ΔΕΛΤΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ

Τομ. 38, 2017

Ένα άγνωστο έργο του Γεωργίου Κλόντζα: εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου δρακοντοκτόνου στην Κέρκυρα

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The relatively unknown icon of St. George the Dragonslayer is kept in the Church of Aghioi Pateres (the Holy Fathers) in the town of Corfu. The manner in which St. George is depicted, the portrayal of figures with realistic Western-style features, the pronounced decorative tendency, types of armour, horse's tack and certain architectural features all connect this icon with the work of George Klontzas. The icon's iconographical and stylistic features suggest that it was executed by George Klontzas himself and indicate a dating to the last quarter of the 16th century.

Keywords
16th century; Rst-byzantine painting; icons; painter George Klontzas; St. George Dragonslayer; Corfu.

In the centre of the icon is a depiction of St. George on horseback, with gold-inlaid armour and a billowing carmine mantle, brandishing his sword over his head in his right hand and holding the horse's bridle in his left. Behind the saint, still bound in his chains and holding a cup and a jug, sits the youth who has been rescued from slavery. The horse is portrayed trotting, its left foreleg raised and its head turned sharply to the left (towards the viewer). In front of the horse, in the lower part of the scene, in the waters of the spring, lies the dragon, with blood gushing from the wound inflicted by the saint's spear, which has been broken. On the left, the princess, dressed in sumptuous attire and with her hair in a chignon, sits by the pool of water, dressed in a long, flowing dress, her hands clasped together in prayer.

In the Church of Aghioi Pateres in the town of Corfu there is a portable icon of St. George the Dragonslayer on horseback (Fig. 1). The icon measures 63×40 cm. and has undergone conservation in the past.1

Although the icon has not been studied hitherto, it is not unknown to research. A photograph of it, without any commentary or attempt to identify the painter, has been published by P. L. Vocotopoulos (‘Icons’, Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art in Corfu. Monuments, Icons, Treasures, Culture, Corfu 1994, pl. on p. 98). Also, M. Acheimastou-Potamiou believes the icon to be the work of a painter who was influenced by the icon in the Byzantine Museum in Athens, which she has attributed to George Klontzas.2

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hands outstretched, tries to evade the beast. On the right stands the tower, whose entrance is guarded by two soldiers. On the battlements, King Selvios and the Queen, accompanied by trumpeters and members of the public, proffer the crown and the keys of the city to the saint. Finally, in the top left-hand corner there is a depiction of a tricoloured mandorla radiating waves of light.

The icon portrays the long narrative version of the miracle of the slaying of the dragon by Saint George3. As an individual scene, the depiction of the mounted saint slaying the beast already occurs in the Byzantine era4 and is occasionally combined with representations of the princess’s rescue and the saint’s subsequent triumph5, as well as the rescue of the young slave6. The combination of these episodes is also not unknown in Byzantine art as it occurs in a considerable number of works7, though with individual differences. The same representation often occurs in Western art too8, with the exception of the episode depicting the young slave’s rescue, which appears to be unknown in the Western iconographical tradition of the Life of St. George.

With regard to the present icon, the most common form of representation in line with the Byzantine tradition is that of the saint on horseback slaying the dragon with a spear9. The version here showing the mounted dragon-slaying saint holding a sword because his spear has broken derives from Western painting, where the scene is quite common10. Also, the posture of the horse,


4 See, for example, the depictions in the Church of St. George at Anydroi Selinou (1323) [K. E. Lassithiotakis, “Πρώιμη μεταβυζαντινή εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου δρακοντοκτόνου στη Θάσο”, op.cit. (n. 4), 50-51, fig. 29].

5 See, for example, the works by Vittore Carpaccio (1502-1507) (G. Perocco – J. Roudaut, Tout l’œuvre peint de Carpaccio, Paris 1981, 100, pl. XL), Raphael (c. 1505) [Meyer zur Capellen, Icônes de Saint-Georges des Croes et de la collection de l’Institut, Bibliothèque de l’Institut hellénique d’études byzantines et post-byzantines de Venise 1, Venice 1962, 38, pl. 10]. See also the icons by George

6 See, for example, the icons in the British Museum (mid-13th century) [From Byzantium to E.I.Greece, Creescros and Icons, M. Acheimastou-Potamianou (ed.) (Exhibition Catalogue), Athens 1987, cat. no. and fig. 9 p. 150-151 (R. Cormack) and on Corfu (ca. 1500) [Vocotopoulos, Icônes de la Kérkira, op.cit. (n. 4), 22-24, fig. 12].

7 See, for example, the depictions in the Church of St. George at Anydroi Selinou on Crete (1323) (I. Spatharakis, Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete, Lexikon 2001, fig. 58), at Dragalevski (G. Sabotić, L’édic de peinture d’Othid au XVI siècle, Belgrade 1989, fig. 101) and also the portable icons in Venice (private collection) (first half of 16th century) (N. Chatzidakis, From Candia to Venice: Greek Icons in Italy 15th-16th Centuries, Athens 1993, 36-39, pl. on p. 37), on Thassos (second half of 16th century) [St. Dedaki, “Περίγραφη μεταβυζαντινή εικόνα του αγίου Γεώργιου δρακοντοκτόνου στη Εύξεια”, DChAE 30 (2009), 249-258, fig. 1], and at the Greek Institute in Venice (first half of 16th century) (M. Chatzidakis, Icones de Saint-Georges des Croes et de la collection de l’Institut, Bibliothèque de l’Institut hellénique d’études byzantines et post-byzantines de Venise 1, Venice 1962, 38, pl. 10). See also the icons by George

8 See the works by Carlo Crivelli (after 1490) [A. Smith – A. Reeves – A. Burnstock, “An Altarpiece and its Fame: Carlo Crivelli’s Madonna della Rondine”, National Gallery Technical Bulletin 13 (1989), pl. 5], Raphael (1505-1506) [Meyer zur Capellen, Raphael, op.cit. (n. 7), 154-158, pls 13, 13/1.1], and Paris Bordone [Stukanbrock – Töpper, European Painting, op.cit. (n. 7), fig. on p. 95].

9 See n. 3, 4 and 5 above. See also Dadaki, “Περίγραφη μεταβυζαντινή εικόνα”, op.cit. (n. 4), 253-254, with relevant examples, mainly from the post-Byzantine era.

10 See the works by Carlo Crivelli (after 1490) [A. Smith – A. Reeves – A. Burnstock, “An Altarpiece and its Fame: Carlo Crivelli’s Madonna della Rondine”, National Gallery Technical Bulletin 13 (1989), pl. 5], Raphael (1505-1506) [Meyer zur Capellen, Raphael, op.cit. (n. 7), 154-158, pls 13, 13/1.1], and Paris Bordone [Stukanbrock – Töpper, European Painting, op.cit. (n. 7), fig. on p. 95].

Klontzas in the Byzantine Museum in Athens and the Benaki Museum [Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Εικόνες της Κέρκυρας”, op.cit. (n. 1), figs 1 and 2 respect ively]. Cf. the iconographical type developed by Michael Damaskenos, as can be seen in the portable icon at the Church of the Panaghia Spiliotissa on Corfu (P.I. Vocotopoulos, Icônes de la Kérkira, op.cit. (n. 4), 22-24, fig. 12).

13 See, for example, the icons in the British Museum (mid-15th century) [From Byzantium to E.I.Greece, Creescros and Icons, M. Acheimastou-Potamianou (ed.) (Exhibition Catalogue), Athens 1987, cat. no. and fig. 9 p. 150-151 (R. Cormack) and on Corfu (ca. 1500) [Vocotopoulos, Icônes de la Kérkira, op.cit. (n. 4), 22-24, fig. 12].


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16 See n. 3, 4 and 5 above. See also Dadaki, “Περίγραφη μεταβυζαντινή εικόνα”, op.cit. (n. 4), 253-254, with relevant examples, mainly from the post-Byzantine era.

17 See the works by Carlo Crivelli (after 1490) [A. Smith – A. Reeves – A. Burnstock, “An Altarpiece and its Frame: Carlo Crivelli’s Madonna della Rondine”, National Gallery Technical Bulletin 13 (1989), pl. 5], Raphael (1505-1506) [Meyer zur Capellen, Raphael, op.cit. (n. 7), 154-158, pls 13, 13/1.1], and Paris Bordone [Stukanbrock – Töpper, European Painting, op.cit. (n. 7), fig. on p. 95]. Cf. the iconographical type developed by Michael Damaskenos in the icon on Corfu [Vocotopoulos, Icônes de la Kérkira, op.cit. (n. 4), 50-51, fig. 29].
Fig. 1. Corfu, church of Aghioti Pateres. Icon of St. George.
though reminiscent of depictions of saints on parade, should be attributed to the influence of Western works. Indeed, this particular rendering of the horse is not unknown in the work of 16th-century painters, where it appears in both portable icons and mural painting. At the same time, the portrayal of the princess in a desperate attempt to flee, her hands raised to repel the beast (see below Fig. 5) derives from the same source. This posture occurs in works of Western painting, such as those by Raphael and Tintoretto, contrasting with her usually calmer form. Likewise, the figure of the winged, horned dragon with scaly skin, while occurring in the traditional Byzantine representation of the subject, here— even in the details— recalls Western depictions. Similar representations of the dragon occur in the portable icon on the same subject in the icon at the Benaki Museum and in the Byzantine Museum in Athens (though the posture is different). In contrast, the portrayal of the young liberated slave (Fig. 1), who appears here not only with his chains but also holding a jug and a cup, derives from Byzantine art. This detail places this particular depiction in the tradition of the Mytilene version of the narrative.

See, for example, the icons of St. George Perivoliatis (Paphos) and St. Martin (Paris) (N. Chatzidakis, “Saint George on Horseback ‘in Parade’. A fifteenth-century icon in Benaki Museum”, v. 7, pp. 170 and 190, respectively) and Giovanni Battista Fontana (E. Grassi, Mannerism, Florence 2011, figs. 7.12 and 13). See also Chatzidakis, “Saint George”, op. cit. (n. 10), figs. 7.2 and 3, with relevant examples.

See, for example, Vassiliki, “A Cretan Icon”, op. cit. (n. 3), figs. 23, 24, 27, 31 (The Painter Angelos, op. cit. (n. 3) art. n. 7, figs. 6, 7.2, 7.5, 7.10).

See op. cit. n. 7, 9 and 14.

Fig. 2. Athens, Benaki Museum. George Klontzas, icon of St. George.
century, this particular iconographical type of the slave, particularly in respect to his attire, does not appear to have become widely established.

The tower with the royal couple (see below Fig. 7) does not differ thematically from that in the traditional iconographical representation of the scene. However, the rendering of the main figures and the depiction of the musicians with their trumpets is reminiscent of works by George Klontzas. The model for the two soldiers at the entrance to the tower appears to derive from the same source. The respectful posture they have adopted, with their arms crossed over their chests, can be seen in an earlier portable icon in Kalamata displaying scenes from the Life of the Archangel Michael, a work by George Klontzas. The portrayal of the soldiers is also connected with similar representations by the same painter, with the difference that in the latter the soldiers are resting on their weapons, a detail which is omitted here. Finally, the tower is rendered in semicircular form, as in other works of the same period, though this form derives from Western painting.

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21 See, for example, the depiction in the Church of St. George at Iviki (Georgia) [M. Kevkhishvli, “Il ciclo agiografico di san Giorgio a Nakipari”, Iconographica 15 (2016), 53, fig. 16].

22 See, for example, the depiction in the Church of St. George at Nakipari in Nakipari, “Η εικόνα του άρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ”, op.cit. (n. 21), fig. 1.

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In conclusion, then, this particular combination of episodes from the Life of St. George, and therefore the iconographic schema as a whole, is not foreign to the Byzantine tradition. With the exception of the theme of the young slave, the icon is directly connected with the portable icon on the same subject in the Byzantine Museum in Athens, which is attributed to George Klontzas (Fig. 2) (31). In the latter, the central theme is further developed through the addition of individual episodes, though this does not detract from the creative similarity of these two works. Also, another connection may be observed with an iconographically similar icon in the Benaki Museum which bears the signature of George Klontzas (35).

As for the stylistic features of the icon under discussion, in the rendering of the bodies an attempt to achieve a symmetrical representation may be observed, although this is confined to the depiction of each individual figure and its relation to space, and does not extend to the composition as a whole. Despite this apparent disharmony, however, the composition as a whole remains unified, and the effect even lends charm to the scene. Finally, note should be made of the shortening of the saint’s body, which does not often occur and recalls the work of George Klontzas, such as the icon on the same subject in the Benaki Museum (Fig. 2) and the figure of the Archangel Michael in the icon at Kalamata (33).

The modelling of the figures is particularly well executed and attests both to the painter’s ease in the use of traditional Byzantine techniques and to his knowledge of Western art. St. George’s face (Fig. 4) is rendered with dense, slender brushstrokes on a dark underpainting, with radiating, linear highlights, long brushstrokes and patches of pink on the cheekbones, recalling works by George Klontzas, such as the Saint George Dragon-slayer in the Benaki Museum (2), the Betrothal of St. Catherine in Arta (32) and the enthroned Theotokos in Zakynthos Museum (33). The princess (Fig. 5) is depicted in a similar way, although the stylistic similarities are somewhat less marked due to the infiltration of certain features of Western art, such as the pink colour, the broad brushstrokes, and the naturalness of the skin.

In the figures of the soldiers (Fig. 6), which noticeably depart from the Byzantine tradition, the painter has employed Western techniques, with broad brushstrokes, contrasts in the sequence of layers that create prominent flesh tones, and almost personalised features (34). At the same time, both the figures on the tower (Fig. 7) and the young liberated slave (Fig. 8) are rendered in a similar

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Fig. 4. St. George (detail of Fig. 1).

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28 The proportionality of the bodies cases to be evident when the icon is viewed as a whole but becomes evident when each body is viewed separately.
29 Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου”, op.cit. (n. 1), 79, fig. 2.
30 Chatzidakis – Katerini, “Η παλιά του ωραγέλεον Μοναχή”, op.cit. (n. 2), 243-246, fig. 1.
32 Acheimastou-Potamianou, Еικόνες της Ζακύνθου, Athens 1997, 102, fig. op. p. 103.
33 Cf. similar techniques in the work of George Klontzas [Vocotopoulos, Το Θείον Πάθος, op.cit. (n. 1), figs 7, 8, 14, 17, 18].
way, and these too recall works by George Klontzas\textsuperscript{35}. Of the figures portrayed on the battlements, the most remarkable is that of the young musician in the middle of the group, of whom only the head is visible (Fig. 7). The different design and facial features of this figure, together with the plasticity of the modelling, produce a depiction which it is tempting to assume shares a common starting-point or common model and artistic preoccupations with similar figures of children in the works of painters like Jacopo Bassano\textsuperscript{36}, Jacopo Robusti (Tintoretto)\textsuperscript{37} and Domenikos Theotokopoulos\textsuperscript{38}.

The same tendency to render detail as realistically as possible can also be observed in the portrayal of the horse (Fig. 1) and particularly in the morphological features of the head and the musculoskeletal characteristics of the body. This style of representation derives from Western painting\textsuperscript{39} and occurs in a considerable number of paintings, such as those by Michael Damaskenos\textsuperscript{40} and George Klontzas\textsuperscript{41}.

\textsuperscript{35} See the works by the same painter, which have been compared with the icon under discussion here.

\textsuperscript{36} R. W. Rearick, “Jacopo Bassano’s Later Genre Paintings”, \textit{The Burlington Magazine} 117 (1968), 246, figs 15-17.

\textsuperscript{37} P. Rossi, \textit{Jacopo Tintoretto}, Venice 1973, 119-120, fig. 121.

\textsuperscript{38} See, for example, \textit{A Boy Blowing on an Ember to Light a Candle} [El Greco, \textit{Tαυτότητα και Μεταμόρφωση. Κρήτη – Ιταλία – Ισπανία}, J. Á. Lopera (ed.) (Exhibition Catalogue), Milan 1999, 383-385, cat. nos 15, 16 (N. Hadjinicolaou)].


\textsuperscript{40} See, for example, the portable icons of St. George the Dragon-slayer [Vocotopoulos, \textit{Εἰκόνες τῆς Κερκύρας}, op.cit. (n. 4), 50-51, fig. 29], the \textit{Adoration of the Magi} [Εἰκόνες τῆς Κρητικής Τέχνης: από τον Χάνδακα ως τη Μόσχα και την Αγία Πετρούπολη}, M. Burboudakis (ed.), Heraklion 1993, 451-453, cat. no 98 (M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilide)] and the \textit{Vision of Constantine the Great} [M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides], “Cretan Painters and their Workshops in Sixteenth Century Candia”, \textit{El Greco’s Studio}, N. Hadjinicolaou (ed.), Heraklion 2007, 15, fig. 19. Cf. the horses in the scene of the Crucifixion of Christ at the Gourni Monastery [Tsioris, \textit{Ο τοιχογραφικός διάκοσμος}, op.cit. (n. 13), pl. 7].

\textsuperscript{41} See the rendering of the horses in the portable icons at the Benaki Museum and the Byzantine Museum in Athens [Acheimastou-
The painter has also taken special care in the rendering of the figures’ garments. On the whole, the drapery is rich and lends emphasis to the body. The folds create an impression of liveliness with their undulating curves and the occasional roundness and naturalness of the design.

More specifically, the saint’s military attire, with the fine chrysography, mask on the cuirass and jewel-inlaid clasp securing the ends of the mantle attests to the painter’s inclination for detail (Fig. 1). There is a similar depiction of a cuirass in the icon at the Byzantine Museum in Athens\(^{42}\) (Fig. 3), as well as in episodes portraying miracles performed by the Archangels in the portable icon in Kalamata, which is also by George Klontzas\(^{43}\). Other details, too, appear to derive from the same source, such as the lace border\(^{44}\) of the tunic below the flaps of the saint’s cuirass and the rapier-type sword\(^{45}\) (Fig. 4).

Another element that derives from the Western painting tradition is the princess’s posture, as well as her garments (Figs 1, 5). The style of her dress, with its intricate design, lace borders, and fine-woven upper section, the round pearl earrings with matching necklace and diadem, follows the Venetian fashion of the age\(^{46}\), as has been recorded, for example, in the work of Paolo Veronese\(^{47}\) and Tintoretto\(^{48}\). Exactly the same type of garment can be seen in the similar depiction in the icon at the Byzantine Museum\(^{49}\) (Fig. 3), although in this case the diadem is absent. The presence of the diadem here, together with

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\(^{41}\) Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου”, op.cit. (n. 1), 78, figs 4, 5.

\(^{42}\) Chatzikakis – Katerini, “Η εικόνα του αγίου Μαρίας”, op.cit. (n. 1), 78 fig. 1.

\(^{43}\) Potamianou, “Εικόνα του αγίου Παναγίου”, op.cit. (n. 1), 78 fig. 1.

\(^{44}\) For the use and depiction of lace in post-Byzantine painting, see M. Martiniani-Reber, “Tessuti veneziani nella pittura bizantina: un esempio della loro diffusione nei territori greci dopo la caduta di Costantinopoli”, Il contributo veneziano nella formazione del gusto dei Greci (XV-XVII sec.); atti del Convegno Internazionale (Venezia, 2-3 giugno 2000), Venice 2001, 165-177, with relevant bibliography.

\(^{45}\) The Art of Chivalry. European Arms and Armor from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, H. Nickel – S. W. Pyhr – L. Tarassuk (eds) (Exhibition Catalogue), New York 1982, 94-95, cat. no 48. The same type of sword is borne by the two soldiers at the entrance to the tower.

\(^{46}\) For the dress of this period, see C. Frick, Dressing Renaissance Florence. Families, Fortunes, and Fine Clothing, Baltimore 2005, with relevant bibliography.

\(^{47}\) M. Valsecchi, Maestri veneziani, Novara 1962, fig. 18.

\(^{48}\) Krischel, Jacopo Tintoretto, op.cit. (n. 15), n. 85.

\(^{49}\) Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου”, op.cit. (n. 1), 83, figs 4, 5.
the style of dress, recalls contemporary works by Dirck Barendsz (1584) and Hendrick Goltzius (1584), where similar details may be observed in the style and design.

The armour worn by the two soldiers at the entrance to the tower is also of Western provenance (Fig. 6). Although the cuirasses are rendered in a conventional manner, the helmets may be identified as examples of the Italian morion type, which occurs very frequently in works by both George Klontzas and Michael Damaskenos.

In contrast, the garments worn by the royal couple and their retinue on the battlements are sparingly depicted (Fig. 7). The style of their dress also recalls the work of George Klontzas, in which the same choices of garment may be observed. Of all the scenes on the same subject, the garments depicted here display the greatest resemblance to those in the icons at the Benaki Museum (Fig. 2) and the Byzantine Museum in Athens (Fig. 3).

Finally, the garment worn by the liberated young slave (Fig. 8) does not occur in previous portrayals of the episode, with the exception of that in the Church of St. George at Komitades, Sfakia (1314), a work by Ioannis Pagomenos, in which a garment of similar design may be observed. Although there are no contemporary depictions of the same garment, representations of garments of a similar design do exist, such as that worn by an elderly horseman in the scene of the Crucifixion of Christ in the triptych by George Klontzas now in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. The peculiar shape of the youth's cap does not appear in other depictions of the theme.

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51 See the Venetian Ball (1584) (W. L. Strauss, Hendrick Goltzius: The Complete Engravings and Woodcuts, New York 1977, 182). Cf. similar forms of armour in the works of George Klontzas [Vocotopoulos, To Θείον Πάθος, op.cit. (n. 11), figs 6, 7, 12, 14, 18]. See also the icon of the Archangel Michael in Kalamata [Chatzidakis – Katerini, "Η εικόνα του Αρχάγγελου Μιχαήλ", op.cit. (n. 22), figs 7, 8, 11].
52 The Art of Chivalry, op.cit. (n. 45), 62-64, cat. no 23.
53 See, for example, Vocotopoulos, Τὸ Θεῖον Πάθος, op.cit. (n. 11), figs. 1, 6, 7, 14, 18. Palouras, Ο ζωγράφος Γεώργιος Κλόντζας, op.cit. (n. 22), figs 24, 316.
54 The material of similar design in the scene depicting Joseph and Mary waiting to register for the census in a triptych by George Klontzas (M. Constantoudaki-Kitrinolides, Proceedings of the 5th Cretological Congress, II, Heraclion 1985, pl. ME) See another similar cloth design in a garment in the work entitled The Feast in the House of Levi by Paolo Veronese (1573) [E. Grasman, “On Closer Inspection: The Interrogation of Paolo Veronese”, Artibus et Historiae 59 (2009), 125, fig. 1].
either in the Byzantine or in the post-Byzantine era. Yet it is interesting to note its resemblance to the cap worn by a youthful figure in the representation of the Last Supper in a work attributed to Domenicos Theotokopoulos, while another, similar cap appears in a contemporary painting on the same subject once kept in Italy but now lost.

The type of horse’s tuck that is portrayed (Fig. 1), with the sturdy stirrups, the ornate decoration and lace running around the saddlecloth, and the sumptuous cloth breastplate with the braided knot, derives from similar depictions in Western art. Similar tuck can also be seen in the work of George Klontzas.

The tower, which as an architectural structure recalls similar features in Western art, is rendered in a similar way to that in the icon at the Byzantine Museum and also to that in the icon at the Benaki Museum. The monumental entrance (Fig. 1) stands out for the decoration of the doorway, with its small high relief pilasters, chequered and occasionally saw-toothed decoration with triangular projections, the high relief male figure depicted from the waist upwards in the tympanum of the relieving arch and the three statuettes. The statuette on the apex of the pediment, in an orator’s pose, wears a himation that expresses a large part of his nude body. The other two statuettes are also portrayed in a frontal pose, though their features are indiscernible. A similar group, though with identifiable figures, such as that of the archangel, can be seen in the icon of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary on Cos, a work by George Klontzas, in whose works the depiction of objects, even statues, in high relief is not unknown. Besides, all these elements represent the morphological features of buildings that were in existence during the painter’s day, and very frequent use was made of them in painting during this period.

Finally, the light that illuminates the figures shines from the viewer’s left and creates corresponding shadows. In this way it helps to create a latent sensation of a third dimension, as also happens in the two portable icons we have compared with the icon here, as well as in other works by George Klontzas.

To sum up, then, the technique used in the modelling of the human flesh and the horse, the rendering of the human bodies, the disharmony in the portrayal of individual figures as part of a composite whole, the love of detail,
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the strong decorative tendency which extends to the studious depiction of sumptuous, delicate and finely-woven fabrics, the types of fabric and armour, the horse's tack and certain architectural features, as well as the constant movement of figures and objects, as a result of the osmosis of Byzantine techniques and Western influences, connect the icon under discussion here with the work of George Klontzas. Also, the way in which the figure of St. George is portrayed (Fig. 4), with the bold highlights, the light pink on the cheeks, and even the detail of the light glowing on the neck, together with the icon's stylistic features, support a connection between this icon and the icons at the Benaki Museum (Fig. 2) and the Byzantine Museum in Athens (Fig. 3), the icons of the Archangel Michael in Kalamata and the Betrothal of St. Catherine in Arta, and also the icon of the enthroned Theotokos in the Zakynthos Museum, which are all works by the same painter.

In addition, a connection may also be observed between the icon in the Benaki Museum (Fig. 2), a signed work by George Klontzas, the icon attributed to him in the Byzantine Museum in Athens (Fig. 3), and the present icon from Corfu (Fig. 1). Compared with the other two, the Corfu icon is plainer in iconographical terms. In terms of individual iconographical detail, the saint's posture is closer to that of the figure in the icon at the Byzantine Museum, as are the depictions of the princess, the soldiers, and the tower. On the other hand, and despite the difference in the time of execution, the rendering of the horse resembles that in the signed icon at the Benaki Museum. As for the stylistic features, the icon in the Benaki Museum is noticeably different, suggesting that it is earlier in date than that at the Byzantine Museum, if it is regarded as Klontzas’ first attempt to portray the theme since, despite the iconographical similarity, the central idea is the same. Also, the demonstrated connection between the Corfu icon and that in the Byzantine Museum points to a common starting-point. The icon under discussion here may be regarded as iconographically plainer than the icon at the Byzantine Museum in Athens, which has an impressive variety of individual episodes, yet here there is a considerable difference in quality. The icon from Corfu (Fig. 1) displays an exceptional quality in the design, rendering and technical execution of individual figures, a quality lacking in the icon at the Byzantine Museum (Fig. 3).

A typical example of this quality is the depiction of the princess, who is rendered with particular skill in terms of modelling and design, unlike the corresponding figure in the Athens icon, which has been executed in a more rapid and summary manner, and with the use of a distinctly bold outline. The same may be observed in the rendering of the saint and his attire, with its attention to detail, abundance of gold striations on the armour, ornate fringes and the lace borders of the saddlecloth, which are absent from the Athens icon, which is attributed to the same painter. Despite these differences, however, the two icons are connected and not far apart in date.

This identification of works with similar stylistic features to those in the Corfu icon helps us to determine approximately when the latter was created, since it bears no written evidence of the fact. Of the icons it has been compared with above, and with which it shares common features, that at the Benaki Museum (Fig. 2) and at the Byzantine Museum in Athens (Fig. 3) has been dated to the last quarter of the 16th century, while the icon of the Betrothal of St. Catherine in Arta could be given a similar dating and the icon of the Archangel Michael in Kalamata also dates from the same period (after 1575). These facts, in conjunction with the stylistic and iconographical features, support a dating for our icon to the same period.

This icon of St. George the Dragonslayer on horseback from Corfu, then, can be safely attributed to the hand of George Klontzas and dated to the last quarter of the 16th century.

Provenance of the figures
Figs. 1, 4-8 Private archive of Ioannis Tsiouris. Fig. 2: Benaki Museum. Fig. 3: Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens.

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Τον ναό των Αγίων Πατέρων στην πόλη της Κέρκυρας φυλάσσεται φορητή εικόνα του αγίου Γεώργιου έμπρος ο άγιος Γεώργιος να υψώνει το σπαθί με το δεξί χέρι, ενώ με το αριστερό κρατά τα χαλινάρια του αλόγου. Μπροστά στον άγιο βρίσκεται ένας δράκος, ματωμένος από το λόχι στης σπασμένης δόρατος του αγίου. Στα αριστερά η βασιλοπόλη με πολυτελή ενδυμασία και με τεταμένα χέρια προσπαθεί να αποφύγει το θηρίο. Στα δεξιά, τέλος, βρίσκεται ο πύργος, η είσοδος του οποίου φρουρείται από δύο στρατιώτες.

Η απεικόνιση του έμπρος δρακοντοκτόνου αγίου Γεώργιου, η οποία συναντάται ήδη κατά την ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο, εδώ συνδυάζεται με τη σωτηρία της βασιλοπόλης, τον συνακόλουθο θρίαμβο του αγίου αλλά και τη σωτηρία του νεαρού αιχμαλώτου.

Η απόδοση του αγίου να φονεύει τον δράκοντα κρατώντας σπαθί αντί δόρατος, το οποίο ήδη έχει χρησιμοποιήσει, προσγράφεται στην παράδοση της δυτικής ζωγραφικής. Στην ίδια πηγή πρόσληψης παραπέμπουν οι απεικονίσεις της βασιλοπόλης, του δράκοντα και των στρατιωτών στη βάση του πύργου, καθώς και του ομίλου στις επάλξεις αυτού. Αντίθετα, από τη βιζαντινή τέχνη προέρχεται η απεικόνιση του νεαρού αιχμαλώτου.

Τα εικονογραφικά στοιχεία συνδέονται την εικόνα με τις εικόνες του Μουσείου Μπενάκη (Εικ. 2) και του Βυζαντινού Μουσείου Αθηνών (Εικ. 3), έργα του Γεώργιου Κλόντζα.

Η τεχνική στο πλάσιμο της ανθρώπινης σάρκας και του ίππου, η απόδοση του ανθρώπινου σώματος, η αγάπη για τη λεπτομέρεια, η έντονη διασχημική διάθεση, η οποία φθάνει έως και στην εξεξεξημένη απεικόνιση πολυτελών, λεπτόπεπτων και αραχνούφαντων υφασμάτων, τα είδη των πανοπλιών, η ιπποσκευή και συγκεκριμένα αρχιτεκτονικές στοιχεία, καθώς και η αέναη κίνηση μορφών και αντικειμένων, ως αποτέλεσμα οικοσκημάτων βυζαντινών τρόπων και δυτικών επιδράσεων, συνδέουν την εικόνα μας με το έργο του Γεώργιου Κλόντζα. Επίσης, ο τρόπος απεικόνισης της μορφής του αγίου Γεώργιου, με τα έντονα φώτα, το ελαφρύ ροζ στις παρειές, ακόμη και η λεπτομέρεια της αναλαμπής του φωτός στον λαιμό, αλλά και των τεχνοτροπικών χαρακτηριστικών, οδηγεί στη σύνδεσή της με τις εικόνες του Μουσείου Μπενάκη, του Βυζαντινού Μουσείου Αθηνών, του αρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ στην Καλαμάτα, της Μνηστείας της αγίας Αικατερίνης στην Άρτα, αλλά και της ένθρονης Θεοτόκου στο Μουσείο Ζακύνθου, όλες έργα του ίδιου ζωγράφου.

Τα εικονογραφικά και τεχνοτροπικά χαρακτηριστικά της εικόνας οδηγούν στην αναγνώρισή της ως αυτόγραφο έργο του Γεώργιου Κλόντζα και στη χρονολόγησή της στο τελευταίο τέταρτο του 16ου αιώνα.

Ελληνικό Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο

Ioannis Tsiouris

ΕΝΑ ΑΓΝΩΣΤΟ ΕΡΓΟ ΤΟΥ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ ΚΛΟΝΤΖΑ: ΕΙΚΟΝΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ ΔΡΑΚΟΝΤΟΚΤΟΝΟΥ ΣΤΗΝ ΚΕΡΚΥΡΑ

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