

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΣΤΑΓΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΤΕΩΡΩΝ  
ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΩΝ ΜΕΛΕΤΩΝ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΜΕΤΕΩΡΩΝ

ΑΝΑΛΕΚΤΑ  
ΣΤΑΓΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΤΕΩΡΩΝ  
ANALECTA STAGORUM ET METEORORUM

ΤΕΥΧΟΣ 1<sup>ο</sup>



ΜΕΤΕΩΡΑ 2022



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ΣΤΑΓΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΤΕΩΡΩΝ



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ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΣΤΑΓΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΤΕΩΡΩΝ  
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Εἰς μνήμην Χαραλάμπους Β. Στεργιούλη (†1.9.2021),

Διευθυντὴ συντάξεως τοῦ Περιοδικοῦ



## ΠΡΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΣΕΒΑΣΜΙΩΤΑΤΟΥ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΟΥ ΣΤΑΓΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΤΕΩΡΩΝ Κ. ΘΕΟΚΛΗΤΟΥ

*Πᾶσα σοφία παρὰ Κυρίου καὶ μετ' Αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (Σειράχ, Α΄, 1)*

**Π**λήρεις χαρᾶς καὶ εὐφροσύνης, ὑποδεχόμεθα καὶ προλογίζομεν τὴν ἔκδοσιν τοῦ ἐπιστημονικοῦ Περιοδικοῦ τῆς Μητροπολιτικῆς Ἀκαδημίας Θεολογικῶν καὶ Ἱστορικῶν Μελετῶν Ἁγίων Μετεώρων, τοῦ ὑπὸ τὸν τίτλο «Ἀνάλεκτα Σταγῶν καὶ Μετεώρων – Analecta Stagorum et Meteororum». Τὸ ἐν λόγῳ Περιοδικὸν σκοπεῖ εἰς τὴν μελέτην τῆς Ἱστορίας καὶ τῆς πνευματικῆς παρακαταθήκης τῆς ἀγιοτόκου πολιτείας τῶν Ἁγίων Μετεώρων καὶ τῆς παλαιφάτου ἐπισκοπῆς τῶν Σταγῶν, νῦν δὲ ἱερᾶς Μητροπόλεως Σταγῶν καὶ Μετεώρων. Εἰς τὸ ἐν λόγῳ συλλογικὸν πόνημα ἀναδεικνύεται μετὰ πολλῶν γραπτῶν πηγῶν καὶ ἀρχαιολογικῶν μαρτυριῶν, ἡ πολύχρονος ἱστορία τῆς τοπικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ὁ πολιτισμικὸς θησαυρὸς τῆς μετεωρικῆς Θηβαΐδος, καὶ ἡ δρᾶσις τῶν μεγάλων ἐκκλησιαστικῶν προσωπικοτήτων τῆς Δ. Θεσσαλίας.

Διὰ τοῦτο εἴμεθα ἐκ τῶν προτέρων πεπεισμένοι ὅτι ἡ ἔκδοσις καὶ ἡ διάδοσις τοῦ Περιοδικοῦ Ἀνάλεκτα Σταγῶν καὶ Μετεώρων θὰ συντελέσῃ οὐχὶ μόνον εἰς τὴν γνῶσιν τῆς ἱστορίας τῆς περιοχῆς τῶν Σταγῶν ἢ τῶν μετεωρικῶν Μοναστηρίων, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὴν περαιτέρω ἀναγνώρισιν τῆς συμβολῆς τῆς τοπικῆς Ἐκκλησίας εἰς τὴν πνευματικὴν ἀνάπτυξιν τοῦ ὀρθοδόξου Ἑλληνισμοῦ ἀπὸ τὰ βυζαντινὰ ἕως τὰ νεότερα χρόνια.

Ἐκφράζομεν τὴν εὐαρέσκεϊαν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν ἡμῶν πρὸς τὰ κοπιάσαντα μέλη τῆς τριμελοῦς συντακτικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς τοῦ Περιοδικοῦ καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἐλλόγιμα μέλη τῶν ἐπιμέρους ἐπιστημονικῶν Ἐπιτροπῶν, διὰ τὴν ἀξίειπαινον αὐτῶν σπουδὴν καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν. Ὡσαύτως, θερμὰς εὐχαριστίας καὶ εὐγνώμονας προσρήσεις ἐκφράζομεν πρὸς τοὺς συγγραφεῖς τῶν μελετῶν τοῦ πρώτου τεύχους, οἵτινες διὰ τῆς ἐνδελεχοῦς ἐντρυφήσεως αὐτῶν εἰς τὰς πηγὰς, ἀπέδωσαν μὲ ἀντικειμενικότητα καὶ ἐπιστημονικὴν ἀκρίβειαν πάντα ὅσα οὗτοι πραγματεύονται.

Ἡ χάρις τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, διὰ πρεσβειῶν τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου τῆς Μετεωριτίσσης καὶ πάντων τῶν Ὁσίων τῶν ἐν τοῖς λίθοις τῶν Μετεώρων λαμπάντων, εἴη μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ πάντων ἡμῶν, Ἀμήν.

Ἐγγραφον ἐν τῷ ἐπισκοπείῳ τῶν Σταγῶν, τῇ 25ῃ μηνὸς Ὀκτωβρίου, ἔτους σωτηρίου 2021

*τῷ Σταγῶν καὶ Μετεώρων Θεοκλήτῳ*

## ΠΕΡΙΕΧΟΜΕΝΑ

ΠΡΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΣΕΒΑΣΜΙΩΤΑΤΟΥ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΟΥ ΣΤΑΓΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΤΕΩΡΩΝ κ. ΘΕΟΚΛΗΤΟΥ	9
ΠΕΡΙΕΧΟΜΕΝΑ	10
ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΥ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΟΥ κ. ΒΑΡΘΟΛΟΜΑΙΟΥ	13
ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΟΥ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΣΗΣ ΑΦΡΙΚΗΣ κ. ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΥ Β΄	15
ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΟΥ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΕΙΑΣ κ. ΙΩΑΝΝΗ Ι΄	17
ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΣΟΛΥΜΩΝ κ. ΘΕΟΦΙΛΟΥ Γ΄	19
ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΜΑΚΑΡΙΩΤΑΤΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ κ. ΙΕΡΩΝΥΜΟΥ	21
ΧΑΡΑΛΑΜΠΟΣ Β. ΣΤΕΡΓΙΟΥΛΗΣ (1970 - †2021). ΝΕΚΡΟΛΟΓΙΑ	23
<b>Brendan Osswald</b> ΣΥΜΕΩΝ ΟΥΡΕΣΗΣ ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΟΣ, ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΑΣ ΤΩΝ ΤΡΙΚΑΛΩΝ	43
<b>Maja Nikolić</b> THESSALY UNDER THE SERBS (1348 - c. 1373)	109
<b>Δημήτριος Κ. Άγορίτσας</b> ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΠΟΙ ΣΤΟΝ ΒΙΟ ΤΩΝ ΟΣΙΩΝ ΝΕΚΤΑΡΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΑΨΑΡΑΔΩΝ	147
<b>Elif Bayraktar Tellan</b> THE MONASTERIES OF METEORA DURING THE OTTOMAN PERIOD AND THE PRACTICE OF MONASTIC CONFINEMENT	193

<b>Παρασκευή Χ. Παπαδημητρίου</b> ΒΗΜΟΘΥΡΟ ΣΤΗ ΜΟΝΗ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΜΕΤΕΩΡΟΥ ΑΠΟΔΙΔΟΜΕΝΟ ΣΤΟΝ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΗ ΤΟΝ ΚΡΗΤΑ	225
<b>Konstantinos M. Vapheiates</b> THE ARTISTIC ACTIVITY OF THEOPHANES THE CRETAN IN WESTERN THESSALY AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE "CRETAN SCHOOL" OF PAINTING IN OTTOMAN GREECE	257
<b>Nikolaos Vryzidis</b> RECREATING A SOCIETY'S MATERIAL CULTURE: TEXTILES IN THE TRIKKE CODEX EBE 1471	301
<b>Yuliana Boycheva (with an appendix by Daria Resh)</b> FROM THE ORTHODOX MEGALOPOLIS OF MOSCOVY OF GREAT RUSSIA': RUSSIAN HEIRLOOMS FROM THE MONASTERY OF TATARNA, SIXTEENTH -SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES	359
<b>Ἡλίας Τερπέλης</b> Η ΕΠΙΚΡΙΤΙΚΗ ΣΤΑΣΗ ΕΝΑΝΤΙ ΜΟΣΧΟΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΩΝ ΕΚΔΟΣΕΩΝ ΠΕΡΙ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΚΟΡΥΔΑΛΙΚΗΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΟΓΡΑΦΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΡΗΤΟΡΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΟΝ 18 <sup>ο</sup> ΑΙΩΝΑ	409
ΛΙΣΤΑ EMAIL ΣΥΝΕΡΓΑΤΩΝ ΠΕΡΙΟΔΙΚΟΥ	431

## ΣΥΝΤΑΚΤΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΗ

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Βαφειάδης Κωνσταντῖνος,  
Βρυζίδης Νικόλαος,  
Στεργιούλης Χαράλαμπος († 1.9.2021)

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## ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΕΣ ΠΕΡΙΟΔΙΚΩΝ

ΑΑΑ	Ἀρχαιολογικὰ Ἀνάλεκτα ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν
ΑΒΜΕ	Ἀρχεῖον Βυζαντινῶν Μνημείων Ἑλλάδος
ΑΕΘΣΕ	Ἀρχαιολογικὸ Ἔργο Θεσσαλίας καὶ Στερεῆς Ἑλλάδας, Πρακτικὰ Ἐπιστημονικῆς Συνάντησης
ΑΔ	Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον
ΑΕ	Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερίς
ΔΧΑΕ	Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας
ΕΕΒΣ	Ἐπετηρὶς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν
ΕΕΘΣΠΘ	Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης
ΕΜΑ	Ἐπετηρὶς Μεσαιωνικοῦ Ἀρχείου Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν
ΕΕΦΣΠΑ	Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν
ἩπειρΧρον:	Ἡπειρωτικὰ Χρονικὰ
ΘεσσΗμ	Θεσσαλικὸ Ἡμερολόγιο
ΘεσσΜελ	Θεσσαλικά Μελετήματα
ΘεσσΧρον	Θεσσαλικά Χρονικά. Δελτίον τῆς ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἱστορικῆς καὶ Λαογραφικῆς Ἐταιρείας τῶν Θεσσαλῶν
ΘΗΕ	Θρησκευτικὴ καὶ Ἠθικὴ Ἐγκυκλοπαιδεῖα
ΙΑΙΣΕΕ	Ἱστορικὸν Ἀρχεῖον Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος
ΙΕΕ	Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους
ΚαρδΧρον	Καρδιτσιώτικα Χρονικά
ΚρητΧρον	Κρητικὰ Χρονικά
ΝΕ	Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων
Νεολόγου Ἐπιθεώρησις	Νεολόγου Ἑβδομαδιαῖα Ἐπιθεώρησις, Πολιτικὴ, Φιλολογικὴ, Ἐπιστημονικὴ.
ΠΑΑ	Πρακτικὰ τῆς Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν
ΠΑΕ	Πρακτικὰ τῆς ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας
ΑnBoll	Analecta Bollandiana
ArtB	The Art Bulletin
AS	Acta Sanctorum

BalkSt	Balkan Studies
BHC	Bulletin de correspondance hellénique
BHG	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca, F. Halkin (ed.), vols. I, II, III, Bruxelles 1957
BHG	Nov. Auct. F. Halkin, Novum Auctarium Bibliothecae hagiographicae graecae, [Subsidia Hagiographica 65], Bruxelles 1984.
BMGS	Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies
BNJb	Byzantinische-neugriechische Jahrbücher
ByzForsch	Byzantinische Forschungen
ByzSl	Byzantinoslavica
ByzVindo	Byzantina Vindobonensia
BSGRT	Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
BZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift
CahArch	Cahiers Archéologiques
CahBalk	Cahiers Balkaniques
CFHB	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae
ChHist	Church History
CIÉB	Congrès International d'Études Byzantines
Corsi	Corsi di cultura sull' arte ravennate e bizantina
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSHB	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, B. G. Niebuhr et al. (eds.), Bonn 1828-1897.
DACL	Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie, H. Leclercq, F. Gabrol (eds.), vols I-XV, Paris 1907-1923.
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
DOS	Dumbarton Oaks Studies
EChR	The Eastern Churches Review
ÉO	Échos d'Orient
EOE	Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire (2009)
EtBalk	Études balkaniques
GSND	Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva
IIRAIK	Izvestija Russkogo Arkheologičeskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole
JEastCS	The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies

JAch	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum
JÖB	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik
JÖByzG	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft
JSav	Journal des Savants
JThS	The Journal of Theological Studies
JWarb	Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes
LA	Liber Annus. Studium Biblicum Franciscanum
LBG	Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität (E. Trapp et alii), Wien 1994 k.e.
LOC	Liturgiarum Orientalium Collectio, E. Renaudot (ed.), vols I, II Parisiis 1716.
MSU	Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens
OKS	Ostkirchliche Studien
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica
OrChr	Oriens Christianus
OrChrAn	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
PBW	Prosopography of the Byzantine World
PG	Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca, J.-P. Migne (ed.), vols. 161, Paris 1857-1866.
RÉB	Revue des Études Byzantines
RÉG	Revue des Études Grecques
RESEE	Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes
RSBN	Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici
SEG	Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum
SemKond	Seminarium Kondakovianum
StP	Studia Patristica
SüdostF	Südost-Forschungen
Synaxarium EC:	H. Delehaye, Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae, e codice sirmondiano nunc berolinensi abiectis synaxariis selectis, Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris, Bruxellis 1902
TM	Travaux et Mémoires
Turcica	Turcica, Reuve d'études turques
VizVrem	Vizantinijskij Vremmenik
WJKg	Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte
ZLU	Zbornik za likovne umetnosti Matice srpske

Zograf	Zograf, Revue d'art médiévale
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik
ZRNM	Zbornik Radova Narodnog Muzeja
ZRVI	Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta
ZSU	Zbornik Srednovekovna umetnost



'FROM THE ORTHODOX MEGALOPOLIS  
OF MOSCOVY OF GREAT RUSSIA':  
RUSSIAN HEIRLOOMS FROM  
THE MONASTERY OF TATARNA,  
SIXTEENTH-SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES\*

**Yuliana Boycheva**  
**(with an appendix by Daria Resh)**

*ABSTRACT: This article examines Russian artifacts donated to the Monastery of the Virgin of Tatarna (Evrytania, Central Greece) by Archbishop Arsenios of Elassona (1550-1625) and clergymen from his entourage. A monastic site since the Byzantine period, Tatarna emerged as an important religious center in the late sixteenth century because of its special status as a patriarchal monastery (stavropegeion), granted to it almost immediately after its foundation by monks from Thessaly. The donation of a large number of Russian artifacts includes a manuscript, icons, and a pectoral panagiaron-encolpion, some of which are associated directly with Arsenios through inscriptions, while others are attributable to the clerics carrying the artifacts to the monastery. Overall, this is one of the very interesting ensembles of Russian ecclesiastical art to have survived in its original context in Greece. It is distinguished not only by the excellent craftsmanship of the objects comprising it, but also by the questions it raises as a historical source.*

*ΛΕΞΕΙΣ-ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ: Ρωσική θρησκευτική τέχνη, μονές στην Κεντρική Ελλάδα, εικόνες, διαπολιτισμική επικοινωνία μέσω της τέχνης, Αρσένιος Ελασσόνας.*

*KEYWORDS: Russian religious art, monasteries in Central Greece, icons, intercultural communication through art, Arsenios of Elassona*

## 1. THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERY OF THE VIRGIN OF TATARNA

Throughout its long and turbulent history, the Monastery of Tatarna, one of the oldest and richest monasteries in continental Greece, has seen both periods of prosperity and decay, brought by fires, natural disasters, and lootings. The researcher examining its history has to deal from the beginning with a set of complex questions related to the motives and practices, cultural, ecclesiastical and economic alike, which led to the foundation of the monastery and its rise to

prominence. Which reasons drove hieromonks David and Methodios, as well as the two other monks accompanying them, to relocate and find a new coenobitic monastery? Moreover, why did their coenobium, shortly after its foundation, receive the name of the Virgin of Tatarna? Which was 'the great monastery of Savior Christ' from where these four monks started their journey? And finally, why were important offerings sent from 'Moscow of Great Russia' to such a remote monastery?

According to the oral tradition, close to the monastery's current location there was a Byzantine monastic structure, built 'a thousand years before us'<sup>1</sup>. Its existence is also attested by the sporadic mentions in the textual sources from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, as well as the presence of Byzantine heirlooms in the contemporary sacristy of Tatarna<sup>2</sup>.

Nevertheless, the oldest written sources documenting the foundation of the contemporary monastery date to 1555/6. Its foundation document was composed in January 1556 by hieromonk David, and the relevant *sigillion* was issued by the chancery of Patriarch Dionysius II (in office 1546-1556) later in the same year<sup>3</sup>. Both documents refer to David as the 'venerable prohegumen of the great monastery of Savior Christ' (σεβάσμιου προηγούμενου της μεγάλης μονής του Σωτήρος Χριστού)<sup>4</sup>, who came to Tatarna accompanied by hieromonk Methodios and two other unnamed monks. Driven by their desire for eremitic and peaceful life, these four found a site fit for establishing a monastery<sup>5</sup>.

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1 Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 37 (no. 2).

2 Theochari, "Εκκλησιαστικά άμφια", 123 (no. 3). Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 37 (nos. 3, 4). Koumoulidis, Deriziotis, Sdrolia, *Το Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, 13-14.

3 Poulitsas, "Επιγραφαι, Ενθυμήσεις και Σιγίλλια", 284-287. Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 139-143.

4 The honorific title of prohegumen was given to monks who had served as abbots and continued to be considered members of the brotherhood of the specific monastery. An ex-abbot does not necessarily or automatically receive the title upon his retirement from the post.

5 "Ἐπειδὴ τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐγὼ τε δηλαδὴ, ὁ ἐλάχιστος ἐν ἱερομονάχοις καὶ προηγούμενος τῆς σεβασμίας μονῆς τοῦ Σωτήρος Χριστοῦ, καὶ ὁ σὺν ἐμοί εὐλαβέστατος ἐν ἱερομονάχοις κυρ Μεθόδιος, καὶ ἄλλοι τῶν ἀδελφῶν, τῶν ἐρημικῶν καὶ ἡσύχιον ποθήσαντες βίον, καὶ ἱεράν

Both sources enumerate various offerings, e.g., liturgical objects, manuscripts, as well as the important estates presented to the monastery by the local flock<sup>6</sup>. The *sigillion* granted to the monastery the status of patriarchal and stavropegial and appointed the ‘most reverend David, prohegumen of the great monastery of Savior Christ’ (ο οσιώτατος κυρ Δαβίδ, ο προηγούμενος της μεγάλης μονής του Σωτήρωσ Χριστού) as abbot. After its foundation, the status of the monastery as a stavropegion was confirmed four more times by the *sigillia* issued in 1586, 1676, 1782 and 1797<sup>7</sup>. Two notes in an early seventeenth-century manuscript date the erection of the *katholikon* and the completion of its iconographic program, which were crucial landmarks in the history of the monastery. According to these notes, hieromonks David and Methodios started the construction of the *katholikon* in 1555/6, which was completed in September 1580. The mural painting of the church was finished much later, in September 1600<sup>8</sup>.

The estate of the monastery continued to be shaped during the early period of its history, from the time of its foundation to the first decade of the seventeenth century. It consisted mainly of the land grants and donations from the local landowners and Orthodox communities in the wider area<sup>9</sup>. This process is documented in various acts preserved in the archive of the monastery<sup>10</sup>, whose cumulative evidence allows placing the emergence and growth of the Monastery of Tatarna in the context of the sixteenth-century wave of monastic foundations or reestablishments in Ottoman Greece, a phenomenon with a notable intensity in Thessaly<sup>11</sup>.

In the foundation act hieromonk David writes that he built a church and dedicated it to the icon of the Mother of God called Phaneromene (ἐπικληθεῖσα Φανερωμένη)<sup>12</sup>. The same appellation is repeated in the first two *sigillia* issued in

μονήν, ἐπ’ονόματι τῆς Θεοτόκου...μόλις εὔρομεν τόν επιτήδιον τόπον εἰς πλάτανον καλούμενον, ... ἐγγεῖστα τοῦ Ασπροποτάμου κακεῖσε τά σύνορα, τῆς τοιαύτης μονῆς πῆζαντες, ναόν ἐκ βάθρου τῆς γῆς τῇ Θεοτόκῳ ἀνηγείραμεν, ἐπικλειθεῖση φανερωμένη καί μοναστήριον ἀπεκατεστήσαμεν καθὼς νῦν ὁράται, σπουδάζοντες καί ἐτι ἐπὶ τῇ βελτιώσει καί αὐξήσει αὐτοῦ...’ (Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 139).

6 ‘...πλείστα αφιερώματα...σκέυη ἱερά τε, καί βιβλία καυκία καί κούπας αργύρας καί ὄσα ἄλλα κινήτά καί ἀκίνητα πράγματα...’ (*ibid.*, 140).

7 All six *sigillia* have been published by P. Vasileiou (*ibid.*, 139-152).

8 ‘Ἐτελειώθη ὁ πάνσεπτος καί περίφημος ναός τῆς Ὑπεραγίας καί ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας, τοῦ ὄντος πλησίον τοῦ Λευκοποτάμου τῆς κεινῶς καλουμένης Τατάρνης ετελειόθη εντάυτα ΖΠΗ’ (1580) καί ιστορήθη καί τοῦτο ΖΡΗ’ (1600)’ (*idem*, *Ἐνθυμήσεις, Επιγραφές κί ἕνα Σιγίλλιο*, 5-6).

9 As a sidenote, it is interesting that two icons from the first templon of the church, depicting Saint George (1598-9) and the Virgin’s Nativity (1593-4), were painted by the artist Lampros from Agrafa (Florou, “Εἰκόνες του 16ου αἰώνα”, 295).

10 Theochari, “Εκκλησιαστικά ἀμφια”, 125 (no. 1).

11 Greene, “History in High Places”, 5-10. Kotzageorgis, “Τα μοναστήρια ως οθωμανικές τοπικές ελίτ”, 185.

12 Phaneromene is one of the many epithets of the Virgin in the Orthodox tradition, literally meaning

1556 and 1586. In the first, the monastery is mentioned as the ‘venerable and holy monastery of Panagia...called Phaneromene’ (σεβασμία καί ἱερά μονή τῆς Παναγίας...τῆς ἐπικεκλιμένης Φανερωμένης). In the second, it appears to have been dedicated to the most holy Theotokos named Phaneromene (τῆ τιμωμένη ἐπ’ὀνόματι τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου τῆς καλουμένης Φανερωμένης)<sup>13</sup>. Thus, the toponym Tatarna is a later addition to the name of the monastery, with different versions of the appellation “the Virgin of Tatarna” being in use from 1599 and on<sup>14</sup>. This appellation appears for the first time in the dedicatory inscription of the Russian icon of the Dormition of the Virgin presented to the monastery by the Archimandrite of the Holy Sepulcher Damaskinos. According to this inscription, Damaskinos commissioned it in 1599 for the venerable stavropegial monastery in Tatarna dedicated to the Nativity of the immaculate and perpetual Virgin Mary<sup>15</sup>.

There are several hypotheses regarding the origins of the word Tatarna in the name of the monastery<sup>16</sup>. In our eyes, the most convincing is that it derived from the nearby watermill ‘in Tatarna’ (εἰς τὴν Τατάρναν). At this watermill, the monastery owned a *poros* (πῶρος), which was either a lugger or a mobile bridge. This watermill was built at the narrowest point of the Achelous River, with its owner essentially controlling the passing. The well-known bridge of Tatarna was erected on the same location in the seventeenth century. It stood there until 1963, when it was demolished and the artificial lake of Kremasta was created<sup>17</sup>.

The choice of the specific location for the monastery can be attributed to many different reasons, such as the presence of the ruins of an older monastic structure and of the river with its largest wellspring (Madracha), which provided access to drinkable water. But its most prominent asset was the proximity to the basic crossing from Thessaly to Agrafa. The choice of the specific location provided to the newly founded monastery access to an arterial road and river crossing, a trait appearing also in other Thessalian monasteries built during the second half of the sixteenth century. Their erection in strategic locations, close to rivers, bridges, and passages, supported the development of road networks in the mountainous

‘the Revealed’, and usually refers to a miraculous discovery or revealing of an icon, which when becomes the center of veneration in the monastery or church built in the location it was found.

13 Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 143-145.

14 E.g., Παναγίας Τατάρνα[ης], Παναγίας Ταταρνωτίσσης, Θεοτόκου Πεφανερωμένης τῆς ἐπικεκλιμένης Τετάρνας.

15 See cat. 1 in the appendix. Also see Kissas, “A Russian Icon from Tatarna Monastery”.

16 On the monastery’s name see Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 28-34.

17 The monastery’s contemporary premises were built to the west of the village of Tripotamos (Ervytania), very close to its original location. Unfortunately, the old structure collapsed after the 1963 earthquake (Koumoulidis, Deriziotis, Sdrolia, *Το Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, 15).

region of Pindus<sup>18</sup>. In other words, the foundation of the Monastery of Tatarna by the watermill and its *poros* basically was the first step towards the development of a new arterial road, which connected Evrytania with Valtos through the bridge of Tatarna.

An open question in the history of Tatarna remains the ‘great monastery of Savior Christ’, from which hieromonks David and Methodios and their two companions began their journey to Tatarna. The monasteries which feature the definition Savior Christ (του Σωτήρος [Χριστού]), meaning ‘the Transfiguration of Our Lord’, and which could have actively participated in Tatarna’s foundation, were the Monastery Saint Bessarion of Dousiko (Μονή του Αγίου Βησσαρίωνος-Δούσικο), also known as the Monastery of Our Savior of the Great Gates (Μονή του Σωτήρος των Μεγάλων Πυλών), and the Monastery of the Transfiguration of Our Savior in Meteora (Μονή Μεταμορφώσεως του Σωτήρος στα Μετέωρα), also known as the Great Meteoron (Μεγάλο Μετέωρο)<sup>19</sup>. Regrettably, the existing scholarship has not clarified this matter yet, and perhaps only further research in the archives could offer new illuminating evidence<sup>20</sup>.

Either way, the hypothesis that the Monastery of the Virgin of Tatarna was founded by monks of Dousiko Monastery seems to me less plausible, considering that a strong earthquake destroyed the *katholikon* of the latter in 1544. This disaster obliged the brotherhood to dedicate itself to the necessary restorative works until 1577<sup>21</sup>. Still, one cannot categorically rule out the possibility that Tatarna’s founding fathers came from Dousiko, especially since the Ottoman documents in its archive attest the concentrated effort to expand the monastery’s estates during the sixteenth century<sup>22</sup>. Then, the important collection of artefacts presented to Tatarna by a high cleric who emanated from Dousiko Monastery, the Archbishop Arsenios (1550-1625), could be interpreted as an act of support to the effort by monks of the brotherhood he used to belong to<sup>23</sup>.

On the other hand, one should consider that the foundation of Tatarna coincides with the economic and spiritual thriving of the Monastery of Great Mete-

18 For an analysis of this aspect see Greene, “History in High Places”.

19 Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 27-28, 37-41. Koumoulidis, Deriziotis, Sdrolia, *Το Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, 13-14. Dositheos, *Ιερόν Τρίπτυχον*, 121-176. Boycheva, “Συλλογές ρωσικών εικόνων στην Ελλάδα”, 38, 51.

20 E.g., tracing the sultanic *firman* granting permission for the monastery’s establishment could provide a clear answer to this question.

21 Alexandropoulos, “Τα Οθωμανικά Τούρκικα έγγραφα”. Kotzageorgis, “Τα μοναστήρια ως οθωμανικές τοπικές ελίτ”.

22 Alexandropoulos, “Τα Οθωμανικά Τούρκικα έγγραφα”, 118.

23 The view that the monastery’s founders came from Dousiko is embraced by Vasileiou (*Το Μοναστήρι*, 45), Dimitrakopoulos (*Αρσένιος Ελασσόνας*, 149, no. 91) and Greene (“History in High Places”, 5-10).

oron, when it played a leading role among the monasteries of Central Greece, well beyond the regions only of Stagoi or Thessaly,<sup>24</sup>.

In the *Sygramma Istorikon* (Σύγγραμμα Ιστορικόν), an episcopal act written shortly after 1529<sup>25</sup>, it is stated that no monk held the title of abbot (hegoumen), either in the Great Meteoron or in any other monastery of the region, except for the Protos of the Hermitage of Stagoi<sup>26</sup>. The writer seems to be ill-disposed towards the Great Meteoron's undertaking of the governance of the Stagoi Hermitage, interpreting it as a de facto abolishment of the autonomy of the other monasteries<sup>27</sup>. In any case, the *Sygramma Istorikon* points out that by the first half of the sixteenth century, at the latest, the dispute regarding primacy in Meteora was resolved in favor of the Great Meteoron. From now on, all other monasteries of Meteora were obliged, as an expression of submission and docility (ὑποταγῆς καὶ εὐπειθείας ἔνεκεν), to acknowledge its spiritual supremacy.

However, as already stated, the leading role held by the Great Meteoron was not limited to the abbeys and monastic cells of Stagoi; its influence exceeded by far the borders of contemporary Thessaly. Furthermore, Dousiko Monastery as well fell under the jurisdiction of the Great Meteoron according to the epistle of confirmation and will of its founding father, Saint Bessarion (d. 1540)<sup>28</sup>. His will testifies to the authority that the Great Meteoron enjoyed during the sixteenth century, to such an extent that Dousiko Monastery was considered its dependency. The Monastery of the Transfiguration of Zavorda, located in Western Macedonia (Greece), had a similar status, as the will of its founding father, Saint Nikanor (1491-1549), attests<sup>29</sup>. It should also be observed that monasteries outside the region of Meteora were founded in the sixteenth century by initiative of monks of the Great Meteoron. For example, characteristic is the case of the Monastery

24 Uspensky, *Восток Христианский*, 160. Vapheides, *Η μονή*, 109-110.

25 See Uspensky, *Восток Христианский*, 408-413. Vogiatzidis, "Το Χρονικό των Μετεώρων". Nicol, *Meteora*, 71-72. Sofianos, *Ἡ Σκήπη τῶν Σταγῶν*, 32-33. Gouloulis, "Ἀρχαιοδίφες τῆς Σκήτης Σταγῶν". Rigo, *La Cronaca*, 53-109.

26 '...οὐδεὶς ὄνομα ἡγουμένου ἐκέκτητο, οὔτε εἰς τὸ Μετέωρον οὔτε εἰς ἄλλην μονήν. Καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο δῆλον ἦν κἂν τοῖς πολλοῖς, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀγνούμενον. Οὕτως γὰρ παρεκτός τοῦ πρώτου τῆς σκήτεως οὐδεὶς ἄλλος ἡγούμενος ὠνομάζετο. Οὕτω γὰρ ἡ συνήθεια ἐπεκράτει, ὅτι ὁ πρῶτος εἶχεν καὶ τὸ τῆς ἡγουμενίας ὄνομα...' (*ibid.*, Ins. 66-70.)

27 *Ibid.*, Ins. 126-128, 145-146.

28 '...εἰ δὲ βαρὺ τε καὶ ἐ/[παχθὲς τυ]γχάνον εἶη τὸ ἀμάρτημα [μοναχοῦ τινός], καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ καθηγουμ(έν)ου τῆς μονῆς δυνάμεως, ἀναχθῆτω αὐτὸ πρὸς τὸν ὀσιώτατον καθηγούμενον τοῦ Μετεώρου, καὶ παρ' ἐκείνου ἐχέτω τὴν διόρθωσιν, εἰ ἐξήν· ὃν ὡς μείζονα τῆς σκήτε(ως) ὄντα πν(ευματ)ικὸν π(ατέ)ρα δίδωμι αὐτῷ, τὸ τὰς με/[γάλας καὶ] δυσδιορθώτ(ους) ἐμπταισιμέν(ας) πράξεις, διορθοῦν κανονικῶς τε καὶ ἐπιστημόν(ως) τοῦ ἡμετέρου λέγω μοναστηρίου (Sofianos, "Ὁ ἅγιος Βησσαρίων", Ins. 22-24 on page 227).

29 Delialis, "Ἡ Διαθήκη τοῦ ὁσίου Νικάνορος", Ins. 72-80, 90-104 on pages 422-423.

of Saint Athanasius Omvriakis (Domokos), which was founded in 1565 by monk Athanasius of Great Meteoron<sup>30</sup>.

Beyond shadow of doubt, the establishment of dependencies by the Great Meteoron Monastery in the various nodal points of continental Greece is a phenomenon worth of further discussion. During the sixteenth century Meteora faced a housing, nutritional and housing crisis due to the great confluence of incoming monks<sup>31</sup>. This state of affairs obliged the Great Meteoron not only to erect a more spacious *katholikon* in 1552 and a two-storey hospital-rest home in 1572<sup>32</sup>, but also to proceed with building new monasteries in suitable locations, usually where older Byzantine monasteries used to stand<sup>33</sup>. Besides a much-desired decongestion, the ultimate aim of these moves was the expansion of the monastery's estates and the increment of its revenue, as well as the control of nodal points and arterial roads by a centralized monastic network<sup>34</sup>. In fact, the founding of Tatarna by the four monks, who perhaps came from the Great Meteoron brotherhood, could be interpreted within the frame of this considerable expansion.

After its establishment, Tatarna developed rapidly, receiving many land endowments in the wider region<sup>35</sup>. Sumptuous ecclesiastical vessels, treasured in its contemporary sacristy of Tatarna, and dating from the second half of the sixteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century, also indicate the economic prosperity of the monastery during this early period<sup>36</sup>. Kaisarios Dapontes (1713/4-1784) mentions Tatarna in his poem on the monasteries and churches dedicated to the Virgin (Ἀπαρίθμησης τῶν ὀνομασθῶν ναῶν καὶ μονῶν τῆς Παναγίας καὶ περὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους)<sup>37</sup>, a fact that further attests to the prominent position of the monastery at that time.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the monastery participated in rebellious movements against the Ottomans and was set on fire many times, like many other monasteries in continental Greece. For example, in 1600 Tatarna became the epicenter of the rebellion led by Dionysios the Philosopher (d. 1611),

30 See selectively Giannopoulos, "Χρονικὸν τῆς μονῆς τοῦ Ὀμβρικοῦ".

31 Skouvaras, "Μεθέωρα", 1076, 1088. Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 45.

32 Vapheides, *Η μονή*, 113-117.

33 Alexandropoulos, "Τα μοναστήρια των Μετεώρων".

34 Skouvaras, "Μεθέωρα", 1088. Alexandropoulos, "Τα μοναστήρια των Μετεώρων", 84-86.

35 Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 79-83. Greene, "History in High Places", 5-6.

36 Theochari, "Εκκλησιαστικά ἀμφιά", 123-147. Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 83-99. Koumoulidis, Deriziotis, Sdroliia, *Το Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, 22, 134-146.

37 '...Τατάρνα μοναστήριον... τῆς Παναγίας / παρόμοιον ὡς τα λοιπά εἰς τὰς θαυματουργίας...' (Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 31).

metropolitan of Larissa, which led to its destruction by the Ottomans in 1601. The monastery was reconstructed with the sponsorship of Scarlatos (fl. sixteenth century)<sup>38</sup>, a Phanariot originally from Agrafta, who became its second founder<sup>39</sup>. In 1602 Arsenios of Elassona, Archbishop of the Cathedral of the Archangels of Moscow, sent icons and other objects to the monastery, which were presumably meant to cover urgent needs after its destruction.

Our study will focus on these donations, as well as other ecclesiastical artifacts sent to Tatarna from Russia, which according to their dedicatory inscriptions and stylistic features date to the second half of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century.

## II. THE RUSSIAN HEIRLOOMS

The group of Russian heirlooms to be discussed comprises of six portable icons, a pectoral panagiaron-encolpion. Unfortunately, the existing scholarship suffers from inaccuracies regarding their dating and iconography<sup>40</sup>. The relatively thin bibliography includes studies dedicated to the icon of the Dormition of the Virgin<sup>41</sup>, the donations of Arsenios to the monasteries of Thessaly<sup>42</sup>, two dedicatory inscriptions on the icons, and the manuscript<sup>43</sup>.

A key text for the contextualization of these objects is the dedicatory inscription of the illuminated manuscript, produced in Moscow and presented to Arsenios in 1596 by the Metropolitan of Myreon Matthaïos (1550-1624). In this manuscript, Arsenios noted his donations before their dispatch in 1602 *propria manu*, also clearly specifying their origin 'from the Orthodox Megalopolis of Moscow of Great Russia' (*από της ορθοδόξου Μεγαλοπόλεως της Μοσχοβίας της Μεγάλης Ρωσίας...*)<sup>44</sup>. He mentions a silver-gilt icon of Descent into Hades (*ἐν εἰκόνισμα ἀργυρόχρυσον τὴν ἀνάστασιν τοῦ Κυρίου Ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Εἰς Ἄδου*)<sup>45</sup>, as well as 'the finest'

38 Theocharis, "Nikolas Mavrocordato", 319-340. Koumoulidis, Deriziotis, Sdrolia, *Το Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, 15. Sdrolia, *Οι τοιχογραφίες του καθολικού της μονής Πέτρας (1625)*, 12-13.

39 Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 48-49.

40 E.g., Vasileiou, *Ενθυμήσεις, επιγραφές κι ένα σιγίλλιο*, 12. *Idem*, *Το μοναστήρι*, 45. Koumoulidis, Deriziotis, Sdrolia, *Το Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, 134. Φλώρου, "Εικόνες του 16ου αιώνα", 293-298.

41 Kissas, "A Russian Icon".

42 Komashko, Saenkova, "The Iconographic program of Russian Icons", 73-88.

43 Poulitsas, "Επιγραφαί, Ενθυμήσεις και Σιγίλλια". Dimitrakopoulos, *Αρσένιος Ελασσόνος*.

44 Poulitsas, "Επιγραφαί, Ενθυμήσεις και Σιγίλλια", 270 (cat. 66), 276 (cat. 96). Dimitrakopoulos, *Αρσένιος Ελασσόνος*, 127-150.

45 Gratsiou, *Die dekorierten Handschriften* 145-146. Vasileiou, *Το Μοναστήρι*, 45. Dositheos, *Προσκύνημα*. Koumoulidis, Deriziotis, Sdrolia, *Το Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, 134.

(έκλεκτώτατον) silver-gilt casket<sup>46</sup>. Their transit to Tatarna was undertaken by the Archimandrite of the Holy Sepulcher Damaskinos, who was accompanied by monks Symeon and Pachomios. Other Russian heirlooms in the collection, not mentioned by Arsenios, can also be linked to the same dispatch: e.g., the icons of the Vision of Saint Sergius of Radonezh<sup>47</sup>, of Christ Pantokrator<sup>48</sup>, of Panagia Phaneromene of Tatarna (Παναγία Φανερωμένη Ταταρνώτισσα)<sup>49</sup>, and a pectoral panagiaron-encolpion<sup>50</sup>. Their iconography and style place them towards the end of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, which is roughly the same period that Arsenios's dispatch of gifts was planned and materialized. As a sidenote, it should be added that Arsenios donated a large number of Russian religious artifacts to Orthodox religious centers: Thessaly (Meteora and Dousiko), the Church of St. George of the Greeks in Venice, Mount Athos, Mount Sinai, and the Holy Land. His oblations are estimated to some fifty icons, other liturgical objects and illuminated manuscripts<sup>51</sup>.

The earliest dated heirloom of this group, and perhaps the earliest Russian object of the collection of Tatarna monastery as well, is a small icon of the Dormition of the Virgin, donated by Archimandrite Damaskinos in 1599 (Fig. 1). Its complex iconographical program and two dedicatory inscriptions present much interest<sup>52</sup>.

The icon's center is occupied by the Dormition of the Virgin, while two sets of buildings appear to the left and to the right from this scene. The Virgin, lying on her deathbed, is mourned by two groups of Apostles, the hierarchs Dionysius the Areopagite, Hierotheus of Athens, James the Just and the two weeping women, who stand at the far edges. The eleven Apostles are again depicted in the upper register standing as half-figures on nebula under the guidance of angels<sup>53</sup>. Christ is framed by a double *mandorla*, symbolic of his glory. The internal *man-*

46 The casket is no longer in the monastery's sacristy (Dimitrakopoulos, *Αρσένιος Ελασσόνος*, 137)

47 Koumoulidis, Deriziotis, Sdrolia, *Το Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, 134.

48 *Ibid.*, 134.

49 *Ibid.*, 134.

50 *Ibid.*, 134.

51 Dimitrakopoulos, *Αρσένιος Ελασσόνος*, 124–164, 221–232. Kissas, "A Russian Icon from Tatarna". Vocotopoulos, "Encore deux icônes", 167–170. Saenkova, Komashko, "The iconographic program", 73–88. Saenkova, "Ο Αρσένιος Ελασσόνος και τα αφιερώματά του", 73–76. Charchare, "Russian icons in the Greek diaspora communities", 200–202.

52 See cat. 1 in the appendix. Although this icon is regarded to be an offering to the Monastery of Tatarna, it should be noted that Kissas encountered it in 1974 in the church of Aroniada, a village in the region of Valtos (Aitolokarnania), and then in 1985, in the Church of Saint Athanasius in Amfilochia. (Kissas, "A Russian Icon", 261 (no. 1)).

53 Porfiriev, *Αποκριφικές сказания*, 270–279 and 292–293. Wratislaw-Mitrovič, Okunev, "La dormition de la Sainte Vierge", 134–174.

*dorla* is topped by a red cherub, while from the external blue *mandorla* emerge two angels holding candlesticks. He holds the Virgin's swaddled soul (*eidolon*), a detail characteristic of the sixteenth-century Russian painting<sup>54</sup>. What is more, the painter's rendering of the episode of the Jewish priest Jephonias, in the very foreground, constitutes an early seventeenth-century iconographical innovation. In this variation, Archangel Michael takes a left, and not right, step, while raising his sword to cut Jephonias's hands<sup>55</sup>. The combination of these two details points out to a transitional iconography, caught between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century.

Above the Dormition, the painter placed two scenes inspired by New Testament apocrypha: The Descent of Mary's Girdle to the Apostle Thomas, and the Metastasis of the Theotokos. In the first scene, the Virgin within an oval "glory" is about to drop her girdle (*zone*) down onto Apostle Thomas, while being carried to heaven by two angels. In the latter scene, on the icon's upper frame, we see a female figure swaddled in white and sitting on a throne, decorated with four lit candlesticks and palm trees. The figure makes a gesture of acceptance with her hands in front of her chest, while two Archangels bend their knees towards the throne. According to the apocryphal text attributed to Saint John the Theologian, the palm symbolizes the Tree of Life<sup>56</sup>. This composition can be perceived as a visualization of apocryphal texts related to the dogma of the Dormition of the Virgin, with or without Resurrection, and with Her soul appearing on the Tree of Life, where it unites with Her body after the Metastasis<sup>57</sup>.

The icon's frame features fourteen prophets and forefathers, who hold in their hands Marian symbols or *eileta*. According to the *encomia* of the feast composed by Saint John of Damascus (c. 675/6-749), these holy figures were present at the Dormition of the Virgin, together with the Apostles<sup>58</sup>.

The reverse side features two dedicatory inscriptions, a hymn and the Cross of Golgotha (Calvary) (Fig. 2). The artist renders the white cross and the Arma Christi (Λόγχη – Σπόγγος) against a red background. The Calvary (Κρανίου Τόπος) is exe-

54 From the beginning of the seventeenth century, Christ appears in Russian religious iconography to be holding the Virgin's soul with His left hand, while blessing with His right (Komashko, Saenkova, "О некоторых русских иконах", 244-246).

55 *Ibid.*, 244-246.

56 Mimouni, *Dormition et assumption de Marie*, 130. Van Esbroeck, "Les textes liturgiques sur l'Assomption", 269.

57 The scene is identified by Kissas as 'the winged spirit of the Virgin' (Kissas, "A Russian Icon", 263). However, it should be noted that the aforementioned article was written prior to the icon's conservation. For this theme, see Хынгopoulos, "Η πτερωτή ψυχή της Θεοτόκου", 1-12.

58 Kissas, "A Russian Icon", 267.

cuted as a terraced plinth over the buried skull of Adam. Asymmetrical scrolling vegetation emanates from the base, filling the whole of the interstice between the cross and the bordure. Although the upper board binding has perished, one can discern two birds, which most probably sat on the upper beam of the cross<sup>59</sup>. The composition is complemented by five apotropaic cryptograms ([ΙΣ ΧΣ] ΝΙ ΚΑ (Inσούς Χριστός Νικά) and others)<sup>60</sup>. Therefore, this is an allegory of the Cross of Golgotha as the Tree of Life and Paradise, which functions as an apotropaic symbol when read together with the cryptograms<sup>61</sup>. The Cross of Golgotha, paired with Arma Christi, appears in double-sided icons, which were particularly venerated in Moscow during this period, such as the miraculous icon of Our Lady of Vladimir, also known as the palladium of the Principality of Moscow<sup>62</sup>, and its sixteenth- and seventeenth-century copies<sup>63</sup>. A version of this representation is also found in the icon of enthroned Christ with Metropolitan Cyprian (c. 1336-1406) in the Church of the Dormition of the Virgin (Kremlin)<sup>64</sup>.

The icon's reverse side also features two inscriptions in verse (iambic dekasyllable), which are placed perimetrically on the frame, as well as a third inscription in the lower board binding<sup>65</sup>. The outer inscription, written in lowercase, records the patron. The inner inscription, written in uppercase, provides the hymnographical text relevant to the icon's main subject, namely the Dormition of the Virgin. Finally, the second dedicatory inscription on the lower board binding, again in lowercase, informs us about the transfer from Moscow to Tatarna Monastery.

Notably, the decoration of the icon's reverse side follows the same formula as in other icons gifted by Arsenios to the monasteries in Central Greece<sup>66</sup>, such as the icon of the Intercession of the Theotokos (1589)<sup>67</sup>, and of Our Lady of Vladimir (1592), both presented to Varlaam Monastery<sup>68</sup>, as well as an icon depicting thirty saints in bust (1579), presented to Dousiko Monastery<sup>69</sup>.

59 Kissas, "A Russian Icon", 264 (no. 11).

60 See cat. 1 in the appendix. On cryptograms see Rhoby, "Secret Messages?". Moutafon, "Typology and Semantics of Cryptograms", 49–75.

61 Walter, "ΙΣ ΧΣ ΝΙ ΚΑ.", 194. Moutsopoulos, "Θωράκιο βυζαντινής σαρκοφάγου". Karagianni, "Ο σταυρός στη βυζαντινή μνημειακή ζωγραφική", 161, 178. Rhoby, "Text as Art?", 265-283.

62 Vrouk, *Государственная Третьяковская галерея. Каталог собрания*, cat. 1 (O. Korina).

63 Bourenkova *et al.*, *Симон Ушаков — царский изограф*, cat. 1 (E. Gladysheva).

64 Tolstaya, *Иконы Успенского собора Московского Кремля.*, cat. 2 (N. Markina).

65 See cat. 1 in the appendix.

66 Preobrazhenskii, "Russian Images of Greek Donor", 51-72.

67 *Θρησκευτική Τέχνη. Από τη Ρωσία στην Ελλάδα*, cat. 10 (K. Matzana, H. Tsimpida)

68 Dimitrakopoulos, *Αρσένιος Ελασσόνος*, 228.

69 *Ibid.*, 227.



1. The Dormition of the Virgin, 37 x 31 cm, egg tempera on wood, Moscow, 1599.  
Photographer: Vasilis Tsionis © Tatama Monastery



2. Reverse side. Photographer: Vasilis Tsionis © Tatarna Monastery

In any case, the complex iconographical program of the Dormition suggests a special commission by a cultured patron<sup>70</sup>. Thus, it is worth considering the impact that Damaskinos's sojourn in Moscow (between 1594 and 1602) had on his spiritual interests and artistic taste<sup>71</sup>.

The only icon in the Tatarna sacristy safely attributed to Arsenios by a dedicatory inscription is the Descent into Hades (H εἰς Ἄδου Κάθοδος) (Figs. 3 & 4)<sup>72</sup>. This can be identified as the silver-gilt icon (εἰκόνισμα ἀργυρόχρυσο τῆς Ἀναστάσεως) mentioned in the note of Arsenios<sup>73</sup>, assuming that its silver and gold revetment perished later in time. The scene of the Descent into Hades is based on the apocryphal evangeliary of Nicodemus and constitutes a symbolic representation of the Resurrection of Christ<sup>74</sup>. Christ dominates the symmetrical composition, enclosed in a mandorla with gold rays ("glory") and against a background of rock mountains. The groups of the Righteous (Δικαῖοι) emerge out of the caves. Above Christ, two facing angels hold symbols of the Passion, the Golgotha Cross and the Holy Lance. Christ stands on the broken gates of Hell and turns to the left to raise the kneeling figures of Adam with his right hand and Eve with his left hand. Behind Adam stands Saint John the Baptist with an *eiletos* in his hand, pointing Christ to the Apostles. On the other side of the icon, Prophets David and Solomon stand behind Eva, accompanied by other Old Testament figures. Below Christ are the broken gates of Hell, revealing scattered locks, keys and chains, as well as an image of Hades-Satan. An angel holding a hammer forges the chains of Hades-Satan. Such detailed depiction of the Underworld was a prevalent trend in Russian iconography during the second half of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century<sup>75</sup>.

70 The extensive inscription on the icon's reverse side speaks of his personality (Kissas, "A Russian Icon". Poulitsas, "Ἐπιγραφαί, Ενθυμήσεις και Σιγίλλια", 270 (cat. 64)).

71 Gratsiou, *Die dekorierten Handschriften*, 145-146. Kissas, "A Russian Icon from Tatarna", 268.

72 ἄρχιεπίσκοπος ἐλάσσονας καί ἀρχαγγέλων Ἀρσένιος στελῶ τό παρόν εἰκόνισμα τοῦ [κυρίου] ἤμων (ἠησο)υ χ(ριστο)υ εἰς τήν σεβασμίαν καί ἱεράν μονήν [τῆς τῆς πανάγγελουθε(στο)κου καί ἀειπαρθένου μαρίας, τήν ] πλησίον Τατάρνας] ἐκ τῆς μεγαλοπόλεως μοσχοβίας εἰς [ψυχικήν αὐτοῦ] σωτηρίαν: Ἐτει .ζρ[ί] μηνί ἀπριλίῳ, (ινδικτιόνος)ιε´. 1602.. (Poulitsas, "Ἐπιγραφαί, Ενθυμήσεις και Σιγίλλια", 270 (cat. 66)). See cat. 2 in the appendix.

73 Dimitrakopoulos, *Ἀρσένιος Ἐλασσόνος*, 139 and 226.

74 See Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Évangile*, 517-540. Χυγγοπουλος, "Ο ὕμνολογικός εἰκονογραφικός τύπος", 113-129. Lange, *Die Auferstehung*. Radovanović, "Les représentations rares", 34-37. Bagatti, "L'ikonografia dell' Anastasis", 239-272. Gouma-Peterson, "A Byzantine Anastasis Icon", 48-61. Kartsonis 1986. Smirnova, "Une icône de la Descente aux Limbes", 54-59. Deligian-ni-Dori, "Παλαιολόγια εἰκονογραφία", 399. Koukiaris, "Οι ανεπίγραφοι ανιστάμενοι", 305-318. Kalafati, "Κρητική εἰκόνα της Εἰς Ἄδου Καθόδου", 173-180. Cf. Varpeiades, *Περί της εν Ἀθω Κρητικής ζωγραφικής*, 183-189.

75 Samoylova, "Икона «Воскресение – Сошествие во ад»", 256-280. Saenkova, "Новые сюжеты в изображении преисподней в иконографии Воскресения Сошествия во ад", 60-74.

Despite the absence of dedicatory inscriptions, the icons of Christ Pantokrator (The Savior “Oplecnii” / Εἰς τὸν ὦμον) and of the Vision of Saint Sergius of Radonezh, can still be associated with Arsenios’s oblation on iconographic and stylistic grounds<sup>76</sup>. These could be gifts of the clerics who participated in the same expedition or other unknown donors.

The first is a small, recessed icon of a frontal bust of Christ Pantokrator, who is portrayed as half-figure (Fig. 5). His cruciform halo bears the inscription Ο ΩΝ (He who is)<sup>77</sup>. This is an older Christological type known as the Savior “Oplecnii” (Εἰς τὸν ὦμον)<sup>78</sup>. Its calligraphic inscriptions, rendered in gold, have a decorative effect<sup>79</sup>.

Although one would expect that the identification of the specific type would be a straightforward issue, the icon has been given vastly different interpretations. Panos Vasileiou, one of the pioneering scholars in the history of the monastery who worked during the 1960s and 1970s, gave to the unsigned icon a Byzantine attribution, expressing the certainty that it belonged to the 1555 *katholikon*<sup>80</sup>. On the other hand, Archimandrite Dositheos, the current hegumen of the monastery, mentions the icon first as a fifteenth-century Russian icon of the Saint Mandyllion<sup>81</sup>, and then, in a more recent publication, as a sixteenth-century Russian icon of Jesus Christ the Lifegiver (Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἡ Πάντων Ζωή)<sup>82</sup>. The most recent monograph on the monastery’s history, which includes a catalogue of the sacristy as well, identifies the theme as the Saint Mandyllion, while proposing a seventeenth-century dating<sup>83</sup>. Overall, one should not undermine the importance of this discussion by interpreting these misidentifications as mere mistakes. They could be manifestations of a process of cultural translation, during which an imported object’s familiarity may protect its identity from radical transformation, leading to its moderate modification instead.

76 Dimitrakopoulos, *Αρσένιος Ελασσόνος*, 139 and 226.

77 See cat. 3 in the appendix.

78 Sixteenth- to seventeenth-century Russian icons of the Savior “Oplecnii” are also preserved in Saint Catherine’s Monastery of Sinai. For the iconographic theme see Tolstaya, *Иконы Успенского собора*, cat. 6 (E. Ostashenko). Saenkova *et al.*, *Зряце пречистыя образы*, cat. 10 (E. Saenkova). Komashko *et al.*, *Русские иконы Синая*, cat. 40 (E. Saenkova).

79 See cat. 3 in the appendix.

80 ‘...την μικρή εικονίτσα του Χριστού αξιόλογο έργο βυζαντινής τέχνης χωρίς όνομα ζωγράφου και χρονολογία, που ασφαλώς προέρχεται από το ναό του 1555...’ (Vasileiou, *Ενθυμήσεις, Επιγραφές κι ένα Σιγίλλιο*, fig. 16 in appendix IV. *Idem*, *Το μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, 45. Dimitrakopoulos, *Αρσένιος Ελασσόνος*, 139 and 226).

81 Dositheos, *Προσκύνημα*.

82 *Idem*, *Ιερόν Τρίπτυχον*, 88.

83 Koumoulidis, Deriziotis, Sdrolia, *Το Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, 134.



3. The Descent into Hades (Εἰς Ἄδου Κάθοδος), 28 x 32 cm, egg tempera on wood, Moscow, 1602.

Photographer: Vasilis Tsionis © Tatama Monastery



4. Reverse side. Photographer: Vasilis Tsionis © Tatarna Monastery



5. Christ Pantokrator (Our Savior "Oplecnii" / Εἰς τὸν ὄμρον), 26 x 31 cm, egg tempera on wood, Moscow, mid-sixteenth century. Photographer: Vasilis Tsionis © Tatama Monastery

To continue, the Vision of Saint Sergius of Radonezh is a prime example of a widely disseminated icon-heirloom (Fig. 7). It was customarily offered as a blessing and souvenir to pilgrims in the Trinity Lavra of Saint Sergius<sup>84</sup>. As one would expect, the icons were massively produced for the needs of the Lavra in the monastic workshop and the surrounding villages. They were either sold or offered, providing steady income to the monks.

The Lavra, founded by the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh (1314-1392), the patron-saint of Muscovy and all Russia since 1422, was the most important pilgrimage in Russia since the mid-fifteenth century. Travelers to Moscow usually included in their schedule a visit to the monastery, in order to pay their respects to the city's patron saint<sup>85</sup>. The effect of this customary visit is probably traceable in the wide dispersal of icons depicting "The Vision of the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh" (The Apparition of the Mother of God to Saint Sergius of Radonezh) outside Russia, as for example in Dousiko Monastery, the Metropolis of Tricca and Stagoi<sup>86</sup>, Saint Catherine's Monastery of Sinai<sup>87</sup>. Their similarity in style and manufacture, as well as their dating (second half of the sixteenth-first half of the seventeenth century), suggest they were produced in the same workshop.

This iconographic theme is known as "The Vision of Saint Sergius of Radonezh" or "The Apparition of the Mother of God to Saint Sergius of Radonezh". It combines an episode from the saint's *Life*, which is interpreted as a moment of epiphany, with the addition of symbolical elements<sup>88</sup>. Its importance lies in the fact that already in the mid-fifteenth century this was the only case that an episode that had been detracted as an independent scene from the saint's iconographical cycle.

The icon's center is occupied by the Virgin's meeting with Sergius and Nikon of Radonezh (1355-1426). She appears holding an abbatial staff and is accompanied by Apostles Peter and John. The two Russian saints are turned towards the Virgin. Saint Sergius holds both his hands steady in supplication. Nikon supplicates in the same way with his left hand, but holds an *eiletton* in his right hand. The scene

84 Koumoulidis, Deriziotis, Sdrolia, *Το Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, cat. 134, fig. on page 53. Tchesnokova, *Χριστιανικὸς ὏στος ἠ Ρωσσία*, 91-115. *Idem*, "Ἡ Διάδοση των Ρωσικῶν εἰκόνων στην Ορθόδοξη Ἀνατολή", 19-20.

85 *Idem*, *Χριστιανικὸς ὏στος ἠ Ρωσσία*, 100.

86 Dimitrakopoulos, *Ἀρσένιος Ἐλασσόνος*, 231-232. *Θρησκευτικὴ τέχνη ἀπὸ τη Ρωσία στην Ελλάδα*, cat. 12 (K. Mantzana, E. Tsimpida). Mantzana, "Ἐικόνες ἐπωνύμων καὶ ανωνύμων ζωγράφων", 72-73.

87 Komashko *et al.*, *Русские иконы Синая*, cat. 7 (E. Saenkova), cat. 27 (N. Komashko)

88 Lifshits, "Иконография Явления Богоматери преподобному", 79-94. Преображенский, "Ранние изображения преподобного Сергия в Троице-Сергиевом монастыре", 76-85. Gusseva, "Особенности сложения иконографии 'Сергиева видения'", 120-138. Smirnova, *Icone Russe, Collezione Banca Intesa*, cat. 14 (E. Smirnova)



7. The Vision of the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh, 24 x 30 cm, egg tempera on wood, The Holy Trinity – Saint Sergius Lavra, Sergiyev Posad, late sixteenth century.

Photographer: Vasilis Tsionis © Tatama Monastery

takes place in front of a building complex, which symbolically represents the Trinity Lavra. The red textile canopy, hanging from the roofs of the facing buildings, is a detail revealing the scene as an epiphany<sup>89</sup>. Only a few letters from the standard identifying inscription remain<sup>90</sup>.

New iconographical elements further complement the scene<sup>91</sup>. One of them is the replacement of Micheas with the Venerable Nikon of Radonezh. This detail refers to the saint's *Life* and normally appears in his biographical icons, showing his successor in the abbotship of the monastery. After Nikon's canonization in 1547 and the erection of a small chapel on his relics, adjacent to the *katholikon*, the need for the dissemination of his cult apparently became more pressing. Thus, this theme was created in order to reinforce the continuity of sainthood in the monastery and present its spiritual genealogy<sup>92</sup>.

The second symbolic element is the presentation of the patron of Lavra, the Holy Trinity, floating within a stylized grey cloud over the canopy, a detail borrowed from the iconography of the Hospitality of Abraham (Φιλοξενία του Ἀβραάμ)<sup>93</sup>. Overall, the iconography of "The Apparition of the Mother of God to Saint Sergius of Radonezh" promotes the notion of the Virgin as a protector of Muscovy, as well as the veneration of its national saints, such as Sergius of Radonezh and his disciple Nikon.

The holdings of the Tatarna monastery include two more roughly contemporary Russian artifacts: a pectoral panagiaron-encolpion and the icon of the Panagia Phaneromene of Tatarna (Παναγία Φανερωμένη Ταταρνιώτισσα). The intricate decoration of their silver revetments, decorated with enamels and semi-precious stones, as well as their style, allow us to date them somewhere between the end of the sixteenth and the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

89 Papastavrou, "Le voile, symbole de l'Incarnation".

90 See cat. 4 in the appendix.

91 The text referring to the episode goes in Greek as follows: "Ο Άγιος βγήκε γρήγορα από τὸ κελλί του στὸν προθάλαμο, ὅπου τὸν περιέβαλε ἕνα φῶς, πρὸ λαμπρὸ καὶ ἀπὸ τὸν ἥλιο. Αἰξιώθηκε νὰ δῆ ὀλοφύτεινη τὴν Μητέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ συνοδευόμενη ἀπὸ τὸν Ἀπόστολο Πέτρο καὶ τὸν Εὐαγγελιστὴ Ἰωάννη. Μὴ μπορώντας νὰ ἀντέξει τὴν ἐκτυφλωτικὴ λαμπρότητα τοῦ ὀράματος, ὁ Ὅσιος ἔπεσε καταγῆς. Ἡ Ὑπεραγία Θεοτόκος ἔσκυψε, τὸν ἄγγιξε μὲ τὰ χέρια της καὶ τοῦ εἶπε: -Μὴ φοβάσαι ἐκλεκτέ μου! Ἦλθα νὰ σέ ἐπισκεφτώ, γιατί ἄκουσα τίς προσευχές πού κάνεις γιὰ τὸ μοναστήρι καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς. Μὴ λυπάσαι καὶ μὴν ἀνησυχεῖς λοιπὸν γιὰ τὴν μονὴ αὐτῆ. Ἀπὸ τώρα καὶ στὸ ἐξῆς θὰ ἔχει κάθε εὐλογία. Δὲν θὰ παύσω νὰ φροντίζω γιὰ τὸν τόπο αὐτὸ καὶ τώρα πού ζῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἐκδημία σου..." (I. M. Παρακλήτου Ὁρωποῦ Ἀττικῆς)

92 Melnik, "Практики почитания", 93-99.

93 On The Hospitality of Abraham see Kuyumdzhieva, *Ликът на Бога*, 161-162. Mouriki, "Η παράσταση της Φιλοξενίας του Αβραάμ. Cf. Kalopissi-Verti, *Die Kirche der Hagia Triada*, 45, 169-177. Uliyanov, *Φιλοксения Авраама*, 216-232. Koukiaris, *Τα θαύματα-Εμφανίσεις των αγγέλων και αρχαγγέλων*, 106-110. *Το Ημέτερο Κάλλος*, cat. 20 (K. M. Vapheides).

The pectoral panagiaron-encolpion is one of the most splendid artifacts in the sacristy, notable for its excellent craftsmanship (Figs. 9-10)<sup>94</sup>. Already since the fifteenth century, such ecclesiastical artifacts were made for dignitaries and the high clergy of the Orthodox Church<sup>95</sup>. A similar pectoral panagiaron-encolpion, also a gift by Arsenios, is preserved at the Museum of the Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice<sup>96</sup>.

The panagiaron-encolpion consists of two ivory medallions intricately carved in relief and mounted with silver and gilt-silver. The medallions' filigree metal revetment is inlaid with green and blue enamels, which bring out the vegetal pattern. It should be noted that this technique is thought to have been transmitted to Russia through Western Europe. The use of semi-precious stones on the external facets provides an extra layer of luxury. Finally, the metal suspension eyelet bears on the one side an engraved cherub and on the other, the Saint Mandylion carved in relief.

The iconographical program of the internal facets combines the representation of the Virgin of the Sign<sup>97</sup>, accompanied by celestial powers and twelve prophets within roundels<sup>98</sup>, with the image of the Holy Trinity (The Hospitality of Abraham), accompanied by the Apostles within roundels (Fig. 10). The center of the right external facet is occupied by a larger medallion with the Three Hierarchs. This is framed by twelve smaller medallions which feature an array of saints, hierarchs, martyrs and venerables depicted as half-figures: Saint Athanasius, Saint Nikolaos the Wonderworker, Saints George and Demetrius, the metropolitans of Moscow Alexius, Peter, Jonah and Cyprian, the great martyrs Georgios and Demetrios, Sergius and Nikon of Radonezh, Zosima (d. 1478) and Savvaty Solovetsky (d. 1435) (Fig. 9). The left external facet's center is occupied by a larger medallion with the Crucifixion. This is framed by ten smaller roundels which carry evangelical scenes: the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, the Baptism, the Raising of Lazarus, the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, the Transfiguration, the Resurrection (The Descent of Christ into Hades), The Ascension of Christ and the Dormition of the Virgin.

The internal facets are inscribed with two hymnological extracts in perfectly correct Greek (Fig. 10). Surprisingly, quite a few Cyrillic inscriptions around the

94 Koumoulidis, Deriziotis, Sdrolia, *Το Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, 140-141.

95 Oikonomaki-Papadopoulou, *Εκκλησιαστικά αργυρά*, 13. Drpić, "Notes on Byzantine Panagiarion", 54. Liakos, "Παρατηρήσεις σε παναγίαρια", 427-428.

96 Kazanaki-Lappa, *Ελληνικό Ινστιτούτο. Οδηγός του Μουσείου*, 129.

97 In this type the Virgin Orans is portrayed in bust holding the Christ Child in front of her chest.

98 This is the scene Άνωθεν οι Προφήται ('Prophets from Above').

individual saints and scenes have many spelling variations<sup>99</sup>. Considering this detail, one can assume that the artisan reproduced the Greek inscriptions as a decorative element, slavishly copying them from a written text, while for the Slavonic inscriptions he made use of his own orthography.

Around the Virgin appears, in consistent lettering, the second part of the sublime *megalynarion* and *theotokion Axion Estin*<sup>100</sup>. Respectively, around the representation of the Holy Trinity is the *Troparion* of Pentecost<sup>101</sup>.

It comes as no surprise that the iconographic program of the pectoral panagiaron's carved decoration links the Marian scene 'the Prophets above' (Ἀνωθεν οἱ Προφῆται) with the Hospitality of Abraham on the internal facets, and the Crucifixion with the Three Hierarchs on the external facets<sup>102</sup>. A Russian pectoral panagiaron-encolpion at the Benaki Museum presents the same iconography<sup>103</sup>. Nevertheless, the inclusion of the seven saintly Hierarchs of the Russian Church in the decoration is peculiar. This could again be attributed to the effort of the Russian Church to promote its national saints towards the mid-sixteenth century. This effort reaches its apogee when, under the auspices of the Metropolitan of Moscow Macarius (1482-1563), the two synods of 1547 and 1549 proceeded with an impressive number of canonizations<sup>104</sup>. The year 1549 seems to be the terminus post quem for the manufacture of the Benaki Museum pectoral panagiaron, especially considering that it features Saint Cyril of Beloozero (1337-1427) and the Venerable Stephen of Perm (1340-1396), who were both canonized in the synods of 1547 and 1549.

It may also be reasonable to assume that these pectoral panagiaria-encolpia were a special category of objects: they could have been especially ordered as gifts to foreign clergymen, as a strategy of spreading the word on the new national saints of the Russia. After all, the Russian Church laid claim to its independence from the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1589, when the bishop of Moscow took the title of patriarch.

99 I am thankful to my colleague Daria Rash for drawing my attention to this detail. See cat. 5 in the appendix.

100 See cat. 5 in the appendix.

101 See cat. 5 in the appendix. Both hymnological texts accompany the ritual raising of the bread (Elevation) honoring the Virgin. See Kondakov, *Памятники Афона*, 231. Yiannias, "The Elevation of the Panaghia", 231-232.

102 Drpić, "Notes on Byzantine Panagiaria", 51-52. *Θησαυροί του Αγίου Όρους*, cats. 9.8, 9.9 (A. Lovredou-Tsigarida).

103 *Θρησκευτική Τέχνη. Από τη Ρωσία στην Ελλάδα*, cat. 20 (Υ. Βουχεβα).

104 Golubinskii, *История канонизации святых в Русской Церкви*, 92-108.



9. Pectoral panagiaron-encolpion (exterior side), w. 38 cm, d. 12.5 cm, ivory, silver, filigree with blue and green enamels and semi-precious stones, Moscow (?), late sixteenth century.

Photographer: Vasilis Tsionis © Tatarna Monastery



10. Interior side.

Photographer:

Vasilis Tsionis © Tatarna Monastery

Finally, it seems possible that the most venerated icon of the monastery, the “Revealed” Virgin of Tatarna (Παναγία Φανερωμένη Ταταρνιώτισσα), arrived with the same shipment of gifts (Fig. 11)<sup>105</sup>. It rests on a shrine in the monastery’s *katholikon*, placed inside of a later case, which comes from an old *prothesis* (Table of Oblation)<sup>106</sup>. Oil lamps and votive offerings hang in front of the icon, which is considered to be miraculous.

This small icon is almost completely covered by an impressive silver revetment. Its ornate filigree develops an intricate net of stylized vegetation, thoroughly inlaid with navy blue, turquoise and pastel green enamels. The Virgin’s halo and external crown are adorned with inlaid semi-precious stones and pearls. It is unfortunate that the wear of the faces’ painting prevents us from studying the icon’s overall style. Even so, its high quality is evident in the fine execution of the Virgin’s garment (*maphorion*), which is richly decorated with golden fringes. The same attentiveness to detail is observed in the chrysography in Christ’s *himation*. The decoration of revetment, especially the motifs, find parallels in other published objects of religious art, such as the early seventeenth-century Theotokos of Tikhvin in Venice’s Hellenic Institute<sup>107</sup>, the late sixteenth-century Our Lady of Kazan, the 1594 Saint Nikolaos, made in the royal workshops of Kremlin,<sup>108</sup> and the seventeenth-century Mother of God Kazanskaya in the British Museum<sup>109</sup>. The artistic affinities shared by these works provide the ground for a late sixteenth- to early seventeenth-century dating of the Tatarna icon.

### III. CLOSING REMARKS

The body of objects discussed in this article is of great interest, especially since it is one of the relatively few ensembles of its kind that remains in its original context. It offers the possibility of study on a micro scale of a much wider, complex, and enduring phenomenon. Regarding Ottoman Balkans, the continuous flow of a variety of Russian religious artefacts, from icons, liturgi-

105 Konstantinidi, “Η Αχειροποίητος-Φανερωμένη”.

106 Koumoulidis, Deriziotis, Sdrolia, *Το Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας*, 134.

107 Kazanaki-Lappa, *Οδηγός του Μουσείου*, 138. Charchare. *Ρώσικα πολιτιστικά αγαθά στο Ελληνικό Ινστιτούτο της Βενετίας*, fig. 2.

108 The icons of Our Lady of Kazan and Saint Nikolaos are both preserved at the sacristy of the Trinity Lavra of Saint Sergei (Vorontsova, Tcherkashina, Shitova, *Ριζνιца*, 209 and 250). Also see the triptych with Our Lady of Vladimir, and the icon of Our Lady of Vladimir in the Prokhorov collection (Komashko, Gnutova, *Древности из собрания*, 2-4).

109 Bobrov, *A Catalogue of the Russian Icons*, cat. 27.



11. Panagia Phaneromeni of Tatama (Παναγία Φανερωμένη Ταταρνιώτισσα), 29 x 23 cm, egg tempera on wood, silver, filigree with blue and green enamels, semi-precious stones, Moscow (?), late sixteenth-first quarter of seventeenth century.

Photographer: Vasilis Tsionis © Tatama Monastery

cal utensils, and veils, to vestments, books, and objects of private piety, lasted from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century. These artefacts often arrived as official gifts, through a variety of customs: e.g., the acts of personal devotion by the tsars, the offerings sent by the state and ecclesiastical authorities to religious or lay institutions in the Balkans, or the officially sanctioned alms collection missions. What is more, many of these objects arrived as private donations, which were made by the Russian clergy and laity, as well as the Greeks and other Balkan people who lived and worked in Russia. At the same time, the role of pilgrimage and trade should also be considered as alternative channels through which these objects were disseminated. Importantly, their integration into the local visual culture is attested by the fact that they have been worshipped and used not only in public spaces, such as churches and monasteries, but also in the private. E.g., Russian icons were not a rarity in Greek households until relatively recently. This circumstance provides grounds for substantiated interpretations both of the motives behind their donations and of their subsequent reception in the new cultural environment. In their long history, these artifacts acquire various interrelated religious, ideological, political, and aesthetic meanings, values and uses.

The rise of Russia's prestige in the Orthodox world after the Fall of Constantinople and the emergence of the idea of "Moscow as the Third Rome" resulted in the Russian Tsar's de facto transformation into a defender of Orthodoxy, a figure to whom every Orthodox could at least in theory petition for help and support. As early as the sixteenth century, the Russian Tsar and higher clergy assumed the role of protector, sending regular donations and offering alms to the needy Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman Empire. Indicative of the institutionalization of this practice was the formation of a state-regulated and strictly hierarchical system for the distribution of alms to the Greeks, Serbs, Moldavians, Wallachians, or Bulgarians who request Moscow's financial aid<sup>110</sup>.

At a first glance, these oblations in the newly founded Monastery of the Virgin of Tatarna seem to be pious oblations by two Greek clergymen, the Archbishop Arsenios of Elassona and Archimandrite of the Holy Sepulcher Damaskinos. But the wider historical context may offer another reading as well. First, the donation coincides with the Time of Troubles (1598–1613), an era of political instability and deep economic crisis for Russia. However, the published official

<sup>110</sup> Karterev, *Характер отношений России к православному Востоку*, 103-145. Chrysochoidis, "Ἀθῶς καὶ Ῥωσία", 267– 282. Stolyarova, *Обмен дарами*, 79– 89. Tchentsova, *Ктиторство и царский титул*, 17, 21. Smirnova, "Russian Icons, Iconographers and Iconographic Models", 29-35.

state Acts of the period mention that the presentation of portable religious artifacts to the Greek clergymen visiting Moscow continued uninterrupted, following the established practice<sup>111</sup>. According to these documents, icons offered to Greek hierarchs had to reproduce common Christian themes, such as the Holy Trinity, the Virgin with the Child, Christ Pantocrator, or important Russian imagery and saints. As we have seen, the Russian religious artifacts offered to the Tatarna Monastery fulfill these criteria and they have been accepted and worshipped by the monastic community continuously for a long period of time. Obviously, they were originally intended for use in a Grecophone context, as may be inferred by the use of the Old Church Slavonic for the iconographic inscriptions and of Greek for the hymnographic and dedicatory inscriptions. Moreover, it seems important to observe that within the new environment the objects' original identity was lost or modified. The misreading of the iconographic type of Christ Pantokrator is only one example of this multifaceted process. At the same time, the naturalization of the Virgin Tatarniotissa, to such a point that it became the monastery's most venerated icon, indicates how powerful the specific dynamic could be.

Thus, Russian donations to Tatarna are distinguished not only by their refined craftsmanship, but also by their status as a historical source, documenting the contacts between local ecclesiastical actors in the Ottoman Balkans and prominent clergymen from the Patriarchates of Russia and Jerusalem. The inscriptions on objects as well as other textual sources offer the rare opportunity to study these gifts in comparative perspective and in the wider context of the relations between Russia and the Orthodox patriarchates of the East. Finally, the presence of other objects of Russian manufacture in the Tatarna collection, such as the largely unpublished eighteenth- and nineteenth-century icons, constitute an important testimony for the continuing contacts of between the monastery and Russia, well beyond the time of Arsenios.

<sup>111</sup> Rozhdestvenskii, *Акты времен Лжедмитрия I–го*, 17. Komashko *et al.*, *Русские иконы Синая*, 23–26, 53–72. Chesnokova, "Written sources on Russian icons of the 17th century", 222–224.

APPENDIX: INSCRIPTIONS<sup>112</sup>

Daria Resh

## 1. Icon of the Dormition of the Virgin

Front side

In the composition

оу̑п̑ени̑е̑ пр̑е̑с̑ѣ̑те̑(и)̑ (в)̑ѣ̑ы̑

Uspenie pres(via)te(i) B(ogorodi)tsy *Dormition of the most holy Theotokos*

х̑ер̑у̑[в]им̑ъ

Kheru[v]im

A cherub

м̑ѣ̑ ѡ̑ѣ̑

M(ete)r Th(eo)u

The Mother of God

ї̑ѡ̑ков̑ъ

Iiakov

St. Jacob

[Д]е̑они̑си̑[ї̑]

[D]eonisi[i]

St. Dionysius

ї̑ѡ̑ков̑[ъ] в̑ѣ̑.ѡ̑[оло]м̑е̑ї̑ л̑ѡ̑ка

Iiakov, Varf[olo]mei, Luka

*James, Bartholomew, Luke*

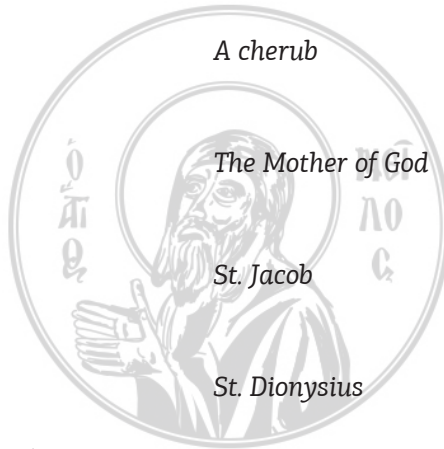
[Ф]или̑п̑ъ [ї̑]ѡ̑н̑ п̑ет̑[ръ]

[F]ilip, [I]oan, Pet[r]

*Philip, John, Peter*

ѡ̑ма̑ ан̑др̑[ей]̑ сим̑он̑ъ

Foma Andrei Simon

*Thomas, Andrew, Simon*

<sup>112</sup> A note on the principles of this edition. For Slavic inscriptions, I provide an exact transcription in Old Slavonic alphabet, a Latin transliteration, and an English translation. For Greek inscriptions, only English translation is provided. For the standard abbreviations of Jesus Christ and Mother of God, there are given only transcriptions and their English equivalents (no transliteration).

павѣ мѣднѣи [м]ѣкѣ  
Pavel, Matfi(i), [M]a(r)k

Paul, Matthew, Mark

*On the frame*  
*Up horizontally:*

свѣі іѡаннѣ  
Sv(iaty)i Ioann

St. John the Prodigios

свѣі семѡнѣ бѣопрѡимецѣ  
Sv(iaty)i Semion B(o)gopriimets

St. Symeon the God-Receiver

*Vertically left:*

іакѡѡ

Iakov

Patriarch Jacob

давѣ

Davyd

King David

[Д]анило

[D]anilo

Prophet Daniel

[іезекі]илѣ

[Iezeki]il

Prophet Ezekeil

моу[ѡсеі]

Mo[ysei]

Prophet Moses

*Vertically right:*

[с]ѡл[ѡмо]нѣ

[S]ol[omo]n

King Solomon

іс[ѡіа]

Is[ai]a

Prophet Isaiah

гедѡонѣ

Gedeon

Prophet Gideon

[ѡ]сіа

[O]sia

Prophet Hosea

авд[кѡмѣ]

Ava[kum]

Prophet Habakkuk

*Bottom horizontally:*

закхаріа

Zakhariia

Prophet Zechariah



*Reverse side**Cryptograms*<sup>113</sup>

ΙΣ ΧΣ ΝΙ ΚΑ Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς Χ(ριστὸ)ς Νικᾷ *Jesus Christ Conquers*

Ε.Ε.Ε.Ε. Ε(ὔρηνα) ε(ὔρημα) ἐ(κ Θεοῦ) Ἐ(λένη) *Helen found a find from God*  
 α.π.μ.σ. Ἀ(δὰμ) Π(επτωκῶς) Μ(ετέστη) Στ(αυρῶ), *the fallen Adam was risen*  
 by the cross; or Ἀ(ρχή) Π(ίστεως) Μ(αρτύρων) Στ(αυρός), *Cross is the*  
*foundation of the martyrs' faith*

Φ.Χ.Φ.Π. Φ(ῶς) Χ(ριστοῦ) Φ(αίει) Π(ᾶσι) *the light of Christ illuminates all*

Τ.Κ.Π.Γ. Τ(όπος) Κ(ρανίου) Π(αράδεισος) Γ(έγονε) *The Place of a Skull be-*  
*came Paradise*

Χ.Χ.Χ.Χ. Χ(ριστὸς) Χ(ριστιανοῖς) Χ(άριν) Χ(αρίζει) *Christ Grants his Grace to*  
*Christians*

*Dedicatory inscription on the inner rim (in lowercase):*<sup>114</sup>

‡ Θεοτόκου κοίμῃσιν ἐκ πόθου νέμω / [σὺν προ]φήταις ἅμα τε καὶ ἀποστόλοις /  
 [ταπει]νὸς Δαμασκηνὸς ἀρχιμανδρίτης / [τοῦ παν]αγίου τάφου τε, τοῦ ζωοδότου.<sup>115</sup>

καί om. Kissas | τε om. Kissas

I, the humble Damaskenos, archimandrite of the all-holy and life-giving Sepulcher, grant with my longing the Dormition of the Theotokos, together with the prophets and the apostles

*Inscription on the inner rim (in uppercase)*

Τῆς πανάγνου κοίμῃσιν ἀν[υμνεῖ] πᾶν γένος / [σὺν ἀγγέ]λοις ᾄδωσιν ὕμνον ἐκ πόθου

113 Kissas, "A Russian Icon from Tatarna", 264

114 This inscription is in twelvesyllable verse.

115 Cf. *ibid.*, 264

/ «χαῖρε» ἀνακράζοντες «Μήτηρ τοῦ Λόγου / [τοῦ] τὰ πάντα φέροντος νεύματι θεῷ»<sup>116</sup>

ἄδουσιν recogn. Kissas

Every creature sings the Dormition of the Immaculate Virgin, together with the angels they chant the hymn with longing and exclaim “Hail, Mother of the Word who carries everything by His divine will.”

*Dedicatory inscription on the lower binding*

«Ταπεινὸς ἀρχιμ[ανδρίτης τοῦ παναγίου καὶ] ζωοδόχου τάφου τοῦ Κ(υρίου) ἡμῶν Ἰ(ησοῦ) Χ(ριστοῦ) // Δαμασκηνὸς ἱερομόναχος στέλλω τὸ παρὸν ἅγιον εἰκόνημα, εἰς τὴν σεβάσμιαν [σταυροπηγια]κὴν μονὴν ἐν τῇ Τετάρνῃ, εἰς τὸ γεννέσιον τῆς Παναγνοῦ καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας // [ἡ] ὁποία μονὴ μεγάλη καὶ θαυμαστὴ σώζεται μέχρι σήμερον, ἐν τῇ Λι[τ]ζᾷ καὶ Ἀγράφῳ] // ἐπαρχίας. Ἐκ τῆς μεγαλοπόλεως Μοσχο[βί]ας τῆς Ῥωσίας ἐπὶ τῆς Βασιλείας τοῦ [εὐ]//σεβεστάτου καὶ αὐτοκράτορος βασιλέως [Μπα]ρίσου Θεδωροβίτζη. Ἐν ἔτει ΖΡΖ [=1599]...»].<sup>117</sup>

ἡμῶν] ὑμῶν Kissas || ἅγιον] ἱερόν Kissas || Μπαρίσου] Μπαρουσίου Kissas

I, the humble Damaskenos, archimandrite of the all-holy and life-giving Sepulcher of our Lord Jesus Christ, send this holy icon to the honorable stauropegial monastery of the Nativity of the Immaculate and Evervirgin Mary in Tatarna; this great and marvelous monastery survives until our days in the province of Litza and Agrapha. From the great city of Moscow in Russia, during the reign of the most pious emperor tzar Boris Fedorovitch, in the year 1599.

## 2. Icon with the Descent into Hades

*Front side*

ВОСКРЕСЕНИЕ Г НАШЕГО ІСА ХІТА

*The Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ*

Voskresenie G(o)s(poda) nashego Is(u)sa Kh(ri)sta

<sup>116</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 265

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 265

ⲁⲘⲗⲏ ⲓϥ̅ ϭ̅	Ang(e)li Gospodni	<i>Angels of the Lord Jesus Christ</i>
ϫ̅ ⲱⲏ		<i>He who is</i>
ⲓⲱⲁ	Ioan	<i>John the Theologian</i>

Reverse side

«Α[ρ]χιεπίσκοπος Ἐλασσόνος καὶ τῶν Ἀρχαγγέλων  
Ἀρσένιος· στέλλω τὸ παρὸν ἄγ(ιον) εἰκόνημα [τοῦ / Κυρίου  
ἡμῶν Ἰ(ησοῦ) Χ(ριστοῦ) εἰς τ(ὴν) σεβασμί(αν) καὶ ἱερὰν μ(ον)ὴν οὗ μ[-c.2-]  
[- - -] τ(ὴν) πλησίον τ(ῆς) Τ[α]τάρνας  
[- - -] [ἐκ τῆς] μεγαλοπόλ(εω)ς Μοσχοβίας  
[εἰς ψυχικὴν ἑαυτοῦ] σωτηρίαν· ἔτει Ϻ[ρι]  
μηνὶ [ἀ]πριλίω, (ἰνδικτιώνος) ιε'' · 1602.<sup>118</sup>

Ἐλασσόνος καί] τῶν om. Poulitsas || 2 στέλω || εἰς τὴν] εἰς τὴ Poulitsas ||  
3 μηνῆν... ante τὴν πλησίον add [τῆς πανάγνου Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου  
Μαρίας] Poulitsas || 4 post πλησίον om. τῆς Poulitsas

I, the archbishop of Elassona and of Arhchangeloi Arsenios, send this holy icon of our Lord Jesus Christ to the honorable and holy monastery where ... near Tatar-na, from the great city of Moscow, for the salvation of my soul, in the year 7110, month April, indict 15. 1602.

**3. Icon of Christ Pantokrator (The Savior “Oplecni”)***Front side:*

ⲓϥ̅ ϭ̅ ⲱⲥⲉⲃⲏⲣⲗⲓⲧⲏⲧⲉⲗⲏ	I(su)s Kh(risto)s Vserzhitel’	<i>Jesus Christ Pantokrator</i>
ϫ̅ ⲱⲏ		<i>He who is</i>

<sup>118</sup> This edition is based on the present state of the inscription. Cf. Poulitas, “Επιγραφὰι, ενθυμήσεις και σιγίλλια”, cat. 66 on page 270.

#### 4. Icon of the Vision of Saint Sergius of Radonezh,

*Front side:*

стаѣа [троица]                      S(via)taia [Troitsa]                      *The Holy Trinity*

... прѣбн[о]мѣ [серги]ю [и ник]онѣ [со ап]лы  
Pr(e)p(odo)bn[o]mu [Sergi]iu [i Nik]onu [so aposto]ly  
*To Sts. Sergius and Nikon of Radonezh with apostles*

#### 5. Pectoral panagiaron-encolpion

*External side A*

*Central roundel (The Crucifixion):*

ис хс	Jesus Christ	
мр ѡу	Mother of God	
іоанъ	Ioan	<i>St. John the Prodromos</i>

*External side B*

*Central roundel (Three Hierarchs):*

василеї	Vasilei	<i>St. Basil the Great</i>
григореї	Grigorei	<i>St. Gregory the Theologian</i>
іоанъ	Ioan	<i>St. John Chrysostom</i>

*Roundels (Saints):*

афанасеї Afanasei	[н]икола [N]ikola	<i>St. Athanasius the Great, St. Nicholas</i>
петр(ъ) Pet(r)	[а]лексеї [A]leksei	<i>Sts. Peter and Alexius of Moscow</i>

иона Iona	[кипри]анъ [Kipri]an	<i>Sts. Jonah and Cyprian of Moscow</i>
егореѣ Egorei	[ди]митр[еѣ] [Di]mitr[ei]	<i>St. George, St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki</i>
сергеѣ Sergei	[н]ика[нъ] [N]ika[n]	<i>Sts. Sergius and St. Nikon of Radonezh</i>
засимъ Zasim	саватеѣ Savatei	<i>Sts. Zosima and Savvatiy of Solovki</i>

*Internal side A**Central roundel (Holy Trinity):*

сѣла троѣца	sv(ia)taia Troitsa	Holy Trinity
Roundels (Apostles):		
петръ апостол(ъ) Petr apostol	павелъ апос(толъ) Pavel apos(tol)	<i>Apostle Peter Apostle Paul</i>
иоанъ апоста(лъ) Ioan apostal	андреѣ апостолъ Andrei apostol	<i>Apostle John Apostle Andrew</i>
мат.дѣ(и) апо(столъ) Matfe(i) apo(stol)	марк апост(олъ) Mark Apost(ol)	<i>Apostle Matthew Apostle Mark</i>
вар.д.лалмей Varfalamei	лѣка апост(олъ) Luka apost(ol)	<i>Apostle Bartholomew Apostle Luke</i>
симонъ Simon	iakavъ апо(столъ) Iakav apo(stol)	<i>Apostle Simon Apostle James</i>
филиппъ апо(столъ) Filip apo(stol)	дѣла апос(толъ) Fama apos(tol)	<i>Apostle Philip Apostle Thomas</i>

*Outer rim:*

ΕΥΛΟΓΗΤΟΣ ΕΙ Χ(ΡΙΣΤ)Ε Ο Θ(ΕΟ)Σ ΗΜΩΝ Ο ΠΑΝΣΟΦΟΥΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΑΛΙΕΙΣ ΑΝΑΔΕΙ-  
ΞΑΣ ΚΑΤΑΠΕΜΨΑΣ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ ΤΟ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΤΟ ΑΓΙΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΔΙ' ΑΥΤΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΟΙΚΟΥ-  
ΜΕΝΗΝ ΣΑΓΗΝΕΥΣΑΣ ΦΙΛΑΝΘΡΩ(ΠΕ ΔΟΞΑ ΣΟΙ)

*Blessed are You, O Christ our God, who made fishermen all-wise, by sending down  
upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them, drawing all the world into Your net.  
O Loving One, (glory be to You).*

*Internal side B*

*Central roundel (Theotokos):*

μῦ δῦ

Mother of God

ιῥ χῥ

Jesus Christ

*Roundels (Prophets):*

иѡѡ пророкѡ дѡз(вѡтанѡнѡ)  
Il'ia prorok thez(vitianin)

Prophet Elijah the Tishbite

царѡ дѡвѡдѡ  
Tsar David

king David

царѡ саломонѡ  
Tsar Salomon

king Solomon

зѡхарѡѡ праро(кѡ)  
Zakhar'ia praro(k)

Prophet Zechariah

исаѡѡ пророкѡ  
Isaia prorok

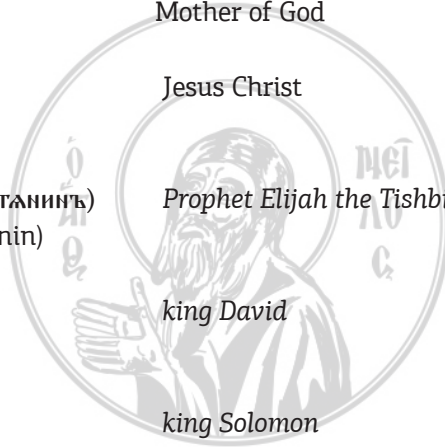
Prophet Isaiah

наѡмѡ праро(кѡ)  
Naum praro(k)

Prophet Nahum

ѡковѡ прарок(ѡ)  
Iakov prarok

Prophet Jacob



АВБАКЪМЪ ПРА(РОКЪ)  
Abbakum pra(rok)

*Prophet Habakkuk*

ЗАХАРЬА ПРАРОКЪ)  
Zakhar'ia prarok

*Prophet Zechariach*

ДАНИЛЪ ПРАР(ОКЪ)  
Danil prar(ok)

*Prophet Daniel*

ΕΛΙΣΕΝ ΠΡΟΡΟΚЪ  
Elisei prorok

*Prophet Elisha*

ОСИА ПРАРОКЪ)  
Osia prorok

*Prophet Hosea*

*Panagiarion's rim:*

ΑΞΙΟΝ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΩΣ ΑΛΗΘΩΣ ΜΑΚΑΡΙΖΕΙΝ ΣΕ ΤΗΝ Θ(ΕΟΤΟ)ΚΟΝ ΤΗΝ ΑΕΙΜΑΚΑ-  
ΡΙΣΤΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΝΑΜΩΜΗΤΟΝ ΚΑΙ Μ(ΗΤΕ)ΡΑ ΤΟΥ Θ(ΕΟ)Υ ΗΜΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΤΙΜΙΩΤΕ-  
ΡΑΝ ΤΩΝ ΧΕΡΟΥΒΙΜ ΚΑΙ ΕΝΔΟΞΟΤΕΡΑΝ ΑΣΥΓΚΡΙΤΩ(Σ ΤΩΝ ΣΕΡΑΦΙΜ)

It is truly meet and right to bless you, O Theotokos, ever-blessed and most-pure mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious (than the Seraphim)

## 6. Icon of Panagia Phaneromene of Tatarna

*Front side:*

Ὁ ὢΝ

He who is



«ΑΠΟ ΤΗΣ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΠΟΛΕΩΣ  
ΤΗΣ ΜΟΣΧΟΒΙΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΗΣ ΡΩΣΙΑΣ...»:  
ΡΩΣΙΚΑ ΚΕΙΜΗΛΙΑ ΤΟΥ 16<sup>ΟΥ</sup> – 17<sup>ΟΥ</sup> ΑΙΩΝΑ  
ΤΗΣ ΜΟΝΗΣ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑΣ ΤΑΤΑΡΝΗΣ

**Yuliana Boycheva**  
(με παράρτημα της Daria Resh)

Η μονή της Παναγίας Φανερωμένης Τατάρνας είναι μία από τις παλαιότερες και σημαντικότερες μονές της κεντρικής Ελλάδας. Σύμφωνα με προφορική παράδοση της αδελφότητας, πολύ κοντά στη θέση της σύγχρονης μονής υπήρχε παλιό βυζαντινό μοναστήρι. Η ύπαρξή του μαρτυρείται από σποραδικές μνείες στις γραπτές πηγές από τον 11<sup>ο</sup> έως και τον 14<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα, καθώς από τα βυζαντινά κειμήλια στο σύγχρονο σκευοφυλάκιο της μονής. Ωστόσο, οι παλαιότερες γραπτές πηγές, οι οποίες περιλαμβάνουν ασφαλείς πληροφορίες για την ίδρυση της μονής, χρονολογούνται το έτος 1555/56. Πληροφορίες προσφέρουν επίσης δύο ενθυμήσεις του 17<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα. Σύμφωνα με αυτές, την οικοδόμηση του καθολικού ξεκίνησαν οι δύο ιερομόναχοι Δαβίδ και Μεθόδιος το έτος 1555-1556 και την ολοκλήρωσαν τον Σεπτέμβριο του έτους 1580, ενώ η αγιογράφισή του περατώθηκε τον Σεπτέμβριο του έτους 1600.

Για την προέλευση της ονομασίας της μονής υπάρχουν διαφορετικές ερμηνείες. Περισσότερο πειστική είναι αυτή, σύμφωνα με την οποία η μονή πήρε το όνομα «*Τατάρνα*», επειδή κτίστηκε πλησίον του νερόμυλου «*εις την Τατάρναν*». Για την επιλογή της θέσης ρόλο πιθανολογούνται πολλές παράμετροι: η ύπαρξη ερειπίων παλιού μοναστηριού, το ποτάμι του Αχελώου και η πηγή της Μαδράχας, που εξασφάλιζαν άφθονο πόσιμο νερό κ.α. Αναμφίβολα όμως το σημαντικότερο πλεονέκτημα ήταν η κοντινή απόσταση από το βασικό πέρασμα από τη Θεσσαλία προς τα Άγραφα.

Ανοιχτό ερώτημα αποτελεί η αποσαφήνιση της ταυτότητας της «*μεγάλης μονής του Σωτήρος Χριστού*», με την οποία σχετίζονται οι ιερομόναχοι Δαβίδ και Μεθόδιος και οι δύο συνοδοί τους. Τα μοναστήρια της ευρύτερης περιοχής, τα οποία σεμνύνονται στο όνομα «*του Σωτήρος*» [Χριστού], δηλαδή στη Μεταμόρφωση του Κυρίου, και τα οποία θα μπορούσαν να έχουν συνδράμει ενεργά στην ίδρυση της μονής Τατάρνας, είναι η μονή του Αγίου Βησσαρίωνος (Δουσίκου), που αποκαλείται και *Μονή του Σωτήρος των Μεγάλων Πυλών*, και η *Μονή Μεταμόρφωσης του Σωτήρος στα Μετέωρα* (κοινώς *Μεγάλο Μετέωρο*).

Παρότι η μονή Δουσίκου δεν μπορεί και δεν πρέπει να αποκλεισθεί, ως τόπος προέλευσης των ανωτέρω μοναχών, πρέπει να έχουμε υπόψη μας ότι στα

χρόνια ίδρυσης της μονής Παναγίας Τατάρνας, η μονή του Μεγάλου Μετεώρου γνωρίζει μεγάλη ακμή, οικονομική και πνευματική. Ο ρόλος της μάλιστα είναι ηγετικός μεταξύ των Μοναστηριών, όχι μόνο στην περιοχή των Σταγών ή ευρύτερα της Θεσσαλίας, αλλά και σε όλη την κεντρική Ελλάδα. Ειδικότερα, το Μεγάλο Μετέωρο, φαίνεται να προσανατολίζεται προς την ίδρυση νέων μοναστικών κοινοτήτων σε επιλεγμένες και πρόσφορες περιοχές, συχνά σε θέσεις παλαιών Μονών. Οι στόχοι της διεύρυνσης αυτής, πέρα από την αποσυμφόρηση της μονής, φαίνεται να είναι η αύξηση της κτηματικής του περιουσίας και, κατά συνέπεια, της οικονομικής του δύναμης, αλλά και ο έλεγχος ζωτικών επικοινωνιακών αρτηριών και θέσεων μέσω της επέκτασης του μοναστηριακού του δικτύου.

Μετά την ίδρυσή της, η μονή της Παναγίας Τατάρνας αναπτύσσεται γρήγορα, κυρίως μέσω αφιερώσεων και δωρεών. Αυτές αφορούν κυρίως αρόσιμες και μη γαίες, αγροτικά και αστικά ακίνητα, αλλά και κειμήλια. Μεταξύ των τελευταίων ξεχωρίζουν τα κειμήλια ρωσικής προέλευσης, τα οποία πληροφορούν για την εξέλιξη και τον ρόλο της Μονής στα πρώιμα μεταβυζαντινά χρόνια.

Το σύνολο των ρωσικών κειμηλίων της μονής Τατάρνας που χρονολογούνται ανάμεσα στα τέλη του 16<sup>ου</sup> και στο πρώτο μισό του 17<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα αποτελείται από έξι φορητές εικόνες, ένα αρχιερατικό εγκόλπιο και ένα εικονογραφημένο χειρόγραφο.

Βασική πηγή για την ταύτιση των εν λόγω αφιερωμάτων συνιστά η αφιερωτική επιγραφή στο χειρόγραφο, το οποίο συνέταξε και αφιέρωσε στον δουσικιώτη μοναχό Αρσένιο Ελασσόνος ο Ματθαίος Μυρέων το έτος 1596. Στέλνοντας το χειρόγραφο στη Μονή Τατάρνας το έτος 1602, ο Αρσένιος κατέγραψε ιδιοχείρως τις δωρεές του σε αυτή. Τα αφιερώματα του δουσικιώτη αρχιερέα προς τη μονή Τατάρνας, μετέφερε ο αρχιμανδρίτης του Παναγίου Τάφου Δαμασκηνός.

Ωστόσο, στη Μονή σώζονται και άλλα ρωσικά κειμήλια, για τα οποία Αρσένιος δεν αναφέρει τίποτε. Αυτά είναι οι εικόνες με το «Όραμα του Οσίου Σεργίου του Ράντονεζ», με τον «Χριστό Παντοκράτορα», η Παναγία Φανερωμένη Ταταρνιώτισσα και ένα αρχιερατικό εγκόλπιο. Τα εικονογραφικά, τεχνοτροπικά και υφολογικά τους χαρακτηριστικά οδηγούν στην χρονολόγηση των έργων αυτών στο πέρασμα από τον 16ο στον 17ο αιώνα, δηλαδή στην εποχή της δωρεάς του Αρσενίου.

Τα ρωσικά κειμήλια της μονής Παναγίας Τατάρνας έχουν μεγάλο ερευνητικό ενδιαφέρον, καθόσον παραμένουν στον χώρο που αφιερώθηκαν. Διακρίνονται δε, όχι μόνο για την ποικιλία τους και την υψηλή καλλιτεχνική αξία τους, αλλά και επειδή αποτελούν σύνολο ιστορικών μαρτυριών, το οποίο τεκμηριώνει τις επαφές των θεσσαλών μοναχών και κληρικών με υψηλόβαθμους κληρικούς από το Πατριαρχείο της Ρωσίας και το Πατριαρχείο των Ιεροσολύμων. Οι γραπτές

πηγές (επιγραφές και έγγραφα) που τα πλαισιώνουν προσφέρουν τη σπάνια ευκαιρία, κοντά σε άλλα αντίστοιχα κειμήλια και πηγές από άλλες περιοχές των Οθωμανικών Βαλκανίων, να μελετήσουμε τις δωρεές ρωσικών εικόνων και κειμηλίων σε ένα ευρύ ιστορικό πλαίσιο.





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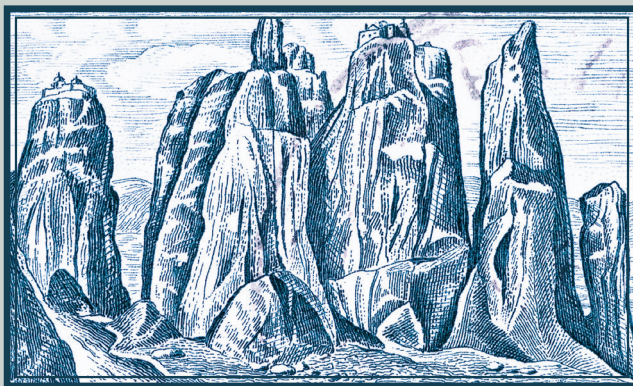
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