



Monastery of Leimon: North-West view

1. ST JOHN THE 'THEOLOGIAN'

DIMENSIONS: 51,6×39×4,5 cm

DATE: second half of 17th century

Saint John the 'Theologian' is depicted on a golden ground; he is seated on a wooden-carved throne with his body slightly inclined to the left and his head to the right, towards God's hand, from which he receives divine inspiration (the Descent of the Holy Spirit). His facial features characterise an old person, but his face is fleshy; he is clad in a long purple chiton (robe) and a dark brown himation. In his right hand, which is raised, he holds a cane, while with his left hand he holds upon his left knee an open Gospel Book inscribed with the beginning of John's Gospel: EN APXH/ [HN] O ΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ/ [Ο] ΛΟΓΟΣ / HN ΠΙΟC/ ΤΟΝ Θ(ΕΟ)Ν/ ΚΑΙ Θ(ΕΟ)C ΗΝ/ Ο ΛΟΓΟ[C] (John 1,1). Saint John is flanked left and right by two medals on which the following inscriptions have been saved: Ο ΑΓ(ΙΟC) ΙΩ(ΑΝΝΗC) (Saint John) and Ο ΘΕΟ/ΛΟΓΟΣ (the 'Theologian'); his halo is decorated with engraved dots.

The size, shape and iconography of the icon indicate that it is a part of an apostolic templon (icon-stand); however, concerning the iconography, the specific type of the enthroned Evangelist who himself writes his gospel book while gazing at God's hand, is not common in the post-Byzantine period. The above characteristics classify the specific figure among workshops influenced by specific works of the Cretan School, such as the icons of Euphrosynos, which are situated in the Protaton of Mount Athos (1542). The same style can be found among wall paintings of the late first half of 16th century (at Meteora).



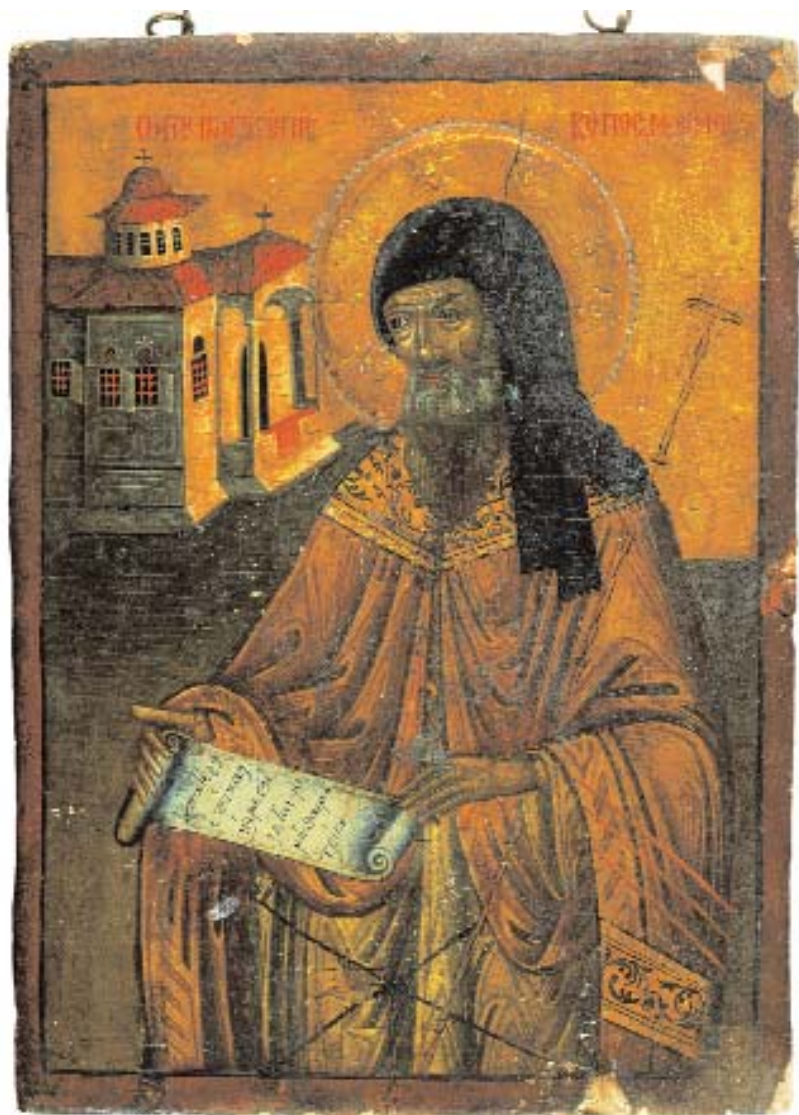
2. SAINT IGNATIUS OF METHYMNA

DIMENSIONS: 50×35,8×2 cm

DATE: 18th-19th century

Saint Ignatius, the most important figure of monastic life on Lesbos island during the 16th century, is depicted in old age, standing still up to his knees, and inclined 3/4 towards left, while a small three chapel is depicted in the background. He holds an open winding scroll inscribed with a misspelled extract of his admonition to monks: *ή πατέρα/ [επικαλήν με θέλ/ετε μ/ μήσθαι μου/ τ(ον) βίον.* The Saint, who has ascetic and wrinkled facial features, is clad in a light-brown chiton (robe), tile-coloured mandyas (mantle), and his head is covered with a black cowl. His golden halo, made from an additional layer of stucco, bears seven engraved stars. At the top of the icon the following inscription has been saved: Ο (ΑΓ)ΙΟC ΙΓΝΑΤΙΟC ΕΠΙCΚΟΠΙΟC ΜΕΘΗΜΝΗC (Saint Ignatius Abbot of Methymna).

The icon was probably created by a monk of the monastery, who copied its older version (icon 110) with some slight differences. The shaping of the figure is characterised by a looseness and harshness. Saint Ignatius the 'Agallianos', born in the village Faragga of Kal-lone on the island of Lesbos about 1492, donated his parental property for the renovation of the Monastery of Taxiarchon Leimonos and of the Monastery of Virgin Myrsiniotissa, in which he was abbot (1527-1530). While he was living in Constantinople (Istanbul), he was elected bishop of Methymna, for issues related to the monastery.



3. CHRIST PANTOCRATOR (ALL-SOVEREIGN, OMNIPOTENT)

DIMENSIONS: 52×45×2,5 cm

DATE: first half of 16th century

Christ is depicted in bust and frontal pose on a golden ground, surrounded by a deep red frame; Christ is blessing with his right hand, while with his left hand he is holding tight to his chest a closed Gospel Book decorated with precious stones. Christ is clad in a chiton (robe), probably purple, with a golden clavus, which hangs loose on his right shoulder. His deep green himation, which has wide khaki-green linear striations, is covering only his left shoulder and hand. On the ground the following inscription has been saved: IC XC ΠΑΝΤΟ/ΚΡΑΤΩΡ (Jesus Christ Pantocrator).

Facial features are fine and harmonious, the beard is relatively short and thin, the eyes are quite small and the eyebrows are arched; however, the body is heavy with sloping shoulders. The face of Christ, which is normal in size, is harmoniously bonded with the body. In general, the whole figure is characterised by austerity without any facial distortions.

The iconography follows the traditional type of the 'Pantocrator', which was established during the Palaeologian period and which is well known from many examples of Byzantine and post-Byzantine period. In general the figure is characterised by austerity. All the features classify the specific work of art in the early 16th century.

