ΔΕΛΤΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ

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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; Post-byzantine painting; icons; painter George Klontzas; St. George Dragonslayer; Corfu.

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. 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. Vocotopoulou ("Icons", Byzantine and Post-byzantine Art in Corfu. Monuments, Icons, Treasures, Culture, Corfu 1994, pl. on p. 98). Also, M. Acheimastou-Potamianou 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 [M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Εικόνα του αγίου Γεώργιου στο Βυζαντινό Μουσείο Αθηνών αποδημότης στον Γεώργιο Κλόντζα", DChAE 22 (2001), 85 n. 41].

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
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 George. As an individual scene, the depiction of the mounted saint slaying the beast already occurs in the Byzantine era and is occasionally combined with representations of the princess’s rescue and the saint’s subsequent triumph, as follows:

2 See, for example, the depictions in the Church of St. George at Anydroi Selinou (1323) [K. E. Lassithiotakis, “Ἅγιος Γεώργιος ὁ ἀρχαίος”, Κτήμα Χρονικά 13 (1959), 160, pl. ΚΖ], at the Dečani Monastery (1346-1347) [Ch. Walter, The Cycle of Saint George in the Dečani Monastery. Dečani et l’art byzantin au milieu du XIVe siècle, Belgrade 1989, 347-354]. For the iconographical type developed by the painter Angelos see M. Vassilaki, “A Cretan Icon of St. George”, The Burlington Magazine 153 (1995), 295-326. Ch. Walter, “Narrative Cycles 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 spear. The version here shown the mounted dragon-slaying saint holding a sword because his spear has broken derives from Western painting, where the scene is quite common. Also, the posture of the horse, unknown in the Western iconographical tradition of the Life of St. George.

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

3 See the scenes in the Church of St. George at Anydroi Selinou on Crete (1323) [I. Spatharakis, Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete, Leiden 2001, fig. 58], at Dragalevski (G. Sabotić, L’écriture de peinture d’Ohrid au XVe siècle, Belgrade 1980, fig. 101) and also the portable icons in Venice (private collection) (first half of 15th century) [N. Chatzidakis, From Candia to Venice: Greek Icons in Italy 15th-16th Centuries, Athens 1993, 36-39, pl. p. 37], on Thassos (second half of 15th century) [St. Dadaki, “Πρώιμες μεταβυζαντινές εἰκόνες του αγίου Γεωργίου θαυματουργού στη Εύβοια”, DCH-ΑΕ 30 (2009), 249-258, fig. 1], and at the Greek Institute in Venice (first half of 16th century) [M. Chatzidakis, Ικόνες των Αγίων του Σαιντ-Ζορνγκ-Οφ της Κέρκυρας et de la collection du Instituto, 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 well as the rescue of the young slave. The combination of these episodes is also not unknown in Byzantine art as it occurs in a considerable number of works, though with individual differences. The same representation often occurs in Western art too, 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.

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) (J. Meyer zur Capellen, Raphael. A Critical Catalogue of His Paintings, 1, The Beginnings in Umbria and Florence, ca. 1500-1508, Münster 2001, 154-158, pls 13, 13/I.1) and Paris Bordone (1525) (Ch. Stukenbrock – Töpper, 1000 Masterpieces of European Painting from 1300 to 1850, Cologne 2000, fig. on p. 95).

See, for example, the works by Carlo Crivelli (after 1490) [A. Smith – A. Reeve – A. Burnstock, “An Altarpiece and its Frame: Carlo Crivelli’s Madonna della Rondine”, National Gallery Technical Bulletin 13 (1989), pl. 5], Raphael (1505-1506) [J. Meyer zur Capellen, Raphael, op.cit. (n. 7), 154-158, pls 13, 13/I.1], and Paris Bordone [Stukenbrock – 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, Εἰκόνες τῆς Κερκύρας, op.cit. (n. 4), 50-51, fig. 29].

Klontzas in the Byzantine Museum in Athens and the Benaki Museum [Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Εἰκόνες τοῦ αγίου Γεώργιου”, op.cit. (n. 1), figs 1 and 2 respectively]. 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 (F. L. Vocotopoulos, Εἰκόνες τῆς Κερκύρας Athens 1990, 50-51, fig. 29).
Fig. 1. Corfu, church of Aghioti Pateres. Icon of St. George.
though reminiscent of depictions of saints on parade\textsuperscript{10}, should be attributed to the influence of Western works\textsuperscript{11}. Indeed, this particular rendering of the horse is not unknown in the work of 16th-century painters, where it appears in both portable icons\textsuperscript{12} and mural painting\textsuperscript{13}. 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\textsuperscript{14} and Tintoretto (1555-1558)\textsuperscript{15}, contrasting with her usually calmer form\textsuperscript{16}. Likewise, the figure of the winged, horned dragon with scaly skin, while occurring in the traditional Byzantine representation of the subject\textsuperscript{17}, here –even in the details– recalls Western depictions\textsuperscript{18}. Similar representations of the

\textsuperscript{10} 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”, \textit{Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου}, Athens 1994, pls 32.7 and 32.10, respectively).

\textsuperscript{11} See the equestrian statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni by Andrea del Verrocchio (1479-1488)\textit{ (S. Magrelli – G. Uzzani, The Italian Renaissance, Florence 2009, fig. on p. 243) and the medal of Francesco Gonzaga [Chatzidakis, “Saint George”, op.cit. (n. 10), pl. 32.11]. Cf. similar equestrian figures and equine postures in works by Carolino Genga (1528-1530), Polidoro da Caravaggio (1530-1534)\textit{ (E. Grassi Mannerism, Florence 2011, figs on p. 170 and 190, respectively) and Giovanni Battista Fontana ([P. L. Vocotopoulos, \textit{Τὸ Θεῖον Πάθος σέ πίνακα τοῦ Γεωργίου Κλόντζα}, Athens 2005, fig. 25]).

\textsuperscript{12} See the icon of St. Demetrius in the Antivouniotissa Museum on Corfu\textsuperscript{[Vocotopoulos, \textit{Εἱκόνες τῆς Κερκύρας}, op.cit. (n. 4), 99-100, fig. 49] and in works by George Klontzas\textsuperscript{[Vocotopoulos, \textit{Τὸ Θεῖον Πάθος}, op.cit. (n. 11), figs. 7, 12, 13]. See also Chatzidakis, “Saint George”, op.cit. (n. 10), 61-65, with relevant examples.

\textsuperscript{13} See, for example, the work of the anonymous pa intér in the katholikon of the Geromeri Monastery in Thesprotia (I. Tsiouris, \textit{Ο τοιχογραφικός διάκοσμος του καθολικού της Μονής Γηρομερίου Θεσπρωτίας (1577-1590). Συμβολή στη μελέτη της εντοίχιας θρησκευτικής ζωγραφικής του 16ου αιώνα στην Έπειρο}, Athens 2011, 64, pl. 7).

\textsuperscript{14} Meyer zur Capellen, Raphael, op.cit. (n. 7), 154-158, pl. 13.


\textsuperscript{16} See the works mentioned in n. 4 above, which depict the princess in a variety of different poses.

\textsuperscript{17} See, for example, Vassiliki, “A Cretan Icon”, op.cit. (n. 3), figs. 23, 24, 27 [\textit{The Painter Angelos}, op.cit. (n. 3) art. n. 7, figs 7.1, 7.2, 7.5, 7.10].

\textsuperscript{18} See op.cit. n. 7, 9 and 14.
century\textsuperscript{21}, 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\textsuperscript{22}. 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\textsuperscript{23}. The portrayal of the soldiers is also connected with similar representations by the same painter,\textsuperscript{24} 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\textsuperscript{25}, though this form derives from Western painting\textsuperscript{26}.

\textsuperscript{21} See, for example, the depiction in the Church of St. George at Ivki (Georgia) [M. Kevkhishvili, “Il cklö agiografo di San Giorgio a Nakopari”, Iconographica 15 (2016), 53, fig. 16].


\textsuperscript{23} N. Chatzidakis – E. Katerini, “Η εικόνα του αρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ”, op.cit. (n. 22), fig. 1.

\textsuperscript{24} See the soldiers in the scene of the Divine Passion now in a private English collection [Vocotopoulos, Τὸ Θείον Πάθος, op.cit. (n. 11), fig. 18].

\textsuperscript{25} For a similar depiction in the icons Epí Soi Chairei [Chatzidakis, From Candia to Venice, op.cit. (n. 4), 166-172, pls 4 la-4 lc] and of the Divine Passion [Vocotopoulos, Τὸ Θείον Πάθος, op.cit. (n. 11), fig. 8] by George Klontzas, as well as in the icon of St. George the Dragonslayer on horseback by Michael Damaskenos [Vocotopoulos, Εικόνες τῆς Κερκύρας, op.cit. (n. 4), 50-51, fig. 29].

\textsuperscript{26} See, for example, Magrelli – Uzzani, The Italian Renaissance,
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. 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.

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 dis-harmony, 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.

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 Dragonslayer in the Benaki Museum (Fig. 2), the Betrothal of St. Catherine in Arta and the enthroned Theotokos in Zakynthos Museum. 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. At the same time, both the figures on the tower (Fig. 7) and the young liberated slave (Fig. 8) are rendered in a similar manner of El Greco. Icon Painting in Venetian Crete, A. Drandaki (ed.) (Exhibition Catalogue), New York 2009, n. 30, 88, fig. on p. 116-117 and 223.

25 The proportionality of the bodies causes to be evident when the icon is viewed as a whole but becomes evident when each body is viewed separately.
26 Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου”, op.cit. (n. 1), 79, fig. 2.
27 Chatzidakis – Katerini, “Η παράδοση του ωραγγέλου Μιχαήλ”, op.cit. (n. 22), 243-246, fig. 1.
29 M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, Εικόνες της Ζακύνθου, Athens 1997, 102, fig. on p. 103.
30 Cf. similar techniques in the work of George Klontzas [Vocotopoulos, Τὸ Θεῖον Πάθος, op.cit. (n. 11), figs 7, 8, 14, 17, 18].
way, and these too recall works by George Klontzas. 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, Jacopo Robusti (Tintoretto) and Domenikos Theotokopoulos.

The same tendency to render detail as realistically as possible can also be observed in the portrayal of the horse and in the morphological features of the head and the musculoskeletal characteristics of the body. This style of representation derives from Western painting and occurs in a considerable number of paintings, such as those by Michael Damaskenos and George Klontzas.

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53 See the works by the same painter, which have been compared with the icon under discussion here.
55 P. Rossi, Jacopo Tintoretto, Venice 1973, 119-120, fig. 121.
57 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 (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. Other details, too, appear to derive from the same source, such as the lace border of the tunic below the flaps of the saint’s cuirass and the rapier-type sword (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, as has been recorded, for example, in the work of Paolo Veronese and Tintoretto. Exactly the same type of garment can be seen in the similar depiction in the icon at the Byzantine Museum (Fig. 3), although in this case the diadem is absent. The presence of the diadem here, together with 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.

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.

For the dress of this period, see C. Frick, Dressing Renaissance Florence. Families, Fortunes, and Fine Clothing Baltimore 2005, with relevant bibliography.

M. Vanucci, Maestri veneziani, Novara 1962, fig. 18.

Krischel, Jacopo Tintoretto, op. cit. (n. 15), n. 85.

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.

52 Cf. similar forms of armour in the works of George Klontzas [Vocotopoulos, Τὸ Θεῖον 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 αρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ," op.cit. (n. 22), figs 7, 8, 11].
53 The Art of Chivalry, op.cit. (n. 45), 62-64, cat. no 23.
54 See, for example, Vocotopoulos, Τὸ Θεῖον Πάθος, op.cit. (n. 11), figs 1, 6, 7, 14, 18. Paliouras, Ο ζωγράφος Γεώργιος Κλόντζας, op.cit. (n. 22), figs 4, 24, 316.
55 See the icons of the Crucifixion of St. Andrew (second half of 16th century) (M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, Εικόνες του Βυζαντινού Μουσείου Αθηνών, Athens 1998, 182, figs on p. 183 and 184) and the Life of St. Nicholas (Michael Damaskenos’ workshop) [Χείρ Αγγέλου. Ένας ζωγράφος εικόνων στη Βυζαντινή Ιστορία, M. Vassilaki (ed.), Athens 2010, 198, fig. on p. 199 (F. L. Vocotopoulos)].
56 See, for example, Vereecken – Hadermann-Misguich, Les oracles, op.cit. (n. 22), pls XIX, XX. Vocotopoulos Εἰκόνες τῆς Κερκύρας, op.cit. (n. 4), fig. 42.
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 Theotokopoulos60, while another, similar cap appears in a contemporary painting on the same subject once kept in Italy but now lost61.

The type of horse's tack 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 art62. Similar tack can also be seen in the work of George Klontzas63.

The tower, which as an architectural structure recalls similar features in Western art64, 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 projections65, 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 exposes 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 Klontzas66, in whose work the depiction of objects, even statues, in high relief is not unknown67. Besides, all these elements represent the morphological features of buildings that were in existence during the painter's day68, and very frequent use was made of them in painting during this period69.

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 here70, as well as in other works by George Klontzas71.

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, the khariteio eikones tis Kû72, DChAE 13 (1985-1986), 138, fig. 5.

6 The depiction of relief figures on the architectural members of buildings is not uncommon in the work of this painter, as can be seen, for example, in the Marc in Codex [Palouaras, Ο Τουρκός Προφητής Κλοντζάς, op.cit. (n. 22), pls 131, 305, 316, 327] and in a triptych in Rome (P. L. Vocotopoulos, "Εννιαία θρησκευτικά έργα Τουρκοπούλου", Proceedings of the 5th Ctenological Congress, II, Henikon 1985, pl. KB).

68 See, for example, the sculpture by Andrea Sansovino (1505-1559) in the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome [Magredi – Uzzani, The Italian Renaissance, op.cit. (n. 11) fig. on p. 276], the entrance to the Church of Santa Maria Formosa in Venice (ca. 1542) [J. K. Nelson – R. J. Zuckhauser, The Patron’s Payoff. Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art, Princeton 2008, 105, fig. 4.10] and the design by Sebastiano Serlio [C. Penna-Bujan, “Lo visto y lo leído teoría de la arquitectura y asimilación visual de las geografías arquitectónicas en la pintura de El Greco”, El Greco’s Studio, N. Hadjinicolou (ed.), Henikon 2007, 273, fig. 1].

69 Cf. the Last Supper by Michael Damaskenos [The Origins of El Greco, op.cit. (n. 28), n. 36, 98, fig. on p. 99 (M. Constantoudaki-Kutsumilides)] and the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary attributed to the same painter [Chatzidakis, Ιcônes de Saint-Georges, op.cit. (n. 4), 62, pl. 28].

70 Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Εικόνες του Ρωμαίου Προφήτα", op.cit. (n. 1), n. 24. Cf. a similar use of light in the painting of St. George the Dragonslayer on horseback by Paris Bordone (1525) [Stukensbruck – Töpper, European Painting op.cit. (n. 7), fig. on p. 99].

71 Cf. see, for example, the icons of the Last Judgment and Epi Soi Chainei at the Greek Institute in Venice (late 16th century) [Chatzidakis, Ιcônes de Saint-Georges, op.cit. (n. 4), 75-77, pl. VI, 37 and 79-81, pls 40, 41, respectively].
THE ICON OF ST. GEORGE THE DRAGONSLAYER IN CORFU

...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 pliner 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 Byzantine 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. 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.
Στον ναό των Αγίων Πατέρων στην πόλη της Κέρκυρας φυλάσσεται φορητή εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου έμπου δρακοντοκτόνου (Εικ. 1). Στο κέντρο της εικόνας ο αγίος Γεώργιος να υψώνει το σπαθί με το δεξί χέρι, ενώ με το αριστερό κρατά τα χαλί νάρια του αλόγου. Πίσω από τον άγιο, δεμένος ακόμη με τις αλυσίδες του και κρατώντας ιπποχόη και ποτήρι, κάθεται ο πρώην αιχμάλωτος. Μπροστά στον άγιο βρίσκεται έφιππος ο άγιος Γεώργιος να φονεύει τον δράκοντα, ματωμένος από το λόγχισμα του σπασμένου πια δόρατο του αγίου. Στα αριστερά η βασιλοπούλα 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 έφιππου δρακοντοκτόνου αγίου Γεωργίου, η οποία συναντάται ήδη κατά την ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο, εδώ συνδυάζεται με τη σωτηρία της βασιλοπούλας, 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 παραμέπεμπουν οι απεικονίσεις της βασιλοπούλας, του δράκοντα και των στρατιωτών στη βάση του πύργου, καθώς και του ομίλου στις επάλξεις αυτού. Αντίθετα, από τη βιζαντινή τέχνη η σωτηρία του νεαρού αιχμαλώτου.

Για εικονογραφικά στοιχεία συνδέονται την εικόνα με τις ομόθεμες του Μουσείου Μπενάκη (Εικ. 2) και του Βυζαντινού Μουσείου Αθηνών (Εικ. 3), έργα του Γεωργίου Κλόντζα.

Η τεχνική στο πλάσιμο της ανθρώπινης σάρκας αλλά και του ιππο, η απόδοση του ανθρώπινου σώματος, η αγάπη για τη λεπτομέρεια, η έντονη διαστημική διάθεση, η οποία φθάνει έως και στην εξεξεχύλιση απεικόνιση πολυτελών, λεπτοπελάτων και αραχνούφαντων υφασμάτων, τα είδη των πανοπλιών, η ιπποσκευή αλλά και συγκεκριμένες αρχιτεκτονικές στοιχεία, καθώς και η έντονη κίνηση μορφών και αντικειμένων, ως αποτέλεσμα οικομορφίας βυζαντινών τρόπων και δυτικών επιδράσεων, συνδέονται την εικόνα μας με το έργο του Γεωργίου Κλόντζα. Επίσης, ο τρόπος απεικόνισης του αιχμαλώτου

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

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