-Λατρεία – Τέχνη. Thessaloniki, 2001, 149-151. The majority of the surviving Palaiologan woodcarvings come from other regions (Macedonia, Epirus, Thrace etc.), *Sotiriou*, Georgios. Ανάγλυφον αγίου Γεωργίου εξ Ηρακλείας της Προποντίδος. – Θρακικά, 1928, No. 1, 33-37; *Lange*, Reinhold. Die Byzantinische Relieffikone. Recklinghausen, 1964, 121-122, 124; *Corović-Ljubinković*, Mirjana. Les bois sculptées du Moyen Âge dans les régions orientales de la Yougoslavie. Beograd, 1965, pl. II-XII; *Han*, Verena. Probleme du style et de la date de l'icone en relief de St Clement d'Ochrid. – Musee des Arts decoratifs. Recueil de Travaux, 1968, No. 8, 7-22; *Pemtas*, Charalampos. Ξυλόγλυπτη βυζαντινή εικόνα Οδηγήτριας από την Αλεξανδρούπολη. In: Αφιέρωμα στη μνήμη Στυλιανού Πελεκανίδη. Thessaloniki, 1983, 397-405; *Banck*, Alice. Byzantine Art, No. 271; *Papatheophanous* – *Tsouri*, Evangelia. Ξυλόγλυπτη πόρτα του καθολικού της μονής Κοιμήσεως Θεοτόκου στη Μολυβδοσκέπαστη Ιωαννίνων. – Αρχαιολογική Εφημερίς, 1993, No. 132, 83-106; *Moutsopoulos*, Nikolaos. Το ξύλινο ανάγλυφο του Αγίου Γεωργίου στον ομώνυμο ναό της Ομορφοκκλησιάς και ορισμένες άλλες ξυλόγλυπτες εικόνες της περιοχής. – Κληρονομία, 1993, No. 25, 33-80; *Petkos*, Antonios, *Parcharidou*, Magdalene. Ανάγλυφη εικόνα του Αγίου Δημητρίου από την Ομορφοκκλησιά Καστοριάς. – Μακεδονικά, 2000, No. 32, 339-354; *Nikonanos*, Nikolaos. Βυζαντινά ξυλόγλυπτα, 149-154; *Taddei*, Alessandro. Le Porte Bizantine, 523-564; *Tsigaridas*, Euthymios. Ανάγλυφες εικόνες σε ξύλο, 87-106; *Loverdou-Tsigarida*, Katia. Ξυλόγλυπτα της ύστερης περιόδου των Παλαιολόγων από ναούς της Δυτικής Μακεδονίας. – ΔΧΑΕ, 2014, No. 35, 375-40; *Milyaeva*, Liudmyla. The Icon of Saint George, with Scenes from His Life, from the Town of Mariupol. In: O.Z. Pevny (ed.). Perception of Byzantium and Its Neighbors (843-1261). New York, 2000, 102-117; Faith and Power, 114-115, No. 59 (D. Popović); *Siomkos*, Nikolaos. Παρατηρήσεις σε ανάγλυφες βυζαντινές εικόνες από ξύλο. In: International Conference "Relief Icons". Volos, 13 – 14 June 2009 (unpublished communication).

62 It is noteworthy that pilgrim Stefan from Novgorod saw a wood carved icon depicting Christ around 1350 in Constantinople, *Sotiriou*, Georgios. La sculpture, 180.

63 *Melvani*, Nicholas. Late Byzantine Sculpture. Turnhout, 2013, 92-94.

64 *Pallas*, Demetrios. Οι βενετοκρατικές μικρογραφίες Olschki του έτους 1415. In: Πεπραγμένα του Β' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου. Vol. 1. Athens, 1967, 362-373; *Cattapan*, Mario. Nuovi documenti riguardanti pittori cretesi dal 1300 al 1500. In: Πεπραγμένα του Β' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου. Vol. 3. Athens, 1968, 29-46; *Idem*. Nuovi elenchi 202-235; *Vassilaki*, Maria. Byzantine Icon-painting around 1400, 169-179, with rich bibliography; *Eadem*. Παρατηρή-

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?

σεις για τη ζωγραφική στην Κρήτη τον πρώιμο 15ο αιώνα. In: Ευφρόσυνον. Αφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη. Vol. 1. Athens, 1991, 65-67; *Constantoudaki-Kitromilides*, Maria. Viaggi di pittori tra Costantinoupoli e Candia: documenti d'archivio e influssi sull'arte (XIV-XV sec.). In: Ch. Maltezos, A. Tzavara, D. Vlasi (eds.). I Greci durante la Venetokrazia: Uomini, spazio, idee (XIII-XVIII sec.), Atti del convegno Internazionale di Studi, Venezia, 3 - 7 Dicembre 2007. Venice, 2009, 709-723.

65 See above, notes 21-23.

66 On Cretan woodcarving and the island's role in the production of wood-carved artworks from the 16th century and on, see *Chatzidakis*, Manolis. Ikonostas. In: K. Wessel, M. Restle (eds.). Reallexicon zur byzantinischen Kunst, III. Stuttgart, 1973, 350; *Idem*. Essai sur l'école dite "italogrecque" précédé d'une note sur les rapports de l'art vénitien avec l'art crétois jusqu'à 1500. In: Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV. Firenze, 1974, 71-72; *Kazanaki-Lappa*, Maria. Εκκλησιαστική ξυλογλυπτική στο Χάνδακα το 17^ο αιώνα. - Θησαυρίσματα, 1974, No. 11, 251-283; *Eadem*. Η εκκλησιαστική ξυλογλυπτική στο 16^ο αιώνα: προβλήματα και επισημάνσεις. In: Ενδέκατο Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινή και Μεταβυζαντινή Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνη, Πρόγραμμα και περιλήψεις εισηγήσεων και ανακοινώσεων. Athens, 1991, 17-19; *Scabavias*, Konstantinos, *Chatzidaki*, Nano (eds.). Μουσείο Παύλου και Αλεξάνδρας Κανελλοπούλου. Βυζαντινή και Μεταβυζαντινή Τέχνη. Athens, 2007, 58-59, No. 13 (C. Scabavias).

67 *Cattapan*. Nuovi documenti, 29-46; *Idem*. Nuovi elenchi, 202-235; *Constantoudaki-Kitromilides*, Maria. Ένθρονη Βρεφοκρατούσα, 285-302; *Papadaki-Oeklant*, Stella. Δυτικότερες τοιχογραφίες του 14^{ου} αιώνα στην Κρήτη. Η άλλη όψη μιας αμφίδρομης σχέσης. In: Ευφρόσυνον. Αφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη. Vol. 2. Athens, 1992, 491-514; *Vassilaki*, Maria. Παρατηρήσεις για τη ζωγραφική στην Κρήτη τον πρώιμο 15^ο αιώνα. In: Ευφρόσυνον, 65-77.

68 *Drandaki*, Anastasia. A Maniera Greca: content, context and transformation of a term. - Studies in Iconography, 2014, No. 35, 39-72; *Constantoudaki-Kitromilides*, Maria. Ένθρονη Βρεφοκρατούσα, 295, note 35; *Papadaki* - *Oeklant*. Δυτικότερες τοιχογραφίες, 491-514; *Vassilaki*. Byzantine Icon-painting around 1400, 177.

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, Despot of Thessaloniki (1408-1423). However, my dating of the lecterns to the period after Andronikos' death in 1429 suggests that this was not the case⁶⁹.

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 surviving⁷¹. Porfirij Uspenskij mentions one additional object⁷². 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

69 On the dating of Andronikos' death in Constantinople (as monk Akakios in the monastery of Pantokrator) and his tomb, *Sideras*, Alexander. *Neue Quellen*, 12-14; *Idem*. *Die Byzantinischen Grabreden*. Prosopographie, Datierung, Überlieferung. Wien, 1994, 413-418.

70 *Tsigaridas*, Euthymios, *Loverdou-Tsigarida*, Katia. *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου*. Βυζαντινές εικόνες 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 Βατοπαιδίου*. – Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς 1919, No. 3, 333).

71 *Hasluck*, William. *The first English Traveller's account of Athos*. – *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, 1910-1911, No. 17, 123-124.

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 Despot of 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.

73 *Tsigarida-Loverdou*. Thessalonique, 250; *Tavlakis*, Ioannis, *Liakos*, Dimitrios. *Ο σταυρός ο λεγόμενος του Μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου στη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου: συντήρηση – τεκμηρίωση*. – *Η Δεκάτη*, 2005-2006, No. 2, 65-75.

74 On the chalice see *Ballian*, Anna. *Μεταβυζαντινή και άλλη μικροτεχνία*. In: *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου*. Παράδοση – Ιστορία – Τέχνη. Vol. 2, Mount Athos, 1998, 501, fig. 442; *Le Mont Athos et l'Empire byzantin*, 180, No. 81 (D. Liakos); *Mezzacassa*, Manlio Leo. *Temì d'ornate microtecnica nell'oreficeria gotica veneziana a paragone con le arti maggiori*. – *Arte Veneta*, 2014 (2015), No. 71, 207, 210-211 (figs. 24, 25). It is referred as Andronikos' gift by *Uspenskij*, Porfirij. *Pervoje Putešestivije*, 33. The tradition is mentioned in the unpublished catalogue of the artefacts kept in the sacristy, dated to 1749 (Inventory Number in the monastery's archive 56Ω.Γ):

embroidered mitre⁷⁵. Andronikos' benefactions are generally mentioned in an unpublished document signed by the monks in 1425⁷⁶; 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 century⁷⁷. 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 century⁷⁸. Likewise, at Chilandar,

⁷⁵ *Ἐπερον ποτήριον Ἀνδρονίκου βασιλέως κρησταλαίνιον* (fol. 1r).

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

⁷⁶ The document (Inventory Number in the archive: Γ183) will be published in *Actes de Vatopedi III*. I am grateful to Prof. Kostis Smyrlis 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: *Ἐπει δὲ κ(αὶ) αὐθις ἔστειλε πρὸς ἡμ(ᾶς) ἀπὸ τοῦ Μωρέως κ(αὶ) ἐτέρ(α)ς ἀπειρ(ο)ῦς εὐεργεσίας κ(αὶ) χάριτας κ(αὶ) τῶν προτέρων μειζονας, ἧτοι σκευή ἀργυρὰ κ(αὶ) πέπλα ἱερὰ κ(αὶ) ἔτερα οὐκ ἐνἀριθμητα...* It seems likely that the famous jasper, commissioned by the Despotēs of Mystras Manouel Kantakouzenos Palaiologos (1349–1380) for a church he founded, could have been sent to Vatopedi from there by his brother, former Despotēs Andronikos; for another hypothesis on the jasper's acquisition of Vatopedi, see: Liakos, Dimitrios. *Λόγια πρόσωπα και λόγοιο περιβάλλον στο Ἅγιον Ὄρος* (14^{ος}–18^{ος} αἰ.): ἡ δυναμική τους στην τέχνη. In: *Ἅγιον Ὄρος και Λογιοσύνη*. Thessaloniki, 2014, 256, note 6.

⁷⁷ On the Athonite *Patria*, see Lambros, Spyridon. *Τα Πάτρια του Ἁγίου Ὄρους*. – Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων, 1912, No. 9, 116–244. Also see the chapter *Ἀνάμνησις μερική περί του Ἁγίου Ὄρους Ἄθω εκ παλαιῶν ιστοριῶν* in *Gedeon*, Manouel. *Ὁ Ἄθω*. Constantinople, 1885, Athens, 1990 (photographical reprint), 297–306. The bibliography on Athonite traditions is vast; here, I cite only some seminal works: Koder, Johannes. *Patres Athonenses a latinophilis occisi sub Michaele VIII*. – *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 1969, No. 18, 79–88; Rigo, Antonio. *La Διήγησις sui monaci Athoniti martirizzati dai latinophronoi* (Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca 2333) e le tradizioni athonite successive: alcune osservazioni. – *Studi Veneziani*, 1988, No. 15, 77–79; *Chrysochoides*, Criton. *Παραδόσεις και πραγματικότητες στο Ἅγιον Ὄρος στα τέλη του ΙΕ' και στις αρχές του ΙΣΤ' αιώνα*. In: *Mount Athos in the 14th–16th centuries*. – *Αθωνικά Σύμμεικτα*, 1997, No. 4, 99–147; *Idem*. *Dall'èremo al cenobio: storia e tradizioni delle origini del monachesimo athonita*. In: K. Chrysochoidis, A. Louf, Makarios di Simonos Petras, J. Noret (eds.). *Atanasio e il monachesimo al Monte Athos*. Bose, 2005, 27–45; *Livanos*, Nikolaos. *Συμβολή στη μελέτη των αγιορειτικών πατριογραφικών παραδόσεων*. In: *Το Ἅγιον Ὄρος στον 15^ο και 16^ο αιώνα*. Thessaloniki, 2012, 141–152.

⁷⁸ *Le Mont Athos et l' Empire byzantin*, 118, No. 17 (D. Liakos). On the tradition, *Sophronios*, *Agiopavlitēs*. *Θησαυροί Ἁγίου Ὄρους*. Athens, 1959, 56.

the so-called chalice of Stephen Dušan, dated to the 16th century⁷⁹, at Xeropotamou the so-called *panagiarion* of empress Poulcheria, of the 14th century, with an 18th century revetment⁸⁰. 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 died⁸¹. This information seems to have originated with the historian Doucas⁸², perpetuated by Du Cange⁸³ (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. 408⁸⁴, 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 chronograph account of 1570⁸⁵, 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 Phourna⁸⁶ (who himself repeated older oral tradition) and had misinterpreted the liturgical inscription written in Prothesis⁸⁷. It has since been demonstrated that Protaton

79 *Bogdanović, Dimitrije, Djurić, Vojislav, Medaković, Dejan. Chilandar. The Holy Mountain, 1997, 164, fig. 138.*

80 *Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, Ioli. Byzantine Icons in Steatite. Wien, 1985, 204-205; Treasures of Mt Athos, 324-325, No. 9.5 (K. Loverdou-Tsigarida). On the tradition, Barskij, Vasilij, Grigorovich. Τα ταξίδια του στο Άγιον Όρος, 1725–1726, 1744–1745. Polyviou, M., Toutos, N., Fousteris, G. (eds.) Με τη φροντίδα και τα σχόλια του ακαδημαϊκού Παύλου Μυλωνά. Thessaloniki, 2009, 506-508.*

81 *Nicol, Donald. The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos, 92.*

82 *Ducas Istorica Turco – Byzantină (1341–1462) (ed. V. Grecu). Bucharest, 1958, XI.5, 71, 1-4.*

83 *Charles Du Fresne Du Cange. Historia byzantina duplici commentario illustrata, Pt. I. Familiae Augustae Byzantinae, Familiae Dalmaticae, Sclavonicae, Turcicae. Paris, 1680, 260.*

84 *Gonzato, Ada. Il codice Marciano Greco 408 e la data del romanzo bizantino di Alessandro. – Byzantinische Zeitschrift, 1963, No. 56.2, 246.*

85 *Σύντομη Ιστορία από τη δημιουργία του κόσμου μέχρι την κατάληψη της Κωνσταντινούπολης από τον Τούρκο, written by the housekeeper (οικονόμος) of the archdiocese of Pogonia; Uspenskij, Porfirij. Pervoje Putešestivije, 32.*

86 *Dionysiou tou ek Phourna. Ερμηνεία της ζωγραφικής τέχνης και οι κύρια αυτής ανέκδοτα πηγαί, εκδομένη μετά προλόγου νυν το πρώτον πλήρης κατά το πρωτότυπον αυτής κείμενον (ed. A. Papadopoulou-Kerameos). St Petersburg, 1909, 3.*

87 *Millet, Gabriel, Pargoire, Jules, Petit, Louis. Recueil, 2, No. 5.*

was painted by Michael and Eutybios Astrapas⁸⁸.

Therefore, it is apparent that the question of the lectern's patron remains open. 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 cases⁸⁹? 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 activity⁹⁰, and for the income of the dependencies and benefactions from Serbian dignitaries in the first half of the 15th century⁹¹. 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 Theotokos⁹², like the Holy Bramble, the Thee Youths in the Fiery Furnace

88 Πρωτάτο II. Η συντήρηση των τοιχογραφιών. Vol. 2, Thessaloniki, 2015, 40-41 and fig. 20, 21; *Liakos*, Dimitrios. Unpublished Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Inscriptions on Mt Athos. In: Chr. Stavrakos (ed.). *Inscription in the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine History and History of Art*. Wiesbaden, 2016, 283-284, note 12.

89 The full extent of the patronage and dedicatory activity of the Athonite abbots and monks is still largely unknown; for a sample of evidence both in the written sources and inscriptions see *Liakos*, Dimitrios. Unpublished inscriptions, 284-285, 287-289; *idem*. Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Athonite Dedicatory Inscriptions in Historical and Archaeological Context. In: Emmanuel Moutafov, Jelena Erdeljan (eds.). *Texts. Inscriptions. Images / Art Readings*, I.2016. Sofia, 2017, 161, 177-178; *Loverdou-Tsigarida*, Katia. Les revêtements de la Vierge Vimatarissa au monastère de Vatopedi. In: *Volume in mémoire d' André Grabar*. Moscou, 1999, 440-448.

90 *Liakos*, Dimitrios. Unpublished inscriptions, 285-286, 289.

91 *Radić*, Radivoj. Η μονή Βατοπεδίου και η Σερβία στον ΙΕ' αιώνα. In: *Ιερά Μονή Βατοπεδίου. Ιστορία και Τέχνη*. – Αθωνικά Σύμμεικτα, 1999, No. 7, 87-96.

92 On the cycle of the Theotokos' Prefigurations, *Mouriki*, Doula. Αι βιβλικά προεικονίσεις της Παναγίας εις τον τρούλλον της Περιβλέπτου του Μυστρά. – *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον*, 1970, No 25, Α' Μελέται, 217-251; *Papamastorakis*, Η ένταξη των προεικονίσεων, 315-327.

and Jacob's Ladder⁹³. 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 sources⁹⁴.

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 onwards⁹⁵.

93 It is noteworthy that after the mid-14th century the Prefigurations of Theotokos become fewer in monumental painting, *Babić*, Gordana. Le programme iconographique des peintures murales décorant les narthex des églises fondées par le roi Milutin. In: *L'art byzantin au début du XIV^e siècle*, Symposium de Gračaniča 1973. Beograd, 1978, 105-125.

94 *Arkadios*. Αγιορειτικά Ανάλεκτα, 333.

95 *Laiou*, Angeliki. Venetians and Byzantines: Investigation of Forms of Contact in the Fourteenth Century. – *Θησαυρισματα* 1992, No. 22, 29-43; *Maltezou*, Chrysa. The Historical and Social Context. In: David Holton (ed.). *Literature and Society in Renaissance Crete*. Cambridge University Press, 1991, 17-47; *Papadia-Lala*, Anastasia. Οι Έλληνες και η Βενετική πραγματικότητα. Ιδεολογική και κοινωνική συγκρότηση. In: *Όψεις της Ιστορίας του Βενετοκρατούμενου Ελληνισμού*. Αρχαιακά τεκμήρια. Athens, 1993, 173-276; *Holton*, David. The Cretan Renaissance. In: David Holton (ed.). *Literature and Society*, 1-17; *Panayiotakis*, Nikolaos. The Italian Background of Early Cretan Literature. – *Dumbarton Oaks Paper*, 1995, No. 49, 281-320; *Kazanaki-Lappa*, Maria. Ζωγραφική, Γλυπτική, Αρχιτεκτονική. Η συμβολή των αρχαιακών πηγών στην ιστορία της τέχνης. In: *Όψεις της ιστορίας του βενετοκρατούμενου Ελληνισμού*. Αρχαιακά τεκμήρια. Athens, 1993, 435 and on.

Appendix

The Iconographic Programs of the Lecterns

Lectern I

Stanza 1	Stanza 4	Stanza 7	Stanza 10	Stanza 13	Stanza 16	Stanza 19	Stanza 22
Stanza 2	Stanza 5	Stanza 8	Stanza 11	Stanza 14	Stanza 17	Stanza 20	Stanza 23
Stanza 3	Stanza 6	Stanza 9	Stanza 12	Stanza 15	Stanza 18	Stanza 21	Stanza 24

Lectern II

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

1. Diviner Balaam
2. Geometrical theme
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 аналоя

Димитриос Лякос



В новата ризница на манастира Ватопед се пазят два висококачествени резбовани аналоя. Те имат осмоъгълен корпус, оформен от вертикални 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 аналоя 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 осемте 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 анализа на резбованата украса чрез проследяване на писмени извори и историческия контекст.

Растителните мотиви по вертикалните и хоризонталните повърхности 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 Акотаос), 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 съжителстват византийски и венециански майстори още от предходния век, създавайки една продукция със „сместен“ стил.

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CROSSING BORDERS**

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