

THE ICON OF THE VIRGIN AND THE CHILD WITH ARCHANGELS, AND SAINTS. WORK OF THE ARTIST-PRIEST EMMANUEL TZANES (1668) FROM THE SACRISTY OF THE MONASTERY OF VARLAAM / METEORA-THESSALY

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Abstract: CHATZOULI, Glykeria. *The Icon of the Virgin and the Child with Archangels, and Saints. Work of the Artist-Priest Emmanuel Tzanes (1668) From the Sacristy of the Monastery of Varlaam / Meteora-Thessaly.* The monastery of Varlaam is located in the north-west of Thessaly amongst the group of monasteries known as Meteora. The monastery has been founded by the hiero-monks brothers Nektarios and Theophanes Apsaras from Epiros, who were descended from the noble family of Apsaras.

Amongst the treasures of the Varlaam monastery is the icon (dimensions: 47,3 x 48 x 2 cm) of the Virgin holding the Christ child with archangels (Michael, Gabriel) on either side and surrounded by the apostles and evangelists (Peter, Paul, John the Theologian, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Andrew, Simon, Philip, Jacob, Bartholomew, Thomas) as well as the hierarch saints (Nicolas, Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian, Basil, Spyridon) along the vertical and horizontal borders.

The inscription, under the archangel Michael, gives the names of the donors: «†δέησις / τῶν δοῦλ(ων)/τοῦ Θε(οῦ) (Στ)αυρινοῦ/καί γεωργίου τῶν/τζαμαντῶν». The icon as we infer from the first part of the inscription is offered by two donors, Stavrinus and George descended from the Epirotian family of Tzamandon. Perhaps this is the “Tzamanta” family from Ioannina, who had relocated to the island of Zakynthos in 1672 for business interests.

In the second part of the inscription under the archangel Gabriel we read: «αχΞΗ» (=1668) «χείρ/ἐμμανουήλ/ιερέως τοῦ/τζάνε». This must refer to the Cretan painter, the priest Emmanuel Tzanes from Rethymnon/Crete. The icon is dated 1668 – as the majority of his dated works – and belongs to his Venetian period (1658-1690).

Keywords: *Post-Byzantine Period, Meteora/Thessaly, Monastery of Varlaam, Emmanuel Tzanes, Cretan icons*

The Monastery of Varlaam (Sofianos 1990, 3-8, pl. A’– KA’; cf. Sofianos 1991, 101-134) is located in the northwest of Thessaly amongst the group of monasteries known as Meteora. The Monastery was founded by two hieromonks, the brothers Nektarios and Theophanes from Epiros, who were descended from the noble family of Apsaras (Tourta 1980, 66-88; cf. Tourta 1999, 343-355, fig. 1-5; cf. Theotekni Monahi 1994, 141 et seq., cf. Chatzouli 2007, 290-294).

Among its treasures are the illuminated manuscripts (Sofianos 1984, 3 et seq.; cf. Sofianos 2000, 25-51) liturgical metallic utensils, ecclesiastical embroideries (Vlahopoulou-Karabinas 2009, 81 et seq.), wood carvings, sanctuary doors, and several Byzantine icons, illustrating the cultural activities of the Monastery of Varlaam diachronically. Today, in the ecclesiastical museum of the before mentioned Monastery, the icon no. 02 (dimensions 47,3 x 48 x 2 cm) of the Virgin is exposed, holding the child Christ (fig. 1) with Archangels Michael and Gabriel on either side of her. On both the vertical and horizontal borders, she is seen to be surrounded by the apostles and the evangelists (Peter, Paul, John the Theologian, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Andrew, Simon, Philip,

James, Bartholomew and Thomas) as well as by the hierarch saints (Nicolas, Athanasios, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great and Spyridon)¹.

The inscription (fig. 2) under the archangel Michael contains the names of the donors: «†δέησης/τῶν δούλ(ων)/τοῦ Θε(οῦ) (Στ)αυρινοῦ/καί γεωργίου τῶν/τζαμαντῶν». The icon, as inferred from the first part of the inscription, was offered by the donors, Stavrinus and George, who descended from the Epirotian family of Tzamandon. Perhaps this is the “Tzamanta” family from Ioannina, who had relocated to the island of Zakynthos in 1672² for business interests (Zois 1963, 643). In the inscription, the name of the Monastery of Varlaam is not mentioned. However, the icon was perhaps donated to the aforementioned monastery in Meteora at a later stage, by the Tzamandon family, who were fellow countrymen with the founders of the Monastery, Nektarios and Theophanes.

In the second part of the inscription (fig. 2), under the archangel Gabriel in red elements one reads: «αχξΗ» (=1668) «χείρ / ἐμμανουήλ / ιερῆως τοῦ / τζάνε» (= “the hand of priest Emmanuel Tzanes”). This obviously proves the identity of the icon as being made by Emmanuel Tzanes from Rethymnon (Drandakis 1962, 153). The icon is dated to 1668³ (Drandakis 1974, 39-40; cf. Drandakis 1962, 169-170, not. 6) like the majority of his works of that period, and belongs to the production of the artist’s Venetian period (1658-1690)⁴ (Karathanassis 1975, 140).

The central subject of this multi-figured composition (fig. 1) is enthroned Virgin Directress (Odigitria), surrounded by two archangels of a smaller scale. Indicative elements are the three fine halos⁵ (Vocotopoulos 1990, 114) surrounding the heads of the three central figures. The painting decoration is from fine, unmarked plant designs of twisted and deciduous stems⁶ (Tsigaridas 1995, 347, fig. 2) embellished with rosettes and palmettes. These elements are quite familiar and well-known in the Cretan painters’ workshops dating back to the second half of the 15th century (Acheimastou-Potamianou 1998, 138).

The composition of the icon is developed along the horizontal axis. The bodily figure of the Virgin “M[HTH]P Θ[E0Y]” with the Christ, in the style of the Virgin Vrephocratousa (holding the Christ child) Directress (Odigitria) predominates.

The height and stature of the Theotokos is depicted guardant and stands out from the other figures. In the blank parts, the oily brown proplasmos (dark base colour) is becoming brightened by a roseate touch. Dense parallel white lines accentuate the folds of her robe. The elaborate painting is predominant in the delicate features of the Virgin’s face. The Virgin Mary’s arched eyebrows,

¹ The icon was restored in 2004. The painting layer of the icon is laid on a cloth with preparation (i.e. the icon is made of linen fabric with stucco thin layer (primed)). Despite the severely damaged painted surface, the icon is kept in a satisfactory condition. A vertical crack, width 5 cm up to 6,5 cm, between the Virgin Mary and the archangel Gabriel caused a big loss of the icon’s painted surface. During the icon’s restoration, two braids/ buildings were added on the back to prop up/hold the icon. I own warm thanks to the head of the 7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Mr. Lazar Deriziotis, who kindly granted me permission to publish this portable icon from the Archive of the Monastery of Varlaam in Meteora.

² One may argue that this may be the “Tzamaida” family mentioned in the archive of Zakynthos (Zang.) in 1768.

³ Perhaps N. V. Drandakis inadvertently wrote the year “1688” instead of “1668”. In addition, the latter in his thesis cited the correct date “αχξη”, that is “1668”.

⁴ The icon must have been made between June 1667 and February 1688, when the priest Emmanuel Tzanes was serving as a provost at the Flanginian Boarding School in Venice.

⁵ After 1654, Tzanes drew halos decorated with twisted leaves in the background, cf. icon of the Virgin Platytera in Corfu.

⁶ The theme of the halo, which is decorated with an embossed twisted stem, comes from textile art and metalwork.

her persistent look, and the well-drawn mouth express tranquillity, kindness, and spirituality. The Theotokos wears a golden enclosed (birdcage) veil decorated with three radial crosses without any tassels⁷ (Konstantinides 1960, 254-266; Galavaris 1967 – 1968, 364-369; Hamann – Mac Lean 1976, 80-86; Ghioles 1994, 249, not. 5). She is seated on a luxurious ornate throne with golden tinges and without any backrest. The throne is portrayed on the right side, thus displaying the figure of the Virgin Mary harmoniously. Its size is discreetly presented as it is depicted in plain colours. The crimson robe covers both her narrow shoulders and the right arm up to the height of her elbow, while it falls pleated with rich ripples on the lower limbs forming deep folds. The dark blue chiton covers her neck with a gold-red ribbon. Two similar ribbons of cloth adorn the lower level of the sleeve on her right arm. From the knees down, the dress falls with rich folds, featuring the satin texture of the fabric and covering the lower limbs forming a “V” type. The rich decoration of the throne betrays the detail of the representation and contributes to the monumentality of the composition.

The Virgin rests her feet on a red pillow that serves as a footstool and is adorned with a golden flowered shoot (Hadermann – Misguich 1994, 121-128). In a weighted straight posture guardant, the Virgin holds on the axis of her body, in the middle of her bosom the little Christ, who is tall and upright with a comfortable posture of his lower limbs. Indicative is also the ball-shaped head of Jesus, with the wide forehead. In a similar vein, this frontal type of the Virgin bears a close resemblance to the early Cretan model (Konstantoudaki-Kitromilidou 1994, 289, fig. 4). The Virgin's left hand rests on Christ's shoulder and with her right hand she touches his bare lower limb (Kalokyris 1972, 76). The figure of Christ is particularly distinctive, as he is presented sitting on the dark red robe of the Virgin Mary, in light orange robe, with dense, well-designed gold rings. Following the pattern of the traditional Byzantine icons of Vrephokratousa Directress (Odigitria), little Jesus «I(HCOY)C X(PICTO)C»⁸ is depicted sitting. His posture is not presented in a natural and comfortable way. Jesus raises his right hand in a blessing pose and holds a rolled scroll in his left hand. His hand is surrounded by a yellow ornate halo on which the inscription «ΩΝ» (Exodus 3: 14. cf. Dionysios 1909, 227; cf. Stamoulis 2012, 104-120) is written.

The Virgin Mary is surrounded by two archangels, who are presented standing facing the center of the icon and have a reverence posture towards her. They stand next to her respectfully, crossing their wrists on their chests, stressing thus formality and solemnity of the occasion. The bodies of the figures are covered with heavy garments of court suits. Tzanes' decorative mood and his passion for detail are clearly evident in the way he draws the imperial garments, embellished with precious stones. The angel's wings are painted with gold ribs. They are open and leave the lower surface to be partially visible. The archangel Michael «O APX(AΓΓΕΛΟ)Σ ΜΙΧΑΗΛ» wears a dark blue chiton and a purple robe, while the archangel Gabriel «O APX(AΓΓΕΛΟ)Σ ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ» is presented in a red chiton with a green robe. The court attire of the two archangels includes tunics of deep blue and red colour. Indicative elements are also the long Dalmatian and gilded stripes⁹ (Sklavou-Mavroidi 1995, 189-194; cf. Ghioles 2001, 66 et seq.). Both archangels wear ribbons around their heads which hold their rich curly hair and cover their necks (Συμεών Θεσσαλονίκη. Ἀποκρίσεις πρὸς τινὰς ἐρωτήσεις ἀρχιερέως. Ἑρώτησις 18; Simeon of Thessaloniki 1866, 869B). Their facial features were painted with care and delicacy. The background of the icon is in gold colour, while the colour of the angels is pink.

⁷ The importance of the three crosses, one on the forehead and one on each shoulder.

⁸ The Christogram is written with letters of gold, and is presented in a horizontal array.

⁹ The meaning and symbolism of the stripe and the evolution of the Roman “toga” is first mentioned in the first half of the 6th century.

The enthroned Virgin Vrephokratousa in the middle of the icon is surrounded by twelve apostles and six hierarchs. The latter are all depicted up to their waist in a three quarter position turning towards the Virgin Mary, who is the central figure of the icon. All six apostles of the upper zone are depicted holding open inscribed books. However, in the case of the apostle Peter, his inscription is shaped like a fan.

The half-length figures of the apostles are identified by the respective inscriptions. All of them are depicted according to the established facial features, following the iconographic type of the ancient philosophers and dressed with robes and chitons. As it is common with similar other icons, the order in which they are placed follows the official line of the apostles in Pentecost representations, in a semi-circular array, or in two opposite rows (Mouriki 1985, fig. 112-113, 280, 281; cf. Aspra- Vardavaki 2003, 218, 219, fig. 2, 8, 11).

The first pair is the two senior apostles, who are placed in the middle of the top zone.

The apostle Peter (ὁ ἍΓΙΟΣ ΠΕΤΡΟΣ), «γέρων στρογγυλογένης» (Dionysios 1909, 150) is depicted turning slightly towards the apostle Paul. Peter wears an orange robe, he gives blessing and holds an inscription in his left hand, which is open like a fan. In the inscription the following text is written: «Εὐλο / γητός / ὁ Θ(εός) / κ(αί) πα / τήρ» (1 Peter 1:3).

Similarly, the apostle of the nations, Paul ((ὁ ἍΓΙΟΣ ΠΑΥΛΟΣ), «φαρακλός, βουρλογένης», (Dionysios 1909, 150) is depicted as turned slightly towards the apostle Peter. He is covered with a dark and a light red chiton. In the open book that he is holding, one may read the following: «... ἦ /... αθε / ... πλ/Η ... πα / τυ ... η // ἔξαπέ / στειλεν ὁ Θ(εός) τ(όν) / υἱον αὐ / τοῦ γενό...» (cf. Galatians 4: 4).

The upper part also includes the figures of the four evangelists who hold unfurled inscribed books. Behind the apostle Peter is depicted saint John the Theologian (ὁ ἍΓΙΟΣ ΙΩ / Θ[ΕΟΛΟΓ] Ος). The painter preferred to depict the Evangelist in the well-known form, that of an old man. According to the interpretation, it is written «γέρων φαλακρός μακρυγένης οὐ πολλά» (Dionysios 1909, 151). John wears a dark blue chiton and is covered in red robe. He holds an open book, where one may read the following : «ἐν ἀρχῇ / ἦν ὁ λό / γος κ'(αί) ὁ / λόγος / ἦν πρὸς // τ(όν) Θ(εό) ν κ(αί) / Θ(εός) ἦν / ὁ λόγος / οὗτος ἦν / ἐν ἀρχῇ / προ» (John 1:1. cf. Dionysios 1909, 262).

The evangelist Matthew (ὁ ἍΓΙΟΣ / [ΜΑΤΘΑΙΟΣ]) is standing behind the apostle Paul. The former is depicted in the usual old-fashioned form, having a long beard and holding a gospel where the following inscription is written: «Βίβλος / γενέσε / ως ἰη / σ(οῦ) Χ(ριστο)ῦ / υἱοῦ Δα(υῖ) δ / υἱοῦ // ἄβρα / ἄμ. Ἀ / βραάμ / ἐγέννη / σε» (Mathew 1:1; cf. Dionysios 1909, 151, 262).

In the upper right corner of the top part, behind St. John the Theologian, one may discern the figure of the apostle Mark (ὁ ἍΓΙΟΣ ΜΑΡΚΟΣ). The latter is facing to the left side with a round grey beard (Dionysios 1909, 150). He wears a red chiton and a green robe that covers his left shoulder. The apostle holds an open inscribed book with the following inscription: «Ἀρχή / τ(ου) εὐ(α)γγε / λίου ἰ / η / σ / (ου) // Χ(ριστο)ῦ / τ(οῦ) Θ(ε) (ου) / ὡς γέγρ/απτε» (Mark 1:1-2; cf. Dionysios 1909, 262).

Saint Luke (ὁ ἍΓΙΟΣ [ΛΟΥΚΑΣ]) is depicted behind Matthew the Apostle. He comes last in the left corner of the upper part, slightly turned to the right and with both his palms he holds an open inscribed gospel, where it is written: «ἐπει / δῆπε / ρ πολλ / οί ἐπε / χ / εἶρη. // ... ν ἄ / να τὰ / ξα σ ει / ... αι / αι. » (Luke 1:1; Compare Dionysios 1909, 151, 262). Iconographically, saint Luke is presented with a glum expression in his ascetic wrinkled face and a sparse beard. What makes his figure distinctive is his tonsure (papalyphra), that is the round haircut at the top of his scalp. He is presented wearing a red sleeveless chiton and a pink robe.

In the vertical zones of the icon are presented other apostles. All of them are depicted holding enclosed scrolls.

To start with, in the right vertical zone is the Protolketos (First-called) apostle Andrew (ὁ ἍΓΙΟΣ ΑΝ / ΔΡΕΑΣ), depicted just below the evangelist Mark, wearing a pink chiton and a dark green robe. In his left hand he holds uprightly a closed scroll. The iconographic type of the saint follows the description of the Interpretation «ως γέρων κατ'αρομάλλης, εις δύο χωρίζων τό γένειον». (Dionysios 1909, 151). He is presented with striking facial features i.e. his noble face with his serious and bland expression, his thick nose and his straight eyebrows. He is also portrayed with rich hair and full beard, with grey and white touches on the brown background of the icon.

Simon the Zealot (ὁ ἍΓΙΟΣ ΣΙ / ΜΩΝ) is placed in the right zone, below saint Andrew, as «γέρων φαλακρός στρογγυλογένης» (Dionysios 1909, 151) holding a closed scroll. He is wearing a dark blue chiton and a brown robe that covers his left shoulder.

On the left zone of the icon, below the evangelist Luke, is depicted saint James (ὁ ἍΓΙΟΣ ἸΑ / ΚΩΒΟΣ), the Brother of the Lord, in a blessing posture. In his left hand, he holds an upright, closed scroll. He wears a dark sleeveless chiton and a light pink robe. The saint is presented with the familiar facial features, with brown short hair and short beard of «ἀρχιγένης». (Dionysios 1909, 151).

In the vertical left zone, below the apostle Jacob, saint Bartholomew (ὁ ἍΓΙΟΣ ΒΑΡ / ΘΟΛΟΜΑΙΟΣ) is drawn as «νέος ἀρχιγένης» (Dionysios 1909, 151). He blesses and holds a closed scroll, like saint James. He wears a light sleeveless chiton and a pink robe.

The apostle Thomas (ὁ ἍΓΙΟΣ / ΘΩΜΑΣ) is portrayed in the vertical left zone of the icon under saint Bartholomew, also holding a closed scroll. The saint is depicted «νέος, ἀγένειος» (Dionysios 1909, 151), wearing a dark chiton and a light pink robe covering his right shoulder.

The last of the apostles, in the vertical right zone of the icon, is the apostle Philip (ὁ ἍΓΙΟΣ / ΦΙ / ΛΙΠΠΙΟΣ). He blesses with his right hand and holds a closed scroll. According to the Orthodox Synaxaria, he is said to be Bartholomew's assistant (Delehay 1954, 221, 13; cf. Nicodemus the Hagiorite 1980, vol. A, 222). The apostle Philip wears a sleeveless tunic and a pink robe and he is depicted as «νέος, ἀγένειος», like the apostle Thomas. (Dionysios 1909, 151).

In general, the shapes of the apostles' faces are painted soft with graduated tones. The facial features of their forms are quite individual. However, the faces of the elderly figures are depicted having darker protrusions and shaped wrinkles on their forehead. The painter tries to give to the faces an emotional expression. Also, the soft folding of the figures' costumes is strongly influenced by Italian art. It should be noted that the depiction of the twelve apostles indicates their participation in the miraculous events of the incarnate Word.

The lower horizontal zone unfolds across the whole width of the icon and includes six hierarchical saints (Mantas 2001, 135 et seq. Cf. Gerstel 1999, 15-36). The former wear their attires (Thierry 1966, 308-315) elegantly decorated (Papap 1975, 92-110; cf. Walter 1982, 7-19), consisting of cross – omophorion¹⁰ (Γερμανοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. Ἱστορία Ἐκκλησιαστική, καί Μυστική θεωρία [dub.], Pseudogermanos Archbishop of Constantinople, 1860, 393D-396A; cf. Stefanidis 1970, 146; cf. Kourkoulas 1960, 63-65; Fountoulis 2007, 3, 234; Johnstone 1967, 104-105; cf. Zografou-Korre 1985, 39 et seq.) multi-cruciform sleeved sackcloths (sakkos)¹¹ (Ghioles 2001, 65; Compare Kourkoulas 1960, 65-68; cf. Papaevangelou 1965, 62-63; cf.

¹⁰ «Τὸ ὠμοφόριον ἐστὶ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, κατὰ τὴν στολήν τοῦ Ἀαράων». The Perivolaion (covering) may be considered a precursor of the episcopal omophorion, a distinguishing vestment of a bishop and the symbol of his spiritual and ecclesiastical authority.

¹¹ The sackcloth (sakkos) comes from the Greek word «διβητήσιον» (divetesion is a long ceremonial silk tunic resembling the Latin dalmatic, for use on only the highest state occasions. It was worn belted, instead of the skaramangion by the emperor, but also by certain court officials).

Johnstone 1967, 15.; cf. Zografou-Korre 1985, 26 et seg.) fitted with varicoloured lining, indicating thus their archpriesthood rank.

The hierarchs are depicted bareheaded except saint Spyridon, who has his head covered with a cloth cap. In the middle of the lower zone is depicted saint John Chrysostom (Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΧΡΥΣΟΣΤΟΜΟΣ) «*νέος, ἀγένειος*», standing, with some beard growth, brown hair, and slightly bald (Delehaye 1954, 217-220; cf. Chatzidakis 1938, 413). (Drandakis 1969, 11 et seg. Dionysios 1909, 154). He holds a book, where it is written: «*ΚνΗΘ' .. / ασμέ.. / ἐκ τῆς / Παρθέ / του Μα.. / ψυχῆ // ΡΚΑ / .. Κα / .. αρθεύ / .. ης τῶ / .. π(νευ)μ(α)τ(ι)*»¹². To the left of saint John Chrysostom one may partially see saint Gregory the Theologian (Ο ΑΓΙ/ΟΣ ΓΡΗΓΟ/ΡΙΟC), patriarch of Constantinople. He is presented (De Agent 1954, 422 et seg. Compare Chatzidakis 1938, 412. Dionysios 1909, 154) facing three quarters towards the central axis of the representation. He holds an open book where one may read the following: «*Ἡ ἀγε / ὠργη / τος κ(αί) / ἄσκα / φος // παρ / θένος ἄνευ / σπέρ / ματος / ἦν α...*»¹³.

The two saints are depicted as if sharing a conversation. Behind saint John Chrysostom is presented Athanasius the Great (Ο ΑΓΙ / ΟC ΑΘΑΝ / ΑCΙ / ΟC), the patriarch of Alexandria, as a bald old man with his big heavy beard «*γέρων φαλακρός, πλατυγένης*». (Delehaye 1954, 399, 647 et seg. cf. Chatzidakis 1938, 413; cf. Denis of Fournia 1909, 154, 267, 291).

Behind saint Gregory the Theologian, one may discern Basil the Great (Ο ΑΓΙ / ΟC ΒΑCΙ / ΛΕΙΟC), Bishop of Caesarea with short hair and a brown long beard (Delehaye 1954, 364-366; Martinov 1963, 57; Chatzidakis 1938, 412 et seg. Drandakis 1969, 8 et seg. 14 et seg. Dionysios 1909, 154). At both edges of the icon, the procession of the hierarchs is covered by saint Nicolas, (Ο ΑΓΙ / ΟC ΝΙ / ΚΟΛΑΟC). Bishop of Myron, with his flat forehead and his short round beard. (Anrich 1913, 224, 31-32, 1-8; Compare Delehaye 1954, 281-284, 278; Compare Zias 1969, 27; Compare Antourakis 1988, 23 et seg. cf. Ševčenko 1983, 18 et seg.) and by saint Spyridon (Ο ΑΓΙ / ΟC CΠΙΡΙΑΔΟΝ), Bishop of Trimythous, the miracle worker, who is depicted with a long white beard wearing a straw hat (Delehaye 1954, 303; cf. Dionysios 1909, 154. cf. Walter 1982, 105; cf. Konstantinides 2008, 132; cf. Weigert 1994, 387-389).

It is important to note that four out of the six hierarchs are shown holding decorated enclosed books, slightly inclined, indicating the upper and side thickness of the pages. The hierarchs, to whose honour and memory certain portions of the communion bread are dedicated, are portrayed as successors to the Apostles and intercessors in their vision of the Divine, while the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is being carried out. The rendering of the apostles and hierarchs corresponds to the removal of the portions of the Holy Bread during the Service of Preparation or Proskomidi (Συμεών Θεσσαλονίκης, Περί τῆς Ἱερᾶς Λειτουργίας 96-97; Simeon of Thessaloniki 1866, 289A-292A; cf. Theochari 1986, 20; cf. Konstantinides 2008, 125).

The stylistic dualism, that characterizes the artistic production of Tzanes as a whole and particularly the works that he created during his stay in Corfu and afterwards in Venice, is clear in this icon as well, where elements from the Byzantine tradition are combined with elements from Italian art (Drandakis 1962, 152-170; cf. Vocotopoulos 1990, 103 et seg. cf. Tselenti-Papadopoulou 2002, 79-80).

The facial features of the Virgin Mary with the child Christ, observed in the examined icon, can also be found in Tzanes' icon no. T. 362 (dimensions: 1,06 x 0,66 m.) painted in 1664, which is now kept at the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens (Acheimastou-Potamianou 1998, 234-235).

¹² This may be a composition of the painter.

¹³ This may be a composition of the painter.

A similar representation of the enthroned Christ (fig. 10), surrounded by the twelve apostles, is also depicted in a similar icon kept at the Monastery of Kato Panagia Arta and dated in 1678 (dimensions 1,33 x 0,95 x 0,02 cm) (Papadopoulou – Tsiara 2008, 154-157). In the icon of Kato Panagia, the apostles are shown in sixes in the two vertical zones and stand in the same order as in the icon of the Monastery of Varlaam. In both icons, the figures have the same iconography types. Furthermore, in the inscribed scrolls or in the books that the evangelists are holding, one may read almost the same inscriptions of the sayings at the beginning of their gospels. The same also applies for the case of Peter and Paul.

The detailed representation of the luxurious fabrics, decorated with gold embroidery and precious stones, is also echoed in the works of the Corfiot and the Venetian period of the painter in question. Western elements are also incorporated in the figures of the six hierarchs depicted in the lower zone of the icon. The hierarchs are wearing richly decorated robes which run counter to their strict forms. Their luxurious clothes often imitate red fabrics of Venetian nobles. These elements can also be found in the icon of saint John of Damascus (1654) (dimensions 190x 88x2 cm.) at the church of saints Jason and Sosipatros in Corfu. (Vocotopoulos 1990, 117-118, fig. 57, 58, 226, 228, 229), in icon of saint Basil no. cat. 127 (1667) (dimensions 67 x 48 cm) and at the Hellenic Institute of Venice (Drandakis 1962, 61 et seq., tabl. 19, cf. Tselenti-Papadopoulou 2002, 191, no. Cat. 127, tabl. 57).

The halos with marked spots may also be found in Tzanes' works during the Venetian period, as it is in the icon no. cat. 130 (dimensions 50, 5x 43,5m) with the enthroned saint James the Brother (1683) in Venice, (Chatzidakis 1862, 135-136, fig. 114, tabl. 60; cf. Tselenti-Papadopoulou 2002, 193, no. Cat. 130. tabl. 59), in the icon of saint Govdelaas (1655) at the Museum of Byzantine Culture of Thessaloniki (dimensions 0,310x 0,246 cm) (Drandakis 1962, 33 et seq. cf. Leontakianalou 2001, 57; cf. Editorial Committee 2003, 7, fig. 5) (dimensions 31,2x 24,7x 2 cm), and in the icon of the Extreme Humiliation of Jesus Christ (dimensions 29,5x 22,5 cm) from the Collection of the New Sacristy of the Monastery of Agios Stefanos in Meteora (Chatzouli 2005, 325-376).

Of particular interest in the icon of the Monastery of Varlaam is the throne with its anthropomorphic decoration and the twisted leaves. These two elements were borrowed from Italian art (Berenson 1968, II, fig. 13, 639, 711, 721, 722, 746, 747, 866).

These elements were popular and favoured since the 16th century. However, they were used individually. The anthropomorphic decoration is also familiar to Emmanuel Tzanes, especially in the works he painted in Venice, showing thus his direct influences from the Italian art. For example, in the icon of saint Andrew (1658) (dimensions 52 x 44,5 cm) from the Collection of the Hellenic Institute of Venice, human figures standing next to twisted leaves adorn the base of the throne. (Chatzidakis 1962, 131, fig. 108, tabl. 60; cf. Tselenti-Papadopoulou 2002, 188-189, no. Cat. 124, tbl. 54). It is obvious that the elaborate throne, as a symbol of secular and ecclesiastical power, is meant to praise and celebrate the Virgin Mary.

Taking into account all the above remarks, it becomes clear that the icon of the enthroned Virgin Mary with the child Christ, surrounded by archangels and hierarchs of the Monastery of Varlaam, is strongly connected with the works of Emmanuel Tzanes created in Venice.

The representation of the enthroned Virgin with Christ, surrounded by angels (Belting-Ihm 1960, 59) was widely known from the early years of Christianity, since the time of Justinian and especially after the period of iconoclasm. It enjoyed special respect throughout the different periods of Byzantine art. We find it also in mosaics, in wall-murals as well as in miniature icons. It should be noted that the composition, is not only well-known because it is found in the apse of the sanctuary of Byzantine churches (Chatzidaki 1983, 30). With such a wide dissemination in Byzantium, it seems only natural that this iconographic composition would also be present in

the Cretan School. Generally speaking, the Virgin is depicted in an iconographic variation based on Byzantine models and was likewise established in the Cretan School of painting of the 15th century by Andreas Ritzos¹⁴ (Chatzidakis 1988, 148; cf. Chatzidakis 1995², 61, no. 10, tabl. 12; cf. Piatnitsky 2003, 622, 625, 632, fig. 1, 4; cf. Chatzidakis 1974, 179, tabl. I, 2; cf. Chatzidaki 1983, 42-43, no. 36; cf. Sidorendo 1997, tabl. 71, 74).

The theological content of this depiction aims to stress the importance of the Virgin's role in the Incarnation of the Divine Word, who contributed to the salvation of the human race (Kalokyris 1971, 25; cf. Tatić-Djurić 1981, 770). In the icon, the importance of the foundation of the Church is indicated with a proclamation tone, through the inscribed scrolls held by the figures. The messages of the multi-figure composition in the icon are related to facts of dogmatic importance, with a revealing and eschatological meaning. As a symbol of the Incarnation, the Virgin is addressing prayers to Christ, which glorify His greatness.

As a whole, this imposing icon has a theological depth that is put forward in the complex, iconographic layout of the work of the divine economy for the redemption of mankind (Spourlakou 1990, 55; cf. Stamoulis 2003, 33 et seq.). It contains the triumphant figures of the Incarnate Word, the Virgin Directress (Odigitria) (cf. Gioultsi 1991, 117), the figures of the evangelists, the apostles, and the holy hierarchs (cf. Skaltsis 1991, 371), who helped formulate the main points of the Church's doctrine. The measured and harmonious composition of the icon is simultaneously a work of serious artistic character and sacred spirit. It is precisely the kind of art one would expect from the artist and priest Emmanuel Tzanes Bounialis from Rethymno.

One of the closest models for the icon we are examining (fig. 4), we find in icon no. 3051 (fig. 10) of the Virgin Vrephocratousa (holding the Christ child) who is accompanied by angels and surrounded by scenes from the Twelve Great Feasts of the Church (such as the Annunciation, the Crucifixion, the Taking Down from the Cross, and the Descent to Hades), as well as apostles, hierarchs, evangelists and other saints (Felicetti- Liebenfels 1956, 93, tabl. 119; Skrobucha 1969, 97-99, tabl. XVII. Chatzidaki 1983, 29-30; Vasilaki 1994b, 232). This icon is found in the Benakis Museum (dimensions 87,5 x 64,8 cm) and is dated from the second half of the 15th century. It is attributed to the workshop of Andreas Ritzos (approx. 1451 – 1492) (Chatzidakis 1995³, 65), but also to his son Nikolaos (approx. 1460 – 1503) (Chatzidaki 1993, 100). Characteristic of this style is the position of the enthroned Virgin directress, the wigs of the archangels as a detail in her clothing, the positioning and the garments of the three Apostles (Peter, Paul and John the Theologian), as well as the depiction of the hierarchs with their richly adorned vestments with crossed omophorions. Three are all elements which can also be found in the icon from the Monastery of Varlaam.

On the left side (fig. 5) of Panaghiarion A (dimension 15,5), from the end of the 15th century and attributed to Nikolaos Ritzos (?) from the New Skevofylakion of the Monastery of Saint John the Theologian on Patmos, the Virgin is depicted accompanied by the archangels (Chatzidakis 1995, 64-67, tabl. 22, 88), like in the central part of the Monastery of Varlaam's icon. Characteristic are the finely detailed folds of the various figures' garments. Indicative too is the miniature icon of the figures from Panaghiarion A of Patmos, with its use of bright colours, the carefully applied

¹⁴ As an example, we note the icon of Panagia Pantanassa (dimensions 164 x 90 x 3,2 cm) (fig. 3) from the iconostasis of the catholicicon of the Monastery of saint John Theologos in Patmos. Today it is kept in the sacristy of the monastery. The same type was repeated with variations in the icon of the Virgin Mary of the Angels of the middle sheet of the triptych (dimensions 7 x 14,6 cm) in the Basilewsky Collection at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. Yet, we find it in the middle sheet of the triptych no. import 22251 (dimensions 0,6303 x 0,31 cm) at the Benaki Museum and at no. 12744 (dimensions 29,4 x 16,5 cm) of the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow.

golden ornamentation, and chiaroscuro. All of these point toward a typically Cretan creation, with its meticulously layered levels of illumination.

In icon no. 431 (Lazarev 1967, 408, fig. 575; Compare Felicetti- Liehenfels 1956, 93, tabl. 118; cf. Chatzidaki 1993, 98-103) (fig. 6) of the enthroned Virgin Vrefocratousa accompanied by the archangels and framed by the prophets (dimensions 60x 57 cm), dating from the first half of the 16th century and now kept in the Galleria dell' Accademia of Florence, the painter chooses from and combines various elements of the 15th century tradition in the icon, as regards its type. In the case of the icon that we have been examining, however, it is clear that the painter is following in his style the more modern trends of the 16th century. The figures of the prophets, with their symbols around the central theme of the Virgin Mary, accompanied by the archangels in the icon from Florence, are replaced by apostles and hierarchs in the icon of the Monastery of Varlaam.

Besides that, in the icon of the Virgin Wider-than-the-heavens (Panagia Platytera) (fig. 7) who is also accompanied by the archangels (dimensions 35x 35x2 cm) and is dated to the 17th century from the Skevophylokion (the Treasury) of the Church of Panagia Korfiatissa in Plaka on the island of Milos (in the Cyclades islands) (Gerousi 1999, 27), we discern a symmetry and precision in its artistic execution, not unlike that of the icon we are examining. In the icon from Milos, the Virgin Directress with the archangels are shown in a circle. The four corners of the square icon are decorated with dark marble. The archangels are rendered on a smaller scale from the central figure of the enthroned Virgin Mary. In the icon from Milos, like in the icon from Varlaam Monastery, the Virgin's wooden throne has no back and the sides of the chair are made up of winged figures, with fish-like bottom halves, that end in twirling leafy vines which adorn the base of the seat. It should also be noted, that such anthropomorphic decoration is characteristic of Emmanuel Tzanes, especially in the works of his Venetian period, where he received direct influence from the surrounding Italian art scene. Distinctive is the geometric folding of the Virgin and Christ's clothes, depicted in strict colouring and limited in number, while the expression of the figures is quite serious.

It is known that the Cretan painter, Emmanuel Tzanes (c. 1610-1690) who lived in Crete, in Corfu and in Venice, is one of the most inspired Cretan painters with rich artistic production (Drandakis 1962, 17 et seq. Compare Chatzidakis - Drakopoulou 1997, tom. 2, 408-422. cf. Vocotopoulos 1990, 104-107. cf. Papadopoulou - Tsiara 2008, 156, not. 81). It is clear from the chronology «αχξΗ» (=1668), as already mentioned above, that this icon belongs to the so-called "Venetian" period (1658 - 1690).

Regarding the Monastery of Varlaam, Emmanuel Tzanes seems to have followed the earlier compositional model of the Virgin Vrefocratousa, named "Pantanassa" (All-Reigning or Queen of All), which was created by Andreas Ritzos in Patmos (fig. 3). This is a very popular iconographic type and it can be found in numerous icons. This type was used until the 18th century, sometimes precisely, sometimes with variations or with other names (Vocotopoulos 1990, 25). The imposing figure of the enthroned Virgin Directress (Odigitria) and its figural folding, are masterfully combined with the western renaissance elements of the elaborate golden throne.

However, it should also be mentioned that the iconographic theme of the central composition of the icon in question bears a close resemblance to the left-wing of Panaghiarion A, attributed to Nikolaos Ritzos (fig. 5).

In the icon, one may notice some other typical characteristic elements of the painter's art, such as the use of the white light, his attention to detail, his fixed design and the rich and varied use of colours. For the portrayal of his figures, Tzanes shows great preference for the Palaiologan iconographical type, although in other details he follows western patterns. The choice of his models depended on his artistic experience, as well as on his deep theological scholarship. Similar

elements can also be found in other icons attributed to Tzanes, such as the icon of Christ (fig. 10) at the Monastery of Kato Panagia in Arta (western Greece).

The icon from the Monastery of Varlaam is a work of exceptional quality, which became the model for other painters of the time as well as for later painters who were active in Crete, the Ionian Islands and Venice. This is especially evident in the work of Ioannis Dzenos (1660 – 1682), descendant apparently of a Cretan family Tze, Tzen, or Tzenou (Zen), who copied all of the details of Emmanuel Tzanes' icon from the Monastery of Varlaam, with the enthroned Virgin Directress surrounded by archangels, apostles and hierarchs dated back to «αχοζ» (=1677), that is an exact copy of it. It is also interesting to note that the icon of Ioannis Ntzenou "hand of Ioannus Ntze (fig. 8) (dimensions 46,5x 49 cm) which now adorns the icon screen of the cemetery church of the Resurrection of the Lord in Corfu, is placed above the despotic image of the enthroned Christ in the form of the High Priest (Vocotopoulos 1990, 142. cf. Chatzidakis – Drakopoulou 1997, tom. 2, 435-436).

The dimensions of the image are 46,5x 49 cm. It is thus one centimetre smaller in height and one centimetre wider than the icon of the Monastery of Varlaam.

The painter duplicated Tzanes' icon in every detail, such as the array of the twenty figures, the apostles, the hierarchs, the folding of all the figures' garments and the shaping of the elaborated wooden throne chair with no backrest.

The great similarity of the icons, the roughly same dimensions, as well as the fact that the icon is found in Corfu, the island where Tzanes stayed before he went to Venice, leads us to speculate that the painter Ioannis Dzenos used Tzanes' anthivolon as his model.

It seems that Ioannis Tzen admired Tzanes' work a lot and for this reason he followed his standards in his own icons. Tzen's icon of the Virgin Mary, surrounded by the archangels and saints, is one of the well-known copies, where all the elements of the strict Cretan Art of the 17th century are scrupulously observed.

The stability of the style, the innovative mood and the great popularity that characterized Tzanes' work had a profound impact on Ioannis Tzen. The latter seems to have borrowed all those elements that suited him best for his work, such as the structured creation of the figures and the precise design. Ioannis Tzen was strongly influenced by the Byzantine iconographical standards of the 14th and 15th centuries, as well as by the Italian patterns of the early Italian Renaissance.

In the icon no. A.S. / 323 (fig. 9) (dimensions 52,5 x 46,6 x 2 cm), the central subject of the enthroned Virgin Directress (Odigitria), accompanied by the archangels and surrounded by the twelve apostles and six holy hierarchs, is dated in the 18th century and is also repeated in the icon of the Monastery of Varlaam. The icon comes from Greek islands and is preserved in the Private Swiss Collection of Siegfried Amberg-Herzog (Chatzidakis et al. 1968, fig. 56). In all likelihood, the painter made a copy of the specific theme from an anthivolon, which he had located in some island area of Greece. One may note that the icon in Switzerland has common iconographic and stylistic features with the icon in question. Its dimensions are almost the same as the dimensions of the image of the Monastery of Varlaam.

What is also interesting in Tzanes' icon is not only the originality of the composition, but the rich theological content he is addressing. In the icon of the Monastery of Varlaam, Tzanes focuses on the main figure of the enthroned full-length Virgin Mary, accompanied by the archangels, while the twelve figures of the apostles indicate their relationship with the Incarnate Word. The choice of the hierarchs by Tzanes is also quite intriguing. Lastly, what someone may also notice in the icon of the Monastery of Varlaam is its solemnity and synthetic balance.

In addition, one may argue that this is not the first time that an icon of Tzane has been copied by later painters. For example, we can refer to the icon of Christ Pantocrator with the twelve apostles dating in 1687 (dimensions 1,33x 0,95x 0,02 m) from the Kato Panagia of Arta (fig. 10)

(Papadopoulou – Tsiara 2008, 154 et seq. cf. Papatheophanous-Tsouri 1981, 243-245) which was copied by an unknown painter in 1683 (dimensions 1,13 x 0,82 m) (Papadopoulou – Tsiara 2008, 158-159; cf. Papadopoulou 2002, 54, fig. 61). The icon which depicts the Christ and the Apostles and is kept in the church of Saint Theodora of Arta has also the same theme. The latter icon is dated to the end of the 17th – beginning of the 18th century (Papadopoulou – Tsiara 2008, 160-161; cf. Papatheophanous-Tsouri 1981, 243-245) and has a more rustic character in contrast with the icon in the church of St. Basil in Arta. Additionally, some other examples are the icon of Saint Theodora (dimensions 40,5 x 29 x 3 cm) kept at the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens (Katselaki 1995, 129-138) and an icon with the same subject (dimensions 37 x 27 cm) by an unknown painter from the 18th century, which is kept at the Greek Institute in Venice (Chatzidakis 1962, 170; cf. Tselenti-Papadopoulou 2002, 226, n. Cat. 188; cf. Katselaki 1995, 137, fig. 9).

It is clear that the iconographic pursuits of early modern artists (i.e. Ioannis Tzen, et al.), in works of older artists (such as Emmanuel Tzanes, Emmanuel Lambardos, Michael Damaskinos and Andreas Ritzos) put forward the theological content of their icons but also the artistic skill of the previous inspired artists who created them and became role models to their younger counterparts.

It is worth recalling that the earlier artists are those who established the iconography and the style of the late Cretan Art, while the Church mostly supported the production and distribution of these important artworks blessing them with liturgical significance (Konstantoudaki 1973, 291-380; cf. Paliouras 1991, 410 et seq.).

To conclude, the icon of the Virgin Mary surrounded by the apostles and hierarchs is included in works that Emmanuel Tzanes created during his mature age, and indicates that the artistic production of the Cretan School continues to have a great impact on the creative renewal until the second half of the 18th century.

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Appendix



Fig. 1. Icon of the Virgin holding the Christ child with archangels, apostles, evangelists and hierarch saints, work of the priest Emmanuel Tzanes. 1668. Varlaam Monastery. Meteora.



Fig. 2. Icon of the Virgin holding the Christ child with archangels, apostles, evangelists and hierarch saints, work of the priest Emmanuel Tzanes. 1668. Detail. The inscription.



Fig. 3. Icon of the Virgin holding the Christ child, work of Andrew Ritzos. Second half of the 15th century. Patmos. New Sacristy. Monastery of Saint John Theologos. (Chatzidakis 1988, 144).



Fig. 4. Icon of Virgin holding the Christ child with archangels, saints and scenes of Dodecaorton. No. 3051, c.1500. Benaki Museum. Athens. (Drandaki 2010, 211).

THE ICON OF THE VIRGIN AND THE CHILD WITH ARCHANGELS, AND SAINTS.
WORK OF THE ARTIST-PRIEST EMMANUEL TZANES (1668) FROM THE SACRISTY
OF THE MONASTERY OF VARLAAM / METEORA-THESSALY



Fig. 5. Panaghiarion with the Virgin holding the Christ child with the archangels and the Hospitality of Abraham, work of Nicolas Ritzos(?). The end of the 15th century. Patmos. New Sacristy. Monastery of Saint John Theologos. (Chatzidakis 1988, 148).



Fig. 6. Icon of Virgin holding the Christ child with archangels and prophets. No. 431. First half of the 16th century. Galleria dell'Accademia. Florence. Italy. (Chatzidaki 1993, 99).



Fig. 7. Icon of Virgin holding the Christ child with archangels. 17th century. Sacristy of the Church Panaghia Corfiatissa. Plaka of Milos. Cyclades islands. (Gerousi 1999, 27).



8. Icon of the Virgin holding the Christ child with archangels, apostles, evangelists and hierarch saints, work of John Tzennos. 1677. Corfu. Church of Resurrection of Jesus. (Cemetery). (Personal archive).

THE ICON OF THE VIRGIN AND THE CHILD WITH ARCHANGELS, AND SAINTS.
WORK OF THE ARTIST-PRIEST EMMANUEL TZANES (1668) FROM THE SACRISTY
OF THE MONASTERY OF VARLAAM / METEORA-THESSALY



Fig. 9. Icon of the Virgin holding the Christ child with archangels, apostles, evangelists and hierarch saints. No. A.S./323. Second half of the 18th century. Private Collection in Switzerland of Siegfried Amberg- Herzog. (Chatzidakis et als. 1968, fig. 56).



Fig. 10. Icon of Christ enthroned and twelve apostles. 1678. Monastery of Kato Panaghia. Chapel of Saint Agnes. Arta. (Papadopoulou-Tsiara 2008, 154).