



RICONTRANS
CONCLUDING
CONFERENCE
23-25 JANUARY

2025
ABSTRACTS

**ORTHODOX HEGEMONY AND ART
TRANSFER OF RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS ART
TO THE BALKANS AND THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN
(LATE 16TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURIES)**

LOCATION:
INSTITUTE FOR **MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES** – FORTH
NIKIFOROU FOKA 130, RETHYMNO (OLD TOWN), KPHTH



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RICONTRANS

**Visual Culture, Piety and Propaganda:
Transfer and Reception of Russian Religious Art
in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean
(16th – early 20th century)**

<https://ricontrans-project.eu/>

The Russian religious artefacts (icons and ecclesiastical furnishings), held in museums, church or monastery collections in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean, constitute a body of valuable monuments hitherto largely neglected by historians and historians of art. These objects acquire various interrelated religious, ideological, political and aesthetic meanings, value, and uses. Their transfer and reception constitutes a significant component of the wider process of transformation of the artistic language and visual culture in the region and its transition from medieval to modern idioms. It is at the same time a process reflecting the changing cultural and political relations between Russia and the Orthodox communities in the Ottoman Empire and its successor states in the Balkans over a long period of time (16th- early 20th century). In this dynamic transfer, piety, propaganda and visual culture appear intertwined in historically unexplored and theoretically provoking ways.

RICONTRANS explores the thousands of Russian Icons and other religious art objects, brought from Russia to the Balkans from the 16th until the 20th century, preserved in monasteries, churches, and museum collections in the region.

Applying the cultural transfer approach in combination with the recent challenging openings of art history to visual studies and social anthropology, RICONTRANS aims to map the phenomenon in its long history by identifying preserved objects in the region; to follow the paths and identify the mediums of this transfer; to analyze the moving factors of this process; to inquire into the aesthetic, ideological, political and social factors which shaped the context of the reception of Russian religious art objects in various social and cultural environments; to investigate the influence of these transferred artefacts on the visual culture of the host societies.

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Russian Icons brought to the Monastery of St. John the Theologian through Alms Collection Missions: Liturgical and Ideological Aspects of their Reception

This paper examines the evidence contained in various types of written sources (monastic archival codices, official documents from the Russian state archives, dedicatory inscriptions on the objects and travelogues) concerning the icons and other artefacts brought to the monastery of Saint John the Theologian through alms collection missions to Russia undertaken in the period 1694-1705.

The three well-known (but not exhaustively studied) icons of the Sovereign Tier of the central iconostasis of the monastery's *katholikon* are among these acquisitions of the monastery via alms collection. Apart from them, we will also present another equally large and beautiful Russian icon created in the Moscow Kremlin Armory Chamber icon painting workshop which, so far, has received no attention whatsoever. The icon in case depicts Saint John the Theologian with his disciple Prochor and it is situated nowadays at the monastery's library. This icon, which was obviously created also for an iconostasis Sovereign Tier, is in all probability one of the two icons "with Christ Pantocrator and St John the Theologian Apocalypse" purchased by Archbishop Nicephorus in 1705 during an alms collection mission of Patmos monks to Russia. Moreover, in monastic codices we have found data about two smaller icons also brought through an alms collection mission - the icon of the Virgin Mary Kazanskaya, which is currently on display at the Great Sacristy Museum, donated to the monastery in January 1703 by Abraham Metropolitan of Ryazan and the icon with "Mother of God Kazanskaya with St. Mary Magdalene and St. Irene in prayer", donated by the family of Stolnik Prince Ivan Nikitch Urussov which unfortunately is missing.

These objects of art, especially those assuming a central liturgical place in the monastery, have been also "invested" with various - usually fictive - stories about their origin and the context of their transfer. Consequently, the objective of this paper is not

only to reconstruct the transfer history of these donations and votive offerings, but also to examine the ideological uses of these icons, not only by the monastic community, but also by well-known historians and pilgrims (Russian or not) who described and (mis) interpreted their identity.

The Russian religious artefacts of Patmos monastery are an outstanding example of the various facets of the “social life” of moving religious art objects, which is the focus of the interdisciplinary approach of RICONTRANS project.

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The Icon of St. John the Theologian from the Iconostasis of Patmos Monastery. A Case of Complex Transcultural Contacts in the Early Modern Orthodox World

This paper aims to illustrate the methodological approach of RICONTRANS project to the study of art transfer during the early modern period. The search and documentation of transferred artefacts (icons, liturgical utensils, etc.) and the written sources related to them (official documents, monastic codices, inscriptions on the objects, travelogues) enables us to trace and reconstruct the “material and social biographies” of these artefacts, which were transferred and incorporated into new social and cultural contexts.

The history of the icon of Saint John the Theologian from the iconostasis of the Monastery of Patmos is an extremely interesting case illustrating this point. The icon, made according to the rules of the Moscow Kremlin Armory Chamber icon painting workshop, represents a new iconographic type of Saint John the Evangelist, created ca. 1680 in Moscow by the famous artist Tikhon Filatiev under the influence of Western engravings. The icon is decorated with a silver frame with floral motifs and it contains six medals. One of them depicts the New Testament Trinity, four of them depict scenes from the Apocalypse and the last one contains a citation from the Apocalypse, as well as the name of the donator “Theodori Stathi” and the date “1697”.

We have managed to draw interesting data about the persons involved in the icon transfer from Moscow to Patmos from various sources, such as documents preserved in the Russian state archives, monastic codices and the donor’s inscription on the icon. This data reveals that the icon created in Moscow was transferred to Patmos monastery by the elder Gedeon in 1698. The data also shows that during his way back from Russia to Patmos, elder Gedeon stopped - among many other places - in Brasov, Transylvania, to collect alms and donations for the monastery. The Patmos Synodic (A.C.1016, A.C.1016a) compiled during the travel of the monks for alms collection from

Patmos monastery to Moscow in 1694-1705, shows that, in all probability, the donor of the silver frame for the new muscovite icon was a Greek priest from this city, which was known for its thriving Greek Orthodox merchant community.

The frame of the Patmos icon is an unknown example of Brasov's goldsmith workshops. The iconography of the Apocalypse used in the frame is adopted by the Brasov goldsmiths from German engravings decorating a series of cast Gospel covers from the second half of the 17th until early -18th c.

The close study of the object and its trajectories shows that the icon of Saint John the Theologian from the iconostasis of the Monastery of Patmos is an outstanding example of the multifaceted transfer of artefacts, iconographic models and prototypes and their transnational communication and entangled contacts in the early modern Orthodox world.

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Russia and Hilandar Monastery: The Icon of the Mother of God Three-Handed and Its Revetment

The Icon of the Mother of God Three-Handed (Troeruchitsa), as the most revered relic of the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos, has received considerable attention in previous research. However, the part of its history related to the 19th century, as well as the connections between Russia and Hilandar, remains unexplored. As the monastery's main sacred item, a new revetment or *riza*, for the Troeruchitsa Icon was crafted in 1862 and sent from Russia as a donation from the faithful. With the installation of the new revetment, older ornaments and votives were removed, including the applied metal third hand of the Mother of God. The new, expensive *riza*, gilded and adorned with precious stones, defined a new appearance for the icon, by which it is well-known to this day.

The act of donating the icon reflected the strength of the cult of the Three-Handed Theotokos, which had developed in Russia. With the cult having been transferred from 1661, the Troeruchitsa Icon gradually became one of the venerated miraculous images of the Mother of God in Russia. The specific credit for the revetment donated to Hilandar's Three-Handed Theotokos Icon belongs to Pyotr Ivanovich Sevastyanov, a Russian researcher who spent time on Mount Athos on two occasions, creating a large collection of photographs, drawings, manuscripts, and ecclesiastical artifacts. During his second visit from 1859 to 1860, when he officially led research under the recommendations of the Archaeographic Commission, Sevastyanov took the measurements for the icon's revetment, which was then created in 1862. The covering was commissioned from one of the most renowned jewelers in Russia at the time, Fedor Andreevich Verkhovtsev, the founder of a firm specializing in the creation of church items made of gold and silver. With the new *riza* made from the Verkhovtsev firm, the Hilandar Three-Handed Theotokos Icon received an appearance that defined it within the contemporary framework of Russian ecclesiastical jewelry and metalwork.

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Russian or Ukrainian? Kievan Icons in the Romanian Principalities in the 18th century

Besides the numerous icons produced in the famous Armory Workshop in the Moscow Kremlin and several others probably originating from Yaroslav, Kostroma and Saint Petersburg, during the 18th century, many icons created in the painting workshops in Kiev were also brought to Moldavia and Wallachia.

Most of these Kievan icons were identified by historical sources in the Romanian Principalities of the time as Russian. Only in very few cases a more specific provenance, that of Malorussia, has been reported.

Such examples are found at the Putna Monastery in Suceava county, where about 80 icons donated by Metropolitan Jacob of Putna are preserved, the Archbishopric of Roman in Bacău county, the Poiana Mărului Monastery in Buzău county, the Cetățuia Monastery from Iași, or at the Snagov Monastery near Bucharest. In most cases, the presence of these icons in Moldavia and Wallachia is related to the expansion of monastic lineage networks of the followers of the spiritual path initiated by St. Demetrius of Rostov, from Kyiv Pechersk Lavra via Mount Athos. Although this type of icon has a specific, easily recognizable style, which has led some art historians to consider it a distinct school of painting, one can notice their similarities to Russian icons produced in Moscow and Central Russia in the first half of the 18th century.

My paper aims to question the stylistic labels and ethnic stereotypes applied to 18th-century Kievan icons and to analyze more deeply the relationship of mutual influence that occurred between centers of art production within the territory of the Russian Empire and beyond.

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Remarks on the Preservation State of the Russian Icons in Bulgaria

The paper deals with the Russian religious heritage in Bulgaria. Nowadays, Russian icons are displayed or stored in museums and galleries or in churches. Sometimes the condition of this specific art objects is a reflection of the cultural and political situation and trends in Bulgaria.

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Studying and exhibiting Russian Icons at the Benaki Museum

The ERC RICONTRANS research project presented an opportunity to study Russian religious art from the collections of the Benaki Museum through an interdisciplinary approach and in collaboration with various researchers involved in the project. Although catalogued, these works had not previously attracted scholarly interest. The art-historical, epigraphic, and technical analysis enabled us to reconstruct the identities and often tumultuous biographies of the objects leading up to their current museification. Simultaneously, we hope this multifaceted study provides a repository of reliable data that can serve as the foundation for improved understanding and secure conservation of numerous other Russian artworks located in regions such as Greece, where the techniques and materials of Russian icons remain largely unknown, despite the religious practices and concepts they embody being quite familiar. Additionally, preparing for the exhibition of these works has been equally instructive, culminating in two exhibitions organised by the Benaki Museum in distinct cities and venues in Greece: the modern Pireos 138 – Benaki Museum (2022-23) and a historical building, Santirvan, a beautifully restored Ottoman mosque in Drama (2024-2025). The two exhibitions, which garnered excellent reviews and received a warm reception from the public, merit evaluation against the current challenging international context that shapes a difficult conversation between the global audience and Russian religious art.

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The Information System SYNTHESIS and its Use in the Documentation and Study of Artefacts Mobility

Studying the mobility of religious artefacts and their various religious, ideological, political and aesthetic meanings, encompasses a wide array of activities, ranging from discovering and analyzing primary and secondary sources, to examining the collected data to uncover new evidence and insights. Throughout this process, it is essential to record, document and maintain rich information about the key entities involved (objects, locations, individuals, etc.) and their interconnections. This information should be systematically organized in a database that can be collaboratively developed and maintained by researchers and domain experts.

To address this need, we present the information system SYNTHESIS, which facilitates the collaborative documentation of entities relevant to a domain under study. The system is web-based, configurable to specific use cases and requirements, and adheres to the documentation standard CIDOC CRM (ISO 21127:2023), ensuring the integration and exchange of data with clear and unambiguous meaning. Its primary goal is to enable the production of data of high-quality and long-term validity that can be reused and extended beyond the scope of a particular research project. We detail the functionality of SYNTHESIS and its use in the context of the RICONTRANS project, and also demonstrate how its data can be directly utilized by other web applications for data browsing and dissemination.

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*The Taxidiotes from the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans
in Russia in 1830-1914: Supporting Orthodoxy and Policy
Implementation*

In the 19th century the traditional channels of material support for the monasteries and churches of the Ottoman Empire were revisited. Since 1735 the aid was regulated by the “Palestinian states”, a list of church institutions and monasteries which received a fixed annual donation. After the turbulent period of the Russo-Ottoman wars, the regular sending of money was restarted, by banking, via the Russian embassy in Constantinople. Since the 1830s clerics from the Middle East and the Balkans arrived again to Russia to gather donations. These trips were strictly regulated. The petitioners had to address a letter to the Holy Synod via the Russian embassy, and only after approval from the ambassador did the issuing of a permission follow, usually for one year. Some of these visits were followed by long-term campaigns of gathering money and church objects (garments, icons, books), while others ended in the foundation of permanent dependencies in Moscow. In the 1830s and 1840s after the visit of the Bosnian priest Pavel Tverdkovich, gathering of donations for Bosnia started and lasted for more than 20 years.

Along with the general line of supporting the Orthodoxy in the Ottoman Empire, the permissions for the *taxidiotes* were often issued with regard to the political views of Russia in the region. In the recommendation letters of the diplomats the loyalty of a certain abbot or bishop to Russia was always stressed. Preference was given to Mount Athos and the monasteries of the Slavonic lands, especially to those where the local population was in danger of being converted to Islam or Catholicism. Trips from the Greek lands were also encouraged, and in case of special needs (fire or earthquake) they could be prolonged for two or more years.

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Ukrainian Traces in Bulgarian Cultural Heritage

The text will look for artifacts created in the Ukrainian lands, which found their way to Bulgaria through various routes: illustrated printed editions, icons, graphic sheets. Specific Ukrainian subjects will also be of interest: images of Kiev saints, replicas of miraculous Ukrainian icons. Some of these images were executed by Bulgarian masters, which is evidence of cultural contacts and which broadens the horizon of research in a direction that is not well explored.

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Russian Icons in the Peloponnese: Evidence and Works

In this paper, information of various origins concerning the presence of Russian icons in the Peloponnese will be presented, in order to demonstrate, through verification, that much of this information is more “evidence” of an oral tradition based on political expectations and religious aspirations than on actual events. Thus, these pieces of information are rather indicative testimonies of a myth. Furthermore, mainly statistical data will be presented, briefly and by region of the Peloponnese, concerning the actual presence of Russian icons and the testimonies related to them.

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The Experience of Transcribing the Zeteia Codices of the Monastery of Saint John the Theologian of Patmos. Their Content and their Relevance as Source Material

The codices examined in this presentation record the practice of *zeteia* – a form of alms collection – organized and conducted by the monks of the monastery of Saint John the Theologian in Patmos. These sources provide us with various kinds of historical information, which give us a better understanding of the ties that the monastery of Saint John developed with the Tsardom of Russia, as well as with other state administrations and religious communities in the wider region. In this presentation, I will attempt to highlight these texts within their historical scope, examining the geographic information that the monks' journeys to the lands of Russian Tsardom, the Danubian Principalities and the Ottoman Empire provide and the dates of those journeys that took place during the transition from the 17th to the 18th century. I will also refer to the various historical figures such as monarchs, nobles, statesmen and clergymen that are recorded in these codices, I will touch on the linguistic peculiarities of the texts written in Greek and Russian and finally comment on the difficulties faced in studying and transcribing the said sources.

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Treacherous times or treacherous monks: The 1894-1896 alms collection (zeteia) in Russia by monks from the Arkadi monastery, Crete

In the early days of August 1894, following two unsuccessful attempts, the hegumen of the Arkadi monastery, Gabriel Manaris, was finally granted the requisite official permission to conduct an alms collection in Russia. According to his notes and memoirs found in the monastery's archives, travelling to Russia to raise money for the restoration of the monastery had been his ardent desire ever since the news of the explosion of the gunpowder magazine during the 1866 revolution reached him in Istanbul, where he was studying at the Halki School of Theology. The alms collection lasted just over two years, during which time Manaris and his colleague Akakios Daoundakis travelled extensively across Russia, from St. Petersburg and Siberia to the Black Sea and the Caucasus. They exhibited holy relics for veneration and offered memorial services. The monastery archives provide insight into the route traversed, income and expenditure, and challenges encountered by the travelers. Furthermore, the archive contains the names of individuals who provided financial contributions in exchange for commemorations in the liturgy. These include well-known personalities from the period in question. The two monks returned to Crete at the end of 1896 with considerably less money than had been anticipated, but with a number of ecclesiastical utensils, including luxurious hieratic vestments, a miter for the Bishop of Rethymno, a silver reliquary, candlesticks, gospels, and censers. Upon their return, a controversy emerged concerning allegations of misappropriation of the funds they had collected. In this paper, with the use of the monastery's archive, I will attempt to reconstruct the monks' zeteia in Russia, their route and the difficulties they encountered, as well as the reasons for the reduced revenues. Additionally, I will examine the reasons for the controversy that arose upon their return to Crete and attempt to contextualize it within the broader political landscape of the time.

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Royal Icons Complexes from Moscow in the Churches of Constantinople

The Orthodox churches of Constantinople contain a significant number of Russian icons dating from the 17th to 19th centuries. Of particular interest among them are the large-format icon complexes created by artists from the icon-painting workshop at the Moscow Armory in the early 18th century. We know of eight such complexes, that are located in different parts of the city. Most of them are in the churches and monasteries on the Princes' Islands and the European shore of the Bosphorus. Few documents about them have been found. The history of only one of the complexes located on the Princes' Islands is known. The iconographic program of the complexes varies. In many cases, it is uniform and corresponds to the traditions adopted in Constantinople for the Royal icons in the iconostasis. Other complexes, on the contrary, are distinguished by the originality of the iconographic solution. Many icons contain late Greek inscriptions mentioning the names of the donors. Autographs of the artists were not found, but in some cases, based on stylistic similarity, the authorship of some icons can be assumed.

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*Archival Documents on the Education of Serbian Painters
in Russia during the 19th century*

During the second half of the 19th century, the question of the dogmatic and iconographic content of religious painting became very important, especially after the arrival of Metropolitan Mihailo Jovanović on the throne of the Serbian Orthodox Church (1859-1881; 1889-1898). In order to reorganize parochial life and religious art in the Principality/Kingdom of Serbia, Metropolitan Mihailo sent students to study art and iconography in Russia. Correspondence preserved in Serbian archives testify to how young Serbian painters experienced their education in Russia, their challenges, how they overcame them, and what expectations were placed before them. The work aims to give a better insight into the transfer of Russian religious art to Serbian soil by educating young Serbian painters in monastery workshops and academies in Russia through preserved archival documents and personal correspondences.

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The Russian Icon in the Greek Private Archaeological Collections

In this paper the presence of the Russian icon in the Greek private archaeological collections is investigated. Starting from the finding that the majority of the collectors/ owners possess a considerable number of Russian icons, their frequency and number compared to icons from other workshops, their provenance, the manner and time of acquisition, where possible, are examined. Finally, the objects themselves are presented in terms of their dating and their subject and iconography.

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Russian Help to Churches and Monasteries in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the second half of the 19th century

In the second half of the 19th century, the Orthodox churches and monasteries in Bosnia and Herzegovina received abundant help from Russia through money, religious objects, and vestments. This practice was supported primarily by the opening of consulates in Sarajevo and Mostar. The Russian consuls, who had good relations with the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, mediated to obtain funds for churches, monasteries, and schools and also arranged for students from Bosnia to study in Russia. In this process, Aleksandar Hilferding stands out; he was consul in Sarajevo and then in Mostar. Hilferding helped the monk Prokopije Čokorilo from Mostar to realize his great aspiration to go to Russia where he collected donations for churches and monasteries in Herzegovina. Thanks to Russian financial aid, the construction of the new Orthodox church in Mostar was completed, and Russian masters worked on furnishing its interior. Also, through the Russian consul in Sarajevo, Aleksej Kudryavcev, the newly built Cathedral in the same city was equipped. Archimandrite Sava Kosanović went to Russia from Sarajevo to collect more contributions in money and necessary liturgical items for the new church. Other church municipalities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina regularly asked for help for their churches through the consulate. That help came primarily in the form of liturgical books, but they also sent money and liturgical objects.

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Piety and Ideology: Russian Miraculous Icons and Saints in the Early Modern Serbian Visual Culture

During the early modern period, there was an intense transfer of Russian sacred visual culture into Serbian Orthodox churches. This process involved the importation of numerous Russian books, icons, and iconostases to the Balkan region. Russian sacred objects could be purchased, but they were often also donated by Russian benefactors. One significant feature and consequence of Russian-Serbian cultural communication was the transfer of Russian miraculous icons and the cult of the Russian saints. Throughout the early modern period, copies of numerous Russian miraculous icons were brought from Russia to Serbian churches. The most prominent cult among the Serbs was dedicated to the Vladimir Mother of God. One of its copies gained particular veneration as the miraculous icon of the Mother of God of Vinča.

In the 19th century, icons that had ideological significance also began to appear. The best examples are the icons and wall paintings of Saint Alexander Nevsky. These were closely linked to the wars against the Ottoman Empire and Russian military aid. The strongest expression of veneration of this saint was the construction of the Church of Saint Alexander Nevsky in Belgrade.

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Russian Icons with Dated Inscriptions from Bulgaria

This report is dedicated to the Russian icons with dated inscriptions, documented by the Bulgarian team of the RICONTRANS project during its work. Usually Russian icons do not bear chronological indications and this makes their precise dating impossible. Dated inscriptions are important because they give us a *terminus ante quem* for the appearance of the icon and sometimes they reveal interesting data about the movement of the object. This paper is based on material from the regional history museums in Veliko Tarnovo and Varna, the art galleries in Pleven, Stara Zagora, Svishtov, Yambol, etc.

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Making Sense of the End: The Lost Last Judgement of Saint Mary of the Mongols

In the 1930s, several Romanian writers, scholars and diplomats visited Istanbul: albeit no longer capital, the city still sparked lots of curiosity. An album, compiled in May 1932 and presented to the Romanian Academy in November of that year, attracted my attention. It consists of thirty-two photographs by Jean Weinberg, the owner of the famous Foto Franse / Photo Français studio in Pera. The first nineteen photos depict houses and churches in the Fener and Balat neighbourhoods. The other thirteen are reproductions of documents concerning the monastery of the Great Cave (Mega Spileon) near Kalavryta, in the Peloponnese. In three of the photos figures a fresco depicting the Last Judgement, which was kept at that time in the church known as Saint Mary of the Mongols. Now lost, the fresco displayed intriguing characteristics. Taking as pretext Weinberg's photographs, I will stroll through Russian, Moldavian, Wallachian and Greek versions of the scene, trying to determine the typology of the Constantinopolitan one. My aim is to highlight some of the traits of eighteenth-century "Phanariot art."

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Patmian Monks and the Imagination of Petrine Russia

This paper builds on the two codices from the library of Patmos monastery (1016 and 1016a) stemming from alms-collection-travels of Patmian monks in Russia at the turn of the 18th century, on the existing scholarly literature as well as on further pertinent sources from the Russian State Archives in order to discuss aspects of piety, alms-seeking and their political and cultural context with respect to the relations of Russia to the Greek world in the early modern period. It aims to uncover and contextualize evidence on the representations and imagination of Russia among the fellow Orthodox of the Ottoman Empire, that conditioned the reception of Russian icons and other items of religious art in the Ottoman lands. The codices from Patmos offer valuable insights in the modalities of alms collection, in the mental categories of the actors involved and in the social setting of pious practices. In combination with the testimony of the petition letters carried and submitted by the Patmian monks in Moscow in 1696 and 1705, their rhetoric and argumentation, the paper will trace indications of mental transformations and adaptations, connected with the contemporary Petrine reforms and the changes in the self-perception of the Russian monarchy.

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The “Sinodik” of Patmos (1016, 1016a) in a Comparative Perspective

This paper investigates the nature of the two previously unstudied codices from the library of Patmos monastery, 1016 and 1016a, which belong to the rarely preserved category of liturgical books, *milostynnyi sinodik* – commemorative lists, that is, of living and dead compiled during the travel of the monks for alms collection, in this case from Patmos monastery to Moscow in 1694-1760. While many such manuscripts from within medieval and early modern Russia survive, only a few are known from the outside communities; in this respect, the Patmos *sinodik* stands out for the wide geographical and social spread of the names and donations it comprises, linguistic diversity, and multiple chronological layers. The paper places the Patmos *sinodik* in a comparative context with the contemporary memorial books originating in Moscow and preserved at the monasteries of Mt Athos, Sinai, as well as selected convents of Russia, and spotlights the most outstanding feature of the Patmos *sinodik*, namely, that it survives in the two partially overlapping codices, which can be potentially identified as an informal register and a clean official version; a study of their mutual relationship may thus provide further insights into the backstage process of how the commemoration books of this type were created and used.

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A New Visual Culture: The Spiritual and Artistic Patronage of Poiana Mărului Hermitage (mid 18th-19th Centuries)

In 1730, a community of Russian monks led by abbot Vasile settled in the mountainous area of southeastern Romania (Buzău county). They founded the Poiana Mărului hermitage. This is the place of irradiation of a new spirituality, of a new type of monastic organization and, at the same time, the place where the spread of new artistic forms started. Through the icons, iconostases and mural painting that these monks commissioned, they brought to the Romanian space the iconography and style specific to the School of Painting from Pechersk Lavra. The material culture preserved at Poiana Mărului, but also in the surrounding hermitages and parish churches, are witnesses to a new visual identity of Romanian ecclesiastical art. This can be found in the area of the Buzău Mountains, but also in some monasteries in Moldova and Wallachia that were linked to the Philokalic movement initiated by abbot Vasile. My aim is to prove how a spiritual center, which marks a religious revival, becomes an artistic center, which establishes a new cultural model.

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Russian Icons and Cults in the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery during the Ottoman Rule

The Patriarchate of Peć monastery was established by Archbishop Arsenije in the 13th century, and in the 14th century it was the seat of the Serbian Archbishopric. It was also the seat of the Patriarchate between 1557 and 1766, when it was merged to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. In the 19th century, the monastery of Peć was part of the Diocese of Raška and Prizren.

One of the most important subjects of the piety in the Patriarchate of Peć as a pilgrimage center is the miracle-working icon of the Virgin, believed to be painted by Saint Luke the Evangelist and brought to the monastery by the first Serbian archbishop, Saint Sava, from Jerusalem or Mount Athos. But this icon, known as the miraculous icon of Peć, palladium of the city, was painted in Russia in the Armory chamber as a copy of a famous Russian icon in the 18th century. Mostly due to its cult among believers, rather than its artistic quality and style, it had impact to the visual culture of the “host society” for we are familiar with several local copies.

Besides this icon, the monastery treasury held several more Russian icons mostly painted in the 17th or early 18th century, which are now kept in the Museum of the Serbian Orthodox church. Some of them, such as the icon of Saint Sava and Saint Simeon the Serbian and the icon of the Venerable Joseph Volotsky illustrate important cults both in the Serbian and the Russian milieu.

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RICONTRANS
CONCLUDING
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ABSTRACTS

**ORTHODOX HEGEMONY AND ART
TRANSFER OF RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS ART
TO THE BALKANS AND THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN
(LATE 16TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURIES)**

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RICONTRANS

VISUAL CULTURE, PIETY
AND PROPAGANDA:
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