

## Stylistic Analysis of the Holy Icons from Saint George Church in Yenikoy, Istanbul

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*The main subject of the research is to analyse the multi-themed sacred proskynetarion icons in Yeniköy Ayios Yeoryios (St. George) Metochion Church, one of the three metochion churches of the Jerusalem Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul. Although it is known that the icons found in the metochion churches in Istanbul have not been studied before, the icons belonging to the church in Yeniköy from these structures were included in the research. Due to the limitations of the article, which prevented the evaluation of all the icons in the church, the research focused solely on the technical and stylistic features of the multi-themed proskynetarion icons. Proskynetarions, also known as the pilgrim icons, contain depictions of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem due to their characteristics. The presence of proskynetarions in this place is directly related to the fact that Yeniköy Ayios Yeoryios Church is a Metochion affiliated to the Jerusalem Patriarchate. Icons are accepted as important works of art in the frame of art history, as well as their liturgical role as manifestation and visual representations of the sacred. It is important to reveal such previously unpublished works, to evaluate them iconographically and to bring them to the art history literature with their semantic context. In the study, a brief historical overview of the status of the Jerusalem Orthodox Patriarchate and the relations between the two patriarchates is presented. At the same time, the location of the building, the architectural plan type, the periodical features in the exterior and interior decoration are mentioned.*

### The Jerusalem Patriarchate

The Jerusalem Patriarchate is considered the oldest Apostolic Patriarchate, the physical continuation of the first church.<sup>1</sup> The establishment date of the Church of Jerusalem varies according to different sources. While one source indicates the year to be 30 AD,<sup>2</sup> another accepts the year as 33 AD.<sup>3</sup> The mentioned

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1. Αρχιεπισκοπου Ιοππησ Δαμασκηνου [Γκαγκανιαρα] (2008) Η Διοικητική Οργανωσις Του Πατριαρχείου Των Ιεροσολυμων, Διδακτορική Διατριβή υποβληθείσα εις τὸ Τμήμα Νομικῆς τῆς Σχολῆς Νομικῶν, Οικονομικῶν καὶ Πολιτικῶν Ἐπιστημῶν, τοῦ Ἀριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης, p.7 (Archbishop Iorppis Damaskinos [Gaganiara] (2008) The Administrative Organization of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Doctoral Thesis submitted to the Department of Law, School of Law, Economics and Political Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, p. 7).

2. Mircea Eliade (2009) Dinsel İnançlar ve Düşünceler Tarihi: Gotama Budha'dan Hıristiyanlığın Doğuşuna, vol. II, trns. Ali Berktay, Kabcacı Publishing House, Istanbul, p. 391.

date represents the Pentecost,<sup>4</sup> which is 50 days after the crucifixion of Christ according to Orthodox Christian tradition. According to another source on the establishment of the Church, it is mentioned that the Church of Jerusalem was founded by Ayios Iakovos (St. James) in the year 55.<sup>5</sup>

In 422, the Church of Jerusalem was separated from Rome in terms of administration and connected to the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople,<sup>6</sup> and in accordance with the decision taken at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, it was elevated to the status of Patriarchate and became completely independent from Constantinople.<sup>7</sup> The Patriarchate's contact with Constantinople was said to have persisted during this time, and delegates from Jerusalem were sent to the councils. It is claimed that when Jerusalem fell under Islamic administration in 638, Christian communities were safeguarded in exchange for taxes.<sup>8</sup> The founding of the Latin Kingdom had a detrimental effect on the Patriarchate after the Crusaders conquered Jerusalem in 1099. The Greek patriarch was banished, and a Latin patriarch was assigned to the Patriarchate.<sup>9</sup> The patriarchs were still appointed during this time, although they now lived in Constantinople.<sup>10</sup> With the Ayyubid conquest of Jerusalem in 1187, the years of exile came to an end, and the privileges formerly accorded to the Patriarchate were also recorded.<sup>11</sup>

Under Mamluk administration, the Latins seized control of Jerusalem's sacred sites from the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem, but during the Ottoman era, these privileges were reclaimed, and authority was once more established. The Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem came under Ottoman rule in 1516. It is stated

3. Archbishop Ioppis Damaskinos, 2008, p. 35.

4. Evangelia Aleksandru Şarlak (2001) *Post-Bizans Dönemi İstanbul Kiliselerinde Duvardan Bağımsız İkonalar/Post-Byzantine Icons -Unattached From Wall- in Istanbul Greek Orthodox Churches*, Doktora Tezi / PhD Thesis, Istanbul Technical University, Institute of Social Sciences, Istanbul, p. 33.

5. Yorgo Benlisoy-Elçin Macar (1996) *Fener Patrikhanesi*, Ayraç Publishing House, Ankara, p. 10.

6. İhsan Satış-Muhammed Ceyhan (2015). *Kudüs Rum Patrikhanesi*, *Belleten*, 79(675-712), doi:10.37879/belleten.2015. p. 677; İhsan Satış-Muhammed Ceyhan (2012). *Kudüs'teki Rum Cemaatine Ait Bir Defter: 10 Numaralı (Kamame) Kilise Defteri*. *Belgeler*, XXXIII(21-55), p.23.

7. Benlisoy-Macar, 1996, p. 10;

8. Steven Runciman (2008) *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, vol. I, trns. Fikret İşıltan, 4th press, Türk Tarih Kurumu Publication, Ankara, p. 3.

9. Runciman, 2008, pp. 222, 228.

10. Satış-Ceyhan, 2015, p. 680.

11. It is recorded that the orders in the edicts issued since Caliph Umar are still valid. See. Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive (BOA), Kâmil Kepeci Tasnifi Piskopos Mukâtaası, Nr: 2539, p. 2; Karakoç Sarkis, Külliyyât-ı Kavânîn, Belge No: 2606. ; The Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives contain a copy of this assurance delivered to the Greek patriarch. In fact, without going into detail, such a guarantee is indicated in the orders and edicts that the Ottoman sultans delivered to the Jerusalem judge. Satış-Ceyhan, 2015, pp. 680-681.

in the archive records that Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem Athanasios traveled to Istanbul during the rule of Mehmed II the Conqueror (r. 1444-1446, 1451-1481) and asked for the renewal of his previous privileges, despite the fact that the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the Ottoman Empire came under Ottoman rule during the reign of Selim I (r.1512-1520).<sup>12</sup> In a decree issued in 1458 by Mehmed the Conqueror, the patriarchate was accorded a number of rights. The patriarchate and its members were exempt from *bac*,<sup>13</sup> traditional tribute, and other taxes in the order, which also recognized the holy places belonging to the Greeks in Jerusalem. Furthermore, it is stated that following Mehmed's rule, concessions made by other Muslim sultans, including Caliph Umar (634-644),<sup>14</sup> will still be legitimate.<sup>15</sup>

The authorities granted by Mehmed II the Conqueror to the patriarchate were renewed as they were, in the decree given by Selim I to the Jerusalem Patriarch Dorotheos (1506-1537) in 1516. The edict that was renewed without any change due to the attendance of the new patriarch during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566) was given to the new patriarch Germanos (1537-1579). In the following periods, with each change of sultanate, the rights and privileges given to the Greek Patriarchs of Jerusalem were renewed and continued.<sup>16</sup> It was stated that the patriarchate was exempt from various taxes<sup>17</sup> in the edicts given to the Greek patriarchs of Jerusalem by Caliph Umar and the Ottoman Sultans.<sup>18</sup>

The Greek Patriarchate of Istanbul also served as a representative for the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem due to the authorities bestowed by Mehmed II the Conqueror to the patriarchate, and their tight ties to the Sublime Porte.<sup>19</sup> The Istanbul Greek Patriarchate grew more powerful than other patriarchates in the Orthodox world, particularly under Suleiman the Magnificent. Although the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem had the independency to communicate with the Ottoman Empire and go by their own authority, the Greek Patriarchate of Istanbul had the supervisory responsibility over the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem.<sup>20</sup>

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12. Satış-Ceyhan, 2015, pp. 675, 682.

13. Tithe or tribute and customs duty that were once levied from the public in the Ottoman Empire.

14. One of the most influential caliphs.

15. Benlisoy-Macar, 1996, p. 32; See. BOA, İrade-i Hariciye (İ.HR), 267/16056; BOA, HAT, 778/36478-B. Satış-Ceyhan, 2015, p.683.

16. Satış-Ceyhan, 2015, pp. 675, 684.

17. Such as *jizye*, *gafr*, *bac* and other allowances under the name of "mevacib".

18. See: BOA, A.DVNS. KLS. d, Nr: 9, p. 5-8. BOA, HAT, 1516/47. Satış-Ceyhan, 2015, p.689.

19. Benlisoy-Macar, 1996, p. 33.

20. Satış-Ceyhan, 2015, p. 685.

Although Jerusalem serves as the headquarters of the Jerusalem Greek Patriarchate, the patriarchs lived in Istanbul from 1645 to 1845.<sup>21</sup> Nowadays, the Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem and all Palestine, Syria, Arabia, and beyond the Jordan River, Kana of Galilee and Holy Sion is Theophilos III.<sup>22</sup> The representative of the Patriarch of Jerusalem in Constantinople is Archbishop Anthidonos K. Nektarios. It is stated that the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem moved his residence from Jerusalem to Istanbul in order to strengthen their relations to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>23</sup> For centuries, there were conflicts between the Greek patriarch of Istanbul and the Jerusalem patriarchs who lived in Istanbul. These issues reportedly came to light and sparked disputes, particularly in relation to the election of the Jerusalem patriarchs and the exercise of their authority. The patriarch of Jerusalem, who resides in Istanbul, reportedly traveled frequently, rather than managing the business of Jerusalem and regularly attending the Synod Assembly of the Greek Patriarch of Istanbul.<sup>24</sup>

It is stated that the Patriarchs of Jerusalem were elected by the Synod Assembly of the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople until 1844. It is recorded that the Synod Assembly in 1661, when Patriarch Nektarios was elected, included the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople, the beyghs of Wallachia-Boghdan, metropolitans of the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople and Ottoman representatives.<sup>25</sup> In this election, it is said that Nektarios was chosen as patriarch after extensive deliberation and negotiations, and the decision was revealed to Jerusalem in a letter. Again, based on the reports, the election of Sophronios (1770), Parthenios (1739), Abhram (1775), Prokopios (1787), Polykarpos (1788), Polykarpos (1808), and Athanasios (1826) followed a similar procedure. Patriarchal elections began to be held by the Synod Assembly of the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem after the patriarchs of Jerusalem moved their residence to Jerusalem. In 1845, with the death of Patriarch Athanasios V, the Synod Assembly was held in Jerusalem, where Kyrillos II, Bishop of Lydda, was elected patriarch.<sup>26</sup>

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21. The Greek Patriarchs of Jerusalem are not the only patriarchs who live outside the patriarchate's geographic center, in Istanbul or elsewhere. According to a document from 1891, Damascus was the home of the Greek Patriarch of Antakya. See. BOA, Meclis-i Vükela (MV), 63/46; M. Macit Kenanoğlu (2017), *Osmanlı Millet Sistemi; Mit ve Gerçek*, 4th press, Klasik Publishing, Istanbul, p. 118.

22. Benlisoy-Macar, 1996, p. 11; The current (2023) Patriarch is Kyrios the third Theophilos.

23. Archbishop Ioppis Damaskinos, 2008, p. 64.

24. Satış-Ceyhan, 2015, pp. 691-692.

25. See: Anton Bertram & Harry Luke, *Report of the Commission Appointed by the Government of Palestine to Inquire Into the Affairs of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem*, Oxford University Press 1921, pp. 167-169. Cited by: Satış-Ceyhan, 2015, pp. 691-692.

26. See: BOA, İ. HR, 28/1320. Satış-Ceyhan, 2015, pp. 691-692.

### Ayios Yeoryios Metochion Church in Yeniköy

As mentioned before, there are three churches in Istanbul dedicated to Ayios Yeoryios, affiliated with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. These churches, in hierarchical order, are Fener Ayios Yeoryios Metochion Church,<sup>27</sup> Heybeliada Ayios Yeoryios Metochion Church and Yeniköy Ayios Yeoryios Metochion Church.<sup>28</sup>

Metochions are the locations that serve as residency for priests and wandering monks and also in cooperation with the mother church. The word metochion does not appear in records from the period before the 9<sup>th</sup> century. It is known that metochions were established in rural areas, some distance from the monastery, or near monastic properties in cities, in order to facilitate the control of the manors. The monks and priests living there were under the authority of the abbot of the main monastery.<sup>29</sup> A metochion also contained a church or chapel. Metochions also contributed to the advancement of education through the schools and libraries they established. These libraries contained many liturgical books and sacred vessels.<sup>30</sup>

The Antonis Paterakis<sup>31</sup> list from 1604 is the first document mentioning Yeniköy Ayios Yeoryios Metochion Church.<sup>32</sup> Clerk Paulus<sup>33</sup> discovered and noted the church's existence in 1652, followed by Kömürçyan<sup>34</sup> in 1690, Hovhannesian<sup>35</sup>

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27. Zafer Karaca (2018) İstanbul'da Tanzimat Öncesi Rum Ortodoks Kiliseleri, 2nd press, Yapı Kredi Publishing, Istanbul, pp. 114-121.

28. Karaca, 2018, p. 69.

29. <https://fosfanariou.gr/index.php/2022/06/30/metoxia-panagiou-tafou-stin-poli/>

30. Alexander P. Kazhdan, Alice-Mary Talbot, and others (Eds.)(1991) "Metochion" , The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, Vol 2, Oxford University Press, pp. 1356-1357.

31. This manuscript list of 55 churches, compiled by Paterakis of Athens, is now in the library of the Alexandrian Orthodox Patriarchate in Cairo. Karaca, 2018, pp. 16, 22.

32. Karaca, 2018, p. 583.

33. Paulus, who served as the Patriarch's Clerk in the Patriarchate of Antioch, accompanied the Patriarch on his journey to Istanbul in 1652. Karaca, 2018, p. 16; Paulus also mentions in his notes that the Patriarch held services in the churches in Yeniköy. Sophrone Petrides, (1901) "Eglises Grecques de Constantinople en 1652", Echos d'Orient, IV (1901): 42-50, p. 48.

34. Eremya Çelebi Kömürçyan (1988) "İstanbul Tarihi, XVII. Asırda İstanbul, trns. Hrand D. Andreasyan, Eren Publishing and Bookbinding, Istanbul, p.43; The poet, writer and historian Eremya Çelebi Kömürçyan (1637-1695), who was originally from Istanbul, based his book Istanbul History, written in Armenian, on his observations in Istanbul. Karaca, 2018, p. 17.

35. Sarkis Tibir Sarraf Hovhannesian (1740-1805), a respected educator from Balat district, describes the neighbourhoods of Istanbul in his book, "Payitaht İstanbul'un Tarihi", written in Armenian. Karaca, 2018, p. 17.

in 1800, and Inciciyan<sup>36</sup> in 1810. While Kömürçiyân and Hovhannesian state that the church belonged to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, İnciciyan states that the Patriarch of Jerusalem often resided here.<sup>37</sup>

It is known that the Patriarchs of Jerusalem reside in the Yeniköy Metochion in Istanbul. Yeniköy Metochion is considered a foundation in terms of its current legal status. Historical sources state that, in addition to the school in Yeniköy, the Holy Sepulcher Metochion Printing House was founded by Patriarch Athanasios.<sup>38</sup>

Yeniköy (Neokhorion), where Ayios Yeoryios Metochion Church is located, is a coastal neighbourhood of Sarıyer district on the European side of Istanbul. According to the sources, the area was named "*Cautes Bacchae*" because the sounds made by the waves hitting the rocks in ancient times were likened to the cries of Baccha.<sup>39</sup>

According to historical sources, Nikolaos Komnenos Hypselantes, a resident of Nikhor, donated a chapel dedicated to Ayios Yeoryios with its garden overlooking the sea and its surroundings, as a result of his friendship with Paisios, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. This chapel in Nikhor developed over time and became a summer residence for the Patriarchs of Jerusalem. In the historical notes regarding the Metochion of the Holy Sepulcher in the city, it is stated that it was a three-apsed basilica built of stone and reflected the Late Byzantine folk architecture of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>40</sup>

*"This holy church of the Great Martis Ayios Yeoryios was fundamentally restored during the time of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cyril II of Constantinople, at the expense of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,"* is written<sup>41</sup> in seven lines of Greek capital letters on the epitaph at the Ayios Yeoryios Metochion Church's entrance facing west. The Istanbul Encyclopedia published the church's obituary in Turkish.<sup>42</sup>

The Ayios Yeoryios Metochion Church is a rectangular building with an east-west axis in the basilica plan. The church is situated in the courtyard's

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36. Gugas V. İnciciyan (1758-1833) was an Armenian cleric from Istanbul who worked in the fields of history and geography. In addition to his two books titled "Boğaziçi Sayfıyeleri" and " XVIII. Asırda İstanbul", he also wrote a seven-volume work titled "Dünya Coğrafyası", Karaca, 2018, p. 18.

37. Karaca, 2018, p. 450.

38. <https://fosfanariou.gr/index.php/2022/06/30/metoxia-panagiou-tafou-stin-poli/>. (Accessed 20 May 2023.)

39. Karaca, 2018, p. 442.

40. <https://fosfanariou.gr/index.php/2022/06/30/metoxia-panagiou-tafou-stin-poli/> (Monitoring date 20.05.2023).

41. Karaca, 2018, p. 451.

42. "This holy church was constructed from the ground up in 1851, under the direction of Cyril II of Constantinople, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, in memory of Ayios Yeoryios, who gave his life in the service of the Christian faith, using all the funds donated by the church of the Jerusalem 'Jesus' cemetery." Reşad Ekrem Koçu, (1960) İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, vol. 3, Neşriyat / Publishing Collective Company, İstanbul, p.1598; Karaca, 2018, p. 451.

northernmost corner, and it is encircled by railings. The facade of the church is covered by a rectangular narthex in the west and a half-domed apse in the east. The external dimensions of the church are 28.25 meters in length, 15.10 meters in width, and 10.10 meters in height.

It is observed that the walls in the interior of the church, which were previously completely plastered,<sup>43</sup> are now covered with natural marble from the windowsills to the wooden ceiling. In the three-nave church, the central nave is separated from the side naves in the south and north by five opposing columns each.

In the eastern part of the naos, there is a wooden iconostasis, also known as the templon, with five doors opening to the Bema. The Holy Door (Orean Pili) is located in the center, aligned with the main nave, while the other doors are symmetrically positioned at the level of the side naves. From the early period until the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the sacred area where the apse is located in Orthodox Christian churches were separated by a wooden curtain or a series of columnar architraves. After this period, this area was decorated in more monumental dimensions, with systematic placement of icons.<sup>44</sup>

### Proskynetarions of the Metochion Church in Yeniköy

As mentioned before, the church contains a large number of icons. Therefore, the iconographic and technical analysis has focused on two proskynetarion icons. Among the proskynetarions<sup>45</sup> identified to date, the oldest is the proskynetarion dated 1704, located in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Saumur, France.<sup>46</sup> Proskynetarions are rectangular oil paintings on large-scale canvas, usually 1.5 m x 2 m in size. The use of canvas cloth allowed the icons to be easily wrapped, transported and placed in frames after returning home.<sup>47</sup>

The fact that Jerusalem has a sacred importance in the history of Christianity and is a center of pilgrimage points to a production process aimed at pilgrims, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> Between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, these canvases were prepared for sale in Jerusalem and targeted Greek Orthodox pilgrims from

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43. Karaca, 2018, pp. 451-452.

44. Şarlak, 2001, p. 56.

45. For further reading, see: Mat Immerzeel, - Waldemar Deluga, - Magdalena Laptas, (2005) Proskynetaria: Inventory, Series Byzantina 3, 25-34.

46. Mat Immerzeel, (2014) Souvenirs of the Holy Land: The Production of Proskynetaria in Jerusalem, *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, Ed. Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai, and Hanna Vorholt, Brepols Publishers n.v., Turnhout, Belgium. (pp. 463-470), p. 463.

47. Rostislava Todorova (2015) Icons as Maps: Cartographic icons in Orthodox art, *Eikón Imago* 7 (2015/1) ISSN-e 2254-8718, p. 15.

48. Immerzeel, 2014, p. 468.

Ottoman lands (the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean).<sup>49</sup> Depictions of Jerusalem in proskynetarion icons appear as theological representations rather than a topographic map.<sup>50</sup> Undoubtedly, the origin of such icons can be traced back to cartographic maps of Western origin.<sup>51</sup> The role of the proskynetarion was different from other Palestinian pilgrimage memories. As one of a series of pilgrimage events, the proskynetarion (Jerusalem, as pilgrims called it) was the culmination of the pilgrimage experience and transformed a person into a "*pilgrim*".<sup>52</sup> This information is given by Mikhail Madzharov, who visited Jerusalem in 1868-1869:

At that time, people considered hajjis only those who, after having bathed in the Jordan River, received a certificate [patent] from the Patriarchate, and bought a 'Jerusalem' icon, were present at the Church of the Resurrection on Easter and saw with their own eyes the '*nur*' [Holy Fire] that comes out of the tomb [of Jesus Christ] and from which pilgrims light their paschal candles.<sup>53</sup>

Memories of pilgrimage depicting the holy places of Palestine are intended to serve as reminders or substitutes for the holy lands in distant places, and to give their owners a kind of aura as former pilgrims.<sup>54</sup> According to the sources, a significant number of these artefacts were originally made for pilgrims from Russia.<sup>55</sup> Researchers consider the presence of Cyrillic inscriptions on some examples as evidence of this. This inscription indicates the practice of workshops to leave a space where the name of the purchaser could be inscribed, and the pilgrim would thus be documenting his pilgrimage to the Holy Land.<sup>56</sup> Immerzeel

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49. Pnina Arad (2018) Landscape and Iconicity: Proskynetaria of the Holy Land from the Ottoman Period, *Eastern Christian art, The Art Bulletin* December 2018, (pp. 62-80), p.63.

50. Immerzeel, 2014, p. 466.

51. Rehav Rubin (2013) Greek-Orthodox Maps of Jerusalem from the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, *e-Perimtron*, Vol. 8, No. 3, [106-132], p. 106.

52. Arad, 2018, p. 64.

53. Mikhail Madzharov, quoted in Valentina Izmirlieva, "Christian Hajjis: The Other Orthodox Pilgrims to Jerusalem," *Slavic Review* 73, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 332. Madzharov (1854–1944), a prominent Bulgarian politician and journalist, went on a family pilgrimage to Jerusalem as a teenager in 1868–69. Cited: Arad, 2018, p. 65.

54. Rand Abou Ackl (2019) "Kharetat al Mousafer, an 18th Century Proskynetarion of Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Saydnaia", *Chronos Revue d'Histoire de l'Université de Balamand*, Numéro 40, 2019, (pp.95-118) ISSN 1608, p. 96.

55. Majna Parijez- Ana Munk (2021) Iconographic and Stylistic Analysis of the Holy City of Jerusalem Icon from the Studenica Monastery, *DPUH Peristil*, 64/2021, 49-63. DOI: 10.17685/ Peristil.64.4; pp. 50-51.

56. Émilie Girard - Felicita Tramontana (2018) La fabrication des objets de dévotion en Palestine, de l'époque moderne au début du XIXe siècle Le témoignage des maquettes et d'une icône de pelerin récemment acquises par le MuCEM, *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 183, (juillet-septembre 2018), pp. 247-260, p. 256.

points out that this cartouche practice is an indication that the icons were prepared in advance.<sup>57</sup>

According to Arad, scholars have generally tended to regard proskynetarions as low-quality religious folk art. However, a closer examination reveals a sophisticated image. In this context, the proskynetarions not only create a sacred landscape, but also give it a theological interpretation.<sup>58</sup> Arad states that these icons are important for three reasons. Firstly, they constitute a unique fusion of Western and Eastern religious iconography, giving rise to a new type of icon; secondly, they show the meaning of the biblical landscape in Christian thought; and thirdly, they symbolise the role of the depicted landscape in the formation of cultural concepts and identities.<sup>59</sup> For this reason, when analysing the proskynetarion icons iconographically, it is necessary to consider their theological character.

The first of the multi-themed icons on the south wall is the proskynetarion icon (Figure 1.) that depicts the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The multi-figured icon, which predominantly incorporates shades of blue and red, consists of various scenes and was created by an unknown artist using the oil painting technique on a canvas measuring 130 x 165 cm. in size. At first glance, the icon, which may appear complex, consists of three main vertical sections that can be evaluated independently; the depiction of the Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem in the center, the portrayal of Theotokos (Virgin Mary) on the right, and the representation of Christ on the left. It is observed that the depictions of Christ and Theotokos, portrayed in the composition's right and left wings, are symmetrically positioned to each other within elliptical frames. The two most prominent figures in terms of size in the entire composition are Christ, located at the center of the left ellipse, and Theotokos, portrayed in the Odegetria iconography,<sup>60</sup> positioned at the center of the right ellipse.

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57. Immeerzel, 2014, p. 466.

58. Arad, 2018, p. 65.

59. Arad, 2018, p. 66.

60. Şarlak, 2001, p. 15.



**Figure 1.** *Proskynetarion, Anonymus, Undated, Oil on Canvas, 130 x 165 cm., Ayios Yeoryios Methokhion Church, Yeniköy, İstanbul. (Photo: R. Onurel)*

The upper part of the right vertical section, where Theotokos is located, contains four circles depicting Old Testament subjects. From right to left, these include the Creation of Eve, Adam and Eve before the Tree, the Expulsion from Paradise, and the Deluge of Noah. The whole composition appears to have been designed in a hierarchical order of importance.

The icon of Theotokos within the ellipse, which has angels in its four corners, is surrounded by a border consisting of 20 circles, each containing different depictions. In the five circles, which are larger than the others, scenes from the lives of Christ and Theotokos; clockwise with the themes of Annunciation, Joseph and Virgin Mary, the Three Magi and the Journey to Jerusalem. The remaining fifteen circles depict saints and prophets, each holding an ilitarion in their hands.

Four subjects have been depicted in each of the square and rectangular shapes at the bottom of the composition. The first square on the far right portrays the Koimesis (Dormition of Mary), while the second square depicts the subject of Zoodohos Pigi (Life-giving Spring). In the horizontal rectangle in the bottom right corner, there is a scene from the life of Ayios Prodromos (St. John the Baptist), and in the vertical rectangle right next to it, Salome<sup>61</sup> is depicted with the severed head of Ayios Prodromos.

Christ, depicted to the left of the central depiction of Jerusalem, is the largest figure in this section. The Christ and Theotokos sections are not only located on

61. For Salome's narrative, see, Markos 6:14-29; Matta 14:1-12; Luka 9:7-9.

the right and left of the main composition in a symmetrical order, but also each section creates a geometric symmetry in the composition with the arrangement within itself.

The figure of Christ, seen within the oval frame with angels in each corner, is surrounded by twenty circular medallions. Among these medallions, five are larger than the others and depict New Testament subjects in clockwise order, including the Raising of Lazarus, Entry into Jerusalem, and the Meal at Emmaus. The other fifteen medals depict saints, portrayed with ilitarions in their hands.

The top left section of the icon is adorned with four oval medallions depicting scenes from the life of Ayios Petros (St. Peter). It culminates in a square that represents the Crucifixion of Ayios Petros. Descending from the square on the left side is a band where nine Old Testament prophets can be seen alongside the leaves of the Jesse Tree, each holding an ilitarion in their hands. A similar arrangement can be observed symmetrically on the outer band to the right of Theotokos.

Just below the large composition on the left side, two squares depict the subjects of three holy Church Fathers and the Baptism of Christ. At the bottom of the icon, there is a rectangular section that concludes with the Arrest of Christ and portrays several simultaneous subjects.

The center of the icon is the most prominent section, depicting the interior of the Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem. This portrayal represents different scenes from the Easter cycle<sup>62</sup> and various moments from the life of Christ. The church is depicted as a six-part architectural structure in these depictions.

On the far right, there is the Church of Constantine and Helen. The Patriarch is depicted holding a candle, symbolizing the act of receiving and passing on the Holy Fire,<sup>63</sup> which represents the flame of faith.

In the second row, the scene of Anastasis is depicted in the rotunda, showing the moment that Christ rises from the tomb. In the section depicted on the left, the dome of the Katholikon and the red Anointing Stone (Stone of Unction) at the entrance can be seen, while Constantine and Helen hold the "True Cross" between the two domes. In the fourth section, Crucified Christ is portrayed in the Chapel of Golgotha, with Theotokos on the right and Ayios Prodromos (St. John the Baptist) on the left.

Above the Crucifixion scene, the depiction of Abraham sacrificing Isaac is shown in front of the Chapel of Abraham. Above the double-arched entrance of the Holy Sepulchre Church, Christ is seen with bound hands, wearing a red garment. In the sixth compartment on the left, the top section portrays the Descent from the Cross, while the bottom section depicts the Burial of Christ. Below them, there are images of monasteries from the Holy Land. Beneath all these scenes, in the five rectangular sections, probably Ayios Minas is depicted in

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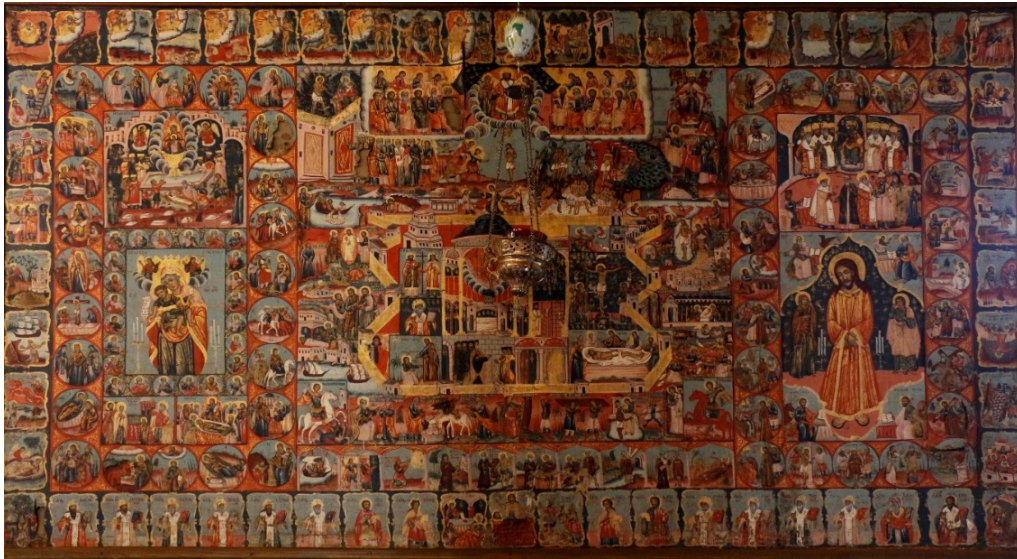
62. Ackl, 2019, p. 101.

63. Ackl, 2019, p. 102.

the center, Ayios Yeoryios on the right, Ayios Demetrios on the left, and two symmetrical depictions of two female saints on either side. One of them could be Ayia Barbara, while the other could be Ayia Catherine.

In the upper portion of the depiction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, is the Last Judgment scene,<sup>64</sup> which represents the final stage of the apocalypse. The depiction of the Last Judgment within two horizontal bands presents a simplified version of the characteristic iconography. In this section, following the iconographic tradition, Christ is seated on a throne, with twelve apostles arranged in groups of six on both sides; on His right, Heaven is depicted, while on His left, Hell is shown, reached by the fiery sea emerging from beneath the throne. Archangel Michael is separating the righteous and the wicked in front of the throne with a scale.

The second proskynetarion is located west of the south nave wall of the church. This icon, dominated by blue and orange colors, measures 121 x 218 cm., and is produced using oil painting technique on canvas (Figure 2). The icon is surrounded by fifty-six small rectangular scenes depicting various subjects and individuals. The sections within this frame can be examined in three main groups. Theotokos on the right and Christ on the left are the first subjects that catch the eye in the composition of the Holy Jerusalem in the center. At the top of the Jerusalem depiction, the Last Judgment can be seen, while scenes from the New Testament can be observed at the bottom.



**Figure 2.** *Proskynetarion, Anonymous, Undated, Oil on Canvas, 121 x 218 cm., Ayios Yeoryios Methokhion Church, Yeniköy, İstanbul. (Photo: R. Onurel)*

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64. For further information: Ruhiye Onurel (2018) *Kıyamet ve Son Yargı Tasvirlerinde Hibrit İkonografisi/Hybrid Iconography in Apocalypse and Last Judgement Depictions*, unpublished PhD Thesis, Institute of Social Sciences, Işık University, İstanbul.

In the squares surrounding the icon, subjects from the Old Testament and the New Testament are depicted. The scenes in the top row, from right to left, are the Formation of the World, the Creation of Adam, the Creation of Eve, the scenes of the Expulsion from Heaven, the Prophet Jonah in the right frame, the Crucifixion of Ayios Petros, the subjects that attract the attention at first glance.

In the center of the lower frame, there are three squares that are related to Ayios Prodromos (St. John the Baptist) and Salome. In each of the squares on either side of Salome, church scholars can be seen wearing ceremonial garments and holding books in their hands. In the order from right to left, the depiction goes as follows: Ayios Basilios (St. Basil), Ayios Hrisostomos (St. John Chrysostom), Ayios Grigorios (St. Gregory), Ayios Spiridon (St. Spyridon), Ayios Kirillos (St. Cyril), Ayios Nikolaos (St. Nicholas), Ayios Kosmas (St. Cosmas), Ayios Triphonos (St. Tryphon), Ayios Damianos (St. Damian), Ayios Athanasios (St. Athanasius), Ayios Timoteos (St. Timothy), Ayios Dionysios (St. Dionysius), Ayios Haralambos and Ayios Seraphim.

The depiction of the city of Jerusalem in the center of the icon is remarkable for its large size and the portrayal of multiple subjects simultaneously. The city walls, indicated by the inscriptions of gate names, cover a significant area and are represented by a yellow band with straight lines at the top and bottom and zigzag patterns on the sides. Within the walls, the complex structure of the Holy Sepulchre Church can be seen. In this section depicting the Easter cycle, on the far right, Constantine and Helen are holding the "True Cross" in their respective churches named after them. In the bottom frame, is seen Ayios Iakovos (St. James).

In the rotunda, Christ rising from His tomb is depicted with a red cloth covering His right shoulder and partially His body, while being surrounded by ring-like clouds. In the Crucifixion scene, there are two more crosses on the right and left behind Christ. Underneath the composition, there is the scene of the Burial, and above it, Abraham, his son Isaac, and an angel bringing a lamb for sacrifice can be seen. Outside the city walls on the left, there is the Baptism of Christ, below it, the Church of the Nativity, and the Massacre of the Innocents. On the right side of the city of Jerusalem, outside the walls, there is the scene of the Transfiguration of Christ, and below it, the depiction of Baruch.

At the bottom of the Jaffa Gate and the sailing ships scene, the band starts with Ayios Yeoryios as cavalry, who kills the dragon with a spear in his hand, and ends with the image of Ayios Demetrios on a horse on the left. On the band between the two cavalry, from right to left, Prophet Abraham's sprouting to Prophet Lot, Lot watering the sprouts and devil drinking water are depicted. The Prophet Solomon is sitting on a throne next to the growing tree, who ordered the

tree to be cut down. In the sources, it is stated that the Cross of Christ was made from this tree, and no one was able to cut down this tree.<sup>65</sup>

At the top of the city depiction, the Last Judgment, which is the last stage of the apocalyptic cycle is depicted. Christ is sitting on his throne in the clouds, the Sea of Fire coming out from under the throne flows towards Hell on His left. On the right of Christ, who is depicted with angels and apostles on both sides, two gates of Heaven are seen. The dead are resurrected, and the judged are sent to Heaven and Hell to receive reward or punishment.

On the left side of the composition, Christ is depicted with his hands bound in front of him, wearing a long orange garment and sandals on his feet. The figure is seen from the front, with the head slightly tilted towards the right shoulder and the gaze directed in the same direction. In the background, to the right and left of Christ, are portrayed Theotokos and Ayios Prodromos, as smaller figures. At the corners of the rectangle, along with their respective symbols, the four Gospel writers (Four Evangelists) are depicted: Ioannes (John) at the top, Matheus (Matthew) on the right, Markos (Mark) on the left, and Loukas (Luke) at the bottom, each holding their own books. At the upper part, within a horizontal rectangle, surrounded by religious scholars, the High Priest Christ is seen seated on his throne (Despotikon). Surrounding these two squares is a band with 24 circles, depicting scenes from Christ's life, including His miracles, Arrest, Trial, Torture, Crucifixion, and more.

On the right side of the depiction of Jerusalem, within a vertical rectangle, there is a central scene featuring Theotokos and Christ. Above them, there is the scene of Zoodohos Pigi (the Life-giving Spring), and below them, there are the scenes of Virgin's Entrance into the Temple and the Koimesis (Dormition of Virgin Mary). Surrounding these four scenes is an outer band with 24 circles depicting scenes from Virgin's life, creating a complete symmetry with those around Christ. In the inner band, within small circles, there are 24 depictions of Old Testament prophets surrounding Theotokos.

## Conclusions

It has been determined that the icons, which constitute the main subject of the research, differ significantly from other icons in the church by containing a large number of figures. The most distinctive feature of these depictions is that

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65. Magdalena Laptas (2004) A Proskynetarion from the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw: A Preliminary Description, in: *Coptic Studies on the Threshold of a New Millennium, Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Coptic Studies*, Leiden, August 27 - September 2, 2000, (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, vol. CXXXIII) eds. M. Immeerzeel J. Van der Vliet, Leuven, Paris, Dudley, MA 2004, (pp. 1349-1355), p. 1353.

they reflect a complex iconography. In the iconographic evaluation, it is seen that both of the proskynetarions include Old and New Testament subjects, as well as depictions of the holy places in Jerusalem and scenes from the life of Christ within the framework of the Easter cycle. The subjects in proskynetarion icons are composed in a systematic order.

The fact that they were painted on canvas cloth instead of wooden surfaces for easy portability is an indication that they were produced in accordance with changing conditions and for the target audience. Especially in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, proskynetarion icons, which were preferred by pilgrims returning from pilgrimage, indicate that they turned into a kind of production industry product in the conditions of that day.

The depiction of subjects within squares in the prosynetarion icons indicates influences from Russian icon art. In this context, the impact of the preferences of Russian pilgrims can also be observed in these icons.

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