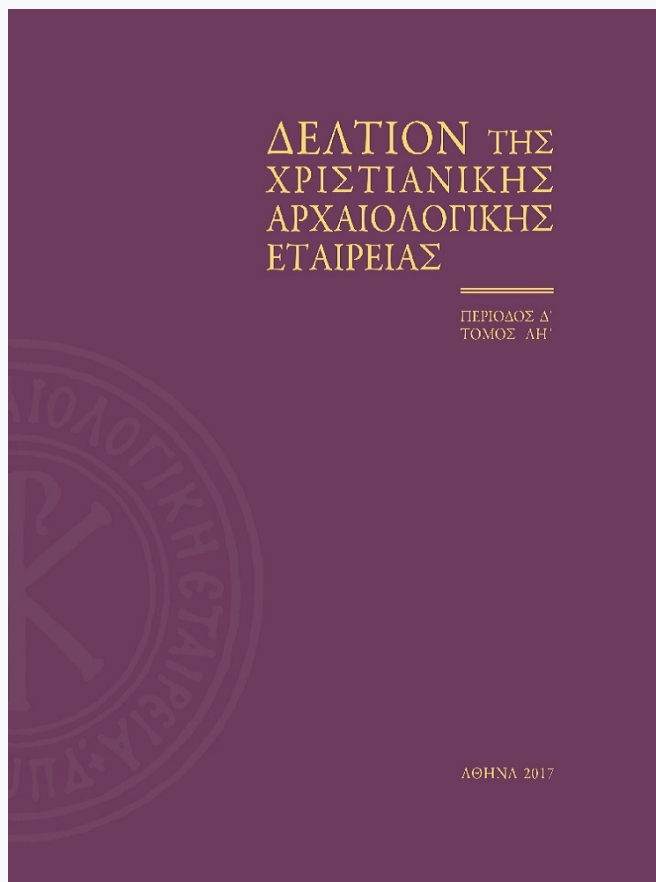


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Ioannis Tsiouris

AN UNKNOWN WORK BY GEORGE KLONTZAS: THE ICON OF ST. GEORGE THE DRAGONSLAYER IN CORFU

Η σχετικά άγνωστη εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου δρακοντοκτόνου φυλάσσεται στον ναό των Αγίων Πατέρων στην πόλη της Κέρκυρας. Ο τρόπος απεικόνισης του αγίου Γεωργίου, η απόδοση μορφών με δυτικότερα ρεαλιστικά χαρακτηριστικά, η έντονη διακοσμητική διάθεση, τα είδη των πανοπλιών, η ιπποσκευή και συγκεκριμένα αρχιτεκτονικά στοιχεία συνδέουν την εικόνα με το έργο του Γεωργίου Κλόντζα. Τα εικονογραφικά και τεχνοτροπικά χαρακτηριστικά οδηγούν στην αναγνώρισή της ως αυτόγραφο έργο του Γεωργίου Κλόντζα και στη χρονολόγησή της στο τελευταίο τέταρτο του 16ου αιώνα.

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.

Λέξεις κλειδιά

16ος αιώνας, μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική, φορητές εικόνες, ζωγράφος Γεώργιος Κλόντζας, άγιος Γεώργιος δρακοντοκτόνος, Κέρκυρα.

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 past¹.

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

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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-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 Γεωργίου στο Βυζαντινό Μουσείο Αθηνών αποδιδόμενη στον Γεώργιο Κλόντζα", *DChAE* 22 (2001), 85 n. 41].

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 George². As an individual scene, the depiction of the mounted saint slaying the beast already occurs in the Byzantine era³ and is occasionally combined with representations of the princess's rescue and the saint's subsequent triumph⁴, as

² See, for example, J. Myslivec "Saint Georges dans l'art chrétien oriental", *Byzantinoslavica* 5 (1935), 304-337. T. Mark-Weiner, *Narrative Cycles of the Life of St. George in Byzantine Art* (Ph.D. diss.), New York University, 1977, 35-113. Ch. Walter, "The Origins of the Cult of Saint George", *REB* 53 (1995), 295-326. Ch. Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition*, Oxford 2003, 109-144 with previous bibliography.

³ See, for example, the depictions in the Church of St. George at Anydroi Selinou (1323) [K. E. Lassithiotakis, "Άγιος Γεώργιος ὁ Ἄνυδροιώτης", *ΚρητΧρον* 13 (1959), 160, pl. KZ], 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 XI^e 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* 131 (March 1989), 208-214 (= *The Painter Angelos and Icon-Painting in Venetian Crete*, Farnham 2009, art. n. 7, 137-152). Id., "Εικόνες του ζωγράφου Αγγέλου με τον άγιο Γεώργιο καθάλαρη δρακοντοκτόνο: ένα νέο απόκτημα του Μουσείου Μπενάκη", *Proceedings of the 6th Cretological Congress*, Chania 1991, 41-49 (= *The Painter Angelos and Icon-Painting in Venetian Crete*, op.cit. 2009, art. n. 8, 153-167), with relevant bibliography and examples.

⁴ 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. Subotić, *L'école de peinture d'Ohrid au X^e 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. on p. 37), on Thasos (second half of 15th century) [St. Dadaki, "Πρώμη μεταβυζαντινή εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου δρακοντοκτόνου στη Θάσο", *DChAE* 30 (2009), 249-258, fig. 1], and at the Greek Institute in Venice (first half of 16th century) [M. Chatzidakis, *Icônes de Saint-Georges des Grecs 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

well as the rescue of the young slave⁵. The combination of these episodes is also not unknown in Byzantine art as it occurs in a considerable number of works⁶, though with individual differences. The same representation often occurs in Western art too⁷, 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 spear⁸. 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 common⁹. Also, the posture of the horse,

Klontzas in the Byzantine Museum in Athens and the Benaki Museum [Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Εικόνες του αγίου Γεωργίου", 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 (P. L. Vocotopoulos, *Εικόνες της Κερκύρας*, Athens 1990, 50-51, fig. 29).

⁵ See, for example, the icons in the British Museum (mid-13th century) [*From Byzantium to El Greco, Greek Frescoes 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, *Εικόνες της Κερκύρας*, op.cit. (n. 4), 22-24, fig. 12].

⁶ P. Grotowski, "The Legend of St. George Saving a Youth from Captivity and its Depiction in Art", *Series Byzantina* I (2003), 27-77.

⁷ 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 – B. Töpfer, *1000 Masterpieces of European Painting from 1300 to 1850*, Cologne 2000, fig. on p. 95).

⁸ See n. 3, 4 and 5 above. See also Dadaki, "Πρώμη μεταβυζαντινή εικόνα", op.cit. (n. 4), 253-254, with relevant examples, mainly from the post-Byzantine era.

⁹ See 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) [Meyer zur Capellen, *Raphael*, op.cit. (n. 7), 154-158, pls 13, 13/I.1], and Paris Bordone [Stukenbrock – Töpfer, *European Painting*, op.cit. (n. 7), fig. on p. 95]. Cf. the iconographical type developed by Michael Damaskenos in the icon on Corfu [Vocotopoulos, *Εικόνες της Κερκύρας*, op.cit. (n. 4), 50-51, fig. 29].



Fig. 1. Corfu, church of Aghioi Pateres. Icon of St. George.

though reminiscent of depictions of saints on parade¹⁰, should be attributed to the influence of Western works¹¹. Indeed, this particular rendering of the horse is not unknown in the work of 16th-century painters, where it appears in both portable icons¹² and mural painting¹³. 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 Raphael¹⁴ and Tintoretto (1555-1558)¹⁵, contrasting with her usually calmer form¹⁶. Likewise, the figure of the winged, horned dragon with scaly skin, while occurring in the traditional Byzantine representation of the subject¹⁷, here –even in the details– recalls Western depictions¹⁸. Similar representations of the

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”, *Θυμιάμα στη μνήμη της Λασκαρίνας Μπούρα*, Athens 1994, pls 32.7 and 32.10, respectively).

¹¹ See the equestrian statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni by Andrea del Verrochio (1479-1488) (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 Gerolamo Genga (1528-1530), Polidoro da Caravaggio (1530-1534) (E. Grassi, *Mannerism*, Florence 2011, figs on p. 170 and 190, respectively) and Giovanni Battista Fontana (P.L. Vocotopoulos, *Τὸ Θεῖον Πάθος σέ πίνακα τοῦ Γεωργίου Κλόντζα*, Athens 2005, fig. 25).

¹² See the icon of St. Demetrius in the Antivouniotissa Museum on Corfu [Vocotopoulos, *Εἰκόνες τῆς Κερκύρας*, op.cit. (n. 4), 99-100, fig. 49] and in works by George Klontzas [Vocotopoulos, *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.

¹³ See, for example, the work of the anonymous painter in the katholikon of the Geromeri Monastery in Thesprotia (I. Tsiouris, *Ο τοιχογραφικός διάκοσμος του καθολικού της Μονῆς Γηρομερίου Θεσπρωτίας (1577-1590). Συμβολή στη μελέτη της εντόχιας θρησκευτικῆς ζωγραφικῆς του 16ου αἰώνα στην Ἠπειρο*, Athens 2011, 64, pl. 7).

¹⁴ Meyer zur Capellen, *Raphael*, op.cit. (n. 7), 154-158, pl. 13.

¹⁵ R. Krischel, *Jacopo Tintoretto 1519-1594*, Cologne 2000, n. 85.

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

¹⁷ See, for example, Vassilaki, “A Cretan Icon”, op.cit. (n. 3), figs. 23, 24, 27, 31 [= *The Painter Angelos*, op.cit. (n. 3) art. n. 7, figs 7.1, 7.2, 7.5, 7.10].

¹⁸ See op.cit. n. 7, 9 and 14.



Fig. 2. Athens, Benaki Museum. George Klontzas, icon of St. George.

dragon occur in the portable icon on the same subject in the icon at the Benaki Museum¹⁹ (Fig. 2), and in the Byzantine Museum in Athens (though the posture is different) (Fig. 3), also both works by George Klontzas.

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 version²⁰ of the narrative. However, despite the fact that iconographical elements relating to this subject first appear in the late 11th

¹⁹ Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Εἰκόνα του ἁγίου Γεωργίου”, op.cit. (n. 1), figs 1 and 2, respectively.

²⁰ Grotowski, “The Legend”, op.cit. (n. 6), 32, with relevant examples from the Byzantine era.



Fig. 3. Athens, Byzantine and Christian Museum. George Klontzas (attr.), icon of St. George.

century²¹, 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 Klontzas²². 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 Klontzas²³. The portrayal of the soldiers is also connected with similar representations by the same painter²⁴, 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 semi-circular form, as in other works of the same period²⁵, though this form derives from Western painting²⁶.

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

²² N. Chatzidakis – E. Katerini, “Η εικόνα του αρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ με δώδεκα σκηνές του κύκλου του στην Καλαμάτα. Ένα άγνωστο έργο του Γεωργίου Κλόντζα”, *DChAE* 26 (2005), figs 9, 10. On the painter, see A. Paliouras *Ο ζωγράφος Γεώργιος Κλόντζας (1540 ci.-1608) και αί μικρογραφίαι του κώδικος αυτού*, Athens 1977. M. Chatzidakis – E. Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση (1450-1830)*, 2, Athens 1997, 83-96. J. Vereecken – L. Hadermann-Misguich, *Les oracles de Léon le Sage illustrés par Georges Klontzas. La version Barozzi dans le Codex Bute*, Venice 2000. Vocotopoulos, *Τὸ Θεῖον Πάθος*, op.cit. (n. 11), with previous bibliography.

²³ Chatzidakis – Katerini, “Η εικόνα του αρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ”, op.cit. (n. 22), fig. 1.

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

²⁵ Cf. a similar depiction in the icons *Epi Soi Chairei* [Chatzidakis, *From Candia to Venice*, op.cit. (n. 4), 166-172, pls 41a-41c] and of the Divine Passion [Vocotopoulos, *Τὸ Θεῖον 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, *Εἰκόνες τῆς Κερκύρας*, op.cit. (n. 4), 50-51, fig. 29].

²⁶ See, for example, Magrelli – Uzzani, *The Italian Renaissance*,



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

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 Klontzas²⁷ (Fig. 3). 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 Klontzas²⁸. 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

op.cit. (n. 11), figs on p. 136, 352, 387, 547. Grassi, *Mannerism*, op.cit. (n. 11), figs on p. 116-117 and 223.

²⁷ Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου”, op.cit. (n. 1), 77-86.

²⁸ *The Origins of El Greco. Icon Painting in Venetian Crete*, A. Drandaki (ed.) (Exhibition Catalogue), New York 2009, n. 30, 88, fig. on p. 88 (M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides). Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου”, op.cit. (n. 1), fig. 2.

the composition as a whole²⁹. 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 Museum³⁰ (Fig. 2) and the figure of the Archangel Michael in the icon at Kalamata³¹.

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 (Fig. 2), the Betrothal of St. Catherine in Arta³² and the enthroned Theotokos in Zakynthos Museum³³. 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 features³⁴. At the same time, both the figures on the tower (Fig. 7) and the young liberated slave (Fig. 8) are rendered in a similar

²⁹ The proportionality of the bodies ceases to be evident when the icon is viewed as a whole but becomes evident when each body is viewed separately.

³⁰ Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου”, op.cit. (n. 1), 79, fig. 2.

³¹ Chatzidakis – Katerini, “Η εικόνα του αρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ”, op.cit. (n. 22), 243-246, fig. 1.

³² M. Papadaki, “Μία εικόνα του ζωγράφου Γεωργίου Κλόντζα με θέμα τη Μνηστεία της αγίας Αικατερίνης”, *ΗπειροΧρον* 26 (1984), 147, fig. 1. B. Papadopoulou – A. Tsiara, *Εικόνες της Άρτας. Η εκκλησιαστική ζωγραφική στην περιοχή της Άρτας κατά τους βυζαντινούς και μεταβυζαντινούς χρόνους*, Arta 2008, 99-101, fig. on p. 98.

³³ M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Εικόνες της Ζακύνθου*, Athens 1997, 102, fig. on p. 103.

³⁴ Cf. similar techniques in the work of George Klontzas [Vocotopoulos, *Τὸ Θεῖον Πάθος*, op.cit. (n. 11), figs 7, 8, 14, 17, 18].



Fig. 5. *The Princess* (detail of Fig. 1).



Fig. 6. *Soldiers* (detail of Fig. 1).

way, and these too recall works by George Klontzas³⁵. 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 Bassano³⁶, Jacopo Robusti (Tintoretto)³⁷ and Domenikos Theotokopoulos³⁸.

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 painting³⁹ and occurs in a considerable number of paintings, such as those by Michael Damaskenos⁴⁰ and George Klontzas⁴¹.

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

³⁶ R. W. Rearick, "Jacopo Bassano's Later Genre Paintings", *The Burlington Magazine* 117 (1968), 246, figs 15-17.

³⁷ P. Rossi, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, Venice 1973, 119-120, fig. 121.

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

³⁹ See works by Paris Bordone [Stukenbrock – Töpfer, *European Painting*, op.cit. (n. 7), fig. on p. 95], Giovanni Battista Fontana (1569) [Vocotopoulos, *Τὸ Θεῖον Πάθος*, op.cit. (n. 11), fig. 25] and Agostino Caracci (D. DeGrazia Bohlin, *Prints and related drawings by the Carracci family: a catalogue raisonné*, Washington, D.C. 1979, 254-257, no 147).

⁴⁰ See, for example, the portable icons of St. George the Dragon-slayer [Vocotopoulos, *Εἰκόνες τῆς Κερκύρας*, op.cit. (n. 4), 50-51, fig. 29], the *Adoration of the Magi* [Εἰκόνες τῆς Κρητικῆς Τέχνης: ἀπὸ τὸν Χάνδακα ὡς τὴ Μόσχα καὶ τὴν Ἁγία Πετρούπολη, M. Borboudakis (ed.), Heraklion 1993, 451-453, cat. no 98 (M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides)] and the *Vision of Constantine the Great* [M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "Cretan Painters and their Workshops in Sixteenth Century Candia", *El Grecos's Studio*, N. Hadjinicolaou (ed.), Heraklion 2007, 15, fig. 19]. Cf. the horses in the scene of the Crucifixion of Christ at the Geromeri Monastery [Tsiouris, *Ὁ τοιχογραφικὸς διάκοσμος*, op.cit. (n. 13), pl. 7].

⁴¹ See the rendering of the horses in the portable icons at the Benaki Museum and the Byzantine Museum in Athens [Acheimastou-



Fig. 7. *The offer of the crown and of the city keys to St. George (detail of Fig. 1).*

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 Athens⁴² (Fig. 3), as well as in episodes portraying miracles performed by the Archangels in the portable icon in Kalamata, which is also by George Klontzas⁴³. Other details, too, appear to derive from the same source, such as the lace border⁴⁴ of the tunic below the flaps of

the saint's cuirass and the rapier-type sword⁴⁵ (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 age⁴⁶, as has been recorded, for example, in the work of Paolo Veronese⁴⁷ and Tintoretto⁴⁸. Exactly the same type of garment can be seen in the similar depiction in the icon at the Byzantine Museum⁴⁹ (Fig. 3), although in this case the diadem is absent. The presence of the diadem here, together with

Potamianou, "Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου", op.cit. (n. 1), figs 1 and 2 respectively].

⁴² Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου", op.cit. (n. 1), 78, fig. 1.

⁴³ Chatzidakis – Katerini, "Η εικόνα του αρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ", op.cit. (n. 22), figs 7-10.

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.



Fig. 8. The young liberated slave (detail of Fig. 1).

the style of dress, recalls contemporary works by Dirck Barendsz⁵⁰ (1584) and Hendrick Goltzius⁵¹ (1584), where similar details may be observed in the style and design.

The armour worn by the two soldiers at the entrance to the tower⁵² 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 type⁵³, which occurs very frequently in works

⁵⁰ Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), *Drawings, Prints and Paintings*, H. Leeftang – G. Luijten (eds) (Exhibition Catalogue), New York 2003, cat. no 12.1.

⁵¹ See the Venetian Ball (1584) (W. L. Strauss, *Hendrik Goltzius: The Complete Engravings and Woodcuts*, New York 1977, 182).

⁵² Cf. similar forms of armour in the works of George Klontzas [Vocotopoulos, *Tò 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.

by both George Klontzas⁵⁴ and Michael Damaskenos⁵⁵.

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 observed⁵⁶. 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 Athens⁵⁷ (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 Pagomenos⁵⁸, 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 Baltimore⁵⁹. The peculiar shape of the youth's cap does not appear in other depictions of the theme

⁵⁴ See, for example, Vocotopoulos, *Tò Θεῖον Πάθος*, op.cit. (n. 11), figs 1, 6, 7, 14, 18. Paliouras, *Ὁ ζωγράφος Γεώργιος Κλόντζας*, op.cit. (n. 22), figs 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 Βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη*, M. Vassilaki (ed.), Athens 2010, 198, fig. on p. 199 (P. L. Vocotopoulos)].

⁵⁶ See, for example, Vereecken – Hadermann-Misguich, *Les oracles*, op.cit. (n. 22), pls XIX, XX. Vocotopoulos *Εικόνες της Κερκύρας*, op.cit. (n. 4), fig. 42.

⁵⁷ Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου”, op.cit. (n. 1), figs. 2 and 7, respectively.

⁵⁸ Spatharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings*, op.cit. (n. 4), 33-35, with previous bibliography. A personal observation.

⁵⁹ Vocotopoulos, *Tò Θεῖον Πάθος*, op.cit. (n. 11), fig. 20. Cf. 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-Kitromilides, “Τρίπτυχο του Γεωργίου Κλόντζα, άλλοτε σε ξένη ιδιωτική Συλλογή”, *Proceedings of the 5th Cretological Congress*, II, Heraklion 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 Domenikos 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

works 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,

δύο κρητικές εικόνες της Κω", *DChAE* 13 (1985-1986), 138, fig. 5.

⁶⁷ 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 Marcian Codex [Paliouras, *Ὁ ζωγράφος Γεώργιος Κλόντζας*, op.cit. (n. 22), pls 131, 305, 316, 327] and in a triptych in Rome (P. L. Vocotopoulos, "Ένα άγνωστο τρίπτυχο τοῦ Γεωργίου Κλόντζα", *Proceedings of the 5th Cretological Congress*, II, Heraklion 1985, pl. KB').

⁶⁸ See, for example, the sculpture by Andrea Sansovino (1505-1509) in the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome [Magrelli – 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. Zeckhauser, *The Patron's Payoff. Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art*, Princeton 2008, 105, fig. 4.10) and the design by Sebastiano Serlio [C. Pena-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. Hadjinicolaou (ed.), Heraklion 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-Kitromilides)] and the *Annunciation of the Virgin Mary* attributed to the same painter [Chatzidakis, *Icônes de Saint-Georges*, op.cit. (n. 4), 62, pl. 28].

⁷⁰ Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου", 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) [Stukenbrock – Töpfer, *European Painting*, op.cit. (n. 7), fig. on p. 95].

⁷¹ See, for example, the icons of the *Last Judgment* and *Epi Soi Chairei* at the Greek Institute in Venice (late 16th century) [Chatzidakis, *Icônes de Saint-Georges*, op.cit. (n. 4), 75-77, pl. VI, 37 and 79-81, pls 40, 41, respectively].

⁶⁰ M. Koshikawa, "Another Last Supper Panel Attributed to the Young El Greco", *El Greco's Studio*, N. Hadjinicolaou (ed.), Heraklion 2007, 55, fig. 5.

⁶¹ Once kept in a private collection in Venice (second half of 16th century) [R. Pallucchini, "La vicenda italiana del Greco", *Paragone* 45 (1953), 33, pl. 7 (= *El Greco: Byzantium and Italy*, N. Hadjinicolaou [ed.], Rethymno 1990, 379)].

⁶² See, for example, the works of Taddeo Zuccari (1561-1565), Tintoretto (1565) [Grassi, *Mannerism*, op.cit. (n. 11), figs on p. 264 and 346, respectively] and Agostino Caracci [DeGrazia Bohlin, *Prints and related drawings*, op.cit. (n. 39), 254-257, no 147].

⁶³ Vocotopoulos, *Τὸ Θεῖον Πάθος*, op.cit. (n. 11), figs 7, 8, 13.

⁶⁴ See op.cit. n. 26.

⁶⁵ Cf. the similar decoration on the door-frames of churches on Crete (O. Gratziou, *Η Κρήτη στην ύστερη μεσαιωνική εποχή. Η μαρτυρία της εκκλησιαστικής αρχιτεκτονικής*, Heraklion 2010, 57-76, figs 57-59, 69, 70).

⁶⁶ M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Η Κοίμηση τῆς Θεοτόκου σέ

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 influences⁷², 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 Arta⁷³, and also the icon of the enthroned Theotokos in the Zakynthos Museum⁷⁴, 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 Athens⁷⁵ (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 stylistic differences, 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.

⁷² On this subject see I. Tsiouris, "Osmosis of Byzantine Art and Venetian Mannerism. An Unknown Vita Icon of St. John the Baptist", *Iconographica* 15 (2016), 150-176.

⁷³ Papadaki, "Μία εικόνα", *op.cit.* (n. 32), 147-162.

⁷⁴ Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Εικόνες της Ζακύνθου*, *op.cit.* (n. 33), 102, fig. on p. 103.

⁷⁵ Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου", *op.cit.* (n. 1), figs 2 and 1, respectively.

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

Στον ναό των Αγίων Πατέρων στην πόλη της Κέρκυρας φυλάσσεται φορητή εικόνα του αγίου Γεωργίου έφιππου δρακοντοκτόνου (Εικ. 1). Στο κέντρο της εικονίζεται έφιππος ο άγιος Γεώργιος να υψώνει το σπαθί με το δεξί χέρι, ενώ με το αριστερό κρατά τα χαλινάρια του αλόγου. Πίσω από τον άγιο, δεμένος ακόμη με τις αλυσίδες του και κρατώντας οινοχόη και ποτήρι, κάθεται ο πρώην αιχμάλωτος. Μπροστά στον άγιο βρίσκεται ένας δράκος, ματωμένος από το λόγχισμα του σπασμένου πια δόρατος 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 παραπέμπουν οι απεικονίσεις της βασιλοπούλας, του δράκοντα και των στρατιωτών στη βάση του πύργου, καθώς και του ομίλου στις επάλξεις αυτού. Αντίθετα, από τη βυζαντινή τέχνη προέρχεται η απεικόνιση του ελεύθερου πια αιχμαλώτου.

Τα εικονογραφικά στοιχεία συνδέουν 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 ίππου, η απόδοση του ανθρώπινου σώματος, η αγάπη για τη λεπτομέρεια, η έντονη διακοσμητική διάθεση, η οποία φθάνει έως και στην εξζητημένη απεικόνιση πολυτελών, λεπτεπίλεπτων και αραχνούφαντων υφασμάτων, τα είδη των πανοπλιών, η ιπποσκευή αλλά και συγκεκριμένα αρχιτεκτονικά στοιχεία, καθώς και η αέναη κίνηση μορφών και αντικειμένων, ως αποτέλεσμα ώσμωσης βυζαντινών τρόπων και δυτικών επιδράσεων, συνδέουν την εικόνα μας με το έργο του Γεωργίου Κλόντζα. Επίσης, ο τρόπος απεικόνισης της μορφής του αγίου Γεωργίου, με τα έντονα φώτα, το ελαφρύ ροζ στις παρειές, ακόμα 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 ιδίου ζωγράφου.

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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