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VENETO-BYZANTINE "HYBRIDS": TOWARDS A REASSESSMENT

Michele Bacci

Notwithstanding the many scholarly efforts to cross the boundaries separating the traditional research fields of art history, our picture of the artistic relationship of Venice and the Latin-ruled territories of the eastern Mediterranean (such as Crete, the Aegean Islands, Rhodes, and Cyprus) still proves to be rather nebulous, especially as regards their genres and forms of painting. In a more or less conscious way, art historians are still troubled by artwork that appear incoherent, eclectic, and stylistically mixed, even when such works celebrate artistic exchange as one of the major outcomes of human ingenuity. Indeed, emphasis on the blending of forms seems to be one of the most important academic trends of this post-postmodern globalized world, and the controversial terms "hybridity" and "hybridization" have become very fashionable in recent years, despite their semantic ambiguity and complexity. The word "hybrid," whose exact etymological roots are unclear, stems from the Latin *hibryda* (bastard), and is used in biology to characterize animal or vegetal organisms produced by the crossbreeding of different species. Yet in making use of such a concept, one implicitly acknowledges that hybrid art forms are ipso facto distinct from other forms, which are considered to be as preexisting, intrinsically coherent, and uniform.

Admittedly, artworks have long been appreciated or condemned according to their alleged "coherence": in the past, as they were supposed to constitute the most profound, rooted, and magnificent witnesses to a nation's spiritual achievements (according to the collectivist myth of the *genius loci*), they were expected to bear witness and actually to give shape to a robust, easily recognizable, and irreproachable personality. In nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Italy, the need to work out a definite, almost stereotyped concept of "national style" proved to be especially urgent on political grounds, in that it served the new state's agenda for the definition of a still lacking transregional identity. Such features of early modern art as spatial realism, imitation of nature, and the supremacy of drawing and painting over all other artistic media, which had been traditionally regarded as hallmarks of specific artists or local schools,¹ were now described as nation specific—that is, as an optically accurate and truthful imitation of reality, whose starting point had been Giotto's work and the apparently all-pervasive influence of his style from the late fourteenth century onwards.²

Scholars did not deny that deviations from this development could occur, yet they tended to interpret such derivations in terms of "influence"—a word borrowed from either astrology or medicine, hinting at a passive, unsolicited, and negative relationship with something coming from the outside.³ The most irritating and long lasting of all such deviations was the so-called "maniera greca," another ambiguous expression which Vasari used to characterize the pictorial production of Tuscany before Cimabue and Giotto and which was later employed in connection with any kind of Byzantinizing phenomena in Italian art, regardless of the historical context or the religious, cultural, and political motivations underlying them. Pre-Giottoesque painting, as the influential scholar Roberto Longhi pronounced in unambiguous, albeit frankly rhetorical terms, was guilty of having delayed by almost fifty years the rediscovery of naturalistic space and plastically rendered bodies already inaugurated in the context of sculpture by Nicola Pisano, while relying on an anachronistic, foreign, and fundamentally abstract and anticlassical repertory of forms. Longhi condemned these artworks as "looking more like the Manichaean miniatures of Turkestan than our art;" others described the same phenomenon in terms of magic, as a "sorcery" hurled by Byzantium at the awakening, distinctly "Latin" culture of late medieval Italy.⁴ The Byzantinist Sergio Bettini made use of a softer metaphor, that of a tidal wave originating from Constantinople and flooding the greater part of the Italian peninsula.⁵

Admittedly, there was a place in Italy whence the Byzantine waves started only very late to flow back. The persistence of "Oriental" motifs in Venice, though combined with Gothic elements pointing to connections with France and Germany rather than with the rest of Italy, had become a commonplace notion in the nineteenth century and was a valuable source of inspiration for John Ruskin's conception of the *Serenissima's* early art as a stronghold of medieval purity and religious sensibility against the corruptive power of the early Renaissance.⁶ By contrast, it proved really difficult for those scholars who shared the Vasarian and positivistic view of artistic progress to express any word of appreciation for Venetian trecento art, which seemed to rely anachronistically on old-fashioned "Eastern" models, or to explore eclectic paths of stylistic convergence when the new art of Giotto was explored and made popular in nearby Padua. Some scholars had the feeling that Venice had entered a sort of "nirvana" that lasted until the beginning of the fifteenth century or even later and inoculated Venetian artists against any achievement of the Tuscan "revolution." Others distinguished a popular tradition of religious painting that relied on old Byzantine models interpreted in very rude and linear terms from an aristocratic trend that deliberately promoted the blending of Byzantine and Gothic forms, because the mixture served the Venetian nobility's quest for luxury, authority, and solemnity.⁷ In general terms, the extant works offered evidence that local artists, "although skilful and very capable, had little individuality."⁸

In this respect, Longhi's attitude toward Venice proved to be even more radical than his views regarding the central-Italian "maniera greca." According to Longhi, the painters working in the lagoon had manifested no interest in contemporary Italian art, even if they must have been thoroughly aware of the revolutionary accomplishments of their Florentine, Sienese, or even Bolognese colleagues. Whereas the Riminese followers of Giotto proved ingenious, inasmuch as they combined the new realistic forms with some elements of the "much more ancient and illustrious Oriental roots" represented by the mosaics of Ravenna, for historians of Italian art—who should have confined themselves to singling out of that stylistic mélange only those elements "bearing witness to the artists' desire to extract out of the gilded and dusty beehive of Byzantinism some Franco-Venetian, if not the true Italian honey"⁹—the Venetians, who kept looking at the discredited and decadent paintings of Palaiologan Constantinople, were not really worth studying. Veneziano's work is essentially composite, but this matter of fact was regarded with disappointment by formalist scholars. As the art historian Terisio Pignatti observed as late as 1961, "Paolo lacks the quality of an artistic hero, i.e., of someone able to shape the development of a superior culture of figural painting. . . . His final destination is nothing but eclecticism and betrays, in essence, a weak personality, if compared to other great masters of Italian painting."¹⁰

An analogously negative, if not horrified, attitude towards Greco-Latin "hybridizations" was manifested by the first authors who looked at the artistic landscape of the "Levantine" countries. In the wake of European expansion in the Mediterranean in the second half of the nineteenth century, such scholars as Louis de Mas Latrie, Melchior de Vogüé, and Camille Enlart were very much inclined to describe the monumental remnants of the Latin rule in Cyprus and Palestine as, at most, pure grafts of Western art into Middle Eastern soil that made no effort to enter into a dialogue with the indigenous Greek or Arab traditions.¹¹ In Enlart's view, for example, the architecture of Lusignan Cyprus had to be just one of the many debased provincial variants of the Gothic language that had originated in the Île-de-France. Yet he could not go so far as to pretend that French tradition also lay behind the remnants of murals in the major buildings of Nicosia and Famagusta. Given that France preserved only a very few remains of monumental decoration from the late Middle Ages, it proved easier to turn towards Italian *comparanda* in order to stress that the Latin settlers on Cyprus shared their contemporaries' disgust with Byzantine arts and were convinced that the settlers' identity could be manifested only by the adoption of indisputably Western forms. Most significantly, the frescoes in Famagusta—which are indeed the work of different artists made in different styles—have always been described as Italianate, but usually as closer to the more distinctively Gothic art of Siena than the Tuscan pictorial dialect invented by Giotto.¹² In general, Enlart ruled out the possibility of any interaction with either the

indigenous or the metropolitan Byzantine tradition, and actually detected none in the context of monumental decoration. As with architecture, he admitted that some hybridizations did take place in the later period, during the Venetian domination of the eastern Mediterranean in the sixteenth century, but he condemned them resolutely as "bastardized," "unnatural," and "absurd combinations."¹³

Not unlike Enlart, the Italian scholar Giuseppe Gerola looked at the extant Latin monuments on Crete and the Aegean Islands as a testimony to Venice's colonial policy of making use of Renaissance forms in order to visualize its supremacy in the maritime lands of the Levant. Yet the wealth of information acquired in situ allowed him to observe that whereas the Venetian imprint could be easily detected in the fields of architecture and sculpture, both panel and mural painting seemed to remain constantly loyal to Byzantine tradition. He confessed to be thoroughly unable to understand why the encounter with the Italian genius had generated and created, even in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, no impetus of rebellion against the dictatorship of Greek Orthodox conventions. A partial explanation was that beginning with its domination on the island in the thirteenth century and continuing into the fourteenth, Venice was not yet conscious of its own art and was fascinated by the still sufficiently vital, not thoroughly "fossilized," expressions of the Eastern pictorial tradition.¹⁴

Paradoxically, this view was long shared by those Greek Byzantinists who chose to describe Byzantine art as an expression of the long-lasting and deep-rooted Hellenic identity, which had undergone an ambiguous process of definition on both linguistic and religious grounds since the birth of the new Greek state in 1821. The myth of Christian Hellenism, worked out in the nineteenth century, implied a rather static view of the development of the pictorial arts, which were seen as the most authoritative cultural tradition the Greek people had inherited from the Byzantine Empire. Byzantine painting was associated with a coherent repertoire of forms, stylistic devices, iconographic programs, and technical procedures deemed to be firmly rooted in Late Antiquity and to have been jealously preserved in Constantinople until its fall in 1453.¹⁵ The debate on the coexistence of classical and anticlassical components in Byzantine art—initiated by such scholars as Charles Diehl, Josef Strzygowski, and Dimitrij Ajnalov, which incidentally paved the way for the conceptualization of Eastern European local traditions as "national arts" (e.g., Bogdan Filov's characterization of Bulgarian painting)¹⁶—was usually understood as reflecting a tension between the capital (or the main metropolitan centers) and the empire's many provinces. The provinces were eventually regarded in Greek scholarship as more open to the influence of both Islamic and Western art while maintaining an essentially Hellenic character. Moreover, the provincial artistic style was considered to be directly connected to the expression of religious belief and ethnic identity and was accordingly deemed to have been strenuously

fostered by the Greek Orthodox people even outside the boundaries of the Eastern Christian Empire.¹⁷

In this respect, it seems only natural to think that Greek painters in Venetian-ruled Crete were ideologically indifferent to Venetian painting, at least as long as Constantinople exerted her role as the artistic center of the Byzantine world. The cultural resistance of Greek communities under Ottoman rule was frequently and rather indiscriminately used as a conceptual tool to examine the dynamics at work in other contexts. In general terms, it was emphasized that the "Frankish conquest," to put it in Georgios Sotiriou's words, "neither affected nor interrupted the development of Byzantine art in the Greek world."¹⁸ Such assertions relied on the idea that style was perceived by foreign-ruled Greeks in the late Middle Ages as a symbol of religious and ethnic identity. In an article published in 1953 the prominent scholar Manolis Chatzidakis spoke of post-Byzantine art as a kind of medieval relic "giving expression to the spirit and soul of contemporary Hellenism, which clung to its own traditions in the hope of safeguarding its individual character. In this way the subjugated Greeks became aware of the differences separating them from their Turkish and Venetian oppressors." Even on Crete, where painters were more exposed to Italian influence, a few decorative or iconographic elements were occasionally borrowed, but the artists always remained loyal to an antirealistic style. Those who did deviate from this tendency—for example, El Greco—eventually became prominent artists, but "they were then no longer in sync with the national sentiment."¹⁹

If stylistic coherence is perceived as a symptom of a people's collective sensibility, stylistically mixed artworks have almost no chance of being considered as creations deserving examination on art historical grounds. Yet such artworks do exist and are mostly known from a rather heterogeneous group of painted panels either dating or that are supposed to date from the fourteenth century, panels whose outward appearance seems awkwardly *mélange* on both stylistic and iconographic grounds. In the nineteenth century the Russian scholars Nikolay Likhachev and Nikodim Kondakov sought to demonstrate that icon painting in their homeland was rooted in what they called the Italo-Greek "koiné" of the thirteenth century—that is, the artistic blend of Western and Byzantine elements thought to have been established by Greek painters in Venice and elsewhere in Italy and therefore exported during the fourteenth century to Russia via either the Venetian-ruled countries of the Mediterranean or the Balkan lands. This then made it possible for Likhachev and Kondakov to assert that Russian art was not just a byproduct of Byzantine culture but rather an original synthesis of different influences.²⁰

Among other "hybrid"-looking paintings that blend Byzantine and Gothic features is a group of panels of different formats and artistic quality—variously labeled as "Italo-Greek," "Italo-Byzantine," "Greco-Venetian," "Veneto-Greek,"

or "Veneto-Cretan"—most of which had been circulating on the art market and entered several prestigious collections at the turn of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth. Treated almost as a homogeneous group, in most cases nothing was known about the panels' origins, and their "mixed" appearance was the only clue to their attribution to Venice, as the lagoon was deemed to be the only place in Italy where such encounters could actually take place in the fourteenth century. The first attempt to write a history of these artworks was made in 1933 by Sergio Bettini, who used a wide range of examples (including works today considered to be Cretan or Cypriot) to stress the role of the *Serenissima* as artistic capital of the Greek world in the late Middle Ages and during the Renaissance (a concept later accused of being close to Mussolini's colonialist policy in the Mediterranean). In fact, Bettini assumed that Greek emigré artists to Venice, known to have flourished in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were already firmly established in the fourteenth. This rather oddly implied the coexistence of two parallel trends, both essentially "mixed" in character, hence difficult to keep apart: in general terms, the native Venetians were trained in a kind of old-fashioned "maniera greca" and tended to transform their style into something innovative, whereas the imported Greek school limited itself to appropriating some isolated elements from Western art and inserting them into compositions, without altering the artworks' essentially Byzantine character.²¹

In the 1940s the consolidated, established perception of Venice as a "liminal" site of overlapping *Kunstlandschaften* enabled the American connoisseur Edward B. Garrison to imagine an enlarged, more articulated space for the production of hybrid artworks. The geographic distribution of "mixed" paintings ought, he thought, to correspond to their more or less evident degree of Byzantinism: Garrison made use of the label "Venetian school" to indicate a group of "retardataire" artworks displaying a mixture of Byzantinizing elements, rooted in the local "maniera greca," and quotations from fourteenth-century Sienese art, whereas all those paintings whose Byzantine elements looked "unassimilated" and inharmoniously combined with less evident Italianate elements were in his view to be relegated to the east of Venice, its maritime outskirts on the north Adriatic, and further eastward to the Dalmatian coast, even if only a very few *comparanda* could be recognized in situ.²² As the Croatian scholar Grgo Gamulin observed, tongue in cheek, "it's just obvious that Dalmatia cannot be an exotic refuge to all those paintings which embarrass us."²³

Despite its weakness, the notion of "Adriatic" and "Dalmatian painting" has survived in the art historical discourse until today, even if a great number of the works associated with it are now supposed to be either Venetian or Constantinopolitan (e.g., the Volpi, now Andreadis, Nativity), or Levantine—including the much discussed Kahn and Mellon Madonnas in the National Gallery of Washington, DC,

or the sixteenth-century Cretan icon of the Virgin and Child Nikopeia in the Venetian church of San Giovanni in Bragora.²⁴ Indeed, by inventing this conceptual rather than geographic space, the American Garrison managed to remove Bettini's "Italo-Greek" school from Italian soil and rule out the possibility of two artistic trends—one more "Byzantine," one more Italian, yet both "hybridized"—coexisting in Venice during the fourteenth century. Bettini's idea, however, was unexpectedly reasserted by the Soviet scholar Victor Lazarev, who went so far as to maintain that the success in the lagoon of old-fashioned Byzantine artworks, due to unskilled Greek emigrés, was a decadent and eclectic phenomenon, serving both the old and new aristocracy's reactionary taste and its alleged aversion to Giotto's painting as a manifestation of "bourgeois realism."²⁵

During the 1970s the historiographical myth of the "Veneto-Byzantine" school was demolished by the Greek scholar Manolis Chatzidakis, who denied Venice any role as a center of icon production and substituted instead Venetian-ruled Crete, which had become much better known after the publication of a number of new documents found in the State Archives of Venice.²⁶ In his interpretation the geographic shift corresponded to a chronological shift, as he tended to think of the establishment of icon workshops on the island as a more or less direct outcome of the fall of Constantinople in 1453, which would have triggered a massive transfer of painters from the Byzantine capital to Candia and substantially altered the artistic habits of the island. Chatzidakis saw these refugees and their Cretan pupils as skilled in painting alternatively *alla greca* or *alla latina*; in so doing, they managed to suit the visual habits and religious needs of both Catholic and Orthodox patrons. Yet the artists usually refrained from blending the two stylistic trends, as they always remained perfectly aware of "the transcendental meaning of their own style," intimately associated with both their religious and ethnic identities. Hybrids—though limited in number—were consequently interpreted as Westernizing icons intended for a Latin audience, which revealed a strikingly conservative attitude. The Greek painters' loyalty to forms rooted in the painting practice of late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century Venice was not due to their lack of contact with the Renaissance but rather to their patrons, who, like Lazarev's aristocrats, proved to be reactionary and nostalgic for trecento art.²⁷ Chatzidakis's argument was eventually expanded through association of ideological meaning with the mixed style—that is, relating the promotion of composite art forms to unionist attempts at confessional syncretism and to the manufacture of a shared Christian identity in the face of the Ottoman threat.²⁸

In sum, we can observe that two opposite forces traditionally underlay the scholarly approach to late medieval artworks in Venice, Crete, or even Cyprus combining Byzantine and Western elements: On one side there are specialists in Italian art, who tend to distance Venetian "Byzantinizing" artworks from the

fifteenth-century Renaissance and to therefore date them as close as possible to the thirteenth century and preferably within the first half of the fourteenth century, because of their alleged association with the old-fashioned *maniera greca*. On the other side there are Byzantinists, who tend to postdate mixed works to the period following the fall of Constantinople. As a result, the period lasting from the mid-fourteenth through the mid-fifteenth century has long remained undefined in the art historical debate. Yet our knowledge has improved significantly in the last decades, especially as regards the specific context of Crete: we now know that Candia (present-day Heraklion) was an important center of both mural and icon painting by the year 1400; that workshops of both Venetian and Constantinopolitan, as well as indigenous Cretan, artists were established there from the fourteenth century onward; and that Italian and Greek painters collaborated in the workshops and that they eventually made use of both Western and Byzantine stylistic and compositional patterns even within the same artwork.²⁹ The Venetian archives have provided a valuable range of information about the social and economic background of art production on Crete, yet our knowledge is limited by the scarcity of evidence about the pictorial programs of the Latin churches in the port towns of the island during the trecento. Nonetheless, some conclusions can be formulated, if we adopt a more comprehensive, comparative approach.

First, it must be stressed that Westerners, on Crete as elsewhere in the Levant, did not fail to provide their ritual spaces with structures, liturgical objects, and ornaments of special importance for the performance of their rites, giving expression to their specific forms of collective and individual devotion. The patterns of decoration were determined by a number of factors, including the institutional and liturgical function of the building, the association with either secular clergy or mendicant and Benedictine orders, and the more or less influential role played by lay patrons. The latter tended to look at churches as relational spaces where they were able to communicate to both God and their fellow citizens their wish for their soul's redemption, by means of sumptuous burial structures, chapels reserved for the liturgical celebration of anniversaries and votive masses, and images "pro anima"—single murals or painted panels representing their patron saints, eventually associated with the lay patrons' portraits and other visual markers of their individual and/or collective identity (inscriptions and coats of arms). Frequently, the results of this particular approach to sacred space were rather chaotic sequences of autonomous murals, arcosolia, and niche chapels scattered along the nave walls, as witnessed notably by the interior decoration of the Carmelite church and other buildings in Famagusta, Cyprus, that mostly date from the period of Genoese rule (1374–1454).³⁰

Latin settlers could indeed turn to Italian artists, either resident or itinerant, when they wanted such a "pro anima" image to be made. A good example of this



Fig. 1. St. Lucy. Mural painting, ca. 1330. Rhodes, Panagia tou Kastrou. (Photo: Elias Kollias, *Η μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου και το Παλάτι του Μεγάλου Μαγίστρου* [Athens: Hypourgeio Politismou, Tameio Archaialogikon Poron, 1994], p. 118.)

is the fresco displaying St. Lucy in the Panagia tou Kastrou in Rhodes, the major church in the general quarters of the Hospitallers of St. John (Fig. 1).³¹ The work, which probably dates from no later than the second quarter of the fourteenth century, makes use of distinctively Italian compositional and iconographic features, such as the multicolored, gabled frame and the halos decorated with incised rays. On stylistic grounds, it seems to be in touch with the Neapolitan followers of Giotto's manner, especially as regards the treatment of physiognomic details. Can we therefore infer that the patronage of an image typologically connected with Western patterns of devotion also inevitably implies the involvement of a Western artist?



Fig. 2. Remnants of a votive mural with the Virgin of Mercy (?) and St. Mary Magdalene. Late fourteenth century. Famagusta, Agios Georgios Exorinos. (Photo: Author.)

This hypothesis is contradicted by some more notable examples from Famagusta, the most surprising one being that of a fragmentary fresco in the so-called “Nestorian” church (Agios Georgios Exorinos) (Fig. 2). This originally served as a Maronite or Melkite Syrian-rite building and was most probably ruled by a community of refugees from Gibelet (present-day Jbail, Lebanon). There a member of the influential Embriaco family (the former lords of Jbail) commissioned a “pro anima” mural in the south aisle, manifesting his or her wish to be commemorated by the Arab Christian community. The painting was made by a Palaiologan artist (probably an immigrant from either Constantinople or Thessaloniki) who, while remaining loyal to Byzantine tradition in technique and style, made efforts to imitate the compositional, iconographical, and typological features of an Italian “pro anima” mural: he represented most probably a Virgin of Mercy (as is indicated by the remnant of a small angel holding that figure’s mantle), flanked by a now lost figure and a standing Mary Magdalene with loose hair. The figures were represented on an ultramarine blue background and were framed by a broad band that includes foliate motifs and the Embriaco’s coats of arms within quatrefoils.



Fig. 3. St. Nicholas. Votive mural, late fourteenth century. Famagusta, Our Lady of Carmel. (Photo: Author.)

In Famagusta the same painter seems to have been responsible for further “pro anima” murals in the Carmelite church and for the more coherent campaign of frescoed decoration in the Benedictine church of St. Anne, which was financed by a Genoese merchant named Corrado Tarigo. In such settings the artist endeavored to gratify his Latin donor’s visual expectations—for example, by representing St. Nicholas mitred (Fig. 3)—and without altering his technique or style, especially when it came to the Gospel scenes, to fit the decorative program to the spatial arrangement of a Latin church. In general terms, in the context of Famagusta’s mixed society, style can hardly be considered to have been perceived as a visual

marker of collective or "ethnic" self-awareness; a much more important role was played by such signs as distinctive inscriptions or heraldry. Equally important was the sumptuous appearance of each community's church, regardless of the fact that its stylistic features may have been borrowed from other people's traditions, as is so clearly revealed by the Gothic features in the metropolitan church of St. George of the Greeks.³²

Indeed, the Latin residents of Famagusta did not patronize an itinerant Byzantine artist because of a lack of Western painters in town (at least two are actually known to have been active in the 1360s and 1380s). On the contrary, the master's extensive work in at least three churches indicates that his art was appreciated and considered to be suitable for Latin-rite buildings. This is hardly surprising, if one considers that even in Genoa the town cathedral had already been decorated with Palaiologan-style murals by the first quarter of the fourteenth century.³³ We can assume that analogous dynamics operated on Crete and in this instance we are assisted by some archival evidence. First, we know that Italian and Greek painters (including both indigenous artists and immigrants) could collaborate in various ways. As early as 1331 we have documentary evidence that a painter from Constantinople was engaged as apprentice in the workshop of a Venetian painter in Candia.³⁴ Seventy years later, on November 23, 1400, another immigrant from the Byzantine capital, Nikolaos Philanthropinos, found it profitable to establish a joint venture with a Venetian painter named Nicolò Storladio living in Crete. The two painters agreed to equitably share their profits, expenses for the workshop rent, and even working hours. Unfortunately, nothing is said about the specific ways in which they shared their commissions and collaborated in practice. Yet this document proves to be of utmost importance inasmuch it demonstrates that regardless of linguistic or confessional differences, nothing kept a Byzantine artist from working in synergy with a Latin colleague, and they could therefore easily exchange ideas and suggestions.³⁵

No doubt that in a culturally mixed context like Crete, this kind of business association proved to be advantageous on economic grounds, as it enabled a workshop to suit the specific needs of and become especially attractive to both Greek and Latin resident patrons. This does not imply, however, that resident Venetians tended inevitably to commission Italian-style works. For example, we are informed that in 1371 the Venetian resident Costanzo Gerardo asked a Greek priest and painter named Ioannis Frangos to decorate Gerardo's entire private chapel after the model of a nearby village's Greek Orthodox church—which implies that not only did he rely on a Byzantine-trained painter but, even more, that he was fascinated by Byzantine patterns of church decoration.³⁶ Further evidence demonstrates that the opposite dynamic could have been at work on Crete. On July 31, 1353, a Venetian painter running a workshop in Candia, Giovanni Gradenigo, agreed to decorate a

church in honor of Christ Pantocrator with subjects that the donor, the hieromonk Daniel Trasthrea, prescribed.³⁷ There are few doubts that the program, having been inspired by a member of the Orthodox clergy, must have been in keeping with the iconographical and compositional standards of Byzantine tradition, but what about Gradenigo's style? Did the donor turn to Gradenigo for practical reasons or because his particular style was also appreciated? It may well be that given the composite character of mid-trecento Venetian painting, the Italian manner did not look unfamiliar to the hieromonk, who may not have perceived any incongruence with his own visual conventions—or, vice versa, that he was fascinated by the distinctive features of the Venetian style (especially ornaments) and considered them an important means of giving his chapel an unusually sumptuous feeling.

This brings us again to the historical problem of when (and why) styles came to be appreciated as ethnic-bound cultural phenomena. Such expressions as "more Graeco," frequently found in the inventories of Western cathedrals in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, hint more at technical and typological characteristics than at stylistic features. In the context of painting, especially of icons, the distinction between images *alla greca* and *alla latina* seems to be clearly expressed only from the late fifteenth century onwards;³⁸ and even in that case one must wonder if the terms are always meant to describe two different ways of representing the world, or rather, two material types of panel paintings (such as icons and altarpieces). Nonetheless, it can be safely stated that by the end of the quattrocento, Westerners tended to look at Byzantine style as reflected by icons as something anachronistic yet mirroring a centuries-old pictorial tradition: for instance, in 1480 the pilgrim Felix Fabri wrote that the icons on sale in the workshops of Candia were worthy of worship, as they corresponded to the particular style of painting associated with the Evangelist Luke, the portraitist of Christ and the Virgin Mary.³⁹

Undoubtedly, the Orthodox had almost no reason to appreciate Western paintings on religious grounds. According to a long-standing and misleading cliché, Latins were supposed to be basically iconophobic, and even when their paintings happened to represent holy figures, they did so in an inaccurate and chaotic way: the frequent absence of *tituli*, as observed by Georgios Melissenos in an often-quoted passage, was a clear witness to this.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, this attitude did not necessarily prevent Greek devotees from appreciating some aspects of contemporary Italian painting. The rich ornamental repertory of Gothic art could provide sacred spaces with an especially sumptuous (and devotionally efficacious) appearance. The compositional and iconographic patterns associated with Western funerary and "pro anima" images could be appreciated, as they served to visualize individual piety. In this respect, the strikingly "realistic" rendering of the deceased in the painted arcosolium of ca. 1453 in the narthex of the Kariye Camii, Constantinople, is not just witness to Byzantine appreciation of Renaissance art but a

testimony to an individual patron's interest in using portraits as a means of emphasizing his or her special and unambiguous association with a holy figure.⁴¹

Finally, the Italian tendency to invest traditional images of the Passion with a deeply dramatic expressiveness, serving the Mendicant orders' emphasis on Christ's sacrifice, did not go unnoticed in the Latin-ruled countries of the eastern Mediterranean. Passion narratives were indeed a major subject of fourteenth-century Venetian painting, to such an extent that a special type of painted panel devoted to scenes from the Gospels was developed and disseminated in the lagoon. It is highly probable that the Franciscans and Dominicans established in Cretan towns made use of such pictorial schemes and displayed them in their churches. It is no coincidence that one of the few devotional panels exported from Venice to the Levant preserved in situ to this day is a highly elaborate late fourteenth-century Crucifixion in the Hodegetria church in the main center of Kimolos (Fig. 4).⁴² This striking composition was meant to enable the viewer not only to feel a deep empathy with the Passion drama but also to gain a kind of mystical access to the most obscure mysteries of Christ's sacrifice. The composition is especially crowded, as it includes the pious women with the swooning Virgin and St. John to the left, and to the right the group of Jews, soldiers, and even a Mongolian attendant. At the same time, the Passion is represented allegorically: personifications of the Christian virtues Obedience, Piety, Charity, and Humility nail the Son of God to the cross. The Eucharist is evoked by the gush of blood filling the chalice on the altar table, where a priest is celebrating Mass flanked by personifications of the crowned Church and the blindfolded Synagogue. Under the cross the sacrament of baptism, made possible by Christ's death on Calvary, is represented. Below the hill of Golgotha the canonical skull of Adam is substituted by a visual evocation of hell: the defeated devil and the Old Testament righteous, redeemed by Christ's resurrection, are represented within a large dark cave in the act of bowing to the Crucified. The composition is framed by medallions with prophets and apostles holding scrolls. At the apex is the pelican killing herself to nourish her chicks; from the nest emerges the hand of God, holding the key to heaven over the open Gospel. This compositional scheme, inspired by a sermon of St. Bernard, is encountered only in late fourteenth-century Venetian painting and constitutes a special variant of the Crucifixion scheme.⁴³

Orthodox devotees, who were often suspicious of friars (who were represented as hell bound in the Last Judgment) but were also attracted by the figure of St. Francis (whose image did appear in the decoration of Byzantine-rite churches), did not fail to appropriate some Westernizing formulae as long as they gave expression to the sorrowful aspect of holy events. A case in point is the very animated Crucifixion from ca. 1320 in the small church of Agioi Theodoroi, on the southwest coast of Crete. The painting shows a swooning Virgin, pious women



Fig. 4. Crucifixion. Painted panel, late fourteenth century. Kimolos, Hodegetria church. (Photo: *Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art* [Athens: Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, 1985], p. 97.)

with loose hair and gestures of despair, and the crucified Jesus, who is rendered in an especially contorted pose (Fig. 5).⁴⁴ Significantly, this Crucifixion is the only image with such a distinctively Italianate iconography in an otherwise coherent pictorial program, even if the technique and style of the Crucifixion remain loyal to the Byzantine tradition. Westernizing Passion cycles are frequently encountered in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Crete, and especially crowded and dramatic representations of the Crucifixion can also be seen in icon painting—for example, in an early fifteenth-century panel now in Stockholm.⁴⁵



Fig. 5. Crucifixion. Mural painting, ca. 1320. Crete, church of Agioi Theodoroi. (Photo: Author.)

The aforementioned examples suffice to suggest that the Greeks' attitude to Venetian religious art was not necessarily negative. At the same time, it would be misleading to think of Crete (or Rhodes or Cyprus) as a site of indiscriminate artistic *métissages*. The adoption of forms associated with other people's traditions was an essentially selective phenomenon, and the diverse combination of these forms was conditioned by the intentions and purposes of at least three social actors: donors or sponsors, who sought both to further their soul's salvation and to exhibit their actual piety; recipients more or less likely to respond favorably to pictorial inventions that conveyed a strong devotional message; and painters more or less able to effectively reformulate formulas borrowed from different pictorial trends.

In this respect, the evidence of panel painting is more difficult to assess than that provided by murals, since in most cases we do not know anything about the icons' provenance. An icon now housed at Pomona College in Claremont, California (Fig. 6), has usually been considered to be of Veneto-Byzantine origin, although its stylistic features betray hardly any connection with Western art. In fact, it can be safely said to be the work of a Palaiologan painter active in the second half of the fourteenth century.⁴⁶ The inserted coat of arms implies, however, that the image was commissioned by a Latin donor and that it was probably meant to be exhibited publicly in a church as a family's votive offering. It is quite probable that this occurred somewhere in the Levant, rather than in Italy, because analogous icons

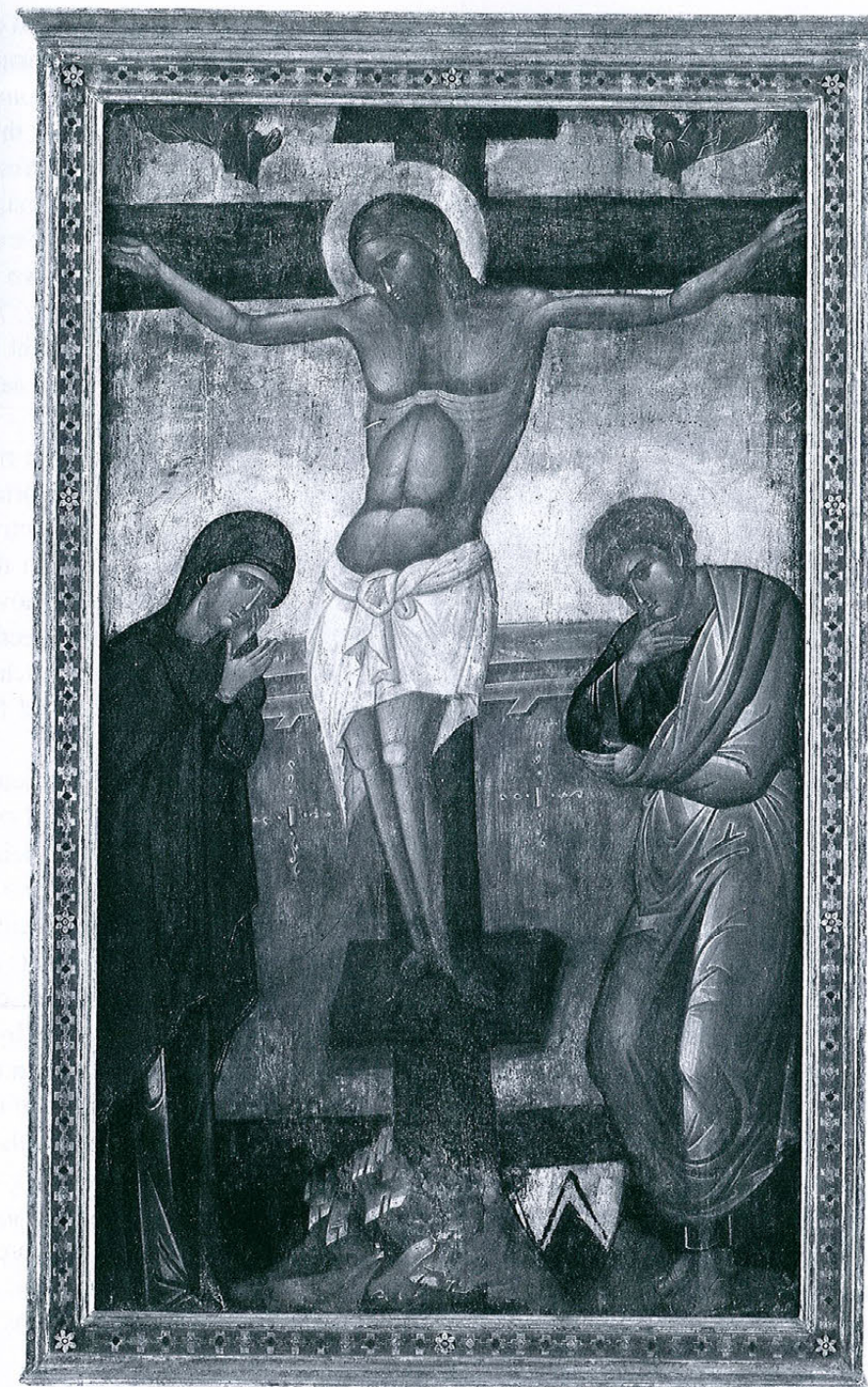


Fig. 6. Crucifixion. Icon, ca. 1370–80. Claremont, CA, Pomona College. (Photo: Courtesy of the Pomona College Museum of Art.)

bearing heraldic symbols are known from Crete and Cyprus.⁴⁷ The preservation of such works in Orthodox-rite buildings may imply that the icons served as visual strategies by which Latin aristocrats manifested both their piety and social prominence vis-à-vis the Greek community. Yet this did not rule out the possibility that images intended as gifts to non-Latin churches and holy sites could also be Western in style and composition: an obvious case is the frequently mentioned image of St. Catherine, signed in 1387 by one Martín de Villanueva, which was offered to the Sinai monastery by the Catalan consul in Damascus.⁴⁸ Less well known is an image of St. Barbara now preserved in the Coptic Museum of Cairo (Fig. 7). It proves to be a work of the early fifteenth century that was probably brought to Egypt as a votive gift in honor of the famous Egyptian saint whose tomb was said to be preserved in the Cairo church of Sitt Barbara.⁴⁹

Indeed, icons could be introduced even into the interiors of Latin-rite churches in the Western-ruled territories as in the West as votive gifts and ornaments, and some icons happened to be selected as visual focal points of collective and transconfessional worship: the Mesopanditissa, venerated until 1669 in the Cathedral of St. Titus in Candia, is an obvious case-in-point.⁵⁰ Also, certain novel types of icons would eventually be created in order to suit specific Western needs: such is the case with the oblong Cypriot icons that filled the quadrangular niches in the doorways of Nicosia Cathedral or the lunette-shaped panels intended for arcosolia and wall chapels on Cyprus and on Crete.⁵¹

Yet Latin-rite churches, which had usually more than just one altar and could indeed include many, also needed a number of altarpieces, and there is textual evidence to suggest that such works were soon introduced in the Levant. Depending on their size and liturgical function, altars could be decorated with single painted panels or more complex structures. A *Maestà*-type image descended evidently from Tuscan models and most likely dating from the mid-fourteenth century (Fig. 8), preserved in the church of St. Eleutherios in Tinos, is an interesting representative of the first category.⁵² The latter, the use of polyptychs, is indicated by a number of sources and corroborated by some extant artworks. A late fourteenth-century panel in the Benaki Museum, Athens (Fig. 9), renders the Adoration of the Magi in a rather stylized Byzantine manner, even if it replicates Western models in iconographic and compositional terms: the panel's unusual shape within an exuberant foliate frame indicates that it was originally the finial of a Venetian-style polyptych, like those made in the workshop of Paolo Veneziano. This panel's provenance from a Greek yet Catholic-rite church in the island of Paros may indicate that Greek converts in the Aegean had at least partially adopted the patterns of decoration and furnishings associated with Latin-rite churches.⁵³

Venice was known as a prominent center of wood carving and a richly ornamented frame was a distinctive hallmark of the polyptychs produced there. Their



Fig. 7. St. Barbara. Painted panel, ca. 1400. Cairo, Coptic Museum. (Photo: Author.)

use in the Venetian-ruled territories in the Levant is implied by their imitation in a major work of Cretan painting, the altarpiece now in Boston but originally preserved in the abbey church of Santo Stefano in Monopoli, Apulia, which since the thirteenth century had belonged to the Hospitallers of St. John (Fig. 10). This luxuriantly decorated painting, meant for a Latin-rite church, has been convincingly dated ca. 1400 and attributed to a Constantinopolitan artist working on Crete and possibly collaborating with a Western artist, as in the aforementioned case of Philanthropinos and Storlato. Stylistic and compositional formulae do not seem to be combined but rather to be juxtaposed selectively: figures such as the Virgin



Fig. 8. Virgin Enthroned and saints. Ca. 1350. Tinos, St. Eleutherios. (Photo: Charis Koutelakis.)

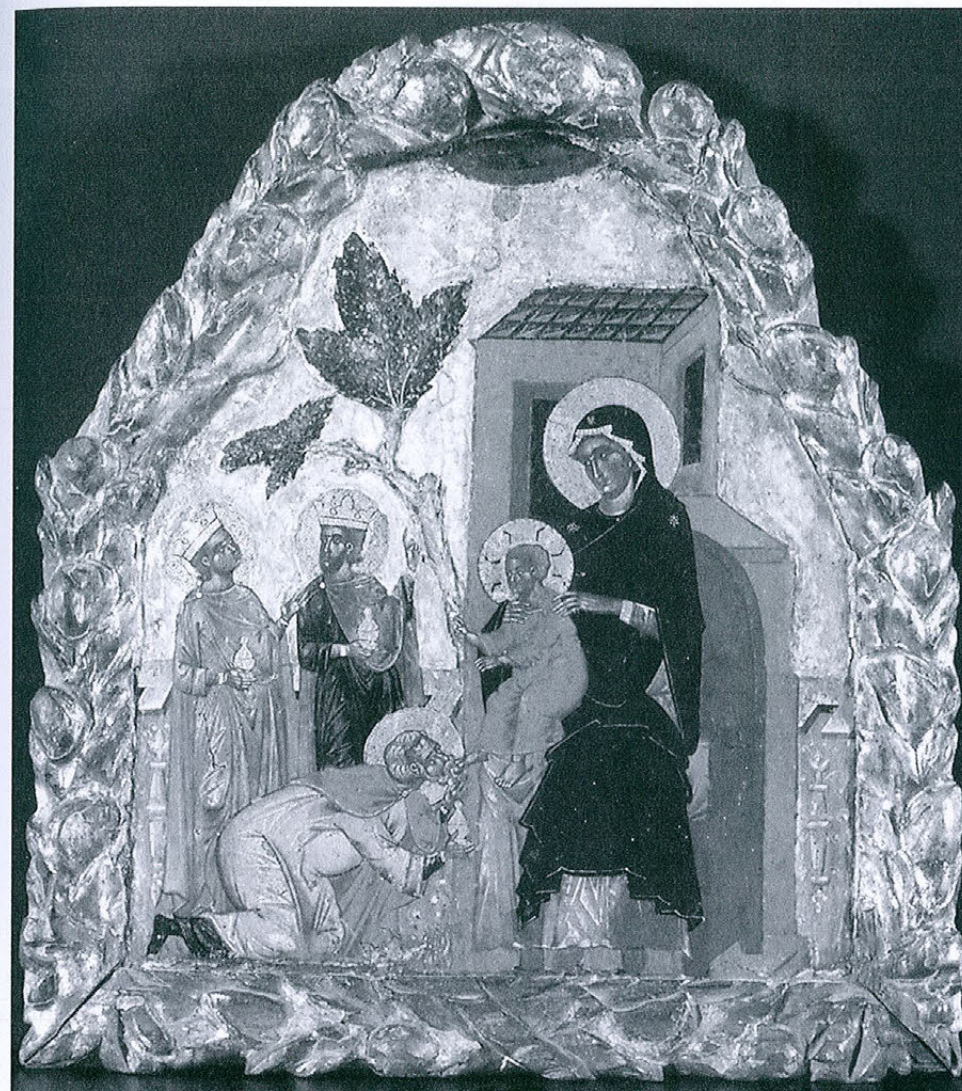


Fig. 9. The Adoration of the Magi. Fragment of polyptych, late fourteenth century. Athens, Benaki Museum. (Photo: © 2014 by Benaki Museum Athens.)

and Child, St. John the Baptist, and St. Nicholas look distinctively "Palaiologan," whereas the international Gothic flavor of Lorenzo Veneziano's work is easily detectable in the figures of Stephen and Augustine. The former were universal saints, whose representation according to Byzantine conventions could be easily recognized by Latin viewers in the culturally composite context of Apulia: most notably, St. Nicholas was associated with Greek-style representations at the site of his cult in Bari, with the effect that the Western iconography of this saint largely bypassed this region. By contrast, the figures of Stephen and Augustine



Fig. 10. Polyptych with the Virgin Enthroned and SS. Christopher, Augustine, Stephen, John the Baptist, Nicholas, and Sebastian. Ca. 1400. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts. (Photo: © 2011 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.)

had a distinctive physiognomy in Western art and their rendering *alla veneziana* would have ruled out any possible misunderstanding: quite possibly, the artist had a chance to look at and replicate a contemporary Venetian image displaying these two saints. Nonetheless, his rendering of the two additional figures on either side indicates that he relied only partially on Italian models to suit his Western donors' visual habits: St. Christopher is represented according to Western iconography, but the artist did not go so far as to use Western style as well; in the same way, St. Sebastian is represented rather oddly as a mature man holding an arrow as his attribute—an iconographic and compositional hapax legomenon.⁵⁴

The altarpiece is itself witness to the fact that Palaiologan and Venetian forms were not perceived as incommensurate, rather they could be used as communicative strategies enabling the viewer not only to quickly recognize specific subjects but also to feel more deeply involved in the devotional experience associated with them. In a similar way, Paolo Veneziano and his followers tended to use Byzantine features—such as the enlarged head of St. John the Evangelist in the *Pala feriale*—to identify some holy figures (especially old men) as authoritative and venerable

saints, whereas more distinctly Gothic models were used, *inter alia*, to give a chivalrous tone to the image of St. George, to emphasize the narrative qualities of a Gospel episode, or, even more distinctly, to convey pathos. The Venetian artist was able enough to work out a coherently mixed repertory of forms which enabled him to suit his fellow citizens' composite visual habits.⁵⁵ The same attitude was inherited and further developed by Cretan artists and more specifically by Constantinopolitan painters established in Candia, who may have assimilated Western means of expression in the Byzantine capital itself. A case in point is a small triptych in the Pinacoteca Vaticana in Rome that probably dates from the second quarter of the fifteenth century, where the representation of the winged John the Baptist is so similar to some works by Angelos Akotantos that it can be safely attributed to him (Fig. 11). Yet the triptych's different elements indicate a variety of visual sources whose selection is by no means fortuitous. The meeting of Anthony and St. Paul of Thebes is rendered in keeping with Byzantine conventions, whereas St. Jerome is represented as a penitent in the wilderness, according to a visual formula which was a definite novelty in contemporary Italian art. An Italianate style reminiscent of Lorenzo Veneziano was employed in the central panel to render the Coronation of the Virgin, a typically Western theme, whereas the Embrace of Peter and Paul on the left wing was distinguished by a distinctively Gothic rendering of the folds of their robes.⁵⁶

We do not have many clues as to whom such a work could have been meant for. The embrace of the two apostles was very popular in the pro-unionist circles of the Orthodox church, but this does not exclude the possibility that the painting was owned by a Latin resident of Crete. Yet this example indicates that small artifacts, meant to suit individual or domestic devotion, could be privileged sites of intercultural exchange. The confessional divide could hardly keep a devotee looking for spiritual health from appropriating other people's manifestations of visual piety, if the latter proved to be efficacious on devotional grounds. Painted panels could serve very effectively as interlocutors in the private exercise of prayer, and as visual supports of meditative practice. The panels were supposed to mirror their beholders' utilitarian approach to worship and were perceived as miniaturized, domestic versions of sumptuous and devout altarpieces. An extant example is a fragmentary panel with the Virgin Enthroned and a predella-like sequence of saints, preserved in the monastery of Apa Bishoi in the Wadi Natrun, Egypt. Some of its features, such as the physiognomy and the peculiar zigzag decoration of the halo, as well as the shape of the panel, probably the central piece of a triptych, confirm its attribution to a Venetian artist of the so-called "Adriatic" group, working in the first half of the fourteenth century, and highlight the role played by Venice in spreading such objects into the Levant.⁵⁷ An indirect witness to this is another fragmentary triptych (only the two side-wings are preserved) from ca. 1370 in the

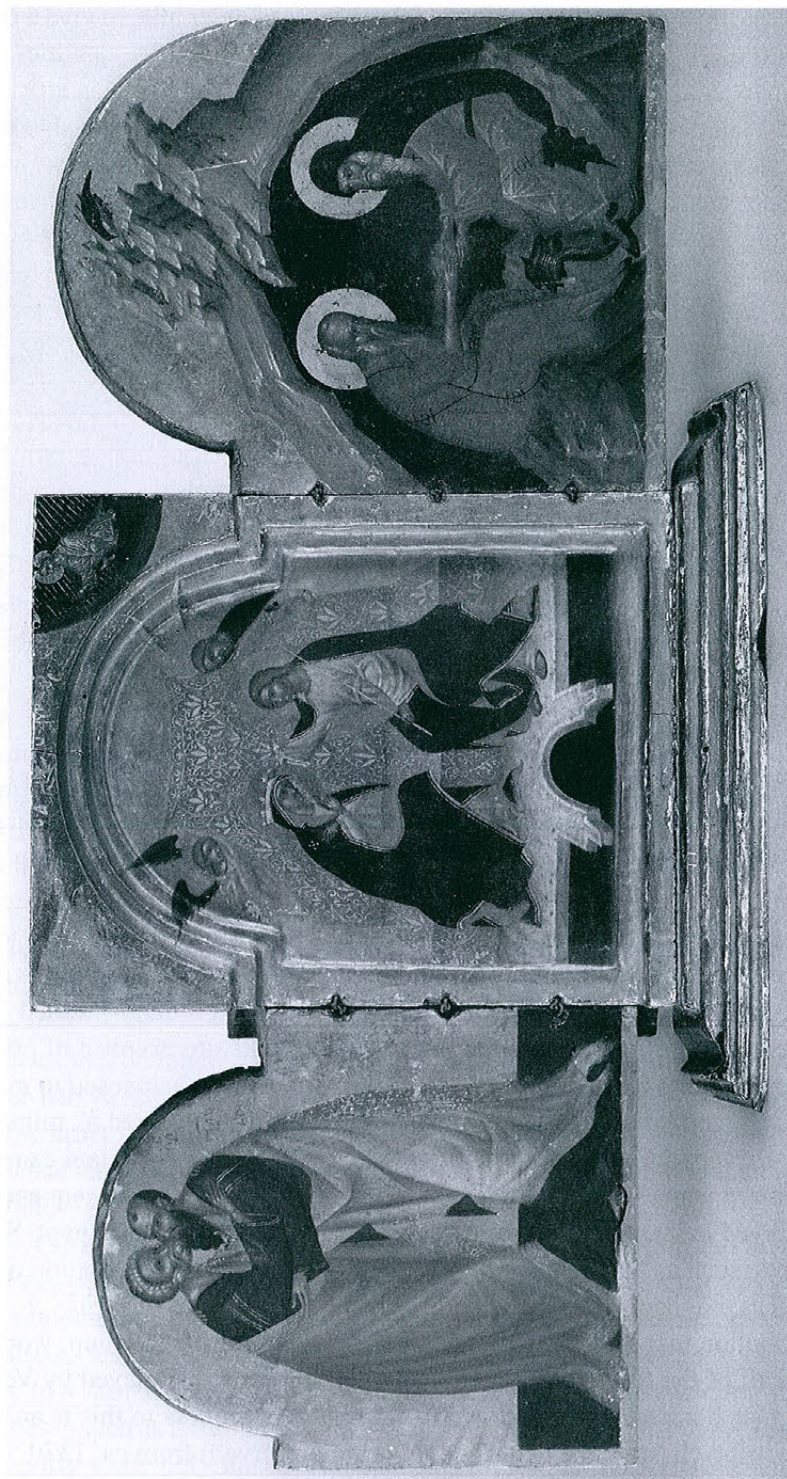


Fig. 11. Painted triptych with the Coronation of the Virgin, the Embrace of Peter and Paul, and the Meeting of St. Anthony with St. Paul of Thebes. Ca. 1425–50. Rome, Pinacoteca Vaticana. (Photo: Musei Vaticani, Rome.)

Monastery of St. Herakleidios in Kalopanagiotis, Cyprus (Fig. 12): possibly made by a Greek painter, this triptych was meant for a Greek-speaking viewer (the *tituli* are in Greek), yet the free combination of narrative and iconic themes, as well as the peculiar rendering of iconographic details—for example, St. Catherine's simplified *loros* and the bloody appearance of the skinned Bartholomew—indicate that efforts were made to imitate a Western work.⁵⁸

It is quite possible that the Greek appropriation of Venetian-like *altaroli* was mediated by the production of stylistically and typologically "mixed" panel paintings in the lagoon itself. Although we lack explicit evidence concerning Byzantine-trained painters working in Venice in the fourteenth century, the presence of itinerant artists is certainly a possibility, given that Greek workshops were active in all the major ports of the eastern Adriatic coasts. An icon in Korčula dating from ca. 1330 and displaying a lay lady addressing her prayer to the Virgin Enthroned still attests to their activity in Dalmatia.⁵⁹ The cluster of works attributed to the so-called "Master of the Sterbini diptych" includes a diptych (Fig. 13), a triptych, a larger polyptych, and a number of quadrangular icons, and can safely be attributed to a Greek master working for both Venetian and southern Italian donors in the second and third quarter of the fourteenth century.⁶⁰ In these works the artist managed to create fundamentally Western objects while combining the Palaiologan pictorial technique with a skillful imitation of Venetian Gothic features, as is revealed, for example, by the rendering of the delicately whirling folds. A fragmentary panel now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam displaying the Crucifixion and the Virgin and Child proves to be truer to Palaiologan style and technique, even if its gabled shape and the foliate decor of Mary's *maphorion* betray its original use as a devotional image of the Western type.⁶¹

Yet the most impressive case is that of the mid-fourteenth-century icon of the Virgin Glykophilousa with Dodekaorton scenes and saints preserved in the Benaki Museum in Athens (Fig. 14). Iconographically, Mary is represented according to a variant of the Eleousa type widespread in fourteenth-century Palaiologan art, whereas her garments combine an Italianate Gothic blue veil with a red *palla*. The woodcarving, including the central arch resting on spiral columns, is distinctively Venetian, as is the technique of *verre églomisé*, here used to decorate the frame in combination with stuccoed relief scenes.⁶²

This work is of the same type as a painting formerly in the D'Atri collection in Paris, a fragmentary triptych displaying the Virgin Galaktotrophousa in the central panel and the Annunciation and three saints—Nicholas, John the Baptist, and another male figure—in the right wing (Fig. 15). The figure of Mary is ensconced in a rather cursorily carved arch and a frame fully decorated with *verre églomisé*. In iconographic respects, the composition is reminiscent of Gothic formulae stemming from Paolo Veneziano and his circle, especially as



Fig. 12a. Diptych panel (or an element of a triptych) with the Annunciation and several saints. Ca. 1370. Kalopanagiotis, Museum of the Monastery of St. Herakleidios. (Photo: Diocese of the Holy Bishopric of Morphou.)



Fig. 12b. Diptych panel (or an element of a triptych) with the Crucifixion, the Imago Pietatis, and several saints. Ca. 1370. Kalopanagiotis, Museum of the Monastery of St. Herakleidios. (Photo: Diocese of the Holy Bishopric of Morphou.)

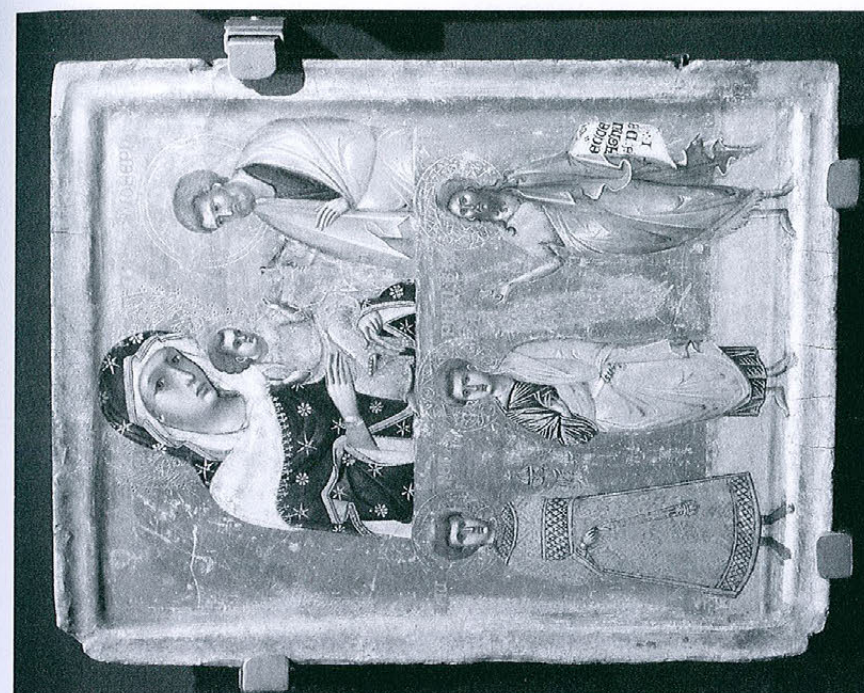


Fig. 13b. The Sterbini Diptych. Ca. 1340-50. Rome, Museo Nazionale di Palazzo Venezia. (Photo: Valentino Pace, Rome.)

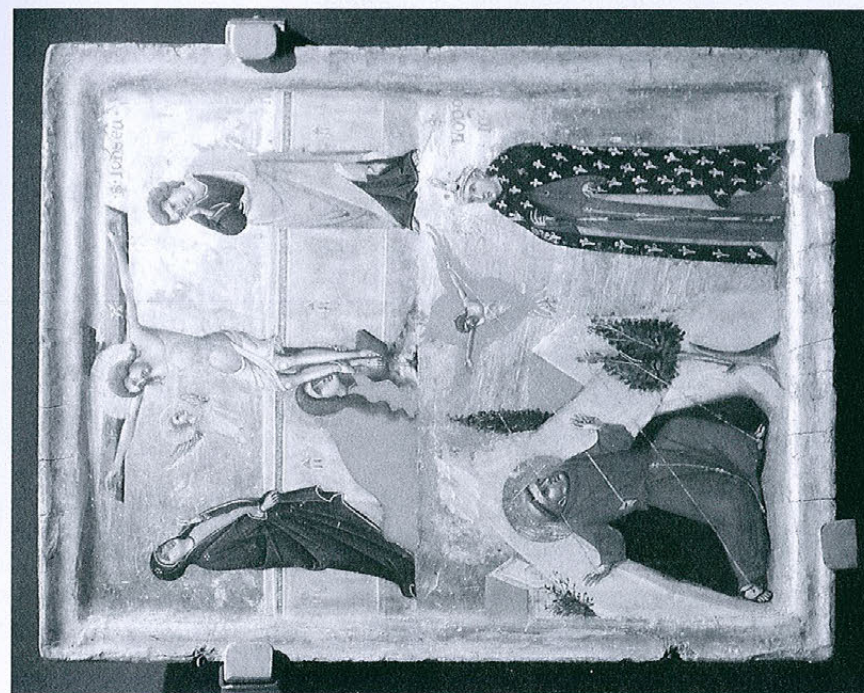


Fig. 13a. The Sterbini Diptych. Ca. 1340-50. Rome, Museo Nazionale di Palazzo Venezia. (Photo: Valentino Pace, Rome.)



Fig. 14. Icon of the Virgin Eleousa. Ca. 1350. Athens, Benaki Museum. (Photo: © 2014 by Benaki Museum Athens.)



Fig. 15. Virgin Galaktotrophousa, the Annunciation, and three saints. Fragmentary triptych. Formerly Paris, D'Atri collection. (Photo: Fototeca Federico Zeri, Mentana, inv. no. 26789.)

regards Mary's garments and her hand holding a flower and the Annunciation set in an interior, where the angel holds a much-stylized olive branch. In contrast, the rendering of facial features, the modeling technique, and bodily proportions seem to imply a Byzantine-trained artist, possibly from the Balkan area. The type of the nursing Virgin in Gothicized garments under a relief arch was later exported to the Levant, as is revealed by a late fourteenth-century icon in the Byzantine Museum, Athens.⁶³

That triptych was seen by the Italian art historian Federico Zeri and immediately ranked in the so-called "Adriatic" group, because of its mixed character.⁶⁴ The aforementioned examples make clear that this historiographical category needs thorough revision. Such objects as the Benaki icon or the D'Atri triptych reveal that what may look like belated byproducts of the Italian "maniera greca" can indeed be products of a Greek painter's ability to appropriate, imitate, and vary in his own manner the forms associated with Venetian devotional panels. Moreover, these objects bear witness to the fact that icons making use of different stylistic and

compositional models, regardless of the specific ethnicity of their makers, could be appreciated by both Greeks and Latins as attractive and efficacious supports for the performance of an individual's pious practices. Admittedly, the ways in which these objects were transmitted to and assimilated in the territories in the Levant ruled by Venice need further investigation. Yet the objects' alleged "hybridization" was always the final outcome of a selective process aimed at awarding the viewer the most thorough, efficacious, and moving experience possible of a transconfessionally shared repertory of images.

NOTES

1. See Philip Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
2. On the fortune and misfortune of pre-Giottoesque art in Italian art criticism, see Giovanni Previtali, *La fortuna dei primitivi: Dal Vasari ai neoclassici* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1964).
3. Jean-Michel Spieser, "Art byzantin et influence: Pour l'histoire d'une construction," in *Byzance et le monde extérieur: Contacts, relations, échanges*, ed. Michel Balard, Elisabeth Malamuth, and Jean-Michel Spieser (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2005), 271–88.
4. Roberto Longhi, "Giudizio sul Duecento," *Proporzioni* 2 (1948): 5–54. On the political implications of the debate on the role of Byzantine art vis-à-vis the pictorial production of Medieval Italy, cf. Massimo Bernabò, *Ossessioni bizantine e cultura artistica in Italia tra D'Annunzio, fascismo e dopoguerra* (Naples: Liguori, 2003).
5. Sergio Bettini, *La pittura di icone cretese-veneziana e i madonneri* (Padua: Casa Editrice dott. A. Milani, 1933), 1–5.
6. Cf. Daniela Rando, "Venezia medievale e la 'modernità': Storici europei fra Otto e Novecento," in *La diversa visuale: Il fenomeno Venezia osservato dagli altri*, ed. Uwe Israel (Rome-Venice: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2008), 1–22.
7. Lionello Venturi, *Le origini della pittura veneziana 1300–1500* (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Arti Grafiche, 1907), 11–12.
8. Raimond Van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*, vol. 4, no. 1 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1924).
9. Roberto Longhi, "Viatico per cinque secoli di pittura veneziana" in *Ricerche sulla pittura veneta 1946–1969* (Florence: Sansoni, 1978), 1–63, esp. 4.
10. Terisio Pignatti, *Origini della pittura veneziana* (Bergamo: Istituto italiano d'arti grafiche, 1961).
11. Cf. Michele Bacci, "L'arte delle società miste del Levante medievale: Tradizioni storiografiche a confronto," in *Medioevo: Arte e storia*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle (Milan: Electa, 2008), 339–54.
12. Camille Enlart, *Gothic Art and the Renaissance in Cyprus* (London: Trigraph Limited, 1987), 69.
13. Enlart, *Gothic Art*, 509.
14. Giuseppe Gerola, *Monumenti veneti nell'isola di Creta*, vol. 2 (Venice: R. Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 1905–32), 306–7.
15. Jean-Michel Spieser, "Hellénisme et connaissance de l'art byzantin au XIXe siècle," in *Ελληνισμός: Quelques jalons pour une histoire de l'identité grecque*, ed. Suzanne Saïd (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 337–62.
16. Bogdan Dimitrov Filov, *L'ancien art bulgare* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1922), 93–97.
17. Cf. Georgios Sotiriou, *Χριστιανική και βυζαντινή αρχαιολογία. Τόμος Α': Χριστιανικά κοιμητήρια. Εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική* (Athens, 1962), 33–34.
18. Georgios Sotiriou, "Η Αγία Τριάς Κρανιδίου," *ΕΕΒΣ* 3 (1926): 192–205, esp. 205.
19. Manolis Chatzidakis, "Contribution à l'étude de la peinture post-byzantine," in *Études sur la peinture postbyzantine* (London: Variorum, 1976), essay 1, p. 10. Chatzidakis progressively nuanced his first assumptions by stressing the mediatory role of Cretan painting, especially in connection with El Greco's early training; cf. Dionysis Mourelatos, "The Debate over Cretan Icons in Twentieth-Century Greek Historiography and Their Incorporation into the National Narrative," in *A Singular Antiquity: Archaeology and Hellenic Identity in Twentieth-Century Greece*, ed. Dimitris Damaskos and Dimitris Plantzos (Athens: Benaki Museum, 2008), 197–207.
20. On the concept of "Italo-Greek art" in Russian literature, see Ivan Foletti, *Da Bisanzio alla Santa Russia: Nikodim Kondakov (1844–1925) e la nascita della storia dell'arte in Russia* (Rome: Viella, 2011), 142–43.
21. Bettini, *La pittura*.
22. Edward B. Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index* (Florence: Olschki, 1949), 11, 16, 32–33.
23. Grgo Gamulin, "La pittura su tavola nel tardo Medioevo sulla costa orientale dell'Adriatico," in *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, ed. Agostino Pertusi, vol. 2 (Florence: Olschki, 1974), 181–209.
24. Cf. Garrison, *Italian Romanesque*, cat. nos. 23, 42, 319, 653. On the Volpi Nativity, see Anastasia Drandaki, *Greek Icons 14th–18th Century: The Rena Andreadis Collection* (Milan: Skira, 2002), 24–35. On the San Giovanni in Bragora icon, see Michele Bacci, "Venezia e l'icona," in *Torcello: Alle origini di Venezia tra Occidente e Oriente*, ed. Giammatteo Caputo and Giovanni Gentili (Venice: Marsilio, 2009), 96–115, esp. 108.
25. Victor Lazarev, "Saggi sulla pittura veneziana dei secoli XIII–XIV, la maniera greca e il problema della scuola cretese [II]," *Arte Veneta* 20 (1966): 43–61.
26. Mario Cattapan, "Nuovi documenti riguardanti pittori cretesi dal 1300 al 1500," in *Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Β' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου*, vol. 3 (Athens, 1968), 29–46.
27. Mario Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi e documenti dei pittori in Creta dal 1300 al 1500," *Θησαυρίσματα* 9 (1972): 202–35.
28. Manolis Chatzidakis, "Les débuts de l'école crétoise et la question de l'école dite italo-grecque," in *Μνημόσυνον Σοφίας Αντωνιάδης* (Venice, 1974), 169–211 [reprinted in Manolis Chatzidakis, *Études sur la peinture postbyzantine* (London: Variorum, 1976)]; Manolis Chatzidakis, "Essai sur l'école dite 'italogrecque' précédé d'une note sur les rapports de l'art vénitien avec l'art crétois jusqu'à 1500," in Pertusi, *Venezia e il Levante*, vol. 2, pp. 69–124.
29. Dimitrios D. Triantaphyllopoulos, "Η τέχνη στην Κύπρο από την Άλωση της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως (1453) έως την έναρξη της Τουρκοκρατίας (1571): Βυζαντινή/Μεσαιωνική ή Μεταβυζαντινή," in *Πρακτικά του Τρίτου Διεθνούς Κυπριολογικού Συνεδρίου (Λευκωσία, 16–20 Απριλίου 1996): Τόμος Β': Μεσαιωνικό τμήμα*, ed. A. Papageorgiou (Nicosia, 2001), 621–50, esp. 621–22.
30. See esp. Maria Vassilaki, *The Painter Angelos and Icon-Painting in Venetian Crete* (Farnham, UK: Variorum, 2009), and *The Hand of Angelos: An Icon Painter in Venetian Crete*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Farnham, UK: Lund Humphries, 2010); as well as Anastasia Drandaki, "Between Byzantium and Venice: Icon Painting in Venetian Crete in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *The Origins of El Greco: Icon Painting in Venetian Crete*, ed. Anastasia Drandaki (New York: Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, 2009), 11–18; and Maria Constantoudaki-Kitromilidis's important articles concerning the documentary evidence on Cretan icon painters (see footnotes below).
31. On this issue see my previous works: Michele Bacci, "Arte e raccomandazione dell'anima nei domini latini del Levante: alcune riflessioni," in *Oltre la morte: Testamenti di Greci e Veneziani redatti a Venezia o in territorio greco-veneziano nei secoli XIV–XVIII*, ed. Chrysa Maltezos and Gogo Varzelioti (Venice: Istituto ellenico di studi bizantini e postbizantini di Venezia, 2008), 131–59;

Michele Bacci, "Side Altars and 'Pro Anima' Chapels in the Medieval Mediterranean: Evidence from Cyprus," in *The Altar and Its Environment 1150–1400*, ed. J. E. A. Kroesen and Victor Michael Schmidt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 11–30.

31. Myrtali Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Η εκκλησία της Παναγίας του Κάστρου της Ρόδου," *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 23 (1963): 267–68; Elias Kollias, *Η μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου και το Παλάτι του Μεγάλου Μαγίστρου* (Athens: Hypourgeio Politismou, Tameio Archaiologikon Poron, 1994), 117–19 and fig. 61; Jean-Bernard de Vaivre, "Peintures murales à Rhodes: Le quatre chevaliers de Philérimos," *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres: Comptes rendus* (2004): 919–43.

32. On the Famagustan frescoes, see my previous articles: Michele Bacci, "Syrian, Palaiologan, and Gothic Murals in the 'Nestorian' Church of Famagusta," *Δελτίον της χριστιανικής αρχαιολογικής εταιρείας* 27 (2006): 207–20; Michele Bacci, "Greek Painters Working for Latin and Non-Orthodox Patrons in the Late Medieval Mediterranean," in *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence; The Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress of the History of Art*, ed. Jaynie Anderson (Carlton and Victoria: Miegunyah Press / Melbourne University Publishing, 2009), 196–201; Michele Bacci, "Pratica artistica e scambi culturali nel Levante dopo le crociate," in *Medioevo: Le officine*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle (Milan: Electa, 2010), 494–510.

33. Robert S. Nelson, "A Byzantine Painter in Trecento Genoa: The Last Judgement at San Lorenzo," *Art Bulletin* 67 (1985): 548–66; Robert S. Nelson, "Byzantine Icons in Genoa before the Mandylion," in *Intorno al Sacro Volto: Genova, Bisanzio e il Mediterraneo (secoli XI–XIV)*, ed. Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti, Colette Dufour Bozzo, and Gerhard Wolf (Venice: Marsilio, 2007), 79–92.

34. Maria Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "Viaggi di pittori tra Costantinopoli e Candia: Documenti d'archivio e influenze sull'arte (XIV–XV sec.)," in *I Greci durante la Venetocrazia: Uomini, spazio, idee (XIII–XVIII sec.)*, ed. Chrysa Maltezou (Venice: Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini di Venezia, 2009), 709–23, esp. 710.

35. Maria Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "A Fifteenth-Century Byzantine Icon-Painter Working on Mosaics in Venice: Unpublished Documents," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32, no. 5 (1982): 265–72; Maria Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "Conducere apothecam in qua exercere artem nostrum: Το εργαστήριο ενός βενετού ζωγράφου στην Κρήτη," *Σύμμεικτα* 14 (2001): 291–99; Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "Viaggi di pittori," 716–19.

36. Cattapan, *Nuovi elenchi*, 228.

37. Cattapan, *Nuovi elenchi*, 227–28.

38. Cf. a frequently quoted document dating from 1499; see Cattapan, *Nuovi elenchi*, 211–13.

39. Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem*, ed. K. D. Hassler, vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Sumtibus Societatis literariae Stuttgardiensis, 1843–49), 289.

40. V. Laurent, *Les "Mémoires" du Grand Ecclésiarque de l'Église de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florence (1438–1439)* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1971), 250.

41. Paul Atkins Underwood, "Palaeologian Narrative Style and an Italianate Fresco of the Fifteenth Century in the Kahriye Djami," in *Studies in the History of Art Dedicated to William E. Suida on His Eightieth Birthday* (London: Phaidon Press for the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 1959), 1–9; Robin Cormack, "The Icon in Constantinople around 1400," in Vassilaki, *Hand of Angelos*, 48–57, esp. 52.

42. Myrtale Acheimastou-Potamianou in *Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art*, ed. Myrtale Acheimastou-Potamianou (Athens: Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, 1985), 96–98, no. 97.

43. The work can be paralleled with two late fourteenth-century panels in Venice (*Il Museo Correr di Venezia: Dipinti dal XIV al XVI secolo*, ed. Giovanni Mariacher [Venice: N. Pozza, 1957], 169–70) and Sarasota (Peter Tomory, *The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art: Catalogue of the Italian Paintings before 1800* [Sarasota, FL: John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 1976], 116).

44. Stella Papadaki-Oekland, "Δυτικότροπες τοιχογραφίες του 14ου αιώνα στην Κρήτη: Η άλλη όψη μιας αμφίδρομης σχέσης," in *Αφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη*, vol. 2 (Athens: Tameio archaiologikon poron kai apallotrioseon, 1992), pp. 491–513; Maria Vassilaki, "Η Κρήτη υπό βενετική κυριαρχία: Η μαρτυρία των μνημείων του 13ου αιώνα," in *Η βυζαντινή τέχνη μετά την Τετάρτη σταυροφορία*, ed. Panagiotes L. Vokotopoulos (Athens: Ακαδημία Αθηνών, 2007), 31–46, esp. 39–40.

45. U. Abel in Vassilaki, *Hand of Angelos*, 90–91, cat. no. 11.

46. Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection* (London: Phaidon Press, 1966), 12. Connections can be detected with icons attributed to pictorial trends of Constantinople and Thessaloniki in the fourteenth century, including the rendering of Christ's body and the Jerusalem wall in the background, and the bodily proportions, gestures, and inclined pose of Mary and John. These features are frequently found in Palaiologan art; cf., for example, an early 14th century processional icon in Ohrid, reproduced in Milco Georgievski, *Icon-Gallery—Ohrid* (Ohrid: Institute for Protection of the Monuments of Cultural and National Museum-Ohrid, 1999), 56–57. The chromatic palette, modeling, and rendering of the physiognomic features point to a date in the third quarter of the fourteenth century and are comparable with, for example, those in the diptych of the Virgin and the Akra Tapeinosis in the Transfiguration Monastery, Meteora; see Panagiotou N. Vokotopoulos, *Byzantine Icons* (Athens, 1995), figs. 123 and 24.

47. Cf. an unpublished fourteenth-century icon in the Byzantine Museum of Chania, Crete, and an icon in Ephtagonia, Cyprus; see Jean-Bernard de Vaivre, "Le décor héraldique sur les monuments médiévaux," in *L'art gothique en Chypre*, ed. Jean-Bernard de Vaivre and Philippe Plagnieux (Paris: Institut de France, dist. De Boccard, 2006), 425–72, esp. 455.

48. Kristen M. Collins in *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Kristen M. Collins (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006), 268–69, no. 57; Rosa Alcoy, "Taula de Santa Caterina," in *Art Català al món*, ed. Francesc Miralles Bofarull (Barcelona: Ed. 62, 2007), 64–67.

49. Paul Van Moorsel, ed., *Catalogue général du Musée Copte: The Icons* (Cairo: Supreme Council of Antiquities, 1994), 141, no. 158.

50. Maria Georgopoulou, "Late Medieval Crete and Venice: An Appropriation of Byzantine Heritage," *Art Bulletin* 77 (1995): 479–96.

51. See esp. Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Cypriot Funerary Icons: Questions of Convergence in a Complex Land," in *Medieval Paradigms: Essays in Honor of Jeremy Duquesnay Adams*, ed. Stephanie A. Hayes-Healy (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 153–73.

52. Charis Michael Koutelakis, "Icona italiana della Madonna Maestà in una chiesa ortodossa dell'isola di Tenos," *Δελτίον εραλδικής και γενεαλογικής εταιρείας Ελλάδος* 10 (1996): 45–68.

53. Anastasia Drandaki in *Οι Πύλες του Μυστηρίου: Θησαυροί της Ορθοδοξίας από την Ελλάδα*, ed. M. Borboudakis (Athens, 1994), 237–38, cat. no. 58; C. Baltogianni, *Εικόνες: Ο Χριστός στην ενσάρκωση και στο πάθος* (Athens, 2003), 227–30.

54. Maria Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "Ενθρονη βρεφοκρατούσα και άγιοι: Σύνθετο έργο ιταλοκρητικής τέχνης," *Δελτίον της χριστιανικής αρχαιολογικής εταιρείας* 17 (1993–94): 285–302.

55. Of the abundant literature on Maestro Paolo, I cite only the monographic books by Michelangelo Muraro, *Paolo da Venezia* (Milan: IEL, 1969), and Filippo Pedrocchi, *Paolo Veneziano* (Milan: A. Maioli; Società Veneta Editrice, 2003).

56. Maria Vassilaki, "A Cretan Icon in the Ashmolean: The Embrace of Peter and Paul," in *The Painter Angelos and Icon-Painting in Venetian Crete* (Farnham: Ashgate/Variorum, 2009), 111–35, esp. 119–21.

57. Zuzana Skalova and Gawdat Gabra, *Icons of the Nile Valley* (Cairo: Egyptian International / Longman, 2006), 115 and fig. 39.

58. C. Chatzichristodoulou in *Cyprus the Holy Island: Icons through the Centuries, 10th–20th Century*, ed. Sophocles Sophocleous (Nicosia: A. G. Leventis Foundation, 2000), 176–81, cat. no. 30.

59. V. Djurić, "Vizantijske i italovizantijske starine u Dalmaciji – I," *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 12 (1960): 123–45.

60. On this interpretation of the Sterbini master, see Michele Bacci, "Some Thoughts on Greco-Venetian Interactions in the Fourteenth and Early Fifteenth Centuries," in *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through Its Art*, ed. Liz James and Anthony Eastmond (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 203–27.

61. M. Janssen-de Waele in *Sienese Paintings in Holland*, ed. Henk W. van Os (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1969), cat. no. 14; Mojmir S. Frinta, "Searching for an Adriatic Painting Workshop with Byzantine Connection," *Zograf* 18 (1987): 12–20, esp. 14 and fig. 6.

62. Maria Vassilaki in *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Athens and Milan: Skira, 2000), 448–49, cat. no. 73; Maria Vassilaki, "Εικόνα της Παναγίας Γλυκοφιλούσας του Μουσείου Μπενάκη (acc. no. 2972)," in *Βυζαντινές εικόνες: Τέχνη, τεχνική και τεχνολογία* (Heraklion, 2002), 201–7; Maria Vassilaki in *Byzantium 330–1453*, ed. Maria Vassilaki and Robin Cormack (London, 2008), 444, cat. no. 251.

63. Vassilaki, *Mother of God*, fig. 86.

64. This unpublished work was sold at an auction in the Hotel Drouot in Paris in 1970; the photograph included here (inv. no. 27689) is preserved in the Fototeca Federico Zeri of the University of Bologna. I am indebted to the director of the Fototeca for authorizing me to publish this work.