International Colloquium

ROUTES OF RUSSIAN ICONS IN GREECE AND IN THE BALKANS

(16TH - early 20th centuries)

15-18 January 2014


The main subject of the Colloquium is the transfer of Russian icons to Greece and the wider Balkan region from the 16th to the early 20th century. Alongside the written sources, icons (as well as liturgical vessels, vestments and books) transferred from Russia all over the Orthodox East, form a particular kind of historical evidence for the evolution of political relations and cultural influences between Imperial Russia and the Balkan states and peoples. The Colloquium aims to contribute to the study of the various aspects of this significant case of cultural transfer, offering fresh evidence and new theoretical and methodological approaches to it.

The workshop subjects:

1/ Investigating the historical context of the spread of Russian icons in the Balkans and the significance of this transfer for the development of cultural ties and political relations between Russia and the Balkan peoples.

2/ Reconstructing the "paths" and "channels" of dissemination of Russian icons in Greece and the wider Balkan region during the long period from the 16th to the early 20th century.
3/ Studying the iconographic repertoire of Russian icons arriving in the Balkans and identifying the predominant iconographic types and themes preferred by donors, patrons and recipients.

4/ Analyzing the various forms and the social aspects of the reception of Russian icons by the various local communities, and examining the symbolic and ideological dimensions of the use of Russian icons in changing historical contexts.

**COLLECTIVE VOLUME “ROUTES OF RUSSIAN ICONS IN GREECE AND IN THE BALKANS” (16TH - early 20th centuries)**

Dear Colleague,

The Volume with the proceedings of the International conference “Routes of Russian icons in Greece and the Balkans” will be published during the 2015. The articles will be peer reviewed. The length of articles should **not exceed 7,000 words** (abstract and notes included) **and may contain maximum 10 illustrations**. Submitted papers should be formatted A4 size, typed in a Unicode font, such as: Arial Unicode, Palatino Linotype Unicode etc. The font size should be 12 for the text and 10 for the footnotes. Line spacing should remain at 1.5 lines throughout the article (including footnotes).
1. ENGELINA SMIRNOVA

(Moscow State University, Russia)

“RUSSIAN ICONS AND ICON-PAINTERS IN THE COUNTRIES OF ORTHODOX WORLD DURING THE END OF 15TH -16TH CENTURIES”

In the course of nearly five centuries of its Christian history, from its inception to the fall of Constantinople, Russia mostly “imported” art from the Byzantine world (although some surviving specimens show that artworks were also exported, as was the case with images of the Russian saints Boris and Gleb, with the aim of popularising their cult). In the late 15th century and especially in the 16th century Russia emerged as a major politically independent state, which maintained contacts with many centres of Orthodoxy, including those in the sphere of art.

Those contacts took place in three forms. First, Russians made donations and gifts to different churches and monasteries in Greece, on Mount Athos and in Sinai, and in other territories. The surviving artworks make it possible to conclude that those were mostly small icons (about 35x25 cm) or slightly larger analogion icons. The images were for the most part meant to acquaint world Orthodox centres with Russian varieties of iconography and objects of worship (the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God, the Murom Icon of the Mother of God and the Holy Mandylion), and also with images of Russian saints (as Vojislav Djuric observed) that were extensively venerated in the country and symbolised the ancient roots and endurance of Russian Orthodoxy. It seems that on rare occasions the donations included more complex triptych compositions emphasising the longevity of Russian monastic life and the piety of the reigning dynasty. Written sources, too, provide evidence of small icon exportation. For example, Martin Gruneveg of Germany, who visited Moscow in 1584–1585 as a secretary of an Armenian merchant, purchased several small finely executed icons to resell them in Wallachia. As distinct from icons, ecclesiastical
embroideries donated by the Russian court could be large in size (the Hilandar katapetasma, 1555), because it was easier to transport them.

Second, icon-painters were dispatched from Moscow to work on large-scale icon-painting commissions. That was how icons for two tiers of the iconostasis were made at the Putna Monastery in Romania. In the 1470s–1480s Ivan III of the Grand Duchy of Moscow maintained active political contacts with Stephen the Great of Moldavia. Masters sent from Moscow around 1484 (?) to decorate the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Putna produced not the Deisis (showing figures of various versions of holiness), which was traditional for Russia, but the Apostles tier characteristic of the Byzantine tradition while on the whole complying with the stylistic fundamentals of the Moscow School of icon-painting. Apparently, some Byzantine icons that have survived in Russian churches were done by Byzantine masters directly in Russia with an eye to the local tradition. This fact must explain, for example, the emphasized outlines in the Deisis icons (circa 1389-1395) of the Serpukhov Vysotsky Monastery (now in the Tretyakov Gallery and the Russian Museum), and also the peculiar iconography of the late 14th-century icon of The Laudation of the Most Holy Theotokos with scenes from the Akathist (the Cathedral of the Dormition at the Moscow Kremlin). Transporting large-size icons in the Middle Ages was out of question.

Third, some specific varieties of the iconographic canon common in Russia were adopted in the Balkan lands. There are Resurrection – Descent into Hell compositions, which include not only Eve but other Old Testament righteous women in accordance with one type of this scene in Russian iconography (podea, circa 1638–1639; a 1646 icon by Master Andrei of Lvov, both at the National Museum of Art of Romania in Bucharest). Transfiguration compositions replicating Russian details of the iconography are found among Greek murals of the late 15th – 17th centuries.

2. KRITON CHRYSSOCHOIDIS

(Institute of Historical Research /NHRF)

“OBSERVATIONS ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE ECCLESIASTICAL CENTERS OF THE ORTHODOX EAST (16TH-17TH C.)”

This paper comments on certain outlooks of the relations of Russia with two representative ecclesiastical centers of the Orthodox East; one monastic center, Mount Athos, and one patriarchate, and great center of pilgrimage, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. More specifically, the paper will focus on the nature, type and degree of the impact Russian grants had on their economic survival during the 16th and 17th century.

We find that:
1. The financial aid of both the monasteries of Mount Athos and the patriarchate of Jerusalem has the form of regular or exceptional state grants, and is in no way related to the mass and grassroots institution of ziteia (fund-raising expeditions) that developed in the Ottoman-held areas.

2. Apart from two exceptions, until the 18th century, no dependency (metochion), i.e. a permanent economic establishment, operated on Russian territory by any ecclesiastical foundation based within the Ottoman Empire.

3. In the pilgrimage current towards the Holy Land, which was spectacularly developed during the 16th and 17th century, Russia is represented by a handful of merchants and even fewer members of its aristocracy.

In conclusion, during the 16th and 17th centuries, the priorities and interests of Russian state and church politics do not involve the exuberant financial aid to ecclesiastical institutions of the Orthodox East as means of involvement and influence in events that affect the Church among other.

3. NENAD MAKULJEVIC

(University of Belgrade, Serbia)

«PIETY, IDEOLOGY AND ORTHODOXY: RUSSIAN ICONS IN SERBIAN CHURCH CULTURE (17TH - 19TH CENTURY»

From the 17th to the 19th century many Serbian churches were provided with Russian icons. The traders of Russian icons emerged all over the Balkans, so now there are many Russian icons in most Serbian churches. Russian icons were primarily bought and given for the purposes of ecclesiastic life and as an expression of private piety. These icons mainly presented images of popular cults of saints, like the wonderworking icons of the Mother of God.

The donation of Russian icons to Serbian churches was also an expression of Slavic solidarity and the ideological connection between Russia and the Serbian Church. Russian rulers donated Serbian monasteries not only with money, but also with icons and relics. In the 19th century, at the time of Slavophilism, Russian donators equipped a great number of Serbian churches with icons, liturgical books, and church vestments and embroidery.

Russian icons were also accepted as an ideal model of the Orthodox icon. This was especially so during the second half of the 19th century, when the Serbian church was governed by Metropolitan Mihailo Jovanović. Due to his engagement, the Russian model of
icon painting started to dominate in Serbia, and Russian icons and iconostases were imported.

4. YULIANA BOYCHEVA

(IMS-FORTH, GREECE)

“THE EXAMPLE OF PATMOS: VARIOUS ROUTES OF RUSSIAN ICON TRANSFER FROM RUSSIA TO THE ORTHODOX EAST”

The Russian icons preserved in museums and church or monastery collections in Greece constitute a body of valuable monuments which raise important questions related, on the one hand, to their origin and production in Russia and, on the other, to the reconstruction of the channels through which they were disseminated in the Orthodox East. In this framework, the Russian icons preserved in Greece constitute not only important objects—“sources” for the history of Christian art in the modern era, but also a specific kind of historical sources for a particular form of cultural transfer and valuable material “testimonies” of the development of Russian-Greek cultural contacts and political relations in a wide period of time (15th-20th c.).

The Russian icons preserved in the island of Patmos, an important Christian pilgrimage site in the Eastern Mediterranean and cultural center of the wider area of the Aegean, constitute a significant body of material evidence, which allows the depiction of Patmos as an outstanding example of the cultural transfer under study, for the following reasons. The monastic and private collections in the island (Monasteries of Saint John the Theologian and Zoodochos Pigi, Folk Museum “To arhontiko Simantiri”) contain numerous Russian icons produced over a long period of time from the 17th to the early 20th c., among which several masterpieces of Russian art. Moreover, the study of this impressive concentration of Russian icons reveals a variety of transfer types, channels and “mediums” ranging from donations by the Russian Emperor to the Monastery, icons obtained by Patmos monks during alms collection in Russia, icons ordered and donated to the monastery by Greek clerics and wealthy laymen, to icons donated by monks entering the monastic community or lesser value objects brought to the island by Greek merchants of the Diaspora and diffused to the private households of Patmos islanders. The aim of the present exposé is to map and explore, through selected examples, the abovementioned collections which offer a kaleidoscopic view of the various types of Russian icon transfer to the Orthodox East, by tackling issues related not only to the clarification of the paths of the objects and the historical context and significance of their transfer, but also to the reception and “uses” of the icons by the monastic community and the inhabitants of the island.
“RUSSIAN IMAGES OF GREEK DONOR IN THESSALY AND VENICE: TWO PORTRAITS OF ARSENIIOS, ARCHBISHOP OF ELASSONA»

Among numerous Russian icons and other items donated by Arsenios, bishop of Elasnona, to Orthodox churches in Greece and Holy Land, there are two pieces with donor portraits of this Greek hierarch who lived in Moscow since 1588. The first one is a small image of the Virgin with Child enthroned, originating from the Thessalian monastery Dousikou (Athens, Byzantine and Christian Museum). On the back of the panel the dedicatory inscription is preserved, made by Arsenios himself. According to this text, the icon has been sent to Dousikou from Moscow in year 7100 (1591/1592). Judging from stylistic features of the painting and Greek inscriptions written in Cyrillic letters, the image has been painted by Russian icon-painter.

The second Russian piece bearing the portrait of Arsenios is an engraved silver episcopal encolpion from the Museum of the Hellenic Institute in Venice. The Greek inscription in Cyrillic alphabet, surrounding the image of St George with dragon on reverse, dates the encolpion to year 7104 (1595/1596). The text and image indicate that encolpion was made for the church of Greek community in Venice, which served as a cathedral church of titular metropolitans of Philadelphia. It is known that in 1593 bishop Arsenios sent from Moscow to Venice four icons for this church and for metropolitan Gabriel Severos. Apparently, the encolpion also was Arsenios’ gift to Gabriel.

The obverse of encolpion bears the image of Deisis. At the footstool of the Saviour’s throne, in front of John the Forerunner, kneeling Arsenios in episcopal mantle and cowl is depicted. On the icon of Byzantine Museum a similar figure is placed in a more complex context. On both sides of the Virgin are represented two metropolitans of Larissa – St Vissarion, the founder of Dousikou, and Neophytos, the builder of the monastery katholikon. At the Virgin’s feet Arsenios and his brother Ioasaph, bishop of Stagoi, are kneeling. Ioasaph as the eldest brother, already dead, is shown in more prominent place, but Arsenios’ role as a donor is emphasized with prayer rope in his left hand.

This composition goes back to Russian images of saints praying before Christ or Virgin. However, instead of kneeling saints of the low rank here we can see the donor and his late brother, and instead of highly worshipped saints – locally venerated bishops, kettors of Dousikou. The basic idea of the icon is an idea of spiritual and family ties connecting all
these persons to each other and to Dousikou monastery (both Arsenios and Ioasaph were nephews of Neophyte, while Neophytos himself was nephew of St Vissarion). Thus, it’s a kind of portrait of a family of Greek bishops, with its senior members acting as intercessors for the representatives of younger generation.

Specific ties binding Arsenios to Dousikou monastery, and, probably, to metropolitan Gabriel, became the reason for insertion of donor portraits in both compositions. His other donations for Greece and Russia, to our knowledge, were not accompanied with such images. Still these two portraits, while not unusual for Post-Byzantine art, are quite an exception for Muscovite culture because of decline of its own tradition of donor imagery. So they may be considered as an important evidence of how Russian artisans would adjust themselves to a donor’s wish while making pieces “for export”. Of no less importance is the fact that thanks to such “foreign” commissions Muscovite craftsmen and donors could get acquainted with motives, characteristic for Post-Byzantine art of Greece and Balkans.

6. ELENA SAENKOVA (Tretyakov State Gallery, Moscow, Russia) & NATALIA KOMASHKO (Central Andrey Rublev Museum of Ancient Russian Culture and Art, Moscow, Russia)

"THE ICONOGRAPHIC PROGRAM OF RUSSIAN ICONS DONATION OF ΑΡΣΈΝΙΟΣ ΕΛΑΣΣΌΝΑΣ IN GREEK MONASTERIES"

Archbishop Arsenius of Elasson, now revered as a saint, was a connecting link between Russia and the Greek world at the end of the 16th century. He lived in Russia for almost forty years (1588-1626) at the center of major historical events. Maintaining close contact with his homeland throughout this period, Arsenius frequently donated icons to Greek monasteries, many of which were in Thessaly. As a rule, he added an inscription on the reverse of the icons. An examination of the broad range of icons connected with Arsenius of Elasson, which are well-preserved and finely executed, makes it possible to trace the cultural relations between Russia and the Christian East, and to reconstruct more accurately the development of Russian icon painting in the late 16th and early 17th century. Icons of Our Lady of Vladimir, Our Lady of Murom and Our Lady of the Dove (Konevitza) are particularly frequent subjects. However, there is one fact that links these icons namely, the Greek origin of their wonder-working prototypes. Our Lady of Vladimir was originally brought to Kiev from Constantinople, Our Lady of Konevitza was brought to Russia from Mount Athos by the monk Arsenius, and Our Lady of Murom was also evidently regarded as a Byzantine relic. Arsenius may have been particularly interested in Russian icons with Greek legends, that is, he may have wanted to remind his fellow-countrymen about their own long forgotten heritage. For this reason we find two copies of Our Lady of Konevitza and three of Our Lady of Murom among the icons connected with him. Our Lady
of Vladimir also fits into this explanation. Apart from this, there is another relevant factor concerning the archbishop’s gifts. In the late Middle Ages both Greeks and Russians were keen to introduce Russian iconographical innovations to the Christian East. This could explain why Arsenius sent icons depicting Russian feasts and revered Russian saints to Greek monasteries (e.g. «Virgin and Child with the Rostov Wonderworkers Leontius, Isaiah and Ignatius», «Virgin Mary Appearing in a Vision to Saint Sergius of Radonezh»). Thus, the Russian icons sent to Greek monasteries in Thessaly, Mount Athos and the Holy Land by Archbishop Arsenius of Elasson were not simply precious gifts that held pride of place in a vestry or a cell. It was the donor’s intention that these icons would be envoys of Russian culture, bearing important information for Greek culture and, in the final analysis, would bind these two Orthodox peoples together with fine, but strong threads of spiritual kinship.

It must be said that the introduction of these icons into the arena of scholarly debate should promote a more profound study of the contacts between Russia and the post-Byzantine world and also extend our knowledge of certain Russian iconographical types of the Virgin Mary.

7. NADEZHDA CHESNOKOVA

(Institute of World History of Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia)

“RUSSIAN ICONS IN JERUSALEM: THE ICON OF HOLY APOSTLE JAMES, BROTHER OF THE LORD, (1644)”

In the 16th - beginning of the 18th centuries Russian icons obtained a wide circulation in the Christian East first of all on the territories of the former Byzantine Empire which formed part of the Ottoman Porte. Testimonies of the contemporaries and poorly-studied archive records give the right to say about a great number of icons and other articles of religious art exported from Russia. We are talking about icons which foreigners (Greeks, Slavs, Arab Christians) who came here for material support got from the czar at the admission in the Kremlin, icons as a sign of blessing in the Russian monasteries and those ones sent to Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria etc. by request of the eastern patriarchs and bishops. Icons were purchased by the laity and clergymen particularly by Greek merchants on the market and directly from icon-painters.

It is known in historiography that patriarch Theophanes ordered a patriarchal mitre and icons for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Archival documents about the Moscow visit of Jerusalem patriarch’s envoy archimandrite Anfim in 1643 was preserved with miraculous if not to say unique completeness. Thanks to this we get to know new details of the work
under the order: the list of icons and materials spent, names of icon-painters and silversmiths, information about the organization of the whole artistic process and finally the cost of materials and works performed. Archimandrite Anfim passed patriarch’s request about painting of ten icons for the Holy Sepulchre and making the mitre. Icons were to be painted in the sizes brought by the archimandrite. Icon-painters Sidor Pospeev and Ivan Borisov with six friends were invited for its fulfillment. Patriarch Theophanes asked to paint the following icons: Christ Enthroned, the Virgin Hodegetria, The Resurrection of Christ, the Archangel Michael, St. Constantine with his mother Helena and also Apostle James, the brother of the Lord. Apart from these four local icons were ordered: Christ Pantocrator enthroned, the Virgin of the Passion with archangels, St. John the Baptist, St. Constantine and his mother Helena.

Sidor Pospeev was one of the few iconographer, who was asked to paint icons for sending abroad. The only thing known about Ivan Borisov is that he worked under the same orders as Sidor Pospeev. Their easel paintings have not survived till our days. One of the ten icons painted by Pospeev and Borisov in 1644 and kept in Jerusalem is not only evidence of exceptional talent of the Russian iconographers. Specialists suppose that the Jerusalem icon which escaped repainting and records is the only sample of the author’s style of Sidor Pospeev which will help to identify allied to this work icons kept in the national collections and assume their authorship with some degree of confidence.

In December 1644 archimandrite Anfim taking generous royal charity of sables, precious patriarchal mitre and ten icons to the Holy Land was let go abroad. Patriarch Theophanes didn’t manage to get the gifts from Moscow, he passed away in December 1644.

8. NATALIA KOMASHKO (Central Andrey Rublev Museum of Ancient Russian Culture and Art, Moscow, Russia) & BORIS L. FONKIC (Moscow State University, Russia)

«THE ICON OUR LADY OF KAZAN, DONATION OF MELETIUS THE GREEK AT SAINT CATHERINE’S MONASTERY, MOUNT SINAI

The collection of Russian icons of the monastery of St. Catherine at the Sinai houses the icon with Theotokos Kazanskaya in a silver revetment (32.0 × 27.5 cm). There is an inscription on the reverse of the icon: “ετούτην τη είκοναν της Θεοτόκου την α/φέροσα εγω Μελετίως ιεροδιά/κον εις τον Συνα όταν παγη ἐκει/ να προσκυνηση να την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομιναητή την ἐχει εις τον ναον του/ και ἀνάθεμα ὑπομι

«This icon with Theotokos was dedicated by Meletios the hierodeacon at Sinai during the worship to leave it in the church, and the anathema [for the person] kidnapped it”). It was written by hierodeacon Meletios the Greek who was one of the most interesting figures in the Greek-Russian relations of the second half of the 17th century. Meletios came from the island of Chios. As a teacher of
church music he was in the immediate vicinity to Parthenius II the Patriarch of Constantinople. In November 1655 he arrived in Moscow with the message of Parthenius. It was time of the reforms of Patriarch Nikon, and Meletios stayed there for teaching the Greek singing at Dormition Cathedral School in the Moscow Kremlin. Soon Meletios entered the circle of people close to Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich. Due to preparation for the deposition of Patriarch Nikon Meletios was sent twice to deliver the royal letters to the Eastern Patriarchs – in 1662 and at the end of 1665. During the second trip he visited Sinai, Egypt and Georgia and returned to Moscow in November 1666. He considerably furthered the organization of Church Council against Nikon. For that affair Meletios received a substantial reward from the Tsar. Dreaming to die at the Sinai, he lived in Moscow until the end of his life. Meletios died in 1686 and was buried in St. Nicholas Greek monastery.

According to the inscription on the reverse Meletios personally donated the icon to the Sinai monastery, but it could have happened only during his visit there in 1666, when he managed to negotiate with Anania the Archbishop of Sinai about his trip to Moscow for the Council. Thus, the icon was painted no later than 1665, when Meletios left Moscow. Its painting style is interesting due to new art tendencies that emerged in Moscow at the end of the 1650s in the works of the main royal iconographer Simon Ushakov and in the 1660s were not yet in widespread use.

Being close to the tsar, Meletios was undoubtedly familiar with Simon Ushakov, who was keenly interested in Greek culture and reflected it in art. It is very likely that he painted the Meletios's icon. The closest stylistic and iconographic analogy of Sinai icon is found among early icons signed by Simon Ushakov – the icon with Theotokos Kazanskaya painted in 1659 (from private collection). Holy faces on Sinai icon are related to Ushakov's early artworks, such as "Mandylion", 1658, from Trinity Church in Nikitniki (Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow).

The icon is covered with silver revetment strict form and decoration. Features of style and manufacturing techniques allow us to date its creation to 1660s and attribute to the work of Yaroslavl masters. However, it could be produced in Moscow, where in that period Yaroslavl silversmiths often worked on Tsar and patriarch’s term orders.

The existing losses the original golden highlights on the right shoulder of Christ-Child were over painted in the 19th century by white. This indicates that the icon had long been in the personal use and was constantly kissed privately. Later, it was already in the cathedral chapel of the Burning Bush, which has concentrated most Russian icon contributions to the monastery.
The icon of the Transfiguration (Metamorfosis), which is currently kept in the Galerie Tretjakov in Moscow, work of the famous painter from Constantinople, Theophanes the Greek (c. 1408), is the source of inspiration of a particular iconography for the composition of the monumental painting of the wider region of Northern Greece. Its particularity lies in the addition of an extremely rare episode; that of the transfer of the prophets Elijah and Moses by angels within clouds combined with the resurrection of Moses from his sarcophagus. This incident in association with the complex luminous glory that surrounds Christ and the detail of the dark caves on Mount Thabor enhance the salvific message of the Transfiguration and emphasize the parousiac character of the scene. We also believe that these iconographic innovations highlight the catalytic role of the light of Christ and reveal the visionary character of the Transfiguration in the frame of the theology of Hesychasm.

The episode of the transfer of the Prophets has also selected by the famous Theban painter Frangos Katellanos in the monuments that he decorated during the 16th century. Thus, we meet this iconography in the Catholica of Saint Nicanor Monastery in Zavorda of Grevena (1542-1548) and of Barlaam Monastery in Meteores (1548) as well as in the southern lateral chapel of St. Nicholas of the Great Lavra Monastery on Mount Athos (1560). Although the above episode first appears in Armenian manuscript of the 11th century (Matenadaran No 6201), the details, however, confirm the iconographic proximity of the Greek examples with the icon of Theophanes. Moreover, the fact that this icon was functioned as a model can be also prooved from the first example in Greece with this iconography, which is the older church of the Transfiguration Monastery in Meteora (1483).

Moreover, the reappearance of the this iconography on Mount Athos in two Russian icons from the 17th century, one in the Xenophon and the other in the Pantocrator monastery, can certify the partial dissemination of the type on the monastic city through the Russian icons. However, it is interesting to note that this type is appeared only in the mural paintings of some monuments in Northern Greece and not at all in the Greek icons. This fact may be due to the dominance of the Cretan icons, which seem to have created their own artistic vocabulary, which did not include or did not adopt the final "theophanian" iconographic type of Metamorphosis, formed and widely spread in Russia through the icons.
RUSSIAN ICONS IN THE BALKANS AND AMONG THE COMMUNITIES OF THE GREEK DIASPORA

10. VARVARA PAPADOPOULOU

(8th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities Ioannina, Greece)

“RUSSIA ICONS FROM EPIRUS”

Numerous icons of Russian workshops have been located and recorded in Monasteries and temples in the region of Epirus. The majority has been found in the prefecture of Ioannina and are undoubtedly associated with merchants from Epirus, travelers and monks that visited Russia, carried out business or spent a part of their life there. It is also a well-known fact that a large number of monasteries from Epirus received financial funding from the Imperial Russian Empire and possibly it is in this context that some of the icons were transferred to Greece. Moreover, many of these icons constitute donations from national benefactors, such as the Zosima brothers, the Rizari brothers, Chatzikostas, and more. The icons of the temple of Aghioi Apostoloi Molyvdoskepastos from the homonymous settlement near the Greek-Albanian borders are some of the oldest examples of Russian icons in Epirus. They are three icons of large dimensions that come from the oldest iconostasis of the temple which was originally built as a monastery catholic. Even though there is no such evidence, it is possible that these icons are connected with the visit of bishop of Pogoniani Sofronios, who visited Moscow in 1630 to ensure financial aid. An interesting category of icons from Russian workshops are the ones that constitute donations of renowned benefactors, such as the Rizari brothers who dedicated in 1810 the icons of the iconostasis of the church of Aghios Athanasios in Monodendri of Zagori, while residing in Moscow. An equivalent donation was the one from the Zosima brothers in 1817 to the church of Taxiarches in Grameno of Ioannina.

11. ELENI CHARCHARE

(National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

“RUSSIAN ICONS IN THE GREEK DIASPORA COMMUNITIES: VENICE – LIVORNO – TRIESTE, 16TH-19TH CENTURIES”

The paper examines the Russian icons which came to the Greek communities of Venice, Livorno and Trieste from the late 16th through the late 19th centuries. In the oldest Greek Confraternity of Venice, founded in 1498, and its church “San Giorgio dei Greci” (Saint
George of the Greeks), the first Russian icons arrive in the late 16th century and continue to be donated during the next three centuries.

In the seaports of Livorno and Trieste a large number of Greeks are settled mainly in the 18th century. The paper lays particular emphasis on the Russian icons in the church of the Holy Trinity of the Livornese Greek community. These icons were originally placed in the Orthodox church of the Greek community in Port-Mahon in Minorca of the Spanish Balearic Islands. At the time Minorca was under British rule and the settlement of Greek merchants and seafarers in Port-Mahon was placed in the context of the Anglo-French rivalry. The settlement was supported by Russia, an ally of England against France which traditionally maintained a pro-Ottoman policy. In 1782 the end of the British occupation of Minorca, which passed again into Spanish hands, marked the end of the Greek community. The icons and sacred vessels of Minorca’s Orthodox church were transferred then to the church of the Greek community in Livorno. During the 18th and 19th centuries Russian icons also came to the Greek community of Trieste.

The paper focuses on the exploration of the routes followed by these Russian icons and also on the leading role of the donors. In this way the discussion of the works becomes part of the context of the multifaceted relationship developed between the three Greek communities and Russia and consequently of the broader context of Greek-Russian relations at the time.

These relations were established primarily on the basis of the common religious dogma. Orthodoxy was the basic component of the identity of the members of both the Greek and Russian diasporas and thus a key link between them. In the Italian cities the Greek churches often served the religious needs of Russians and were financially supported by the Russian political and diplomatic authorities.

The political aspect of the Greek-Russian relations was also decisive as Russia assumed the role of protector of the Orthodox Christians under Ottoman rule. The Greeks who lived in the three major seaports of the Italian peninsula expressed their pro-Russian leanings in many ways, while the role of the Greek consuls of Russia was very important in key issues of the communities.

The Russian icons examined in this paper had an obvious function in the common devotional practices of the Orthodox Greeks and Russians. However, they inevitably acquired a particular ideological dimension as they were involved in the complex historical context outlined above. Departing from Russia and arriving in the Greek communities of Venice, Livorno and Trieste, they propose an unusual and interesting route.
“RUSSIAN ICONS IN BULGARIA”

The theme of the presence and significance of Russian icons in Bulgaria has not been specifically studied so far. Since the respective material is not yet completely assembled, I have limited myself to a few observations.

Russian icons used to enter Bulgarian lands by the usual ways: some were sent as donations, others were bought by Bulgarians in Russia or brought to Bulgaria by Russian merchants. Most often the icons ended up in monasteries or parish churches, though they seem to have been also highly sought after for home iconostases and monk’s cells.

Quite interesting and important is the question how were the Russian icons perceived by the individual believer or the community as a whole. An illustrative example is the Russian metal triptych that was found walled up in a house belonging to a Bulgarian family who had converted, probably not voluntarily, to Islam.

In the course of time some Russian icons became shrouded in legends of miracles. Most interesting in this respect is the Glojene Monastery icon of St. George which is credited with the power of being a wonder-worker; the legend says that it was brought to this holy place by prince Gloj from Kiev in the 13th century. After removing the silver cover from the icon, I have found out that the image is really Russian or Ukrainian even if from a later period.

Another example involving a partially burned Russian icon of The Virgin with Child has come from the town of Chiprovtsi. The local people believe that it survived the uprising against Ottoman rule in the late 17th century when the town was turned to ashes.

Two large icons – one depicting The Virgin, the other Jesus Christ, donated by a Russian general and his officers after one of the Russian-Turkish wars - are also connected with important historical events.

Icons brought from Russia had certain impact on the repertoire and iconography of the Eastern-Orthodox art in Bulgarian lands. It is quite probable that some wall-paintings with typical Russian iconography in the Arbanasi 17th-century Church of Nativity might have been inspired by Russian icons. There are also replicas of Russian and Ukrainian miraculous icons such as The Burning Bush, The Holy Wisdom, etc.
RUSSIAN ICONS AND DEVOTION IN THE BALKANS

13. TATIANA BORISOVA
(National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

“THE FUNCTIONS OF THE POETIC TEXT ON ORTHODOX ICONS IN THE RUSSIAN AND BALKAN BAROQUE TRADITION (THE ‘LIVING CROSS’ EXAMPLE)”

The purpose of this conversation is to attempt an analysis of the new complex iconographic types of Russian baroque, the icons of which tend to feature poetic texts. One of these types is the so-called “Living Cross” type which features the verses of the Russian baroque poet Silvester Medvedev. One of the masterpieces of this iconographic type is preserved in the Athens Byzantine and Christian Museum collection (inventory number 106-13). The verses of Silvester Medvedev are placed on various parts of the icon. The complex symbolism of the verses, characteristic of the baroque style, is based on Biblical quotations and allusions. Similar symbolic images can be found in the work of other representatives of the literary school of Russian baroque, primarily in the texts of Simeon Polotski. Due to the influence of the catholic western culture and contrary to the Russian orthodox tradition of the past, the emphasis in these texts is shifted from the “internal feeling” of the Bible to the “visual” image. The poems of this genre thus become especially suitable to be featured on icons. The symbolism of the poetic text greatly complements the symbolism of the iconographic image which is also based on Biblical allusions. The combination of the two constitutes the didactic message of the icon. The complementary functions of the image and the text in the symbolic presentation of the Bible can be observed in various parts of the icon. The analysis of the poetic text in conjunction with the complex symbolism of the icon reveals that the visual image does not actually function as an illustration for the text, and the text does not in fact attempt to describe the visual image; they both however play their specific roles in the context of the icon. The icon acts as a messenger carrying a complex symbolic and didactic message that needs to be decrypted by comparing the poetic text and the image and read only intertextually with the Bible. The New Testament quotation (First Epistle to the Corinthians 2, 2) acts as the symbolic center of an icon and focalises every dimension of its symbolic meaning.
14. NIKOLAOS GRAIKOS
(Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports, Greece)

“FINDINGS OF RUSSIAN ICONS IN CHURCHES OF THE HELLENIC SPACE (LATE 18TH - EARLY 20TH C.): CULTURAL AND ICONOGRAPHICAL INTERPRETATIONS”

In many churches of the Hellenic space we find Russian icons mainly from the 19th and 20th centuries. The study of this phenomenon is important for many reasons. Based on the investigation of a great number of churches mainly in South Greece, the purpose of this paper is to explore the cultural, devotional and iconographical prerequisites of this phenomenon.

The main questions which were addressed were: (a) Under what conditions Russian icons were brought to Greece? In which towns? Who were the donors? (b) Which were the usual (or unusual) iconographic themes? (c) Which was the devotional use of those icons? In which point in the churches were placed initially? Where are now?

Study of Russian icons in Hellenic churches is a new field of research, which may help us to answer many questions pertaining the Russian and neohellenic ecclesiastical art. However, necessary preconditions are, the avoidance of the research prejudices of the past and the application of interdisciplinary methodologies, which will take into account not only the ecclesiastical but also the wider historical and cultural character of this phenomenon.

15. N. KASTRINAKIS & N. KONSTANDIOS
(Byzantine & Christian Museum, Athens)

“TALKING ICONS”: SACRED IMAGES IN COMMON USE

Contributing to the “Russian Icons in Greece (15th-early 20th centuries)” research program of the Institute for Mediterranean Studies and in view of this Colloquium, the Byzantine and Christian Museum in collaboration with the researcher of the Institute, Yuliana Boycheva, organizes a small exhibition based on three paintings from its collections: a Russian one (The Living Cross, 1720-40) and two Greek (The Trial of Christ and The Wisdom of God, early 19th c.). The working group included the art historian Yuliana Boycheva, the archaeologists Nikos Kastrinakis and Nikolas Konstantios and the architect Spyros Nasainas. The title of the exhibition summarizes the main question we faced and our first attempt to answer it: “Talking Icons. The Dissemination of Devotional Painting in Russia and the Balkans, 16th-19th century”. But what does “talking icons” mean? And what is the relationship between icon, “talking icon”, and religious painting?
The three exhibits seem prima facie unrelated to each other, but in fact they have a lot in common. The specific iconographic themes appeared in Russia, Moscow and Yaroslavl, for the first time in an Orthodox environment: Living Cross – 1682, Wisdom of God – 1683 and Trial of Christ – c. 1703-04. They met there after a long journey across Western Europe where they were originally created (Living Cross – 15th c.; Trial of Christ – 16th c.; Wisdom of God of the Krestnaia type – unknown Western prototype[s]). Their adoption was made possible after being properly adjusted by the Orthodox Russian copyists. Then, in the early 18th c., we find the Living Cross in Bucharest (two Romanian samples) and a few decades later (end of 18th c.-early 19th c.) in mainland Greece (one Russian sample). The second theme, Wisdom of God, was updated in Kiev in the early 18th c., and about a century later we find it in the islands of the Ionian and Aegean Seas (two Greek samples). The story of the Trial of Christ goes somewhat different. The iconographic theme, already known in Russia, was adopted by the Patriarchate of Constantinople not in a Russian but in a Western European version, derived from Vienna, in the early 19th c. It spread rapidly from Istanbul to the mainland Greece and the islands, after being properly adjusted by the Orthodox Greek copyists.

All three themes were incorporated as new and original into Orthodox environments. They were intended as promoters of a comprehensive theological argumentation connected to contemporary ecclesiastical and political issues. To meet this purpose more effectively, extensive textual elements were inserted into the visual vocabulary. They weren’t destined for worship, but for reading, contemplation and reflection. They functioned as illustrated sermons. Although ‘silent’ compared to the pulpit-preachers, they were very much ‘eloquent’ in relation to the previous tradition of Orthodox icons. Thus, seen from the perspective of the Orthodox tradition, “talking icons” represent a sudden rupture, causing in its turn a sudden shift in the concept of the sacred image itself.

This development can be explained by the evolution of European social formations. From the 16th century on, gradually, broad social alliances formed in almost all European countries demanding ecclesiastical and social reforms. Soon, the confrontation between reformers and traditionalists escalated, taking the form of open religious conflict, often a bloody one, in which the exploited classes massively participated. The clash was dramatic in both Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Catholic and Orthodox reformers alike had to face not only the Protestants, the rivalry between themselves or the traditionalists within their own churches, but also the subversive popular political action.

The imposition of reform, even though usually supported by a large part of the mercantile class, bourgeois, artisans and guilds of the cities, depended also heavily on the support of the laborers and peasants. Luther himself appealed to “Herr Omnes”, meaning the “common man”, and also did his opponents. Under the pressure of the Protestant denial of the sanctity of the icon (imago) and in order to serve the increasing needs of propaganda, a
new form of religious representation was required: one that could communicate a clear political message (that is: the reform) through iconography and style (through artistic innovation), without losing its sanctity, i.e. its authority.

A single artistic phenomenon begins now to emerge behind “talking icons”, extended in most European territories from the 16th to the 19th c. although unequal in terms of dispersion and intensity in each one of the respective countries.

STUDYING RUSSIAN ICON PAINTING WITH OPTICAL METROLOGY, MULTI-SPECTRAL IMAGING AND SPECTROSCOPIC ANALYSIS


(Institute of Electronic Structure and Laser, Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas (IESL-FORTH))

“LASERS ENLIGHTEN THE DIAGNOSIS, ANALYSIS AND CONSERVATION OF PAINTINGS; CHALLENGES AND APPLICATIONS”

Paintings, being particularly sensitive and fragile, are a real challenge as regards their analysis, diagnosis and conservation. This is due to their complexity in materials and structures and their susceptibility to environmental conditions. Varnish coatings and multiple paint layers over a variety of primers and supports compile an exceptionally complicated structure with challenging issues as regards its reliable analysis and controlled interventions.

In this respect laser light nature and properties allow for accurate and sensitive measurements, as well as, for selective and controlled interventions. To this end, within the last twenty years a number of unique diagnostic, analytical and conservation tools and methodologies have been developed at IESL FORTH in order to effectively respond to demanding Cultural Heritage (CH) research questions and application challenges.

The differentiation and imaging of different layers and strata within a painting, the detection of invisible defects within its bulk and the determination of risk prioritization maps, the visualization of the paintings’ response to abrupt environmental changes, the identification of materials in atomic and molecular level and, last but not least, the controlled and selective removal of unwanted over-layers are among the issues that can be approached by laser light tools and methodologies. These possibilities have been studied
and applied in a number of technical samples and real objects in the laboratory allowing thus a better understanding of their principle of operation, applicability and potential. In parallel compact, portable instrumentation is being exploited aiming to bring these laser analytical methodologies in-situ.

This communication aims to highlight the role of lasers as analytical, diagnostic and cleaning tools for painted artworks. Optical metrology, multi-spectral imaging, spectroscopic analysis and material ablation will be presented on the basis of their implementation in paintings conservation. Furthermore, advantages and limitations will be underlined with emphasis to future challenges and prospects.