The Hermitage of «Panagia Eleousa» (Virgin Merciful) Great Prespa: an Artistic Expression of Time and Space Limit Between Two Eras and Two Nationalities

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The first references in the bibliography about the hermitage of «Panagia Eleousa» (Virgin Merciful), situated within the Greek borders of the lake Great (Megali) Prespa, were brought to light at the end of 19th century. They belong to P. N. Miljukov, member of the Russian Archaeological Institute of Constantinople in 1899. From the middle of 20th century onwards publications of professor Stylianos Pelekanidis, concerning his inspections in the uninvestigated land, and of professor Nikolaos Moutsopoulos, concerning his excavations, gave new impetus in the overall research of the area of Prespa lakes including the hermitage as well. The mural decoration of Panagia Eleousa has been studied by the academician professor Gojko Subotić, categorizing it in the so-called artistic unity of the “School of Ochrid” of the 15th century and emphasizing those elements, which unify the artistic production of the broader northern Macedonian area. Moreover, an edition of the Greek Ministry of Culture in 1991 constituted the first archaeological guide of the area. In the years 1995-2002 the byzantine monuments of Prespa Lakes –the hermitage included- have been thoroughly investigated, excavated and maintained through a Greek-European program held

1 P.N. Miljukov, Hristianskija drevnosti Zapadnoi Makedonii, Izvestija Russkago Arheologitseeskago Instituta v Konstantinopol IV.1 (1899), 60-62.
2 S. Pelekanidis, Βυζαντινά και μεταβυζαντινά μνημεία της Πρέσπας, Θεσσαλονίκη 1960.
3 N. Moutsopoulos, Η βασιλική του Αγίου Αχιλλείου στην Πρέσπα. Συμβολή στη μελέτη των μνημείων της περιοχής, Α, Β, Γ Θεσσαλονίκη 1989.
4 G. Subotic, Охридска сликарска школа XV века, Београд 1980, 34-42.
by the 11th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities.6

The hermitage of Panagia Eleousa has been built in a cave on the rocky cliffs of the southern shore of the Great Prespa Lake (fig. 1). It makes part of a unit of small byzantine and post-byzantine hermitages, which today are shared among three different countries, thus forming a monumental frontier between Greece, Albania and FYROM. Within the Greek borders Panagia Eleousa counts as the last among five hermitages, dated in the 14th and 15th centuries, which lay to the southern coast of the Psarades village. Its place in the limit of a three-nation borderline and its punctual date in 1409/10 give to the monument its speciality in terms of site, time and culture.

It is built and decorated when the population of byzantine Macedonia was gradually passed under the domination of the Ottomans.7 Therefore, it is chronologically placed in the transition period between two eras – the Byzantine and the Ottoman or Post byzantine-, and geographically within the broader area where greek-bYZantine and slavic populations coexist, under the protection of the same religion and the jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Ochrid that existed from 1020.8 The Archbishopric was officially Greek-speaking and had harmonious collaboration with the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate, yet bilingual bishoprics were included in its territory.

As a factor of unification, the Archbishopric has undertaken the initiative and duty of continuing a common civilization within the frame of the post-byzantine world, during the turbulent 15th century. Though in historical terms the conditions form overturning scenery, on the contrary the basic cultural principles lead to unity.

The donor inscription of the hermitage gives an eloquent proof of such a combination through the reference of Kral Vukašin with his hellenized name as “afthe[n]tis Vlukasinos” (master Vlukasinos)9 (fig. 2). Although the inscription points to the same date, 1409/10,

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7 Α. Vacalopoulos, Ιστορία της Μακεδονίας 1354-1833, Θεσσαλονίκη 1988, 40-55, 63-71.


9 The first publication of the inscription was made by Miljukov (Miljukov, Hristianskija drevnosti, 62) and the second by Pelekanidis (Pelekanidis, Μνημεία της Πρέσπας, 125-126) who corrected the mistakes and completed the missing words. In the publication of Moutsopoulos, that followed, is given also the facsimile
for erection and mural decoration, some scholars ascribe its erection during the reign of Vukašin (1355-1371)\textsuperscript{10} dissociating it from its painted decoration that undoubtedly belongs to 1409/10\textsuperscript{11}. On the contrary, we support that both the edifice and its decoration are to be attributed to the same period, namely in the beginning of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century. The reference to the late Kral is an expedient anachronism that reflects not only the maintenance of memory but also points to a desirable system of self-administration for the Christian populations of the area by a Christian governor, no matter his nationality, at least during the 15\textsuperscript{th} century. The three monks and donors Savvas, Iakovos and Varlaam, of Greek origin, evoke the sovereignty of Vukašin, by their choice without being forced to accept it\textsuperscript{12}. The Serbian Zupan of Prilep and subsequent Kral Vukašin, as a ruler of the western part of Macedonia, aimed with his brother King Ugljesa, to re-establish the ancient Serbian kingdom, strengthening the central power in their territory, among which the area of Prespes was, within the scope of usurpation of the Byzantine power that was gradually weakened\textsuperscript{13}. Furthermore, both brothers have made appeal to Byzantium to confront in alliance the common enemy\textsuperscript{14}. Vukašin was killed in the battle of Maritsa in 1371 and his son, the popular and almost legendary, Kral Marko became his successor until his death in the battle of Rovine in 1395, yet as a vassal to the Ottomans.

Portraits of members of the Serbian family are depicted twice: Vukašin is represented with the Tsar Uro in Saint Nikolaos in Psača during his reign (1365-71)\textsuperscript{15} and in the Monastery of Marko after his death, with the Kral Marko\textsuperscript{16}, thus pointing to the dynastic continuity despite their subjugation to the Ottomans.

Although 38 years have been intervened between the battle of Maritsa and the donor inscription of the Virgin Eleousa, the memory of Vukašin’s reign in the broader area has


\textsuperscript{12} Eloquent proof of the peaceful coexistence of Greek and Slavic populations in the broader Macedonia, during the 15\textsuperscript{th} century, is given through the Greek donor inscription in the church of the Ascension in Lescoeć (Subotić, \textit{Οχριδέςκα}, 93-96).

\textsuperscript{13} For the Kral Vukašin and the Kral Marko see C. Jireček, \textit{Geschichte der Serben} 1 (1967), 430, 433-434, 437-438. For the Mirmajcević dynasty, their policy in Macedonia and relative rich bibliography see: N. Dionysopoulos, \textit{Πορτρέτα κοσμικών δωρητών στην εντοίχια ζωγραφική του Αγίου Όρους (14\textsuperscript{ς} – αρχές 16\textsuperscript{ς} αι.)} (unpublished PhD dissertation), Βόλος 2012, 87-93, 120-121, 169.


been kept alive. Even though a typological similarity between dedicatory inscriptions referring to the Kral is observed: in the church of Theotokos in Mali Grad (1368/9) we read: “Afthentevontos panypsilotatou kraliou tou Velikasinou” (during the mastership of the highest Kral Velikasinou) in a similar expression to “Afthentis Vlukasinos” of the examined monument. Moreover, numismatic evidences and hoards of Vukašin’s reign have been located in excavations at the basilica in the island of Ayios Achillios and in Skopje a few decades after his death.

Between the defeat of Bayazid the 1st in Ankara in 1402 until the reorganization of the Ottoman State, in the occupied Macedonia the conditions of subjugation have been released giving thus hope to christian populations for the overturning of the new order. The political and territorial situation is still changeable and the two biggest cities of Byzantium are still free. In such historical conditions it is observed an augmentation in the erection and decoration of new churches especially in the area of Kastoria, Prespes and Ochrid during the first two decades of 15th century.

The same ideology reflects the text of the painted inscription on the roof beam of the hermitage, which constitutes a variation of the Paracletical Canon of the wish for the bread fraction (fig. 3). Having corrected the first reading by professor Moutsopoulos, we propose the following:

1. \[\text{ΨΩCΟΝ ΤΟ ΚΕΡΑΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΩΝ ΚΡΑΤΟΥΝΤ(ΩΝ) ΤΑ ΚΗΠΙΤΡΑ} \]
2. \[\text{ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΕΥCEBΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΩCΩΝ ΕΛΕΗCΟ/} \]
3. \[\text{ΤΟΝ ΟΙΚΟΝ ΜΕΧΠΙ ΤΕΛΟΥC ΔΙA ΤΗC [CHC] ΕΥCΠΙΛΑΧ(ΝΙΑ)C Κ(ΨΠΙ)Ε} \]

It is obvious that this redemptory invocation bear also political interpretation by appealing

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17 V. Djurić, Mali Grad – Sv. Atanasije u Kosturu – Borje, Zograf 6, 31-32.
18 For the excavation at the basilica of Saint Achilleios see M. Paissidou, Άγιος Αχιλλείος 1996-1998, 533-534. For the excavation in Skopje and the relative hoard see G. Spasovska-Dimitrioska, Medieval Serbian silver coins unearthed on the locality Stara Skopska Carsija, MAA 6 (1980), 135-137.
21 «Πψωσον κέρας χριστιανών ορθοδόξων και κατέπεμψον ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς τὰ ἐλέη σου τὰ πλοῦσια / ἢ τὸ μέγαν σου ἐλέος».
22 Moutsopoulos, Βυζαντινά Μνημεία, 152.
the Lord «to rise up the horn 23 (the strength) of the pious Christian Kings who hold the scepters, to save and to show mercy to the House until the End through the Lord’s compassion».

During this period the byzantine Emperor Manuel Palaiologos (1391 - 1425) aimed to re-establish the crumbling byzantine empire and to develop an alliance among all the Christian leaders in the peninsula of Haemus against the Turkish invasion 24.

The political ideology for the renaissance of the empire is artistically reflected in motives used in the iconography of the hermitage, as the two-headed eagle on the basis of the conch of the sanctuary, alluding to textile decoration (fig. 4). Within the same ideological frame the two-headed eagle also decorates the basis of the wall painting in Saint George at Godivje 25.

This symbol used by the Comnenian and the Palaiologan dynasty 26 has been also adapted by the Serbian 27 and the Bulgarian court of the 13th and 14th century 28. During the 14th and the 15th century it decorates the costume of local rulers in Macedonia and Serbia, as these of Despot Liveros and his wife in Saint Sophia in Ochrid 29 (1347-1350), of Caesar Novakos in Mali Grad (1369) and of the presumptive heir of the subjugated Serbian kingdom Despot Stefan in Resava (1418) 30, thus presuming their authority.

Furthermore, another imperial insignium we can discern is the red purple pillow (suppedium), on which Christ is standing in the depiction of the Deesis (fig. 5). The motif refers to the imperial iconography in the manuscripts illuminations, on the coins and on the mosaics 31.

Apotropaic signs are widely used either in the internal or in the external decoration, as the two flourishing crosses with the cryptograms and the symbols of the Passion in the entrance 32.

23 Especially the mention of the horn finds its artistic parallel in the depiction of Kral Marko in Marko monastery, where he holds a horn instead of a scepter (Kotso, Peinture murale, 168).
24 Vacalopoulos, Ιστορία της Μακεδονίας, 25-30.
25 Subotic, Οξυριστικά, 29 fig. 4.
27 For the adoption of this symbol by the Serbian court see: Dionysopoulos, Πορτρέτα δωρητών, 142.
28 As in the illumination of the Tetraevangelon of Tsar Ivan Alexander (Το Βυζάντιο ως Οικουμένη, Όρες Βυζαντίων. Έργα και ημέρες στο Βυζάντιο, Αθήνα 2001, 256-258).
29 Cv. Grozdanov, Οξυριστικο σώμα σλαβικού XIV века, Београд 1980, 63-64, des. 9, fig. 44.
30 V. Djurić, Byzantinische Fresken in Jugoslawien, München 1976, 133, 151-152, fig. 82, 113.
32 For the flourishing cross see D. Talbot-Rice, The Leaved Cross, Byzantinoslavica XI.1 (1950), 72-81. For the plant ornaments that surround the cross see J. Fleming, Kreuz und Pflanzenornament, Byzantinoslavica
the bird-like, the zoomorphic or the snake-like creatures under the altar, the human face in
the external decoration and the painted inscriptions with prophylactic content (fig. 6-7).
This iconographic phenomenon bears symbolic connotation and its increasing application in
Macedonia and Serbia, during the 14th and 15th centuries, may seek explanation in the new
historical circumstances.

Four painted inscriptions constitute a constant prayer for the protection of the donors thus
completing the context and meaning of the internal donor inscription and the donors’
depiction on the south wall (fig. 8). The red colored painted inscriptions on the western
façade constitute an imitation and reference to the byzantine ceramic inscriptions on the
elaborate façades of the churches, as particularly the paradigms in Epirus, in Ochrid as in
Saint Sophia and in Serbia as in Bogorodica Ljeviška.

Moreover, the external red painted decoration, as an imitation of the colorful ceramic
decoration, refers to the handling of the façades of the churches in Kastoria, Prespes, Ochrid
and in regions influenced by the architecture of the Despotate of Epirus. Particularly, the
successive decorative friezes and the variety of the themes in the western pediment, which
allude to the ceramic motives, follow and accentuate the wall structure (fig. 9). Characteristic
motives as the “disepsilon”, the bricks with the cuttings in a row and the crosses with circular
or quadrate plaques are known from Epirus, Veroia, Zaum and Serbia. In addition to that,
the painted imitation of the “cloisonné” structure on the walls and of the ceramic decoration
is localized in the byzantine architecture of Macedonia and Serbia from 11th until 14th century,
as in the Virgin Eleousa (Veljusa, 1080), in Saint George at Kurbinovo (1191), in Saint

30.1 (1969), 88-115. For the cryptograms see G. Babić, Les croix à cryptogrammes, peintes dans les églises
Paris 1979, 7-10.
33 For the human mask motif see: D. Mouriki, The Mask Motif in the Wall Paintings of Mistra. Cultural
34 S. Gabelić, Prophylactic and Other Inscriptions in Late Byzantine Fresco Painting, in: Byzantinische
35 Concerning the context of the inscriptions see: Moutsopoulos, Βυζαντινά μνημεία, 145-150.
36 K. Tsouris, Ο κεραμοπλαστικός διάκοσμος των υστεροβυζαντινών μνημείων της Βορειοδυτικής Ελλάδας,
Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης 1988, 145-147.
37 Ćurčić, Architecture, 574-575, fig. 659-660.
38 G. Subotić, Art of Kosovo. The sacred Land, New York 1998, 38-39, fig. 23, 24, 25. Ćurčić, op. cit., 645-
646, fig. 754-755.
39 Concerning the external ceramic decoration it has been observed its organic combination with the wall
structure. For the decoration of the pediments see: G. M. Velenis, Ερμηνεία του εξωτερικού διακόσμου στη
βυζαντινή οικιστική, A’ (κείμενο), Θεσσαλονίκη 1984, 239-244, πίν. 74-76.
40 Tsouris, op.cit., 117-119, 124-125, 141, σχ. 4°, 5.ΙΙα, 87.
41 Ćurčić, Architecture, 561-562, 576, εικ. 639, 662.
42 Subotić, Art of Kosovo, 38-39, fig. 23, 24, 25.
43 Ćurčić, Architecture, 382-383, εικ. 412.
Achillios at Arilje (Dragutin’s phase before 1296), in Saint Nicholas at Dobarsko (c. 1330) and in Ljubostinja (c. end of 14th century).

As far as the frescoes decoration of the hermitage is concerned, its linking to the so-called “School of Ochrid” of the 15th century has been supported though in a differentiated expression. Yet the comparative study shows that it is basically associated to the artistic tradition of Kastoria, which has been particularly formed during the second half of 14th and the first decades of 15th century, then propagated in the area of Ochrid and Pelagonia, constituting thus a common artistic language. Either iconographical types or surnames of the Virgin refer to byzantine prototypes. The Virgin in the conch of the apse bears the rare for the area surname “Episkepsis”, an epithet that has been applied to Theotokos of Blachernai, associated to the protective capacity of the sacred veil (maphorion) of the Virgin that was sheltered in Blachernai monastery in Constantinople (fig. 10). In accordance to this, in a small distance from the Virgin Eleousa and on the ruins of an anonymous hermitage the depiction of the Virgin of Blachernae is surnamed “Megali Panagia” (the Great Panagia), an epithet that has been created in Thessaloniki, has propagated in Kastoria and Ochrid during 14th and 15th centuries and finally passed to the northern Balkan and Russian iconography of the post byzantine world.

Respectively, the type of the Virgin Glycophilousa holding Christ Anapeson (fig. 11) follows the known prototype from churches in Kastoria of 14th and 15th century, as in Taxiarchis Mitropoleos (1359/60), in Saint Alypios (last quarter of 14th cent.) and the in Virgin Rassiotissa (1411), and passes in Pelagonia in the monastery of Treskavac (1430), drawing their origin from the relative icon in Filotheou Monastery and probably alluding to a Thessalonian or Constantinopolitan prototype.

On the barrel vault of the hermitage dominates the depiction of Jesus in three different

45 Subotić, Oхридска, 194-195.
47 For the epithet of the Megali Panagia see: M. Paissidou, «Μήτηρ Θεού η Μεγάλη Παναγία», Βυζαντινά 30 (2010), 255-276.
48 E. N. Tsigaridas, Η χρονολόγηση των τοιχογραφιών του ναού του Αγίου Αλυπίου Καστοριάς, Ευφρόσυνον, Αφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη 2, Αθήνα 1992, 648-656, pl. 351-357.
49 Χ. Μπαλτογιάννη, Εικόνες Μήτηρ Θεού, Αθήνα 1994, 79-80.
types: Ascending, Angel of the Great Council and Pantocrator (fig. 12-13). The pictorial polymorphism of Jesus on a barrel vault of a church has been firstly formed in the monumental painting of Macedonia, in Veljusa (c. 1080)\textsuperscript{50}. We consider as the top example of such an interpretation the trimorphic depiction on the barrel vault of Saint Stefanos in Kastoria\textsuperscript{51}. Christ’s polymorphism is met in variations concerning the way of the Logos of God’s depiction and its interpretation. Thus in Saint Constantine and Heleni in Ochrid\textsuperscript{52} and in Prophet Elias at Dolgaec\textsuperscript{53} the trinitarian dogma is accentuated through the depiction of the Ancient of the Days, the Pantocrator and the Holy Spirit in the Preparation of the Throne, although in the monastery of Matka the presence of Logos is accentuated through the depiction of the Angel of the Great Council and of Christ Emmanuel\textsuperscript{54}. The typological “trilogy” of the examined paradigm in Prespa concentrates on the unity and eternity of the divinity through the meaning of the Ἦν (Logos – Angel of the Great Council), the Ὄν (Pantocrator) and the Ἐρχόμενος (Ascending).

Particularly the Angel of the Great Council figures the eternal Logos and he is associated to the Incarnation\textsuperscript{55}. The twelve-rayed glory that surrounds him may constitute a hesychastic influence (fig. 13). The theme appears at first in the Virgin Perivleptos at Ochrid (1295) from the Thessalonian painters Michail Astrapas and Eutyhios and it is rarely depicted during 15\textsuperscript{th} century, as only two paradigms show us, in the examined hermitage of Eleousa and in Saint Demetrios at Matka. In an interesting and unique iconographic peculiarity on the barrel vault of Saint Nicholas Bolnica (c.1330-45), the figure of Archangel Gabriel is to be correlated to the three types of Christ’s presence (Ascended, Pantocrator, Preparation of the Throne)\textsuperscript{56}. As Gabriel makes an allusion to the Incarnation we think that the synthesis in Bolnica can be interpreted as a transitional stage that leads from the paradigm of Perivleptos and the sole depiction of the Angel of the Great Council, to the examined case, which forms a unique application of these three types of Jesus.

As far as the christological scenes are concerned we observe close similarities to iconographic

\textsuperscript{50} N. Siomkos, L’église Saint-Etienne à Kastoria. Études des différentes phases du décor peint (Xe-XIVe siècles), Θεσσαλονίκη 2005, 136-137.
\textsuperscript{51} Op. cit.
\textsuperscript{52} G. Subotić, Свети Константин и Јелена у Охириу, Београд 1971, fig. 11, 13-16.
\textsuperscript{53} Subotić, Охиридска, des. 29.
\textsuperscript{54} Op. cit., des. 111.
\textsuperscript{56} Grozdanov, Охиридско, 43, 45, des. 4.
parallels from Kastoria of the second half of the 14th century and of the beginning of the 15th, as with Taxiarchis Mitropoleos for the depiction of the Descent to Hell57, with Saint Athanasios tou Mouzaki for the depiction of the Baptism and for the Resurrection of Lazarus58, in Saint Nicholas tou Kyritzì for the depiction of the Lamentation59 (fig. 14), in Saint Nicholas tou Tzotza and in Saint George tou Vounou for the Descent to Hell60 and in some icons from the iconostasis of the church of Saint Treis (Gourias, Avivos and Samonas)61.

The two major warrior Saints Demetrios and George bear the epithets “Megas Dux” (Great Duke) and “Cappadox” (from Cappadocia) as we discern in the extinguishable inscription of Saint Demetrios and on the sword of Saint George (fig. 15). The epithet “Cappadox” refers to the native of the Saint62. Its record on the sword reflects the manners of the Thessalonian painters Michail Astrapas and Eutyhios who were particularly activated in Macedonia and in the Serbian court of Milutin63. The epithet of Saint Demetrios as “Megas Dux” has been already discussed among researchers64. The most ancient paradigm is documented in the church of the Archangel Michael in Lesnovo65 and then follows the examined one and the depiction in Saint Andreas tou Rousouli in Kastoria (1430)66. The known examples belong to 15th century and they are sited in Kastoria, in the broader area of Ochrid, in Veroia, in Meteora and in Boboshevo67. In the latest case he brings the epithet “Veliki voevoda”, translating from Greek the byzantine dignity. The origin of the surname “Megas Dux” may originate from Thessaloniki. It is to be noted that Vukašin’s family considered the Saint Patron of Thessaloniki as her protector as well. Moreover, the Kral was also referred in the sources as

57 S. Pelekanidis, Καστοριά I. Βυζαντινά τοιχογραφία. Πίνακες, Θεσσαλονίκη 1953, πίν. 126β.
60 E. N. Tsigaridas, Τοιχογραφίες της περιόδου των Παλαιολόγων σε ναούς της Μακεδονίας, Θεσσαλονίκη 1999, fig. 129, 160. A. Trifonova, Οι τοιχογραφίες του Αγίου Γεωργίου του Βουνού στην Καστοριά. Συμβολή στη μελέτη της εντοίχιας ζωγραφικής του δεύτερου μισού του 14ου αιώνα στην ευρύτερη περιοχή της Μακεδονίας, Θεσσαλονίκη 2010 (unpublished PhD dissertation), 145-151, εικ. 44).
62 See also in the Old Catholicon of the Monastery of Transfiguration in Meteora (E. Georgitsoyanni, Les peintures murales du vieux catholicon du monastère de la Transfiguration aux Meteores (1483), Athènes 1993, 276-277, pl. 92-93).
64 Α. Χονγορουλους, Άγιος Δημήτριος ο Μέγας Δούς ο Απόκαυκος, Ελληνικά 15 (1957), 122-140. N. Th. Pazaras, Άγιος Δημήτριος ο «Απόκαυκος»: μία νέα ερμηνευτική προσέγγιση, Βυζαντινά 29 (2009), 337-360.
66 Pelekanidis, Kastoria, pl. 166α. Tsigaridas, Τοιχογραφίες Παλαιολόγων, 306, εικ. 174 (where we read the inscription “Ο ΜΕΓΑΣ ΔΟΥΚΑΣ”).
“Kral Demetrios”\textsuperscript{68}. The donor synthesis with the two monks to the right and left of the enthroned Virgin with the child counts as another paradigm among those appearing with special frequency from 14\textsuperscript{th} century onwards (\textit{fig. 16})\textsuperscript{69}. The importance of the figure to the right of the Virgin is underlined by his size and his elder age. His identification to the monk Savvas, referred on the donor inscription, is probable. Despite his important personality, the model of the church is being offered by the younger monk, perhaps the monk Iakovos of the donor inscription. It is probable that we can recognize his name on the imitative ceramic inscription of the western facade “IAKOB”\textsuperscript{70}.

The hermitage of the Virgin Eleousa in the time and space limit between two eras and two nationalities has been provided by elements matured in the byzantine Macedonia and transmitted in the broader area with the impulse of an artistic common language, balancing between the byzantine and post byzantine world, which was searching for his identity in the political, cultural and artistic sector under a unified tradition, that has been promoted within the ecumenical heritage of Byzantium.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{The hermitage of the Virgin Eleousa}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{68} Dionysopoulos, \textit{Πορτραίτα δωρητών}, 169.
\textsuperscript{70} Prof. N. Moutsopoulos has read “NKOB” (Moutsopoulos, \textit{Βυζαντινά μνημεία}, 145-146).
Fig. 2: The donor inscription
Fig. 3: The inscription on the roof beam (detail)
Fig. 4: The two-headed eagle in the sanctuary
Fig. 5: Christ of the Deesis on a purple pillow
Fig. 6: Flourishing cross with cryptograms
Fig. 7: Apotropaic creatures under the Altar
Fig. 8: Design of the western façade (layout by George Fousteris)
Fig. 9: The western façade with painted decoration (detail)
Fig. 10: The Virgin “Episkepsis”
Fig. 11: The Virgin “Glykophilousa” with the Christ “Anapeson”
Fig. 12: Jesus Pantocrator
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Fig. 13: Jesus Angel of the Great Council
Fig. 14: The Lamentation
Fig. 15: Saint George “Cappadox”
Fig. 16: The donors’ representation