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Ζωγράφοι από τη δυτική Μακεδονία στις ρουμανικές ηγεμονίες. Οι αδελφοί Ιωάννης και Γεώργιος (ακμή π. 1640-1655) .

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PAINTERS FROM WESTERN MACEDONIA ACTIVE IN THE ROMANIAN PRINCIPALITIES. THE BROTHERS IOANNIS AND GEORGIOS (*FLORUERUNT* c. 1640-1655)

Στη μελέτη αναλύεται το έργο δύο ουσιαστικά άγνωστων ελλήνων ζωγράφων των μέσων του 17ου αιώνα, των αδελφών Ιωάννη και Γεωργίου, τα ονόματα των οποίων έγιναν γνωστά από επιστολή τους, με ημερομηνία 25 Ιουλίου 1655, προς τον πατριάρχη της Μόσχας Νίκωνα, στην οποία απαριθμούνται αρκετές εκκλησίες που τοιχογραφήθηκαν από αυτούς στο Κίεβο και στη Βλαχία. Συμπεραίνεται ότι οι δύο ζωγράφοι εκπαιδεύθηκαν στη σημερινή δυτική Μακεδονία και διερευνώνται οι δεσμοί τους με τους πάτρονές τους και τον γνωστό θεολόγο Μελέτιο Συρίγο.

The study analyses the works of two virtually unknown Greek painters from the mid-seventeenth century. The names of the two painters, the brothers Ioannis and Georgios, are known from a letter addressed to Patriarch Nikon of Moscow, dated July 25 1655, in which they enumerate several churches they painted in Kiev and Wallachia: Berestovo, Căldărușani, Brebu, Strehaia, Cornăești, Plumbuita, Plătărești, Soveja. The study concludes that the two painters were trained in (nowadays) Western Macedonia. It also discusses the connections between the two painters, their patrons and the theologian Meletios Syrigos.

Λέξεις κλειδιά

17ος αιώνας, τοιχογραφία, ζωγραφική εικόνων, ζωγράφοι δυτικής Μακεδονίας, Βλαχία, Μολδαβία, Κίεβο, Ρωσία, Μελέτιος Συρίγος.

Keywords

Seventeenth century; mural painting; icon painting; western Macedonian painters; Wallachia; Moldavia; Kiev; Russia; Meletios Syrigos.

The publication in 2007 by the Russian researcher Vera Tchentsova of Synod Gramm. 2289/Vlad. 511 from the collection of the Museum of History in Moscow, a document previously very little known in its content, has brought to light an important amount of information

about two Greek painters active in the mid-seventeenth century, although it has remained so far virtually unexplored by art historians. The document is a letter addressed to Patriarch Nikon of Moscow, dated July 25 1655 and undersigned by two painters, the brothers John (Ιωάννης) and George (Γεώργιος)¹. Both of them offered

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¹ Konstantinos Papoulides listed the letter among other Greek documents found in the Russian archives, without giving any details about its content; K. K. Papoulides, "Η σημασία των αρχείων της Ρωσίας για την ελληνική ιστορία", *Βαλκανικά Σύμμεικτα* 5-6 (1993-1994), 192, cat. 57. Dimitris Deliyannis was the first to mention that two Greek painters named Ioannis and Georgios painted Plătărești and Plumbuita monasteries in Wallachia around 1640; D. Deliyannis, "Έλληνες ζωγράφοι σε μονές της Ρουμανίας", *Τάσεις του ορθόδοξου μοναχισμού, 9ος-20ός αιώνες. Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Συμποσίου που διοργανώθηκε στα πλαίσια του Προγράμματος "Οι δρόμοι του ορθόδοξου μοναχισμού: Πορευθέντες μάθετε"*

(*Θεσσαλονίκη, 28 Σεπτεμβρίου – 2 Οκτωβρίου 1994*), Athens 1996, 171-188 (I did not have the opportunity to consult the article). The small amount of information led Eugenia Drakopoulou, in a volume that complemented the repertoire of Greek painters drawn together with Manolis Chatzidakis between 1987-1997 (*Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση, 1450-1850*, Athens, 2 vols), to treat Ioannis and Georgios from the letter addressed to the Patriarch of Moscow as differing from the painters Ioannis and Georgios at Plătărești and Plumbuita; E. Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση (1450-1850)*, 3, Athens 2010, s.v. Γεώργιος 12./15.1 and Γεώργιος 13.1., p. 211. The entire text of the letter was published for the first time, in Greek in the original together with

to paint frescoes and prepare mural painters in the Russian Tsardom, because, they claimed, they heard from some Macedonian fellow countrymen that in Russia the craft of fresco painting was precariously developed. Further, they presented to the Russian Patriarch their works, mural paintings they had executed in various places, enumerating: the church of the Prince Vladimir of Kiev – which V. Tchentsova identifies as the church built by

a French translation, by V. Tchentsova, “Les documents grecs du XVIIe siècle: pièces authentiques et pièces fausses, 3. Mélétiós Syriagos, véritable auteur de la lettre adressée au patriarche de Moscou Nikon par les zôgraphoi Jean et Georges”, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 73 (2007), fasc. 2, 329-331. The document’s facsimile is reproduced on pp. 333-335. We give our English translation below: “Your Holiness, Venerable and Sacred Patriarch, chosen by God, of Moscow and the Great and Little Russia and of the many dioceses of the northern countries that spread out on the earth and the sea, Father Nikon, our Lord and Master, we, the undersigned painters, prostrate to the ground in front of Your Beatitude, like small and humble servants. The reason for our letter is as follows: some Macedonians, our compatriots, coming back from the land of Moscow, told us this country abounds in good painters, also in all other good things, and that they paint on wood as it should be done, but they do not master the craftsmanship of mural painting, and for this reason many of the imperial monasteries are unpainted. That is why we, who have learned this art from our predecessors, want to come and practice it and cover those monasteries with frescoes. But in order to be sure that this country agrees to receive our art, and that Your Beatitude will finance the painting of these churches, we first want to write to you to ask Your Holiness if You accept to receive us to accomplish this task. And if we receive an answer, at God’s will, we hope to depart from here to those places. If Your Beatitude wants to know some examples of the kind of painting we make, You can ask those who saw St. Vladimir’s Church in Kiev or, in Wallachia, the *Călduşani* [Căldăruşani] monastery, *Brep* [Breb], *Strihar* [Strehaia], *Cornitzell* [Cornăţel], in Bucharest *Blupoiţa* [Plumbuita] and *Platarest* [Plătăreşti] and in Bogdania [Moldavia], *Vranitza* [Vrancea province – i.e. Soveja Monastery], and many more, and they will explain the way we work. When we get there, we would like to stay for a year and then return to our children at God’s will, for we hope that the local painters will master our craft and work like us, perhaps even better, each of them according to his own power, so that this country will no longer need our work. May it be that the prayers of Your Holiness guide us in this work and that God make us worthy to delight the sight of Your Holiness and of the Christ-loving Tsar, for whose victory against the seen and unseen enemies, health and salvation we pray day and night. Amen. In Constantinople, in July 25, 1655. The smallest and most humble servants of Your Beatitude chosen by God, Ioannis [Ἰωάννης] and Georgios [Γεώργιος], brothers in flesh”.

Grand Prince Vladimir II Monomakh in Berestovo, Kiev, in 1113-1125, and restored and repainted under the Metropolitan of Kiev Peter Moghila (Petru Movilă) in 1643²; then, several monasteries in the Principality of Wallachia: Căldăruşani, Brebu, Strehaia, Cornăţel, Plătăreşti and Plumbuita; and in Moldavia, Vrancea – the Soveja monastery³, the foundation of the Wallachian voivode Matthew Basarab, erected in 1645 as a gesture of reconciliation with the Moldavian voivode Basil Lupu, who had previously tried to take his throne. The two painters completed the list of churches with the formula “and many others”, which suggests that the enumerated monuments were but a selection of the most prestigious.

All of the seven mentioned churches in the Romanian Principalities are princely foundations, built by the Wallachian voivode Matthew Basarab (1632-1654). Reconstructing their chronological order is difficult, since not only the murals, but also most of the edifices do not preserve dated inscriptions. Only at the Plătăreşti Monastery, built in 1646, did an inscription dated 1649 survive on the mural painting layer⁴. Căldăruşani Monastery was built at the beginning of the voivode’s reign, in 1637; others, such as Strehaia and Soveja, were built around 1645, Plumbuita around 1647, Cornăţel in 1648 and Brebu in 1650⁵. Since the number of the monuments is quite large,

² Ibid., pp. 318-319. A more detailed analysis of the frescoes at Berestovo, in E. V. Lopukhina – E. V. Pitateleva – V. G. Tchentsova, “Поствизантийские фрески церкви Спаса на Берестове в контексте письменных источников и художественно-иконографического анализа” [Post-Byzantine mural painting of the Saviour church at Berestovo in the context of written sources. An art and iconographic analysis], *The Kapterev Symposium*, 13, Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of World History, Center for the History of Byzantium and East Christian Culture, Moscow 2015, 179-220; V. Tchentsova, “Pour un corpus des inscriptions grecques de l’église Saint-Sauveur de Berestovo”, *Museikon. A Journal of Religious Art and Culture*, Alba Iulia, 1 (2017), 77-94.

³ Eadem, “Les documents grecs du XVIIe siècle”, op.cit. (n. 1), 320.

⁴ On the southern wall of the narthex, an inscription in Romanian near the portrait of hegumenos Vasile mentions him as a participant in the erection of the monastery with donations. The year 1649, read at the beginning of the 20th century, is rather effaced today. C. Pillat, *Pictura murală în epoca lui Matei Basarab* [Mural Painting in the Age of Matthew Basarab], Bucharest 1980, 23.

⁵ See T. Sinigalia, *Repertoriul arhitecturii în Tara Românească. 1600-1680* [The Repertory of the Architecture in Wallachia, 1600-1680], 3 vols, Bucharest 2002-2005, s.v.

it is possible that the painters were contracted for the ruler soon after the autumn of 1643, when they had just finished the murals at Berestovo⁶, and that their first commission was probably the Căldărușani Monastery, the only one of the monuments mentioned in the letter to have been erected at that time. They must have worked for the ruler until his death on 9 April 1654, that is for about a decade, since it was not until July 1655, when the letter to Patriarch Nikon was written, that the painters were again looking for contracts.

Regarding the origin of the two painters, it is notable that they refer to some Macedonian compatriots (κάποιοι Μακεδόνες, συντοπίταις μας) they had contacts with. There are several identified painters named Ioannis and Georgios who worked together in the North-western Greek area⁷. However, the mentioned paintings in Wallachia were lost for the most part, which make an identification of the brothers Ioannis and Georgios in Greece difficult. What is still preserved from their known work is Berestovo –which underwent repairs in oil painting in the nineteenth century⁸– and

the narthex of the Plătărești Monastery, along with a few fragments discovered by restorers under the 1826 layer of oil painting in the nave and the narthex of Strehaia Monastery⁹ and on the intradoses of two windows in the narthex at Brebu.

During the seventeenth century, in Linotopi and Grammosta, prosperous villages around Mount Grammos populated by Kutsovlachs, many workshops of local painters became itinerant on a relatively large area. Initially linked more to the area of Kastoria and Ohrid in the sixteenth century¹⁰, the painters of Grammosta and Linotopi were heavily influenced in the next century by the Epirus workshops drawn from the sixteenth-century art of Frangos Katelanos and the brothers Kontaris, some of them producing works that may be considered as a more rustic derivation of the Epirote painting, although they also adopted and used Cretan schemata. Their painting workshops were in most cases family based. During the seventeenth century they painted frescoes and icons from Thessaly to Western Albania and from Aitolia and Epirus to Rilevo (Pelagonia) and Fruška Gora (northern Serbia)¹¹.

⁶ There are two painted inscriptions at Berestovo documenting the restoration of the monastery under Peter Moghila, which give two different dates, 1643 and 1644: “This church was erected by the prince and autocrat of all and great Russia, St. Vladimir, who had in baptism the name of Saint Basil. Ruined by time and by the pagan Tartars, the humble Peter Mogila Archbishop, Metropolitan of Kiev, Galicia and all of Russia, the exarch of the Holy See of Constantinople and Archimandrite of Lavra Pecherska, renewed it by the grace of God, to praise Christ, the incarnate Word Who was transfigured on Tabor. The year 1643, and from the beginning of the world 7151” (Slavonic inscription); “Peter Mogila, the Archbishop of God, built this church of the Lord, and by creating this glorious and ever-mentioned house of stone and *adorning it with the fingers of the Greeks* [emphasis added], he showed the glory that You, the One Without a Beginning, have acquired on earth through the Passion on the Cross, so that the whole being may bring glory in the church of God. You, who keep the vault of heaven and the weight of the earth in Thy palm, strengthen this house and make it unbreakable for eternity to the glory of Thy power. In the year since the world was made 7152, and from Christ 1644, November, 12th indiction” (Greek inscription). V. Tchentsova demonstrates that the date 1644 is an erroneous conversion of the year 7152, with the placement of the month of November in 1644 instead of 1643; “Pour un corpus des inscriptions”, op.cit. (n. 2), 78, 84-86.

⁷ Chatzidakis – Drakopoulou, “Έλληνες ζωγράφοι, op. cit. (n. 1), I. 217-218.

⁸ See Tchentsova, “Pour un corpus des inscriptions”, op.cit. (n. 2), 79.

⁹ Paul of Aleppo, deacon of the Patriarchate of Antioch, who visited the Strehaia Monastery in the summer of 1657, noted that the church was painted both inside and outside. M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru – M. A. Mehmed (eds), *Călători străini despre Țările Române* [Testimonies of foreign travellers on the Romanian Principalities], VI, “Paul de Alep. Evlia Celebi”, Bucharest 1976, 205. Parts of the exterior fresco decoration are still preserved today. See E. Negrău – V. Bedros, *Monasteries of Oltenia. Art and Spirituality*, Bucharest 2014, 168-169.

¹⁰ M. M. Mašnić, “Јован Зограф и неговата уметничка активност”, *Културно Наследство* 22-23 (1995-1996), 68-87; eadem, “Sur quelques œuvres attribuées récemment à Jean Zographe de Grammosta”, *Niš i Bizantija, Zbornik radova* VIII (2010), 355-366; E. Tsigaridas, “Ikone iz Kostura slikara Jobana iz Gramoste”, *Zograf* 41 (2017), 169-188; A. Strati, “Άγνωστες φορητές εικόνες του ζωγράφου Ιωάννη, γιου του Θεοδώρου, από τη Γράμμοστα, στην Καστοριά”, *DChAE* 40 (2019), 299-323.

¹¹ A. G. Tourta, *Οι ναοί του Αγίου Νικολάου στη Βίτσα και του Αγίου Μηνά στο Μονοδένδρι. Προσέγγιση στο έργο των ζωγράφων από το Λινοτόπι*, Athens 1991; eadem, “Εικόνες ζωγράφων από το Λινοτόπι (16ος-17ος αιώνας). Νέα στοιχεία και διαπιστώσεις για τη δραστηριότητά τους”, *DChAE* 22 (2001), 341-356; M. P. Skavara, *Το έργο των Λινοτοπιτών ζωγράφων Μιχαήλ και Κωνσταντίνου στην Επισκοπή Δρυϊνούπολεως Βορείου Ηπείρου. Συμβολή στη μελέτη της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής τον 17ο αιώνα*, Ioannina 2011; T. Tsampouras, *Τα καλλιτεχνικά εργαστήρια από*

At the Berestovo church in Kiev, the court chapel built by the Grand Prince Vladimir Monomakh and restored by the Metropolitan Peter Moghila in 1643, one can still see the seventeenth-century frescoes in the apse of the sanctuary (retouched with oil painting), partly in the nave and at the entrance (Fig. 1). The church underwent restoration works between 2017 and 2019. In order to recover fragments of the original paintings, dating from the beginning of the twelfth century, several scenes from the seventeenth-century frescoes of the Passion Cycle were removed from the nave and exhibited in the church of St Nicholas of the Lavra Pecherska.

The vault that precedes the triumphal arch has a votive Deesis composition, with two ktetors praying to Christ the Archpriest on the throne (Fig. 2): the initial founder St Vladimir of Kiev and Metropolitan Peter Moghila, the one who repaired, extended and repainted the church. His portrait displays the typical naturalistic features of seventeenth-century Russian painting¹², seemingly an attempt by the Greek team to mimic the current painting style in Kiev at that time.

Both in the votive composition and in the representation of the enthroned Mother of God painted at the entrance to the nave, the interesting ornamental detail of the unusual cut of the backrest of the throne draws attention. A similar profile is found in two icons preserved today in the Museum of Korçë, Albania (Figs 3, 4) dated 1651; an inscription preserved in a fragmentary state mentions the birthplace of their painter, Linotopi, stating that the icons were destined for the Transfiguration

την περιοχή του Γράμμων κατά το 16ο και 17ο αιώνα: ζωγράφοι από το Λινότοπι, τη Γράμμοστα, τη Ζέρομα και το Μπουμπουτσικό, Ph.D. thesis, Byzantine Art and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2013; idem, "The Contribution of the Mount Grammos Painters to the Formation of a Common Artistic Language in the Seventeenth-Century Balkans", M. Hartmuth – A. Dilsiz – A. Wharton (eds), *Christian Art under Muslim rule. Proceedings of a Workshop Held in Istanbul on May 11-12, 2012*, Leiden 2016, 1-17. See also the project *The roads of Balkan icon-painters and post-Byzantine artistic heritage in Bulgaria*, directed by Prof. Bissierka Penkova at the Institute of Art Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, between 2014-2018, at <http://zogرافي.info/> (retrieved 8 Jan. 2020).

¹² See I. Feodorov, "Peter Movilă's Portraits Preserved in Museums and Collections of Kiev", *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes* LIV (2016) 1-4, 176-177.

Church in Nicolitsa¹³, a Vlach village near Grammosta, today close to the Albanian border. More very similar profiles are found on two icons painted by Nikolaos of Linotopi around 1650 for the Metropolitan Church of Servia and Kozani in Siatista¹⁴. One can see such a cut of the backrest of the throne also in the fresco icon of St Mercurios at Plătărești, 1649 (Fig. 5), painted by Ioannis and Georgios, and as well in the despotic icon of the Virgin Mary in the Dormition of the Mother of God Church in Băjești, Wallachia (1669), the work of a local Wallachian painter, Tudoran (Fig. 6).

Apart from the details of decoration, there are also compositional similarities between the icons of the Mother of God from Berestovo, Korçë and Siatista; all three have two angels flying on both sides above the throne, except that in the Berestovo fresco they bear the Passion instruments, while in the icons from Korçë and Siatista they worship the Virgin Mary in her hypostasis as Ἡ Κυρία τῶν ἀγγέλων, reiterating older late-fifteenth and sixteenth-century Cretan prototypes¹⁵. Very similar settings also appear in the despotic icons from Cotroceni, Aninoasa and Hurezi in Wallachia, attributed to the Greek painter Konstantinos¹⁶ (Fig. 7). A reference to the Passion iconography of Berestovo is found in the despotic icon of the Mother of God in the church in Filipeștii de Pădure (1691-1692), a work of the Wallachian painter

¹³ *Icons from the Orthodox communities of Albania: Collection of the National Museum of Medieval Art, Korçë*, Exhibition catalogue, ed. A. G. Tourta, Thessaloniki 2006, cat. 29 and 30.

¹⁴ T. Tsampouras, *Τα καλλιτεχνικά εργαστήρια*, op.cit. (n. 11), figs 740, 741.

¹⁵ P. Vocotopoulos, *Εικόνες της Κέρκυρας*, Athens 1990, 25. See the Ermitage icon of Mother of God Κυρία τῶν ἀγγέλων by Andreas Ritzos, in *Εικόνες τῆς Κρητικῆς Τέχνης (Ἀπό τὸν Χάνδακα ὡς τὴν Ἁγία Πετρούπολη)*, Heraklion 1993, 2004, 330-331, cat. 2 (Y. Piatnitsky); a sixteenth-century Κυρία τῶν ἀγγέλων icon from Krousta, Crete, with two angels flying on both sides above the throne like those in the icons from Korçë and Siatista, at <https://impeh.gr/eikones-kritikis-sxolis/> (retrieved 2 Jan. 2020).

¹⁶ *Κωνσταντίνος (6)* in Chatzidakis – Drakopoulou, "Ἑλληνες ζωγράφοι", op.cit. (n. 1), II, s.v.; C. Costea, "Icoanele de la Aninoasa și unele probleme ale imaginii în Țara Românească în a doua jumătate a secolului XVII și la începutul secolului XVIII" [The icons from Aninoasa and some image representation problems in Wallachia in the second half of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century], C. Firea (ed.), *Artă, istorie, cultură. Studii în onoarea lui Marius Porumb*, Cluj-Napoca 2003, 221-231.



Fig. 1. Berestovo, Church of the Saviour, the entrance to the nave. Mother of God and Christ on throne.

Pârvu Mutu or/and his associates¹⁷ (Fig. 8). This type of the Virgin of the Passion seated on the throne, differing from the much more widespread bust variants, was seemingly common among painters of Western Macedonia¹⁸ and subsequently entered Wallachia as well.

¹⁷ E. Negrău, “Biserica mănăstirii Cotroceni”, C. Cojocaru – E. Negrău – S. R. Polizu – M. A. Văetiși, *Iconostase din București. Secolele XVII-XIX* [Iconostases from Bucharest. 17th-19th centuries], Bucharest 2017, 27.

¹⁸ For the sake of simplicity and for lack of proper historical synonyms, we chose to use in our text the equivalent contemporary names of the Greek provinces we discuss.

The icon of Christ enthroned at Korçë bears the inscription *Ὁ Δίκαιος Κριτής*. The one in Berestovo, whose background was subsequently repainted, does not preserve any inscription, but the structure of the composition, which features two angels next to the throne, may have derived from Last Judgment compositions. Another more widespread formula of the Righteous Judge displays Christ on a throne surrounded by the tetramorph, an iconography adopted from Late Byzantine art by the Cretan icon painters in the sixteenth century and adopted in the seventeenth century also by the painters from Linotopi and Grammosta, such as Nikolaos of Linotopi and Ioannis Skoutaris. This iconography was adopted also



Fig. 2. Berestovo Church, nave, above the triumphal arch. Votive Deesis, 1643.

by Konstantinos at Cotroceni and Hurezi and by the Wallachian painters Tudoran and Pârvu Mutu at Băjești and Filipeștii de Pădure¹⁹.

The two representations of Christ and the Mother of God at Berestovo flank the entrance to the nave. A similar iconography is found at Crețulești-Rebegești in Wallachia (1669), the depiction of Christ and the Virgin Mary there being found on the columns separating the nave from the narthex. Its mural paintings are stylistically related to the North-western Greek area²⁰. Similarly, at Plătărești and Strehaia, ensembles painted by Ioannis and Georgios, full-length figures of Christ and the Mother of God flank the entrance to the nave, alongside

John the Baptist. Christ with John the Baptist and the standing Mother of God with the Infant at the entrance to the nave, are found in the frescoes of the Linotopi and Grammosta workshops, e.g. in the churches attributed to Nicholas of Linotopi (St Zacharias in Grammosta, St John the Baptist in Moscopole)²¹. At Plătărești, only the initials XC and the figure of St John are preserved (Fig. 9), but the silhouette of the standing Virgin Mary holding the Infant Jesus is preserved at Strehaia (Fig. 10), accompanied by a representation of St Anthony the Great, stylistically very similar to the one at Plătărești and to other North-western Greek painters' works, like in Spilaion (Sarakinista, Albania)²². The decorative

¹⁹ Negrău, *ibidem*, 25, 27.

²⁰ Pillat, *Pictura murală*, *op.cit.* (n. 4), figs 65 (Christ) and 66 (Mother of God).

²¹ Tsampouras, *Τα καλλιτεχνικά εργαστήρια*, *op.cit.* (n. 11), figs 782, 787, 788, 799, 801.

²² *Ibidem*, fig. 444.



Fig. 3. Korçë National Museum of Medieval Art. Mother of God, 1651.



Fig. 4. Korçë National Museum of Medieval Art. Christ on throne, 1651.

motifs, the gilded stucco nimbi and the full-scale depiction of the Virgin Mary Eleousa display characteristics commonly found during this period in the western Greek Macedonian region²³.

At Topolnița (1673), the standing figures of Christ and the Mother of God flanking the entrance to the nave also recall Plătărești and Strehaia²⁴. It is likely that the painter “Dima the Vlach” mentioned in the dedicatory inscription at Topolnița²⁵ together with his co-worker

²³ Ibidem, figs 729, 804; M. Paissidou, *Οι τοιχογραφίες του 17ου αιώνα στους ναούς της Καστοριάς*, Thessaloniki 1995, II, pl. 130 a-b.

²⁴ See Pillat, *Pictura murală*, op.cit. (n. 4), figs 103 (Christ) and 105 (Mother of God). The program of the paintings, at ibid. 24-25.

²⁵ N. Iorga, *Inscripții din bisericile României* [Inscriptions from the churches of Romania], I, Bucharest 1905, 229, cat. 446: “With the good will of the Heavenly Father and the exhortation of His Holy Son and the realization of the Holy Spirit, this holy and di-

vine church was built and dedicated to the feast of the Beheading of Saint John the Forerunner. It was built from its ground at the expense of zhupan Lupu Buliga great *aha* [captain], and after him, with the help of God, it was painted and embellished at the cost of his son, Curuia great *paharnik* [cupbearer]. It was written in the days of the Christian Lord Grigore Ghyka Voivode, and of hieromonk Axentie *nastavnik* [teacher]. And it was finished in August, 9 days, year 7181 [1673]. I, Gheorghe, Greek painter, and Dima, Vlach painter” (inscription in Romanian). Dima also signed the wall paintings in the loggia of the former Princely House at the Strehaia Monastery transformed into the Bishop’s Palace (today lost); A. Lapedatu, “Episcopia Strehăii și tradiția Scaunului bănesc de acolo” [The Bishopric of Strehaia and the tradition of its *Ban* see], *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, series II, 30 (1907-1908), 8: “I, Dima the zogographer, painted these portraits and I wrote this inscription on the wall of the porch, at the bishop’s cells, at the blessed command of Kir Varlaam the above-said [the abbot], being bishop Kir Daniil, stranger from the Principality of Moldavia” (inscription in Romanian).



Fig. 5. Plătărești, Monastery of St Mercurius, narthex. The patron saint Mercurius, 1649.

“Gheorghe the Greek”²⁶, was also a Macedonian, probably a northern one, since the term “Vlach” mentioned in the inscription was never used by Romanians with respect

to themselves, whereas the Megleno-Romanians usually called themselves Vlachs²⁷. Judging from the iconographic

²⁶ Identified by Eugenia Drakopoulou with Giorgios who painted in 1671-1672 the frescoes at Cetățuia in Yassy, Moldavia; Drakopoulou, *Ἑλληνες ζωγράφοι*, op.cit. (n. 1), III, 212, *Giorgios* (20). In our opinion, considering the differences in quality and style of the two mural ensembles, they seem to be two different painters. See below, n. 42.

²⁷ T. Capidan, *Aromânii, dialectul aromân. Studiu lingvistic* [Aromanians and the Aromanian dialect. A linguistic study], Bucharest 1932, 3; I.-A. Pop, “Mărturii medievale privind numele românilor și al graiului lor în limba română” [Medieval proofs of the name of Romanians and their Romanian language], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “George Barițiu” din Cluj-Napoca*, LVII (2018), 347-363.



Fig. 6. Băjești. Church of Dormition of Mother of God. Mother of God, 1669.



Fig. 7. National Museum of Art, Bucharest. Mother of God icon from Cotroceni Monastery, 1683.

and stylistic features²⁸, it is likely that both Dima the Vlach and George the Greek had been trained in the Macedonian area.

At Strehăia, in the nave, one can see a fragment of a silhouette that seems to be of a standing military saint who is trampling on a tyrant while spearing him²⁹ (Fig. 11). He could be either Saint Merkourios killing Julian the Apostate or Saint Demetrios spearing the Bulgarian tsar Kalojan³⁰. At Plumbuita as well, in the frescoes of

the nave, heavily retouched at the beginning of the nineteenth century, standing military saints appear trampling tyrants and dragons, an iconography which we suspect it was kept from the original fresco, painted by the painters Ioannis and Georgios. In the church of the Holy Trinity Monastery at Cerneți, the foundation of Prince Gregory Ghyka from 1663, one can see in the narthex a military saint on horseback overriding a pagan emperor, a fragment recovered by the restorers from the original mural painting covered by two subsequent layers in the 1740s and in 1827 (Fig. 12). In Moldavia, at Golia

²⁸ Negrău – Bedros, *Monasteries of Oltenia*, op.cit. (n. 9), 180.

²⁹ It seems unlikely to be the Archangel Michael, since the current Greek iconography represented him trampling the sinner's soul pictured as a naked old man (see the Archangel Michael painted by Ioannis and Georgios at Berestovo; further, fig. 16). On the development of this iconography, see Irene Leontakianakou, "Une création post-byzantine: l'archange Michel triomphant et psychopompe", *Zograf* 33 (2009), 145-158.

³⁰ However, C. Walter stressed that, while Demetrios stabbing

Kalojan was continually represented on horseback, the equestrian iconography of Merkourios became more rare in Late Byzantine art, when it was replaced by his figure standing. C. Walter, *The Warrior saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition*, London – New York 2003, 87-89 and 105-107. On the apotropaic and anti-Ottoman significance of the warrior saints in post-Byzantine times, see *ibidem*, 284.



Fig. 8. Filipeștii de Pădure, Three Hierarchs church. Mother of God, 1691-1692.



Fig. 9. Plătărești Monastery, narthex. St John the Baptist, St Anthony the Great, St Euthymius the Great, St Sabbas the Sanctified.

Monastery, a similar representation was painted by two North-western Greek artists, Mattheos and Ioannis, in 1660³¹ (Fig. 13). This military iconography flourished in the seventeenth century with the hands of the Greek painters who decorated the Wallachian and Moldavian princely foundations³². The anti-Ottoman politics of the Wallachian voivode Matthew Basarab seems to be reflected symptomatically in the choice of predominantly

military saints as patrons for his foundations, most of them decorated by the two Greek painters Ioannis and Georgios: St Demetrios at Căldărușani, St Archangels at Brebu, St Merkurios at Plătărești, Sts. Demetrios and Nestorios at Cornățel, St Prokopios at Gherghița and St Archangels at Brâncoveni and Negoiești³³.

At Plătărești, in the upper register below the vault, Ioannis and Georgios painted a selection of Miracles of Christ. Their presence in the narthex, accompanied by a small menological selection – themes often found in the North-western Greek iconographical programs –, is found in only two Wallachian monuments, Plătărești

³¹ Sorin Iftimi, “Mănăstirea Golia din Iași. O privire retrospectivă”, *Monumentul. Tradiție și viitor* XII/1 (2011), 65, 67 (fig. 9, the painted inscription).

³² For the warrior saints depicted in the seventeenth century in Western Macedonia, see Paissidou, *Oi τοιχογραφίες του 17ου αιώνα*, op.cit. (n. 23), I, 235-262; equestrian military saints trampling tyrants and dragons, II, pls 163-165.

³³ C. Popa, “Military and Local Saints in the Art of Seventeenth Century Wallachia”, *Colloquia. Journal of Central European Studies* XII (2005), nos 1-2, 70-73.



Fig. 10. Strehaiia, Monastery of Holy Trinity, narthex. St Anthony the Great, Mother of God and Infant Christ, post 1645.

and Clocociov³⁴. Saint Gregory Palamas depicted in the sanctuary at Clocociov –an absolute rarity in Wallachia

at that time– is also indicative of a Macedonian influence³⁵. The faces of the saints at Clocociov display close

³⁴ In the narthex of Clocociov one can see, in the lunettes formed by the arches of the calottes, the Three Temptations of Christ, the Resurrection of Jairus' Daughter, the Samaritan Woman, the Marriage at Cana, the Agony in the Garden, the Healing of the Blind at Siloam, the Cursing of the Fig, the Resurrection of Lazarus, and the Good Samaritan. The murals in the lunettes of the narthex of Plătărești are lost, but on the next register are still legible several Miracles and scenes from the Ministry of Christ: the Calming of the Storm, the Healing of the Sick, the Conversation with the Priests, the Healing of the Bleeding Woman, Let the Children

Come to Me (?), the Healing of the Blind, Zacchaeus in the Tree, the Expulsion of the Merchants from the Temple. Clocociov and Plătărești are the only two monuments preserved in Wallachia from the seventeenth century that have a Cycle of Christ's Miracles painted in the narthex. For the mural program of Plătărești, see Pillat, *Pictura murală*, op.cit. (n. 4), 22. For Clocociov, Negrău – Bedros, *Monasteries of Oltenia*, op.cit. (n. 9), 164.

³⁵ For the depictions of St. Gregory Palamas in Macedonia in the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, see Paissidou, *Οι τοιχογραφίες του 17ου αιώνα*, op.cit. (n. 23), I, 54-55.



Fig. 11. *Strehăia Monastery, nave. Military saints (detail).*

stylistic similarities with the ones at Plătărești and Berestovo (Figs 14-16). Ioannis and Georgios seem to have a robust style and their design, although sometimes clumsy, preserves classical reminiscences. The votive portraits in the narthex at Clocociov appear stylistically very close to those at Plătărești, and the inscriptions of the votive portraits were written apparently by the same hand, in Romanian, in both monuments. It is likely that the church of the Clocociov Monastery was also painted by a team led by the brothers Ioannis and Georgios. Both at Clocociov and Plătărești they must have worked with local apprentices, who wrote the inscriptions in Romanian. The church of St Michael the Archangel of the Clocociov Monastery, dated to 1645, is a foundation of agha Diicu Buicescu, a cousin of Voivode Matthew Basarab. His kinship and close relationship with the ruler may have given him the access to the two painters. Clocociov is not

mentioned by the brothers Ioannis and Georgios in their letter to Patriarch Nikon, probably because they chose to present their most prestigious works –the voivodal monasteries– although they noted that, apart from the listed churches, they painted “many more”.

It is possible that Ioannis and Georgios were also icon painters, considering the influence they seem to have exerted in Wallachia on the works of the painters Tudoran and Pârvu Mutu. Recently, Theocharis Tsampouras attributed the two 1651 icons from Korçë to the painter Ioannis from Linotopi³⁶. We cannot sustain an identification of Ioannis from Linotopi with Ioannis the brother of Georgios, as in 1651 the two brothers were most probably in Wallachia, employed by Matthew

³⁶ Tsampouras, *Τα καλλιτεχνικά εργαστήρια*, op.cit. (n. 11), figs 807-814.



Fig. 12. Cerneți, Monastery of Holy Trinity, nave. Military saint (Demetrios? detail), post 1663.

Basarab at the Brebu monastery church, erected in 1650. But it is likely that the two brothers had close links with the Linotopi workshops.

The collection of the Romanian Patriarchate exhibited at Antim Monastery (Bucharest) contains a pair of royal icons, a Deesis and an enthroned Mother of God with the Child³⁷ (Figs 17, 18). Datable stylistically to the middle of the seventeenth century, we consider them as the work of some Northwestern Greek painters, perhaps

³⁷ See I. D. Ștefănescu, “Colecția de artă a Patriarhiei noastre” [The art collection of our Patriarchate], *Glasul Bisericii XVII* (1958), nos 1-2, 98-102; Archimandrite P. Ghițulescu – S. S. Duicu – Mother A. Văețiși, *Colecția de Artă a Patriarhiei Române. Catalogul Muzeului de la Mănăstirea Antim* [The art collection of the Romanian Patriarchate. The catalogue of the Museum of Antim Monastery], Bucharest 2016, “Icoane” [Icons], cat. 2-3, pp. 24-27 (M. A. Văețiși).

Ioannis and Georgios, given the specific physiognomic details that link them to the frescoes of Clocciov and Plătărești as well as the round cuts on the backrest of the throne and the ornamental repertoire that places them in the same stylistic and iconographic family with the icons from Korçë and Siatista and with those of Tudoran at Băjești and Konstantinos at Cotroceni (Figs 19, 20)³⁸.

The frescoes of Plătărești, Strehaia, Plumbuita, Clocciov and Topolnița, together with the two icons of the Antim collection have gilded stucco mouldings decorating the nimbi of the saints. If the nimbi or the backgrounds

³⁸ *Colecția de Artă*, 25, 27 (M. A. Văețiși) proposes Moldavia as their place of origin, considering the stucco decorations and the naturalistic features of the faces of the Mother of God and the Infant Christ to be Ukrainian influences. In our opinion, the two icons belong stylistically to the Western Macedonian area.



Fig. 13. Iasi, Golia Monastery, exonarthex. St Demetrios, 1660.

ornamented with stucco of many of the mid-seventeenth-century Wallachian icons were generally considered an import from the Moldavian or Ukrainian (Ruthenian) milieus³⁹, in mural painting they seem to be the result of the North-western Greek influence, such stucco decorations being frequently found in the frescoes and the icons of the Linotopi workshops, heavily influenced by

³⁹ See A. Efremov, *Icoane românești* [Romanian icons], Bucharest 2003, 53.

the tradition of Frangos Katelanos, who used gilded stucco in his works⁴⁰. They were later used at Golia (1660)⁴¹

⁴⁰ M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Η μονή των Φιλανθρωπηγών και η πρώτη φάση της μεταβυζαντινής ζωγραφικής*, Athens 1995², 96, A. Strati, *Ο Φράγγος Κατελάνος στην Καστοριά*, Thessaloniki 2018, 57.

⁴¹ See above, note 31. The seventeenth-century frescoes at Golia were discovered during the restoration undertaken in 2014-2016, under a secco layer made in 1838. The restored frescoes are yet unpublished. Annamaria Baciu published a few technical considerations



Fig. 14. Slatina, Clocociov Monastery, nave. Archangel Michael (detail), post 1645.

and Cetățuia (1671-1672)⁴², painted by two teams of North-western Greeks, and later at Hurezi (1694), the work of a team led by Konstantinos⁴³.

The preference of the mid-seventeenth century Romanian church founders for Greek painters has been proved also in other subsequent cases. In 1665, the Grammostan painter Ioannis Skoutaris⁴⁴ painted the despotic

on the paintings prior to their restoration; A. Baciu, "Pictura murală interioară de la biserica Înălțarea Domnului a Mănăstirii Golia din Iași, la anul 2010", S. Iftimi (ed.), *Mănăstirea Golia - 350 de ani de la sfințirea ctitoriei lui Vasile Lupu. Studii și documente* [Golia Monastery of Basil Lupu - 350 years from its consecration. Studies and documents], Jassy 2010, 377-395.

⁴² The frescoes were made by the brothers Giorgios, Dima and Michael of Ioannina, whose sons also became painters; Ș. Meteș, *Zugravii bisericilor române* [Painters from Romanian Churches], Cluj-Napoca 1929, 61; D. Deliyannis, "Ελληνες ζωγράφοι στα ουμανικά μνημεία (14ος-17ος αι.)", *Byzantina Symmeikta* 9 (1994), 197-199.

⁴³ See above, n. 16; C. Popa - I. Iancovescu - V. Bedros - E. Negrău, *Repertoriul picturilor murale brâncovenești. Județul Vâlcea* [The Iconography of Brancovan Mural Paintings in Vâlcea District], Bucharest 2008, II, 18, 30, 53.

⁴⁴ Numerous icons and mural ensembles signed by him are found in Kastoria and southern Albania. I. P. Houliaras, "The Work of the Painter Ioannis Skoutaris from Grammosta, Kastoria in Epirus and Southern Albania (1645-1672/3)", *Matica Srpska / Proceedings of Fine Arts*, Novi Sad, 40 (2012), 61-74.

icons of the church in Grămești, the small foundation of the Metropolitan Stephen I of Wallachia in his native village⁴⁵. Ioannis Skoutaris was also entrusted in 1669 with the painting of the feast icons from an unidentified iconostasis; the icons are now preserved in the church of St Charalambos in Frasin (Wallachia)⁴⁶. The lost frescoes of the Cantacuzino's family foundations –the Mărgineni Monastery and the chapel in Filipeștii de Târg–, seen by the Antiochian deacon Paul of Aleppo in 1657, were probably the work of a Greek painter who introduced new themes to Wallachia, like the Marian hymn "In thee rejoiceth", the Psalms 148-150 and the cycle of the Prodigal son⁴⁷. According to Paul of Aleppo, he had also painted churches for Basil Lupu in Moldavia. The presence of teams of Greek painters in Moldavia is proven by their signatures at Golia and Hlineca, both painted under Voivode Ștefănișă Lupu (1660) and at the Cetățuia Monastery, founded by George Duca (1672).

It is worth mentioning also that Voivode Matthew Basarab invited Greek artists to paint his foundations on Mount Athos: the hagiastarion of the Great Lavra (1635), the exonarthex and the refectory of Xenophon (1637)⁴⁸ and the chapel of St Michael of Synnada at the Great Lavra, painted in 1653 by Marinos and Anastasios from Nafplio⁴⁹.

Scholars have noticed that painting –icon painting in particular– during the period generally known in Romanian historiography as the Age of Matthew Basarab, was marked by two divergent directions and by

⁴⁵ Efremov, *Icoane românești*, op.cit. (n. 39), 56-57 and figs 74, 75, p. 57.

⁴⁶ A. Boescu - A. Stroe, "Câteva icoane veneto-cretane din județul Dâmbovița" [Some Veneto-Cretan icons from Dâmbovița county], *Valachica. Studii și materiale de istorie și istoria culturii* 12-13 (1980-1981), Târgoviște. A. Dobjanschi - M. Georgescu, *Icoane din Târgoviște, secolele XVI-XIX* [Icons from Târgoviște, 16th-19th C.], Bucharest 1998, cat. 11-17.

⁴⁷ Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru - Mehmed (eds), *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, op.cit. (n. 9), VI, 147-149.

⁴⁸ J. Renaud, *Le cycle de l'Apocalypse de Dionysiou. Interpretation byzantine des gravures occidentales*, Paris 1943, 2, 199-200.

⁴⁹ N. Iorga, "Muntele Athos în legătură cu țările române" [Mount Athos in relation with the Romanian Principalities], *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, series II, XXX-VI (1914), 491-492; Chatzidakis - Drakopoulou, "Ελληνες ζωγράφοι", op.cit. (n. 1), I, 165; II, 170.



Fig. 15. Plătărești Monastery, narthex. St John the Baptist, St Anthony the Great, St Euthymius the Great, St Sabbas the Sanctified.

a third one that we may consider a synthesis⁵⁰. The so-called “traditionalist trend”⁵¹, more conservative, was very strong in Wallachia at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The paintings of the Radu Vodă Monastery in Bucharest, financed by Voivode Alexandru Cocon in 1624-1625, were described by Paul de Aleppo as “luxurious”, a work of superior quality, and it is not improbable that the paintings of this Iveron metochion were the work of Greek painters. The mural paintings of the Metropolitan Church in Bucharest, completed in 1668 under Radu Leon, a voivode of Greek origin from

Constantinople, were still rooted in the “traditionalist” current. The work of painters Ioannis and Georgios, of their Romanian followers like Tudoran and also of the scriptorium of Bishop Luke of Cyprus at Târgoviște are as well very conservative⁵². A few decades later, the

painting in the Age of Matthew Basarab], *Mitropolia Olteniei* XXXIV (1982), nos 7-9, 476-479.

⁵² In the Wallachian art of illuminated manuscripts, the traditionalist trend was maintained by Greeks like Matthew of Myra, the abbot of the Dealu Monastery between 1603 and 1605, and Luke of Cyprus, bishop of Buzău and then Metropolitan of Wallachia between 1602-1629, who created a school of copyists and miniaturists at the Metropolis of Târgoviște. Such a miniaturist was the Romanian Popa

⁵⁰ Efremov, *Icoane românești*, op.cit. (n. 39), 52.

⁵¹ Idem, “Pictura de icoane în epoca lui Matei Basarab” [The icon



Fig. 16. Berestovo Church, nave, the northern pillar of the triumphal arch. Archangel Michael.

work of Konstantinos and his co-workers at Hurezi are also characterized by a traditionalist vision.

The second direction, the “innovative trend”⁵³, was particularized by the influence of naturalism, introduced in Wallachia through Russian and Ukrainian icons. Some notable examples are the Russian despotic

Vlaicu (Vlaicu the priest), the author of the miniatures in the *Hieratikon* of the Monastery of St. Stephen at Meteora, of the miniatures of the Tetraevangelion from Căldărușani, and of an icon of Christ Pantokrator, today in Bistrița-Neamț; T. Sinigalia, “Popa Vlaicu și creația sa artistică” [Popa Vlaicu and his artistic creation], *Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei – seria Artă Plastică* (new series), 1/45 (2011), 33-47.

⁵³ Efremov, “Pictura de icoane”, op.cit. (n. 51), 480.

icons from the iconostasis of Plătărești⁵⁴ and the icons from the original iconostasis of the Stelea Monastery church in the capital city of Târgoviște. Some of the Wallachian painters were inspired by the Ruthenian “Carpathian school”, such as the authors of the icons from Arnota, Sâmburești, Păușa, Cozia (the museum), the icon of Saint Paraskeve from Bălănești-Râmești (today at the museum of Hurezi Monastery)⁵⁵, and the miniatures of the *Sluzhebnik* (Hieratikon) of Metropolitan Stephen I⁵⁶.

The Romanian voivodes had started by the 1630s to regard traditional art as decadent compared to the new Baroque aesthetics and conception of beauty of the seventeenth century. Russian art, influenced by Renaissance and Baroque naturalism, was exceptionally praised. Princes Basil Lupu and Matthew Basarab complained in letters to Moscow about the lack of good icon painters and the decadence of the craft of painting in Wallachia and Moldavia, asking for artists from the Tsar’s workshop⁵⁷.

The phenomenon manifested by the assimilation of Western influences was recorded both in Moldavia and Wallachia in the 1630s and 40s. It was related to a significant event that took place after the Catholic-Orthodox Union at Brest-Litovsk (1595-1596), i.e. the recognition of the Orthodox cult in the multi-religious Kingdom of Poland by King Vladislav IV Vasa in 1632. The king reorganized the Ruthenian Orthodox Church and soon Peter Moghila, the son of Moldavian voivode

⁵⁴ M. I. Sabados, “Icoanele împărătești de la Plătărești. Ipoteză de datare și atribuire” [The despotic icons from Plătărești. A hypothesis about their dating and autor], I. Căndea – P. Cernovodeanu (eds), *Închinare lui Petre Ș. Năsturel la 80 de ani*, Brăila 2003, 479-494.

⁵⁵ Efremov, *Icoane românești*, op.cit. (n. 39), 53-56.

⁵⁶ G. Popescu-Vilcea, *Slujebnicul Mitropolitului Ștefan al Ungrovalahiei: 1648-1688* [The Hieratikon of the Metropolitan Stephen I of Wallachia], Bucharest 1974.

⁵⁷ S. Dragomir, “Contribuții privitoare la relațiile Bisericii românești cu Rusia în secolul XVII” [Contributions on the relations of the Romanian Church with Russia in the 17th C.], *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, series II, XXXIV (1911-1912), 1091-1092, 1156-1157; M. I. Sabados, “Influences occidentales dans la peinture roumaine d’icônes du XVIIe siècle”, *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire de l’Art. Série Beaux-Arts*, XXXIX-XL (2002-2003), 33.



Fig. 17. Bucharest, Museum of Antim Monastery, Bucharest. Christ on throne, mid-17th century.



Fig. 18. Museum of Antim Monastery, Mother of God, mid-17th century.

Simeon Movilă, came to the Orthodox Metropolitan Seat of Kiev in 1633⁵⁸. Metropolitan Peter Moghila supported several cultural reforms including the adoption of forms of expression borrowed from Central European Catholic art and their adaptation to the underlying principles of post-Byzantine iconography. Soon, in 1637, Matthew Basarab would set up a printing house at the Monastery of Câmpulung in Wallachia, with the support of Peter Moghila, who contributed by sending a printing press and Ruthenian printers who reproduced German engravings⁵⁹.

However, an important turn took place at the Synod of Jassy in September-October 1642, a council including three representatives of the Metropolitan of Kiev and two of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, hosted by the

Moldavian voivode Basil Lupu at the Three Hierarchs Church in Jassy. The main purpose of the council was to address the need of the Kievan representatives for an official response from the Patriarchate of Constantinople regarding the controversies generated by the recent influences of Calvinist doctrines in the Orthodox Church. The Kievan Metropolitan Peter Moghila did not come in person to the Synod, but composed and sent to Jassy a *Confession of Faith (Expositio Fidei)*, around which the discussions were supposed to be structured. Moghila modelled his *Confession* on the Tridentine Catechism, with Latin-style categories of thought and Scholastic terminology⁶⁰. The Greek scholar Meletios Syrigos, the main representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch at the council⁶¹, amended the erroneous passages about the

⁵⁸ More about his life, at Feodorov, "Peter Movilă's Portraits", op.cit. (n. 12), 171-175.

⁵⁹ P. P. Panaitescu, "Influența operei lui Petru Movilă, arhiepiscop al Kievului, în Principatele Române" [The influence of Peter Movilă, Archbishop of Kiev, in the Romanian Principalities], idem, *Petru Movilă. Studii*, Bucharest 1996, 20-22.

⁶⁰ G. A. Maloney, *A History of Orthodox Theology since 1453*, Belmont 1976, 34.

⁶¹ Born in Candia, Crete, in c. 1586, to a family which generated several catholic bishops, Meletios Syrigos was trained in Candia, Venice and Padua. He entered monasticism and became a priest, but soon came to be considered an enemy of the Serenissima Republica

consecration in the Eucharist (which Moghila attributed solely to the Words of Institution) and the Purgatory. He translated it from Latin into vernacular Greek for the Ecumenical Patriarch who, together with the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem approved it through a synodal act at Constantinople on 11 March 1643⁶².

From Constantinople, Syrigos left directly for Kiev, probably to see Moghila and discuss the adopted synodal act. He stayed at Lavra Pecherska and there met Metropolitan Moghila, who was restoring the Berestovo church in Pechersk in the summer of 1643. Apparently

for his anti-Catholicism and took refuge in Egypt. Passing as one of the most erudite men of the time, he was welcomed in 1630 by Patriarch Cyril I Lucaris to Constantinople and appointed great preacher hieromonk of the Patriarchate (ἱερομονάχος καὶ διδάσκαλος τῆς μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας) in the Khrysopege church in Galata, to combat Jesuit proselytism. The Patriarch sent him to a series of confessional missions in Moldavia (1632-1633, 1635-1637), where he approached Voivode Basil Lupu and composed in Greek the *akolouthiai* of St. Paraskeve and of the martyr John of Trebizond (or John of Suceava). For the voivode, Syrigos compiled a collection of Byzantine laws (in Romanian *Carte românească de învățătură de la pravilele împărătești*), printed in Jassy in 1646. After the death of Cyril Lucaris, Meletios, having a rigorous Orthodox orientation, composed in 1638 an *Antirrhesis* of the *Eastern Confession of the Christian faith* – the work of Calvinist inspiration published under the name of Lucaris in 1629 in Geneva. As a representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch, he participated in the Synod of Jassy in September-October 1642 and at the synodal decisions at Constantinople in March 1643. Then he went to Kiev, at Pechersk, where he visited Metropolitan Peter Moghila. At the beginning of 1644, Syrigos returned to Constantinople and for the next nine years he will suffer exile for his rigorist Orthodox vision, alternating with periods of rehabilitation. After another ten years of staying and working in Constantinople from 1653 onwards, he died in Galata on 17 April 1664 (or 13 April 1663, according to other sources). He may have held also the title of protosynkellos, which however is mentioned only posthumously. On his life and works, see J. Pargoire, “Mélétios Syrigos, sa vie et ses œuvres”, *Échos d’Orient* 11 (1908), no. 72, 264-280; no. 73, 331-340; 12 (1909) no. 74, 17-27; no. 76, 167-175; no. 78, 281-286, no. 79, 336-342. A detailed bibliography, at Tchentsova, “Les documents grecs du XVIIe siècle”, op.cit. (n. 1), 312, n. 3. ⁶² A. Elian, “Contribuția greacă la Mărturisirea ortodoxă” [The Greek contribution to the *Confession of Faith*], *Balcania* 5/1 (1946), Bucharest, 90-101. *The Orthodox Confession* of Metropolitan Peter, though basically Orthodox in content, is seen by some theologians as still “the most Latin document ever to be adopted by an official council of the Orthodox Church”; Timothy Ware (Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia), *The Orthodox Church*, New York 1997, 97.

after the arrival of Syrigos in Kiev, Moghila began to paint the church; The chronology of events has enabled V. Tchentsova to assume that Syrigos might have been the one who recommended the two Greek painters to the Metropolitan⁶³. The Russian historian, analysing the letter of the two painters to Patriarch Nikon, identified on one of the pages the signature of Meletios Syrigos and, submitting the letter to a palaeographical analysis, revealed that the whole letter was written by the hand of Syrigos⁶⁴. In July 1655, when the letter to Patriarch Nikon was written, Syrigos was in Constantinople, under the protection of Patriarch Paisios I, as an archimandrite priest at the Kontoskalion harbour church in the Fatih district⁶⁵. The letter ends with the mention of the place where it was composed, Constantinople, which coincides with the location of Syrigos at that time. This is not the first letter that Syrigos sent to Patriarch Nikon. In 1654, the Patriarch of Moscow convened a synod for reforming the Russian liturgical books, asking the Ecumenical Patriarchate for answers to a series of questions on liturgical matters. The letter with the response, written in December 1654, is an explanation of the Divine Liturgy composed by Meletios Syrigos and countersigned by Patriarch Paisios I and 25 metropolitans⁶⁶.

The Synod of Jassy and the contact with Syrigos’ conservative thinking led to a cultural reorientation of Peter Moghila in 1643 and then of Matthew Basarab from 1644 on. This reorientation may have had as its main reason the necessity to encourage a religious art that reflected the true Orthodox faith established at the recent synod in Jassy. It is likely that the influential scholar Syrigos played an important role in recommending the two painters from the conservative Macedonian environment⁶⁷ to the Kievan Metropolitan, painters who next passed to the neighbouring Wallachian Principality. Syrigos then

⁶³ Tchentsova, “Pour un corpus des inscriptions”, op.cit. (n. 2), 81.

⁶⁴ Eadem, “Les documents grecs du XVIIe siècle”, op.cit. (n. 1), 312-318.

⁶⁵ J. Pargoire, “Mélétios Syrigos”, op.cit. (n. 61), no. 76 (1909), 172.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 173. A more detailed bibliography on the correspondence of Syrigos with the Russian Patriarchate, at Tchentsova, “Les documents grecs du XVIIe siècle”, op.cit. (n. 1), 322, n. 30.

⁶⁷ Margarita Kuyumdzhieva reconfirmed in the project *The roads of Balkan icon-painters and post-Byzantine artistic heritage in*



Fig. 19. Băjești church. Christ on throne, 1669.

contributed to their introduction to Patriarch Nikon, at a time when the Russian Patriarch also promoted a “re-Byzantinization” of the Russian Church.

It is not known whether the two painters did eventually come to Russia. In 1657-1658, the Russian tsar was

searching abroad, through the Archimandrite Ezekiel of the monastery of Hosios Loukas in Phocis, for painters to work in Russia. The Metropolitan Joasaph of Ioannina sent him two Greek painters, Paul-Apostol Yuryev (Georgiou) and his nephew Manuel Ivanov (Ioannou)⁶⁸.

Bulgaria, op.cit. (n. 11) a common opinion that the painters from Linotopi and Grammosta were characterized by conservatism and a tendency to treat painting as a craft.

⁶⁸ A. I. Uspenskii, *Царские иконописцы и живописцы XVII в. Словарь* [Tsar’s icon painters and mural painters in the 17th century. A repertoire], Moscow 1910, II, 300-305; *Словарь Русских иконописцев*



Fig. 20. National Museum of Art, Bucharest. Christ icon from Cotroceni Monastery, 1683.

Yuryev asked the tsar for permission to bring with him painters who had worked in Moldavia and Wallachia. The permission was granted, and he left for Moscow accompanied by two other painters and by Father Ezekiel of Hosios Loukas and his cellarer Sergios. However, the two painters who joined Yuryev suddenly died on the

way. Their death is reported to Moscow in a letter sent from the harbour of Galați, Moldavia⁶⁹. The painter Paul-Apostol Yuryev was the only one who managed to arrive at the Moscow court of Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich on 4 November 1659, accompanied by Father Ezekiel, and had great success as a painter in Russia between 1659

⁶⁸ XI-XVII *vekov* [Dictionary of Russian painters, 11th-17th centuries], online at <https://tinyurl.com/y22g7mmz> (retrieved 16 July 2019).

⁶⁹ V. Tchentsova, "Les documents grecs du XVIIe siècle: pièces authentiques et pièces fausses, 2. Le monastère Hosios Lucas de Stiris

and 1666⁷⁰. V. Tchentsova speculates that the two painters brought by Yuryev from the Romanian Principalities that died in Moldavia could have been the two Greek painters from the 1655 letter to Patriarch Nikon⁷¹. Wallachia and Moldavia were in 1657-1660 suffering from pest, which could have caused the unexpected death of the two fellow painters of Apostol Yuryev⁷².

The revitalization of the Orthodox tradition after the Synod of Jassy gradually took on Wallachia and, within a few decades, gained momentum during the reigns of princes Șerban Cantacuzino (1678-1688) and Constantine Brancovan (1688-1714). Towards the end of the second third of the seventeenth century, as we move away from the artistic trends of the reign of Matthew Basarab, the signs of the “innovative stream” marked by the naturalism of Russian and Ukrainian influence were eclipsed by the traditionalist vision which began to gain a solid ground. The traditionalism of the period of Matthew Basarab is a preamble to the next steps taken by princes Șerban Cantacuzino and Constantine Brancovan, characterized as a “re-Byzantinization” program⁷³. The same pattern seems to repeat itself: a North-western Greek painting team was the main contractor commissioned by the ruler for at least a decade, which enabled the Greek artists to gather around them and to train Romanian apprentices. The last decades of the seventeenth century came with higher artistic results compared to the times of Matthew Basarab, due to a superior master painter, the Greek Konstantinos⁷⁴. The advisory authority in the theological matter was

en Phocide et le monastère de Saint-Nicolas tòn Philanthrôpinôn à Galatz dans les années 50 du XVIIIe siècle”, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 71 (2005), fasc. 1, 127-128.

⁷⁰ A. I. Uspenskii, *Государев иконописец грек Апостол Юрьев* [The Royal Greek icon painter Apostol Yuryev], Moscow 1901.

⁷¹ Tchentsova, “Les documents grecs du XVIIe siècle”, op.cit. (n. 1), 323.

⁷² Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru – Mehmed (eds), *Călători străini*, op.cit. (n. 9), VII, 117, 129.

⁷³ C. Popa, “Tradiție și renaștere bizantină în arta epocii brâncovenești” [Tradition and Byzantine Renaissance in the art of the Brancovan era], *Arta istoriei. Istoria artei. Academicianul Răzvan Theodorescu la 65 de ani*, Bucharest 2004, pp. 139-156.

⁷⁴ Chatzidakis – Drakopoulou, *Ἑλληνες ζωγράφοι*, op.cit. (n. 1), II, s.v. *Κωνσταντίνος* (6). Popa – Iancovescu – Bedros – Negrău, *Repertoriul*, op.cit. (n. 43), I, 41-101 and pls I-XXIV.

not absent either: it was the Archimandrite John of the Monastery of Hurezi, a refined theologian who devised many of the iconographic programs of the works of Konstantinos and his team⁷⁵. The climate was again imbued with Orthodox confessions, due to Patriarch Dositheos II Notaras of Jerusalem (1669-1707), an anti-Catholic, anti-Calvinist and ardent admirer of Meletios Syrigos, who wrote the biography of Syrigos and organized an Orthodox Synod in 1672⁷⁶. Dositheos struggled to gain protection and finances for the Holy Land in the Romanian Principalities and in this respect he visited frequently and counselled Prince Constantine Brancovan in his cultural initiatives, supporting the Greek printing presses in Wallachia, for which services he was rewarded with rich metochia⁷⁷. It was Dositheos, the biographer of Syrigos, who in 1690 released from the printing press in Bucharest a volume containing his own refutation of Calvinism joining the polemical work against Catholicism by Meletios Syrigos⁷⁸.

The seventeenth century, a time of theological debates and preoccupations for structuring the corpus of the Orthodox faith, left important marks on religious art. The progressively fossilized Late-Byzantine tradition, which had been perpetuated at the core of the art of the sixteenth century in a more or less organic manner, was to become now a corpus of the Orthodox tradition, interpreted through the lens of a conscious conservatism drawn by the scholastically formulated Confessions of

⁷⁵ C. Popa, “Un cărturar din Câmpulung de la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea” [A scholar from Câmpulung at the end of the 17th century], *Ars Transilvaniae* I (1991), 13-15.

⁷⁶ The Synod of Jerusalem was specifically convened by Patriarch Dositheos to examine the *Confession of Faith* attributed to Cyril Lucaris, It condemned as heretical the assertions and the theological notions drawn from the writings of John Calvin. The acts of the Synod (usually called *The Confession of Dositheos*) were countersigned by the representatives of the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Moscow. A document of primary importance in the history of seventeenth-century Orthodox theology, the *Confession* of Patriarch Dositheos was characterized by Bishop Kallistos Ware as “less Latin than that of Moghila” [Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, op.cit. (n. 62), 97].

⁷⁷ St. Sabbas Monastery in Bucharest (1689), which housed the Princely Academy, and the large Monastery of St. George in Bucharest (1707) were among the most important acquisitions for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre from Wallachia.

⁷⁸ Pargoire, “Mélétios Syrigos”, op.cit. (n. 58), 72 (1908), 265.

the Orthodox Faith. During the seventeenth century, the awareness of the heritage of the Byzantine tradition increased, leading to a gradual development of an “academic conservatism”⁷⁹, removed from the multi-layered

meanings contained in the original formulae produced by the Late Byzantine cultural climate. In the end, this tradition was scrupulously recorded in the seventeenth and the eighteenth-century codices of painters’ manuals⁸⁰.

⁷⁹ A. Vasiliu, “Brancovan Mural Painting and Several Aspects Regarding the Greek Post-Byzantine Art (II)”, *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire de l’Art. Série Beaux Arts XXV* (1988), 61.

⁸⁰ The painters’ manuals have a long Byzantine history. But, although their presence in Byzantium is rather certain, the rarity of such documents preserved makes the knowledge of their extent of development and their role in the artistic training of the painters very scarce. This scarcity led E. Moutafov to conclude that, prior to the seventeenth century, there seems to be a lack of demand for such detailed manuals and that the *hermeneiai zographikes* in their most elaborated form are a phenomenon characteristic of the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, appearing in times of aesthetic or ideological crises, as an attempt to preserve a dying tradition; E. Moutafov, *Europeanisation on Paper. Treatises on Painting in Greek during the first half of the 18th century* (in Bulgarian), Sofia 2001, 5-27; idem, “Post-Byzantine *hermeneiai zographikes* in the eighteenth century and their dissemination in the Balkans during the nineteenth century”, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 30 (2006), no. 1, 79. Newer information on the painters’ manuals in Byzantium was brought recently to light by the publication of a few such manuscripts by G. R. Parpulov – I. V. Dolgikh – P. Cowe, “A Byzantine Text on the Technique of Icon Painting”, *DOP* 64 (2010), pp. 201-216 (codex Vaticanus Graecus 209, ca 1355); F. Nousia, “Ανέκδοτο κείμενο περί σκευασίας μελανιού, κινναβαρέως, βαρξίου, καταστατού και κόλλησης χαρτίου”, N. Tsironis

(ed.), *Το βιβλίο στο Βυζάντιο: Βυζαντινή και μεταβυζαντινή βιβλιοδεσία*, Athens 2008, pp. 43-62 (cod. Vaticanus Graecus 214, 15th cent.); K. Vapheïades, *Εγχειρίδια ζωγραφικής στο Βυζάντιο. Η μαρτυρία του κώδικος I.M. Παντελεήμονος 259*, Athens 2017 (codex Panteleimoniensis 259, late 16th cent., a copy of a 14th-century text); idem, “Byzantine Painting Treatises: the Case of Codex Panteleimoniensis 259”, *I quaderni del m.a.e.s. - Journal of Mediae Aetatis Sodalitium XVI* (2018), 133-143. K. Vapheïades brings an important contribution to documenting Byzantine painting manuals by demonstrating that codex Panteleimoniensis 259 is a copy of a Late Byzantine painter’s manual. He also stresses that the Byzantine painters’ manuals were not just a collection of technical and iconographical recipes, like the post-Byzantine ones, but a corpus of intermingled literary material, formed by biblical and patristic quotations and various epigrams, together with descriptions of saints and technical recipes, intended for the spiritual and artistic preparation of the painter.

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Figs 1, 2: <http://abcnews.com.ua/ru/education/v-kiievie-riestavriruiut-sierkov-spasa-na-bieriestovie-foto>; Figs 3, 4: Tourta, *Icons from the Orthodox communities of Albania*, op.cit. (n. 12); Figs 5, 7-15, 20: E. Negrău; Figs 6, 19: Efremov, *Icoane românești*, op.cit. (n. 26); Fig. 16: Tchentsova, “Pour un corpus des inscriptions”, op.cit. (n. 2); Figs 17, 18: Mother Atanasia Văetiși, *Colecția de Artă*, op.cit. (n. 24).

ΖΩΓΡΑΦΟΙ ΑΠΟ ΤΗ ΔΥΤΙΚΗ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ
ΣΤΙΣ ΡΟΥΜΑΝΙΚΕΣ ΗΓΕΜΟΝΙΕΣ. ΟΙ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ
ΚΑΙ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ (ΑΚΜΗ π. 1640-1655)

Η δημοσίευση το 2007 ενός εγγράφου από τη συλλογή του Ιστορικού Μουσείου της Μόσχας έφερε στο φως άγνωστα στοιχεία για το έργο δύο ελλήνων ζωγράφων των μέσων του 17ου αιώνα, που εργάστηκαν στο Κίεβο, τη Βλαχία και τη Μολδαβία. Πρόκειται για μια επιστολή προς τον πατριάρχη Μόσχας Νίκωνα, με ημερομηνία 25 Ιουλίου 1655, η οποία υπογράφεται από τον Ιωάννη και τον Γεώργιο, δύο αδέρφια ζωγράφους που παρουσιάζονται ως Μακεδόνες. Οι δύο ζωγράφοι προτείνουν στον πατριάρχη μια μελλοντική συνεργασία, απαριθμώντας του τα έργα τους: την εκκλησία του Αγίου Βλαδίμηρου στο Κίεβο (το εκκλησάκι του Μπερέστοβο, που ξαναζωγραφίστηκε το 1643 επί μητροπολίτη Πέτρου Μογίλα) (Εικ. 1, 2, 16), και τα βλαχικά βοϊβοδαλικά μοναστήρια του Căldărșani, Brebu, Strehaia (Εικ. 10, 11), Cornăţel, Plătăreşti (Εικ. 5, 9, 15), Plumbuita και Vrancea (μοναστήρι Soveja) στη Μολδαβία. Έργα τους, με βάση τα τεχνοτροπικά τους χαρακτηριστικά, μπορεί να είναι και η μονή Clucocion (Εικ. 14) όπως και δύο εικόνες από τη συλλογή του Ρουμανικού Πατριαρχείου (Εικ. 17, 18). Το ύφος των έργων φανερώνει ότι οι δύο ζωγράφοι προέρχονται από την περιοχή Λινοτόπι-Γράμμουστα στη Δυτική Μακεδονία.

Όταν ο Γεώργιος και ο Ιωάννης έφτασαν στο Κίεβο και μετά στη Βλαχία, είχε μόλις πραγματοποιηθεί η Σύνοδος του Ιασίου (1642), με κύριους πρωταγωνιστές τον μητροπολίτη Πέτρο Μογίλα και τον συντηρητικό θεολόγο Μελέτιο Συρίγο, εκπρόσωπο του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου, ο οποίος διόρθωσε τις καθολικές αποκλίσεις στην *Ομολογία της Πίστεως* που είχε συντάξει ο Πέτρος Μογίλα. Η ερευνήτρια Βέρα Τσεντσόβα, η οποία δημοσίευσε το πρωτότυπο ελληνικό έγγραφο με γαλλική μετάφραση, αναγνώρισε την υπογραφή του Μελέτιου Συρίγου στην επιστολή που απηύθυναν οι δυο ζωγράφοι στον πατριάρχη Νίκωνα και μέσω γραφολογικής ανάλυσης ανακάλυψε ότι ολόκληρη η επιστολή γράφτηκε από τον ίδιο. Ο Συρίγος φαίνεται ότι διαδραμάτισε σημαντικό ρόλο συστήνοντας στον μητροπολίτη Κιέβου τους δυο ζωγράφους, οι οποίοι πέρασαν στη συνέχεια στον

βοεβόδα της Βλαχίας Ματθαίο Μπασαράμπα. Ο Συρίγος τους σύστησε επίσης στον πατριάρχη Νίκωνα σε εποχή κατά την οποία ο τελευταίος ξεκινούσε μια «επαναβυζαντινοποίηση» της Ρωσικής Εκκλησίας. Οι συστάσεις του Συρίγου για τους δυο ζωγράφους που προέρχονταν από το παραδοσιακό περιβάλλον της Δυτικής Μακεδονίας, είχαν προφανώς ως κύριο στόχο την υποστήριξη μιας συντηρητικής τέχνης που θα αντανakλούσε την ορθόδοξη πίστη όπως αυτή διατυπώθηκε στη Σύνοδο.

Οι Σύνοδοι του Ιασίου (1642), της Μόσχας (1654) και της Ιερουσαλήμ (1672) επεδίωξαν να διατυπώσουν μια *Ομολογία της Ορθόδοξου Πίστεως* και να συστήσουν ένα κανονικό σώμα ορθόδοξων λειτουργικών κειμένων, επηρεάζοντας έτσι τις καλλιτεχνικές τάσεις, οι οποίες σημάδεύτηκαν από έναν ορθόδοξο συντηρητισμό. Η αναζωγόνηση της παραδοσιακής ορθοδοξίας, που επιβεβαιώθηκε στις τρεις Συνόδους, θα ενισχυθεί έντονα από τις «βυζαντινίζουσες» πολιτισμικές και καλλιτεχνικές προσεγγίσεις της αυλής της Μόσχας, του βλάχου βοεβόδα Ματθαίου Μπασαράμπα και του μολδαβού Βασιλείου Λούπου και μετά από λίγες δεκαετίες των βλάχων πριγκίπων Σερμπάν Καντακουζηνού (1679-1688) και Κωνσταντίνου Μπρανκοβάν (1688-1714). Ο 17ος αιώνας, εποχή θεολογικών συζητήσεων και προβληματισμών για τη συγκρότηση της ορθόδοξης πίστης, άφησε σημαντικά σημάδια στη θρησκευτική τέχνη. Η προοδευτικά αποδυναμωμένη ύστερη βυζαντινή παράδοση, η οποία διαιωνιζόταν στον πυρήνα της τέχνης του 16ου αιώνα με έναν περισσότερο ή λιγότερο οργανικό τρόπο, θα γίνει τώρα το σώμα της ορθόδοξης παράδοσης, ερμηνευμένο μέσω ενός συνειδητού συντηρητισμού που αντλεί από τη σχολαστικά διατυπωμένη *Ομολογία της Ορθόδοξου Πίστεως*. Τελικά, η παράδοση αυτή είναι εκείνη που καταγράφηκε επιμελώς στις ερμηνείες της ζωγραφικής τέχνης του 17ου και του 18ου αιώνα.

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