The article concerns the authorship of two Cretan icons from the ex-collection of Nikolay Likhachev held nowadays in the Hermitage museum. The iconography, stylistic features and techniques used in the icons prove dating to the seventeenth century. The first icon was signed by Ioannis Lampardos from Rethymnon. It has a rare iconography of “Deesis – the Gate of Salvation”. The inscription on the second icon, the Virgin Lambovitissa, says that it was painted by hierodeacon Stephanos Tsankarolos. He is famous for his works created on the island of Corfu where he lived in the Holy Trinity monastery.

Key words: icon painting, Crete, post-Byzantine art, the seventeenth century, Ioannis Lampardos, Stephanos Tsankarolos

The Hermitage Collection of Byzantine and post-Byzantine icons includes several signed panels painted by artists of the Cretan school. This article introduces two seventeenth-century icons, namely, a Deesis – Gate of Salvation by Ioannis Lampardos, and an Enthroned Virgin with the Child by Stephanos Tsankarolos. In addition to expanding the corpus of signed works by Cretan painters, these icons’ publication shall hopefully broaden our understanding of Cretan icon-painting.

1. Deesis – The Gate of Salvation by Ioannis Lampardos (inv. no. I-430) (Fig. 1) The icon measures 42.2 × 48 × 2 cm and is painted on a panel consisting of two boards of cypress wood, which are joined at the back with two vertical dowels of the same wood. A metal hanging loop is fixed at the center on the backside. The front of the panel is flat, and the painting is executed on gesso ground over glued canvas.

The icon’s compositional scheme is quite sophisticated and its iconographic theme is rare. At the top, Christ sits on a broad throne, which stands upon a cherry-colored marble platform; He holds the opened Gospel in His left hand and blesses with His right, whilst, on the same level and flanking the throne, stand the Virgin and St John Prodromos, their hands extended in supplication. Four steps – rendered in green color – lead to the Lord’s marble platform. Flanking these steps, the following saints – arranged according to rank – are represented in full length: (starting from the top), the Apostles Peter and Paul, the warrior-saints Demetrios and George, the Church Fathers John Chrysostom and Spyridon of Trimithous, the monk St Anthony, and an unknown saint, the figure of whom is only partially preserved. Below the Lord’s marble podium extend three concentric, circular segments (rendered in shades of blue). The lowermost of them circumscribes a cherry-colored rectangle, within which is rendered an open gate. The latter is painted in a warm ochre. The Greek inscriptions at the bottom, namely, Η ΙΤΗΡΙΑ ΤΗ ΟΥ ΧΕΙΡ [hand of Ioannis Lampardos] (rendered as a monogram, in black), identify the subject and the painter of the icon, respectively (Fig. 2).

Considerable damage of the original gold background, at some point in time, led to its overpainting with a thick layer of light-brown ochre. At that time, also, new inscriptions (in red) designating the depicted saints were added. During this partial “renovation”, the inscriptions referring to the saints George and Demetrios were mutually confused, and those on Christ’s Gospel and on the scrolls held by the saints were retouched.

The icon was transferred to the State Hermitage in 1930 from the State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg, where it had entered in 1913 as part of the famous icon-collection of Nikolai Likhachev. A fragment of an antiquarian’s label on the back of the panel indicates that Likhachev acquired the icon in Italy. This prominent collector and scholar had noticed the rare subject of the icon: during the acquisition process of the collection to the Russian Museum, he noted the following in the inventory list: “Deesis. The Throne of Salvation? Deesis of a special type of the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries. New Greek [painting].” As a matter of fact, we cannot name any other, thematically similar icon among the output of the Cretan school. Hence, we hope that the publication of the present Hermitage icon shall help in identifying analogous works in museums or private collections.

In attempting to analyze the present icon, attention should be focused first to the designatory Greek inscription, Η ΙΤΗΡΙΑ ΤΗ ΟΥ ΧΕΙΡ ΕΙΚΟΣΙΚΟΤΡΟΠΙΑΚ (The Gate of Salvation). The
special Greek word for “gate” employed here could be more precisely translated as “narrow gate, small door, or garden gate”. Obviously, in the present case, the different nuances of the word “gate” in Greek came into a play that corresponds with the Biblical and theological traditions about the opposed “wide” and “narrow” gates, that is, the gates leading to Good and Evil.

The textual reference relating to the subject of our icon is to be found in the Gospel of Matthew: “Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter therein”; “For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it” (Matthew, 7:13–14).

This closing passage from the Sermon on the Mount addresses man’s perennial quest to find his path to salvation. One should enter through the narrow gate, but in order to do so, one has to accept Christ’s commandments, with regard to his relation both with God and with his fellow men. Emphasis is especially placed on the choosing of the narrow gate for entering into (true) life, for the “wide” gate and the “broad” path are those leading to spiritual death. Verse 14 clearly states that the Lord’s followers should choose the way that He showed to them, in contradistinction to all the other people, the multitudes, who follow the “wide” path that leads to their demise.

The notion of the two “paths” leading to either Good or Evil was paramount in the Judaic tradition; hence, it was clearly understood by the followers of Christ. It is a central notion both in the Essene literature, and in early-Christian texts, the most significant of the latter being The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (Didache), where it is stated that: “There are two ways, one of life and one of death, but there is a great difference between the two.” According to many scholars, the Greek text harks back to a Jewish original, which, regrettably, has not survived. The issue of choosing the right path is also tackled in the Old Testament, namely in Deuteronomy (30, 19), in Jeremiah (21, 8) and in Baruch (4,1).

Lampardos’s visual rendition of the notion of the “narrow gate of salvation” is expressed in the sharp-edged triangular form circumscribed by the lower circular segment that represents the earthly realm. It is worth noting in this context that the same notion is further stressed in another detail of the icon, namely, in the text written in the open pages of the Gospel held by Christ. Though fragmentally preserved, the text allows for the identification of its source, which, again, is from the Gospel of Matthew: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”, “Take

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It is our contention that in the Hermitage icon textual postulates reflect to visual images. Thus the words from Matthew 11:28–29 find a visual parallel in the images of the Saints who stand on the steps leading to the throne of Christ, for it is those who, during their earthly lives, chose the “narrow gate”, took upon themselves the “yoke” (i.e. the teaching of the Lord), and accomplished deeds for the glory of Christ and the Church. And, precisely because of this, they earned the Heavenly Kingdom and now stand by the throne of the Lord. The present icon, by dint of both its visual vocabulary and its textual references, possesses a clear symbolic-moral character. Distinguished by a crystalline, logical simplicity, its iconicographic formulation does not have any direct parallels in post-Byzantine art. Hence, the hypothesis that this formulation is a personal creation of Ioannis Lampardos is highly sustainable.

On purely stylistic grounds, it should be mentioned that the icon’s genuine and refined color-scheme – a combination of gold, green, blue, and cherry hues (the latter speckled by whitish spots that amount to a glowing and vibrating surface) – points to works by Venetian masters. Most interesting is the use of the gold lining under the cherry-toned kraplak that creates the effect of the paint’s glow from inside. In addition to that, the compositional layout alludes to principles expounded in Western artistic manuals. Lampardos employs the rectangular – quasi square – format of the panel and inserts in it the triangle and the circle. The whole composition is built precisely on a combination of these three geometric forms. Nonetheless, in his way of rendering the saints, and in regard to their garments and attributes, he employs the well-established, formal vocabulary of Byzantine iconography, as it was adapted and codified by the masters of the Cretan school. Such a subtle combination of Byzantine and Western formal elements adds a special character to the Icons of the Cretan School and consists one of its distinctive features.

The monogrammatic form of the artist’s signature placed at the bottom of the icon is easily deciphered. As a matter of fact, Ioannis Lampardos, who mentioned in the written sources for the period between the years 1627 and 1639, belonged to a distinguished Cretan family of traditional icon painters. The sources mention also his brother Emmanuel, whose activity spans between 1587 and 1631, as well as his two sons, Nikolas and Stamatis. The Lampardos family lived in the city of Rethymno, a large artistic and cultural center of Crete.5

Up to now, only three signed icons by Ioannis Lampardos were known. According to M. Chatzidakis and E. Drakopoulou, these are: The Virgin of the Passion (Byzantine Museum, Athens), St. Gregory the Theologian (Benaki Museum, Athens), and the Hermitage icon presented here.6

However, we know of two more icons signed by this painter, which also bear monogrammatic signatures that are absolutely identical to that in the Hermitage icon. Both icons...
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are presently in Moscow. The following short discussion of the mentioned icons is deemed as necessary at this point, for it shall clarify matters with regard to Lampardos’s artistic personality and oeuvre.

The first icon represents St. George ‘Kephalophoros’ (the Head-Bearer) and is in the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow (Fig. 4). It was displayed in August 1991 in the exhibition of Post-Byzantine Painting at the same museum,1 and later, in October of 1995, in the exhibition Post-Byzantine Painting at the Andrei Rublev Museum of Ancient Russian Art. The icon has been included in the catalogue issued in connection to the Rublev Museum exhibition; it has been dated by Olga Etinhof to the second half of the sixteenth century.2 It was displayed in August 1991 (the Head-Bearer) and is in the State Pushkin Museum of Byzantine Painting. The icon has been included in the catalogue issued in connection to the Rublev Museum exhibition; it has been dated by Olga Etinhof to the second half of the sixteenth century.3

The Hermitage icons.4 Besides the identical signatures, the two icons bear significantly identical iconographic similarities – in the physiognomic type, the posture, the garments, the armor, and the weapons of St George. We would go as far as to assert that the figure of St George in both cases originated from the same antithelikon (Figs. 3 and 4). Similar remarks could be made about the technique of both icons.

More is what, both icons testify to a distinctly personal approach in what regards the treatment of the subject. In the Moscow icon St George is depicted in full length, treading upon the defeated dragon. His hands are outstretched in a gesture of prayer, whilst his severed head is held in, and an unfolded scroll hangs from, his left hand.5 Christ, emerging from a celestial segment in the top right corner, blesses him and holds an unfolded scroll containing His response to the martyr’s plea.6 St George stands in a floriated, mountainous terrain.

Christopher Walter, who studied the iconography of St George Kephalophoros, came to conclusions that are interesting and important for our discussion. According to him, this peculiar iconographic type appeared in the post-Byzantine period. The earliest examples are dated to the sixteenth century and are to be encountered in murals at the Athonite monasteries of Xenophonos and Hagiot Poulov. However, the earliest portable icons examined by Walter are works of Cretan artists of the end of the sixteenth-beginning of the seventeenth century. This led Walter to conclude that the workshop of the artist Emmanuel Lampardos, which is mentioned in archival documents from 1587 to 1631,7 played a significant role in the development of this particular iconographic type. Therefore, the Moscow icon of St George Kephalophoros further supports Walter’s conclusions with regard to the contribution of the Lampardos family workshop in the development of this iconographic variant.

Our agreement with Walter’s conclusions extends even further, namely, to the fact that this particular variant of St George evolved from the iconography of St John the Forerunner. Icons representing St John in full form, holding an open scroll and addressing Christ (or His blessing hand) who emerges from a celestial segment, appear as early as the twelfth century.8

By adapting this Byzantine iconographic formulation to the theme of St George Kephalophoros, the Cretan artist

1 The exhibition was organized in connection with the 18th Congress of Byzantine Studies in Moscow. Regrettably, the catalogue was never published.


invigorated the notion of a mystical dialogue conducted between the martyr and Christ, as evinced by the texts on the scrolls held by both conversants.\footnote{It is worth noting in this context, that the scrolls always bear the same text.} In the Moscow icon of St. George, Lampardos not only employed the established, Byzantine compositional scheme, but he enhanced it with elements of the pictorial vocabulary of Cretan art. One such typical element, for example, is the representation of the warrior-saint treading upon a dragon or snake, which is encountered in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Cretan icons.\footnote{Y., for instance, an early fifteenth-century icon of St. George from the Latis Collection, or icons of St. Phanourios and St. Theodore Tiro, painted by Angelos in the mid-fifteenth century. Cf. A. Drandaki, The origins of El Greco. Icon painting in Venetian Crete, New York 2009, 46, no. 5, 51–52, nos. 8, 9.} In all likelihood, Lampardos also borrowed the motif of the round shield laying by St George’s feet from the iconography of Saint Phanourios. Thus, the Moscow Saint George Kephalophoros, in like manner to the Hermitage Deesis – Gate of Salvation, point to the fact that Ioannis Lampardos was an original artist who realized his work in a creative manner.

The second unknown icon signed by Ioannis Lampardos is also in Moscow and represents St John Prodromos – Angel of the Desert. It appeared in the European antiquarian market at the end of the 1960s (Fig. 5). Previous to that, it belonged to the private collection of Ilas Neufert in Munich and was displayed in the exhibition Icons of the 13th–19th centuries, held in Munich in late 1969. In the exhibition catalogue the icon was ascribed to a Greek artist of the seventeenth century.\footnote{Bären 13. bis 19. Jahrhundert. Haus der Kunst München, 11 Oktober 1969 bis 4. Januar 1970, München 1969, No. 75.} In 1995 the icon was offered for sale at Christie’s, London,\footnote{13 December 1995, Lot 321.} and was listed as a Greek icon of the sixteenth-seventeenth century.\footnote{For an excellent color reproduction of the icon, cf. the sales catalogue: An important collection of Greek and Russian icons. The property of a family trust, London, Christie’s London, 13 December 1995, London 1995, 50–51.} In 2007, the icon was put on sale again, at the same auction house. At that time, the Christie’s expert Maria Paphiti dated it to the period around 1600.\footnote{Inevitably, after such an ascription, the price of the icon was raised considerably, as the eventual buyer (a well-known Russian entrepreneur and art collector Vladimir Logvinenko) was very much impressed by the fact that an icon by the same painter is treasured in the Hermitage collection. We would like to thank Mr. Logvinenko for his kind permission to publish the icon in this article.} The entries in both Christie’s catalogues mentioned traces of a black inscription in the lower part of the panel, albeit this inscription was not apprehended as a possible artist’s signature. And there were reasons for it: firstly, the monogrammatic form of the Lampardos name highly resembles to the monogrammatic inscription used for the designation of the Prodromos; secondly, the inscription is located at the bottom part of the icon and to the right of the platter with the severed head of St John. These facts, most likely, led experts to consider it – somewhat superficially – as an explanatory inscription pertaining to the saint rather, than as a signature of the painter.

In June 2007, in a personal examination of the icon prior to the auction, we addressed the attention of M. Paphiti to the inscription as a signature by Ioannis Lampardos, and mentioned the similar signatures on his three icons in the Russian museums. Amendments were made with regard to the attribution, and at the time of the sale the icon was presented as a signed work by Ioannis Lampardos.\footnote{It is well known that many young Cretans sought a firm education in Italian universities, while those who had a talent for the arts refined their skills in the workshops of leading painters of Rome, Bologna, and especially Venice. Upon completing their studies, many returned to their homeland. Some of them took the vows and pursued an ecclesiastical career. The originality of the present Hermitage icon illustrates exactly such a well-educated and skillful-in-painting Cretan intellectual. For a pertinent and succinct discussion of this particular milieu, cf. A. A. Dmitrievskii, Puteshestvie po Vostoku i ego nauchnye rezul’taty. Otchet o zagranichnoi komandirovke v 1887/88 godu, s prilozheniiami, Kiev 1890, 92–116.}

In conclusion, the Hermitage icon by Lampardos, is an interesting product of Cretan icon-painting, and it adds to our knowledge of the working methods and the creative procedures of the Cretan painters. Admittedly, when compared to the works of the best contemporary Cretan masters, the icon lacks both in originality and in grandeur with regard to style. However, it asserts itself in a way that can best be described as “a sermon in painted form”, for it clearly shows the painter’s individuality in translating theological and liturgical literature to a visual form.\footnote{It is worth noting in this context, that the scrolls always bear the same text.} Ioannis Lampardos, can thus be considered as an interesting individual who represents such a specific trend of the early seventeenth century.

2. Virgin and Child, Enthroned by Stephanos Tzankarolas (inv. no. I-441) (Fig. 6)

The Virgin, holding the Christ Child on Her lap, is seated on a monumental marble throne, which is crowned by a baroque, shell-like conch. The Child rests on a red cushion embroidered with a gold floriated pattern, blesses with His right and holds an open scroll with His left hand.

Inevitably, after such an ascription, the price of the icon was raised considerably, as the eventual buyer (a well-known Russian entrepreneur and art collector Vladimir Logvinenko) was very much impressed by the fact that an icon by the same painter is treasured in the Hermitage collection. We would like to thank Mr. Logvinenko for his kind permission to publish the icon in this article.
Tzankarolas was a Cretan painter active in the last quarter of the seventeenth – first decade of the eighteenth century. A native of Crete, he moved to Corfu, where he settled in the Monastery of the Holy Trinity. This Monastery possessed an icon bearing the signature “Hand of Spyridon Tzankarolas” and the date 1685. On the basis of this fact, it was suggested that the painter’s secular name was Spyridon, and it changed to Stephanos around 1688, when he took his monastic vows. Indeed, icons by this artist dating from 1688 to 1710 are signed by the latter name. Tzankarolas’s signed icons are preserved mainly in monasteries at Corfu and Kefalonia, as well as in museums and private collections at Athens, London, Cairo, and Germany. This oeuvre is now enriched by the present Hermitage icon.

The designation “hierodeacon” attached to the painter’s name tempts us to narrow the dating of the Hermitage icon to around 1688–1700. In addition to that, intrinsic features of the icon, such as the employment of varnish colored lakes for the garments and certain decorative motifs, point to a dating of the panel to around 1700.

A further comparison between the Hermitage icon and the Virgin and Child surrounded by Scenes of the Akathistos (at the iconostasis of the Sismonastery at Kefalonia, signed by Tzankarolas and bearing the date 1700) strengthens the above hypothesis. The latter icon shows a similar technical approach in the rendition of the garments of the Child, and of Christ (in the scene of The Harrowing of Helly. Notably enough, colored varnish was also used as paint for the winged heads of the angels at the top corners of the Sikon icon, the heads of the beasts and the shell-formed finial of the throne, as well as for parts of the garments of the angels in the Hermitage icon. At the Sismonastery, Stephanos Tzankarolas painted three more icons for the iconostasis of the katholikon: an Enthroned Virgin and Child, an Enthroned Christ Pantokrator, and St. John the Forerunner – the Angel of the Desert, in which the particular technique of painting certain details in varnish can be attested, too. Though not bearing any date, it is most likely that these icons were painted around 1700, that is, they are coeval to the mentioned icon of the Virgin and Child surrounded by Scenes of the Akathistos. In addition to that, in three other icons by Tzankarolas at Corfu (and especially in an Enthroned St John Chrysostom) dating to the end of the seventeenth century, colored varnish was actively used in highlighting the details. The above point to the conclusion that, two intrinsic elements in the Hermitage icon, namely, the specific type of the painter’s signature, and the systematic employment of certain techniques, allow us to date the icon to the very end of the seventeenth century.

The twenty-three known, autograph icons by Stephanos Tzankarolas (including the one presented here), and

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23 Isaiah (61,1); Luke (4,18).
24 The Akathistos Hymn, 1st Stanza.
26 Piompinos, Ελληνες αγαθογράφοι μέχρι το 1821, 38; P. Vokotopoulos, Εικόνες της Κέρκυρας, Athens 1984, 158; Chatzidakis, Drakopoulos, Ελλήνες Ζωγράφοι μετά την Άδικη, 426–428.
28 Ibid., 41–42, pls. 34–36.
29 Vokotopoulos, Εικόνες της Κέρκυρας, 159–161, pls. 59, 236.
another five, which, albeit signed, are considered dubious, embrace a large variation of subjects and iconographic themes. Nonetheless, within this oeuvre, the Hermitage icon stands alone with regard to its iconography, and therefore it expands the known repertoire of the artist.

To our knowledge, two icons of the Enthroned Virgin among the post-Byzantine corpus are quite similar to the Hermitage icon – iconographically, technically, and stylistically. Both were painted in Corfu and are linked to the cathedral, celebrated, and miracle-working icon of the Theotokos Lambovitissa. More specifically, the first icon is a work by Konstantinos Tzanes dated to 1654, and is still in the Cathedral of the city, whilst the second, painted by Emmanuel Tzanes and dated to 1684, is now at the Byzantine Museum, Athens (Fig. 8). A question as to whether this latter icon and its date-bearing emblem are coeval, was raised in one of the publications by the Byzantine Museum, and this lead to its broader ascription to the second half of the seventeenth century. Despite some differences in iconographic details (as, for instance, in the shape of the upper throne, the gestures of the archangels, the color of Christ’s cushion, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and the inclusion of the epithet Lambovitissa [in the latter], both icons are connected typologically. They either copy one another, or both hark back to the same prototype. There is no arguing that the icon painted by Emmanuel Tzanes, an artist of greater skills and a higher productivity than his brother Konstantinos, is the most significant of the two, for it bears a double indication regarding the Lambovitissa Monastery, namely, in the donor’s inscription and in the epigraph. This icon’s significant size points to its placement in the central part of the iconostasis, and to its central role of honor in the said monastery. As to the icon painted by Konstantinos, albeit it does not bear this specific epithet in its epigraph, it is worth noting that the throne is decorated with two gold vases bearing burning torches, an iconographic motif that, most likely, alludes to the celebrated icon from the Lambovitissa Monastery. This monastery was destroyed in 1799. Many of its icons were transferred and preserved in different Corfiote monasteries and churches, as indicated by commemorating epigraphs on their reverse. It should be mentioned here that within this corpus, an icon representing St Alexios the Man of God is signed by Stephanos Tzankarolas. It is tempting, therefore, to hypothesize that Tzankarolas worked for the monastery of the Virgin Lambovitissa at Corfu, as well. As we mentioned above, the two icons by Emmanuel and Konstantinos Tzanes, and the Hermitage icon under discussion, present many similarities. In particular, these are: the figural types of the Virgin and the Child, the type of throne (embellished with orbs on the armrests and capitals on the sidewalls), and the text in the scroll held by the Child. At the same time there are minor, secondary differences that show how freely and creatively the three artists approached the task at hand. Being the latest among them, the Hermitage icon combines elements from both Emmanuel and Konstantinos Tzanes’ formal vocabulary. For example, the throne without finial, the shape of the foot, the red cushion, and the scroll-bearing angels hark back to the icon by Konstantinos Tzanes, whereas the arrangement of the folds in the Virgin’s maphorion, especially of those around Her knees, and the sharp, falling ends of Her dress, are close to the formulations of Emmanuel Tzanes, as is the golden, shell-shaped finial of the throne in the Hermitage icon. It is worth-noticing here that this finial lost the solid, architectural character it had in the icon by Emmanuel Tzanes and became a purely decorative element. All these features indicate that the icons by Stephanos and Konstantinos used the same prototype, which, most likely was the Lambovitissa icon by Emmanuel Tzanes. This conclusion is indirectly supported by the fact that Tzankarolas did some work for the Monastery of the Lambovitissa.

Known copies of the miracle-working icon of the Theotokos ‘Lambovitissa’, dated mainly to the end of the seventeenth–first quarter of the eighteenth century, are: an icon by Konstantin Kontarin in the Savina Monastery, Montenegro (dated to 1703); an icon by Dimitri Foskali in the Church of St. Spyridon, Corfu (dated to 1707); icons dated to 1722 in St. Catherine’s Monastery, Sinaï; an icon dated 1726 in the Loverdos collection, Athens; and, undated icons at Lefkas and in the Musée d’art et d’histoire, Genève. It is interesting to mention here that the type of throne in the Hermitage icon is rather precisely repeated in the one at the Geneva museum, especially in the lateral monsters’ heads and in the shell-shaped finial. It should be noticed, however, that they are conceived as solid architectural elements rather, than decorative embellishments, for they are rendered in the same gray color as the rest of the throne. What is more, the mentioned icons present some typological similarities with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century etchings that represent the miracle-working icon of the “Virgin Faneromeni” of Corfu. In these, the Virgin and Her Child are shown in similar postures; Christ is holding in His arm a similar waving scroll bearing the same text, the angels are crowning the Virgin (in like manner to the icons by Emmanuel and Konstantinos Tzanes), and the Virgin is sitting on a massive semicircular throne. One interesting detail should

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30 Pyatnitsky Y.: Two signed seventeenth century icons of the Cretan school from the Hermitage Museum


be noted here about the engraved images: the small, half-size figures of the Prophet Isaiah and of Luke the Evangelist are depicted on the throne’s seat, which is a visual allusion to the Biblical quote on the scroll held by the Christ Child.38

The icon from the Faneromeni Monastery at Corfu became popular in 1689. The sheer iconographic similarity of the Lambovitissa and the Faneromeni variants, as well as their unquestionable equivalence in theological meaning, point to a quite wide distribution of these honored images on Corfu during the seventeenth century.

Certain elements borrowed from the paintings of the Italian Renaissance and adapted by the masters of Cretan school (in a typical-to-them “Byzantine iconic style”) are clearly visible in the roots of this iconographic type. It is interesting to see that in their borrowing of iconographic elements, the Cretan masters followed the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century established iconography and not the contemporary one, i.e., that of the late seventeenth century. Hence, the central part of the composition – the figures of the Virgin and Child – are taken from the iconographic type of the Virgin Madre della Consolazione, a type, most likely of a pure Italian origin, which became widely-spread all over the Mediterranean world. The semicircular marble throne decorated with orbs and capitals is reminiscent of Renaissance and early-Baroque Italian thrones. The portrait-like vividness of the flying angels, with a somewhat flamboyant flavor, is comparable to the angels and putti recurrent in Italian works during the sixteenth-, and particularly in the first half of the seventeenth century.

However, such partial and secondary elements as the separation of the monochromatic plane of the throne with colored capitals and a frieze, the grotesque and purely decorative heads of the crowning beasts, the schematized, shell-like top of the throne, the tendency towards superfluous gilding, and the intricate, elaborate details, together with their accentuated and non-solid decorativeness, attest to the fact that the artists of the Cretan school “kept in pace” with their times (those of the waning Italian Baroque and the arising Rococo), at least in what regards certain, lesser elements within their composition.

38 Let us remind here that the scroll bears the text from Luke, 4.18 (“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised”) that almost exactly corresponds with Isaiah, 61.1.

Fig. 8. Icon “The Virgin Mary Lambovitissa” by Emmanuel Tsanes. Byzantine and Christian museum, Athens.
Pyatnitsky Y.: Two signed seventeenth century icons of the Cretan school from the Hermitage Museum


Две пописане иконе критске школе XVII века из Ермитажа

Яурий Пажынцки

Автор се бави двема критским иконама из некадашње колекције Николаја Лихачова, које се данас чувају у Ермитажу. Иконографија, одлике стила и техника израде икона оправдавају њихово датовање у XVII веку. Оно је потврђено и поширилось уметника. Прву икону пописано је Јован Лампрадос из сликарске породице која је потицала из Ретимнона. На њој је јединствена иконографска тема – Дисис – врата спасења. Литерарни извор теме јесте текст Јеванђеља по Матеју (7, 13–14): „Уђите на уска врата; јер су широка врата и широк пут што воде у пропаст, и много их има који њиме изду. Јер су уска врата и тесан пут што воде у живот, и мало их је који га налази.“ Јика из Ермитажа веома је занимљива рад критске иконописне школе. Она потврђује податке о мајсторима те школе и методама њиховог рада познате из писаних извора. На пример, зна се да су млади Кријах традиције одлазили на университету у Италији, где су добијали свебуђено образовање; они који су имали талент за уметност настављали су школовање у радниницима водећих сликара Рима, Болоње и посебно Венеције. После студија млади су се враћали у отаџбину и веома су често одлазили у манастире, где су настављали да граде каријеру у црквеним круговима. Икона из Ермитажа коју је насликао мајстер Јован Лампрадис сведочи управо о таквом једном критском интелектуалцу, изузетно образованом и искуском сликару. Иако је радио као професионални сликар, пре га треба сматрати мајстором монашких појеката критске школе.

Напис на икони Богородици Ламбовитисе, другом разматраном делу из Ермитажа, говори о томе да је насликао јерођакон Стефан Цангарамос. Он је познат по делима која је израдио на острву Крф, где је живео у мањанику Свете Тројице. Икона Богородицу Ламбовитисе по иконографији је сасвим слично неколико добро познатих икона које су делу Емануила и Константина Ца-
неса из друге половине XVII века. Икона коју је Емануил израдио за манастир Икона Богородица Ламбовитисе на Крфу несумњиво је послужила као прототип каснијим копијама, укључујући и ону коју је израдио Цангаро-
LOS. Иконографски тип Богородице Ламбовитисе веома је сличан Богородици Фанеромени, чија је чудотворна икона поштовања на острву Крф, па је вероватно да су та два типа заправо била истоветна.