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ART, POWER, AND PATRONAGE IN THE PRINCIPALITY OF EPIRUS, 1204–1318

Leonela Fundić



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The Principality of Epirus was a medieval Greek state established in the western part of the Balkans after the fall of Constantinople to the forces of the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The Epirote rulers from the Komnenos Doukas family claimed to be legitimate successors to the Byzantine imperial throne and, with the support of the high clergy and the aristocracy within their domain, carefully maintained their Byzantine identity under the conditions of exile. This book explores a corpus of Epirote architecture, frescoes, sculpture, and inscriptions from the early thirteenth to the early fourteenth century within a comparative and interdisciplinary framework, focusing on the nexus of art, patronage, and political ideology. Through an examination of a vast array of visual and textual sources, many of them understudied or hitherto unpublished, the book uncovers how the Epirote elite mobilised art and material culture to address the issues of succession and legitimacy, construct memory, reclaim Constantinople, and mediate encounters and exchanges with the Latin West. In doing so, this study offers a new perspective on Byzantine political and cultural history in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade.

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Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
<i>List of Illustrations From the Catalogue</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xii
<i>Note to the Reader</i>	xiv
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xv
Introduction	1
<i>History of the Principality of Epirus</i>	1
<i>Question of Terminology: Despotate or Principality of Epirus?</i>	6
<i>The Scholarship on Byzantine Epirus: Texts, History, and Art</i>	8
<i>Art, Power, and Patronage in the Principality of Epirus, 1204–1318</i>	9
1 Artistic Production and Patronage in Epirus During the Thirteenth and the Beginning of the Fourteenth Centuries	13
<i>1.1. Art Production in Epirus at the Beginning of the Thirteenth Century</i>	13
<i>1.2. Artistic Patronage in Epirus</i>	14
<i>1.3. Artistic Patronage of the Epirote Ruling Komnenos Doukas Family</i>	15
<i>1.4. Ecclesiastical Patronage</i>	24
<i>1.5. Aristocratic Patronage</i>	30
2 Art, the Memory of Constantinople, and the Formation of the Epirote Political Identity After 1204	45
<i>2.1. Epirote Art and Construction of Byzantine Identity</i>	46
<i>2.2. Theodore Komnenos Doukas: Rebuilding Byzantium</i>	51
3 Catastrophe and the Revival of Epirus: Art and Political Ideology after the Battle at Klokotnitsa 1230	73
<i>3.1. Survival and Demise of the Empire of Thessaloniki</i>	73
<i>3.2. Artistic Patronage During the Reign of Michael II Komnenos Doukas (1230–1266/1268) and His Wife Theodora</i>	77

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
	3.3. <i>The Church of Ag. Nikolaos tis Rodias and Its Context</i>	88
	3.4. <i>Art in Aitolocarnania</i>	97
4	Epirus Between the Palaiologoi and the Angevins During the Reign of Nikephoros Komnenos Doukas (1267/1268–1297)	103
	4.1. <i>Artistic Patronage of Nikephoros Komnenos Doukas and His Wife Anna</i>	104
	4.2. <i>Artistic Promotion of Nikephoros's Alliances</i>	112
	4.3. <i>Aristocratic Patronage at the End of the Thirteenth Century</i>	117
5	Art and Patronage in the Principality of Epirus After 1296	126
	5.1. <i>The Narthex of the Church of Ag. Theodora in Arta</i>	127
	5.2. <i>The Marble Sarcophagus in the Church of Ag. Theodora</i>	142
	5.3. <i>Thomas' Independent Rule, 1303–1318</i>	144
	Conclusion	152
	Catalogue of Iconographic Programmes in Epirote Churches	160
	<i>Bibliography</i>	233
	<i>Index</i>	262

Illustrations

1	Map of Epirus	2
2	Map of Epirus and surrounding states around the year 1225	5
3	Embroidered <i>aer</i> with the Virgin and Child, c. 1215–1225/1226, National History Museum, Sofia	18
4	Brick-made monogram with the name of Michael II Doukas and a two-row inscription on the north <i>façade</i> of the monastery church of Kato Panagia, Arta	20
5	Brick-made inscription, Panagia tou Bryoni, Neochoraki	28
6	Arta, Vlacherna monastery, north tomb with the inscription	32
7	Arta, Vlacherna monastery, marble slab with a warrior saint	35
8	Electrum trachy of Theodore Komnenos Doukas, National Museum in Belgrade	50
9	Veria, Old Metropolis, the second zone of the north wall of the nave	56
10a	Veria, Old Metropolis, Deuteronomy (28:66)	57
10b	Veria, Old Metropolis, Isaiah (52:13)	57
10c	Veria, Old Metropolis, Habakkuk (3:3)	58
10d	Veria, Old Metropolis, Jeremiah (11:18)	58
10e	Veria, Old Metropolis, Ezekiel (37:1)	59
10f	Veria, Old Metropolis, Daniel (3:1 or 4:4)	59
10g	Veria, Old Metropolis, Zechariah (9:9) or Zephaniah (3:14)	60
11	Veria, Old Metropolis, Repentance of David	62
12a and b	Aspron trachy of Manuel Komnenos Doukas, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC	74
13a and b	Aspron trachy of John I Komnenos Doukas, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC	76
14	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, Knight on horseback, fighting a centaur-archer, nave, lower zone of the north wall	81
15a	Icon of St George with female donor, obverse, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens (inv. no. BM 1108)	84
15b	Icon of two female saints, reverse, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens (inv. no. BM 1108)	85

viii *Illustrations*

16a	Veneration of the Holy Cross by angels, the north side of the longitudinal vault of the diakonikon, Ag. Nikolaos tis Rodias, Arta	89
16b	Drawing of the Veneration of the Holy Cross by angels, the north side of the longitudinal vault of the diakonikon, Ag. Nikolaos tis Rodias, Arta	90
17	Icon of the Adoration of the Cross from the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, second half of the twelfth century, obverse	94
18a	Arta, Vlacherna monastery, narthex, litany of the icon of the Hodegetria	105
18b	Arta, Vlacherna monastery, narthex, litany of the icon (detail)	106
19a	Filippiada, Pantanassa, donor representation and inscription	111
19b	Filippiada, Pantanassa, donor representation (detail)	112
20a	Gilded and enamelled casket, obverse, National Archaeological Museum of Cividale del Friuli	113
20b	Gilded and enamelled casket, reverse, National Archaeological Museum of Cividale del Friuli	114
21	Arta, Church of the Panagia Parigoritissa, the dedicatory inscription on the west wall of the nave, sculptured on the relief marble arch above the western entrance	115
22	Voulgareli, Panagia Vellas, donors in the narthex	118
23	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, narthex, farewell of Jacob and his flight to Mesopotamia	129
24	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, narthex, Rebecca from the farewell of Jacob and his flight to Mesopotamia, narthex	130
25	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, narthex, return of Jacob to Palestine	131
26	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, narthex, Jacob wrestling with the angel	131
27	Vat. Gr. 1162, fol. 22v. Jacob greets his parents before departing for Mesopotamia, crosses the Jordan, dreams of the heavenly ladder	133
28	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, narthex, Moses and the burning bush	134
29	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, narthex, St Kyriaki, St Marina, and St Theodora (?)	137
30	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, narthex, vision of St Peter of Alexandria	138
31	Golden signet ring of Michael Zorianos, the Metropolitan Museum, New York	141
32	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, narthex, slab of the pseudo-sarcophagus	143
33	Gold seal of despot Thomas, British Museum, London	145
34	Arta, Vlacherna monastery, façade, southside, Marble icon with Archangel Michael	148

Illustrations From the Catalogue

I-1	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, general view from southeast	161
I-2a	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, architectural plan	162
I-2b	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, The iconographic programme of the diakonikon	163
I-3	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, St George in the diakonikon	164
I-4	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, the iconographic programme of the narthex	165
I-5	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, dome in the narthex	168
I-6	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, narthex, the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste in the frozen lake	168
I-7	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, south wall of the southern barrel vault of the narthex	169
I-8	Arta, Church of Ag. Theodora, narthex, the miracle at Cana of Galilee	169
II-1	Arta, Church of the Panagia Parigoritissa	170
II-2	Arta, Church of the Panagia Parigoritissa, architectural plan, first phase of the church	171
II-3	Arta, the Church of the Panagia Parigoritissa, dome Christ Pantokrator	172
III-1	Arta, Ag. Vassileios stin Gefyra, a view from SE	173
III-2	Arta, Ag. Vassileios stin Gefyra, the iconographic programme of the church	174
III-3	Arta, Ag. Vassileios stin Gefyra, Sts Panteleimon	175
IV-1	Arta, monastery Kato Panagia, general view from SE	176
IV-2	Arta, Kato Panagia, the iconographic programme of the diakonikon	177
IV-3	Arta, Kato Panagia, Zechariah rejecting the Gifts	178
V-1	Vlacherna monastery, general view from SE	178
V-2	Vlacherna monastery, the iconographic programme of the church	180
V-3	Vlacherna monastery, Blessing of the Virgin, (detail)	181
VI-1	Plissioi, Ag. Demetrios Katsouris, general view from NW	182

x *Illustrations From the Catalogue*

VI-2a	Plissioi, Ag. Demetrios Katsouris, the iconographic programme of the church	183
VI-2b-c	Plissioi, Ag. Demetrios Katsouris, the iconographic programme of prothesis, diakonikon and western corner bays	185
VI-3	Plissioi, Ag. Demetrios Katsouris, bema apse	188
VI-4	Plissioi, Ag. Demetrios Katsouris, dome, prophets Zephaniah and Joel	189
VII-1	Kirkizates, Ag. Nikolaos tis Rodias, general view from NW	190
VII-2a	Kirkizates, Ag. Nikolaos tis Rodias, the iconographic programme of the church	191
VII-2b	Kirkizates, Ag. Nikolaos tis Rodias, the iconographic programme of prothesis, diakonikon, and western corners bays	192
VII-3	Kirkizates, Ag. Nikolaos tis Rodias, Seven Sleepers of Ephesus	195
VII-4	Kirkizates, Ag. Nikolaos tis Rodias, Mandylion	196
VIII	Philippiada, Pantanassa	196
IX-1	Voulgareli. Vella church, general view from SW	198
IX-2	Voulgareli, Vella church, the iconographic programme of the church	199
IX-3	Voulgareli, Vella church, nave, west wall, the Stylites, and the donor inscription	200
IX-4	Voulgareli, Vella church, nave, west wall, St Daniel the Stylite	201
X	Varassova (Aetolia) Hermitage of the Ag. Pateres, Exaltation of the Holy Cross	202
XI	Galaxeidi, the church of the Metamorphosi Sotiros	203
XII-1	Efpalio Doridos, Church of Ag. Ioannis Theologos, general view from SW	204
XII-2	Efpalio Doridos, Church of Ag. Ioannis Theologos, nave, Mockery of Christ (detail)	205
XIII	Evrytania, Episkopi	206
XIV-1	Mastron, Episkopi, general view from SE	207
XIV-2	Mastron, Episkopi, bema apse	207
XV	Myrtia Monastery, general view from SE	208
XVI	Kremasta, cave church of Ag. Nikolaos, fresco of Archangelos	209
XVII	Preventza, Panagia (the Panagia Kyriotissa and Ag. Theodoroi), view from the south	210
XVIII	Rivio, Ag. Stefanos, a view from the SW	211
XIX	Chalkiopoulos, Ag. Andreas the Hermit, wall painting in altar apse	213
XX-1	Thessaloniki, Theotokos Acheiropoietos, north wall of the south aisle, figures of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste	214

XX-2	Thessaloniki, Theotokos Acheiropoietos, north wall of the south aisle, St Iliadis	215
XX-3	Thessaloniki, Theotokos Acheiropoietos, north wall of the south aisle, detail—candlestick with a lit candle	216
XXI-1	Veria, Old Metropolis, the iconographic programme of the church	218
XXI-2	Veria, Old Metropolis, the Prophets Zephaniah and Zechariah	219
XXII	Kypseli, Ag. Demetrios monastery, general view from E	223
XXIII-1	Kostaniani, the Church of Taxiarches, general view from NE	223
XXIII-2	Kostaniani, the Church of Taxiarches, the iconographic programme of the church	225
XXIII-3	Kostaniani, the Church of Taxiarches, Nativity of Christ	227
XXIII-4	Kostaniani, the Church of Taxiarches, St Symeon Stylite	228
XXIII-5	Kostaniani, the Church of Taxiarches, Virgin with Angels	229
XXIV-1	Plakoti, Metamorphosi Sotiros, general view from SW	230
XXIV-2	Plakoti, Metamorphosi Sotiros, the iconographic programme of the church	231