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# Texts and Icons in Worship, Communication, Propaganda On the Contribution of a Philologist to Research on Icon Transfer

Tatiana Borisova

Εθνικό και Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, Athens /  
Ινστιτούτο Μεσογειακών Σπουδών, ΙΤΕ, Rethymno (GR)

**RÉSUMÉ :** La présente étude se concentre sur le rôle joué par les textes liés aux icônes dans le culte, la communication culturelle et la propagande des icônes lors de leur transfert. Ces textes se regroupent en trois catégories : les textes qui précèdent les icônes, les textes sur les icônes et les textes d'après les icônes. L'analyse de chacune de ces catégories aide à mieux déchiffrer la fonction et le rôle des textes dans la création et la perception, ainsi que dans les processus de transfert des icônes. Dans le cadre d'un transfert culturel, celui-ci se produit souvent dans un contexte où les signes verbaux se différencient des signes visuels. L'auteure donne quelques exemples de textes qui sont essentiels pour une interprétation exacte de certaines icônes russes transférées en Grèce du XVI<sup>e</sup> au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et détermine leur place dans la communication linguistique, spirituelle et culturelle. D'un point de vue méthodologique, elle s'intéresse aux conditions dans lesquelles les textes accompagnant les icônes russes devraient être étudiés, notamment dans le cadre de la recherche qui étudie le transfert de ces icônes russes en Grèce.

**MOTS-CLÉS :** transfert des icônes, icônes russes, inscriptions sur icônes, signes visuels et verbaux, contact culturel.

**REZUMAT:** Acest articol se concentrează asupra rolului pe care îl joacă textele referitoare la icoane în venerarea celor din urmă, în comunicarea culturală și propaganda realizată prin transferul lor. Textele referitoare la icoane sunt împărțite în trei categorii: texte de dinainte de icoane, de pe icoane și de dincolo de icoane. Prin analiza funcției fiecărei categorii în crearea și percepția icoanelor, se poate dezvălui rolul acestor texte în procesul de transfer al icoanelor. Acest lucru se produce în contextul caracteristicilor distinctive ale semnelor verbale în transferul cultural în comparație cu cele vizuale. Articolul oferă exemple de texte semnificative pentru interpretarea corectă a diferitelor icoane rusești transferate în Grecia în secolele XVI-XIX. Totodată, le este stabilit locul în comunicarea lingvistică, spirituală și culturală. Sunt de asemenea discutați termenii în care ar trebui studiate textele care însoțesc icoanele rusești în cadrul unei cercetări care vizează transferul lor în Grecia.

**CUVINTE CHEIE:** transfer de icoane, icoane rusești, inscripții pe icoane, semne vizuale și verbale, contact cultural.

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NONTRANS

VISUAL CULTURE, PIETY  
AND PROPAGANDA:  
TRANSFER AND RECEPTION OF  
RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS ART IN THE BALKANS  
AND THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN  
(16TH TO EARLY 20TH CENTURY)

The present paper focuses on the role of texts in the transfer of icons, and, consequently, on the contribution a philologist can make within the framework of research that studies how an icon is perceived when moved to a different cultural space, along with its role in worship, communication, and propaganda. Specifically, the current research concerns the ways Russian Holy Icons were transferred to Greece and the Balkans. The icons studied by art historians who generally investigate these processes are visual semiotic objects; meaning that they are on the opposite side of the general semiotic field when compared to the texts, which are verbal semiotic objects.<sup>1</sup> However, visual and verbal semiotic objects (in other words, icons and texts), do not exist independently. Icons are surrounded by texts, which are just as important for the two main stages of the icon's life – its creation and perception. By analyzing the texts according to their role in the function of the icons, one can divide them into the following three categories:

## 1. Texts *before* icons.

I should stress that an icon is experienced as 'icon', not as mere picture, because it is not a product of the painter's imagination; it depicts veracity, truth, and sacred reality.<sup>2</sup> This crucial fact regarding the nature of the icon can only be proven by texts. In other words, an icon can be an icon as long as it truly depicts the sacred text it is based on. By this definition, the icon is not just an illustration of the text; it exists independently from the latter and becomes the object of an intersemiotic translation – or transmutation, using Roman Jakobson's terminology – which is "the interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems".<sup>3</sup> However, knowledge of the text translated into a visual image is important for the correct perception and interpretation of the message of the icon. These texts include: the Holy Scripture; the recognized Apocryphal books; hagiographical texts;<sup>4</sup> selected hymnographic texts, since cer-

tain icons are inspired by hymns or prayers. Such is the case of the *Akathistos* icon<sup>5</sup> or the *Axion Estin* icon<sup>6</sup> of the Holy Virgin. Moreover, many symbolic images on the icons can be “decoded” only through hymnographic texts. It is clear that, without prior knowledge of these texts, one cannot use an icon for worship, as it is impossible to interpret its sacred message. According to the theory of communication, this is a necessary text presupposition,<sup>7</sup> in order to transfer meanings by specific visual signs.

## 2. Texts on icons.

The second category, *Texts on icons*, consists of usually small and extremely important message fragments selected from those among the texts before icons. This category comprises words, phrases, or whole texts written on icons: short inscriptions regarding the persons depicted on the icon; ktetorial inscriptions; quotations or citations from the Bible (or prayers); and even large symbolic texts placed on different parts of the icon that form their own structure, parallel to the visual image structure, as in the case of the so-called *Talking icons*.<sup>8</sup> In all the above-mentioned cases, the interpretation of these texts is most necessary in order to perceive the whole message of the icon. According to B. Uspensky, the inscriptions are considered essential components of the icon, equal to the image in terms of their importance for the transmission of the sacred message. It is important for worshippers to have an inscription alongside a visual image, since the icon cannot function as a sacred object without its identifying inscription.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the text is placed on the icon in order to be read and understood. Otherwise, the viewer would fail to decode its actual meaning.

## 3. Texts after icons.

This category includes all the texts composed after the icon's creation in reference to the topic of this particular icon or icon type. These texts may be divided into two subcategories based respectively on the sacred and material hypostasis of the icon. As far as the sacred nature of the icon is concerned, the numerous texts in regard to its worship tend to begin with the Story of the Icon, and can also appear in various forms. There is the official version included in the Synaxarion collection, as well as many different unofficial folk versions, which are usually more expressive and poetic.<sup>10</sup> But there is also the icon's hymnography, which increases depending on the icon's authority and sanctity: troparion; kontakion; canon; an entire service; and, lastly, akathistos. All these texts explain why believers should worship a particular icon and the manner in which they should do it. In other words, these texts are necessary for the icon to be worshiped properly.

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The material nature of the icon is reflected on other texts, starting with various documents which accompanied every step of its life: historical texts and evidence; various descriptions provided by worshippers or representatives of other cultures and religions who view the icon as an art object; literary descriptions; research texts of different types. There is also one specific sub-subcategory which includes the texts that directly mention the icon's transfer process.

Let us now examine how the aforementioned text categories act in the transfer process of the icons. I should stress that an icon is a much wider concept when compared to a mere image; an icon is an image surrounded by texts which make it a sacred object, an object of worship. Without said texts, however, the icon becomes a simple image. If one

wanted to study the transfer of icons and not images, one should also examine in which way or to which extent the transfer of the image is accompanied by the transfer of the corresponding texts. It should be stressed at this point that text transfer is a much more difficult task compared to an image transfer. While in the second case, one can simply move the image to another territory, the transmission of texts from language to language requires their translation. This translation is always an interpretation, which does not render the translated text equal to the original one. Keeping all this in mind, we will now see what happens with each particular text category during the transfer process, illustrating these ideas with specific examples of Russian icons transferred to Greece.

Starting with the *Texts before icons* category, it must be pointed out that part of these specific texts (the Bible and the main body of the hagiographical and hymnographic corpus) pre-existed in Greek culture and were then translated and transferred to the Slavonic and Russian languages. We are thus faced with a case of round transfer: first, the text is translated and transferred from Greek to Slavonic; then, it is interpreted in the context of the Slavonic and later the Russian culture; next, based on this text an icon is created; and, lastly, the icon is transferred back to Greece. However, taking into account that the same text could be interpreted in different ways in the context of different cultures, two questions remain open: if and to which extent the icon could be associated by the Greek worshipper with the text which was the starting point of the whole process at the end of this “round trip”. Allow me to illustrate this point with two examples. The first example focuses on the Russian iconographic composition of the Protective Veil of the Holy Mother of God.<sup>11</sup> It is based on the combination of two texts, namely an episode from the Life of Blessed Andrew the Fool for Christ (9<sup>th</sup> century), who saw the Holy Mother of God holding her veil over those praying under her Protection while he was praying in the Blachernae church; and an episode from a much earlier life of another saint, Roman the Melodist, containing a vision of his which showed the Theotokos holding a scroll with a hymn devoted to Her. Both these texts are Greek in origin, and Greek worshippers were surely familiar with both. However, textual theory argues that the combination of the two texts does not represent just their sum. It creates a third text, seeing as the interaction between them produces new meanings and messages.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it is not clear whether Greek worshippers adequately understood the composition of this icon and the texts forming its context when it was transferred to Greece,<sup>13</sup> making this a subject which deserves to be researched.

The other example focuses on an even more symbolic image of the Holy Virgin: the Russian iconographic type of the Burning Bush (see Fig. 1).<sup>14</sup> The icon depicts four major Old Testament prophecies regarding the Holy Virgin, namely the Burning Bush from the Vision of Moses: *καὶ ὁρᾷ ὅτι ὁ βάτος καίεται πυρί, ὁ δὲ βάτος οὐ κατεκαίετο* (Exod. 3: 2); Aaron's flowering rod: *καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐβλάστησεν ἡ ῥάβδος Ααρὼν* (Numb. 17: 23); the Ladder from Jacob's vision: *καὶ ἰδοὺ κλίμαξ ἐστηριγμένη ἐν τῇ γῇ, ἥς ἡ κεφαλὴ ἀφικνεῖτο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀνέβαινον καὶ κατέβαινον ἐπ' αὐτῆς* (Gen. 28:12); and the closed gate from Ezekiel's prophecy: *ἡ πύλη αὕτη κεκλεισμένη ἔσται,*

► *Holy Virgin of the Burning Bush. 16<sup>th</sup> century, Russian. Athens, Benaki Museum, 46108.*

Source: Μπούτσιβα, Δρανδάκη 2017, p. 141











οὐκ ἀνοιχθήσεται, καὶ οὐδεὶς μὴ διέλθῃ δι' αὐτῆς (Ezek. 44:2). The other allegoric images on the icon include the mountain from Daniel's prophecy: ἐθεώρεις ἕως οὗ ἐτμήθη λίθος ἐξ ὄρους ἀνευ χειρῶν (Dan. 2:34); the Holy Village on the mountain surrounded by city walls from the Psalter: τοῦ ποταμοῦ τὰ ὄρμηματα εὐφραίνουσι τὴν πόλιν τοῦ Θεοῦ· ἡγίασε τὸ σκῆνωμα αὐτοῦ ὁ Ὑψιστος ὁ Θεὸς ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς καὶ οὐ σαλευθήσεται (Ps. 45: 5-6), and so on. It should be noted that the texts preceding this icon do not only include the above-mentioned Old Testament quotations, but also the hymnographic and rhetoric texts of the Holy Fathers (saints John Chrysostom, John of Damascus, Andrew of Crete, and others), who interpreted these scenes as Holy Virgin prototypes.<sup>15</sup> All these texts were part of the Greek Orthodox culture long before being transferred to the Slavs, therefore what the Slavs created was only a replica of these texts. Still, once again, it is not clear how all these texts upon which the icon was based were perceived in their native land and whether they were properly interpreted after their "round trip" to and from the Slavic culture.

This problem becomes even more complex if we take into account cases of an original Russian text inspiring the creation of an icon, where there is only a "one-way trip", as was the case of the image with the Vision of saint Sergius of Radonezh (see Fig. 2).<sup>16</sup> The icon was definitely part of a propaganda campaign, seeing as it was offered as a gift to the foreign pilgrims and official guests of the Holy Trinity Lavra. This specific icon however, which depicts a scene from the saint's life that happened shortly before his death<sup>17</sup>, would remain a simple picture and not function as an object of worship or propaganda if its transfer to Greece were not accompanied by the transfer of the corresponding text. This text would explain to the representatives of the other Orthodox culture who the person depicted there was, what role he played in the spiritual life of Russia, and why he should be worshipped. The transfer could not occur in the absence of a translation. To the best of my knowledge, there is no evidence that the Life of saint Sergius of Radonezh was translated in Greek at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the moment when this icon was probably transferred to the Dousikou monastery. The only textual evidence are the pilgrim reports, but this is definitely not enough matter to result in worship.

Moving on to the *Texts on icons* category, three types of transfer may be distinguished, namely: inscriptions originally written in Greek; inscriptions originally written in Church Slavonic and later re-written in Greek; inscriptions in Church Slavonic even though the icon stayed in Greece.

The first subcategory mainly includes the Greek symbolic identification acronyms (contraction signs), such as IC XC or MP ΘY, commonly used in Russian iconographic tradition.<sup>18</sup> Normally, these inscriptions could easily be interpreted by the Greek audience, even though sometimes the calligraphic style adopted by Russian painters (the *vyaz* – a 'bound' style of Cyrillic ornate lettering) made the Greek symbols incomprehensible to the Greeks. Another example of this type of inscription is the ktetor's inscription in the case of a Russian icon donated by Greeks. A beautiful example of this type of inscription was found on all the icons donated to Greek monasteries by saint Arsenius, bishop of Ellassona (Ταπεινὸς ἀρχιεπίσκοπος ἐλασσῶνος ἀρσένιος στέλλω τὴν παρούσαν εἰκόνα εἰς τὴν ἱερὰν μονήν...), which helped identify the donor.<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that these inscriptions in Greek, alongside the votive inscriptions in Slavonic, form the multilingual text space of the icon.<sup>20</sup>

The second subcategory is represented by a number of icons. A typical example is an icon of saint Demetrius of Thessaloniki, where the initial Slavonic inscription of the saint's name was brushed off and another inscription in Greek was written over it (see Fig. 3).<sup>21</sup> Apart from its practical importance of helping people distinguish which saint is pictured on the icon, the act has a deep semiotic meaning. By means of this translation, one transfers the icon not only to Greece but also to the semiotic space of the Greek language and culture, demonstrating an intention to adapt this object to the target culture and to create complex interactions between the original and the target language and culture; all within this one icon which could be analyzed and re-analyzed from different perspectives.

Lastly, in the majority of cases, the initial Slavonic inscriptions remain as they were on the icon, even as they are transferred to the Greek territory. When considering the small cheap icons intended for home worship, this can be easily explained by the lack of means or ability. However, this was certainly not the case for the large icons in famous centers of Christianity, such as the magnificent Christ Pantocrator icon in the iconostasis of the Patmos monastery, where the Church Slavonic inscriptions were left intact, as was the text inside the book Christ is holding (see Fig. 4).<sup>22</sup> It is important to stress that the Slavonic inscriptions transferred to other languages and cultural spaces stop being language signs and can no longer function as texts, because their meaning cannot be interpreted by the foreign audience. This is another inte-

♦ *Vision of Saint Sergius of Radonezh. End of 16<sup>th</sup>-beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century, Russian. Meteora monastery of Saint-Vissarion (Dousikou), 47. Source: Μπόιτσεβα, Δρανδάκη 2017, p. 90.*

♦ *Saint Demetrius. Early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Russian. Zoodochos Pigi monastery, Patmos. Source: Boycheva 2016, p. 136.*



resting semiotic issue. As long as the content of these texts cannot be “decoded”, their function is no longer to communicate with the audience, but with the image foretype.<sup>23</sup> From the perspective of a Greek audience, the texts become a type of ornament on the icon, their only purpose being to denote the foreign – specifically Russian – origin of the icon. It is very probable that in most cases the Slavonic inscriptions on Russian icons were kept intact because this specific message was of great importance for the Greek audience and deserved to remain untranslated at the expense of the original text message.

At this point, it is important to also focus on the messages of the *Texts on icons* which were lost after the transfer. In the case of the Christ Pantocrator icon, the message may not have been so important since everyone recognized the figure depicted on the icon. The meaning of the composition was also clear to everyone, and the Greek worshipper was very familiar with the text written in the book. What would happen, however, when the icon composition was unfamiliar or when the text on an icon played a critical role in understanding its message as was the case of the so-called *Talking Icons*?<sup>24</sup> One such case is an icon of the ‘Living Cross’, on which Slavonic texts and images are combined in an allegoric composition, quite unusual for a Greek audience. The problem is that this composition cannot be decoded without the proper interpretation of the text fragments.<sup>25</sup> And the text itself is also unusual, because only a small part of it is taken from the Bible, namely the quotation from apostle Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians: НЕ СОУДИХЪ БО ВИДЕТИ ЧТО ВВАСЪ ТОЧІЮ ИСА ХРИСТА И СЕГО РАСПЯТА (οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινα τοῦ εἰδέναι τι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον) (1 Cor. 2:2).<sup>26</sup> The rest is an original Russian text taken not from the Holy Tradition, but from the verses of a prominent, albeit somewhat controversial, Russian scholar and ‘enlightener’ of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Sylvester Medvedev.<sup>27</sup> Medvedev composed not only the lyrics, but also the entire complex of the poetic text and imagery, with obvious Western European sources of inspiration, but with an original spiritual and ideological message which could be decoded only by carefully reading and correlating image and text.<sup>28</sup>

The destination of the icon as predicted by its creator and its actual fate often radically differ. This is exactly the case of a Russian icon from the collection of the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens (cat. 106-13), which arrived in Greece in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup> Its poetic text was incomprehensible to the common folk. The ‘talking’ image was thus rendered ‘mute’ and, since the Greek tradition lacked a corresponding iconographic type, achieving the necessary correlations was also rendered impossible. Under such circumstances, did the icon succeed in accomplishing its catechetical mission? What message did it convey to the people? In other words, what did the Greeks feel when they worshiped this image? Did it remain an object of worship for them or did it end up being a strange illustration of an incomprehensible text? For the time being, nobody can provide a confident answer, but this question needs to be addressed. Unless we take these factors into account, we cannot properly understand how icons of Russian origin were perceived and interpreted in Greece and the Balkans.

Moving to the third and last category of texts related to icons, namely the *Texts after icons*, two of the subcategories of texts mentioned above need to be reexamined: those reflecting the sacred and those reflecting the material nature of the icon. The first subcategory is more important for worshippers, while the second one is interesting for researchers. Starting with the first subcategory, one should

keep in mind that the icons as objects of worship should be ‘equipped’ with all necessary texts explaining why they should be worshipped (the Story of the Icon, the texts describing the miracles the icon has performed, and so on) and how one should worship them (all hymnographic texts, from short troparia to entire services). This is a necessary ‘text mantle’ without which the icon cannot function as an object of worship. If an icon is transferred to another (foreign) culture with the purpose of making it function as an object of worship and propaganda, it is not enough to transfer the image. The texts *after* the icon should be transferred as well. Without translating these ‘mantle texts’, the icon remains a simple image. It is therefore very important to discover whether the transfer of these Russian icons to Greece was supported by the translation of hagiographical and hymnographic texts.

Examples of this are the numerous Russian icons of Our Lady of Vladimir<sup>30</sup> – one of the most popular Russian iconographic types in Greece – transferred to the Balkans starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>31</sup> Obviously, the figure depicted on this icon – the Holy Virgin – is known to every Christian. The iconographic type – the *Eleousa* – is also known to the Greek audience. In fact, the icon itself is of Greek origin and had been transferred to Kiev from Constantinople in the first half of 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the interpretation of this icon in Greece does not seem to pose

▼ *Christ Pantocrator*. 1702, Russian. Saint-John the Theologian monastery, Patmos.

Source: Μπόιτσεβα, Δρανδάκη 2017, p. 44.





any problems. However, if the knowledge of the Greek believers regarding the icon were limited to this common Orthodox knowledge,<sup>33</sup> they would not be worshipping Our Lady of Vladimir, but the *Panagia Eleousa*, and this would no longer be an icon transfer, but an image transfer. In order to have an actual icon transfer, the Greek believers approaching this icon had at least to know what this specific icon was famous for, to have some idea about its role in the spiritual life of Russia, to be familiar with some miracles for which it was responsible; and in the best case scenario, to know some prayers with which they could address the Holy Virgin of this specific icon. This was the only way in which the icon could function within the Greek religious culture, not only as another image of the Holy Virgin that happens to be of Russian origin, but as a part of Russian spirituality transferred to Greece, and therefore as an object of cultural communication and propaganda. This means that one needs to look for the transfer of the corresponding texts along with the image transfer – a problem that, to the best of our knowledge, still remains *terra incognita* in philology.

When discussing the last subcategory of texts, it is essential to refer to historic records, chief among which are the texts specifically related to icon transfer and Greek-Russian religious communication in general. A great number of various text sources still need to be studied, but I will focus

my attention on one typical example: an extremely interesting document which certainly deserves to be studied and published within the framework of the current project. It is the so-called “List of Russia” (*Κατάλογος Ρωσίας*) of the Patmos Monastery, dating back to 1718-1722 and kept in the monastery archive (AK 1018). This book of commemorations was composed during the monks’ journey to Russia at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the mission to collect alms for the monastery, an act known as *ζητεία*. Russian donors had the right to place their names in the list, in hierarchical order, so that they could be commemorated at the Patmos monastery. It provides us with a characteristic cross-section of Russian society during this specific time period and provides researchers with valuable data on the Greek-Russian spiritual contacts.<sup>34</sup>

Summing up the ideas presented in this brief introductory paper, I would like to re-define the concept of the icon, with the image only occupying its center. This image is surrounded by all categories of texts described here – texts *before* icons, texts *on* icons, and texts *after* icons – in order to form an icon as a whole. Such an icon could neither be created nor understood in the absence of these texts. Its transfer into another culture can only be done alongside them. Perhaps this is the reason why philologists deserve a place in art history research, especially when dealing with icon transfer.

## Notes:

1 For the differences and interactions between verbal and visual semiotics, see Аванесов 2014, p. 10-22.

2 On the specific semiotic nature of the icon, see Успенский 1995, p. 225-229.

3 Jakobson 1959, p. 233.

4 Illustrative iconographic cycles linked by the same narration (the corresponding hagiography text) transcribed on the marginal scenes of the saints icons’ are discussed in Успенский 1995, p. 223-224.

5 See Patzold 1989; Limberis 1994.

6 See Зеленина 2007, p. 103-105.

7 See Strawson 1952, p. 173-179.

8 See Boycheva *et al.* 2014.

9 Успенский 1995, p. 229-230.

10 Note that this story can also serve as a source (text *before* icon) for other visual images, such as marginal scenes on icons or book illustrations. See Панина 2012, p. 35-112.

11 For the Russian iconography of the Protective Veil of the Holy Mother of God, see Кондаков 1915, p. 92-101.

12 See Николаева, 1990.

13 See, for example, the icon from Moscow (1589) donated to the Meteora monastery of Saint-Vissarion (Dousikou) by saint Arsenius bishop of Ellassona, in Комашко, Саенкова 2008, p. 191-204, Μπόιτσεβα, Δρανδάκη 2017, p. 84-85 (*sub voce* K. Μαντζανά, E. Τσιπλίδα).

14 See Μπόιτσεβα, Δρανδάκη 2017, 141-142 (text written by Γ. Μπόιτσεβα).

15 For these symbolic images of the Virgin Mary and their interpretation in patristic tradition, see Борисова 2001, p. 45-82; Чернышева 2017, p. 87-90, 91-92, 95-98, 114-116, 145-147.

16 See, for example, the Russian icon (end of 16<sup>th</sup>-beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century) donated to the Meteora monastery of Saint-Vissarion (Dousikou) by saint Arsenios bishop of Ellassona, in Комашко, Саенкова 2008, p. 191-204; Μπόιτσεβα, Δρανδάκη 2017, p. 90-91

(*sub voce* K. Μαντζανά, E. Τσιπλίδα).

17 For this specific iconography and its relation to the saint’s life, see Гусева 1999, p. 120-138; Преображенский 2013, p. 76-85; Каримова 2014, p. 239-264.

18 See, for example, the acronyms on the Russian icons of the Holy Virgin, in Μπόιτσεβα, Δρανδάκη 2017, p. 124-137. For the symbolic role of Greek inscriptions on Russian icons, used for the purpose of sacred identification of the image with its foretype, see Успенский 1995, p. 231.

19 See Δημητράκοπουλος 2007, p. 127-150; Komashko, Saenkova 2016, p. 73; Μπόιτσεβα, Δρανδάκη 2017, p. 73-94.

20 See, for example, the icon ‘Lamentation of the Mother of God’ (end of 19<sup>th</sup> century) from the Museum Collection of Nea Moni on Chios island (X255). Among various Slavonic inscriptions, one may find the inscription of the Greek ktetor: [ΔΕΗΣΙΣ Τ]ΟΥ [ΔΟΥΛΟΥ] Τ[ΟΥ] ΘΕΟΥ [ΓΑ]ΒΡΙΗΛ [ΙΕΡΟ] ΜΟΝΑΧΟΥ 18[3]2 ΙΟΥΝΙΟΥ. See Μπόιτσεβα, Δρανδάκη 2017, p. 138-140 (*sub voce* Σ. Φαϊτάκη).

21 For this icon, see Boycheva 2016, p. 131, 136.

22 See Boycheva 2016, p. 125-128; Μπόιτσεβα, Δρανδάκη 2017, p. 34-37, 44. Note that this icon also has the ktetor’s inscription in Greek: ΔΕΗΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΙΣΑΥΟΥ ΗΕΡΟΜΟΝΑΧΟΥ ΜΑΖΑΡΗ (in the left-hand bottom corner); Boycheva 2016, p. 128.

23 Note the similar semiotic role of Greek inscriptions on Russian icons, discussed in Успенский 1995, p. 231.

24 See Boycheva *et al.* 2014.

25 For this iconographic type and its composition, see Лавров 1997, p. 519-525; Постернак 1999, p. 284-297; Кузнецова 2008; Borisova 2016, p. 215-228.

26 Borisova 2016, p. 220.

27 For Silvestre Medvedev and his contribution to the Russian literature and spiritual life of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, see Козловский 1895, p. 1-49; Панченко 1973, p. 116-129.

28 See Лавров 1997, p. 520-524; Borisova 2016, p. 220-227.



29 See Boycheva et al. 2014; Borisova 2016, p. 228.

30 For this iconographic type as well as the texts accompanying it, see Щенникова 2005, p. 8-38; Этингоф 2000, p. 127-156.

31 See typical examples in Μλόιτσεβα, Δρανδάκη 2017, p. 43, 81, 131-133.

32 See Этингоф 2000, p. 127.

33 It is believed that the Greek origin of this iconographic type,

as well as that of Our Lady of Murom and Our Lady of Konevitsa, was one of the main reasons why they were selected to be donated to Greek monasteries by saint Arsenius bishop of Ellassona. He probably tried to stir a local interest in their Greek spiritual heritage and to awaken the historic memory of the nation. See Komashko, Saenkova 2016, p. 75, 83-84.

34 See Boycheva 2016, p. 125. I would like to thank Juliana Boycheva for drawing my attention to this valuable codex.

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Linguistic supervision:

Ileana Sasu (Centre d'études supérieures de civilisation médiévale / CÉSCM – UMR 7302, Poitiers).

Peer-reviewed by:

Vera Tschentsova (UMR 8167 Orient et Méditerranée / Monde byzantin, Paris);

Mirosław Piotr Kruk (Institute of the Art History, University of Gdańsk).