

Introduction

The background of the research on the templon and the prostration images

The present study aims to shed light on the development of the templon and prostration images in Crete from the Middle Byzantine era to the 15th century; it is part of a broader research field regarding the evolution and stabilization of artistic and cultic forms. For a clearer understanding of the specific methodological approach deployed, the reader is first offered a brief review of the state of research. It must be noted that the following review mainly considers the general studies that refer to the topics of the templon and prostration images, and does not include the numerous publications that refer to regional characteristics, morphological issues, etc.

The templon is considered a »distinctive feature of churches of the Byzantine rite«¹; the backdrop of its configuration was of interest to both historians of worship as well as Byzantine archaeologists. The partition's transformation into an iconostasis has been thematically explored in Greek handbooks on Christian archaeology since the beginning of the 20th century, as in the book by the archpriest K. Kallinikos, *Ο Χριστιανικός ναός και τὰ τελούμενα ἐν αὐτῷ* (1908)². The relevant chapter mainly focuses on the antiquity of the establishment rooted to the Early Christian era and its later evolution based on ecclesiastical sources. In the handbook of Christian Archaeology published in 1941 by the notable byzantinologist G. Sotēriou, the configuration of the templon was treated as a biological species. Sotēriou establishes a tripartite evolutionary scheme on the basis of the small partition of the Early Christian presbyterion, which was transformed into the higher Middle Byzantine templon (restored with closure slabs, pillars and an architrave) to finally culminate in a »wall full of icons« on the wooden iconostasis of the Post-Byzantine era³. The prevailing scientific positivism of his era influenced Sotēriou's methodological approach. His appointment as the Director of the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens, his interest in the pedagogical significance of the works of art, as well as the reorganization of the museum he single-handedly accomplished (1923-1930), resulted in

1930 in the transformation of three aisles of the Villa Ilisia into three church interiors representing the Early Christian, the Middle Byzantine and the Post-Byzantine eras⁴. Apart from the architectural configuration, the chronological and aesthetic differentiation of the spaces were achieved by the placement of an analogous barrier that recalled each of the three periods. This arrangement stayed intact for decades, until the most recent reorganization of the museum in the years 2004-2010, thus shaping and establishing a specific reflection of the templon's evolution as part of a specific scientific consciousness.

This scientific positivism is also discerned in Xydis' attempt to restore the Justinian templon of the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (1947)⁵. The templon was demolished in 1204, although its description is preserved in the metrical celebratory Ekfrasis by Pavlos Silentiarios, which was recited in 562, during the inauguration of the church after the earthquake of 557. The detailed description and the prominence of the monument exhorted a series of restorations that were carried out in the 19th century, and the beginning of the 20th century whose prevailing trait was a combination of elements sourced by the description of Silentiarios and the Post-Byzantine iconostasis⁶. Xydis sets forth the scientific survey of the restoration of the templon's form based on two main logical pillars: the written sources and the use of parallels from the early Christian monuments of Constantinople, Asia Minor and the Greek territories. For the restoration of the individual parts of the templon, Xydis uses parallels from Justinian monuments as well as from later ones (such as Asia Minor templon architraves from the 9th/10th century). Xydis' findings were used by later researchers who typified his attempt as the first systematic research into the restoration of the Justinian templon. His contribution lies in the fact that he interprets the significance of the particular templon as pivotal for the further evolution of the early Christian forms into medieval ones. This perspective has been widely accepted

1 Walter, *The origins* 251.

2 Kallinikos, *Christianikos naos* 198-114.

3 Sotēriou, *Christianikē Archeologia* 200-205. – On a corresponding consideration of the Bēma's configuration since the early-Christian era to the Middle Byzantine era, see the analysis of Sotēriou's student, D. Pallas on the secondary building of the diakonikon, Mailis, *The annexes* 10-16.

4 On the reorganization of the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens by Sotēriou, see Lazaridou, *Christianikē Syllogē* 20-24. – Olga Gratziou interprets

Sotēriou's approach based on his perceptions as regards the composition of a national identity through the systematic classification of works of art, with the intention to shape an unimpeded continuity of the orthodox Hellenism: Gratziou, *Istoria Mouseiou* 69-73. – On an indirect critical response to Sotēriou's approach mainly arguing about the musealization of the cult object, see Triantafyllopoulos, *Byzantino Mouseio* 124.

5 Xydis, *Chancel Barrier* 1-24.

6 Antoniadēs, *Ekfrasis* 125 fig. 261.

by scholars and is frequently reiterated in articles of general content on the evolution of the installation.

The first studies of the placement and function of the templon's icons appear in the 1960s. The study by Sirarpie der Nersessian »Two Images of the Virgin« in the *Dumbarton Oaks Collection* (1960)⁷, traces the origins of the iconographic scheme that comprises the dialogue between frontal Christ and Virgin in supplication. Constantinopolitan origins are ascribed to the theme. The byzantinologist argues for the transfer of the scheme to the east piers surrounding the templon of Byzantine churches or the lateral walls of single-aisled churches, such as Hagios Geōrgios in Kurbinovo. She concludes that the placement of the iconographic scheme on the east piers played a vital role in the evolution of the iconostasis, in an era when the *diastēla*, that is the gaps among the pillars of the templon, were not decorated with despotic icons.

In A. Grabar's study of the development of the templon on the basis of the monuments of Yugoslavia (1961)⁸, the notable byzantinologist underlines the lack of general studies of the evolution of the iconostasis. Based upon the masonry screens of two churches of the 14th century, Hagios Geōrgios in Staro Nagoričino and Bela Črkva in Karan, Grabar – like Der Nersessian – asserts that the initial Middle Byzantine templon did not exhibit any despotic icons on its *diastēla*, but instead mounted large prostration icons on the east piers. According to Grabar, after the gradual increase of venerating needs the icons were then encompassed in *diastēla*, so that in the 14th century, the initially open installation was transformed into a closed screen, decorated either with portable images or with painted pseudo icons.

The »Deltion of the Christian Archaeological Society« of 1964/1965, dedicated to Geōrgios Sotēriou, published an essay by V. Lasareff on the link between painted architraves and the scenographic rendition of the Byzantine templon⁹. The Russian byzantinologist compiles the written sources, material evidence and restorations of a broader group of templa to extract conclusions on the evolution of the installation. Lasareff detects in the pro-iconoclast Hagia Sophia the earliest example of the decoration of a templon's architrave bearing sacred figures. He thus deduces that the templon's architrave had featured the theme of Deēsis since the 9th century, and was later established in the 11th and 12th century, accompanied by the *Dōdekaorton*. Lasareff summarizes the Middle Byzantine templon as an open installation complemented by the placement of icons on the architrave. Following Grabar, he accepts the transformation of the templon into an iconostasis in the 14th century, while stressing the ascription of a mystical/symbolic element to the templon in the 15th century, under the influence of the liturgical commentaries of Symeōn

of Thessaloniki. Lasareff sees the high Russian iconostasis as an evolved form of the Byzantine templon of modified dimensions. thus shaping a new aesthetic ultimately focussed on the monumentality and disembodiment of figures.

In contrast to Lasareff's analysis, which mainly focussed on the aesthetic evaluation of the Byzantine templon, Christopher Walter stresses the association of the templon's icons with the Liturgy, giving emphasis to the iconographic theme of Deēsis. His first articles were published in 1968 and 1971, and were enhanced by definitive conclusions in 1993¹⁰. In his earlier works, Walter associated the iconographic/symbolic scheme of the Deēsis (Christ, Virgin, Precursor) with the theological belief that accorded the Virgin and the Precursor an intermediary role in the salvation of humanity. The researcher discerns this belief in the Divine Liturgy and detects its aesthetic transfer in the theme of Deēsis featured on the templon's architrave or east piers. By deploying a series of liturgical texts and monuments (mostly from the Greek mainland and Serbia) Walter regards the placement of Deēsis on the templon as part of a gradual process of sacralising the *Bēma*. The partition conceals the activity occurring in the Sanctuary and captures the attention of the laity piety, who address their pleas for salvation to the icons that decorate it. According to Walter, the recipients of these intermediary prayers are the icons of Deēsis on the architrave, the pair of icons of Christ and Virgin on the east piers or the icons/wall paintings on the lateral walls of the single-aisled churches.

In an article regarding the origins of the iconostasis (1971)¹¹, published almost at the same time, Walter attempts an analogous approach to the evolution of the installation. The view expressed therein recapitulates the already-formulated theories and further contributes two interesting ideas. The first regards the distinction of Deēsis from the iconographic scheme of Virgin Paraklēsis and frontal Christ. The second regards the origins of the icons of extensive Deēsis and the *Dōdekaorton* of the templon, which in an earlier phase (undefined) constituted prostration icons standing in the church, probably supported by stands.

In 1973, the *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst* published the entry »Ikonostas« by M. Chatzēdakēs¹². Chatzēdakēs follows Sotēriou's biological model in delineating the main configuration phases of the templon from the Early Christian to the Middle Byzantine era. His entry was supplemented by the article in the »Proceedings of the 15th International Conference of Byzantine Studies« in Athens (1976, published in 1979), concerning the placement of icons during the 11th and 13th century¹³. The evolutionary scheme of Chatzēdakēs begins with the low chancel slabs of the early Christian period. According to his concept, in the period fol-

7 Der Nersessian, *Images* 71-86, mainly 80-86.

8 Grabar, *Deux Notes* 13-22.

9 Lasareff, *Epistyle* 117-143.

10 Walter, *Two notes* 311-336. – Walter, *Further Notes* 161-187. – Walter, *A new look* 203-228.

11 Walter, *The origins* 251-267.

12 Chatzidakis, *Ikonostas* 326-354.

13 Chatzidakis, *Templon* 333-366.

lowing the iconoclasm and in parallel with the establishment of the cross-in-square architectural type, there is crystallized a form of a high templon with closure slabs, colonettes and a horizontal architrave, usually decorated with aniconic or zoomorphic motifs. The placement of the icons on the architrave dates back to the 11th or 10th century¹⁴, while the scenographic rendition of the templon is complemented by the array of the full-length icons of Christ and Virgin on the east piers/proskynētaria. Chatzēdakēs draws his examples mostly from Sinai and Asia Minor (concerning architraves) and the Greek mainland (concerning the prostration icons of the piers). While taking into account Der Nersessian's notes, he observes that in single-aisled churches the prostration icons of the piers are applied on the lateral walls. In contrast to the previous views, Chatzēdakēs attests – based on written sources – that the practice of applying icons to the diastēla had been in evidence since the 11th century, although it did not enjoy universal use. The researcher concludes that during the Middle Byzantine era no stable iconographic program was in force as regards the icons of the architrave and those on the diastēla, but from the 12th century onwards, the templon was transformed into an iconostasis. This particular evolution was observed by Chatzēdakēs in the wall-painted masonry screens, where pseudo-icons were placed instead of portable despotic icons of the diastēla, thus reflecting the provincial version of the arrangement. In his analysis of the 13th-15th century («Palaiologean Era»), Chatzēdakēs does not detect evolutionary alterations as regards the installation, while observing that there is not any strict order concerning the arrangement of the despotic icons. He concludes that the practice of attaching the icons takes place simultaneously with the transformation of the templon into an iconostasis during the post-Byzantine era, when the partition is established as a solid timber construction with integrated portable icons; Crete is considered to be the centre of production of the wood-carved templa (15th-17th century).

In dissertations written in the 70s that examine the single-aisled churches of the former Yugoslavian Republic and the Greek mainland, the issue of the prostration icons on the east edge of the lateral walls is frequently encountered. In the study by Haderman-Misguich of Hagios Geōrgios in Kurbinovo¹⁵, the researcher employed the previous observations of Der Nersessian regarding the liturgical significance of the juxtaposition of the prostration images/frescoes of the titular saint and Christ on the eastern parts of the lateral church walls. Haderman-Misguich compiled examples of prostration icons in churches in Yugoslavia and Greece and came to the conclusion that the specific wall paintings/icons supplemented the templon and signalled the transition from the main nave to the Bēma. Analogous conclusions and methodological approaches are found in the doctoral dissertation

by S. Kalopissē Vertē (1975), which examines the church of Agia Triada in Kranidi, Argolida (1244)¹⁶. Her analysis regards the facing array of the wall paintings of the Virgin and the titular representation (Agia Triada) on the eastern parts of the lateral walls of the church. The researcher employs the idea of the prostration icons' transfer from the east piers on the lateral walls of the single-aisled churches and provides a detailed and thorough list of prostration icons from the Greek mainland and the Balkans. She also refers to the typology of the prostration representations on the lateral walls and their depiction mode (painted arched proskynētaria), thus underlining their liturgical value.

The first period of the systematic investigation into the configuration of the templon concludes in the end of the 70s/beginning of the 80s. In a brief article published in 1979¹⁷, based on data from a hagiological text, Cyril Mango holds the view that high templa were used in Constantinople during the 7th century and icons were placed on the architraves; in addition, he indirectly endorses the view of Chatzēdakēs on the placement of the despotic icons on the diastēla since the 11th century. In contrast, in 1981¹⁸ Wharton-Epstein argues that the Middle Byzantine templon remained an open space delineated by closure slabs, pillars and an architrave. From a methodological point of view it is noteworthy that the researcher uses examples not only from Constantinople but from the Byzantine provinces as well. Within the framework of this approach, Wharton-Epstein notes that the provincial Middle Byzantine monuments of Cappadocia or southern Italy seemingly used archaic solutions, such as small partitions of the presbyterion (imitating the early Christian chancel slabs), thus underlining for the first time that the evolution of the Byzantine templon did not occur throughout Byzantine territory at the same time but instead varied, according to local cultural and venerating conditions.

In Hans Belting's book «Bild und Kult» (1990)¹⁹, an entire chapter is dedicated to the configuration and function of the Byzantine templon. Belting views the installation as a scenographic element of the Byzantine rite. His methodological approach encompasses the linkage of the templon with the Liturgy. In particular, he interprets the insertion of the icon in the templon based on multiple factors such as: 1) the crystallization of the Liturgy and the need for its artistic/poetic visualization, 2) the institutionalization of a single liturgical/plain calendar and the subsequent veneration of a saint's icon set as a prostration image on the respective celebration date, 3) the wish of aristocrat patrons to have certain icons venerated in their foundations. Belting follows the previous theories on the representation of the Byzantine templon, mainly emphasizing the documentation of the function of prostration icons.

At the end of the 90s, new studies were published as regards the development of the templon. In 1999 J. M. Spieser

14 Chatidakis, Ikonostas 337. – Chatzidakis, Templon 337-339.

15 Hadermann Misguich, Kurbinovo, mainly 214-234.

16 Kalopissi-Verti, Hagia Triada, mostly 43-52.

17 Mango, Artemios 40-43.

18 Epstein, Templon or Iconostasis 1-22.

19 Belting, Bild und Kult 253-278.

published his research on the evolution of the templon, particularly the icons of the Dōdekaortion²⁰. This study coincided with the publication of Sharon Gerstel's doctoral dissertation on the iconographic programs of the Bēma in churches of medieval Macedonia. The first chapter of the book²¹ outlines the main findings of the survey of the arrangement of the templon. Following Walter, Gerstel's view is briefly summarized as the gradual separation of the congregation from the occurrences in the Bēma and the shift of the laity piety's focus to the prostration icons. Gerstel catalogues a series of texts that refer to the sanctification of the Bēma, recalling the official ecclesiastical practice, while at the same time she uses the Macedonian examples to prove that »By the late thirteenth century the practice of obscuring the sanctuary was adequately widespread [...]«²².

Since the 2000s, collective volumes and reports have been published on the evolution of the iconostasis – mostly in Orthodox countries such as Russia and Greece²³. Prominent in the study of the evolution of the templon is the contribution of the collective volume »Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West«, edited by Sharon Gerstel (2006)²⁴. The work comprises artistic/historical and theological/liturgical studies of the templon within the framework of an interdisciplinary approach. It also includes papers on partitions used in the Orthodox East and the Latin West, thus indicating the overall prevalence of barriers in the Christian medieval world. This survey contains studies of Latin screens written by historians of medieval art who pioneered this topic, such as J. Jung²⁵ and M. Hall²⁶.

The above-mentioned volume also includes a study by S. Kalopissē-Vertē concerning the prostration icons found in churches of the Greek mainland and the islands (apart from Crete). The byzantinologist broadens our understanding of this issue, which was one of the focal points of her doctoral dissertation (1975). The study is divided into two parts. In the first, she examines the prostration icons of the templon and analyses their depiction mode (proskynētaría), their location (east piers or lateral wall), their iconography and cognomens. Kalopissē Vertē recasts the view that the painted proskynētaría are placed on the edge of the lateral walls of the single-aisled churches after the Middle Byzantine era. She further deduces that these specific wall paintings were used as despotic and prostration icons at that time. In the second part, the researcher notes the duplication of despotic icons on the eastern wall of the narthex, mostly in monastic institutions. The arrangement is explained on the basis of the use of icons within the framework of commemorative celebrations (such as Litē). Kalopissē Vertē deploys the

liturgical memoranda of Symeōn of Thessaloniki and proves that the prostration icons of the templon and the narthex signalled the ceremonial transitions from the different parts of the church (narthex-nave-Bēma) towards the conceptual axis of supplication, thus reflecting the expectations of the congregation for penitence and salvation.

The article by the volume's editor S. Gerstel, »An Alternate View of the Late Byzantine Sanctuary Screen²⁷, makes an important contribution to the analysis of the topic. Gerstel notes that the study of masonry screens – although essential to the history of the templon's evolution – is frequently interpreted as a secondary element in that particular area of research. Gerstel sees the emergence of the masonry screens as a phenomenon of the Late Byzantine era, mainly geographically dispersed in southern Greece, the Aegean and Serbia. Based on the catalogue of 60 wall-painted templa dated to the 13th-15th century (including six monuments from Crete), Gerstel conveys the main traits of the figures and the iconographic arrangement of the masonry screens. One of the most pivotal results of the study concerns the decoration of these installations, which often display fresco-painted surfaces on both sides, the one facing towards the congregation and the other towards the celebrating priests in the sanctuary. The researcher, following the concept of her dissertation on the consecutive sacralisation of the templon and the altar, holds that the two-sided wall painting demarcated two separate spatial sections addressing two different recipients (laity/priesthood), and ultimately aiming at their transition from the mortal level to that of a transcendent intermediary. At the end of the article, Gerstel adopts an interpretative approach to the appearance of the installation within the framework of intercultural Latin-Orthodox relations. She refers to the frequent existence of the specific installations in territories under Latin control, the coincidence of the bi-faced painting of the templa and the Italian retables from the 13th century onwards, and finally the parallel installation of the transverse liturgical screens in the main nave of the churches in West.

In 2015 the author of the present study researched the masonry screens in Crete dated from the 14th to the 15th century²⁸. The resulting article listed monuments that were mainly located in the western part of the island. It was primarily intended to explain the existence of a built-in templon within the framework of the broader transformation of the venerating figures in connection with the prevalent cultural circumstances on the island during early Venetian rule. In the article, it was noted that Crete displays a liturgical/venerating dualism, since only a limited number of churches are furnished with masonry templa, while in a large number of churches the prostration icons are placed as wall paintings on

20 Spieser, Douze Fêtes 131-164.

21 Gerstel, Sacred Mysteries 5-14.

22 Gerstel, Sacred Mysteries 8.

23 Lidov, Ikonostasis (with essays mainly drafted in Russian). – Margaritēs, Templon (mainly with brief introductory texts-briefings in Greek).

24 Gerstel, Thresholds of the Sacred.

25 Jung, Choir Enclosure 185-213.

26 Hall, Tramezzo revisited 215-232.

27 Gerstel, Alternate View 135-161.

28 Mailis, Templa 111-144.

the lateral walls; this leaves unanswered questions regarding the form and existence of a templon. In an era of religious controversies, the appearance of a masonry templon constitutes a salient declaration of the Orthodox faith during the period of Venetian rule. The findings of this article are re-examined in the third chapter of the present study. The author published a complementary article in 2016²⁹. Therein a small group of stone templa is examined, which are typologically different from the built-in wall-painted installations. According to this study, the morphology and monumentality of this specific group suggest the limited adoption and adaptation of the western architectural types (*tramezzi*) in the Orthodox venerating practice (*templa*).

In addition to the research into the evolution of the templon and the prostration icons, we must note the articles by Tomeković and Koukiarēs on the placement of the titular saint's fresco in the churches of Greece and Yugoslavia, as well as Drpić's reference to the presentation mode of the venerating icon of Saint Theodores in Serres³⁰. The monograph of M. Kazamia-Tsernou regarding *Deësis* also provides useful information on the tracing, emanation and usage of this particular iconographic scheme in Greek territory, including a brief reference on the Cretan monuments³¹. Finally, the article by S. Maderakēs on the *Deësis* in Cretan churches³² offers notable observations. The author primarily examines the theological prominence of the representations on the lateral walls and the quarter-sphere of the *apsis* in Cretan churches. He emphasises the liturgical value of the representation of *Deësis* on the lateral walls and notes that the location of the representation at this specific position suggests the potential absence of the templon. Hence, in Maderakēs' study, the presence of prostration icons is for the first time decoupled from the templon itself.

Methodology and structure of the present research

The state of research suggests that the evolution of the templon and the prostration icons usually fits into a biological evolutionary scheme. The monuments pertaining to the scheme are mostly found in Constantinople, the Greek mainland and the southern territories of the former Yugoslavia, while the written sources derive from Constantinople or the *typicon* of the provincial monasteries. Crete has not been included in the preceding general discussion of the evolution of the templon, except for the brief reference to the island's monuments made in the article by S. Gerstel, regarding masonry screens³³. On the other hand, the density of Crete's

fresco painted churches has led to numerous studies of the island's wall-painted churches; they mainly focus on documentation issues, aesthetic evaluation, iconography or the search for workshops³⁴. These studies are fundamental to the further exploration of individual topics such as the prostration images or the painted templon. Within the context of this broader research, the issue of the existence (or non-existence) of the templon is only sporadically mentioned³⁵, while the placement of the prostration icons is treated as part of a wider study of a group of churches, e. g. the ones related to the workshop of *Iōannēs Pagōmenos*³⁶.

Nevertheless, the study of the templon and the prostration icons in Crete is of great interest due to the particular political, religious and cultural circumstances that prevailed in the island from the midst of the 13th century onwards, that is after the Venetian conquest. In the fourth chapter of this study, extensive reference is made to the ecclesiastical conditions under Venetian rule, a long period characterized by controversies involving the Orthodox population and the Catholic rulers, but also by religious fluidity and osmosis. In this period, the study of the existence of a templon as a »distinctive feature of churches of the Byzantine rite« is of particular importance, especially when taking into account the fact that the Byzantines define the laity's access to the *Bēma* as a religious and cultural point of diversification from the Latins (see the extensive discussion on p. 128-129. 137-138).

The present study comprises the elements of a survey derived from the study of ca. 425 wall-painted churches, dated from the 10th to the 15th century. The rather poor condition of the majority of the lateral walls did not allow us to arrive at unequivocal conclusions for all the examined churches. However, the survey shed light on certain elements for a sufficient number of monuments, and so provides significant information on the depiction mode of the *Bēma* and the placement of the prostration icons. Especially with reference to the single-aisled churches, a particular mode of the prostration icons/wall paintings' insertion in the iconographic program is evident. This scheme encompasses their facing array on the east part of the lateral walls of the church, in front of the *Bēma*. A corresponding array of the same icons has been identified in the single-aisled churches of Macedonia and the Peloponnese, where the specific icons/wall paintings are interpreted as extended parts of the templon arrangements. Nevertheless, the Cretan churches do not bear vestiges of a previous high templon. The high iconostasis affixed to the lateral walls during the late Byzantine era demolished the previous wall-painted decoration, while at the same time the original prostration icons were usually demolished by the opening of windows; this fact further emphasises the loss of their initial use.

29 Mailis, *Tramezzi* 462-471.

30 Tomeković, *Saint Patron* 25-42. – Koukiarēs, *Eponymos Hagios* 105-123. – Drpić, *Saints Theodores* 654-660.

31 Kazamia Tsernou, *Deësis*.

32 Maderakēs, *Deësis* 9-150.

33 Gerstel, *Alternate View* 158-161.

34 Indicatively see: Spatharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings*. – Spatharakis, *Mylopotamos*. – Spatharakis, *Amari*. – Spatharakis, *Agios Basileios*. – Lymberopoulou, *Kavalariana*. – Lymberopoulou, *Cretan Church Decoration*. – Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*.

35 Borboudakēs, *Byzantinē technē* 44. – Maderakēs, *Deësis* 15. 92.

36 Tsamakda, *Kakodiki* 68-71.

As we have seen in the research review, in a preliminary article on the masonry templa of Crete, the author proposed the existence of a morphologic and liturgical dualism between the churches equipped with a masonry screen with wall-painted despotic icons and the churches that displayed the prostration icons on the lateral walls. Therein, it was suggested that the placement of the masonry templon did not constitute a mere provincial selection but a conscientious declaration of faith that designated the templon as a cultural testament to the Orthodox doctrine. During the present study this opinion was slightly modified, so that the interpretation of the existence or absence of a templon will not only be based on the parameter of cultural diversity or interchange with western elements, but also evaluated in terms of cultic modernisation and archaism, subsequently adjusted to the ecclesiastical conditions of each passing period.

The first chapter of this study comprises the survey of the templon's existence in the Cretan churches during the Middle Byzantine period (after the renewed conquest of the island by the Byzantines from 961 to the early 13th century). The analysis suggests that, in contrast with the mainland and the remaining islands, Crete offers few complete templon ensembles from the Middle Byzantine period. Most frequently, the evidence for the existence of these installations derives from spolia subsequently placed in the masonry of later churches (usually compiled by Gerola), as well as the most recent excavations and restoration works of the Antiquity Ephorates.

The published material suggests that the existence and form of the templon are configured on the basis of a series of factors related to the capacity/use of the church, the architectural type and its geographical location. The cross-in-square churches near the religious and administrative centre of the island (Gortyna and Chandakas) were equipped with templa that consisted of closure slabs and architraves. In a few edifices, the wall paintings on the east piers serve as prostration icons, thus completing the depiction mode of the Bēma. Hence, in the churches of the central part of the island, the existence of a templon attests to the connection with the contemporary artistic evolution of the Byzantine world, which was the outcome of a conscientious artistic and venerating modernisation. In contrast, in the western part of the island (now the prefectures of Rethymno and Chania), Middle Byzantine sculpture is rather scarce. The building types (cross-in-square with a protruding cross arm, churches in a free cross shape) that were developed in these areas suggest the compilation of conservative and progressive elements, reflected to the potentially archaic depiction mode of the Bēma (low masonry closure slabs) as evidenced by monuments at different locations (Hagios Pavlos, Sfakia, Panagia Lampēnē). At the same time, another category of edifices on the island – the single-aisled cross-in-square domed churches (such as Hagios Nikolaos in Kyriakosellia) – place the prostration icons so that they face one another in front of the Bēma, indicating the substitution of the templon by other structural elements that partially conceal the Sanctuary. The abovementioned

hint at the existence of a ritual multiplicity, expressed on the one hand through the implementation of the formal liturgical forms reflecting the contemporary metropolitan developments, and on the other hand through the adherence to »archaic« venerating modes (and solutions) deriving from the local popular cultic tradition.

The second chapter investigates the phenomenon of the juxtaposition of the prostration images' array – mainly in the single-aisled churches of the 13th and the 15th century, also comprising a small number of domed or cruciform superstructures. The first conclusion from this analysis is that in churches of the second category (domed/cross-roofed), the prostration icons are placed before the congregation, thus recalling the Middle Byzantine »common practice« that required the array of the prostration images on the east piers. On the other hand, in the single-aisled edifices of the island, the prostration icons are placed on the eastern part of the lateral walls and follow specific arrangements.

This chapter attempts, for the first time, the systematic classification of these icons/wall paintings based on their iconography and depiction mode. The most widely disseminated iconographic variant comprises the facing array of the Deēsis and the patron saint. The typical placement of Deēsis on the east edge of the south wall began in the 13th century, while the placement of the patron saint on the opposite north wall started in the 13th century and was established in the 14th century. The prominence of these frescoes is highlighted either by their location in the blind arcades before the Bēma or the presence of a painted proskynētation above the patron saint. The array mode of these icons (Deēsis on the south wall/patron saint on the north) is the precursor to the despotic icons on the post-Byzantine iconostasis (where the patron saint and Virgin are mounted on the north part and Christ with the Precursor are displayed on the south part of the installation). The second variant comprises the facing array of the prostration icons of Christ, Virgin, the titular saint or the church's titular celebration. The depiction mode of these icons corresponds to that of the previous groups (painted frames, blind arcades or plain red frames) while the selection of the themes is frequently linked to local customs or specific workshops (such as the workshop of Iōannēs Pagōmenos in the prefecture of Chania). The dating of these examples shows that this array mode of the prostration icons was already known from the 13th century, thus preceding the masonry screens that emerged at the beginning of the 14th century. At the same time, it could be deduced that the wall-painted despotic icons of the built-in templa duplicated the models of the prostration images on the lateral walls, thus suggesting their evolution from this type of wall painting. The archaeological investigation of the walls in these churches did not reveal any vestiges of a high templon. Thus, the restoration of the depiction mode of the Bēma is rather speculative. The remnants of the low guardrails (reproducing the early Christian chancel slabs) in few churches of Crete, and the evidence for built-in or movable

guardrails in insular churches of Naxos, Chalkē and Tēlos to the end of the 15th century, attest to the insistence on more ancient venerating types and suggest the possible employment of a similar solution in the Cretan churches of the 13th and the 15th century. Thereby, this restored arrangement may be interpreted within the framework of a cultic archaism that survived due to the preservation of ancestral customs by the local population. The island's parallel arrangements reveal the existence of a liturgical multiplicity until the 15th century, thus indicating that the usage of a high templon is a phenomenon of spatial and temporal variations. As regards the alteration of cultic customs, notable is the casual destruction of the prostration icons on the lateral walls during the post-Byzantine era, since their function was now transferred to the despotic icons of the iconostasis.

The third chapter investigates the establishment of the wall-painted masonry templon in the single-aisled churches of Crete during the 14th and the 15th century. The earliest monument is traced to the village of Hagia Triada, Messara in 1302, and appears as a crude imitation of a more luxurious templon consisting of an architrave, colonettes and closure slabs. The identification of the said arrangement near Gortyna indicates the continuity of the local Middle Byzantine tradition of the marble templa with less luxurious means. On the contrary, the exemplars of western Crete suggest that the masonry screen first appeared as an innovation. On occasion, the built-in templa seemingly did not form part of the initial design of the church, while the wall-painted despotic icons/frescoes of the masonry screens of the first half of the 14th century actually duplicated the earlier model of prostration icons/frescoes on the lateral walls of the single-aisled churches. The transition to the iconostasis is observed from the second half of the 14th century onwards, when painted pseudo icons that imitated portable images now replaced the wall-painted surfaces of the despotic icons. A notable trait of the churches with built-in templa is their concentration in the prefecture of Chania, and particularly the area of Selino (where the majority are preserved) and secondarily in the prefecture of Kisamos (mostly traces). This phenomenon is linked to the density of churches, the material wealth and the strong Orthodox identity of the populations.

From 1204 onwards, the accessibility of the Bēma is rendered as a proper religious and cultural trait of the Orthodox. The Cretan monuments suggest that the construction of a masonry templon in the single-aisled churches of the island's provinces is frequently associated with monastic circles, directly targeting the maintenance of the mystic nature of the Liturgy and the »secular/sacerdotal« distinction. The installation of a solid masonry screen is vested with higher significance if one takes into consideration that, during the

earlier arrangement of Cretan churches, the »despotic« icons were placed as wall paintings on the lateral walls, while the churches carry no visible traces of a high templon in their earliest phase. As seen in the second chapter, this conservative arrangement continued in the 14th and the 15th century, in an era of intense religious controversies. Possibly the archaic custom of the local populace could pose significant questions as regards the dogmatic correctness of these churches especially on the part of the zealot Orthodox, who recognize in the existence of a templon a distinctive difference between the Catholics and the Orthodox. Hence the masonry templon seemingly appears as a cultic modernization, which complements a previous outfashioned arrangement. This innovation is probably sourced from the areas of SE Peloponnese and Kythera, both of which exhibit diachronic cultural relations with West Crete. This assumption is affirmed by the frequency of the masonry screens in neighbouring Manē and Kythera, as well as the ecclesiastical circumstances of the era, since the Venetian authorities allowed until 1429 the ordination of Cretan Orthodox priests, solely outside Crete – in the episcopate of Manē. Therefore, the supremacy of the built-in templa in West Crete materially asserts a religious/cultural route between this part of the island and the remains of the Byzantine territory.

The fourth chapter delineates the final evolutionary phase of the religious and artistic forms in Crete. The analysis is conducted on the basis of two significant documents regarding the existence and the prominence of the templon in Cretan churches. The first, presented in detail for the first time, is the narration of the German knight Konrad Grünemberg, who departed in 1486 from his homeland, Konstanz, on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The restless German records his impressions of the pilgrimage in a colourfully detailed travelogue, »Beschreibung der Reise von Konstanz nach Jerusalem«, extant in two illustrated manuscripts³⁷. One of the »Greek« stops on his voyage was Chandakas. There, the knight attended the Divine Office in an urban Orthodox church (of unionist beliefs?) and was impressed by the »exotic« atmosphere of the service. The German noble describes the ritual extensively and enhances his narration with a detailed miniature depiction of the Divine Office, emphasizing the actors, the depiction mode of the Bēma and the liturgical furnishings. Konrad's reaction to the Orthodox ritual graphically reveals a German Catholic's perception of a venerating practice that exceeds his web of cultural references. Nevertheless, because the German noble attends and illustrates an Orthodox rite in a church without a templon, thus enjoying an unimpeded view of the Bēma and the occurrences therein, the combination of narration and iconography provides sublime testimony concerning the depiction mode of the Bēma

37 On the history of the manuscript: Goldfriedrich/Fränzel, Grünembergs Pilgerfahrt 48. – For an account of the manuscript's editions, see: http://bilder.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/hs/projekt-Gotha-pdfs/Chart_A_541.pdf (13.12.2019). – The text of the manuscript was recently published: Denke,

Grünembergs Pilgerreise. A first analysis of the miniature was effected by the writer during the 39th Symposium of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Archaeology and Art (31st May 2019). – Mailis, What did the German see? 121-122.

in an urban church of Crete in the 15th century. The chapter researches the religious conditions of this period and the liturgical customs of the Catholic and Orthodox world, with an emphasis on the liturgical multiplicity, the contradictions and the daily osmosis of the two doctrines until the end of the 15th century.

The second document concerns the conflict between the Orthodox and the official Latin leadership of the Franciscans on the occasion of the removal of the Orthodox templon from the church of the Saviour in Ierapetra in 1626, and the attempted solution proposed by the Venetian administrative authority. The incident seals a series of preceding religious

advancements during the 16th century. During this time, the iconostasis was recognized in the consciousness of the Orthodox populace as a fundamental symbol, while the open form of the Bēma was now acknowledged as a formal belief of the Catholic Church. The rigorous reaction of the Cretan Orthodox and the formal intervention of the Venetians record an attempted political equilibration of two divergent religious modes after their crystallization. The testimony of the German knight as combined with the material evidence proffered by the Cretan churches constitutes valuable testimony for previous everyday practices, which would otherwise be overlooked.