

EL GRECO OF CRETE

Πρακτικά του διεθνούς επιστημονικού συνεδρίου
που οργανώθηκε με αφορμή τα 450 χρόνια από τη γέννηση του ζωγράφου
Ηράκλειο 1-5 Σεπτεμβρίου 1990

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Italian Influences in El Greco's Early Work. Some new Observations

I dedicate this paper to the memory of my father, Georgios Constantoudakis, a native of this island.

I would like to thank David Davies and Paul Joannides for their helpful observations and the fruitful discussions we have had.

Domenicos Theotocopoulos's early artistic activity in his birthplace, Crete, a matter of scholarly debate up to about thirty years ago, due to absence of reliable information, has since then been documented by both archival evidence and surviving paintings. It so happened that the archival evidence was brought to light by Greek scholars, including Constantinos Mertzios in 1961, and more recently Professor Panayotakis in 1986,¹ while the discovery in 1983 of his only known fully signed icon is due to the archeologist G. Mastoropoulos.² It is now known that young Domenicos was already an independent painter by 1563,³ and that he was practising his profession in Candia, until his departure, probably in 1567, for Venice.⁴

Only one painting by him is recorded in the Cretan sources and this, today either lost or unidentified, depicted «la Passione del nostro Signor Giesù Christo»,⁵ that is probably the «Man of Sorrows» rather than the Crucifixion.⁶ This «Passion of Christ», for which more information is lacking, was painted against a golden background, a traditional Byzantine feature.

Theotocopoulos's Byzantine formation is understandable, although paintings from his Cretan phase are rare and the authenticity of them, it must be said, is still disputed by some scholars. His early paintings in the Byzantine tradition include the *Dormition of the Virgin*, bearing the signature ΔΟΜΗΝΙΚΟΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ Ο ΔΕΙΞΑΣ, recently discovered at Syros, as well as two further

1. C. D. Mertzios, «Σταχυολογήματα από τα κατάστιχα του νοταρίου Κρήτης Μιχαήλ Μαρά (1532-1578)», *Κρητικά Χρονικά*, 15-16, 1961-62, II, p. 308 (communication to the 1st International Congress of Cretan Studies, Iraklion 1961). Idem, «Domenicos Théotocopoulos: Nouveaux éléments biographiques», *Arte veneta*, xv, 1961-62, pp. 217-219. M. Constantoudaki, «Dominicos Théotocopoulos (El Greco) de Candie à Venise. Documents inédits (1566-1568)», *Thesaurismata*, 12, 1975, pp. 292-308. N. M. Panayotakis, *Η κρητική περίοδος της ζωής του Δομήνικου Θεοτοκόπουλου*, Αθήνα 1986, esp. pp. 28-29 and 118. See also Prof. Panayotakis's paper in this conference (document of November 1566).

2. G. Mastoropoulos, «Ένα άγνωστο έργο του Θεοτοκόπουλου», *Third Symposium of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Archeology and Art*, Christian Archeological Society, Athens 1983, Summaries, p. 53. *From Byzantium to El Greco. Greek Frescoes and Icons*, Exhibition catalogue (ed. M. Acheimastou-Potamianou), Royal Academy of Arts, London 1987, no. 63 (text by G. Mastoropoulos).

3. Panayotakis 1986 (see above, n. 1), p. 29 and doc. 1 on p. 118: «maestro Domenego Theotocopuli».

4. Constantoudaki 1975 (see above, n. 1), p. 295.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 296, doc. I.

6. This I had hypothesised, when I published (1975) the relevant document of 1566. See above, n. 1 (p. 298).

paintings, housed in the Benaki Museum, *Saint Luke painting the Virgin and the Adoration of the Magi*.⁷ These are both signed ΧΕΙΡ ΔΟΜΗΝΙΚΟΥ and display similar technical features (underdrawing, colour palette and handling of the brush-stroke) to those in the fully signed *Dormition*.⁸ In all three of the above paintings one can distinguish Italian elements, to a different degree of absorption for each icon.⁹

In this paper I should like to concentrate on two questions, concerning the appraisal of El Greco's early production. First I will try to place this production within an established cultural and social framework. Secondly I would like to focus on the Italian influences on El Greco's Cretan and early Venetian work, venturing some new, if I am not mistaken, observations on the particular sources he may have used. In order to place his production in an appropriate context therefore, we have to examine the work of other Cretan painters of the period, who were influenced by Italian art.

El Greco's fellow painters in Venetian Candia mainly followed the technical, iconographic and aesthetic principles of the Byzantine tradition.¹⁰ On the other hand, as deduced by archival evidence, some of them were able to work in both Byzantine and a westernised style of painting (*in forma greca, in forma a la latina*).¹¹ They furthermore had ample opportunities to view Western and mainly Italian paintings in the Catholic churches and monasteries or in patrician houses of the island.¹² The public for which they were producing was a mixed one in terms of ethnic origin, religious doctrine, and cultural outlook, a public therefore with a variety of tastes. As a result, many Cretan painters had to be versatile professionals, in order to meet the particular demands of a diversified market.¹³

Apart from this concrete social factor, it is equally true that for some of the most capable and progressive painters contact with Western art, easier from the beginning of the sixteenth century thanks to the circulation of prints,¹⁴ exercised a considerable fascination. To clarify this, it would be useful to discuss briefly two cases of Cretan painters of one or two generations earlier than Domeni-

7. For all three paintings see *El Greco of Crete*, Exhibition catalogue (ed. N. Hadjinicolaou), Iraklion 1990, nos. 1-3, with earlier bibliography.

8. M. S. Stassinopoulos, «Το σχέδιο στα έργα του Δομήνικου Θεοτοκόπουλου στο Μουσείο Μπενάκη», *Τα νέα των φίλων του Μουσείου Μπενάκη*, 4, Oct.-Dec. 1988, pp. 13, 17. S. Baltoyiannis, communication to the 1st Conference of Greek Restorers, Athens, Nov. 1988 (unpublished).

9. See the relevant analysis referred to in n. 7.

10. This hardly needs to be underlined, as it is evident in their work.

11. M. Cattapan, «Nuovi documenti riguardanti pittori cretesi del 1300 al 1500», *Πεπραγμένα του Β' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου*, III, Athens 1968, pp. 45-46. Idem, «Nuovi elenchi e documenti dei pittori in Creta dal 1300 al 1500», *Thesaurismata* 9, 1972, pp. 211-13, docs. 6-8. Cf. M. Chatzidakis, «Les débuts de l'école crétoise et la question de l'école dite italogrecque», *Μνημόσυον Σοφίας Αντωνιάδη*, Venice 1974, pp. 197 ff. (reprinted in: Idem, *Études sur la peinture post-byzantine*, London 1976, I).

12. G. Gerola, «Gli oggetti sacri di Candia salvati a Venezia», *Atti dell'I. R. Accademia di scienze, lettere ed arti degli Agiati in Rovereto*, IX (third series), fasc. III-IV, 1903, pp. 7-8 (offprint) and doc. 17. M. Constantoudaki, «Μαρτυρίες ζωγραφικών έργων στο Χάνδακα σε έγγραφα του 16ου και 17ου αιώνα», *Thesaurismata*, 12, 1975, pp. 42-48. Panayotakis 1986 (see above, n. 1), *passim*.

13. This included both Cretans and Venetians, political authorities and private individuals (noblemen, bourgeois, monks), ecclesiastical institutions, both Orthodox and Catholic.

14. For a bibliography see M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, «Ο Θεοφάνης, ο Marcantonio Raimondi, θέματα *all'antica* και *groteschen*», *Ευφρόσυνον. Αφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη*, I, Athens 1991, p. 271 n. 1. See also P. Bellini, «Printmakers and dealers in Italy during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries», *The Print Collector*, 11, 1975, fasc. Jan.-Febr. 1975, pp. 17-45.

cos, who painted in the Byzantine manner, but they were also inspired by Italian engravings in their work.

The first case is that of the Cretan painter Georgios Sotirchos active in Candia between 1496 and 1522,¹⁵ and producing mainly for Catholic patrons.¹⁶ His only surviving painting depicts the Archangel Raphael with Tobias. The subject itself is more associated with the West than with the East and the background of the painting shows extensive borrowings from three engravings by Giulio Campagnola depicting the Young Shepherd, the Astrologer (1509)¹⁷ and Zeus with Ganymede (the last one is in itself indebted to Dürer),¹⁸ without however any real attempt to incorporate them into the composition.

The second case is that of Theophanis Strelitzas-Bathas, the most important Cretan painter of the first half of the sixteenth century,¹⁹ who also represents the generation of Theotocopoulos's masters. Theophanis executed extensive fresco cycles on the Greek mainland, in monasteries at Meteora and Mount Athos, but died in Candia in 1559,²⁰ when Theotocopoulos was still a young man.²¹ The monastic environments in which Theophanis worked as a painter and a monk, did not impede his innovative spirit. In fact, in some of his compositions he incorporated figures taken from Italian engravings, adapting them to his generally Byzantine style. In 1527 he painted a decorative band with «grottesche» features,²² a common kind of Renaissance decoration, deriving from Roman sources, in the monastery of Saint Nicholas Anapausas at Meteora,²³ probably inspired by an engraving, such as the one by Zoan Andrea.²⁴ In 1535 in the monastery of the Great Lavra and in 1546 at Stavronikita monastery on Mount Athos he rendered the Massacre of the Innocents²⁵ in an iconography inspired by Marcantonio Raimondi's engraving of the same subject,²⁶ after a drawing by Raphael.²⁷ Also at

15. Cattapan 1972 (see above, n. 11), p. 208. M. Constantoudaki, «Στοιχεία από ιταλικές χαλκογραφίες σε εικόνα του Κρητικού ζωγράφου Γεωργίου Σωτήρχου», *Thesaurismata*, 11, 1974, pp. 240-250.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

17. It is perhaps interesting to note parenthetically that the engraving with the Astrologer was also used much later by another Cretan painter, Georgios Klontzas, in a codex he himself copied and illustrated around 1590-92 in Candia. See A. D. Paliouras, *Ο ζωγράφος Γεώργιος Κλόντζας (1540 c.-1608) και οι μικρογραφίες του κώδικος αυτού*, Athens 1977, figs. 14 and γ'.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 245 and n. 17.

19. M. Chatzidakis, «Recherches sur le peintre Théophane le Crétois», *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 23/24, 1969-70, pp. 304-52 (repr. in *Idem, Études sur la peinture post-byzantine*, London 1976, V). *Idem, Ο Κρητικός ζωγράφος Θεοφάνης. Η τελευταία φάση της τέχνης του στις τοιχογραφίες της Ιεράς Μονής Σταυρονικήτα*, Άγιον Όρος 1986, pp. 33 ff.

20. Mertziou 1961-62 (see above, n. 1), p. 262. Chatzidakis 1969-70 (see the previous note), p. 348.

21. Domenicos was then around eighteen, consequently he undoubtedly had already served his apprenticeship.

22. For a photograph see Chatzidakis 1969-70 (see n. 19), figs. 2 and 110 and Constantoudaki 1991 (see above, n. 14), pl. 140a.

23. No comprehensive publication of this interesting fresco cycle exists yet.

24. A. M. Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, part 2, VI, London 1948, pl. 593.

25. For a study of the subject in post-Byzantine painting and its earlier Western sources see A. Stavropoulou-Makri, «Le thème du Massacre des Innocents dans la peinture post-byzantine et son rapport avec l'art italien renaissant», *Byzantion*, lx, 1990, pp. 366-381.

26. J.-P. Richter, «Abendländische Malerei und Plastik in den Ländern des Orients», *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, XIII, 1878, p. 208. M. Chatzidakis, «Η κρητική ζωγραφική και η ιταλική χαλκογραφία», *Κρητικά Χρονικά*, I, 1947, pls. Β'-Γ'. *Idem* 1969-70 (see above, n. 19), figs. 102-103. *Idem* 1986 (see above, n. 19), fig. 84.

27. For a recent bibliography on both the drawing and the engraving see Stavropoulou 1990 (see above, n. 25), p. 371 n. 22-24 and Constantoudaki 1991 (see above, n. 14), p. 272 n. 4 and 5.

Great Lavra some figures in the scene of Christ's Ascent to the Cross are copied, with minimal adaptations, from an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi (after a drawing attributed to Jacopo Ripanda) representing the Triumph of a Roman general.²⁸ Furthermore, the impressive Last Supper in the refectory of Stavronikita monastery combines traditional iconographic features with borrowings deriving from Western prototypes.²⁹ The case of these two painters exemplifies the fact that artistic innovations under Western influence were viewed positively in Cretan society and were even adopted in Orthodox monasteries by Cretan masters. Theotocopoulos was therefore brought up in an artistic and social climate which appreciated Western European taste. We may even suppose that certain social circles in Venetian Candia, for example members of the Academy of the Stravaganti,³⁰ favoured this orientation.

Placed in the social and artistic climate briefly sketched above, El Greco's early activity in Crete could perhaps be appreciated in a more balanced way. We ignore the particular conditions of the painter's apprenticeship,³¹ but we may safely assume that his taste for Western art was rooted in that early period in Crete, where he could also view Western paintings in public and private places, as mentioned above.³²

We now come to the main subject of this paper, the study of Italian influences in Domenicos's Cretan and early Venetian phase. The discussion will focus on influences transmitted through prints, therefore the majority of the observations which will follow will be more iconographic than stylistic.

The Dormition of the Virgin (fig. 1)

The Dormition of the Virgin (Ermoupolis, Syros)³³ displays an overall Byzantine iconography similar to that established in Paleologan painting³⁴ and in Cretan painting of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.³⁵ Yet several differences are visible. No detailed study of this icon will be attempted here, since other papers in this conference are concerned with it; only a few pertinent details will be pointed out.

The first concerns the scene of the Ascension of the Virgin (fig. 2), present in earlier Cretan icons,³⁶ but here rendered in a new way as regards the scale of the scene in the overall composition,

28. *Ibid.*, pls. 132-133.

29. Chatzidakis 1986 (see above, n. 19), fig. 205.

30. For the literary society called «Accademia degli Stravaganti», or the Extravagants, functioning in Candia in the second half of the sixteenth century, following similar Western associations, see N. M. Panayotakis - A. L. Vincent, «Νέα στοιχεία για την Ακαδημία των Stravaganti», *Thesaurismata*, 7, 1970, pp. 52-81, with earlier bibliography.

31. In older Greek bibliography an (unfounded) hypothesis was formulated regarding a probable apprenticeship of El Greco's with Michael Damaskinos in Crete. Quite recently a new hypothesis was brought forward by N. Panayotakis, 1986 (see above, n. 1), p. 99, indicating as Domenicos's master in Candia the painter Ioannis Gripiotis, by whom however no paintings survive.

32. For some stylistic features pertinent to Venetian art (especially light and colour) and absorbed in Theotocopoulos' early paintings in Candia see *El Greco of Crete* (see above, n. 7), no. 3, pp. 153-154 (M. Constantoudaki).

33. *El Greco of Crete* (see above, n. 7), no. 1 (text by M. Potamianou), with earlier bibliography.

34. P. A. Underwood (ed.), *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 2, New York 1966, pl. 320. *Holy Image, Holy Space. Icons and Frescoes from Greece*, Exhibition catalogue, The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland 1988, no. 42, for two representative examples.

35. For some examples see M. Chatzidakis, *Icônes de Saint-Georges des Grecs et de la collection de l'Institut (hellénique de Venise)*, Venice 1962, pls. 14 and 15. *El Greco of Crete* 1990 (see above, n. 7), p. 115.

36. Chatzidakis 1962 (see n. 35), pl. 14. *El Greco of Crete* 1990 (see n. 7), p. 115.



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1. *The Dormition of the Virgin*. Icon. Syros, Ermoupolis.
2. *The Dormition of the Virgin*, detail: The Ascension.
3. Giorgio Ghisi, *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (detail). Engraving.

the postures of the Virgin and of some of the angels surrounding her, and other details.

The figure-type of the Virgin is Paleologan (a self-contained figure with narrow shoulders and elegant gestures),³⁷ yet her continuous, discreetly contorted movement, suggests an Italian prototype, such as the one in paintings by Raphael and his collaborators (for example the so-called Virgin of the Fish)³⁸ and by Fra Bartolomeo (Virgin with Saints in the Lucca cathedral,³⁹ Saint Anne altarpiece, Florence, San Marco).⁴⁰ However, since this type of figure is repeated in many works of art by different artists, we are unable to indicate a specific model with confidence and we would rather admit the absorption of similar figures in the work of the young Byzantine artist.

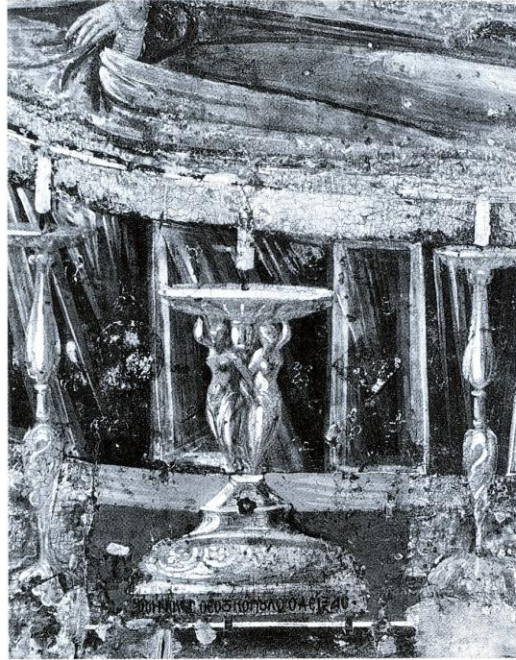
Especially interesting are the unexpected contortions of the first angel on the right of the Virgin

37. For the particular features of paleologan style see O. Demus, «Die Entstehung des Paläologenstils in der Malerei», *Berichte zum XI. internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress*, München 1958, pp. 1-63. S. Radojčić, «Die Entstehung der Malerei der paläologischen Renaissance», *Jahrbuch der Oesterreichischen Byzantinistik*, 7, 1958, pp. 105-123. O. Demus, «The style of the Kariye Djami and its place in the Development of Palaeologan Art», *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4: *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and its Intellectual Background*, Princeton 1975, pp. 109-160. H. Belting - C. Mango - D. Mouriki, *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Djami) at Istanbul*, Washington, DC. 1978, pp. 43-111. D. Mouriki, «Stylistic Trends in Monumental Painting of Greece at the Beginning of the Fourteenth Century», *L'art byzantin au début du XIVe siècle*. Symposium de Gračanica (1973), Beograd 1978, pp. 55-83.

38. For an easy reference see S. J. Freedberg, *Painting of the High Renaissance in Rome and Florence*, Cambridge, Mass. 1961, II, fig. 238. Cf. also two prints by Marcantonio's school in K. Oberhuber (ed.), *The Illustrated Bartsch 26: The Works of Marcantonio Raimondi and of His School*, New York 1978, no. 54-54A.

39. Freedberg, *op.cit.*, fig. 255.

40. *Ibid.*, fig. 263.



4. *The Dormition of the Virgin*, detail: Three candelabra.

and the second on her left. These betray the influence of postures such as that of an angel in Giorgio Ghisi's engraving of the Adoration of the Shepherds⁴¹ (fig. 3). The similarities are in fact quite close.

Furthermore, the shape and decoration of the three candelabra in front of the Virgin's bier and especially of the middle one (fig. 4), reflect true Renaissance and Mannerist works of art, for instance sculpted fountains in Renaissance towns.⁴² The central candelabrum displays two (and apparently three, the third one being invisible to the spectator) semi-nude female figures, supporting a basin, in the middle of which a big candle is fixed. This group steps on a heavy base of a triangular shape, with relief decoration of schematised vegetable motifs. The nudity of these figures is quite rare in Byzantine art, even in details, and contrasts with the overall Byzantine appearance of the piece. A bold feature, it anticipates by some ten or twelve years the nude Adam and Eve in an Annunciation by Michael Damaskinos,⁴³ another Cretan painter contemporary of El Greco and with similar Italian experience.

This candelabrum is the subject of yet another paper in this conference,⁴⁴ so I will not go into

41. S. Boorsh - J. Spike (eds.), *The Illustrated Bartsch, 31: Italian Artists of the Sixteenth Century*, New York 1986, no. 2.

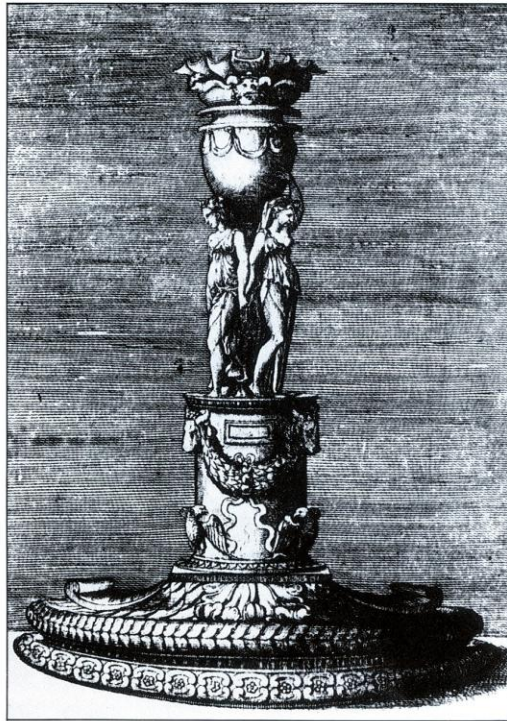
42. See for example J. Burckhardt, *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance*, rev. P. Murray, London 1985, p. 214, figs. 298 and 299 (early Renaissance Holy Water basins supported by three putti).

43. Chatzidakis 1962 (see above, n. 35), pl. 28, no. 38. M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, *Μιχαήλ Δαμασκηνός (1530/35-1591/92). Συμβολή στη μελέτη της ζωγραφικής του*, Ph.D.thesis, University of Athens 1988, I, pp. 163-166 and III, pl. 53. *El Greco of Crete* (see above, n. 7), fig. on p. 172. Damaskinos lived in Italy, mostly in Venice, for about fifteen years.

44. Paper by Professor K. Hesychaki. See also K. Fatourou-Hesychaki, «Ιταλική και κρητική αναγεννησιακή τέχνη. Σημεία συγκρίσεως», *Πεπραγμένα του ΣΤ' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου*, II, Chania 1991, pp. 668-669 n. 60, for an interpretation of the cluster with the three female figures on the candelabrum as a possible allegory of the three theological virtues (Faith, Hope and Charity), attributed to the Virgin in Western iconography.



5. Marcantonio Raimondi, *An Incense-burner* (after a drawing by Raphael). Engraving.



6. Enea Vico, *A Candlestick*. Engraving.

much detail about it. I would only like to note its similarities to engravings of the incense-burner by Marcantonio Raimondi (after a design by Raphael) and later by Enea Vico⁴⁵ (figs. 5 and 6). Other Italian influences are discernible throughout the painting, for the most part limited to details.

Saint Luke painting the Virgin (fig. 7)

This icon represents the Evangelist Saint Luke in his traditional capacity as a painter of the image of the Virgin.⁴⁶ Despite its extensive damage it is a work of high quality, in the best tradition of sixteenth century Cretan painting. The subject-matter, not very common in Byzantine art, is known in illuminated middle and late Byzantine manuscripts and frescoes.⁴⁷ A comparison between this subject in a

45. K. Oberhuber (ed.), *The Illustrated Bartsch 27: The Works of Marcantonio Raimondi and of His School*, New York 1978, nos. 489 and 490-1. For Enea Vico's print see J. Spike (ed.), *The Illustrated Bartsch 30: Italian masters of the Sixteenth Century: Enea Vico*, New York 1985, no. 491.

46. Most recently, *El Greco of Crete* 1990 (see above, n. 7) no. 2 (text by the present author), with earlier bibliography.

47. Examples: G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus*, Princeton, N.J. 1969, pp. 175, 222-226 (an eleventh century manuscript). R. Hamann-MacLean, *Grundlegung zu einer Geschichte der mittelalterlichen Monumentalmalerei in Serbien und Makedonien*, Giessen 1976, fig. on p. 107 (drawing from a fourteenth century fresco).



7. *Saint Luke painting the Virgin*. Icon. Athens, Benaki Museum.



8. Marcantonio Raimondi, *The Last Supper* (detail). Engraving.

manuscript of 1427 in the library of Saint John's monastery at Patmos⁴⁸ and in a Cretan icon of, perhaps, the beginning of the sixteenth century⁴⁹ will make more obvious Domenicos's novel treatment of the theme.

The posture of the apostle, better preserved in later copies of this icon,⁵⁰ is reminiscent of seated evangelists in middle and late Byzantine manuscripts.⁵¹ One, however, is very tempted to compare his figure, for the upper part of the body, to an apostle at the far left in the well-known engraving of the Last Supper by Marcantonio Raimondi (fig. 8) after a drawing probably by Raphael.⁵²

A noteworthy presence in the scene is the flying angel, who crowns the evangelist, while holding an inscribed ribbon (fig. 9). This figure is a mirror image of the victory crowning the Roman Vestal Tucia in an engraving by Marco d'Angeli (fig. 10), based on a composition by Bernardino Campi.⁵³ It is

48. I. Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453*, Leiden 1981, II, fig. 508.

49. *Kunstsammlungen der Stadt Recklinghausen. Ikonen-Museum*, Recklinghausen 1976 (1981), front cover picture and no. 334. *El Greco of Crete* 1990 (see above, n. 7), p. 121, fig. 1.

50. A. Χυνοπουλος, *Σχεδίασμα ιστορίας της θρησκευτικής ζωγραφικής μετά την Άλωσιον*, Athens 1957, frontispiece. *El Greco of Crete* 1990, p. 148, fig. 2. M. Chatzidakis, *Δομήνικος Θεοτοκόπουλος Κρής. Κείμενα 1940-1990*, Αθήνα 1990, fig. 17; see also figs. 16 (a Russian icon) and 18 (a Greek icon of the seventeenth century).

51. A. M. Friend, Jr., «The portraits of the Evangelists in Greek and Latin Manuscripts», *Art Studies*, VII, 1929, figs. 11, 12, 29. Spatharakis 1981 (see above, n. 48), II, figs. 252, 340, 434, 508.

52. K. Oberhuber (ed.), *The Illustrated Bartsch 26: The Works of Marcantonio Raimondi and of His School*, New York 1978, p. 41. I. H. Shoemaker - E. Broun, *The Engravings of Marcantonio Raimondi*, Exhibition catalogue, The Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, and the Ackland Museum, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Lawrence (Kansas) 1981, pp. 116-117, no. 30.

53. H. Zerner (ed.), *The Illustrated Bartsch 32: Italian Artists of the Sixteenth Century School of Fontainebleau*, New York 1979, p. 303, fig. 1. First signaled by the present author in *El Greco of Crete* 1990, p. 148; see also p. 146, fig. 1.



9. *Saint Luke painting the Virgin*, detail: An angel.



10. G.B. d'Angeli, *Tucia, a Vestal* (detail). Engraving.

interesting that Theotocopoulos was inspired by a classical type of figure, taken from a Roman subject, a subject *all'antica*, so favoured in Renaissance art.⁵⁴ We might wonder, however, what is the significance of this angel's presence, who, in the shape of a victory, crowns the evangelist. The fragmentary inscription on the ribbon he holds reads: ANEIKO[N]I/CACAN / ΥΨΩCE,⁵⁵ and is therefore referring to the evangelist's specific task of painting. The saint is crowned because he depicted the holy image of the Virgin. We may assume that by extension the painter must be honoured, because his art brings in front of the eyes of the faithful both an existing reality and a world beyond our senses.

In this connection it is perhaps interesting to note that by the middle of the sixteenth century some of the best and well-known artists in Crete (including Ioannis Gripiotis, Michael Damaskinos and Georgios Klontzas) had achieved a certain social recognition and enjoyed a degree of freedom in their work,⁵⁶ being considered as respected professionals. It can be suggested that this new situation for the painter in Venetian Crete is reflected in the depiction of Saint Luke as a painter,⁵⁷ although his representations remain rather rare.⁵⁸

54. It is perhaps interesting to note that a similar type of figure is repeated in another composition by the artist, that is in the *Expulsion of the Merchants from the Temple*, in both versions (Washington, National Gallery and Minneapolis, Institute of Arts).

55. «Ανεικονίσας ανύψωσε» (?), which can be rendered: «After he had painted ... he raised high». Cf. the hymn (εξαποστειλάριον) sung during the feast day of Saint Luke in the Orthodox church (18 October): «...της αγνης Θεοτόκου, ής την θείαν εικόνα, εκ πόθου ανιστόρησας...», which can be translated: «...the chaste mother of God, whose holy image you painted from desire...».

56. Cf. M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, «Οι Κρητικοί ζωγράφοι και το κοινό τους: Η αντιμετώπιση της τέχνης τους στη Βενετοκρατία», *Κρητικά Χρονικά*, 26, 1986, pp. 252-255. Eadem, *Art and Patronage in Venetian Crete: Icon Production, the Market, and Taste in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, Venice - Iraklio, Part I.5 (in press).

57. Already discussed by the present author in *El Greco of Crete* 1990 (see above, n. 7), p. 148.

58. See also n. 49 and 60.

As is well known, this very subject enjoyed great popularity in European art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and especially in Flemish painting.⁵⁹

Among Saint Luke's rare depictions in Cretan painting is a drawing by Georgios Klontzas, included in a codex written and illustrated by him around 1590-92.⁶⁰ Interestingly enough, this drawing represents the evangelist-painter as a dignified figure in a rich environment. On the contrary, a seventeenth century Cretan icon of the same subject emphasizes the saint's role as a painter-craftsman, in his organised workshop, among his assistants who perform varied preparatory tasks.⁶¹

As one might expect, Saint Luke was the patron saint of the Cretan painters' guild, which was already functioning in the sixteenth century,⁶² while earlier documentation is lacking.

Another point worth stressing and a further step away from the Byzantine tradition is the painter's concern with a perspectival rendering of space, albeit in an elementary form. The composition seems to be constructed according to an elementary geometric pattern: it is clear that the main lateral lines, when projected, will meet at the level of the horizon.⁶³ The wall on the left and the two pieces of furniture in the room (the easel and the stool) are placed in such a way as to follow, or rather indicate, these lines.⁶⁴

As it is known the use of linear perspective and the application of geometry was one of the main concerns of early Renaissance painters trying to prove that their art did not merely require a practical skill, but involved an intellectual effort as well.⁶⁵ We may suppose that the young Cretan artist was aware of and reflected in his turn these Renaissance conceptions.

A closer examination of this painting therefore, has revealed some qualities unlike those observed in the work of other Cretan painters of the period. On the other hand, the technical similarities of this panel signed ΧΕΙΡ ΔΟΜΗΝΙΚΟΥ to the fully signed icon of the *Dormition*, as has also been observed at the beginning of this paper,⁶⁶ as well as stylistic evidence and, furthermore, the absence of any archival reference to another Domenicos among approximately one hundred and fifty Cretan painters working in Candia in the sixteenth century,⁶⁷ support the attribution of this icon to Domenicos Theotocopoulos.

59. J. O. Schaefer, «Saint Luke as painter: from saint to artisan to artist», *Artistes, artisans et production artistique au Moyen Age* (ed. X. Barral i Altet), I, Paris 1986, pp. 413-14. The fact had undoubtedly to do with the growth of professional painters' guilds dedicated to the patronage of Saint Luke. On the other hand the frequency of the depiction of this subject can be associated with a new attitude of both the audience and the painters themselves towards their own art, an attitude already established in Renaissance Italy for some time.

60. Now in the Marciana Library, Venice. For a photograph of this drawing see Paliouras (see above, n. 18), fig. 53.

61. D. Konomos, *Ναοί και μονές στη Ζάκυνθο*, Athens 1964, pl. 61.

62. M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, «Ειδήσεις για τη συντεχνία των ζωγράφων του Χάνδακα του 16ου αιώνα», *Πεπραγμένα του Δ' Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου* (Iraklio 1976), II, Athens 1981, pp. 123-145.

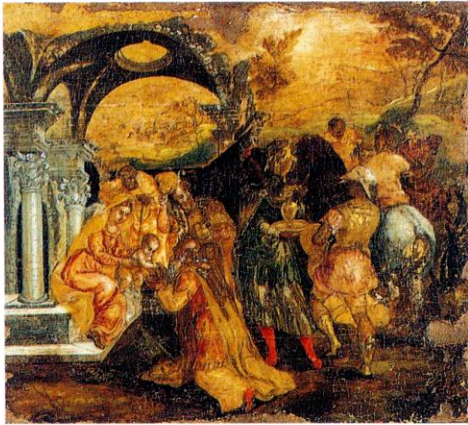
63. Observation already made by the present author in *El Greco of Crete* (see above, n. 7), p. 149.

64. The traditional Byzantine image of the Virgin, however, is shown frontally, despite the fact that the icon depicting her is obliquely placed in relation to the picture plane.

65. See A. Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy, 1450-1600*, Oxford (1940) 1975, pp. 49-55. A. Hauser, *Storia Sociale dell'arte*, I, Torino, 1976, I, pp. 345-48. H. Osborne, *Aesthetics and Art Theory*, New York (1968) 1970, pp. 42-44. R. and M. Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn. The Character and Conduct of Artists*, New York (1963) 1969, pp. 14-16, 42-44. Also, see B. Kempers, *Painting, Power and Patronage. The Rise of the Professional Artist in Renaissance Italy*, London 1992, pp. 24-30, 154-155, 167-168.

66. See above.

67. For lists of painters of this period, formed on the basis of archival information, see A. D. Paliouras, «Η ζωγραφική εις του Χάνδακα από 1550-1600», *Thesaurismata*, 10, 1973, pp. 117-123, M. Constantoudaki, «Οι ζωγράφοι του



11



12



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11. *The Adoration of the Magi*. Painting. Athens, Benaki Museum.

12. *The Adoration of the Magi*, detail: Virgin and Child.

13. A. Schiavone, *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine*. Etching.

The Adoration of the Magi (fig. 11)

If for the two paintings we already referred to, the Italian elements are incorporated as details in an overall Byzantine composition, the same cannot be said about the *Adoration of the Magi*, signed ΧΕΙΡ ΔΟΜΗΝΙΚΟΥ, in the Benaki Museum.⁶⁸ Here the contrary is the case. This Adoration, situated in a landscape, inside a heavy complex ruined building of Renaissance type, recalls paintings with the same subject by Jacopo Bassano⁶⁹ as regards the general composition and postures of many of the figures.

Earlier portable icons of the Adoration of the Magi by Cretan artists preserve elements from the

Χάνδακος κατά το πρώτον ήμισυ του 16ου αιώνας οι μαρτυρούμενοι εκ των νοταριακών αρχείων», *op.cit.*, pp. 297-359, Eadem, «Νέα έγγραφα για ζωγράφους του Χάνδακα (ΙΣΤ' αι.) από τα αρχεία του Δούκα και των νοταρίων της Κρήτης», *op.cit.*, 14, 1977, pp. 161-98.

68. Most recently: *El Greco of Crete* (see above, n. 7), no. 3 (text by the present author), with earlier bibliography.

69. P. Zampetti, *Jacopo Bassano*, Roma 1958, pl. LI. E. Arslan, *I Bassano*, I-II, Milan 1960, figs. 28, 51, 127, 130-32. *Jacopo Bassano, c. 1510-1592*, ed. by B. L. Brown and P. Marini, Exhibition catalogue, Museo Civico, Bassano del Grappa 1992 and Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas 1993, nos. 10, 27, 56.

late Gothic tradition,⁷⁰ while the present one displays an iconographic scheme in which Renaissance and Mannerist features are absorbed.

The figures of the Virgin and Child (fig. 12) are very similar, although in reverse, to those in an etching by Andrea Schiavone (possibly after a drawing by Parmigianino),⁷¹ a detail already noted by Manolis Chatzidakis in 1950.⁷² This composition depicts the Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine (fig. 13) and was later repeated in an engraving by Marco d'Angeli, a mirror image of Schiavone's etching.⁷³ Among the few differences between Schiavone's etching and Theotocopoulos's painting are the Virgin's face (rendered by the latter in a three-quarter view), her long veil, and other points, such as the piece of cloth hanging behind the nude Christ's back. These details reflect sources like Titian's Virgin with Saint Luke and Saint Catherine (1540) in New York⁷⁴ and are also present in a woodcut of about 1567, probably by Niccolò Boldrini (fig. 14), based on another painting by Titian, now lost,⁷⁵ as well as in a print by G. B. Franco.⁷⁶ Another figure in the Benaki *Adoration* with a probable specific source is the soldier, turning his back to the spectator (fig. 15), in the right half of the composition. He is strikingly similar to a soldier in an engraving of the Resurrection by Parmigianino⁷⁷ (fig. 16), down to almost every detail.

The attitude of the black Magus in the centre of the picture is a rather common *topos* in many Italian works of art. The serpentine construction of his body recalls figures like the ones in Adorations by Correggio⁷⁸ (already pointed out by Mayer in 1935)⁷⁹ and Parmigianino in a series of drawings and prints.⁸⁰ The oldest of the Magi is rendered in a very conventional posture, so widespread that no convincing argument can be made about his source. The third Magus, taking off his crown in an act of

70. For example, two icons in Athenian private collections: (a) N. Chatzidaki, *Εικόνες κρητικής σχολής, 15ος-16ος αιώνας. Κατάλογος εκθέσεως*, Μουσείο Μπενάκη, Αθήνα 1983, no. 47, (b) Ch. Baltoyianni, *Εικόνες - Συλλογή Δ. Οικονομοπούλου*, Athens 1985, pls. 28-29.

71. For an illustration of it see Zerner 1979 (see above, n. 53), p. 86. This observation was already made by the present author in *El Greco of Crete* 1990 (see above, n. 7), p. 152; see also fig. 1 on the same page.

72. M. Chatzidakis, «Ο Δομήνικος Θεοτοκόπουλος και η κρητική ζωγραφική», *Κρητικά Χρονικά*, iv, 1950, pl. KA' 2: another engraving, here attributed to Parmigianino.

73. See Zerner 1979 (see above, n. 53), p. 313 for an illustration. Cf. *El Greco of Crete* 1990 (see above, n. 7), p. 152 and fig. 2.

74. C. Cagli - F. Valcanover, *L'opera completa di Tiziano*, Milano 1969, no. 207. Cf. also *Titian, Prince of Painters*, ed. by S. Biadene and M. Yakush, Exhibition catalogue, Palazzo Ducale, Venice 1990 and National Gallery of Art, Washington 1991, no. 18 (Pesaro Madonna) and no. 23 (Madonna of the Rabbit) for similar details. See also *Le siècle de Titien. L'âge d'or de la peinture à Venise*, Exhibition catalogue, (Paris), Grand Palais 1993, no. 36 (Sebastiano del Piombo), no. 50 (Titian).

75. M. Muraro - D. Rosand, *Tiziano e la silografia veneziana del Cinquecento*, Vicenza 1976, no. 47.

76. Zerner 1979 (see above, n. 53), no. 7.

77. Zerner 1979 (see above, n. 53), no. 12. Already pointed out by the present author in *El Greco of Crete* 1990 (see above, n. 7), pp. 152-53; see also p. 154, fig. 3.

78. See *The Age of Correggio and the Carracci. Emilian Painting of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Exhibition catalogue, Washington, National Gallery of Art, 1986-1987, no. 29 and p. 2 for the origin of this figure. Cf. *El Greco of Crete* 1990 (see above, n. 7), p. 153.

79. A. L. Mayer, «De pintura española, I. Una obra juvenil del Greco», *Archivo español de arte y arqueología*, xi, 1935, p. 206.

80. A. E. Popham, *Catalogue of the Drawings of Parmigianino*, New Haven - London 1971, II, pl. 124, no. 358. C. Karpinski (ed.), *Le peintre graveur illustré, vol. I. Italian Chiaroscuro Woodcuts (Bartsch vol. XII)*, University Park (Pennsylvania), London 1971, fig. 29.II.2.



14. N. Boldrini, *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* (after a drawing by Titian). Woodcut.

15. *The Adoration of the Magi*, detail: A soldier.

16. Parmigianino, *The Resurrection*. Engraving.



worship and respect, is again noticed in paintings of the Adoration of the Magi by Jacopo Bassano,⁸¹ as well as in paintings⁸² and prints⁸³ of the Adoration of the Shepherds by various artists.

The rider at the far right of the painting, viewed from the back with his horse, is a common feature in many Italian paintings and prints. Nevertheless, this cluster is very similar to figures on horseback in Bassano's Martyrdom of Saint Mark⁸⁴ and in an engraving by Giorgio Ghisi with the Fall of Troy and the Flight of Aeneas.⁸⁵

An underlying influence from Venetian art in general is felt throughout the picture. This mainly concerns the disregard for precise contours, the emphasis placed upon the use of colour, and a particular predilection for rendering with light and colour the texture of fabrics and objects.⁸⁶ Especially the handling of the golden pitcher in a tray, offered by the black Magus, is very similar to the modelling of an analogous object in the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist by Jacopo Bassano.⁸⁷

The iconography of the painting and the details discussed above clearly reveal the artist's familiarity with Italian art. This seems to have been the product of both the circulation of prints and direct knowledge. Nothing is known about the circumstances of this particular commission, realised probably for a Catholic patron, presumably in Crete.

A number of factors leads us to the hypothesis that this work was painted in Crete. In earlier generations of Cretan craftsmen a mixed style with elements from Byzantine and late Gothic art, parallel to that continuing the Paleologan tradition, was not an uncommon practice.⁸⁸ The way therefore to the use of Western models was already paved; a Catholic community was actively present; and works of Western art could be seen and studied by local painters.⁸⁹

Stylistic similarities can be observed between this painting and the Modena triptych, to which I shall now turn.

The Modena triptych (figs. 17, 18)

This small portable and folding painting, used for private devotion, of a type widespread in Cretan sixteenth century art,⁹⁰ has been an object of interest in El Greco studies since its discovery in 1937.⁹¹

81. Arslan 1960 (see above, n. 69), II, figs. 28 and 51. *Jacopo Bassano 1992-1993* (see above, n. 69), no. 10.

82. Arslan 1960 (see above, n. 69), figs. 71, 74, 133. *Jacopo Bassano 1992-1993* (see above, n. 69), nos. 16, 36.

83. J.-F. Willumsen, *La jeunesse du peintre El Greco. Essai sur la transformation de l'artiste byzantin en peintre européen*, Paris 1927, fig. opp. p. 342, H. E. Wetthey, *El Greco and His School*, Princeton 1962, I, fig. 39 (engravings by Cornelis Cort after drawings by Taddeo Zuccaro).

84. Arslan 1960 (see above, n. 69), II, fig. 43, J. Müller Hofstede, «Ein frühwerk Jacopos Bassanos und eine Komposition Raffaels», *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, xv, 1964, fig. 1. *Jacopo Bassano 1992-1993* (see above, n. 69), fig. 11.

85. Boorsh-Spike 1986 (see above, n. 41), no. 29.

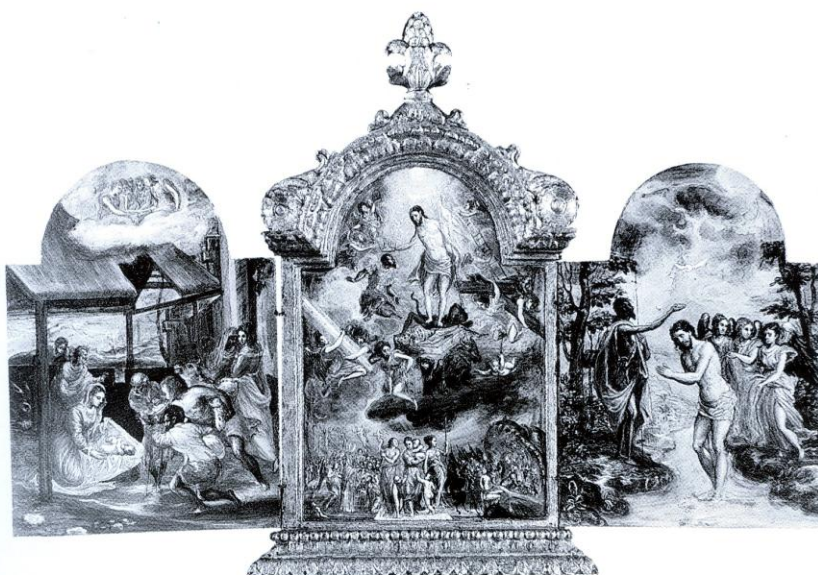
86. It is appropriate to be reminded here of the importance attached by Venetian painters to the expressive qualities of the interplay between colour and light. See D. Rosand, *Painting in Cinquecento Venice. Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto*, New Haven and London 1982, pp. 15-26 and J. Steer, «Titian and Venetian Colour», *The Genius of Venice, 1500-1600* (ed. J. Martineau and Ch. Hope), Exhibition catalogue, (London), Royal Academy of Arts, 1983, pp. 41-43.

87. Zampetti 1958 (see above, n. 69), pl. XXVI and pl. XXVIII (detail).

88. For an appropriate discussion see Chatzidakis 1974 (see above, n. 11), pp. 197-206.

89. Cf. above, n. 12.

90. Several examples are cited by M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, «Τρίπτυχο με σκηνές από το Πάθος του Χριστού στη Δημοτική Πινακοθήκη της Ραβέννας», *Thesaurismata*, 18, 1981, pp. 146-47, n. 4. For another similar triptych see *Holy Image, Holy Space* 1988 (see above, n. 34), no. 69 (text by P. Vocotopoulos).



17. The Modena triptych, internal view. Modena, Galleria Estense.



18. The Modena triptych, external view. Modena, Galleria Estense.

91. See the well-known monograph by R. Pallucchini, *Il politico del Greco nella Reale Galleria Estense e la formazione dell'artista*, Roma 1937, who first discovered and identified the painting. See also A. L. Mayer, «Notes on the Early El Greco», *The Burlington Magazine*, lxxiv, 1939, pp. 28-33. V. H. Miesel, Jr., «La tabla central del tríptico de Modena, del Greco», *Archivo español de arte*, 26, 1953, pp. 205-214. L. Hadermann-Misguisch, «Deux nouvelles sources d'inspiration du polyptyque de Modène», *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, lxii, 1964, pp. 355-358. For good colour reproductions and a detailed presentation see also, *El Greco of Crete* (see above, n. 7), no. 4 (text by M. Vassilaki).

No evidence survives as to the circumstances and place of execution, Crete or Venice, and the question still remains open.

Nevertheless no systematic analysis has as yet been attempted regarding the specific choice of the six scenes included in it and the reasons for their choice. In any case it seems clear that the central scene, the Coronation of a Christian knight by Christ, is associated with Counter-Reformation ideas, of the period of the Council of Trent.⁹²

Here these matters cannot be explored and focus will be made instead on the subject of this paper, that is the use of Italian (and more generally Western) sources by the painter. Some specific Italian sources for this triptych were identified during its first publication by Rodolfo Pallucchini.⁹³ Influences discussed there derive from the following prints.

The Annunciation by Gian Giacomo Caraglio, after a composition by Titian,⁹⁴ now lost and recorded only in a copy. This engraving, however, was rather used for the group of angels in the triptych's Annunciation than for the whole composition.

The Adoration of the Shepherds by Giulio Bonasone⁹⁵ and one by the monogrammist I.B. (perhaps Giovanni Britto),⁹⁶ as well as an etching by Parmigianino,⁹⁷ for parts of the corresponding scene in the triptych.

In 1939 August L. Mayer identified the basic source for the central scene of the triptych, when open, in an anonymous woodcut circulated in Venice in 1555⁹⁸ and included in a publication of the text «Speculum viae veritatis ac vitae fidelis militis christiani». This woodcut represents an Allegory of the Christian knight and helped for the identification of the main subject in the triptych.

An interpretation of this scene, in conjunction with this woodcut and in the framework of Counter-Reformatory spirit at the time of the Council of Trent was afterwards attempted by Victor Miesel.⁹⁹

A few years later Lydie Hadermann-Misguisch pointed to an anonymous woodcut of the middle of the sixteenth century, in which the four creatures-symbols of the Evangelists and angels carrying the symbols of Christ's Passion are represented in the same way as in the Modena triptych. She also pointed to a woodcut of the Last Judgement by Albrecht Dürer as a source for the dragon of Hell in the lower right part of the central scene.¹⁰⁰

More recently, in 1981, an engraving by Giovanni Battista Fontana depicting the Mount Sinai landscape was mentioned by Gustav Kühnel in connection with the same scene in the triptych.¹⁰¹ He,

92. Miesel 1953 (see the previous note), pp. 207 ff.

93. Pallucchini 1937 (see above, n. 91).

94. Muraro - Rosand 1976 (see above, n. 75), fig. XXX. Cf. Pallucchini 1937, (see above, n. 91), p. 6.

95. S. Boorsch - J. Spike (eds.), *The Illustrated Bartsch 28: Italian Masters of the Sixteenth Century*, New York 1985, no. 39.

96. Muraro - Rosand 1976 (see above, n. 75), no. 55A. See also (D. Davies), *El Greco. Mystery and Illumination* (Exhibition catalogue with introductory essays), National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh 1989, no. 3.

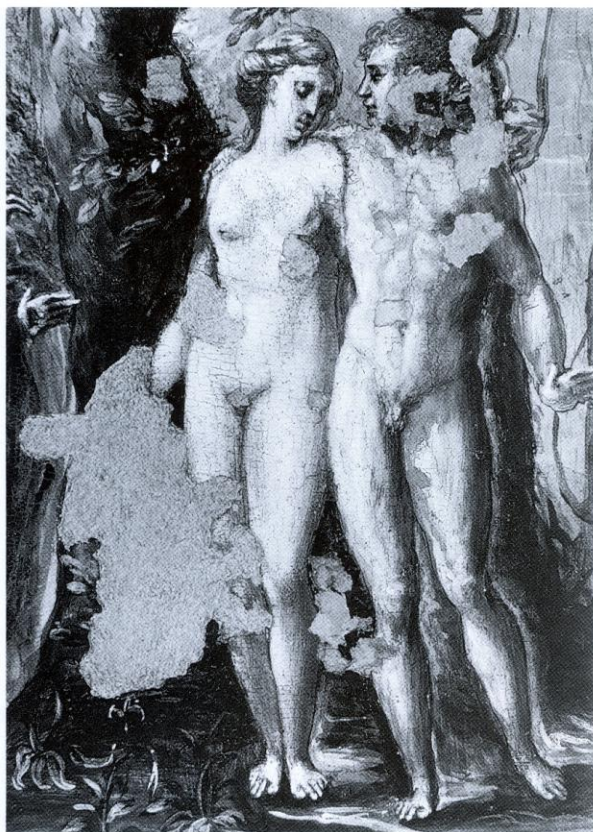
97. Zerner 1979 (see above, n. 53), no. 3.

98. Mayer 1939 (see above, n. 91), p. 28 and fig. 1B. Cf. Miesel 1953 (see above, n. 91), pp. 205-214.

99. See above, n. 92.

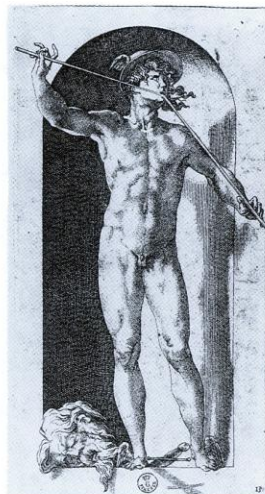
100. Hadermann-Misguisch 1964 (see above, n. 91).

101. G. Kühnel, «Die 'Ikone des Sinai-Klosters' und verwandte Pilgerillustrationen», *Oriens christianus*, 65, 1981, pp. 173-180 and fig. 11. For this association see also G. Dillon, «La grafica, stampe e libri a Verona negli anni di Palladio», *Palladio e Verona*, Exhibition catalogue, Verona 1980, pp. 257-292, esp. p. 285. This engraving is also reproduced in Zerner 1979 (see above, n. 53), p. 380 as well as in D. Papastratou, *Χάρτινες εικόνες. Ορθόδοξα θρησκευτικά χαρακτικά 1665-1899*, Athens 1986, II, p. 340, fig. 2 (from a different copy).



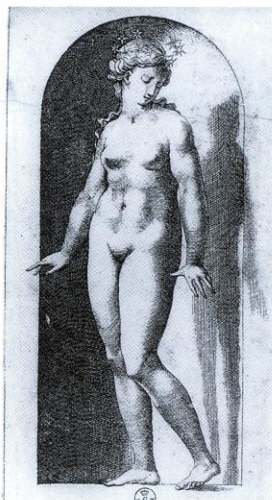
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19. The Modena triptych, left panel, detail:
Adam and Eve.



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20. G. J. Caraglio, *Ariadne* (after a drawing
by Rosso Fiorentino). Engraving.



21

21. G. J. Caraglio, *Mercury* (after a drawing
by Rosso Fiorentino). Engraving.

however, considered it as a derivation from another Greek icon.¹⁰² After this survey of Italian and other prints proposed as sources for the Modena triptych, I would now like to offer for criticism a few further observations.

Starting from the scene of Adam and Eve (fig. 19), we notice that Eve's figure is very similar, with the exception of her left leg, to Ariadne in an engraving by Caraglio, after a drawing by Rosso Fiorentino (fig. 20). Adam's posture is also very similar to that of Mercury in an engraving again by Caraglio after Rosso Fiorentino¹⁰³ (fig. 21).

In the Annunciation the gesture of the Virgin with her hand in front of her breast is reminiscent of her figure in an engraving by Giovanni Battista Franco of the same subject.¹⁰⁴

102. Kühnel 1981 (see the previous note), pp. 177-180.

103. Boorsch - Spike 1985 (see above, n. 95), nos. 41 and 42. It should be noted that this observation was independently made by Dr. G. Dillon in his own paper.

104. Zerner 1979 (see above, n. 53), no. 7.



22. The Modena triptych, central panel, detail: The Christian Soldier Crowned by Christ.

In the panel of the Coronation the kneeling armoured knight, with extended arms and his right knee bent outwards (fig. 22), differs from the corresponding figure in the woodcut of 1555 earlier referred to as the main source for the scene.¹⁰⁵ On the contrary, it displays strong similarities with the kneeling patron, dressed in a military uniform, in a scene in a bronze relief from the life of Saint Mark (the miracle with the Conversion of the Nobleman) decorating the right hand *cantoria*, executed around 1541 for the Venice Basilica of Saint Mark by Jacopo Sansovino¹⁰⁶ (fig. 23). Did Theotocopoulos know the relief from direct experience or through a drawing or even print? In other words was the Modena triptych painted in Venice or in Crete? No evidence survives whatsoever and the matter is still open to scholarly speculation. In any case we have to note that this type of portable triptych with an elaborate wood-carved frame is characteristically Cretan.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, its iconography and style show that this piece stands at the end of the Cretan phase and the beginning of the artist's Venetian period.

In the central panel the three standing female figures in the foreground, identified as the three theological virtues Hope, Charity and Faith (fig. 24), differ substantially from their counterparts in the Venetian woodcut. The first on the left, personifying Hope, is rendered in a continuous serpentine movement, her head turned right and upwards, her left arm bent in front of the breast, her left leg brought forward, uncovered. She quite closely resembles one of the female figures in an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi of *Two Women and Signs of the Zodiac*¹⁰⁸ (fig. 25), except for her protruding

105. See above, p. 55 and n. 98.

106. B. Boucher, *The Sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*, New Haven and London 1991, II, pl. 123.

107. Cf. above, n. 90.

108. Oberhuber 1978 (see above, n. 45), no. 397. Cf. also Zerner 1979 (see above, n. 53), no. 45: G. B. Franco, figure at the upper left corner. See also here, fig. 26.



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23. J. Sansovino, *The Conversion of a Nobleman*. Bronze relief. Venice, San Marco, right hand cantoria.
 24. The Modena triptych, central panel, detail: The Three Theological Virtues, Hope, Charity, and Faith.
 25. Marcantonio Raimondi, *Two Women With Signs of the Zodiac* (detail). Engraving.
 26. G. B. Franco, *Antique Bas-Relief With Bacchus and Ariadne* (detail). Engraving.



27. Marcantonio Raimondi, *Fortitude* (after Mantegna?). Engraving.

28. Parmigianino, *Virgin and Child*. Drawing.

left leg, visible through a high opening of the robe. This detail is a common feature in many classicizing Renaissance figures, present also in Marcantonio's engraving with another virtue, *Fortitude*¹⁰⁹ (fig. 27) and noticed again in an angel from the *Baptism* in the same triptych.¹¹⁰

The figure of *Charity*, is surprisingly close to a drawing of the *Virgin and Child* by Parmigianino (fig. 28), as Paul Joannides pointed out to me.¹¹¹

Our discussion could be extended to include other early El Greco paintings, where influence from prints is detectable. As an example I will only mention the *Bologna Last Supper*,¹¹² in my opinion by El Greco, which is based to a certain extent on the well known engraving of the *Last Supper* by Marcantonio Raimondi (after drawings in all probability by Raphael),¹¹³ as already noted in a neglected footnote by Krönig in 1966.¹¹⁴ Other sources for it include a drawing by Andrea Schiavone,¹¹⁵ brought to my attention by David Davies, two paintings of the same subject by Tintoretto, the one in Paris¹¹⁶

109. Oberhuber 1978 (see above, n. 45), no. 375.

110. See the colour plate in *El Greco of Crete* 1990 (see above, n. 7), on p. 169.

111. Popham 1971 (see above, n. 80), II, pl. 65 (drawing 148 Haarlem); it probably came to the Greek painter's knowledge through an existing print. Quite similar is also the cluster with the *Virgin and Child* in an engraving by Mario Cartaro, see Boorsch - Spike 1986 (see above, n. 41), no. 8. Cf. also S. Boorsch (ed.), *The Illustrated Bartsch, 29: Italian masters of the Sixteenth Century*, New York 1982, no. 223 (*Charity* by Giulio Bonasone) as well as Zerner 1979 (see above, n. 53), no. 6: *Virgin and Child* by G. B. d'Angeli after Parmigianino (see also here, fig. 29).

112. H. E. Wethey, *El Greco and His School*, Princeton 1962, I, fig. 38, and II, 190, no. X-112 with earlier bibliography (the work is here rejected). *Da Tiziano a El Greco. Per la storia del Manierismo a Venezia, 1540-1590*, Exhibition catalogue, Venice, Palazzo Ducale 1981, no. 96 and fig. on p. 252 (text by R. Pallucchini, the work is accepted). C. Bernardini et. al. (eds.), *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna*, Catalogue, Bologna 1987, no. 156 and pp. 108-109.

113. See above.

114. W. Krönig, «L'Ultima Cena di Jacopo Bassano», *Arte in Europa, Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Edoardo Arslan*, Milano 1966, p. 559 n. 2.

115. F. L. Richardson, *Andrea Schiavone*, Oxford 1980, fig. 132.

116. R. Pallucchini - P. Rossi, *Tintoretto. Le opere sacre e profane*, Milano 1982, II, fig. 293 and I, 179.



29. G.B. d'Angeli, *Virgin and Child*
(after Parmigianino). Engraving.

and the other at San Marcuola in Venice,¹¹⁷ and perhaps the Last Supper by Giuseppe Salviati formerly in Santo Spirito in Isola and now at the church of the Salute in Venice.¹¹⁸ It may be of some interest to note here that the above mentioned print by Marcantonio was again used, about two decades later, by another Cretan artist, Michael Damaskinos, for his own Last Supper,¹¹⁹ an observation made by Manolis Chatzidakis in 1947.¹²⁰

Going now beyond my chronological limit, I would like to close this discussion by mentioning briefly a detail which is noticeable in an Italian engraving, a composition by El Greco, and several paintings by the late sixteenth century Cretan artist Georgios Klontzas, an old acquaintance of El Greco's in Candia, as revealed by a Cretan document of 1566.¹²¹

The motif of the bridge, which the souls of the dead have to cross in depictions of the Last Judgement, an iconographic device going back to medieval times,¹²² is found, rendered in a similar way, along with the dragon of Hell, in an engraving by Giovanni Battista Fontana,¹²³ in El Greco's *Allegory of the Holy League*,¹²⁴ and in Klontzas's various panels with the Last Judgement.¹²⁵ It is possible that the use of this motif by El Greco is influenced by Fontana's print, an hypothesis ad-

117. *Ibid.*, II, fig. 162. Cf. R. Longhi, *Viatico per cinque secoli di pittura veneziana*, Firenze 1946, pp. 60-61. Reprinted in Idem, *Ricerche sulla pittura veneta, 1946-1969*, Firenze 1978, pp. 1-63.

118. D. McTavish, *Giuseppe Porta called Giuseppe Salviati*, New York and London 1981, pp. 128-29, 305-06 and fig. 138.

119. *El Greco of Crete* 1990 (see above, n. 7), no. V, p. 132-35 and esp. p. 134 and *Εικόνες της κρητικής τέχνης. Από τον Χάνδακα ως την Μόσχα και την Αγία Πετρούπολη*, ed. M. Borboudakis, Exhibition catalogue, Iraklio 1993, no. 96, pp. 449-451, esp. p. 450 (both entries by the present author).

120. Chatzidakis 1947 (see above, n. 26), 35.

121. Georgios Klontzas was one of the painters appointed to evaluate an icon of the «Passion of Christ», which had been painted by Domenicos. For the relevant document of 1566 see Constantoudaki 1975 (see above, n. 1), p. 298.

122. A. Blunt, «El Greco's 'Dream of Philip II': An Allegory of the Holy League», *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, iii, 1939-40, pp. 58-69.

123. Zerner 1979 (see above, n. 53), no. 19.

124. Blunt 1939-40 (see above, n. 122), pl. 9. Wetthey (see above, n. 112), I, pls. 64 and 65.

125. Large icons and small portable triptychs. See *Holy Image, Holy Space* 1988 (see above, n. 34), no. 69 (text by P. Vocotopoulos), with references to other paintings.

vanced by A. Braham.¹²⁶ On the other hand it seems even more possible that the above mentioned compositions by Klontzas are indebted to the same source.¹²⁷

This survey of Italian influences in El Greco's Cretan and early Venetian periods does not have any pretention or even intention of being exhaustive. A more systematic analysis of this kind, when undertaken, may be in many ways revealing of the young Theotocopoulos's attitude towards Western art and his search for new models during his early production.

Young Domenicos experienced and expressed the tradition of Byzantine art, whose recollection he most probably kept well into his late period in Spain.¹²⁸ Being an inquisitive personality, however, and growing into a confident professional, he soon felt constrained within the given conventional limits of his early training. A wish to renew traditional iconography is perceptible in his Cretan production (*Dormition, Saint Luke*). During this phase western prints, which reached the Greek East either thanks to individual taste or by the organised market in Italian cities, offered an easily accessible and inexpensive means for this purpose. Furthermore, similar sources were previously explored by earlier Cretan painters and it seems that woodcuts and engravings had already taken their place in some workshops next to traditional «anthivola» (pricked drawings used by Byzantine artists for transfer of whole subjects or of individual figures). On the other hand, prints of various subjects, both religious and secular, are listed in Cretan inventories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, occasionally in large numbers.¹²⁹ The use of prints could be seen as an outlet for a painter not trained to look at nature for inspiration.

A telling indication of Domenicos's taste in this practice is the choice he made of prototypes of high quality (Marcantonio, Parmigianino, A. Schiavone, among others). Through these choices he enriched his Byzantine subjects (e.g. *Dormition, Saint Luke*) with iconographic and stylistic features deriving mainly from Central and North Italian Renaissance and Mannerist art, while he even went as far as to emulate Italian iconography and style (*Adoration of the Magi*).

In adopting western features during this stage of his development Theotocopoulos tended to choose from various works —often even for one and the same painting— in order to produce a modified composition within his Byzantine cultural heritage. His subsequent stay in Venice not only encouraged him further in this practice (e.g. *Last Supper*), but revealed to him in a more direct manner the splendours of Venetian painting, which fascinated him, especially through its emphasis on colour.

Thus, from a discussion like the preceding one, we can have some glimpses into the early phase of the struggle of a strong artistic personality with a Byzantine background, fascinated by Mannerist forms and Venetian colour, striving to articulate an artistic vocabulary of his own. And it is certainly quite difficult for a modern art historian to anticipate from Domenicos's early eclectic oeuvre his subsequent astonishing development and unique course in the history of European painting.

126. A. Braham, «Two notes on El Greco and Michelangelo», *The Burlington Magazine*, cviii, 1966, p. 308 and figs. 41-43.

127. Especially an icon in Venice, see Chatzidakis 1962 (see above, n. 35), no. 52, pl. 41.

128. For a recent survey of El Greco's relationship to Byzantine tradition see D. Mouriki, «Ο Greco και το Βυζάντιο», in: *Δομήνικος Θεοτοκόπουλος Κρής εποίη. Τετρακόσια πενήντα χρόνια της γέννησής του*, Τετράδια «Ευθύνης», 31, 1991, pp. 10-41, with references to earlier bibliography and with further comments. The same subject was addressed by L. Hadermann-Misguisch, S. Papadaki-Oekland and D. Davies in their papers at the present conference.

129. Dozens of prints, many of them clearly with Western subjects, and found in various places in Candia, are listed and often valued in archival records of the period. Published by Constantoudaki 1975 (see above, n. 12), pp. 95-97.