

## Ottoman textiles and Greek clerical vestments: prolegomena on a neglected aspect of ecclesiastical material culture

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*This article discusses a neglected aspect of Greek ecclesiastical material culture: the wide use of Ottoman textiles after the conquest of Constantinople. My discussion will touch upon Greek archival sources before analysing three different types of textiles: aniconic silks and velvets; Ottoman figural production for the Christian market; and embroidery of the Byzantine tradition featuring Ottoman motifs. These categories represent three different points of contact between Ottoman aesthetic and Greek ecclesiastical material culture. If the use of aniconic textiles expresses the employment of court aesthetic, then the figural silks represent the weaving industry's response to a Christian demand for such products. Finally, the Byzantine-tradition embroideries discussed constitute evidence of artistic confluence.*

**Keywords:** Greek vestments; material culture of religion; syncretism; semiotics; aniconicity

Greek ecclesiastical dress has only recently been brought into the art historical spotlight, with a definite focus on the refined artistry of embroidery.<sup>1</sup> However, this exclusive focus on embroidery falls short of giving us an overall assessment of the period's aesthetic. The almost monothematic treatment of the subject actually prevents us from understanding that Greek ecclesiastical dress in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was composite, employing various juxtaposed features. In this article I will attempt to illuminate an obscure corner of ecclesiastical material culture: the wide use of Ottoman woven textiles and its meaning within the specific context during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Dress is undoubtedly one of the most immediate, non-verbal modes of communicating one's status. This point of view can be particularly useful in the

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1 The author follows the spelling and accents as they appear in the sources quoted.

specific case study, which focuses on the Greek Church's participation in Ottoman elite culture. The importance of the argument lies in the fact that it helps us to understand that ecclesiastical dress was constructed upon the interplay or confluence between the inherited Byzantine tradition and the Ottoman component, which has hitherto been neglected by scholarship.

My discussion will begin with an analysis of Greek textile terminology, which originates from the Ottoman, as a preparation for the analysis of objects. These terms, unlike their Byzantine counterparts, have hardly been discussed. The contextualization of these Ottoman loanwords will increase our understanding of the relevant vestments that survive in Greek sacristies today. This discussion does not need to be exhaustive, as its focus will be on the three main types of luxury textiles found in ecclesiastical inventories and sacristies: lampas, cloth of gold/silver and velvet.<sup>2</sup> The textiles to be analysed were worn by clerics either inside a church or in processions, which means they were visible to the wider society as well. In the second part I will open the discussion with some examples of luxurious aniconic textiles used by the Church. I will then continue by touching upon the figural production for the Ottoman Christian market. Finally, I will discuss the transfer of Ottoman motifs to the embroidery production of Greek workshops, as another aspect in this multi-faceted phenomenon.

## Introduction: Greek textile terminology of Ottoman origin

*Kamouchas*, the Greek term for the Ottoman *kemha*, or higher-quality lampas silk, appears in ecclesiastical inventories even before the conquest of Constantinople.<sup>3</sup> In the 1396 Patriarchal inventory there are references to *chamouchas* ('χαμουχᾶς') in relation to a yellow-red tunic, a two-colour *podea* and two chalice covers ('ποτηροκαλύμματα').<sup>4</sup>

2 Luxury textiles could be divided into two main categories: simple weaves and compound, more complex, weaves. The Ottoman textiles that will occupy us in this article fall into the category of compound weaves: 1) lampas: silks with a satin ground and twill pattern, 2) cloth of gold/silver: silks completely covered by supplementary wefts of gold and/or silver, and 3) velvet: a compound weave with a ground fabric and an extra set of threads woven into it, creating different effects. These are the three favoured weaves in Ottoman textiles as well. See N. Atasoy et al., *İpek: Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets* (London 2001) 217–25.

3 R. Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks 1204–1461* (Leiden and Boston 2016) 313–14.

4 These are the three references in the Patriarchal inventory: 'ἰμάτιον χαμουχᾶς δίχρους κιτρινοκόκκινος'; 'ἔτι προσετέθησαν καὶ ἕτεραι δύο ποδέαι...ἡ δὲ ἄλλη χαμουχᾶς δίχρους μετὰ περιφερίου πρασίνου χαμουχᾶ'; and 'καὶ ποτηροκαλύμματα δύο, καὶ αὐτὰ ὄξυν βασιλικὸν συρματέινον μετὰ περιφερίων χαμουχενίων'. See F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana II* (Vienna 1862) 569–70. In the will of Demetrios Tzambakon (1366/7) there is another reference to a piece of female clothing made of *kamouchas*: 'ἐνέχυρον γυναικεῖον ῥοῦχον χαμουχᾶς εἰς ὑπέρπυρα ὀκτώ': see G. I. Theocharides, 'Eine Vermächtnisurkunde des Groß-Stradopedarchen Demetrios Tzambakon,' in P. Wirth (ed.), *Polychronion. Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag* (Heidelberg 1966) 486–95, esp. 489. *Podea* was a decorative cloth, sometimes embroidered, used as an adornment of icons. See A. Frolov, 'La «Podea»: un tissu décoratif de l'Eglise byzantine', *Byzantion* 13, Fasc. 2 (1938) 461–504; P. Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition in Church Embroidery* (London 1967) 22–3.

This reads like an antiquated version of the Greek term *kamouchas*, which is the one usually found in Ottoman-period ecclesiastical inventories.<sup>5</sup> Although Greek linguists generally agree that this term derives from *kemha*, it might be the case that it did not always indicate Ottoman lampas.<sup>6</sup> Especially in comparison with the late Byzantine period, it is quite probable that a shift in the meaning of certain words took place. For example, the Byzantine courtier Theodore Hyrtakenos, who lived in Constantinople during the reign of Andronikos Palaiologos (r. 1282–1328), requested a cloth named *kamkha*, ‘in the language of the Persians’, from a Trapezuntine official. This type of luxurious silk produced in the Middle East and China during the late medieval period had reached Italy as well, and was called *camoca* in Italian.<sup>7</sup> *Chamouchas* was probably the Greek rendering of the Persian *kamkha*, the linguistic origin of *kemha*. This leaves space for interpretation as to whether the word *kamouchas* or *chamouchas* was used during this early period for silk brocades of Islamic or ‘Oriental’ origin in general, and not just Ottoman brocades.<sup>8</sup> In Ducas’ *Historia byzantina* there is a clearer reference in relation to Ottoman clothing: one of the writer’s criticisms of the clergy on the eve of the fall of Constantinople was their habit of wearing the ‘barbarians’ vestments’ (‘...ἄμφια τῶν βαρβάρων τῷ σώματι περιφέρουσιν...’).<sup>9</sup> However, one cannot expect detachment and objectivity from a historical source of this nature, embellished with personal

5 In a poem by the Rhodian Emmanuel Georgillas (ca. 1450–1500) with the Greek title ‘Ἱστορικὴ ἐξήγησις περὶ Βελισαρίου’, this older version (‘χαμουχάδες’) appears again in relation to precious silk that could be walked upon, an equivalent of the red carpet: ‘...ῶρισε πεύκια καὶ χαμουχάδες νὰ τὰ ξαπλώσουν εἰς τὴν γῆν καὶ πάνω νὰ πατήσῃ...’. It seems therefore that this version of the term continued to live on in Modern Greek for some time after the fall of Constantinople. See W. Wagner (ed.), *Carmina Graeca Medii Aevi* (Leipzig 1874) 334.

6 E. Kriaras (ed.), *Λεξικὸ τῆς μεσαιωνικῆς δημόδου γραμματείας, 1100–1669*, VI (Thessaloniki 1980) 320.

7 D. Jacoby, ‘Late Byzantium between the Mediterranean and Asia: Trade and material culture’, in S. T. Brooks (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557): Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture* (New York, New Haven and London 2006) 20–41. On the impact of Persian and Central Asian silks on Italy, and the terminology used, including *camoca*, see D. Jacoby, ‘Oriental silks go west: A declining trade in the later Middle Ages’, in C. Smidt Arcangeli and G. Wolf (eds), *Islamic Artefacts in the Mediterranean World: Trade, Gift Exchange and Artistic Transfer* (Venice 2010) 71–99; L. Monnas, ‘The impact of Oriental silks on Italian silk weaving in the fourteenth century’, in L. E. Saurma-Jeltsch and A. Eisenbeiß (eds), *The Power of Things and the Flow of Cultural Transformations* (Berlin 2010) 65–89; M. L. Rosati, ‘Nasizzi, baldacchini e camocati: il viaggio della seta da Oriente a Occidente’, in M. Norell et al. (eds), *Sulla Via della Seta: Antichi sentieri tra Oriente e Occidente* (Turin 2011) 234–70.

8 In Greek sacristies there are many Persian remnants as well, mainly Safavid and Qajar silks. An interesting observation is that the Persian provenance, which was noted quite often in Byzantine inventories, does not appear in Ottoman-period monastic archives. Textiles of Italian or Russian provenance are noted, which raises the question as to their naming in Ottoman-period Greek. This is a matter that can be clarified after a more meticulous study of the archives has been undertaken.

9 As Ducas (c. 1400–after 1462) used the phrase ‘amphia of the barbarians’, it is highly probable that he saw clerical costume made of early Ottoman textiles in pre-1453 Constantinople. The word *amphia* is quite specific in Greek, meaning ecclesiastical vestments. See M. Ducas, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn 1834) 257.

commentaries and views. There is also the well-known document prepared for the Council of Basel (1431-8), based on a report by European emissaries, which mentions that in many parts of Eastern Anatolia the clergy, bishops and archbishops wore the 'clothes of the infidels', most probably meaning the Turks.<sup>10</sup> This provides Ducas' criticism with some credibility, pointing out that early Ottoman brocades had been used by the Church in the Byzantine capital before its conquest by Mehmed II. Certainly, the honorific exchange of textiles is nothing new within the context of the Eastern Mediterranean, including between Byzantines and Ottomans; some of these recorded acts mention *kamouchas*.<sup>11</sup> However, the Church's practices during the Palaiologan period need to be clarified, especially as to whether the antiquated term *chamouchas* denoted Ottoman or just Oriental brocades in general.

While more light should be shed upon textile consumption during the late Byzantine period, the archival sources matched with the remaining vestments confirm that the Greek Church widely used Ottoman textiles after the conquest of Constantinople. *Kamouchas* is one of the most popular types of textiles, as is attested to by the evidence of ecclesiastical inventories. The earliest reference I have managed to trace is in a monastic archive, dating to 1486.<sup>12</sup> By this time, *kamouchas* probably denoted silks of Ottoman manufacture, as is attested to by the presence of Ottoman *kembas* in Greek sacristies. In Martin Crusius' 1584 *Turcograecia*, it is mentioned that the Patriarch-elect received a head-dress made of *kemba* ('μὲ τὸν καμουχᾶν') from the Byzantine emperor, a custom that Mehmed II was advised to continue by the Greek bishops immediately after the conquest of Constantinople.<sup>13</sup> The Patriarch's investiture ceremony was probably one of the main ways through which Ottoman brocades found their way into Greek sacristies. This also explains the number of vestments which appear to have been reused.<sup>14</sup>

10 R. Clogg, 'A millet within a millet: the Karamanlides', in D. Gondicas and C. Issawi (eds), *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism* (Princeton 1999) 115-42, esp. 118.

11 For example, the Cretan Leonardo Dellaporta (before 1330-1419/20) recounts in one of his poems his contacts with an Emir. He mentions that his Frankish outfit was taken by the Emir's courtiers and he was given 'Turkish' clothes to wear. In their description, the term *kamouchas* is again mentioned: '...ἐγδύνου μετὰ ροῦχα μου τὰ φράγκικα τὰ ἐφόρου, καὶ ἀνάλλαξέν με ὁ ἀμίρας τούρκικη φορεσίαν, πικροκοκκᾶτον καμουχᾶν καὶ ἀπάνω γερανέον, χρυσοβουλᾶτον ἔντυμαν καὶ μαντηλίτσια τρία μεταξοχρυσοκέντητα καὶ ταλαγάνι ὠραῖον,...'. See M. I. Manousakas, *Λεονάρδου Ντελλαπόρτα Ποιήματα (1403-1411)* (Athens 1995) 257; see also E. Zachariadou, 'The presents of the Emirs', in L. Droulia (ed.) *Cultural and Commercial Exchanges between the Orient and the Greek World* (Athens 1991) 79-84.

12 C. Pavlikianov, *The Athonite Monastery of Vatopedi from 1462 to 1707* (Sofia 2008) 144.

13 M. Crusius, *Turcograeciae Libri Octo* (Modena 1972) 108.

14 N. Vryzidis, 'Towards a history of the Greek *bil'at*: an interweaving of Byzantine and Ottoman traditions', *Convivium-Exchanges and Interactions in the Arts of Medieval Europe, Byzantium and the Mediterranean* 4.2 (2017) 176-91; N. Vryzidis, 'Textiles and ceremonial of the Greek Church under the Ottomans', Paper presented at the *Gennadius Work-in-progress Seminar*, The Mandilas Rare Book Reading Room, 16 March 2017; N. Vryzidis and E. Papastavrou, 'Sacred patchwork: patterns of textile reuse in Greek churches during the Ottoman period', Paper presented at 'Spolia reincarnated: second life of spaces, materials, objects in Anatolia from antiquity to the Ottoman period', 10th RCAC Annual Symposium, Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, Istanbul, 6 December 2015.

From the available Ottoman-period archival evidence it seems that by the sixteenth century *kamouchas* became a term which was far from generic, with the different qualities of silk being noted and understood by the clerics. For example, in the inventory list of Vatopediou Monastery, dating to 1596–8, there are at least five different terms related to silk:<sup>15</sup> *ατλάζη*, which probably derives from the Ottoman/Arabic *atlas*, for sleek satin, used in relation to two objects;<sup>16</sup> *καμουχένιον* in relation to more than twenty objects; *μεταξοτά* in relation to six objects;<sup>17</sup> *βλατίου*, only in relation to a red cover for a relic of Saint Niphon, Patriarch of Constantinople (in office 1486–8 and 1497–8);<sup>18</sup> and finally *ταυτάς* (taffeta), the plain, smooth, silk weave. Therefore, it is evident that the monks' most preferred quality textile at that time was the *kamouchas*. As the inventory took place in the last decade of the sixteenth century, this sampling provides a clear view of the consumption practices up to that point.

It is indicative that *kamouchas* started to appear in eponymous ecclesiastical oblations. In 1574 the Patriarch of Constantinople, Jeremiah II (c. 1530–5), donated vestments to 'his church', probably meaning the church that served as the Patriarchate's seat at that time. *Kamouchenia* is mentioned in relation to two *sticharia* (tunic-shaped vestments) and five *polystavria* (dalmatic or chasuble-shaped vestments patterned with crosses).<sup>19</sup> The latter probably indicates patterned silks for the Christian market, many of which featured a blend of Ottoman motifs and crosses.<sup>20</sup> In a 1609 letter from the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius IV of Karkala (in office 1579–1608), accompanying his donation of vestments to the Archbishop of Dimitsana, *kamouchas* is again mentioned in relation to a *sticharion*. Sophronius donated the vestments in the hope that his

15 Pavlikianov, *The Athonite Monastery*, 173–5.

16 For a concise overview of the different types of Ottoman textiles, among them the less luxurious qualities such as *atlas*, see N. Gürsu, *The Art of Turkish Weaving: Designs Through the Ages* (Istanbul 1988) 22.

17 As a textile term, *metaxa* usually denoted raw silk during the Byzantine era. One cannot be certain of the meaning during the Ottoman period but it was probably either a generic term for silk or simple silk weaves. See J. Galliker, 'Terminology associated with silk in the middle Byzantine period (AD 843–1204)', in M. L. Nosch, C. Michel and S. Gaspa (eds), *Textile Terminologies from the Orient to the Mediterranean and Europe 1000 BC–AD 1000* (Oxford, forthcoming) 1–47, esp. 6.

18 This is a Byzantine term which stood for porphyry red silk, and later became generic for silk. The fact that the specific term was used in the inventory list for the cloth covering the holy relic is an indication that it might have been a Byzantine remnant. On the term, see A. P. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary to Byzantium* (New York and Oxford 1991) 296; E. Kriaras, *Λεξικό της μεσαιωνικής δημόδους γραμματείας*, IV (Thessaloniki 1975) 130.

19 M. Paizi-Apostolopoulou and D. G. Apostolopoulos, *Αφιέρωματα και δωρεές τὸν 16ο αἰῶνα στὴ Μ. Εκκλησία: Θεσμικὲς ὄψεις τῆς εὐσεβείας* (Athens 2002) 153–5.

20 In the collection of the Byzantine and Christian Museum there is a sixteenth/seventeenth-century fragment from the Monastery of the Transfiguration, Meteora, patterned with crosses and tulips. See D. Konstantios (ed.), *The World of the Byzantine Museum* (Athens 2004) cat. 338. The main body of the *omophorion* of the Archbishop of New Justinianopolis and all Cyprus, Sylvester, is made of exactly the same design. According to the embroidered inscription, this stole dates to 1720, but the silk under discussion is from earlier. See D. Papanikola-Bakirtzis and M. Iacovou (eds), *Byzantine Medieval Cyprus* (Nicosia 1998) cat. 165.

family's name would be listed among the benefactors of the diocese of his origin.<sup>21</sup> This indicates that the *kamouchas* was understood to be of acceptable quality for functions including prestigious oblations, and for that reason it was duly noted in the letter.<sup>22</sup> Overall, the archival evidence matches the many remnants of *kemba* in Greek sacristies.<sup>23</sup> A question which naturally arises from the available archival evidence is why the epithet 'Turkish' does not appear in relation to *kamouchas* as often as one would expect, or even at all. This is particularly telling, especially given the popularity of Ottoman silks, as is attested to by their presence in Greek sacristies. My preliminary conclusion is that because these textiles were of a standard quality, they did not have to be noted. On the contrary, if *kamouchas* had a more generic use as well, provenance was noted – for example, when it was European.<sup>24</sup>

The precious Ottoman cloth of gold, *serâser*, appears less frequently in ecclesiastical inventories but was certainly not a rarity. From Serres to Mount Athos and its dependencies in Romania, and from Sinai to Thessaly, *serâser* appears in relation to various vestments and ecclesiastical veils.<sup>25</sup> Some of the archival evidence is impressive and gives us a clear understanding of the wealth that Greek sacristies used to hoard in precious textiles. In the 1752 inventory list of the Church of the Virgin of the Visitation (Παναγία της Επισκέψεως) in Trikala there is a reference to two *serâser sticharia* and twelve *phelonia*

21 T. Gritsopoulos, 'Η αρχιεπισκοπή Δημητσάνης και Αργυροκάστρου', *Επετηρίς Εταιρίας Βυζαντινών Σπουδών* 20 (1950) 209–56, esp. 222–5.

22 Almost a century later, but still relevant, is Alexandros Mavrokordatos' (1636-1709) oblation to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. In its codex of oblations it is noted that in the year 1705 he donated fourteen *phelonia* of white *kemba* ('καμουχά άσπρο') to the Great Church. See M. Gedeon, 'Κώδιξ άφιερωμάτων και δωρεών εις τον πατριαρχικόν ναόν', *Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* 38 (1884) 568–71, esp. 568. *Kemba* is also mentioned in relation to the textile oblations that a Valide Sultana presented during her pilgrimage to Mecca in Tzanes' *The Cretan War*: '...Μέγα καράβι εφόρτωσε, ούλο προσκυνητάδες, φορέματα όλόχρυσα, βελουδά καμοκάδες, ν' άφήσει στό προσκύνημα και άλλα νά χαρίσει εις έφτωχούς όπου 'τον κεί κι' όνομα ν' αποχτήσει...' (A. N. Nenedakis, *Μαρίνος Τζάνες Μπουνιαλής: Ο Κρητικός Πόλεμος (1645-1669)* (Athens 1979) 211). It would be correct to state that in the Greek world the pertinence of *kemba* as an official present was universally understood, and was also understood in relation to the customs of the Ottoman court.

23 N. Vryzidis, 'A study on Ottoman Christian aesthetic: Greek-Orthodox vestments and ecclesiastical fabrics, 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries', unpublished PhD thesis, SOAS-University of London, 2015, 206-74.

24 In *Κόποι και Διατριβή*, by Archbishop Arsenius, the English provenance of a *kamouha* is noted: '...και Έγκλητέρας καμπουχάν με εϋμορφα κλαδιά...'. See S. Zampelios, 'Κόποι και Διατριβή του ταπεινού Αρχιεπισκόπου Αρσενίου', *Πανδώρα* 10 (1859-60) 414–18, 390-5, 370-5, esp. 414. Similarly, in Limenitis' *The Plague of Rhodes*, first published in the early sixteenth century, the Pisan provenance of a *kamouchas* is duly noted: '...Και πασαένα φόρεμα που να 'ναι τιμημένον χρεια 'ναι 'πουκάτω στην ποδιάν τριγύρα να 'ν' ραμμένο βελουδίν ή και τσατουνίν ή καμουχά αφ' την Πίζαν...' (G. S. Henrich, *Εμμανουήλ/Μανόλης Λιμενίτης: Το Θανατικόν της Ρόδου* (Thessaloniki 2015) 68).

25 See D. G. Kalousios, 'Ο κώδικας της Τρίκκης: 1688-1857 (EBE 1471)', *Θεσσαλικό Ημερολόγιο* 48 (2005) 3–64, esp. 22, 25, 27 and 45; C. Karydis, *The Orthodox Christian Sakkos: Ecclesiastical Garments Dating from the 15th to the 20th Centuries from the Holy Mountain of Athos. Collection Survey, Scientific Analysis and Preventive Conservation* (Oxford 2010) 258; P. Odorico, *Le Codex B du Monastère Saint-Jean-Prodrome Serrès XVe-XIXe siècles* (Paris 1998) 95, 149.



made of golden *serâser* ('φελόνια σε:ρασέρια χρυσᾶ 12.').<sup>26</sup> The areas of Trikala and Thessaly were prosperous during the Ottoman period but the number of listed vestments made of this extremely costly fabric is still impressive. In the sixteenth-century *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους Σινᾶ* by Paisios, Bishop of Rhodes, there is also a mention of a festive *serâser* hanging adorned with a star motif in the middle.<sup>27</sup> Such *serâser* silks, patterned with large-scale motifs, were usually destined to be used for ceremonial caftans.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the relative popularity of the fabric probably explains how the word 'σερασσερτζής' (*serâserci*), as a term used specifically for the seller of these textiles, entered the Greek lexicon at that time.<sup>29</sup> *Serâser* is related to the Ottoman sultans in Greek texts written by clerics. In the *Ἐπιτομή της Ἱεροκοσμικῆς Ἱστορίας* by the Patriarch of Jerusalem Nektarios the Cretan (1677), among the prestigious presents he mentions that Selim I received were *serâser* silks ('σερασέρια').<sup>30</sup> Wearing *serâser* as an honorific gesture for the reception of exalted guests was also noted in the narrative poem by Ioakeim Kyprios, which is another indication of the significance of this textile in Greek culture.<sup>31</sup>

In relation to velvet, the two most frequently used terms are *βελούδο(ν)*, from the Venetian *veludo*, and, more often, *κατηφέζ/καντηφέζ*, from the Turkish *kadife*.<sup>32</sup> It is unclear whether the linguistic origin of these terms always corresponded to the described object's provenance. For example, in the inventory of the sacristy at

26 D. G. Kalousios, 'Ο κώδικας της Τρίκης: 1688-1857 (EBE 1471)', *Θεσσαλικό Ημερολόγιο* 49 (2006) 65-128, esp. 75.

27 '... Ἐστὶ καὶ ἕτερον χρυσοῦν, ὠραῖον σερασέρι, ὅπερ κρεμοῦν τὰς ἐορτὰς κὶ ἔχει ἔν μεσαστέρῃ'. See Paisios, Bishop of Rhodes, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους Σινᾶ καὶ τῶν περιχώρων αὐτοῦ: Ἐμμετρον σύγγραμμα συνταχθὲν μετὰ τῶν ἐτῶν 1577-1592* (St Petersburg 1891) 613. In the Ottoman collection of the Benaki Museum there is a textile with the mentioned motif ('μεσαστέρῃ') that could have been used as a hanging (ΓΕ3777).

28 For large-scale motifs in *serâser* and *faux-serâser*, a term art historians used for *kemha* silks which imitate the costly cloth of gold, see Atasoy et al., *İpek*, figs. 168-74, 179, 180, 185, 187, 188; L. W. Mackie, *Symbols of Power: Luxury Textiles from Islamic Lands, 7th-21st Century* (New Haven and London 2015) 8.7, 8.24, 8.41. One of the largest star motifs, representing the mythological seal of Solomon, can be found in a *kemha caftan* at the Topkapı Palace (TSM13/21). A later velvet cushion cover, adorned with a central eight-pointed star, is to be found in the Royal Armoury of Sweden, Stockholm; see Atasoy et al., *İpek*, cat. 74. While star motifs appear quite often in *kemha* silks within the Greek ecclesiastical context (for example: BXM 20857 and BXM 20844 in the collection of the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens), no *serâser* drapery, such as the one described by Bishop Paisios, has yet been published or discovered within a sacristy.

29 I. Kazazis (ed.), *Λεξικό της μεσαιωνικής δημόδους γραμματείας του Εμμανουήλ Κριαρά*, XVII (Thessaloniki 2014) 471-2. Another reference reinforces this point regarding the textile's popularity, at least for the eighteenth century: in a 1759 official motion of the community of Mytilene, women are encouraged to adopt a more modest attire and avoid *serâser*, among other sumptuous textiles, because of their incompatibility with a pious appearance. See A. Spanos, *Κώδιξ Ἀ' Ἱεράς Μητροπόλεως Μυτιλήνης (18ος αἰ.)* (Mytilene 2006) 222.

30 Patriarch of Jerusalem, Nektarios the Cretan, *Ἐπιτομή τῆς Ἱεροκοσμικῆς Ἱστορίας* (Venice 1739) 330.

31 '...Με σερασέρια ὅλοι τῶς ἦτανε στολισμένοι, μπιήτηδες καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ ποὶ 'σαν 'πεσταλμένοι, νὰ τοὺς τμηῖσιν περισσὰ αὐτοῦνους τοὺς ἐλτζήδες...'. See T. Kaplanis, *Ioakeim Kyprios' Struggle: A Narrative Poem on the 'Cretan War' of 1645-1669* (Nicosia 2012) 130.

32 'Κατηφένιον' and 'κάτουφέ' are both terms which derive from *kadife* and appear in the 1673 and 1796 inventory lists of Simonopetra monastery (Mount Athos). See Karydis, *The Orthodox Christian Sakkos*, 263 and 265.

Vatopediou Monastery there is a reference to a *phelonion* and *sticharia* made of *βελούδο(ν)* but no Italian velvet survives.<sup>33</sup> Surprisingly, and despite its significant presence in Greek sacristies, *çatma* does not appear in inventory lists. The difference between *kadife* and *çatma* was quite important, the latter being rich in metallic threads and therefore more precious.<sup>34</sup> It seems that the Greek-language derivatives of *kadife* were generic terms for velvet, whether it was Ottoman or not. Overall, it can be concluded that while many Greek terms for textiles derived from Ottoman, their use in textual descriptions did not always denote an Ottoman provenance. However, the many Ottoman remnants in Greek sacristies potentially imply that these terms became generic precisely because of the popularity of these specific types of Ottoman textiles.

### Aniconic silks and velvets: passive acceptance or active employment of Ottoman aesthetic?

Beyond the archival evidence, the many relevant, surviving remnants of aniconic Ottoman silks and velvets confirm that one of the most important changes in ecclesiastical material culture after the fall of Constantinople was their widespread use. This first point of close contact between the Ottoman aesthetic and Greek clerical costume raises the question as to whether this consumption practice constituted an acceptance of the period's aesthetic or an employment of elements from the government's public image. As historical background, the gradual integration of the Greek Church into the Ottoman bureaucracy, a slow process completed only in the eighteenth century, is certainly relevant.<sup>35</sup> Apart from official documents, art history can provide a supplementary insight into this process. Clerical vestments made of Ottoman textiles should be examined in light of the social symbolism they conveyed. For example, if holy figures are represented wearing garments made of Ottoman textiles in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century icons and church murals, one should reflect on the meaning of these representations.<sup>36</sup> Byzantinists have pointed out how the representation of angels

33 See Pavlikianov, *The Athonite Monastery of Vatopedi*, 174. In this collection there is a *phelonion* made of a sixteenth-century Italian silk brocade, but it is not velvet (inv. no. 128).

34 Atasoy et al., *İpek*, 222-4.

35 See E. Bayraktar-Tellan, 'The Patriarch and the Sultan: The struggle for authority and the quest for order in the eighteenth-century Ottoman empire', unpublished PhD thesis, Bilkent University, 2011, 80-168.

36 The abundance of Ottoman motifs on the clothing of holy figures in Greek icons and mural paintings during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is only relatively well-documented. See the relevant article by C. Merantzias, 'Le tissu de soie comme représentation culturelle: le cas de la peinture monumentale post-byzantine dans la Grèce du Nord-Ouest', *Bulletin du CIETA* 83 (2006) 6-21. Also for relevant examples in the mural paintings of southern Greece, see X. Proestaki, 'The wall paintings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at Stemnitsa in the Peloponnese, Greece', *Zograf* 38 (2014) 165-201, esp. figs. 8,30,40,42; X. Proestaki, 'Ο Ναός του Αγίου Αθανασίου στο Στεφάνι Κορινθίας', in *Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of Corinthian Studies: Historical Corinthian Monasteries, Corinth 7-9 October 2011* (Corinth, 2014) 21-58, fig. 8; X. Proestaki, 'Western influences on 17<sup>th</sup>-century post-Byzantine wall paintings in the Peloponnese: Roots in the 16<sup>th</sup> century', *Byzantinoslavica* 68 (2010) 291-352, esp. figs. 27-8, 33. Research on the subject remains insufficient.



wearing Byzantine imperial garments had a meaning related to political and religious metaphor.<sup>37</sup> Greek religious painting respected this convention by updating it: the dress of the Ottoman Christian elite became the new model, and Byzantine features were replaced by Ottoman ones in the depiction of the holy figures.<sup>38</sup> Within this framework, I would suggest that the Church's use of aniconic Ottoman textiles leaned more towards employment and less towards passive acceptance. The shape of the vestments sufficed to give them a 'Christian' appearance, while the social message conveyed by the Ottoman silk functioned on a different and more secular level. In this way, the figural narrative communicated by Christian iconography and shapes is complemented by a narrative of aniconic motifs. The aniconic visual language of the Ottoman classical style, as formed in the sixteenth century, was devoid of an immediate message that might infringe the dogma.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, it conveyed the social message of an alignment with the Ottoman court aesthetic.

Turning now to discussing vestments, floral patterns, which exemplify the aniconicity desired by the Ottoman aesthetic, were among the most popular motifs.<sup>40</sup> At Iveron Monastery there is a *sticharion*, the main body of which is made of sixteenth-century green silver-thread *kemba* (Fig. 1).<sup>41</sup> In an unpublished note dating to 1595 (codex 240, f. 4r), I was able to identify a previously unknown but directly relevant

37 There certainly was a blending of heavenly and earthly worlds at the core of Byzantine ceremonial symbolism, especially during the late Palaiologan era. The representation of angels in frescoes wearing imperial garments was an artistic expression of this point. This has been correctly understood by Byzantinists as being a political metaphor for the protection of the Faith by both God and Emperor. See H. Maguire, 'The heavenly court', in H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington, D.C. 1997) 247–58; R. S. Nelson, 'Heavenly allies at the Chora', *Gesta* 43.1 (2004) 31–40; G. Tirnanić, 'Divine images and earthly authority at the Chora *parekklesion* in Constantinople', in A. Walker and A. Luyster (eds), *Negotiating Secular and Sacred in Medieval Art* (Farnham 2009) 75–101.

38 See Vryzidis, 'A study on Ottoman Christian aesthetic', 121–2; C. Merantzias, 'Ottoman textiles within an ecclesiastical context: Cultural osmoses in mainland Greece in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries', paper presented at 'The mercantile effect: on art and exchange in the Islamic world during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries', Berlin, 18 November 2016.

39 On the Ottoman classical style see G. Necipoğlu, 'A *kânûn* for the State, a canon for the arts: Conceptualizing the classical synthesis of Ottoman art and architecture', in G. Veinstein (ed.), *Soliman le magnifique et son temps: Actes du Colloque de Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais 7–10 Mars 1990* (Paris 1992) 195–216.

40 On the emergence of the Ottoman floral style, read W. Denny and S. Belger Krody, *The Sultan's Garden: The Blossoming of Ottoman Art* (Washington D.C. 2012). The Greek Church's use of metallic-thread brocades with floral motifs has been noted in travelers' accounts. For example, Jacob Elser noted textiles with a red ground and golden flowers ('mit goldenen Blumen auf einem rohten Grund') in Greek vestments, a description which recalls Ottoman floral *kembas* with a red ground. See J. Elser, *Neueste Beschreibung derer griechischen Christen in der Türrkey: aus glaubwürdiger Erzählung Herrn Athanasius Dorostamus* (Berlin 1737) 63–4.

41 *Sticharion* is the tunic-shaped vestment worn by deacons, priests and bishops. It evolved from late antique tunics and was generally plainly decorated until the Ottoman period. The bishop's *sticharion* was distinguished by its richer decoration, called *potamoi*. W. Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon: Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium* (Oxford and New York 2012) 5–6, 8–10, 13–15.



Fig. 1. *Sticharion*. Main body, sixteenth century or later, silver-thread *kemba*; sleeves, sixteenth century or later, silver-thread *kemba*. © Iveron Monastery (inv. no. 197; photograph: Thanos Kartsoglou). Unpublished.

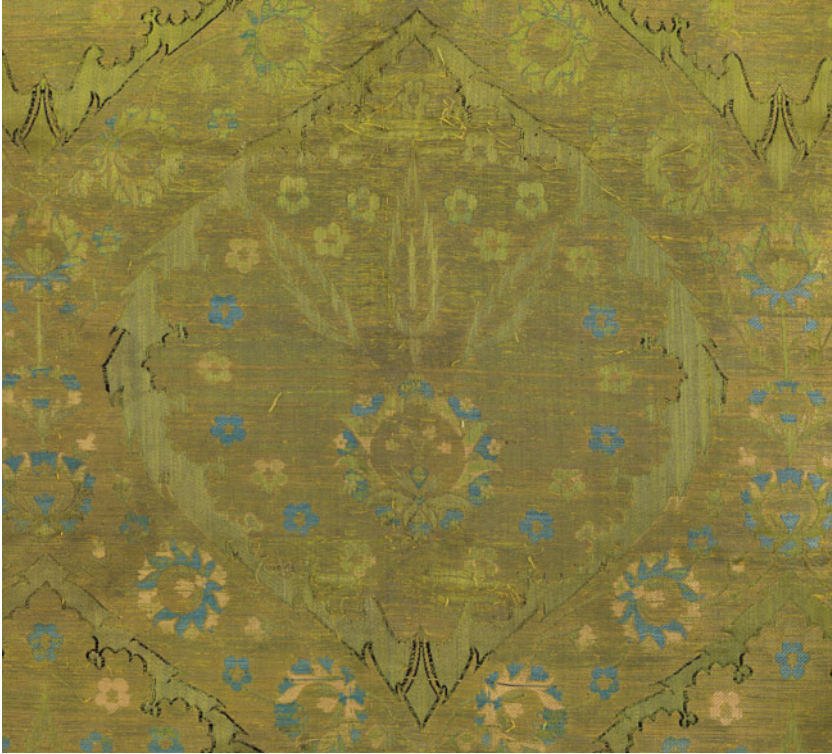


Fig. 2. Detail of Fig. 1. © Iveron Monastery (inv. no. 197; photograph: Thanos Kartsoglou).

donation: a cantor named Manuel donated a *sticharion* made of green *kamoucha*.<sup>42</sup> The style of the *kemha* is patterned with a central ogee, dominated by a sizeable lotus bud and triple cypresses above it, while the interstices are filled with graceful chains of smaller lotus buds (Fig. 2).<sup>43</sup> This style, based on floral and vegetal arabesque of

42 ‘+ ἐπροσήλωσ(εν) ὁ κυ(ριος) μανουήλ ὁ ψάλτ(ης) ἐν στιχάριον πράσινον καμοχὰ ἀσπρ(ῶν) β· και ἐγράφει εἰς τὴν πρόθ(εσιν) και μνημονεύεται και παρῆρησία.’ The word ‘ἀσπρ(ῶν)’ is the genitive plural of the noun ‘asper’ (*akçe*) and it probably indicates the monetary value of the *kemha*: 2000 aspers. The note may refer to the pictured vestment, which is a contemporary *sticharion* made of green *kamoucha*. I am indebted to Father Theologos, the monastery’s archivist, for transcribing and kindly providing me with this unpublished note. The complete text of the folio, together with the other Ottoman-period documents from the Iveron archive, will be published by Kriton Chrisochoidis of the Greek National Foundation for Research. In a description of the 1674 Maundy Thursday service, Dr John Covell mentions a green taffeta *sticharion*, worn by the Patriarch: ‘...Then, the Patriarch vested himself in his robes, στοιχάριον, with a hole on top like a surplice with sleeves, body to the ankles; Sallow green (or yellow green) tuffetay...’ (J. T. Bent (ed.), *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant* (London 1893) 157).

43 There are references to green floral silks in ecclesiastical codices. In a folio from a codex of the diocese of Trikke (f.10a) there is a reference to a green *phelonion* with floral motifs (‘πράσινον με λολούδια’) in the collection of St. Stephen, Trikala. Although the exact year of the folio is not known, it probably dates to the late seventeenth century or later. See Kalousios, ‘Ὁ κώδικας της Τρίκκης’, 22.





Fig. 3. Detail of Fig. 1. © Iveron Monastery (inv. no. 197; photograph: Thanos Kartsoglou).

ultimately Chinese origin, was known in Ottoman Turkish as *hatayi* and appears in Greek sacristy inventories as *χεταΐ* and *χαταΐ*.<sup>44</sup> This serves as proof, among much other evidence, that the Greek Church could distinguish not only between the quality of the textiles but also between the different motifs and styles. Relevant to the popularity of

44 In the 1710 inventory list of the Monastery of Meteora there is a reference to an *epitrachelion hatayi* (‘χεταΐ’) (f. 142b). See D. G. Kalousios, ‘Ο κώδικας της Τρίκκης: 1688-1857 (EBE 1471)’, *Θεσσαλικό Ημερολόγιο* 51 (2007) 193-257, esp. 244. Then, in the 1761 inventory list of St. Stephen, Trikala, there is a reference to a Chios *hatayi* dress (‘φόρεμα Χιώτικων χαταΐ’). See Kalousios, ‘The codex of Trikke, 51. Although these inventories date to the eighteenth century, they list all the objects which entered the sacristy until they were compiled. The aforementioned *hatayi* garments were most probably earlier. The term *χαταΐ* is also mentioned in the 1796 inventory of the sacristy of Simonopetra monastery (Mount Athos). See Karydis, *The Orthodox Christian Sakkos*, 266. For a reference in an official document related to women’s dress, see Spanos, *Κώδιξ*, 221-2. However, the earliest mention of the *hatayi* motif I managed to trace in relation to vestments comes from the seventeenth century inventory list in the codex of Saint George of Argyroupolis (Gümüşhane) (Συλλογή ταμείου ανταλλαξιμων/Musée Benaki Exchangeables; codex TA 324, f. 4). On the evolution of *hatayi* motifs of Far Eastern origin, reinvented and Ottomanized by the sixteenth century, read Gürsu, *The Art of Turkish Weaving*, 64-7.

the *hatayi* motifs is a *sakkos*, which according to oral tradition is associated with the tenth-century Byzantine emperor Ioannis I Tzimiskes (c. 925–6). It is made of Italian velvet spolia and decorated with what might be embroidery, crafted by the monks themselves. The embroidered chains of floral motifs on the upper part of the garment are closely reminiscent of the lotus buds on the *sticharion* depicted in Figure 2, indicating how the dynamic of transfer functioned in relation to embroidery, an issue analysed later in this article.<sup>45</sup> The sleeves of the *sticharion* are made of a probably contemporary *kemha* silk, decorated with a wavy grid, densely filled with rosebuds, leaves and other floral motifs (Fig. 3). Using one textile as the primary constituent of the main body of the vestment, and another for the sleeves, was by no means exceptional; on the contrary, it was standard practice for the Greek Church.<sup>46</sup> This tailoring practice significantly contrasts with the way Ottoman court caftans were cut and tailored. To conclude the analysis of this piece, it is worth discussing its dominant colour: green. The fact that quite a few sixteenth- and seventeenth-century vestments were made of luxurious green silks, in theory related to notions of Islamic piety and supposedly forbidden for Christians, clearly puts this rule into question; at the very least it reveals its limitations.<sup>47</sup>

In the same monastery there is another vestment where green is again the dominant colour: a velvet *epitrachelion*, heavily embroidered with silver and gilded wire (Fig. 4).<sup>48</sup> The green velvet is a simple *kadife*, not *çatma*, which is rich in metallic threads. It is the heavy embroidery that increases its luxuriousness, making it a prestigious object. The large-scale, triple-spot motif is paired with crescents of a smaller scale

45 On the Iveron *sakkos* associated with Emperor Ioannis I Tzimiskes (c. 925–76) see T. Kousoulou, ‘Conserving the legend: conservation and research of a sixteenth-century sakkos from Mount Athos’, *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* 36.1 (2013) 18–34.

46 In the same folio there is a reference to a vestment with sleeves made of Ottoman velvet (*kadife*): ‘ταχτικὸν με μανι(κία) κατηγένια’ (the unpublished Iveron codex 240, f. 4r). For a discussion of this practice, see Vryzidis and Papastavrou, ‘Sacred Patchwork’.

47 According to Suraiya Faroqhi, green was avoided by most Ottoman Muslims as well because it was a colour reserved for the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. See S. Faroqhi, ‘Introduction, or why and how one might want to study Ottoman clothes’, in S. Faroqhi and C. K. Neumann (eds), *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity* (Istanbul 2004) 15–48, esp. 22. As many relevant textile remnants I initially had at my disposal came from Cyclades, where there was no significant Muslim settlement, I thought that this was a localized phenomenon. However, the ecclesiastical inventories and the objects themselves show that green was far from forbidden for the Church and could be worn by clerics even in the Ottoman capital. For example, there is reference to a green *sticharion* even in the Patriarchal codex. See Paizi-Apostolopoulou and Apostolopoulos, *Ἀφιέρωματα καὶ δωρεές*, 153. Whether they could be worn in processions outside the churches is an intriguing question. It is worth mentioning that the tunic-shaped *sticharia* were not destined solely for the high clergy, bishops and archbishops. This undermines any notions about green being affordable only by the Greek clerical elite. It was a liturgical colour that could be worn by clerics regardless of their office.

48 *Epitrachelion* is a stole worn about the neck, underneath the *phelonion*, by the priest and the bishop. See Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon*, 10–11, 15. In the vestment analysed above, the large-scale triple-spot design was visible as only the *epitrachelion*’s upper part was covered by the *phelonion*.



Fig. 4. *Epitrachelion*. Sixteenth century or later *kadife* velvet, heavily embroidered with silver and gilded wire. © Iveron Monastery (inv. no. 36; photograph: Thanos Kartsoglou). Unpublished.

than those usually found on *kemha* and *serâser*.<sup>49</sup> It can be safely stated that the triple-spot became one of the most celebrated motifs in Greek vestments and ecclesiastical

49 For triple-spots in Ottoman court caftans and other textiles, see M. J. Rogers, H. Tezcan and S. Delibaş, *The Topkapı Sarayı Museum: Costumes, Embroideries and Other Textiles* (Boston 1986) cats. 2, 8, 10, 22, 26, 44, 53, 87, 92, 95, 100; D. J. Roxburgh (ed.), *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600-1600* (London 2005) cats. 263, 267, 313, 315, 366. For crescents, see Rogers, Tezcan and Delibaş, *The Topkapı Sarayı*, cats. 21, 25, 32, 51.



fabrics after the fall of Constantinople.<sup>50</sup> Crescents, on the other hand, were not absent from the repertoire of Ottoman motifs employed by the Greek Church, but instead, from the published or known examples, it seems that they certainly did not surpass the triple-spots in popularity.<sup>51</sup> The simplicity of the embroidery's technique, without any indicative stitches or knots, does not provide much information regarding the workshop. It was probably preferred for its motif, which was such a central part of the Ottoman aesthetic of that period. This is especially true as the value of the triple-spots, with an almost 'heraldic' meaning for a dynasty that did not have blazons, was readily understood by all the echelons of Ottoman society.<sup>52</sup>

### Ottoman silks for the Christian market: Byzantine iconographic prototypes and Ottoman execution

Another point of contact is Ottoman production for the Christian market.<sup>53</sup> The range of textile qualities, from simple satins to costly *serâser*, and the amount of relevant remnants in sacristies betrays the success of the production and its penetration into the Greek cultural realm, apart from the Armenian and Eastern European spheres.<sup>54</sup> The best-known silks are *kemha* patterned with Christ as the High Priest within roundels. This flat motif has been rightly associated with the corresponding iconographic type that rose to prominence during the Palaiologan era, the time when Byzantium as a political entity was declining and the Patriarch of Constantinople became an ecumenical symbol of Orthodox unity. This was most probably the meaning intended by representing the crowned Christ in Patriarchal attire on Ottoman patterned silks.<sup>55</sup> Undoubtedly, the need for Christian iconography was fulfilled in a very different way from that of the Byzantine system of symbolism, which favoured the uniqueness of holy figures and clear theological meaning via a very complex network of cross-references between a

50 Atasoy et al., *İpek*, fig. 191; Vryzidis, 'A Study on Ottoman Christian aesthetic', figs. 6.2, 6.3, 6.33, 6.34a, 6.34b, 6.35, 6.41. The triple-spot motif was certainly not an Ottoman discovery. We find small-scale triple-spots on the representation of garments in Byzantine art as well. However, the large-scale version is quite characteristic of the Ottoman court aesthetic.

51 Vryzidis, 'A study on Ottoman Christian aesthetic', fig. 42. There is another relevant piece at the Byzantine and Christian Museum (BXM20842).

52 On the triple-spots, very often accompanied by the wavy stripes motif, see Atasoy et al., *İpek*, 264-5; Gürsu, *The Art of Turkish Weaving*, 57-9.

53 My findings so far point to a religiously mixed workforce for this production. Silks with Christian iconography can have Greek, Armenian and Ottoman inscriptions. Then, there is the *fetva* issued in Bursa in 1004 Hegira (c. 1595 CE), forbidding Muslim weavers to serve under a non-Muslim master, which indicates that Muslims and Christians were often collaborating despite the local Mufti's displeasure. See F. Dalsar, *Türk Sanayi ve Ticaret Tarihinde Bursa'da İpekçilik* (Istanbul 1960) 321.

54 For Ottoman figural silks in Eastern Europe, mainly in Russia, see Atasoy et al., *İpek*, pls. 10, 51, 53, 55 and cats. 20, 21, 29, 40-1. For an Armenian piece, see M.-A. P. Savigny (ed.), *Ors et Trésors d'Arménie* (Lyon 2007) cat. 56.

55 See W. Woodfin, 'Orthodox liturgical textiles and clerical self-referentiality', in K. Dimitrova and M. Goehring (eds), *Dressing the Part: Textiles as Propaganda in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout 2014) 31-51.



Fig. 5. *Sakkos*. Sixteenth century or later *kemha*. © Rhode Island Museum of Art (inv. no. 28.008).

vestment's iconography and church interiors.<sup>56</sup> While the popularity of the High Priest motif is explained by the rise to prominence of the figure of the Patriarch, a question remains as to the way Christian iconography was reproduced when compared to embroidery of the Byzantine tradition.

The RISD Museum *sakkos* may clarify our discussion (Fig. 5).<sup>57</sup> Its Ottoman silk is patterned with a representation of the enthroned Christ, flanked by symbols of the four evangelists, against a background of rich floral decoration. Not many *sakkoi* survive from the Byzantine period and this makes it difficult to trace their evolution during the

<sup>56</sup> Warren Woodfin's seminal monograph has clarified this. Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon*, 47-129.

<sup>57</sup> One of the most official clerical vestments of the Byzantine and Ottoman periods is the *sakkos*. This Greek equivalent of the dalmatic is worn by the high clergy – in Byzantine times, only by the Patriarch – and probably evolved from its secular, courtly counterpart. According to Symeon of Thessalonica, it symbolized the purple robe that Christ wore when mocked by the Romans. It was used for important dominical feasts like Easter and Christmas, and probably also other special processions. See Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon*, 25-8.

Ottoman period.<sup>58</sup> However, there are references in Byzantine ecclesiastical inventories which can give us a view of this evolution – incomplete, yet sufficient for my analytical overview. In the aforementioned inventory of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate, there is a reference to a *sakkos* decorated with ivy leaves and twelve figures of saints.<sup>59</sup> This description of a blend of floral motifs and Christian iconography calls to mind, to a certain extent, the silk of the Rhode Island *sakkos*, which could be interpreted as an evolution or updated version of the described composition.<sup>60</sup> The Ottoman floral motifs replace the ivy leaves in the role of the decorative background or frame, but the most fundamental change appears in the way that the iconographic prototype of the enthroned Christ, framed by symbols of the four evangelists, unfolds: as a repeating, medium-scale motif.<sup>61</sup> This practice recalls the way in which narrative evolved in other Middle Eastern figural productions, for instance in Persian examples.<sup>62</sup> We see that while the source of these patterns is Byzantine, a certain degree of liberation is achieved from the standard way iconography was reproduced on Christian vestments during the late Byzantine era. The result is reduced iconicity, thanks to the motif's repetition and the lack of framing around it. Beyond the religious symbolism that each and every Byzantine iconographic type of Ottoman production probably conveyed, their reduction to repeating motifs indicates their quality as markers of Christian identity. Just like the

58 All three published Byzantine-period *sakkoi* feature clear iconographic programmes, as analysed by Elisabeth Piltz in her monograph. See E. Piltz, *Trois sakkoi byzantins: analyse iconographique* (Uppsala 1976). One cannot be certain that more comparable pieces will not be discovered in the future, especially as cataloguing and recognition efforts continue in Greek monasteries. However, the general scholarly consensus is that chances of a significant discovery are slim.

59 'ἕτερος (σάκος) καὶ αὐτὸς ὀξὺς κλαπωτός, ἔχων κισσόφυλλα ἀργυροδιάχρυσα τριάκοντα καὶ φάκτα μετὰ ὑελίων δώδεκα καὶ ἁγίων εἰκόνας ἕξ μετὰ φεγκίων καὶ μαργάρων.' See Miklosich and Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca*, 568. The ivy leaf is a motif we find in surviving examples of Byzantine embroidery, such as on an *epitaphios* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. See Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition*, figs. 99-100.

60 From the directors' correspondence in the Rhode Island School of Art archives, it appears that the Museum bought an ensemble of Greek Orthodox vestments made of Ottoman textiles from Elizabeth Titzel and Rudolf Riefstahl in 1928. Having toured Turkey and the Middle East many times before, the couple resided in Constantinople between 1927 and 1929. As their purchases took place in 1928, just before Titzel and Riefstahl sailed back to Turkey, one might assume that they acquired these pieces there. See D. Guzman, 'Elizabeth Titzel Riefstahl', in M. S. Joukowsky and S. B. Lesko (eds), *Breaking Ground: Women in World Architecture* (Online 2004). Available at [http://www.brown.edu/Research/Breaking\\_Ground/bios/Riefstahl\\_Elizabeth%20Titzel.pdf](http://www.brown.edu/Research/Breaking_Ground/bios/Riefstahl_Elizabeth%20Titzel.pdf) [accessed 28 November 2016]. This makes it probable that the Rhode Island *sakkos* came from a church or monastery which belonged to the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

61 This motif can be found in various forms in the following collections: the Kremlin Museums (oxr13052); the Benaki Museum (TE3862, TE3908); the Harvard Museums of Art (1975.41.27); the National Museum in Warsaw (sz52); and the National Historical Museum of Armenia (E-1930). See Privat-Savigny and Berthod (eds), *Ors et trésors d'Arménie*, cat. 56.

62 For example, Safavid silk patterns were inspired by Persian popular stories. In these patterns, the representations of one or two familiar protagonists from these narratives was deemed sufficient, instead of having multifaceted visual cycles. See Mackie, *Symbols of Power*, 346-55. In this respect, the Ottoman figural production is closer to the Persian than the Byzantine, which favoured more complex iconographic programmes.

Ottomans, who did not have a blazon, but were associated with a distinctive visual language, the Greek clergy accepted designs which may have leaned upon Byzantine iconography, and simplified the process of communicating religious meaning. This was probably not the outcome of a conscious bypassing of traditional theology but instead the practical result of the Church's affiliation with Ottoman weaving workshops.

### Ottoman motifs in ecclesiastical embroidery produced by Greek workshops

The final point of contact analysed here is the presence of Ottoman motifs in the works of Greek embroidery workshops. Ecclesiastical embroidery was a Byzantine craft which continued to flourish after the fall of Constantinople. Its receptivity allowed creative reworking of elements from other artistic traditions and the transfer or adaptation of motifs and iconography from both Western and Eastern sources. In the case of Ottoman motifs, it should be made clear that it is not a question of foreign loans but instead of an update to local fashions of the period under study. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the compositions continued to present a Byzantine aesthetic;<sup>63</sup> loans from Italian and other European iconography are more apparent from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards.<sup>64</sup> By contrast, the incorporation of aniconic decoration with Ottoman motifs had already become common from the earlier period. The first point of artistic contact was that embroidered figural vestments were worn together with the woven silks analysed above. For example, an *orarion* should be imagined as being worn together with a *sticharion* made of a woven silk.<sup>65</sup> Many stole-like vestments, such as the *orarion* or the *epitrachelion*, were embroidered with figural representations of saints that followed a Byzantine system of symbolism. Generally speaking, in stole-like vestments Ottoman motifs appear in the lower part and as a frame around the holy figures. In an *orarion* in the Boston Museum of Arts, the dominant Ottoman motif is that of the triple-spot (Fig. 6).<sup>66</sup> The triple-spots appear prominently again above Christ on an

63 On the topic, read E. Papastavrou and D. Filiou, 'On the beginnings of the Constantinopolitan school of embroidery', *Zograf* 39 (2015) 161–76, esp. 161–70.

64 For examples of Italian and other Western European elements in post-seventeenth century embroidery, see A. Ballian (ed.), *Relics of the Past: Treasures of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Population Exchange: The Benaki Museum Collections* (Milan 2011) cats. 43–5; E. Papastavrou and D. Filiou, 'On the beginnings', 172–4; E. Papastavrou and D. Filiou, 'Church embroidery in Constantinople during the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Putting a veil by Kokona of Rologa in context', in I. Stoufi-Poulimenou (ed.), *Γ' Επιστημονικό Συμπόσιο Νεοελληνικής Εκκλησιαστικής Τέχνης: Πρακτικά* (Athens 2015) 543–55; E. Papastavrou and D. Filiou, in I. Stoufi-Poulimenou and S. Mamaloukos (eds), 'Χρυσοκέντητο Πέτασμα Ωραιάς Πύλης της Κοκόνας Ρολογά από τη συλλογή του Βυζαντινού και Χριστιανικού Μουσείου (αρ. 21055)', *Β' Επιστημονικό Συμπόσιο Νεοελληνικής Εκκλησιαστικής Τέχνης: Πρακτικά* (Athens 2012) 301–14.

65 *Orarion* is a narrow stole worn by the deacon. See Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon*, 6–7.

66 Among other pieces, the triple-spots adorn a 1608/9 *Epitaphios* veil from the Varlaam monastery ( Meteora). See E. Vlachopoulou-Karabina, *Εκκλησιαστικά χρυσοκέντητα άμφια βυζαντινού τύπου στον ελλαδικό χώρο (16ος -19ος αι.): Το εργαστήριο της Μονής Βαρλαάμ* (Trikala 2009) 341–2. *Epitaphios* is a processional veil used on Good Friday.

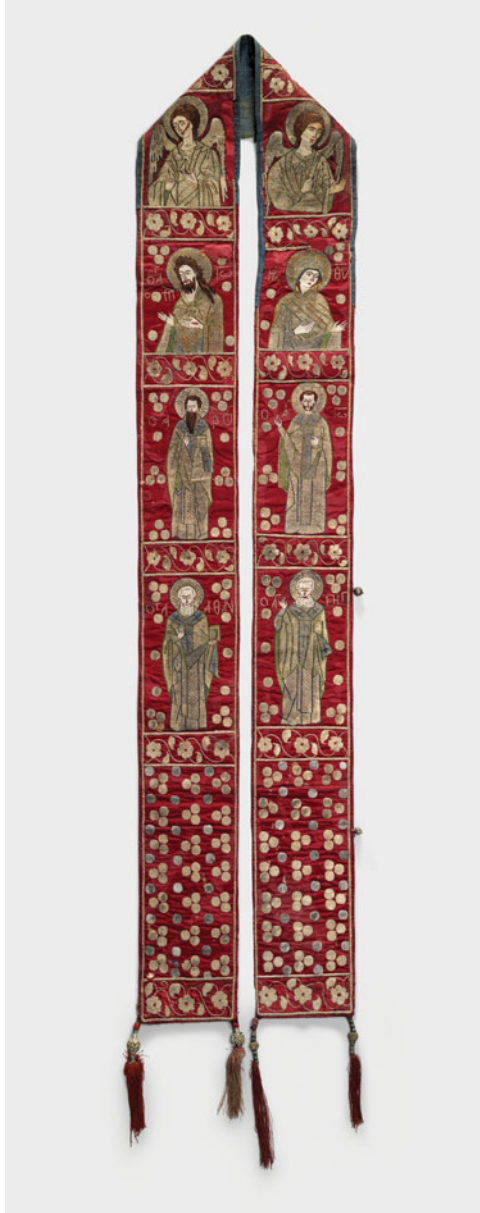


Fig. 6. *Epitrachelion*. Sixteenth century, embroidery on red silk. © Boston Museum of Arts (inv. no. 43.337).





Fig. 7. *Epigonation*. Sixteenth century, embroidery. © Kanellopoulos Museum (inv. no. ΔΑ2614; image courtesy of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Athens).

*epigonation*, depicting the Last Supper, now in the Paul and Alexandra Kanellopoulos Museum in Athens (Fig. 7).<sup>67</sup>

Apart from the creative aspect of the transfer of motifs, and their re-employment as a frame for holy figures, one should return to the representation of saints and angels dressed in silks that feature these motifs. Embroidery seems to replicate this mechanism of cross-references between the visual landscape (icons, frescos and so forth) and clerical vestments. Thus, in the Ottoman period, there are two distinct narratives that blend and/or intertwine: one of figural iconography, and another of aniconic motifs, which mainly stem from the Ottoman aesthetic. It seems that in certain cases embroidery largely copied designs from silks in the same environment, for example the *sakkos* of

67 A comparable *epigonation* from Dousikou monastery again depicts the Last Supper with the triple-spot motif appearing over Christ. See Vlachopoulou-Karabina, *Εκκλησιαστικά χρυσοκέντητα άμφια*, 361. The *epigonation* has been published in C. Skambavias and N. Chatzidaki (eds), *Βυζαντινή και Μεταβυζαντινή Τέχνη* (Athens 2007) cat. 200.





Fig. 8. *Epitrachelion*. Sixteenth century or later, metal thread embroidery. © Vatopediou Monastery (inv. no. 203; photograph: Thanos Kartsogou).



Fig. 9. Detail of Fig. 8. © Vatopediou Monastery (inv. no. 203; photograph: Thanos Kartsoglou).

Tzimiskes in Iveron monastery.<sup>68</sup> In other cases, embroidery followed the same creative rendering of Ottoman designs, just as in religious painting. An *epitrachelion* from Vatopediou Monastery is indicative: floral motifs, such as the rosebud and Chinese ribbons, appear in a dense reinterpretation of compositions in silks. As such, it conveys a clear message that an Ottoman style is intended, despite the reworking of motifs (Figs. 8 and 9).<sup>69</sup>

68 The same creative reworking and adaptation of Ottoman floral designs and motifs can be seen in many other Ottoman-period Greek embroideries. See A. Ballian (ed.), *Relics of the Past: Treasures of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Population Exchange: The Benaki Museum Collections* (Milan 2011) cat. 11; Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition*, figs. 22-23; G. Kakavas (ed.), *Post-Byzantium: The Greek Renaissance, 15th-18th Century Treasures from the Byzantine and Christian Museum* (Athens 2002) cats. 47 and 49; E. Vlachopoulou-Karabina, *Holy Monastery of Iveron: Gold Embroideries* (Mount Athos 1998) figs. 8, 12-13, 40b, 61; Vlachopoulou-Karabina, *Εκκλησιαστικά χρυσοκέντητα άμφια*, 351, 354-5, 362, 374-8, 380; A. Karakatsanis (ed.), *Treasures of Mount Athos* (Thessaloniki 1997) cats. 11.11 and 11.25.

69 See M. Theochari, 'Χρυσοκέντητα άμφια', in I. M. M. Vatopediou, *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπεδίου: Παράδοση-Ιστορία-Τέχνη* (Mount Athos 1990) 420-56, esp. cat. 15.

## Conclusion

In this article we have seen that Ottoman-derived terminology associated with Greek textiles may not always denote Ottoman provenance; the meanings were certainly not as fixed in Greek as they were in Ottoman. However, these loanwords certainly betray how widespread the use of these textiles was. *Kamouchas* probably stood for all metallic-thread silk brocades, with the remnants in Greek sacristies clarifying the Church's consumption practices. Moreover, the preference for Ottoman textiles points to an employment of the aniconic aesthetic associated with the court. In this way, another narrative is created, that of motifs, which were used for framing Christian iconography and melding with the Byzantine tradition. Whether it was Ottoman aniconic silks used for a vestment or Ottoman motifs appearing in Byzantine-style embroidery, the social message that these motifs communicated was always present. The figural silks, on the other hand, present a very interesting innovation: the way that religious meaning was conveyed became simpler, especially when compared with Byzantine embroidery. These three points of contact occurred at the heart of the cultural ferments that took place after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople and for that reason they are very important. Essentially, their analysis reveals how multi-layered cultural interaction between a religious minority and its heterodox government can be, illuminating the subtleties and bidirectional dynamic of their symbiosis.