



201 EPITAPH

15th – 16th century

From the church of Ayios Kassianos, Nicosia

118.6 X 41.7 cm

Byzantine Museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Foundation, Lefkosia (IAM.162)

Epitaph, is usually, embroidered liturgical veil of the Orthodox Church set out for worship during the Good Friday service upon which is embroidered an image of the dead Christ, or the Lamentation, or threnos (Millet 1947, 87-89). In Crete and Patmos the icon of the Epitaph is placed on the icon screen, over the Royal Doors (Chadzidakis 1995, 137). In Cyprus it is used during the Good Friday service instead of a cloth Epitaph. The Epitaph portrays Christ naked except for a loincloth, dead and alone, lying on a spread-out shroud. His head is resting on a red pillow. The gold background of the icon is decorated with engraved decorative motifs in imitation of precious Venetian fabrics. (Martiniani-Reber 2001, 166-177).

In the representation of the Epitaph, as also in the Man of Sorrows, Christ is laid out in the position of the crucifixion, with His head leaning slightly to one side and his

legs a little bent and tied at the ankles. The only difference here is that His arms are resting loosely on His legs. Although dead, the wound made in Christ's side by the lance is still bleeding, in accordance with the iconography of the Crucifixion. The absence of surrounding figures in this Epitaph indicates that this icon might have also been placed vertically in the Holy Bema. In Cyprus, icons of the Epitaph were often placed on the altar as well.

The artistic requirements in Cypro-renaissance manner for one-point-perspective (Eliades 2008b), a style which dominated in Cyprus during Venetian Rule (1489-1570), were limited, due to the absence of depth, in portraying bodily forms. The strongly outlined anatomy on Christ's body in brown is highlighted by fine tones of light on the skin in ochre and a paler shade of the background colour. The fact that the painter has avoided portraying Christ's hands crossed on the girdle according to the his iconography, may be due to the artist's need to give greater realism to his work and denote the physical beauty of the dead Christ which is bursting with life and presages His Resurrection.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Talbot Rice 1937, 254, pl. XL, fig. 111.

[I.E]

202 ST PAUL

Late 13th Century

From the Church of Panayia Chrysaliniotissa, Nicosia

94 X 25 cm

Byzantine Museum of the Archbishop Makarios III
Foundation, Nicosia

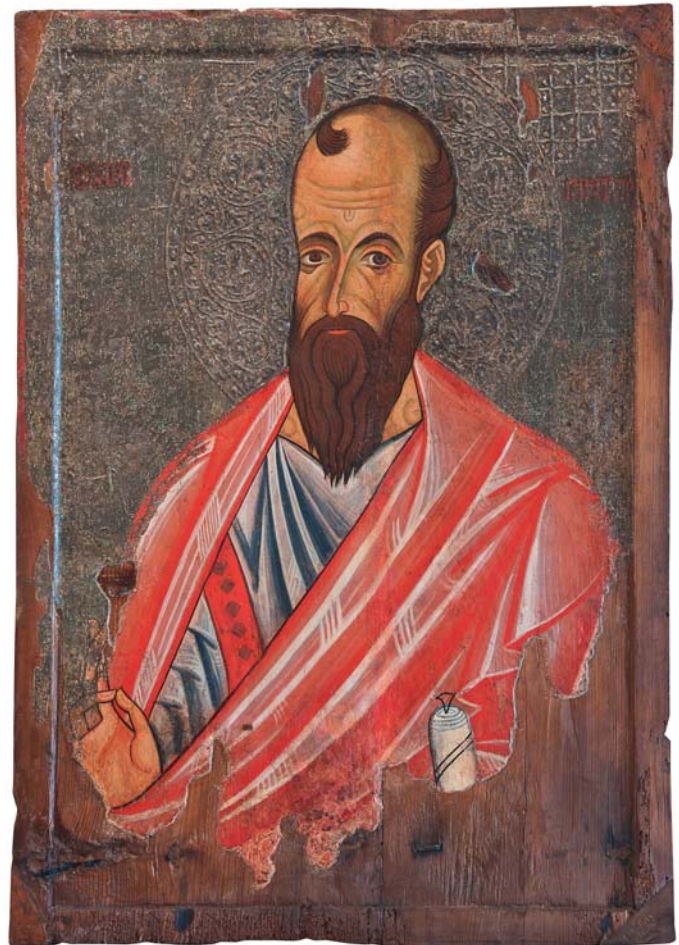
(IAM.013)

Inscriptions: Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΠΑΥΛΟΣ (sic)

St Paul is pictured in the established iconographic form (Hermeneia, 205) balding, turned slightly to the left and holding his Epistles wrapped in a scroll. It is believed that the Saint's slightly rotated position indicates that the icon was part of a diptych with an icon of St Peter, similar to many such examples preserved at Mount Sinai (Mouriki 1995, 367).

He is wearing a light blue tunic and a rose-coloured cloak from which his right hand emerges in blessing. The purple clavus above St Paul's tunic is decorated with a series of four diamond shapes, characteristic of the 'Crusader art' which flourished on the island and at St Catherine's monastery at Mount Sinai during the 13th century (Chotzakoglou 2005, 661-662). This art, also known as «maniera Cypria» (Mouriki 1995, 408) derives from influences on the art of Cyprus from both West and East (Eliades 2009, 54).

The background of the icon is adorned with a decorative plaster grid bearing cross patterns in relief. The art of plaster relief decoration is one of the innovations in Cypriot art which, after its establishment on the island, subsequently spread to Western Europe (Frinta 1981,



336). Subjects encountered on Cypriot plaster decorations, such as the twirling floral plaits and the grid decorations are found in corresponding Italian works (Eliades 2006, 18). On the Saint's halo are painted fleur-de-lis, the symbol of the House of Lusignan, the Frankish Royal family that ruled Cyprus from 1192 to 1489, a motif often encountered in 13th century Cypriot icons (Papageorgiou 1991, 55).

The Saint's facial features are strongly formed and the shape of his head is elongated in similar fashion to the figure of the Prophet Elijah in the same museum (Eliades 2008a, 57). The stiff drapery and shape of the face present extraordinary similarities with the figure of the Apostle Paul in the wall painting at the church of the Holy Virgin at Moutoullas which an inscription dates to 1280 (Papageorgiou 1976). The icon can therefore be dated to the second half of the 13th century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Papageorgiou 1976, 54.

[I.E]



203 CRUCIFIX

1562 AD

From the church of Archangel Michael,
Kokkinotrimithia

160.5 X 121 cm

Byzantine Museum of the Archbishop Makarios
III Foundation, Nicosia (IAM.196)

This type of crucifix depicting Christ on the Cross and the symbols of the four Evangelists is derived from the great Venetian crucifixes of the 13th and 14th centuries and became established in Cyprus and the greater Venetian-occupied Greek world in the post-byzantine period (Kazanaki-Lappa 1991, 226-232).

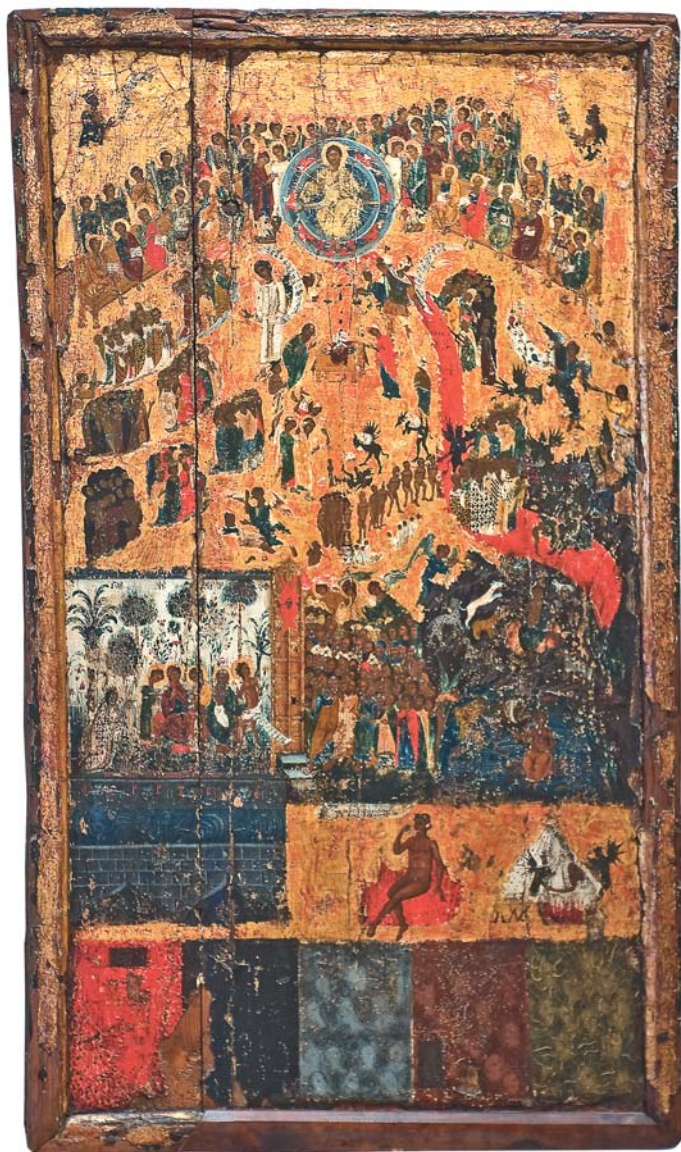
The Cypro-renaissance artist who created this crucifix appears to be very familiar with the depiction of the Crucifixion at the church of Panagia Podithou in Galata dating from 1502 (Eliades 2008b, 243-245) from which he faithfully followed certain iconographic details, such as the nail-

ing of Christ's feet from back to front with a single nail, a feature deriving from western influence (Kontoglou 1960, 174). The artist follows the same iconographic style and realism in his depiction of Christ's head with the crown of thorns, His hair falling on to His shoulders in tendrils and the depiction of the thorax. The artist's attempt to reconcile the dynamic figure of Christ on the Cross of Podithou with the more conservative form with arms almost horizontal on the patibulum, or horizontal beam, of the cross, explains the anatomical problems appearing in the portrayal of the thorax and in general the absence of dynamism when compared to the wall-painting of Podithou.

According to the inscription, this Cypriot work of the Renaissance was created in memory of Iacovos Grountos of Rachia, Nicosia District, who died on 12 April 1562.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Talbot Rice 1937, 256-256, pl. XLI, fig. 117

[I.E.]



204 LAST JUDGMENT

16th century

From the church of Agioi Anargyri, Phoini

109,4 X 65,5 cm.

Byzantine Museum of the Archbishop Makarios III
Foundation, Nicosia (IAM.101)

The upper central section of the icon depicts Christ in Glory. He is flanked by the Holy Virgin and John the Baptist in prayer, the Apostles and swarms of angels. A little further down is the Preparation for the Throne with the white

dove that symbolises the Holy Spirit and Adam and Eve to the left and right of the throne. On the left side, can be seen the fair in three successive series, and lower down, a portrayal of Heaven presented as a vibrant garden with saplings, palm trees and shrubs with red flowers against a white background: *the undying light*. In the midst of heaven the enthroned Virgin is worshipped by two angels, and to her left is depicted the donor, the high priest Maximos, with white hair and beard. To the Virgin's right is Abraham with the souls of the just in his bosom, with first among them the soul of poor Lazarus (Luke 16:23) and further to the right is the good thief carrying his cross. At Heaven's edge four lion-shaped gargoyles spout the raging waters of the four rivers of heaven (Gen. 2: 10-14). Outside the closed gates of heaven is gathered a crowd of saints headed by St Peter with the key placed in the lock, and St Paul. The right side of the icon depicts the fiery river of Hell which divided the just from the damned and empties into the mouth of the infernal dragon. Underneath the representation of the Preparation of the Throne is depicted Psychostasia – the weighing of the souls, with the angels thrusting their spears into the demons around the Scales of Justice. The flaming river is crossed by hordes of sinners including Annas, Caiaphas and the Judean high priests. Lower down, the angels summon with their trumpets carnivorous beasts, the World – a semi-nude male figure astride two horses, and the Sea – a half-naked female figure riding a sea monster and holding a sailing-ship. The lower zone contains a damned couple who prefer to sleep late on Sunday instead of going to church. This image is identical to one found at the church of the Virgin at Moutoullas. To the left is the rich man from the parable of poor Lazarus (Luke 16: 24), who is naked and being consumed by the flames of hell and pleading with Abraham to send poor Lazarus to cool him down. The last zone is divided into five sections of different colours showing the suffering of the souls of the damned in Hell.

. The stylistic features of the icon which dates to the mid 16th century suggest that it could be attributed to the artist Sylvestros (Papageorgiou 1974), who in around 1540 painted the ciborium of St Mamas in Morphou (Hadjichristodoulou 2010) and the icon of Virgin Filochiotissa in Paphos on 1570 (Papageorgiou 1991, 152).

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Talbot Rice 1937201-202, pl. XII, fig. 15, Papageorgiou 1976, 150.

[I. E]

205 SAINT MATTHEW EVANGELIST

16th century

From the church of Christ Antiphonitis, Kalogrea (in the Turkish-occupied areas of Cyprus)

84 X 63 cm.

Byzantine Museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Foundation, Nicosia (IAM. 201)

Inscriptions: Ο ΑΓΙΟC ΜΑΤ/ΘΕΟC (Saint Matthew)

In the back of the icon: Α†Φ

Saint Matthew Evangelist, bearded and with grey hair is pictured above the waist, turned three quarters to the left. He is wearing an olive green tunic, and a light blue cloak. His right hand is raised in blessing and in his left is a closed Bible, according to the established iconography. (Hermeneia, 150).

The icon comes from the *Deesis* in the Epistyle on the Iconostasis of Christ Antiphonitis near the Turkish-occupied village of Kalograia, Kyrenia District (Perdikis 2006). The icon, which was stolen after the Turkish invasion of 1974 by Turkish smugglers and was sold illegally abroad, was repatriated from Switzerland in 1998. Another four icons from the same *Deesis* are kept illegally in Holland: the Apostles Peter, Paul, John and Luke (Papageorgiou 2000). On the back side of the icon of Matthew are the initials Α†Φ. The same initials are inscribed on the icon of Cyrus and John which date to 1567 and is exposed in the Byzantine Museum. The painter of both icons might have been Lutzios Flagianos whose signature is on the icon of Virgin Mary Odegetria in the same Museum (Eliades 2008, 86; Eliades 2010). The icon of the Evangelist Matthew and the others of the *Deesis* date to around 1567, the year when he signed the icon of Cyrus and John were signed with initials.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Papageorgiou 1974, 178-179

[I.E.]

