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**Museums and collections of Byzantine
and Post-Byzantine art in Greece¹**

In memory of George Lampakis

The first museum that functioned in Greece after its liberation from the Turks was installed in Aegina, the provisional capital. It was inaugurated in 1829, one year before the formal recognition of the country's independence. It was transferred in 1837 to Athens, where it developed into what is today the National Archaeological Museum. That museum, as well as a few collections that were subsequently assembled in provincial towns, was dedicated to classical antiquity, in spite of the fact that a law of 1834 stipulated that not only ancient monuments and artifacts were protected *but also those of the first period of Christianity and the so-called Middle Age*, that medieval art was extremely popular in Western Europe during the period of romanticism, and that, after all, there was an obvious interest in connecting modern Greece to its Byzantine past. The Age of Enlightenment had obviously influenced belatedly the Greek public, which did not appreciate Byzantine art during the greater part of the 19th century. A typical instance of this attitude is

1. This article constitutes a slightly revised version of a paper delivered on 9th April 1995 at the 29th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, held in King's College, London.

The following abbreviations are used:

DChAE = *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*.
A. Kokkou, *Merimna* = A. Kokkou, *Η μέριμνα για τις αρχαιότητες στην Ελλάδα και τα πρώτα μουσεία*, Athens, 1977.

The museums existing in Greece a quarter of a century ago are listed in A. Karakatsani - St. Papadopoulos, *Μουσεία και Συλλογές της Ελλάδος*, Athens, 1970. Cf. also Sp. Kokkinis, *Τα μουσεία της Ελλάδος*, Athens, 1979.

The author is indebted to the Byzantine Museum, the Benaki Museum and the Numismatic Museum in Athens, the Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki and the Museum of Zakynthos for providing photographs.

the case of the monastery of Daphni, which, although its magnificent mosaics were quite visible, was used for some time as a madhouse.

This attitude began to change in the 1880s, but it took some decades before an Ephoreia of Byzantine Monuments and a Byzantine Museum depending on the state and not on private initiative were founded. This change may be connected with the writings of Constantine Paparhigopoulos (1815-1891), Professor of History at the University of Athens, who stressed the continuity of Hellenism from antiquity to modern times. It is noteworthy that interest in Byzantine art is first observed in Constantinople, which vied in the 19th century with Athens as the cultural capital of Hellenism. The *Topographical and Historical Byzantine Studies* of Alexander Paspatis were published there in 1877, several years before a Society devoted to the preservation and study of Byzantine monuments and art was founded in Athens.

The man who was for three decades the moving power of that society and who assembled the first collection of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art in Greece was George Lampakis² (fig. 1). He was born in 1854 in Athens, where he studied theology. He subsequently specialized in Christian archaeology in Germany, and received his doctor's degree from the University of Erlangen. The subject of his thesis was the Christian antiquities of Attica. Upon his return to Greece in 1883 he published in daily papers articles on the sad condition of Byzantine monuments and founded in December 1884 together with twenty other men of letters the Christian Archaeological Society, whose aim was *to collect and protect remains of Christian antiquity, in Greece or elsewhere, whose preservation and study contribute to the enlightenment of our ancestral history and art*³. The Society was to establish a Museum of Christian Archaeology, *where only objects pertaining to her aim would be exhibited*⁴. The following year, on hearing that the upper part of the

2. On G. Lampakis and his activities cf. G. Lampakis, "Ἱστορία τῆς ιδρύσεως, καταστάσεως καὶ τῶν σπουδαιότερων ἀντικειμένων τοῦ Χριστιανικοῦ Μουσείου ἀπὸ τοῦ 1884-90", *DChAE*, 1, 1892, p. 56-71. Id., *Κατάλογος καὶ ἱστορία τοῦ Μουσείου τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογίας καὶ Τέχνης*, 2nd edition, Athens, 1908. Chrysostomos (Paparhigopoulos), Metropolitan of Athens, "Γεώργιος Λαμπάκης", *DChAE*, 2nd period, 1, 1924, p. 2-7. O. Gratzou, "Ἀπὸ τὴν ἱστορία τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ Μουσείου. Τὰ πρῶτα χρόνια", *Μνήμων*, 11, 1986, p. 54-73.

3. *DChAE*, 1, 1892, p. 6.

4. *Ibid.*

mosaic of the Virgin in the apse of the church of Daphni had fallen, members of the Society's council visited the monastery and initiated a campaign for the restoration of the building and its mosaics, which resulted in the repairs directed by the French architect Eugène Troump and the Venetian *capo musaicista* Francesco Novo⁵. In 1885 Lampakis was appointed for a short time Ephor of Christian antiquities, but left this office to become secretary to Queen Olga of the Hellenes. He toured Greece extensively in that capacity in connection with the Queen's charities, and used this opportunity to visit, draw and photograph dozens of medieval monuments, to copy hundreds of inscriptions and to collect pell-mell old and modern church implements, icons, manuscripts and printed books. He was aided in this by his capacities as doctor and later Privatdozent of Theology and as secretary of the Queen. The Ministry of Education and the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece had furthermore issued in 1890 circulars asking bishops, abbots and all church authorities to send to the Society's Museum all unused church implements and vestments, icons and liturgical books. One of the clergymen who responded to these appeals was the Bishop of Kythera, who donated the chrysobull of Andronikos II granting privileges to the metropolitan of Monemvasia, today in the Byzantine Museum of Athens⁶.

Lampakis was enthusiastically received by the ecclesiastical authorities. He would explain to the crowd gathered around him the significance of the monuments he visited and often preached during the services he attended. Here is his account of his deciphering of the name of Hylasios, the founder of the church of Katapoliani on the island of Paros, preserved on a capital:

It is with emotion that the bells of that sacred church (sc. the Katapoliani) made known all over the town our deciphering, at 4 p.m. of that same day, that is September 23rd, 1891, when we spoke about the precious value and about the founding of that venerable church, in the presence of the Most Reverend Bishop Gregory, all the clergy, the

5. "Ἐνέργειαι τῆς Ἑταιρείας ὑπὲρ διασώσεως τῆς περιπύστου Μονῆς Δαφνίου καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ περιφήμων ψηφοθετημάτων", *DChAE*, 1, 1892, p. 21-26. G. Lampakis, *Ἡ Μονὴ Δαφνίου μετὰ τὰς ἐπισκευάς*, Athens, 1899.

6. I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, Leiden, 1976, p. 184-185, fig. 134.

mayor Mr. Matsas, the personnel of the schools and a big crowd. Then the Bishop ascended a big ladder, which we had used in deciphering the inscription, and was the first to communicate and pronounce aloud that name to the crowd which waited impatiently in a mystic silence. After that, on the pious initiative of the Bishop himself, a moving memorial service was sung for that grizzled Bishop Hylasios⁷.

Lampakis toured not only Greece but also many places in the Ottoman empire (fig. 2-4). He published picturesque accounts of his tours in ten fascicles of the Bulletin of the Christian Archaeological Society and in his book on the seven churches of Asia Minor⁸. They are interspersed with invocations to his mother, photographs of his wife Euthalia, the speeches that were addressed to him and those he delivered, and somewhat naive notes inspired by the sentiments he felt visiting various sites. This is what he wrote in Philippi:

15 August 1902

Sitting as another Jeremias among the ruins of Philippi, I lament the devastation of the first Christian city of Europe. Philippi, why were you destroyed? Did you perchance drive away Paul and did not accept his sacred preaching? Did you offend the great Paul? But he himself testifies to the contrary. How the Lord's decisions are unsearchable and his ways inscrutable! Oh! If I had with me today Father Eleutherios Kastrinsiou, we would of course celebrate mass ... amongst the holy ruins of Europe's first church!...⁹.

The photographs and plans of Lampakis were extensively used by Gabriel Millet. Many of them are today invaluable, since they depict monuments no longer extant, as the church of St. Nicholas at Aulis, in Boeotia, or radically altered, such as the church of the Transfiguration near Galaxidi¹⁰.

7. G. Lampakis in *DChAE*, 1, 1892, p. 103.

8. Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας, 1-10, 1892-1911. G. Lampakis, *Οί έπτά άστέρες της Αποκαλύψεως, ήτοι ιστορία, έρείπια, μνημεία και νύν κατάστασις των έπτά εκκλησιών της Ασίας Έφέσου, Σμύρνης, Περγάμου, Θυατείρων, Σάρδεων, Φιλαδελφείας και Λαοδικείας, παρ' ή Κολοσσαί και Τεράπολις*, Athens, 1909.

9. *DChAE*, 6, 1906, p. 29.

10. Ch. Bouras, "Συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία για ένα κατεστραμμένο ναό της Βοιω-

Lampakis appears to have been very well known in his day. Gustave Schlumberger, Cozza Luzzi of the Vatican Library, Giovanni Battista de Rossi, the marquess of Bute and other celebrities knew and helped him, his collections were visited by European royalty, and he became a member of most European institutions concerned with Christian archaeology. His career, however, was not always happy. He advocated the union of the Anglican and the Orthodox church, was charged with protestantism and had to defend himself to the Holy Synod. He failed to be elected Professor of Byzantine art at Athens University and died in 1914 at the relatively early age of sixty.

The collection assembled through various donations and acquisitions made by Lampakis was housed in private houses till the Holy Synod ceded in 1890 a part of its premises. The exhibition (fig. 5) was inaugurated in the presence of the Royal Family, the Holy Synod, the mayor of Athens and the mother of Lampakis, *blessing with moving tears her son's achievement*¹¹. After two years, however, the collection had to move and was finally installed in 1893 in a room of the Archaeological Museum (fig. 6). Petitions for larger premises were of no avail. The collection was finally moved in 1923 to the ground floor of the building of the Academy of Athens and merged with the small Byzantine and Christian Museum founded in 1914 with the purpose of *assembling objects of Byzantine, Medieval and Christian art from early Christianity to the founding of the Kingdom of Greece, except those in Macedonia*¹² and housed till then in the National Technical University.

The first director of the Byzantine Museum of Athens¹³ was

τίας", *DChAE*, 4th period, 4, 1964-1965, p. 227-243, fig. 1, pl. 43.2, 44. P. L. Voco-topoulos, "Παρατηρήσεις στον ναό του Σωτήρος κοντά στο Γαλαξείδι", *DChAE*, 4th period, 17, 1993-1994, p. 199-210, fig. 2-4, 15. The photographs taken by Lampakis are listed in *DChAE*, 9, 1910, p. 3-100; unfortunately several of the negatives, kept in the Byzantine Museum in Athens, are in a poor condition or lost.

11. G. Lampakis, *Κατάλογος καὶ ἱστορία τοῦ Μουσείου τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογίας καὶ Τέχνης*, 2nd edition, Athens, 1908, p. 75.

12. P. Lazaridis, *Βυζαντινὸ καὶ Χριστιανικὸ Μουσεῖο Ἀθηνῶν. Πενήντα χρόνια 1930-1980*, Athens, 1981; *Ἐκθεση γιὰ τὰ ἑκατὸ χρόνια τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας (1884-1984)*, Athens, 1981, p. 3.

13. On this museum cf. G. Sotiriou, "Ἡ συλλογὴ τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας καὶ ἡ συμβολὴ τῆς πρὸς καταρτισμὸν τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ Μουσείου", *DChAE*, 2nd period, 1, 1924, p. 74-87. M. Chatzidakis in M. Andronikos et al., *The Greek Museums*,

Adamantios Adamantiou (1875-1937), the first Professor of Byzantine Archaeology in the Faculty of Philosophy of Athens University, who belonged to the generation of Strzygowski and Millet and whose views about the items to be collected and the scope of the museum differed considerably from those of Lampakis. Adamantiou thought that the museum should house objects connected with the nation's medieval history and art. He remarked that the collection of the Christian Archaeological Society was assembled with a theological perspective and was useful for the study of Christian rites and customs rather than of the history of art. In fact, many of the objects assembled by Lampakis were modern souvenirs or curiosa. Among the items catalogued in his museum were holy water and candles from the inaugural ceremony of the museum of the Christian Archaeological Society, various incenses, perfumes mentioned in the Old and New Testament and modern lanterns, among them the lantern in which he had brought to Athens holy light from the Holy Sepulchre at Easter 1905. He had also deposited and catalogued earth and pieces of bones from the mound where were buried those who fell for God and country at Missolonghi during the Greek Revolution.

Adamantiou was succeeded the same year —1923— by George Sotiriou (1881-1965), Ephor of Byzantine Antiquities, who was elected the following year Professor of Christian Archaeology at the Faculty of Theology of Athens University¹⁴ (fig. 7). His views did not differ from those of Adamantiou. The Byzantine Museum was to be an art museum, from which trivial objects should be excluded. The museum was to develop into Greece's national museum *par excellence*, since it was to illustrate the development of art in Greek lands from the spreading of Christianity to the liberation from Turkish yoke¹⁵.

The Byzantine Museum's first holdings —mainly sculptures from Attica— were expanded through purchases. At the time of their merger,

Athens, 1975, p. 333-334. A. Kokkou, *Merimna*, p. 283-288. P. Lazaridis, *op.cit.* *Ἐκθεση γιὰ τὰ ἑκατὸ χρόνια τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας (1884-1984)*, Athens, 1985. O. Gratziou, "Ἀπὸ τὴν ἱστορία τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ Μουσείου. Τὰ πρῶτα χρόνια", *Μνήμων*, 11, 1986, p. 54-73.

14. A. Phytakis, "Γεώργιος Ἀγγ. Σωτηρίου", *Πανεπιστήμιον Ἀθηνῶν. Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς*, 14, 1958-1960 (1963) (*Τιμητικὸν ἀφιέρωμα εἰς Γεώργιον Ἀγγ. Σωτηρίου*), p. ε' - ξβ' (p. 5-62 of the offprint).

15. G. Sotiriou, *Guide du Musée Byzantin d'Athènes*, Athens, 1931, p. 5. Cf. O. Gratziou, *op.cit.*, p. 72.

the two collections together possessed roughly 1500 objects. The museum was enriched in the late twenties with donations of icons and with a number of cult objects, brought to Greece by refugees who were obliged to abandon their ancestral homes in Asia Minor and Eastern Thrace after the Greco-Turkish war of 1917-1922¹⁶.

The Byzantine Museum was transferred in 1930 to the Ilissia, the mansion of an eccentric Frenchwoman, Sophie de Marbois, Duchess of Plaisance (1785-1854), who settled in Athens after its liberation in the 1830s (fig. 8, 11). This imposing building was designed by Stamatios Kleanthis (1802-1861), one of the best Greek architects of the time, and was completed in 1848¹⁷. It was repaired and adapted to its new function under the supervision of Aristotelis Zachos (1872-1939), a well-known architect, who was also responsible for the reconstruction of the church of St Demetrios in Thessaloniki after the fire of 1917, while the garden was laid out by the architect Kimon Laskaris (1905-1978). The formal inauguration took place during the Third International Congress of Byzantine Studies, held in Athens in October 1930. The exhibition was refurbished when Manolis Chatzidakis took over the direction in 1960, and the restoration facilities were greatly improved. The Museum was expanded in 1952 and again in 1980, when the approximately 500 icons of the Dionysios Loverdos collection were incorporated in it. That collection was assembled by the Athenian banker Dionysios Loverdos (1877-1934), and included mainly icons of the Cretan and Ionian schools. Its nucleus was formed by the Alexios Kollyvas collection, which was acquired by Loverdos before World War I. It was initially housed in a building on Mavromichali and Akademias Streets in Athens converted for that purpose by the architect Aristotelis Zachos, and functioned as a museum for a short period before World War II¹⁸.

Today the Byzantine Museum possesses about 1850 pieces of sculpture, 146 detached frescoes, of which 71 are Byzantine, approximately

16. Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού και Ἐπιστημῶν, *Βυζαντινὸ καὶ Χριστιανικὸ Μουσεῖο Ἀθηνῶν, Εἰδικὴ Ἐκθεσὴ κειμηλίων προσφύγων*, Athens, 1982.

17. C. Biris, *Αἱ Ἀθῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ 19ου εἰς τὸν 20ὸν αἰῶνα*, Athens, 1966, p. 121-123.

18. *Μεγάλῃ Ἑλληνικῇ Ἐγκυκλοπαιδεῖα*, 16, p. 184-186. A. Kokkou, *Merimna*, p. 194 n. 1. *Βυζαντινὸ Μουσεῖο Ἀθηνῶν, Ἐκθεσὴ τοιχογραφιῶν Ἐπισκοπῆς Εὐρυτανίας καὶ εἰκόνων Συλλογῆς Λοβέρδου*, Athens, 1980, p. 17-30.

2700 icons —of which only 29 are Byzantine—, 3169 Post-Byzantine working drawings (pricked cartoons), 203 manuscripts plus 44 loose leaves and 3388 objects of the minor arts. Its premises are now being expanded, and its exhibition halls, restoration and storage facilities will be greatly improved.

Athens, Benaki Museum¹⁹. The Athens mansion of a wealthy merchant of Alexandria, Emmanuel Benakis, was donated in 1930 by his children to house the family collections, mainly those of his elder son Antonios (1873-1954)²⁰. The Benaki Museum, inaugurated in 1931, comprises an important collection of Byzantine and especially Post-Byzantine icons, embroideries, metalwork and manuscripts, as well as Coptic textiles (fig. 9-10). The initial collections were enlarged by important donations, mainly by Antonios Benakis himself, and by cult objects brought from Asia Minor and Eastern Thrace by refugees in 1923²¹. The Benaki Museum, housed in a typical mansion of the Athenian neoclassicism and displaying a variety of objects from various periods and cultures, might be compared to the Wallace collection in London. The character of the museum will be radically altered after the important works in progress in its premises are terminated. A new wing with seven floors —three of them underground— is being added to the existing two-storied building, which will be completely renovated. The collections of Islamic and Far Eastern art will be moved to other locations and the main building will be turned into a Museum of the Historic Cultural Continuity and Coherence of Hellenism, whose aim will be to cover every facet of Greek art. The space allotted to Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art in the new museum will be increased from 133 to 320 square metres. Today the section of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art of the Benaki Museum includes 460 icons (10 of them Byzantine), about 4000 items of the minor arts —among them 1000 pieces of pottery, 750 of metalwork and 250 of bone, all of them from the Byzantine period—, and a dozen illuminated manuscripts.

19. M. Chatzidakis in M. Andronikos et al., *The Greek Museums*, Athens, 1975, p. 365-367. A. Kokkou, *Merimna*, p. 297-301.

20. Built by the architect Anastasios Metaxas (1863-1937), the mansion belonged originally to the Charokopos family. Cf. C. Biris, *op.cit.*, p. 264, 266, 282.

21. *Μουσείον Μπενάκη. Όδηγός*, Athens, 1935, p. 19-27, 35-37.

Athens, The Paul and Alexandra Kanellopoulos Museum²². The private collection of the Athenian industrialist Paul Kanellopoulos, focused mainly on Post-Byzantine art, was donated to the Greek state and housed in a mansion on the northern slope of the Acropolis. This Museum, inaugurated in 1976, contains a collection of 377 icons —most of them Post-Byzantine—, Byzantine pottery and bronzes, and Post-Byzantine silver and wood carvings —among them bread stamps.

Athens, Numismatic Museum²³. The Numismatic Collection of the first Archaeological Museum of Greece, founded in 1829 in Aegina, had a chequered history, as it was at times independent and at times formed part of the National Library and of the National Archaeological Museum, and had to change premises several times. It has been an independent museum since the 1960s and is being moved to the Iliou Melathron, Schliemann's mansion on Panepistimiou street (fig. 13), which was built by Ernst Ziller (1837-1923), a well known German architect extremely active in Greece in the late 19th and early 20th century²⁴. The Numismatic Museum has today about 10000 Byzantine coins. It is not very important as far as rare types and Palaeologan coinage are concerned. The museum's policy is to purchase mainly hoards, because of their historical significance: It contributed to the programme of the French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique on hoards of the 5th to the 7th century with 80 hoards. The Numismatic Museum has an important collection of about 3500 seals²⁵. It also possesses a noteworthy collection of Byzantine weights.

One must not forget that among the 3000 Greek manuscripts of the National Library of Greece in Athens there are several Byzantine illuminated specimens. They are not exhibited, however, and

22. A. Kokkou, *Merimna*, p. 301-302.

23. A. Kokkou, *Merimna*, p. 258-265. *The first century of the Numismatic Museum 1829-1922*, Athens, 1988.

24. C. Biris, *op.cit.*, p. 211.

25. During the last two decades the problem of their deterioration was coped by using consolidative reduction, a method first developed in the British Museum Research Laboratory. Another treatment with elementary analysis of lead isotopes is envisaged, in order to determine the provenance of silver.

have to be viewed privately.

Thessaloniki. A Byzantine Museum, bearing the title Museum of Byzantine Culture, was inaugurated in Thessaloniki, the Byzantine city of Greece *par excellence*, only on 11th September 1994²⁶. The decision to found a Central Byzantine Museum in that city, which was to house *the remains of Byzantine Hellenism scattered all over Macedonia*, was taken, however, eighty years earlier, only a few months after the liberation of Thessaloniki in October 1912. The relevant decree, signed by the governor of Macedonia Stephanos Dragoumis, stipulated that the Museum would be housed in the Early Christian basilica of the Acheiropoietos, following the suggestion of the Metropolitan of Thessaloniki, according to whom the church was *quite capable of serving as the Central Byzantine Museum of Greece*²⁷. Two weeks later, Adamantios Adamantiou, Professor of Byzantine art and archaeology at Athens University, submitted to Dragoumis a *Memorandum on the establishment and organization of a Central Byzantine Museum in Macedonia*²⁸. It would contain five sections devoted to sculpture, painting, church implements, seals and casts, and could very quickly become the most important Byzantine museum in both East and West. These noble intentions did not materialize. Greece was drawn into the maelstrom of the First World War and then entrusted by the Entente with the expedition to Asia Minor which ended in a catastrophe. The basilica of the Acheiropoietos was reconsacrated and the Rotunda was designated in 1917 to house a "Macedonian Museum"^{28a}. In the meantime, as we saw, a Byzantine Museum, headed by the same Adamantios Adamantiou, had been founded in Athens. Although the law covering its establishment stipulated that it was to contain works of Byzantine art with the exception of those in Macedonia²⁹, several

26. Γενική Διοίκησης Μακεδονίας. Έφορεία τῶν Ἀρχαιοτήτων, Βυζαντινά μνημεῖα καὶ Βυζαντινὸν Μουσεῖον ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ, Thessaloniki, 1914. Βυζαντινοὶ θησαυροὶ τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης. Τὸ ταξίδι τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς, Thessaloniki, 1994. *Museum of Byzantine Culture*, 1, 1994, p. 14-22.

27. Βυζαντινά μνημεῖα καὶ Βυζαντινὸν Μουσεῖον ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ, p. 4-6.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 8-23.

28a. Ροτόντα, μνημεῖο Πολιτισμοῦ, Thessaloniki, 1996, p. 20-21.

29. Cf. *supra*, p. 211.

hundred objects—including sculptures, the epitaphios of Thessaloniki and many outstanding palaeologan icons—were transported to Athens in 1916 and many of them were exhibited in the Museum installed in 1930 in the Villa Ilissia. According to the relevant decree, the transport took place *for reasons of protection*—perhaps in the fear that Thessaloniki might be occupied by the Central Powers. Their Bulgarian allies were noted for their habit of transporting to Sofia works of art from the regions they temporarily occupied. A typical example is the Byzantine mosaic icon of the Virgin from the Greek church at Herakleia in Eastern Thrace (Marmaraereğlisi in Turkish), occupied by the Bulgarian army for a few months during the First Balkan war, which is exhibited in the National Museum at Sofia³⁰. Be it as it may, the establishment of a Byzantine Museum in Thessaloniki was subsequently forgotten till the mid-1970s and again delayed for more than a decade, because the owner of the plot chosen for the new museum, in the vicinity of the Archaeological Museum, was asking too high a price for it. After this problem was solved, the foundation stone was laid in 1989 and the building finished in 1993³¹.

The plans for the Museum were drawn by the architect Kyriakos Krokos in 1977³². It is probably the most important museum built in Greece since the war (fig. 14-15). The building covers 6170 sq. m. and its total surface, including the upper floor, is 11500 sq. m. The eight main exhibition halls cover 2400 sq. m., the laboratories 5000 sq. m. The Museum's possessions include 3000 pieces of sculpture, 210 inscriptions, 6000 pieces of pottery, about 1000 icons, 100 detached frescoes, 90 detached mosaics, mainly from Early Christian floors, and 8000 coins. The new museum's strength lies in its frescoes detached from Early Christian tombs, and its Middle and Late Byzantine glazed pottery. Most of the objects transported to Athens in 1916 and

30. O. Demus, *Die byzantinischen Mosaikikonen. I. Die grossformatigen Ikonen*, Vienna, 1991, p. 56-58, Pl. XII; in p. 56 it is erroneously stated that the icon comes from Ereğli (Herakleia Pontike) on the Black Sea, and that it was brought to Sofia by Greek refugees. K. Paskaleva, *Die bulgarische Ikone*, Sofia, 1981, p. 64, mistakes Marmaraereğlisi for Heraclea Pontica.

31. *Museum of Byzantine Culture*, 1, 1994, p. 22.

32. *Βυζαντινό Μουσείο Θεσσαλονίκης. Από τα σχέδια στην πράξη*, Thessaloniki, 1993.

exhibited in the Byzantine Museum of that city were handed back; they include the famous epitaphios, the architectural sculptures from St Menas and the icon of Christ the Wisdom of God³³, but not several other important icons, such as the relief icon of St George and the bilateral icon with the Crucifixion³⁴. The Museum of Byzantine Culture was inaugurated with a small temporary exhibition; it was anticipated that it would be fully operational with its permanent exhibits by 1997, but it has meanwhile been decided to hold there that year a temporary exhibition of Byzantine objects from Mount Athos. Two exhibitions inaugurated a decade ago will continue to operate alongside the Museum: one on the city of Thessaloniki in the White Tower, and another on the cult of St Demetrios and on his basilica in the crypt of that monument.

Outside Athens and Thessaloniki there exist a few museums dedicated mainly or exclusively to medieval art. The oldest among them appears to be the Museum of Zakynthos (Zante). Founded in 1908, it contained mainly icons of the 15th to 18th century, was housed in the church of Christ Pantocrator, and was about to move in 1953 to the *Monte di Pietà*, when Zante was destroyed by an earthquake. Many of its icons were unfortunately lost during the fire which followed the seism and completed the destruction of the *Monte*, where many of its holdings had already been transported. The panels which had remained in the church of the Pantocrator were spared and together with hundreds of others saved from the debris by Manolis Chatzidakis. Dr. Chatzidakis was responsible for their exhibition in the new museum, inaugurated in 1960 (fig. 12), which apart from some 600 icons, contains also Byzantine sculptures, detached frescoes, wood carvings and silverwork³⁵.

Another collection of some 90 Post-Byzantine icons was formed in

33. L. Bouras, "The Epitaphios of Thessaloniki, Byzantine Museum of Athens No 685", *L'art de Thessalonique et des pays balkaniques et les courants spirituels au XIVe siècle*, Belgrade, 1987, p. 211-231. M. Kambouri-Vamvoukou, "Αρχιτεκτονικά γλυπτά από τον Άγιο Μηνᾶ Θεσσαλονίκης", *Actes du Xe Congrès International d'Archéologie Chrétienne*, Città del Vaticano-Thessaloniki, 1984, II, p. 225-240. N. Chatzidakis in *Holy Image, Holy Space. Icons and Frescoes from Greece*, Athens, 1988, p. 193, No 30.

34. P. L. Vocotopoulos, *Βυζαντινές εἰκόνες*, Athens, 1995, p. 205, 209-210, No. 64, 82.

35. D. Konomos, *Τό Μουσείο Ζακύνθου*, Athens, 1967.

the 1930s in Corfu by Ioannis Papadimitriou, Ephor for the Ionian Islands at that time, who later became Director General of Antiquities. It was enriched after the war with mosaics detached from the floor of the basilica of Palaeopolis, 11th and 14th century frescoes and a few Byzantine reliefs. Housed initially in the palace of St Michael and St George, it was recently transferred to the 17th century church of Our Lady Antivouniotissa, apart from the mosaics, frescoes and sculptures, which will be displayed in the Old Fortress.

An important collection of medieval art, including detached frescoes, icons, sculptures and metalwork, is exhibited in the Historical Museum of Crete in Heraklion, which was inaugurated in 1953. It is housed in the ex-mansion of the Kalokairinos family and is run by the Society of Cretan Historical Studies. A collection of medieval art, including detached frescoes, sculptures, inscriptions, icons, pottery and coins is divided between the so-called Giustiniani palace and a 19th century mosque in Chios, and another one, containing mainly detached frescoes and sculptures, in the building adjacent to the cathedral of St Demetrios in Mistra. In Rhodes an exhibition on the art and history of the island from the 4th century to the Ottoman conquest in 1522, covering 700 square metres, was inaugurated in 1993 in the castle of the knights of St John, while Post-Byzantine icons and detached frescoes are exhibited in the nearby church of the Virgin of the Castle (Παναγία τοῦ Κάστρου). Among collections inaugurated recently one should also mention the Museum of Kastoria, containing mainly icons, —among them the remarkable bilateral icon of the Virgin Hodegetria and the Man of Sorrows³⁶—, and the lapidarium arranged in the refectory of the monastery of Hosios Loukas, which contains also sculptures from its no longer extant metochion at Antikyra. A museum of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art was inaugurated in April 1995 in Ioannina. It contains sculptures, pottery and coins —including five hoards— from the Byzantine period. With one exception, its icons are Post-Byzantine. Among its Post-Byzantine exhibits one may mention a collection of pottery from local workshops of Arta. More medieval museums are envisaged, among them one in Verroia, which will house the local

36. M. Chatzidakis in *Holy Image, Holy Space* as quoted in n. 33, p. 174, No 9.

collection of Byzantine icons. It should finally be mentioned that one can find interesting specimens of Byzantine art in archaeological museums, in places where there are no museums of medieval art. In the Archaeological Museum of Thebes, for example, there are many interesting reliefs of the Middle Byzantine period.

The trend during the last two decades has been for the church authorities to assemble the best icons, vestments and cult objects in their jurisdiction and to exhibit them in museums depending from the local bishopric. One of the first is that of Mytilene, where liturgical vestments and some 70 icons are exhibited, among them the imposing St John the Theologian from the church of St Therapon³⁷. Another important collection is that of the Archbishopric of Crete, installed in the church of St Catherine in Heraklion. Most important monasteries display their more notable possessions. I would like to single out the monasteries of Patmos, of the Transfiguration and of Varlaam in the Meteora in Thessaly, Hilandar, the Great Lavra and Pantocrator on Mount Athos, of Vlatadon in Thessaloniki, and of Arkadi and Toplou in Crete.

The first Byzantine Museum in Greece, that of Athens, was enriched early in this century mainly through donations from religious foundations, and the same applies to provincial museums, such as those of Zante, Corfu or Kastoria. As I have already hinted, this practice is now practically over, and the museums can only increase their holdings through purchases, donations or excavation finds. The Benaki Museum in Athens appears to attract the largest number of donations, while a number of artifacts and two collections, the Oikonomopoulos collection of icons and the Papastratos collection of engravings, have recently been donated to the new museum in Thessaloniki. Funds allotted by the Ministry of Culture for the enrichment of museums are limited, and the only museums to benefit from them are in practice those of Athens³⁸.

37. H. Bakirtzis, *Θησαυροί τῆς Λέσβου*, Mytilene, 1989.

38. The collection of icons of an important corfiote family was offered for sale a few years ago to the Byzantine Museum of Corfu. The Athenian bureaucracy did nothing to raise the funds required, which were not enormous, and the collection, which should have remained in Corfu, was finally purchased by an Athenian collector. It included a big 15th-century Italo-cretan icon of Christ with the Adulteress, and a charming depiction of the salvation of Count Anthony Maria Capodistria, the father of the first Governor of Greece, who fell from his

Another trend of the last decades is that local Ephoreiai of Antiquities do not send fresh finds to the museums of the capital —the National Archaeological, the Byzantine and the Numismatic Museum—, but keep them in the local museums, which are now much more numerous and have enough personnel.

A sad fact is that very few catalogues of the holdings of Greek museums have been published; among the few exceptions in the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine field, one may mention the long outdated catalogue of the icons of the Benaki Museum by A. Xyngopoulos and that of the embroideries of the same Museum by E. Veï-Chatzidaki³⁹. This lacuna cannot be filled by the short guides issued for many museums or by the catalogues of temporary exhibitions. The only museum of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art in Greece to publish its own bulletin is that of Thessaloniki⁴⁰.

To sum up, belated interest in medieval art led to the foundation of the first Byzantine Museum in Greece only in the second decade of this century. Up to the first post-war years, museums devoted to Byzantium or with large medieval sections —the Byzantine, the Benaki and the Numismatic Museums— were concentrated in Athens. Small museums of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art, belonging either to the state or to local church authorities, are now scattered all over Greece, while the new Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki hopes to vie with the Byzantine Museum of Athens. Greek collections of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art are important mainly for their collections of icons, sculpture, pottery, coins and seals. Ivories, enamels, gems, goldsmith-work, silverwork and textiles are rather poorly represented. To view them one has to turn to the collections of the Latin west or of the Slavic north.

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horse on 2nd May 1755 (P. L. Vocotopoulos, *Εἰκόνες τῆς Κερκύρας*, Athens, 1990, p. 17-19, pl. 81; Id., "Κερκυραϊκὲς ἀναθηματικὲς εἰκόνες", *Δελτίον Ἀναγνωστικῆς Ἑταιρείας Κερκύρας*, 22, 1988, p. 38, fig. 12).

39. A. Xyngopoulos, *Μουσεῖον Μπενάκη. Κατάλογος τῶν εἰκόνων*, Athens, 1936. E. Veï-Chatzidaki, *Μουσεῖον Μπενάκη. Ἐκκλησιαστικὰ κεντήματα*, Athens, 1953.

40. It is trilingual, and bears the title(s) *Μουσεῖο Βυζαντινοῦ Πολιτισμοῦ* / *Museum of Byzantine Culture* / *Musée de la Civilisation Byzantine*.





1. George Lampakis. Photograph by S. and P. Stournaras, Volo
(Courtesy of Mr J. Lampakis).



2. George Lampakis and his wife in the church of the Holy Trinity at Moschonissia in 1906 (Photo: Byzantine Museum, Athens, Lampakis Archive, neg. A. 6024).



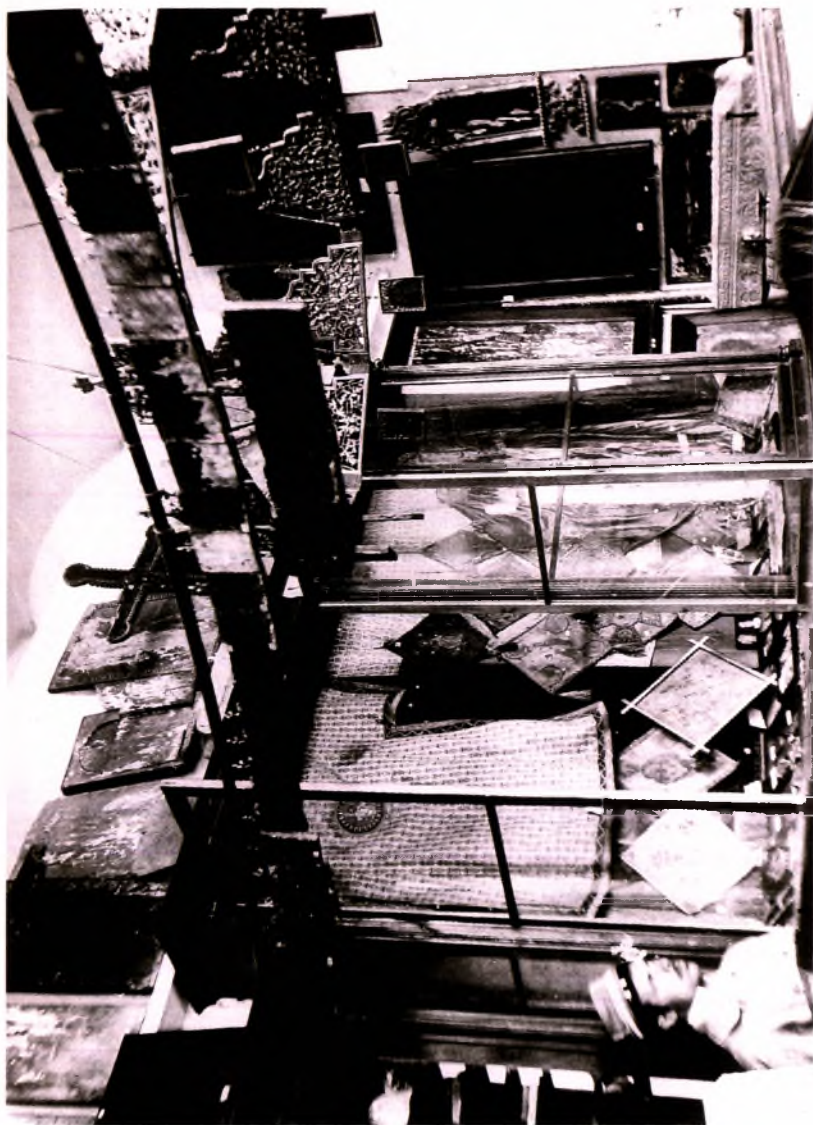
3. George Lampakis in the Monastery of Skaloti near Ainos (Eastern Thrace) in August 1902 (Photo: Byzantine Museum, Athens, Lampakis Archive, neg. A. 3434).



4. George Lampakis and his wife near Pergamos in 1906 (Photo: Byzantine Museum, Athens, Lampakis Archive, neg. A. 6037).



5. Athens. The Museum of the Christian Archaeological Society on 4th March 1893
(Photo: Byzantine Museum, Athens, Lampakis Archive, neg. A. 1470 α).



6. Athens. The Museum of the Christian Archaeological Society in 1903
(Photo: Byzantine Museum, Athens, Lampakis Archive, neg. A. 6720).



7. George Sotiriou with his wife Maria in August 1922, during the excavation of the church of St John at Ephesos (Photo: Byzantine Museum, Athens, Sotiriou Archive, neg. Σ. 114).



8. Athens. Byzantine Museum. The main building (Photo: Byzantine Museum).



9. Athens. The Benaki Museum around 1930 (Photo: Benaki Museum, neg. N. 2772).



10. Athens. Benaki Museum. Two of the Byzantine rooms in the early 1930s (Photo: Benaki Museum).



11. Athens. Byzantine Museum. Room imitating an Early Christian basilica
(Photo: Byzantine Museum).



12. Zante. The Museum.



13. Athens. The Iliou Melathron (Photo: Numismatic Museum).



14. Thessaloniki. Museum of Byzantine Culture. A model of the building.



15. Thessaloniki. The Museum of Byzantine Culture (Photo: Museum of Byzantine Culture).