

St Phanourios: Cult and Iconography*

St Phanourios, celebrated on 27 August, is an enigmatic saint. He is commemorated in the synaxaria of the nineteenth century,¹ such as the *Neon Leimonarion*,² the *Synaxarion* of Nikodemos Agioreites,³ and the *Megas Synaxaristes* of Konstantinos Doukakes,⁴ though he is not mentioned in such Byzantine synaxaria, as the *Menologion* of Basil II, the *Synaxarion* of Symeon Metaphrastes or the *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*. He appears for the first time in a synaxarion preserved in the cod. Vat. Gr. 1190,⁵ of 1542.⁶ Even when he does appear, however, there is no information given so as to where and when St Phanourios lived and suffered martyrdom. Although my approach to the subject in this paper will be that of an art historian, the main question, which must be asked, is whether his life is a fact or a fiction.

* I would like to thank all those who, with their valuable criticism and suggestions, helped me to minimize any errors in this paper, namely Mr M. Chatzidakis, Dr R. Cormack and Dr L. Bouras. My thanks are extended to Mr M. Borboudakis, *ephoros* of the Byzantine Antiquities of Crete, who permitted me to publish the iconographic material on St Phanourios found in Crete and to Mr M. Michailides, director of Byzantine Antiquities, for the photo of St Phanourios' icon from Pholegandros. I always recall the discussion I had with Mr E. Kollias, *ephoros* of the Byzantine Antiquities in the Dodecanese, which greatly helped me at the beginning of this research. The contribution of † E. Eaton in the improvement of the English text was very important.

¹ L. Petit, *Bibliographie des Acolouthies grecques* (Brussels, 1945), 236–9.

² *Νέον Λειμωνάριον* (Athens, 1873²), 317–28.

³ N. Agioreites, *Συναξαριστής* (Athens, 1914³), 1–17.

⁴ K. Doukakes, *Μέγας Συναξαριστής Αυγούστου* (Athens, 1894), 387–97.

⁵ The cod. Vat. Gr. 1190 consists of 1,387 folios. It was offered to Pope Paul V by the Latin bishop of Sitia and Hierapetra, Alessandro Turriano, around 1594. M. Vogel and V. Gardthausen, *Die griechischen Schreiber des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Leipzig, 1909), repr. (Hildesheim, 1966), 174. A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1939), 608–9, 870–71. R. Devreese, *Les Fonds grecs de la Bibliothèque Vaticane des origines à Paul V* (Vatican, 1965), 473, 480. B. Laourdas, 'Κρητικά παλαιογραφικά', *KretChron* 6 (1952), 50–51. M. Manoussakas, 'Η χειροτονία ιερέων της Κρήτης από τον μητροπολίτη Κορίνθου', *DChAE* 4 (1964–65), 319.

⁶ An inscription on fol. 819v of the Vatican manuscript gives the date of the codex (September 1542), the name of the scribe (the priest John Kodomnenos) and the name of its owner (George Avramiaios, bishop of Sitia). Laourdas, 'Κρητικά παλαιογραφικά', 50.

This study is divided into three parts: the first is a brief account of sources on St Phanourios, the second is concerned with the iconography of the saint and in the third some conclusions are proposed.

I. Sources on St Phanourios

Our information about St Phanourios derives from two manuscripts and from the synaxaria of the nineteenth century. The cod. Vat. Gr. 1190, dated 1542, includes an account of miracles by St Phanourios (Fig. 5.1). It was written in Crete and copies an earlier synaxarion, probably also written in Crete. This account of miracles by St Phanourios, published in the *Acta Sanctorum* among the texts of saints celebrated on 27 May, is divided into two parts.⁷ In the first, there is the story of a miracle of St Phanourios which, according to the text, caused his cult to spread from Rhodes, the only place where the saint was known, to Crete. It refers to four Cretan priests who, returning from the district of Coron to Crete, were arrested by the Turks. One was put to death immediately and the remaining three were taken to Palatia (the ancient Miletus) in Asia Minor and became slaves. After unsuccessful attempts to free them, the Cretan monk Ionas went to Rhodes to ask the help of a lord of the island, whom he knew personally. At that time this lord, George Petranis, was at Palatia and Ionas informed him of the case of the imprisoned Cretan priests and begged him to arrange their release. Petranis' answer was discouraging and Ionas, distressed by the reply, met Neilos, the metropolitan of Rhodes, who advised him to go to the monastery of St Phanourios and seek the saint's help. The Cretan monk went to the monastery and, having prayed to the saint, met one Theodore, a former prisoner in Palatia, who had been recently set free and reported that the negotiations for the priests' release were making progress. Ionas attributed the good news to the intervention of St Phanourios and so, on leaving for Crete, ordered and took with him an icon of the saint. The account ends here without mentioning whether the priests were finally set free and returned to Crete, something implied by the optimistic tone of the end of the text. The second part of the Vatican manuscript enumerates some of the miracles of St Phanourios performed in Crete. In these, the saint features as helping the discovery of lost animals and objects and the cure of sick people and animals.

Dr E. Zachariadou has discussed the text of the first part and the date of the miracle.⁸ She identifies Neilos, the metropolitan of Rhodes mentioned in the text, with the well-known Hesychast Neilos Diasorenos,⁹ who was

⁷ *Acta Sanctorum*, 6 May (Venice, 1739), 37–43.

⁸ E. Zachariadou, 'Ιστορικά στοιχεία σ' ένα θαύμα του αγίου Φανουρίου', *Αρχαίον Πόντου* 26 (1964), 309–18.

⁹ H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 787. V. Grumel in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* 11, 1st part (Paris, 1931), cols 674–5. Zachariadou, 'Ιστορικά στοιχεία σ' ένα θαύμα του αγίου Φανουρίου', 312.

ordained metropolitan of Rhodes in the fourteenth century. On account of the occupation of the island by the Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem (1309–1522), Diasorenos would have spent the greater part of his service at Constantinople, but it appears that he went to Rhodes around 1357 because two patriarchal letters of this year have been preserved which were addressed to the inhabitants of Rhodes and the Cyclades on the occasion of the journey of the metropolitan of Rhodes to those islands.¹⁰ As to whether Neilos finally went to Rhodes we have no evidence. The Vatican manuscript would provide the only evidence for the presence of Neilos in the island, which may be dated between 1357 (the year in which the patriarchal letters were written) and 1366, when Neilos was appointed patriarchal exarch.¹¹ Within this period should be dated the miracle of St Phanourios, since it occurred when the metropolitan Neilos was in the island. The Vatican manuscript mentions also that when Petranis was at Palatia there occurred 'many disputes and wars'. Dr Zachariadou identifies these events with the war of 1360 between the Emirates of Aydin and Mendeshe.¹² Her conclusion is that the miracle described in the cod. Vat. Gr. 1190 can be dated around 1360.¹³ Accordingly, the worship of St Phanourios in Crete began after 1360.

The centre of his cult in Crete was the monastery of Varsamonero¹⁴ in the prefecture of Herakleion, where the chapel of St Phanourios was erected in 1426 and decorated with wall paintings in 1431, according to the preserved dedicatory inscription.¹⁵ If the chronology of Zachariadou is accepted, about 70 years elapsed before the saint acquired his own place of worship in Crete. It would appear more likely, however, for the chapel to have been erected in the first years of the saint's worship in Crete and under the impact of the miraculous release of the Cretan priests and the return of the monk Ionas with the icon of the hitherto unknown St Phanourios. The founder of the chapel was the abbot of Varsamonero, Ionas Palamas, who cannot be identified with the monk Ionas on the chronology of Zachariadou. The miracle of the liberation of the Cretan priests is also described in a second manuscript, of which four pages have been preserved – now in the possession of N. Stavrinides,¹⁶ the translator of the Turkish Archives in the Municipal Library of Herakleion (Fig. 5.2). It can be dated in the first half

¹⁰ MM I (Vienna, 1860), repr. (Darmstadt, 1968), 363–5. Zachariadou, 'Ιστορικά στοιχεία σ' ένα θαύμα του αγίου Φανουρίου', 312.

¹¹ Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, 787. *Dictionnaire*, 674. Zachariadou, 'Ιστορικά στοιχεία σ' ένα θαύμα του αγίου Φανουρίου', 313.

¹² Zachariadou, 'Ιστορικά στοιχεία σ' ένα θαύμα του αγίου Φανουρίου', 314, 316–17.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 317–18.

¹⁴ G. Gerola, *Monumenti veneti dell'isola di Creta II* (Venice, 1908), 285. S. Spanakis, *Οδηγός Κρήτης I* (Herakleion, n.d.), 88–91. M. Chatzidakis, 'Τοιχογραφίες στην Κρήτη', *KretiChron* 6 (1952), 72–5.

¹⁵ S. Xanthoudides, 'Χριστιανικά επιγραφαί εκ Κρήτης', *Αθηνά XV* (1903), 139. Gerola, *Monumenti IV* (Venice, 1932), 539–40.

¹⁶ I would like to thank N. Stavrinides warmly for his kindness in permitting me to publish this manuscript here.

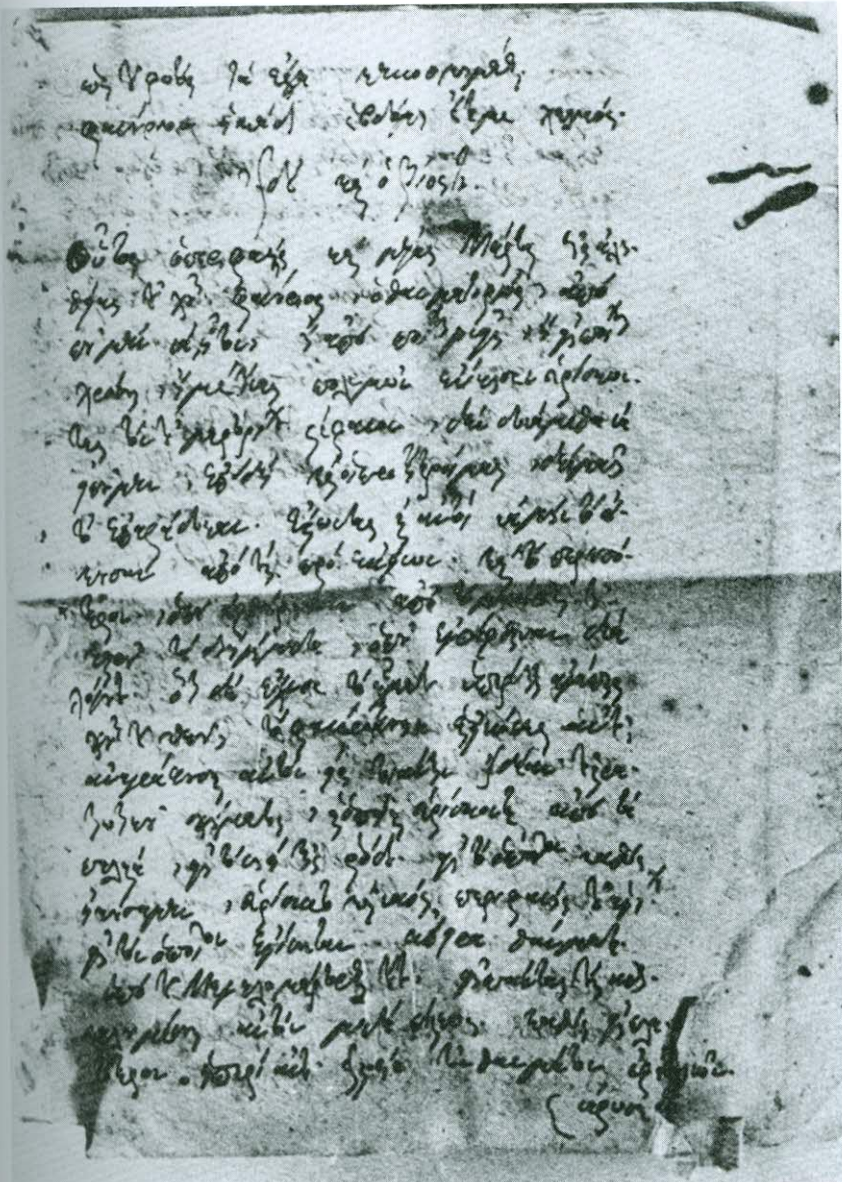


Fig. 5.2. Crete, Herakleion, Vikelaia Municipal Library. Manuscript, fol. 1.

of the seventeenth century,¹⁷ and is, therefore, later than the Vatican text of 1542. The story of the miracle of St Phanourios in the Herakleion version is very similar to that of the Vatican manuscript but in the following cases new information is recorded:

1. The monk Ionas, who achieved the Cretan priests' release, is identified with the abbot of Varsamonero, Ionas Palamas, the founder of St Phanourios' chapel.
2. After the Cretan priests had been set free, they went to Rhodes, where they met the abbot Ionas Palamas and they all returned to Crete.
3. The icon, which was painted by order of the abbot Ionas, was conveyed to the monastery of Varsamonero.
4. The chapel of St Phanourios was erected a few years after the return of the priests to Crete and in particular when the abbot Ionas Palamas was cured of a serious infection in his legs with the help of the saint.

Despite the later date of the Herakleion manuscript its information seems historically more likely than that of the Vat. Gr. 1190. By identifying the Cretan monk Ionas with the abbot of Varsamonero, Ionas Palamas, it transfers the story of the miracle to the first decades of the fifteenth century (with a *terminus ante quem* of the year 1426, when the chapel of St Phanourios was erected). This date seems more acceptable for the miracle, since it disposes of a long interval of 70 years between the miracle and the erection of St Phanourios' chapel. The author of the Herakleion text is well acquainted with the monastery of Varsamonero, and the stories he narrates about St Phanourios were presumably current at the monastery itself. Several expressions suggest that he was probably a monk at Varsamonero.¹⁸

The information summarized so far derives from the two manuscript sources, and now the further evidence from the nineteenth-century synaxaria may be considered. These, apart from the information they give about the miracle of the Cretan priests' release, are important for an understanding of the origins of St Phanourios' cult. According to these texts, in the fourteenth century some workmen, while gathering building material for the restoration of the city walls from the ruins of houses outside the southern walls of Rhodes, came across a ruined church, which contained many icons. These were all damaged except one, which depicted an unknown military saint, whose name, St Phanourios, was read on the icon by the metropolitan of Rhodes, Neilos. The authors of the nineteenth-century synaxaria probably copied this story from earlier hagiographical texts on St Phanourios which have not survived or have not yet been located. As early as the fifteenth

¹⁷ A date between 1600 and 1640, based on the lettering of the text, was suggested to me by Professor N. Panayiotakes, to whom I express my thanks.

¹⁸ ... εις τούς ἐρχομένους εις αὐτήν (i.e. the monastery) ... ψκοδόμησαν ἐκεῖ τόν ναόν τοῦ μεγαλομάρτυρος Φανουρίου καθὼς φαίνεται τήν σήμερον ... ἐρχομένου ποτέ τοῦ εἰρημένου κυρ-Ἰωνᾶ τοῦ ἡγουμένου βασιάζοντος καί μίαν εἰκόνα ... φέροντάς την ...



Fig. 5.3.
Crete, Moni
Varsamonerou.
South-east façade.

century there was an Akolouthia of the saint, from which a single verse has been preserved in the fifteenth-century codex of Lavra L 164 (folio 405).¹⁹ In the sixteenth century Nikolaos Malaxos composed verses and chants for St Phanourios, which survive today in the cod. Marciana gr. 140.²⁰ In one of these verses Malaxos refers to the church discovered at Rhodes, which he attributes to St Phanourios.²¹

It seems that the story of the discovery of the church in Rhodes was known in Crete at the beginning of the fifteenth century, when the chapel of St Phanourios at Varsamonero was erected and decorated with wall paintings (Fig. 5.3). On the north wall there is a damaged scene with the inscription ... [ΦΑ]ΝΟΥΡΙΟΥ ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΟΙΚΟΔΟΜΗΝ [discovering the building of Phanourios] (Fig. 5.4). The obvious interpretation of the scene is a representation of the finding of the church in Rhodes.

If we accept the story of the discovery of the church as true, then we might attribute the scarcity of information about the life of St Phanourios to the fact that this saint had been forgotten and remained unknown for several centuries until the church with his icon was found in Rhodes in the fourteenth century. In that case we must accept that the icon of Rhodes

¹⁹ S. Efstratiades, *Αγιολόγιον της Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας* (Athens, 1960), 457–8.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 458.

²¹ Φανούριος φῶς πᾶσι πιστοῖς παρέχει / κἄν εἰς σκότος δ' ἔκειτο τῆς γαίας μέγα. / ἔνθα σοι σηκός Φανουρίο ζάθεος ἔνι.

Fig. 5.4.
Crete, Moni
Varsamonerou.
The Discovery
of St Phanourios
Church in
Rhodes, wall
painting.



comprised at that time the only source of information about the saint and it may even have been the only pictorial account of St Phanourios.

The metropolitan of Rhodes, Neilos, is recorded in both stories – that is, in the account of the discovery of the saint's church and icon in Rhodes as well as in the miracle of the Cretan priests' release – though some years might have elapsed between them. The Herakleion manuscript mentions Neilos in spite of the fact that the liberation of the priests must have taken place in the first decades of the fifteenth century, since the abbot Ionas Palamas is mentioned, who lived at a time when Neilos was no longer alive. Can it be that Neilos is only connected with the discovery of the church and the icon in Rhodes and not with the miracle of the Cretan priests' release? In that case his name was connected with the miracle in an attempt to give authenticity and importance.

To sum up this interpretation of the textual sources: The saint was completely unknown before the fourteenth century, when his church was discovered in Rhodes with an icon of the saint in it. The metropolitan of Rhodes Neilos read the name of St Phanourios on the icon. The cult of the saint was fostered through the dedication of a monastery to him. His cult was spread to Crete at the beginning of the fifteenth century, after his role in the liberation of three Cretan priests imprisoned by the Turks. A significant part in the liberation of the priests and the spread of the saint's cult in Crete was played by the abbot of Varsamonero, Ionas Palamas, who brought an icon of the saint to the island and erected the chapel of St Phanourios in the monastery of Varsamonero.

II. The Iconography of St Phanourios

The nineteenth-century synaxaria describe the icon of Rhodes as showing the saint in military uniform and holding in his right hand a cross, which supported a burning candle. Around the central image of the icon there

were 12 scenes from the saint's martyrdom, which are also described in the *synaxaria*. All the surviving representations of St Phanourios, known to me, were painted on Crete. In the chapel of St Phanourios at Varsamonero military saints were depicted on the east, west and north walls, as also on the soffit of the arch of the east wall. Their state of preservation is mostly very poor and those of the north wall have been completely destroyed. So there is no trace of any representation of St Phanourios in the most likely place to be chosen. Apart from the scene depicting the discovery of the saint's church in Rhodes, there are four unidentified wall paintings, one on the upper register of the north wall and the rest on the east wall, which may depict episodes from the life or miracles of St Phanourios.

The earliest certain representation of the saint is in the wall decoration of the church of St Constantine at Avdou Pediados, painted in 1445.²² On the south side of the eastern apse is a depiction of St Phanourios as a deacon (Fig. 5.5). The saint, dressed in the normal garb of a deacon, holds in his left hand, raised at breast-level, an incense-case. Curls behind his ears adorn his delicate youthful face, an iconographic feature which accompanies the saint in all his depictions. On the left side of the wall painting is the inscription Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΦΑΝΟΥΡΙΟΣ.

St Phanourios is also represented in a group of seven icons, three of which are signed by the painter Angelos, while the others might be assigned to him on stylistic grounds. The activity of the Cretan painter Angelos is normally dated around 1600.²³ The first work to be considered here is a double-sided icon once in the *templon* of St Phanourios' chapel at Varsamonero (dimensions: 87.5 x 65.5 cm).²⁴ On one side of it St Phanourios converses with Christ (Fig. 5.6). The saint, turned towards the left, wears military uniform and carries a spear on his left shoulder. In his right hand he would have held the cross supporting the candle,²⁵ of which a very small part can be distinguished. On the right we may read part of his name [ΦΑ] ΝΟΥΡΙΟΣ. Christ on the left is turned towards the saint. He holds a scroll in his left hand and with his right makes a gesture of speech. Three scenes with miracles of St Phanourios are depicted in a register on the upper part of the same side. On the right at the bottom there is the signature Χείρ Ἀγγέλου [The Hand of Angelos]. On the other side of the icon, St Phanourios is almost frontally depicted (Fig. 5.7). Dressed in uniform, he holds a spear in his

²² Xanthoudides, 'Χριστιανικά ἐπιγραφαί', 60. Gerola, *Monumenti* IV, 513. M. Michailides, *B' Chronika*, AD 25 (1970), Pl. 28b.

²³ Xyngopoulos, *Σχεδιάσμα*, 169–71. M. Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos*, 116–19.

²⁴ M. Borboudakis, 'Βυζαντινά και Μεσαιωνικά Μνημεία Κρήτης', *KretChron* 25 (1973), 505, Pl. 27. M. Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos*, 118.

²⁵ The cross supporting the burning candle might be interpreted as a cross-shaped candlestick, though it is without a base. This type of candlestick has been preserved in few 6th-c. examples. *Byzantine Art – An European Art* (Athens, 1964), 447, no. 536. J. Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst – Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire* (Vienna, 1904), 287, no. 9126, Fig. 319. H. Schnell, 'Christliche Lichtsymbolik in den einzelnen Kunstsepochen', *Das Münster* 31 (1978), Fig. on 25.

Fig. 5.5. Crete, Avdou, St Constantine. St Phanourios, wall painting.





Fig. 5.6.
Crete, Moni
Varsamonerou.
St Phanourios
with Christ, icon.

right hand passing diagonally in front of his breast. His left hand, resting on a shield, holds the cross with the candle. At the upper left corner the hand of God gives a blessing and on the upper right the name of St Phanourios appears faintly. The icon has been cut at the top and the bottom, and the lower part of the saint has been preserved only down to the middle of the leg, while of the dragon, on which he treads, survives only a small part. It can be suggested that this side of the icon was painted first, for, after it had been cut at the top and the bottom, the other side was painted, on which the representation is entirely preserved. On the grounds of style, both sides can be attributed to Angelos, although his signature is found on one side only. If we compare the unsigned side of the Varsamonero icon with that of

Fig. 5.7.
Crete, Moni
Varsamonerou. St
Phanourios, icon.



St Phanourios in Patmos²⁶ (Fig. 5.8) bearing the signature of Angelos, we see that they share several iconographic and stylistic affinities. They display the same iconography and follow the same method in the rendering of lights (thin, parallel white lines) on the forehead and the cheekbones of the saint. At the beginning the icon was presumably intended to be on a stand but after its alteration it was to be placed in the *templon*; this change of function might explain why it was cut soon after the first side was painted.

In the monastery of Varsamonero there is a second icon of St Phanourios in military uniform, enthroned and crowned by an angel (dimensions: 92 x 66.5 cm; Fig. 5.9). The greater part of the representation has been damaged. The saint's name has not survived but that it is St Phanourios is deduced not only from the individual features of his portraiture but also by the fact that a later copy of this icon bears the name of St Phanourios (Fig. 5.10). The saint holds a spear in his right hand passing diagonally in front of his breast. His feet tread upon a dragon. The saint's face is rendered with a close network of lights, which becomes more intense on the cheekbones, the forehead and the chin (Fig. 5.11); it has the same restrained and, in a way, cold expression as the face of St Catherine in an icon from Patmos depicting the Virgin and St Catherine, which is signed by Angelos (Fig. 5.12).²⁷ On the basis of its stylistic resemblance with the above icon from Patmos, this icon of St Phanourios should also be assigned to Angelos.

Two icons from the monastery of the Virgin Hodegetria (located on the south coast of the prefecture of Herakleion), now in the Collection of Icons and Treasures of St Catherine at Herakleion, also depict St Phanourios. Both can be attributed to Angelos on stylistic grounds. The first icon illustrates Christ's appearance to the Holy Women above and a miracle of St Phanourios below (dimensions: 115 x 63 cm; Fig. 5.13).²⁸ The name of the saint ΦΑΝΟΥΡΙΟΣ appears clearly. The way in which the face of St Phanourios has been painted is very similar to that of Christ conversing with St Phanourios in the double-sided icon of Varsamonero (Figs 5.14, 5.15). Both faces have been rendered with characteristic white brushstrokes, which create a network of lights on the forehead, the cheekbones and the neck. The nose has been rendered in the same way in both icons, as also the shadows below the eyes. Both faces are distinguished by their nobility, the result of delicate modelling.

In the second icon from the same monastery (dimensions: 90 x 51 cm; Fig. 5.16) St Phanourios is shown as a military saint.²⁹ He holds in his right hand a spear and in his left a shield and the cross, of which only a part survives, because the icon has been cut at the bottom and on the right side. At the upper right corner appears the hand of God blessing and at the left Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΦΑΝΟΥΡΙΟΣ can be read. The face of the saint has been painted with the same characteristic brushstrokes found in the icons signed by Angelos.

²⁶ M. Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos*, 117–19, Pl. 27.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 116–17, Pls 49, 127.

²⁸ Το Ηράκλειον και ο Νομός του (Herakleion, 1971), Pls 382, 383.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Pl. 385.

Fig. 5.8. Patmos,
St Phanourios,
icon.





Fig. 5.9.
Crete, Moni
Varsamonerou. St
Phanourios, icon.



Fig. 5.10. Crete,
Herakleion, St
Matthew. St
Phanourios, icon.

Fig. 5.11.
Crete, Moni
Varsamonerou.
St Phanourios,
detail of Fig. 5.9.



Fig. 5.12.
Patmos,
detail of St
Catherine, icon.



Fig. 5.13. Crete, Herakleion, Collection of St Catherine. Icon.

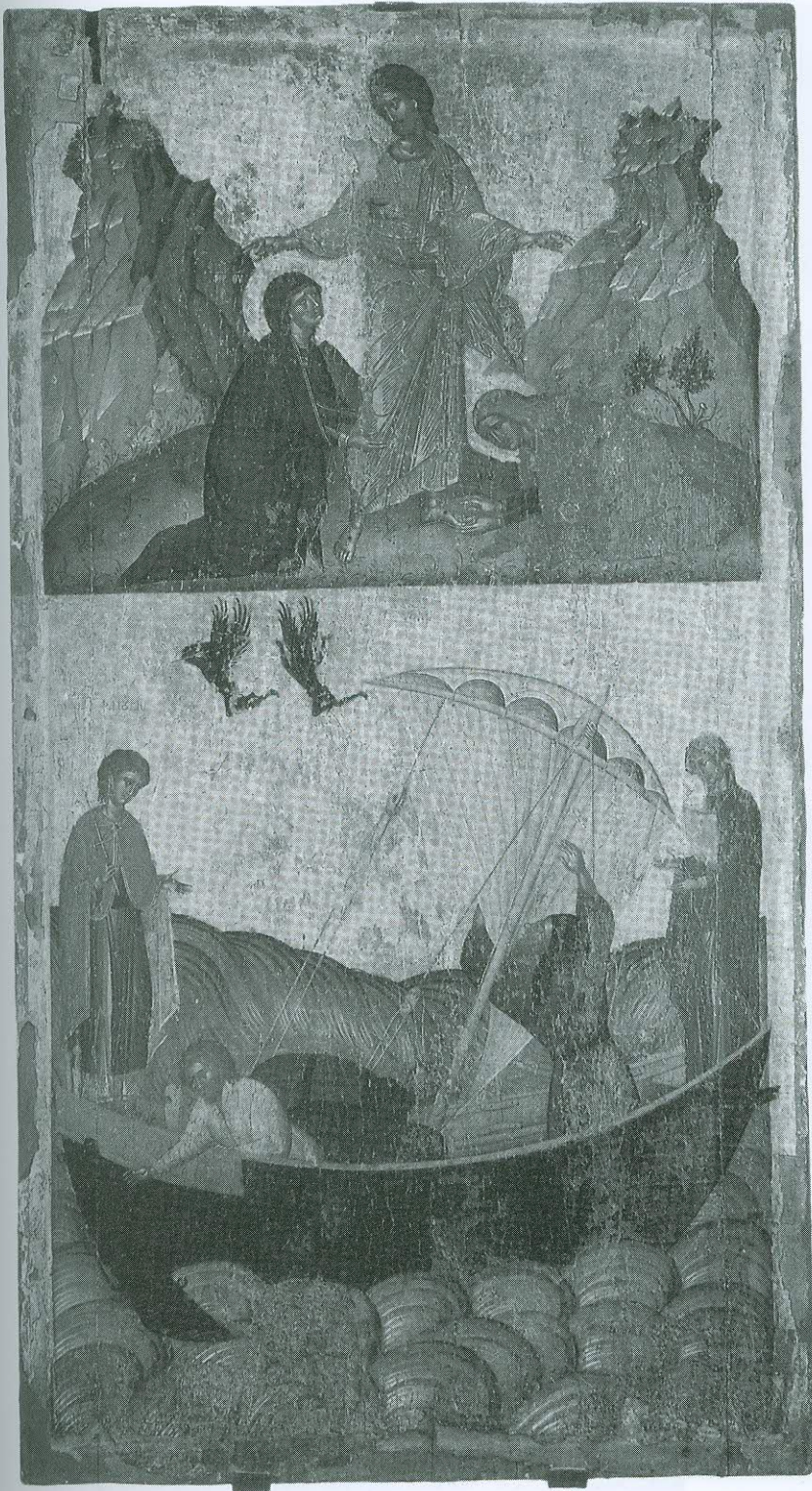


Fig. 5.14. Crete,
Herakleion,
Collection of
St Catherine.
St Phanourios,
detail of Fig. 5.13.



Fig. 5.15. Detail of
Fig. 5.6, Christ.





Fig. 5.16. Crete, Herakleion, Collection of St Catherine. St Phanourios, icon.

The two last icons of the same painter are unpublished. One is in the Aegean island of Pholegandros and is signed by Angelos (dimensions: 79.5 x 49.7 cm; Fig. 5.17).³⁰ The second is in a private collection in Athens and must be assigned to Angelos on account of style and resemblance to his signed icons (dimensions: 84 x 33.5 cm; Fig. 5.18).³¹ In both the saint is shown in military uniform.

Apart from the icons painted by Angelos, there is in Crete another icon of St Phanourios, which has been already mentioned as copying the icon of the enthroned St Phanourios from Varsamonero (dimensions: 90 x 60 cm; Fig. 5.10). It bears the date ΑΧΠΗ [1688] and the inscriptions ΧΕΙΡ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΙΕΡΕΩΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΟΛΥΒΑ [By the hand of the priest John Kolyvas] and ΔΕΗCIC ΤΟΥ ΔΟΥΑΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΙΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΜΟΝΑΧΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΝΤΑΒΥΤΑΑ ΕΝ ΜΩΝΙ ΒΑΡCΑΜΟΝΕΡΩ [Prayer of the servant of God the hieromonk Parthenios Daviglas in the monastery of Varsamonero]. It comes from the monastery of Varsamonero but is today found in the church of St Matthew in Herakleion.

Outside Crete I have been able to locate five icons of St Phanourios. They all seem to be of Cretan origin and date from the seventeenth or eighteenth century:

1. An icon at Sinai with a bust of the saint shown as a martyr (Fig. 5.19).³² He holds before him in his right hand the martyr's cross, which supports the characteristic burning candle; his left hand is held out in a gesture of prayer.
2. An icon in the Lavra Monastery on Athos with the saint in military uniform (Fig. 5.20).³³
3. An icon in San Marco in Venice with St George and St Phanourios, both in military uniform (dimensions: 20 x 16 cm).³⁴
4. An icon from the Collection of Icons of the Hellenic Institute in Venice with St Merkourios, St Catherine and St Phanourios (dimensions: 26 x 30 cm).³⁵ The two male saints are in military uniform.
5. An icon of St Phanourios in a Swiss collection (dimensions: 38.3 x 26 cm).³⁶ The saint is again in military uniform.

Two of the icons painted by Angelos which have been already mentioned include scenes with miracles of St Phanourios. In the icon from the monastery of the Virgin Hodegetria the main feature is a ship sailing in a stormy sea (Fig. 5.21). To the left stands St Phanourios as a martyr, and to the right

³⁰ M. Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos*, 118.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 118.

³² *Ibid.*, 118.

³³ I thank Mr M. Chatzidakis for the information and the photo.

³⁴ A. Rizzi, 'Le icone bizantine e postbizantine delle chiese veneziane', *Thesaurismata* 9 (1972), no. 36, 274-5, Pl. K.1.

³⁵ M. Chatzidakis, *Icones de Saint-Georges*, no. 138 (93), 153.

³⁶ M. Chatzidakis, V. Djurić and M. Lazović, *Les icônes dans les collections suisses* (Geneva, 1968), no. 22, Pl. 22.



Fig. 5.17.
Pholegandros. St
Phanourios, icon.

Fig. 5.18.
Athens, private
collection. St
Phanourios, icon.



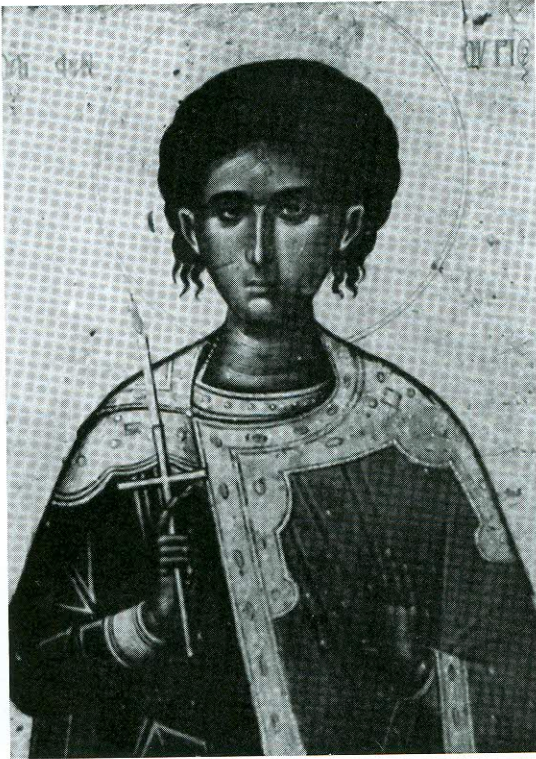


Fig. 5.19. Sinai, St Phanourios, icon.



Fig. 5.20. Mount Athos, monastery of Great Lavra. St Phanourios, icon.

Fig. 5.21. Detail of
Fig. 5.13,
A Miracle of St
Phanourios.



end of the ship the Virgin in a posture of supplication. In the ship there are also three priests: two of them kneel in prayer and the third is busy with the sails of the ship, from which two winged demons are flying away. A fourth figure, dressed as a layman, kneels with his hand stretched towards the ship's anchor. The same miracle is illustrated in the middle of the three scenes in the Varsamonero icon (Fig. 5.22). The poor state of its preservation permits us to distinguish only with difficulty the two praying priests, the hand and part of the body of the third, close to the mast, St Phanourios to the left, part of the Virgin to the right and one of the flying demons. From a worn inscription we may reconstruct the words *Η ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ, ΦΑΝΟΥΡΙΟΣ* and *ΘΑΛΑΚΚΑ*.

Here a scene from the liberation of the Cretan priests and in particular their return to Crete may be illustrated. St Phanourios, by whose help they were set free, accompanies them on their return journey. The presence of the Virgin in the miracle, as well as her depiction in the wall painting of the Discovery of St Phanourios' chapel, may be explained by a particular relation between St Phanourios and the Virgin: the transverse chapel of St Phanourios at Varsamonero was erected in the place of the narthex of the Virgin's chapel at the same monastery. St Phanourios and the Virgin also appear together in a story contained in the Herakleion manuscript.



Fig. 5.22. Detail of Fig. 5.6, A Miracle of St Phanourios.

From the first scene on the Varsamonero icon, part of the Christ has survived on the right, and of St Phanourios only his cross supporting a candle has been preserved on the left (Fig. 5.23). From the very few remains of an inscription on the left we may reconstruct the word Φ ΑΝΟΥΡΙΟΣ. Here, as in the central scene of the same side, Christ would have been shown conversing with St Phanourios (Fig. 5.6). This conversation need not refer to any particular event in the saint's life. Since military saints are considered first of all soldiers of Christ,³⁷ the conversation of Christ with St Phanourios in the Varsamonero icon may perhaps emphasize this relation. Furthermore, saints act as mediators, interceding, that is, with Christ for the salvation of the mankind. This may be the reference in the icon of Varsamonero with St Phanourios asking for the salvation of Christians.³⁸

In the third scene from the same icon, St Phanourios is standing on a tower-like building (Fig. 5.24). On the right is a tethered horse. A worn inscription on the right reads: $\text{Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΦΑΝΟΥΡΙΟΣ ΦΥΛΑΤΤΩΝ ... ΦΩΣ ΕΚ ΤΟΥ ΥΕΤΟΥ}$ [St Phanourios protecting ... phos from heavy rain]. In the Vatican and the Herakleion manuscripts there are two miracles with St Phanourios giving protection from heavy rain. In the Vatican miracle the saint is said to have protected the dried figs of a certain George from heavy rain. In the

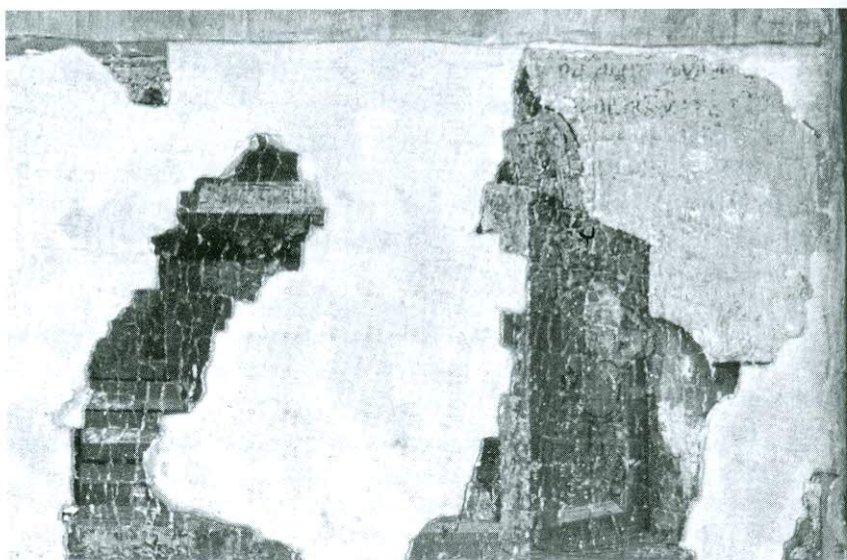
³⁷ St Phanourios is called in his *Akolouthies* ἀθλητής τοῦ Κυρίου, ἀήττητος στρατιώτης, ὑπέρ Χριστοῦ ἀθλήσας etc.

³⁸ The mediating role of St Phanourios is underlined throughout his *Akolouthies*.

Fig. 5.23. Detail of Fig. 5.6, A Miracle of St Phanourios.



Fig. 5.24. Detail of Fig. 5.6, A Miracle of St Phanourios.



Herakleion text St Phanourios protects Ionas, the abbot of Varsamonero, from heavy rain as he returns from the city of Candia (Herakleion) to the monastery of Varsamonero carrying an icon of St Phanourios. One of those miracles may be illustrated in the Varsamonero icon.

From the brief examination of the surviving icons with miracles of St Phanourios there is no indication that the artist Angelos, who painted them, had any other information about the saint's life beyond that contained in the Vatican and the Herakleion manuscripts. This reinforces the opinion that the first source of information about St Phanourios was the icon found in Rhodes, from which his iconography appears to have originated. The icon Ionas brought to Crete must have been a copy of the icon of Rhodes.

In the representations of St Phanourios, listed here, the saint is not shown only as a soldier (as, for instance, he was depicted in the icon of Rhodes), but also as a martyr saint and as a deacon. It was normal for military saints to be sometimes shown as martyrs.³⁹ Instead of the normal martyr's cross, St Phanourios holds the cross supporting a burning candle. As for the illustration of St Phanourios in the form of a deacon, it is not clear if there is any theological reason or if it shows uncertainty about the biographical data of the saint.⁴⁰

The *synaxaristes* mention that in the icon of Rhodes the military St Phanourios held a cross supporting a candle, and this iconographic attribute accompanied the saint in all his representations. But apart from the cross, the military St Phanourios is illustrated with a spear and a shield, which are the usual equipments of the military saints. The dragon, on which he treads in some icons, connects St Phanourios with the dragon-slayers St George and St Theodore, with the exception that St Phanourios is not shown on horseback at the moment of slaying the dragon but on foot treading on him. This representation of St Phanourios reflects the symbolism of the subduing of evil, which the dragon represents, rather than any particular miracle performed by the saint. In no representation, known to me, does St Phanourios slay the dragon. St George and St Theodore are illustrated as dragon-slayers not only on horseback but also on foot.⁴¹ The iconographic scheme of St Phanourios enthroned, being crowned by an angel, is found

³⁹ H. Delehay, *Les légendes grecques des saints militaires* (Paris, 1909), 5. For examples of military saints depicted as martyrs, G. and M. Soteriou, *Icones du Mont Sinai I* (Plates) (Athens, 1956), Pls 4, 6, 7, 47, 62, 64 etc.

⁴⁰ It is interesting to note that St Demetrios was transformed into a military saint, though he was originally a deacon. C. Mango, *Byzantium the Empire of New Rome* (London, 1980), 157. The case of St Phanourios is completely the opposite; he is mentioned in the textual sources as a military saint but he was transformed into a deacon in one of his depictions.

⁴¹ St George is shown on foot slaying the dragon in a Cretan icon of the beginning of the 16th c. from Patmos (M. Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos*, 76, Pl. 26); in a 17th-c. icon in the Benaki Museum (*ibid.*, Fig. 205); in another of the same date in the Historical Museum of Herakleion (*Το Ηράκλειον και ο Νομός του*, Pl. 360); and in two icons, also from the 17th c., in the Zakynthos Museum (M. Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos*, 76). The only representations of St Theodore on foot slaying the dragon known to me are found in a 13th-c. enamelled icon

in representations of military saints such as St George,⁴² St Demetrios⁴³ and St Theodore.⁴⁴ We see, therefore, that the iconography of St Phanourios conforms with the illustrations of other military saints. The cross with the candle, which is characteristic of St Phanourios only, could be interpreted with the help of the sixteenth-century verse of Malaxos mentioned above, which says that St Phanourios gives light to all the faithful.⁴⁵ It could be also explained by the saint's main attribute to bring things into light, to reveal things.

III. Conclusion

This study of St Phanourios has uncovered several affinities between him and St George. In view of those affinities it is necessary to examine whether St Phanourios ever existed or when and how he was invented. In the first of the miracles recorded in the Vatican manuscript, St Phanourios helped a woman called Pheme to find her lost ox. The text itself comments that this is similar to what the great St George did⁴⁶ – St George helped a certain Theopistos to find his two lost oxen.⁴⁷ In another miracle of the same manuscript St Phanourios healed the dying horse of the monk Theodoulos and the ox of a certain Nikolaos. We know that St George raised the dead ox of the farmer Glykerios⁴⁸ and the ox of the son of a woman called Scholasteke.⁴⁹ According to the Vatican and the Herakleion manuscripts, St Phanourios liberated the Cretan priests; St George liberated a Paphlagonian

in the Hermitage (A. Bank, *Byzantine Art in the Collections of the Soviet Museums* (Leningrad, 1977), Pl. 196) and in an icon from the Loverdos Collection painted by Angelos.

⁴² St George is depicted enthroned in a marble relief of the beginning of the 13th c. from San Marco in Venice (R. Lange, *Die byzantinische Reliefikone* (Recklinghausen, 1964), Pl. 28); in a 16th-c. icon from the Stavroniketa Monastery on Mount Athos (C. Patrinelles, A. Karakatsanes and M. Theochari, *Μονή Σταυρονικήτα – Ιστορία – Εικόνες – Χρυσοκεντήματα* (Athens, 1974), Pl. 52); and in a 16th-c. icon from Plovdiv (K. Weitzmann, M. Chatzidakis, K. Miatev and S. Radojčić, *Frühe Ikonen, Sinai – Griechenland – Bulgarien – Jugoslawien* (Vienna, 1965), Pl. 125).

⁴³ St Demetrios is shown enthroned in a 12th-c. Russian icon in the Tretjakov Gallery (D.T. Rice, *Byzantine Painting, the Last Phase* (London, 1968), Pl. 130); in a marble relief from San Marco of the beginning of the 13th c. (Lange, *Reliefikone*, 87); and in an icon of the end of the 16th c. from Mykonos (A. Χυngopoulos, *Ο εικονογραφικός κύκλος της ζωής του Αγίου Δημητρίου* (Thessaloniki, 1970), Pl. IV).

⁴⁴ St Theodore is represented enthroned in a 17th-c. icon in Skopje. *Razstava Ikon, Narodna Galerija* (Ljubljana, 1963), no. 54, Pl. 30.

⁴⁵ See n. 2.

⁴⁶ ... ὡς ὁ μέγας Γεώργιος ...

⁴⁷ *Miracula Sancti Georgi*, ed. J.B. Aufhauser (Lipsiae, 1913), 44–6 and *Collections grecques de miracles: Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien, Saints Cyr et Jean (extraits), Saint Georges*, trans. and annot. A.J. Festugière (Paris, 1971), 288–93.

⁴⁸ For the textual sources of the miracle, T. Mark-Weiner, *Narrative Cycles of the Life of St George in Byzantine Art* (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1977), 212.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 212.

youth abducted by the Saracens⁵⁰ and a Mytilenian boy abducted by the corsairs of Crete.⁵¹ The miracles performed by various saints often follow similar patterns including repetitions of the same events. Of the common miracles performed by St Phanourios and St George I have isolated only those which are unique to them. These miracles mostly refer to animals connected with pastoral and farming occupations – with which St George is especially associated – and also to liberation of abducted people.

Most of the 12 scenes of St Phanourios' martyrdom, shown in the icon of Rhodes and described by the *synaxaristes*, are paralleled in the martyrdom of St George. The accounts of saints' martyrdoms often present many common features. What is peculiar in the martyrdoms of St Phanourios and St George is that they are almost identical.⁵²

In Rhodes, where the worship of St Phanourios is first documented, St George was held in special honour with a large number of churches dedicated to him. On the other hand, the only extant Byzantine church of St Phanourios in Rhodes today⁵³ was dedicated to the saint very recently, after the liberation of the island from the Italian occupation, in 1948. The church had been transformed into a mosque during the Turkish occupation of Rhodes and subsequently became a storehouse.⁵⁴ Hence its original dedication to St Phanourios is a modern one. In its wall decoration there are no traces of any representation of St Phanourios, and its present dedication is unlikely to be the original one.

The name of St Phanourios is etymologically associated with the saint's main attribute: the revelation of lost objects and animals. The Vatican manuscript lists three miracles in which St Phanourios brings things to light. 'Άγιε Φανούριε φανέρωσε μου [St Phanourios reveal to me] is a phrase quite often heard today in Greece. We have seen that St George showed Theopistos where he could find his oxen. St George also, according to the Greek popular tradition, which undoubtedly echoes older tradition, reveals lost children. St Theodore, too, is presented as having the same ability in a miracle cited in the *Vita* of Joseph the Hymnographer composed by John the Deacon and dated between the tenth and the thirteenth century.⁵⁵ According to the miracle, St Theodore helped a man to find his lost servant.⁵⁶ In that miracle St Theodore bears the appellation ΦΑΝΕΡΩΤΗΣ [revealer].

⁵⁰ *Miracula*, 13–39. *Collections*, 276–87.

⁵¹ *Miracula*, 100–103. *Collections*, 313–15.

⁵² I cite from the *synaxaria* some of the martyrdom scenes of St Phanourios in order to show this connection: a. The martyr was stretched out on the ground, scourged by two soldiers; b. He was tortured on a wheel; c. He lay on the ground with a heavy stone on his chest; d. He was buried in a lime-pit with his hands raised to heaven.

⁵³ A. Orlandos, 'Βυζαντινά και μεταβυζαντινά μνημεία Ρόδου', *ΑΒΜΕ* 6 (1948), I, 86, Fig. 78; II, 164–73.

⁵⁴ A. Gabriel, *La Cité de Rhodes, MCCCX–MDXXII. 2, Architecture civile et religieuse* (Paris, 1923), 193.

⁵⁵ E. Tomadakis, *Ιωσήφ ο Υμνογράφος, βίος και έργον* (Athens, 1971), 30–31.

⁵⁶ P.G. 105, col. 933: 'Ανθρωπός τις, ἔχων δοῦλον χρήσιμον, ἐπέπειρ ὁ δοῦλος ἔφυγεν, ἀπελθὼν ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν Ἅγιον Θεόδωρον τὸν Φανερωτὴν, παρεκάλει αὐτὸν φανερώσαι

There is substantial evidence for the conclusion that St Phanourios is an invented saint, who was created from a mingling of other saints, a process which can be paralleled in other cases.⁵⁷ The name ΦΑΝΟΥΡΙΟΣ would have been created from the appellation ΦΑΝΕΡΩΤΗΣ either from its use for St Theodore or for St George (in the latter case the term, though appropriate, is not documented).

The process of assimilation of saints suggested in this paper could be best understood on the basis of the following hypothesis: the icon found in Rhodes actually depicted either St George or St Theodore. Whichever saint it was, his name was accompanied by the appellation ΦΑΝΕΡΩΤΗΣ. The hagiography of St Phanourios makes it more likely that the icon illustrated St George and 12 scenes from his martyrdom and miracles; this saint was the most popular on Rhodes. The representations of St Phanourios have facial characteristics in common with St George: both have youthful beardless faces and short hair. On the other hand, St Theodore normally was bearded. It seems that the appellation of St George as ΦΑΝΕΡΩΤΗΣ had been forgotten by the fourteenth century, as was the case with the same appellation of St Theodore. It seems also that in the icon of Rhodes the name of the saint had become worn and that is why only an educated person, such as the metropolitan Neilos, could read it. Therefore, if the proper name of St George in the icon of Rhodes had been destroyed and only a few letters from his appellation ΦΑΝΕΡΩΤΗΣ had survived, these would have been interpreted as the proper name ΦΑΝΟΥΡΙΟΣ, thus creating a new saint completely unknown till then. That is they gave to the word ΦΑΝΕΡΩΤΗΣ an ending – ΟΥΡΙΟΣ – known from another military saint, St Merkourios. This means that St Phanourios was created from the misreading of an icon's inscription and that he never existed previously. The fact that no icon of St Phanourios has been preserved in Rhodes may indicate that the confusion regarding the saint soon became known in the island and the saint was suppressed. In Crete, however, his cult was widespread and survives to this day. In present times St Phanourios is one of the favourite Greek popular saints. He is worshipped and honoured all over Greece as the saint who reveals lost objects.

τόν δούλον αὐτοῦ· προσμείνας δέ ἰκανῶς καί μηδέν μαθῶν ἐβουλεύετο ἀναχωρῆσαι. Ὁρθρου δε ὄντος, καί λόγου ψυχωφελοῦς ἀναγιγνωσκομένου, μικρόν ἀφύπνωσε, καί ὥρα τόν μάρτυρα λέγοντα αὐτῷ. Ἴνα τί περίλυπος εἶ; Τοῦ ποιητοῦ Ἰωσήφ κοιμηθέντος ταύτη τῇ νυκτί, ὀψικεύθη ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ παρά πάντων ἡμῶν, οὐς κανόσιν καί ὕμνοις ἐτίμησεν καί ἐσυνοψίσθη εἰς Θεόν. Καί νῦν πάρεμι πρὸς σέ. Τοῦ λοιποῦ τοίνυν δηλώσει. Ἄπελθε κατὰ τόνδε τόν τόπον, τοῦνομα προσειπῶν, καί εὐρήσεις, ὃν ἐπιζητεῖς οἰκέτην σου.

⁵⁷ This is the case between St Theodore Teron and St Theodore Stratelates (Delehaye, *Saints militaires*, 15–16), as well as between St Nicholas of Myra and St Nicholas of Sion (Mango, *Byzantium*, 156–7).

The Painter Angelos and Icon-Painting in Venetian Crete

Maria Vassilaki

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Published in the Variorum Collected Studies Series by

Ashgate Publishing Limited
Wey Court East
Union Road
Farnham
Surrey GU9 7PT
England

Ashgate Publishing Company
Suite 420
101 Cherry Street
Burlington, VT 05401-4405
USA

Ashgate website: <http://www.ashgate.com>

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Vassilaki, Maria

The painter Angelos and icon-painting in Venetian Crete. –
(Variorum collected studies series)

1. Akotantos, Angelos – Criticism and interpretation 2. Icon painting – Greece
– Crete – History 3. Icons, Greek

I. Title

704.9'482'094959

ISBN 978-0-7546-5945-7

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Vassilaki, Maria.

The painter Angelos and icon-painting in Venetian Crete / Maria Vassilaki.
p. cm. – (Variorum collected studies series)

ISBN 978-0-7546-5945-7 (alk. paper)


1. Akotantos, Angelos, 15th cent. 2. Icon painting – Greece – Crete – History.

I. Title.

N8189.5.A56V37 2007

759.9495-dc22

2007021974

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984 ™

Printed and bound in Great Britain by TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

VARIORUM COLLECTED STUDIES SERIES CS892