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RE-USE OF DECORATED SILVER PLATES: A GOSPEL COVER IN THE MONASTERY OF ST JOHN ON PATMOS

In this article an account is given of a gospel cover from the Monastery of the Apocalypse, today in the sacristy of the Monastery of St John the Theologos, on Patmos. It is decorated with sheets and plaques from objects of differing origins and periods, from the 13th–14th to the 17th century.

A frequent practice in the sacristies of monasteries has been the exchange, the sale as well as the recycling of church ornaments made of precious metals, with a view to the raw material being re-used for making of new ones.¹ At the same time, of course, it has been usual for items from objects which are no longer in use or have become worn to make good damage to others or for completely new works to be created with them.² Nor is it rare in these compositions for pieces from more than one object to be used. The gospel cover from the Monastery of the Apocalypse on Patmos, today in the sacristy of the Monastery of St John the Theologos, is such an instance (Figs 1 and 2).

Nailed to the boards of the gospel (published by N. Saros, 1728, Venice) are embossed silver sheets and cast plaques.³ The centre of the obverse side is occupied by a representation of the Crucifixion (fig. 3). The cross has two horizontal cross-pieces and is supported on a sheet which is reminiscent of a sarcophagus. At the ends of the larger horizontal, the Theotokos with her arms crossed before her breast, on the left, and John, in an attitude of grief, on the right, are depicted. At the extremities of the shorter horizontal, the sun and the moon can be seen, and at the top of the cross, the Preparation of the Throne. The outer corners of the gospel are strength-
ened with button-shaped sheets for its better support when open. The spaces between them, on the edges of the board, are covered, above and below, on its width, with sheets with a repetition of a flower and foliage scroll in relief (Fig. 7) and, on its height, right and left, by sheets of a width of 3 cm., bearing scenes from the Dodekaorton, of differing lengths, because these have been cut to fit them to the dimensions of the board (Figs 5 and 6). On two of the larger sheets are shown, in this order, the Baptism, the Presentation in the Temple, the Nativity, and the Annunciation and, on the other two, the Descent into Hades, the Crucifixion, the Entry into Jerusalem, and the Raising of Lazarus. To this latter group may be added a fifth scene, that of the Transfiguration, as can be seen from the series of depictions on the smaller sheet which completes the decoration on the bottom edge of the left-hand side of the board.4 The depictions are accompanied by inscriptions relevant to the subject, not always clearly legible, sometimes set out horizontally and sometimes vertically. Nailed to the inner corners of the board are medallions containing chased busts of the Evangelists; in the intervening spaces are cherubim, and, exactly above the central cross, a small sheet with a representation of the Crucifixion.

On the reverse of the gospel, a sheet with a depiction of the Descent into Hades — Η ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΗΣ ΤΟΥ Χ(ΡΙΣΤΟΥ) [The resurrection of Christ] is nailed to the centre (Fig. 4). Christ, in low relief, on a matted background, treads on a rudimentary cave, from which Hades projects. The inscriptions O ΑΔΗΣ [Hades] and Ι ΤΑΦΗ [the Burial] identify the scene. Christ, turning to his left, with his right hand raises up Adam from the sarcophagus (O ΑΔΑΜ, H ΕΥA [Adam, Eve]). In his left hand he holds a cross with two horizontal cross-pieces, an iconographic characteristic of the Middle Byzantine period, a symbol of the Passion, but also a trophy and a weapon,5 the power of which is extolled by the inscription on its upper edge: Ι(ΗΣΟΥ)Σ / Χ(ΡΙΣΤΟΣ)Σ ΝΗ / ΚΑ [Jesus Christ conquers]. Higher up, the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace can be seen, turning in a posture of supplication towards Christ and below the bust of the angel who was protecting them. They are identified by means of the inscription: Ι ΤΡΟΙΣ ΠΕΔΕΣ [The Three Children]. On the left of the scene, David, John the Baptist, and Abel6 appear, with the relevant inscriptions: Ο ΔΑΒΗΔ, ΙΩ(ΑΝΝΗΣ), Ο ΑΒ(Ε)Λ [David, John, Abel].

The cast plaques which are nailed to the corners of the board end on the inner side in Late Gothic anthemia and bear the symbols of the Evangelists among vegetal motifs of an Ottoman style. The plaques along all the sides are decorated with dense vegetal interlacing in the same spirit. The joints show that the same pattern is repeated in order that the length and breadth of the initial board should be covered. Since, however, these plaques are not sufficient to cover the actual board, sheets with figurative (the Transfiguration, the Entry into Jerusalem, and the Raising of Lazarus) and non-figurative (flower and foliage scroll) decoration, of the same type

4 The Raising of Lazarus is repeated at that point, once as a last scene on the preceding sheet, and a second time as a sce preceding the Transfiguration. The same order is followed on the right-hand side of the board.


as that which appears on the obverse of the gospel, have been interpolated (Fig. 10). The additions, moreover, have a toothed edge on the inner side, to harmonise them with the Late Gothic anthemia of the plaques. Radiant suns (Fig. 10), quatrefoil sheets with the symbols of the Evangelists, cherubim, wheels, and floral ornaments are arranged symmetrically on the velvet on the intervening surfaces. Nailed to the central sheet is a cast cross with a representation of the Crucifixion, the Theotokos, and John at the ends of the arms, and a seated Evangelist at the top. Below, on a circular sheet with tulips on the circumference and chased floral decoration, in five medallions, the following inscription appears in niello: EN AR/CH HN OΛ/ΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ OΛ/ΟΓΟΣ ΗΝ ΠΡ/ΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΘΕ/ΩΝ [In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God] (left), ΚΑΘΗΓΟΥΜΕΝΟΣ ΓΕΡ/ΜΑΝΟΣ ΗΕΡΟ/ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ/ ΑΧΠΙE (middle) ΕΤΕΛΙΟ/ΘΗ ΥΠΟ ΧΡΟΣ ΙΜΩΝ ΓΕ/ΡΑΣΗΜΟΥ/ ΜΟΝΑ/ (right) ΧΟΥ ΣΟ/ ΚΕ ΝΗΚΟ/ΛΑΟΥ ΕΞ Α [Abbot Germanos, priest-monk, 1685; finished by the hand of ourselves Gerasimos, monk, … and Nikolaos from A … ] (the inscription does not continue), (below) ΜΝΗ/ΣΤΗΤΙ ΚΥ(ΠΙΕ) / ΗΜΟΝ ΤΟΝ/ ΑΜΑΡΤΟ/ΛΟΝ [Be mindful, Lord, of us sinners].

It will be seen from the description given above that the metal items which are nailed to the boards of this gospel originally decorated other objects and can be divided into groups. The first and earliest group includes the sheets with scenes from the Dodekaorton, along the vertical sides of the obverse, and those which have been used as supplements between the plaques of the long sides on the reverse. In small-scale sculpture, the cycle of the Dodekaorton is known in ivory and steatite eikonidia from the Middle Byzantine period. During the Palaeologan era the subject became popular and, from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards, to judge by the surviving examples, it is also encountered in the margins of silver icon revetments, and even on silver gospel covers. The scenes, in line with preferences at that time for works in relief, are embossed and alternate, usually on the same sheet, with the panels formed by vegetal interlacing. In the better examples, dating from the fourteenth century, such as on the revetments of the icons of Our Lady Hodegetria and of the Crucifixion in the Vatopedi Monastery, on Mount Athos, the figures, in fairly high relief, are framed by landscape features and works of architecture (Fig. 8).

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7 The lettering of the inscription is a mixture of lower case and capitals.
ing to the Chilandari Monastery, which also dates from the fourteenth century, the synoptically rendered figures without volume, the virtual non-existence of landscape, the rudimentary architectural scenery and the low relief are reminiscent of steatite eikonidia of the Middle Byzantine period.

Whereas in the examples cited above the organisation of the space is clear, with a symmetrical alternation of figurative and non-figurative decoration, in the revetments of Our Lady Hodegetria and of Christ Pantocrator in the Icon Gallery in Ohrid, the approach to the decoration differs. These revetments, also of the fourteenth century, in second use, consist of a large number of small sheets with alternating figurative and non-figurative motifs, mass-produced, and the impression given is that these function as a unified decorative carpet. The size of the sheets and the small scale of the subjects — which gives rise to a need for repetitions if all the surfaces of the icons are to be covered — contribute to this.

In terms of iconography, the scenes from the Dodekaorton on the sheets of Patmos show similarities to some of the corresponding scenes in the margins on the revetments of the Hodegetria and the Crucifixion in the Vatopedi Monastery — that is, to the scenes of the Transfiguration and the Presentation in the Temple (Figs 5 and 8). The latter, in the case of the Patmos sheet, is dominated by the ciborium on the vertical axis and is, moreover, reminiscent of the steatite eikonidion in the Benaki Museum, which also dates from the fourteenth century. Iconographic affinities are also observable with the decoration of the revetments of the icons of Our Lady Hodegetria and of Christ Pantocrator, in Ohrid, particularly in the scenes of the Descent into Hades and of the Raising of Lazarus (Fig. 6). Furthermore, in spite of the fact that the scale of the subjects and the published photographs do not favour more detailed comparisons, there seem to be similarities not only as regards the abstract iconographic approach, but also as to the manner of production, because the scenes on the Patmos sheets, as their exact repetition indicates, were also made with a dye on which they were probably negatively imprinted. It is by the same method

12 A. Grabar, Les revêtements en or et en argent des icônes byzantines du Moyen Âge, Venice 1975, 55, No. 26, Fig. 62.
13 I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, op. cit., Text, 143–144, No. 52, Pl. 31.
17 Cf. the Raising of Lazarus on the revetment of the icon of Our Lady Hodegetria, K. Balabanov, op. cit., Fig. p. 42. Similarities are also observable to the corresponding scene on the revetment of the icon of the Theotokos in the Church of San Samuele in Venice. See A. Grabar, op. cit., No. 30, Fig 65.
18 The process of the pressing of fine sheets on a steel dye with a negative impression in order to produce a subject, with the help of a lead plate, is described by the monk Theophilus in the twelfth cen-
that the subjects have been rendered in a category of silver enkolpia which are dated to the thirteenth — fourteenth century. They are decorated, mainly, with scenes of the Crucifixion and warrior saints and most of them are kept in the Vatopedi Monastery (Fig. 9). However, a few others have been located in excavations in regions of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, such as the enkolpion from Gorno Orizari, near Kočani, and the fragment of an enkolpion from Markova Varoš, near Prilep. Warrior saints, in any event, are shown also on the revetment of the icon of Christ Pantocrator in the Icon Gallery of Ohrid. It is also by means of a dye that the scene of Sts Constantine and Helen seems to have been reproduced on the steatite eikonidion of St Demetrius, which dates from the fourteenth century and is now kept in the National Museum in Sofia.

The chief characteristics of the works which have been cited is the synoptic rendering of the figures, without additional elaboration, and the absence of details in the facial features of the figures, which are further impaired by the wear of use, because the sheets have to be fine to take the impress of the scenes more easily. To these features should be added the way in which the inscriptions are set out horizontally and vertically. The scenes from the Dodekaorton on the sheets of the Patmos gospel, in spite of the small scale, stand out for the excellent compositions, the confident design, the balanced proportions, the movement, the plasticity and fluidity of the figures, and because of these merits could be included among the better works of the genre. They differ, however, from all the known examples of the same type on revetments of icons in the coherence of the scenes without the interpolation of panels with vegetal motifs. This too makes dating difficult, since there are no secondary features to serve as indications as to the general trends in decoration of the period in which they were made, and this is all the more so because the duration of use of such dyes is undetermined. Questions, moreover, arise as to the number and the...
length of the original sheets, the number of scenes on each sheet, and whether the remaining scenes from the Dodekaorton — the Ascension, Pentecost, and the Dormition of the Theotokos — were present. Also unknown is the kind of object on which the sheets were nailed and the manner in which they were arranged. Perhaps they adorned the horizontal margins of an icon, in which case there must have been the corresponding sheets for the vertical sides — but perhaps they came from another type of work. In the inventory of the sacristy of the Monastery of St John of 1200, when Arsenios was Abbot, icons are mentioned “μετά περιφερ(είς)”, “with a border” or “μετά περιφερ(είων) αργυροδιασχύ(σιν)”, “with silver gilt borders” — and one, moreover, as “η αγ(ία) Θ(εοτό)κος μετά περιφερ(είων) εχόντ(ων) εἰκονίσμ(α)τ(α)”, “the Holy Theotokos with borders with small icons”. It is, nevertheless, not possible to link these descriptions with the sheets of this gospel. In the inventory of 1262 or 1277, when Germanos was Abbot, which is more laconic, “εἰκονεν μεγάλα και μικρα περιφέρουσαι κόσμιον εἴκοσιν και πέντε”, a total of “twenty-five icons great and small bearing decoration around” is mentioned.

The second group, in a totally different style, includes the quatrefoils with the symbols of the Evangelists and the sheets with the flower and foliage scroll, which appears to have been made with the aid of a dye (Fig. 7). It is very likely that these items originally had a place on the same object, perhaps a cross, where the symbols of the Evangelists would have occupied the ends of the arms and the other sheets its body. The style and execution of the symbols in low relief is close to similar depictions, such as on a silver processional cross of the San Cipriano Monastery at Trieste, a work which dates from the fifteenth century and, moreover, is attributed to a Venetian workshop. The foliage and flower scroll is also encountered, but in richer versions, in works of Venetian woodcarving of the fifteenth century, for example on the upper frame of the pala showing the Coronation of the Virgin, a work by Giovanni Bellini, in the Museo Civico at Pesaro. The question arises as to whether the original object from which the sheets in this group came was imported from the West or whether it was a product of a workshop in the broader region of the South-Eastern Mediterranean. This is an issue concerning other works too, as research in this region progresses.

The origin of the small group of four radiant suns (Fig. 10) which adorn the outer corners of the reverse of the Patmos gospel should be sought in carefully executed Late Byzantine leather bookbindings, where they would have served as bosses. One of the surviving examples is Codex No. 68 in the National Library of

26 The individual scenes from the Dodekaorton which fill the gaps on the reverse of the gospel must have come from other, larger sheets.
Athens. Silver bosses of this kind also seem to have decorated codices in the library of the Monastery of St John, from which the four bosses on the board of the gospel from the Monastery of the Apocalypse clearly came. The motif of the radiant sun is not, however, unknown in the decorative art of the region, as is shown by silver sheets on icons from Patmos and Amorgos.

Another group of sheets on the Patmos gospel, made up of the principal scenes of the Crucifixion and the Descent into Hades — and the medallions showing the Evangelists on the obverse together with these — manifest noteworthy iconographic details (Figs 3 and 4). Christ has on his head a crown of thorns, a crucifer nimbus with rays, and his feet are nailed with a single nail. His ribs are visible — in an attempt at a realistic depiction of the body, also a characteristic, like the preceding ones, of Western art. The Theotokos, with a nimbus in perspective, has her hands crossed at her breast. The folded garment covering her neck recalls works of Western art and compositions showing the Man of Sorrows in Veneto-Cretan painting, such as the Pietà, inspired by a painting by Giovanni Bellini, by the Cretan painter Nikolaos Tzafouris (second half of the fifteenth century), on the central panel of a triptych in the Hermitage in St Petersburg. At the top of the cross the Preparation of the Throne, a symbol of the Holy Trinity, foreshadows, according to the troparia of Easter Eve, the triumph of Christ after his death on the cross and his burial, which is denoted here by the sheet at the foot of the cross, as it suggests a sarcophagus.

The same iconographic symbolisms, the Preparation of the Throne and the Lamentation at the Tomb, occupy the same positions in the upper and lower margins of a board of a gospel with a depiction of the Crucifixion from a workshop in Transylvania, at the Mărgineni Monastery in Romania (1648–1658). And the neck

32 See, indicatively, J. M. Fritz, Goldschmiedekunst der Gotik in Mitteleuropa, Munich 1982, Fig. 475, and Argenti Fiorentini dal XV al XIX secolo. Tipologie e marchi, ed. D. Liscia Bemporad, Florence 1993, 1, Fig. 32.
33 See, indicatively, C. Campbell, A. Chong et al., Bellini and the East, Exhibition Catalogue, National Gallery, London 2006, 56–57, Fig. 23. See also the Pietà in the Benaki Museum, From Byzantium to El Greco, Greek Frescoes and Icons, Royal Academy of Arts, Exhibition Catalogue, London 1987, 113 and 178, No. 45 (M. Vassilaki) and the Pietà in the Accademia of Venice, which could be attributed to Ioannis Permeniatis, N. Chatzidaki, Από τον Χάνδακα στη Βενετία. Ελληνικές Εικόνες στην Ιταλία, 15ος — 16ος αιώνας [From Candia to Venice. Greek Icons in Italy, 15th — 16th century], Exhibition Catalogue, Museo Correr, Venice, Athens 1993, 140–142, No. 33. See also G. Kakavas, Θέματα Πεταλούδος εικονογραφίας σε Κρητικά τρίπτυχα [Themes of Patmian iconography in Cretan triptychs] ΔΧΑΕ ΚΔ' (2003), 304–305, Fig. 9.
34 The Preparation of the Throne is depicted above the Crucifixion and on a cross from an epistle of a sanctuary screen in the Pantokrator Monastery on Mount Athos, T. Papamastorakis, Byzantine Icons (1200–1453), Icons of the Holy Monastery of Pantokrator, eds S. Papadopoulos, C. Kapilodass-Soteropoulos, Mount Athos 1998, 74, 76–78, Fig. 33.
of the Theotokos is covered with the same pleated garment. The sarcophagus and the
two mourning angels are shown below the Crucifixion on a gilt sheet from a gospel
cover (1548) in the Benaki Museum.37 There, however, the space at the top, instead
of the Preparation of the Throne, as is the case with the Patmos cross, is occupied by
the Ancient of Days and the Dove, a subject equivalent in terms of symbolism which
in Western art can be combined with the Crucifixion.38

In the representation of the Descent into Hades (Fig. 4), on the reverse of the
gospel, the Western characteristics consist in Christ's crucifer nimbus with rays, and
in the scene's inscription, which resembles an unfurled scroll, similar to that held by
John the Baptist in an icon of the enthroned Theotokos by Ioannis Permeniatis (early
16th century), in the Correr Museum in Venice.39 Here an iconographic particularity
is the presence of the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace — though this is not with-
out a reason, because the text which deals with this prophecy of Daniel is read at
Vespers on Easter Eve and then the relevant hymn is sung.40 The guardian angel of
the Three Children, of the righteous in this instance, is regarded as a prefiguration of
Christ and of his redemptive descent into Hades.

The two main scenes on the gospel show a number of weaknesses. The design
is awkward, the compositions are slack, and the execution uneven. Small differ-
ences, for example the rendering of the inscriptions, suggest the thought that perhaps
they are not the work of the same goldsmith. Nevertheless, both could be products of
the same cultural climate — of the South-Eastern Mediterranean — where other
works with mixed characteristics, from artistic centres such as Crete, have been
identified.41 The stylistic weaknesses, the awkwardness of the execution and the
lack of other features make it difficult to arrive at safe conclusions, and for that rea-
son a dating to the seventeenth century is proposed with every reservation.

The group of cast items on the Patmos gospel (Fig. 10) comes from a printed
publication of smaller dimensions, perhaps with leather binding, to which these
would originally have been nailed, a practice which was usual in the seventeenth
century.42 This type of metal plaques belongs within the climate of the period, when
one of the dominant trends in the decoration of ecclesiastical equipment followed
the aesthetic preferences of Ottoman art, often, moreover, combined with Late
Gothic or Renaissance features.43 Cast works have been preserved, such as the
large-scale choroi in Athonite monasteries, which are attributed to sixteenth — sev-

37 D. Fotopoulos, A. Delivorrias, Η Ελλάδα του Μουσείου Μπενάκη [The Greece of the
38 See, indicatively, a processional cross (1663–1664), Ori e Tresori d'Europa, op. cit.,
192–193, No. VII.7.
40 Reading XV (Prophecy of Daniel 3, 1–23, and Hymn of the Three Children, 1–33).
41 Y. Ikonomaki-Papadopoulou, Church Metalwork, op. cit., 268, Fig. 13.
42 Y. Ikonomaki-Papadopoulou, Εκκλησιαστικά Αργυρά [Church Silver], Athens 1980, 5, Fig. 2.
43 See, indicatively, Y. Ikonomaki-Papadopoulou, Church Metalwork, op. cit., 270–271, Figs 20,
386–387, No. 9, 49 (Y. Ikonomaki-Papadopoulou).
enteenth century Thessaloniki, a city with a constant production in this field down to modern times,\textsuperscript{44} hanging lamps, from various workshops in the broader region of the Balkans,\textsuperscript{45} and cast plaques on gospel covers.\textsuperscript{46} The plaques on the Patmos gospel belong to a known type which has been attributed to a workshop in Trikala in Thessaly,\textsuperscript{47} examples of which are preserved on gospels in the Monastery of the Transfiguration at Meteora (Fig. 11)\textsuperscript{48} and in the Benaki Museum, with the date 1642 on the central item. In comparison with these, the corresponding themes on the Patmos gospel, figurative and non-figurative, are somewhat inferior in vitality and clarity. This impression, however, is perhaps due to their mediocre state of preservation. The symbols of the Evangelists are rendered in a similar way on the corner sheets of a gospel cover of the Xeropotamou Monastery on Mount Athos, signed in 1632/3 by “ΘΩΔΟΡΗΣ ΜΑΣΤΟΡΑΣ ΓΗΑΝΗΤΗΣ” [Thodoris craftsman from Ioannina]”. Perhaps, to judge by the example in the Benaki Museum, the small cross which is nailed a little above the sheet with the scene of the Descent into Hades should be added to the group of cast items of this category on the Patmos gospel. In terms of iconography, organisation of space and style, it is reminiscent of pectoral crosses carved in wood of the late sixteenth — early seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{49} Nor can the possibility be precluded that some of the other individual items, such as the cherubim and the wheels, belong to this same group.\textsuperscript{50}

The medallion with the tulips on the circumference and the nielloed inscription, on the reverse of the gospel (Fig. 2), is of a different technique and style and bears floral decoration which, though not totally successful, is more evolved than the vegetal interlacing on the plaques, and accords with the date 1685 and the trends then predominating in Ottoman art.\textsuperscript{51} Consequently, it probably comes from another work and should not be included in the group of cast plaques. Abbot Germanos, who is named in the inscription, is mentioned as abbot in documents between the years


\textsuperscript{45} See, indicatively, Y. Ikonomaki-Papadopoulou, Decorative Arts, Modern Works, The Treasury of the Protaton, Mount Athos 2001, I, 83–85, Fig. 20.

\textsuperscript{46} See, indicatively, Y. Ikonomaki-Papadopoulou, To evangeío apo to Eukárpio Θράκης, Θημίσμα στη μνήμη της Δασκαλίνας Μπουρά [The gospel from Efkaryo, Thrace, incense to the memory of Laskarina Boura], Athens 1994, II, 120 and 122, Figs 3 and 6.


\textsuperscript{49} See, indicatively, Y. Ikonomaki-Papadopoulou, B. Pitarakis, K. Loverdou-Tsigarida, op. cit., 206, No. 81.

\textsuperscript{50} Cf. the gospel covers of the Panagia Xenia Monastery and the Great Meteoron, Y. Ikonomaki-Papadopoulou, Εκχλησιαστικά Αργυρά, op. cit., 5, Fig. 2, and M. Chatzidakis, D. Sofianos, op. cit., 203. See also B. Radojković, Srpsko zlatarstvo XVI i XVII veka [L’orfèvrerie serbe du XVIe et XVIIe siècle], Novi Sad 1966, Figs 158–160 and 162.

\textsuperscript{51} Cf. the floral decoration on a benediction cross of 1676, from a workshop in Constantinople, Treasures of Mount Athos, op. cit., 394–395, No. 9.57 (Y. Ikonomaki-Papadopoulou).
1686 and 1698 and as former abbot in a document of 1705. The goldsmith monk Gerasimos is not mentioned either in the Monastery’s Vraveion or in any other of the published documents. It is not clear whether Nikolaos who co-signs on the medallion was a monk. Gerasimos, however, is also known from two other works which as a monk-goldsmith he signed in the same year, 1685, and which are preserved in the Monastery: a good-quality polykandelon with delicate floral motifs, to which, in any event, the medallion of the gospel shows stylistic similarities, and a holy water cross which he constructed from items of differing origin. It is unknown whether he was a brother of the Monastery of St John or whether his presence on Patmos was occasional. He cannot, however, have been the goldsmith who nailed the metal items on to the boards of the gospel from the Monastery of the Apocalypse, since the printed book is of a date later than the inscription, as it was printed in 1728 — unless, of course, these were transferred to the gospel of 1728 from another, earlier, printed book. But whoever the craftsman was who produced the composition with the sheet reminiscent of a sarcophagus on the obverse of the gospel, he must have had a knowledge of Western iconography and perhaps came from a region where the two traditions, the Eastern and Western, intersected, such as the South-Eastern Mediterranean.

Since the goldsmith-monk Gerasimos has been identified with Gerasimos of Sinope, who in 1714 signed a kivotion (casket) belonging to the Vatopedi Monastery, it should be noted that the monk Gerasimos on none of the objects from Patmos identifies himself as from Sinope, nor do his works show stylistic similarities to the Vatopedi kivotion. Thus is is difficult to maintain that the monk Gerasimos of 1685 is the Gerasimos of Sinope of 1714.

The monastic complex which is built on the cave where, according to tradition, St John the Theologos wrote the Apocalypse, was constructed in the early seventeenth century and is a dependency of the Monastery of St John (1088). It is, therefore, very likely that most of the metal items on the gospel came from ornaments and votive offerings of the Monastery of St John. And these are evidence of the range of objects which are to be found in the sacristy and library of an important monastery with an age-old history and prestige in a sacred place of pilgrimage such as Patmos. They are also testimony to its historical fate and geographical position, between East and West. At the same time, this gospel provides an opportunity for commenting on certain more general issues concerning the great sacristies of the Orthodox world and their equipment in terms of church silverware.

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52 S. Papadopoulos, Deacon Chrysostomos Florentis, Νεοελληνικό αρχείο Ι. Μονής Ιωάννου Θεολόγου Πάτμου. Κείμενα για την τεχνική και την τέχνη [Modern Greek archive of the Monastery of St John on Patmos. Texts on technique and art], Athens 1990, Nos 38, 39, 44, 52 and 58.

53 S.A. Papadopoulos, K. Fatourou, Επιγραφές της Πάτμου [Inscriptions of Patmos], Athens 1966, 21, No. 28, and Y. Ikonomaki-Papadopoulou, Church Silver, Patmos, Treasures of the Monastery, ed. A. Kominis, Athens 1988, 227, Fig. 3.

54 S.A. Papadopoulos, K. Fatourou, op. cit., 21, No. 29.

55 A. Ballian, Μεταβυζαντινή και άλλη μικροτεχνία, Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου, Παράδοση — Ιστορία — Τέχνη [Post-Byzantine and other small-scale art, Holy Great Monastery of Vatopaidi, Tradition — History — Art], Mount Athos 1996, II, 523, Fig. 468.
The group of sheets with scenes from the Dodekaorton and the group with the quatrefoils showing the symbols of the Evangelists raise questions in connection with the nature of the objects which they came from. As to the sheets of the second group, the issue of geographical origin arises — whether, that is, they are products of importation from a Western workshop or whether they can be attributed to goldsmiths of the South-Eastern Mediterranean, a hypothesis which is attractive as regards the gospel's central scenes: the Crucifixion and the Descent into Hades. The plaque with the Ottoman style floral decoration signed in 1685 by the monk Gerasimos raises questions as to the activity of goldsmiths on Patmos and, moreover, those who were brothers of the Monastery of St John, a phenomenon for which there is, anyway, evidence at some periods. It is, however, not out of the question that it is a matter here of itinerant craftsmen who took orders and brought ready-made objects, as was the case with a pair of candlesticks in 1748. And a final question exists with regard to the date when the decoration of the boards was put together; but these different items cannot have been nailed there very recently, because the velvet is considerably worn.

The gospel cover from the Church of the Apocalypse is an example of the re-use of metal items of differing periods and origins which bears testimony to continuities of life and practice and interprets the mentalities of the users, in which practices and solutions without pretensions satisfy needs of everyday life, without the final aesthetic result being taken into account.

Joïa Ikonomaki-Papadopulu

СЕКУНДАРНА УПОТРЕБА ДЕКОРАТИВНИХ СРЕБРНИХ ПЛОЧИЦА: КОРИЦЕ ЈЕВАНЂЕЉА У МАНАСТИРУ СВЕТОГ ЈОВАНА НА ПАТМОСУ

Уобичајена пракса у манастирским ризницама била је прерада или „рециклирање” црквених украсних окова од драгоцених метала ради добијања материјала за нове предмете. Такође, често су деловима предмета који нису били у потреби поправљана оштећења на другим предметима, или су од тих делова стварани потпуно нови предмети. Овакав је случај са корицама једног Јеванђеља из Светог Откровења са Патмоса, које се данас чувају у ризници манастира Светог Јована Богослова. На корицама прекривеним сомотом додате су исковане и лице не сребрне плочице. Крст на представи Распећа, са два хоризонтална крака, оскло њен је на ковану плочицу која подсећа на саркофаг. Доњи и горњи крајеви омота

56 S. Papadopoulos, Deacon Chrysostomos Florentis, op. cit., Nos 162 (1760), 184 (1771), and 244 (1799), and Deacon Chrysostomos Florentis, Βραβείον της Ιεράς Μονής Αγ. Ιωάννου του Θεολόγου Πατμου [The Vraveion of the Holy Monastery of St John the Theologos, Patmos], Athens 1980, 65 and 117.

57 S. Papadopoulos, Deacon Chrysostomos Florentis, op. cit., No. 146.
књиге покривени су кованим представама биљних изданака са цвећем и сценама из циклуса Великих празника (Крштење, Сретење, Рождество, Благовест, Силасак у Ад, Распевање, Цвети, Васкрсење Лазарево, Преобрађење). У сцени Силаска у Ад, иза уобичајених лица, насликана су Три младића у пећи огњеној. Читавом дужином бочних страна омота додате су лијеве плочице са биљним преплетом осман-лијског типа, позноготичким завршцима и, на угловима, симболима Јеванђелиста. Крун, заједно постављена сунца, четвртске заобљене плочице са симболима Јеванђелиста, шестоокати Серафи, точкови и цветни мотиви допуњују целокупно украшавање (запис са именом игумана Германа из 1685).

Сцене из Великих празника на патмоским плочицама имају иконографске сличности са неким представама на ивицама окоха икона Богородице Одигитрије и Распевања у манастиру Ватопеду (14. век). Више сличности, међутим, изгледа да имају са представама на окоха икона Богородице Одигитрије и Христа Пантократора из Охрида, а само због иконографског приступа, него и због на- чина израде уз употребу целичног калупа. То је техника која се чува и на јед- ној врсти сребрних енколпия 13–14. века. Сцене на патмоским плочицама одликују се изванредном израдом, пластичношћу и представљеним покретом, разликују се од познатих примера, јер на њима не постоји непосредно попуњава- ње међупростора биљним орнаментима. Осим тога, одређена питања поставља- ју се у вези са бројем и дужином првобитних плочица, као и са врстом предмета од којих потичу.

Четвртске заобљене плочице са симболима Јеванђелиста и исковане плочице са представама биљних изданака са цвећем, елементи који су првобитно можда били постављени на крсту, указују на венецијанско сребрнарство и ре- љефне представе у дрвету 15. века. Попут представа сунца, требало је првобит- но да служе као главе нити на познозанзијским кожним повезима кодекса у библиотеци манастира Светог Јована.

Може се рећи да главне представе, Распевање и Силасак у Ад, укрсом слабо- стима у композицији и технички израде, садрже вредне иконографске поједи- ности које их повезују са западном уметностошћу и стављају у оквире уметничке климе Југозападног Медитерана, а хронолошки, можда, у 17. век.

Група лијевних елемената патмоског Јеванђела припада познатом типу ко- ји се повезује са радионицом из Трикале у Тесалији и приписује духу који влада средином 17. века, када један од најважнијих праца украшавања црквених предмета следи естетска начела османлијске уметности. За монаха Герасима, који потписује око 1685. године, не знамо да ли је припадао братству манастира Светог Јована и не би требало да је он ливац који је додавао металне елемен- те на корице Јеванђела. Он је, међутим, познат и по два друга дела која се чува- ју у манастиру и носе исту годину.

Јеванђеле из манастира Откровења одликују разноликост предмета који постоје у ризници и библиотеци тако значајног манастира са дуготрајном историјом и утицајем, какав је манастир Светог Јована. То је сведочанство његовог историјског значаја и географског положаја између Истока и Запада. Истовремено, на основу овог Јеванђела могуће је уочити неке општије теме у вези са великим ризницама православног света, са делима црквених сребрнаства који се у њима чувају, са кретањем мајстора и њихових дела, са менталитетом кори- сника тих дела, што све сведочи о трајности живота и стваралаштва.
Fig. 5. Sheet with scenes from the Dodekaorton (photo: author)

Fig. 6. Sheets with scenes from the Dodekaorton (photo: author)

Fig. 7. Sheet with a flower and foliage scroll (photo: author)
Fig. 8. The Presentation in the Temple. Detail from the revetment of the icon of Our Lady Hodegetria of the Vatopedi Monastery (photo: E. N. Tsigaridas, K. Loverdou-Tsigarida, Ierā Megistē Monē Vatopedidou. Vouzantinēs eikones kai ependosēs, Mount Athos 2006, 311, Fig. No. 240.)

Fig. 9. Enkolpion of the Vatopedi Monastery (photo: Y. Ikonomaki-Papadopoulos, B. Pitarakis, K. Loverdou-Tsigarida, Enkolpia. The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi, Mount Athos 2001, 107, No. 36)
Fig. 10. Detail from the gospel cover of Patmos (photo: author)

Fig. 11. Detail from a gospel cover in the Monastery of the Transfiguration at Meteora (photo: M. Chatzidakis, D. Sofianos, The Great Meteoron, Athens 1990, Fig. p. 203)