

Article

A 'Lost' Panel and a Missing Link: Angelos Bitzamanos and the Case of the Scottivoli Altarpiece for the Church of San Francesco Delle Scale in Ancona

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Abstract: In his will, dating from 1490, the nobleman Francesco Scottivoli from Ancona ordered his heirs to erect a chapel in his memory at the church of San Francesco delle Scale, and have it adorned with a painted altarpiece, executed in 1508 by a painter of Greek origin residing in Ancona. In the late 18th-century a full-scale renovation of the church resulted to the dissolution of the Scottivoli chapel and the removal of the painted altarpiece, which was subsequently lost and has been considered missing ever since. This article aims to identify the long-missing Scottivoli altarpiece and determine the identity of its creator based on the re-evaluation of previously published sources and the discovery of unpublished archival and visual material. In light of this new information, this study interprets the Scottivoli altarpiece within the context of the intense cross-cultural transfer that took place in the multicultural contact zone of the early modern Eastern Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas.

Keywords: icon painting; Cretan; post-Byzantine; Bitzamanos; altarpiece; Franciscans; Ancona; Marche; Adriatic Sea; Vatican



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1. Introduction

In late 1777, a large-scale renovation project was initiated at the church of San Francesco delle Scale, one of Ancona's principal religious institutions, aiming to the extensive refurbishment of the church interior. In the spirit of renewal, earlier altars and chapels were dismantled and all artworks that were deemed old-fashioned were removed from the church walls and stored in the sacristy (Buglioni 1795; Sparacio 1916; Moretti 1929; Pirani 1998, pp. 57–60). Within the following decades most of these fragmented works eventually disappeared from both the church of San Francesco and Ancona. Subsequently, they were widely dispersed in museums and collections across Italy, Western Europe, and the United States by means of donations, sales and through the systematic spoliations of the Napoleonic period—a fate shared by countless movable works of art from churches, monasteries and private collections of the Marche (Centanni 1950; Corradini 1990; Costanzi 2005, pp. 13–33).

In recent years, considerable research has been conducted in order to identify artworks alienated from the Marche region, map their diaspora and eventually reunite their fragmented pieces. Building on the studies of Federico Zeri, Pietro Zampetti, Luigi Centanni and Sandro Corradini, scholars such as Costanza Costanzi, Marcello Mastrosanti, Andrea de Marchi, and Matteo Mazzalupi have managed to trace and rediscover dispersed artworks from Marchigian churches, including several paintings from the church of San Francesco delle Scale (Zeri 1949; Centanni 1950; Zampetti 1991; Corradini 1990; Costanzi 2005; Mastrosanti 2007; De Marchi et al. 2008). These studies have helped advance our knowledge of San Francesco's pre-renovation state, at the same time allowing us to reconstruct the oeuvre of painters who worked at the church, such as Maestro Antonio da Firenze or his son, Nicola di Maestro Antonio d'Ancona. Yet for all these valuable contributions, numerous works of art from San Francesco and other Anconitan churches still remain missing, unidentified and decontextualized from their original settings.

One of the paintings originally displayed at the church of San Francesco delle Scale that still eludes scholarship, is the altarpiece that once adorned the private chapel of Francesco Scottivoli, a nobleman who died in 1490 and was buried in the convent's grounds. Commissioned in Scottivoli's will, the altarpiece was documented in various archival and historiographical sources up until its removal from the church of San Francesco in the late 18th century. Ever since, the painting has been considered irrevocably lost, as scholars have been unable to identify it or trace its current location ([Costanzi 2005](#), n. 10–11 [entry by Romina Vitali]; [Mazzalupi 2008b](#), pp. 254–55, 263, 274, 278–79, 281, 286–87, 292). With an increasing number of artworks from the church of San Francesco delle Scale being rediscovered in recent years, the loss of the Scottivoli altarpiece, one of the most important commissions for the Franciscan church, leaves a critical void in our understanding of the church's early history as well as art patronage in Ancona during the turn of the 16th century.

Based on the re-evaluation of previously known sources and through their combined examination with new unpublished archival material this article proposes the identification of the 'lost' main panel of the Scottivoli altarpiece with a large icon from the Vatican collections, thus far largely overlooked by scholarship. Furthermore, by bringing to light newly discovered archival evidence, this study proceeds to discuss the hitherto-unknown identity of the painting's creator, who is revealed to be the 16th-century Cretan icon-painter, Angelos Bitzamanos. Painted during Bitzamanos' early, undocumented years, the Scottivoli altarpiece arises as the missing link in the painter's life trajectory, thus allowing us to fill a longstanding gap in our knowledge of his trans-Adriatic endeavors ([Voulgaropoulou 2010a](#); [Voulgaropoulou 2014](#), pp. 86–95). By doing so this case study enhances our insights on "post Byzantine" Cretan art and on the activity of itinerant Greek painters in a region that remains largely an uncharted territory for scholarship, such as the Italian Marche, all while illuminating the vibrant cross-cultural exchanges between artists and patrons of diverse ethno-confessional backgrounds in the early modern Adriatic.

2. Francesco Scottivoli and Patronage at the Church of San Francesco delle Scale

On 10 January 1490, shortly before his death, the nobleman Francesco di Benvenuto Scottivoli from Ancona drew up his last will and testament before the notary Pellegrino Scacchi. Having arranged his affairs and divided his property among his heirs, Francesco turned his thoughts towards his final resting place and posthumous legacy (Appendix A). Following the family tradition, Francesco bequeathed his body to be buried in the church of San Francesco delle Scale in the family tomb that was located at the convent cloister and bore the Scottivoli coats of arms. The tomb must be the one described by Giovanni Pichi Tancredi in the late 17th century as being located "in the second vault, on the left from the entrance to the cloister" ("Nel secondo volto [à mano manca nel entrare del claustro] S. Philippi Benvenuti de Scotivolis") (Pichi Tancredi, fol. 130^v). Filippo di Benvenuto was in all probability one of Francesco's brothers, as we shall see further down. The Scottivoli family tomb is also mentioned in 1765 by Damiano Fillareti and 1782 by Pompeo Compagnoni ("[. . .] dal sepolcro della casa Scotivoli Patrizia Anconitana, esistente nella chiesa di S. Francesco de' Minori Conventuali di Ancona, cioè nelle mura esteriori verso la parte del chiostro" [from the sepulcher of the patrician house of Scottivoli from Ancona, existing in the church of Saint Francis of the Friars Minor Conventual of Ancona, that is, in the external walls towards the side of the cloister]) [Fillareti 1765](#), p. 12; [Compagnoni 1782](#), p. 392).

According to Francesco's will, the friars of San Francesco delle Scale were also to receive a portion of the yearly revenue from his estates, on condition that they should celebrate masses in memory of the testator's soul and the souls of his deceased family members. Last but not least, towards the end of his will Francesco Scottivoli proceeded to further establish his connection to the church and convent, by ordering his heirs and executors to have a chapel erected in his honor across or near his tomb, and have it adorned with a painted altarpiece.

Francesco seems to have had a clear vision of how his desired altarpiece should look. In his will, he left explicit instructions specifying which exact figures would be depicted in the composition, “namely the glorious and always Virgin Mary with her Son in her arms, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Cyriacus, Saint Jerome, and Saint Francis”. The main panel would be accompanied by a scabbello—in all probability a predella—featuring small figures of “the three Magi when they visited our Lord Jesus Christ and his mother the Blessed Virgin”. The task of seeing these works through to completion fell to Francesco’s four nephews, Benvenuto d’Astorgio Scottivoli, the brothers Niccolò and Benvenuto di Filippo Scottivoli, and Bartolino di Ciriaco Naffini. The four were to receive 125 golden ducats with the obligation to have the chapel, altarpiece, and scabbello finished within a year from the testator’s death. Failure to do so would incur a penalty of 25 golden ducats per year, until the works would be finished as specified; any additional money resulting from a possible penalty would be spent to further enhance the ornamentation of the chapel.

Francesco di Benvenuto Scottivoli was a member of one of the most prominent houses of Ancona. The family took pride in hailing from Benvenuto Scottivoli († 1282), a friar of the Observant branch of the Franciscan order, who was canonized as a saint shortly after his death (Saracini 1675, p. 501). Benvenuto Scottivoli served as archdeacon of the church of Saint Cyriacus in Ancona, bishop of Osimo and Governor of the region of the Marche. Francesco’s immediate family also counted several illustrious members. His brother Filippo, father of the aforementioned heirs Niccolò and Benvenuto, had gained renown as engineer at the court of Francesco Sforza in Milan, while his other brother, Astorgio, father of the above-mentioned Benvenuto, was a famous condottiero, also employed at Sforza’s service (Saracini 1675, p. 502; Peruzzi 1835, p. 320; De Bernabei 1870, p. 179). Francesco himself had an important position in the local community of Ancona, holding the office of *regolatore del comune*, in which capacity he supervised the decoration of the ceiling of the Loggia dei Mercanti by the Florentine painter maestro Antonio, together with his father-in-law, Domenico di Lippo (De Bernabei 1870, p. 163; Ravaioli 1982, p. 162; Mariano 2003, p. 116).

By commissioning a funerary monument and chapel at the church of San Francesco delle Scale, Francesco Scottivoli maintained his family’s traditional ties with the order of the Franciscan minors and honored his namesake and titular saint of the church, Francis of Assisi, all while following a patronage tradition that was well-established among the local aristocracy. Much like their counterparts in other Italian cities, Anconitan noblemen had adopted the practice of founding family chapels and altars in the city’s churches as a means of elevating their political and social prestige, as well as obtaining spiritual benefits in the afterlife. Since the Middle Ages the cathedral of Saint Cyriacus and the church of San Francesco ad Alto remained the city’s principal sites of devotion. However, during the 15th century San Francesco delle Scale grew steadily in popularity, enjoying the patronage of the most distinguished Anconitan families and attracting some of the most important art commissions of the time (Pichi Tancredi, fols. 130^v–45^v; Mazzalupi 2008c, p. 351, doc. 344).

In 1469 the nobleman Girolamo d’Antonio Ferretti had a family chapel built at the church, which was decorated in 1472 with an altarpiece by Nicola di Maestro Antonio d’Ancona (Mazzalupi 2008c, p. 352, doc. 352). Around 1481 the same painter was commissioned by another nobleman, Niccolò di Giovanni Petrelli, to paint an altarpiece for his family chapel and then again in 1486 to further decorate it with a lunette (Mazzalupi 2008b, pp. 252–57; 2008c, p. 360, doc. 534; See also BAV, Vat. Lat. 13387, fol. 19^v). A few years later, in 1498, Giovanna, widow of Angelo Montifieri, had a chapel built in the same church, adorned with sculpted figures and scenes by the stonemasons Pietro di Stefano from Venice and Pasqualino di Giovanni from Trogir (Traù) (Mazzalupi 2008c, p. 367, doc. 655). Pietro di Stefano would return to the church of San Francesco two years later, this time to construct the funerary monument of nobleman Leonardo Trionfi (Mazzalupi 2008c, p. 369, doc. 679). Reaching its peak in the last quarter of the 15th century, this tradition of family and funerary patronage survived well into the 16th century. In 1550, for instance, the heirs of Lorenzo Todini commissioned the Venetian painter Lorenzo Lotto to create an

altarpiece with the Assumption of the Virgin for the former's funerary chapel at the church of San Francesco; the main altar of the church was also erected by the Todini family (Pichi Tancredi, fols. 134^v, 136^r; BAV, Vat. Lat. 13387, fols. 19^r, 21^r).

3. The Construction of the Scottivoli Chapel

It appears that some early discussions regarding the construction of Francesco Scottivoli's chapel had already taken place immediately after his death, which occurred sometime between 10 and 20 January 1490, on which date his wife, Simona di Domenico di Lippo is referred to as "relicta", i.e., a widow (ANA, vol. 122, notary Pellegrino Scacchi, 1490–95, fols. 5^v–6^r). This was likely due to the harsh penalty stipulated in Francesco's will, which was intended to highlight the importance of the task for the testator and ensure its swift completion. According to a document dated only a month after the execution of Scottivoli's will, on 15 February 1490, the stonemason Matteo from Ancona ("Magister Macteus lapicida") promised to pay off a debt of 81 ducats and thirty-four bolognini that he owed the heirs of Francesco Scottivoli ("heredes quondam Francisci de Scottigolis"). However, should the said heirs decide to entrust Matteo with the construction of "a chapel at the church of San Francesco alle Scale in Ancona, according to the will of the late Francesco Scottivoli", the amount of 50 ducats would be subtracted from his debt ("unam cappellam in ecclesia Sancti Francisci a Scalas de Ancona iuxta voluntatem condam Francisci de Scottigolis in testamento suo declaratam", ANA, 71, notary Melchiorre Bernabei, 1490–92, fol. 46^r; Mazzalupi 2008c, p. 362, doc. 576). "Magister Macteus lapicida", a name frequently recorded in the sources, can be identified with the sculptor Matteo d'Antongiacomo (or simply Matteo d'Antonio), who was active in Ancona from roughly 1468 until the end of the 15th century (Mazzalupi 2008a, pp. 228–29; 2008c, pp. 352–57, 362, docs. 352, 361, 362, 379, 380, 384, 393, 404, 436, 448, 467, 473, 568, 570, 576, 578). A prolific craftsman, Matteo had gained considerable renown in Ancona for having undertaken a series of notable commissions, such as the construction of a chapel for Girolamo d'Antonio Ferretti at the church of San Francesco delle Scale in 1469.

The above findings urge the question whether master Matteo ended up constructing the Scottivoli chapel after all. A note in the margin of the same document informs us that Matteo's debt was cleared on 21 November 1490, without determining, however, whether he was eventually assigned the construction of the chapel by his creditors (ANA, 71, notary Melchiorre Bernabei, 1490–92, fol. 46^r; Mazzalupi 2008c, p. 362, doc. 576). Given the artist's popularity and productivity the possibility seems highly likely. Nevertheless, later sources put this hypothesis to doubt. In particular, a late 18th-century chronicle that was composed sometime after the renovation of the church in 1777 records that the Scottivoli altar, made of Istrian stone from Brijuni (Brioni), was sculpted in the year 1500 (BAV, Vat. Lat. 13387, fol. 21^r). The same information was repeated by Michele Buglioni in 1795 (Buglioni 1795, p. 47; See also Mazzalupi 2008b, p. 261n156). Although it is not possible to confirm the accuracy of these reports, in the case that the recorded date is correct, we may assume that the heirs of Francesco Scottivoli either did not take up master Matteo's offer, or if they did, that the construction was completed with a considerable delay. It should also be noted that, according to Cvito Fisković, the altar was made by the hand of Ivan Duknović (Giovanni Dalmata), a hypothesis that has been contested by more recent scholarship (Fisković 1975–76, , pp. 27–30; Röhl 1994, p. 163).

4. The Commission for the Scottivoli Altarpiece

While the Scottivoli chapel was probably constructed sometime between 1490 and 1500, the accompanying painted altarpiece would not be commissioned until almost two decades after Francesco's death. Valuable evidence documenting the commission of the painting is provided in a series of contracts dating from 1507 and 1508, preserved in the State Archives of Ancona. The first document dates from 10 November 1507, on which day the heirs of Francesco Scottivoli appeared before the notary Calisto Trionfi at the palazzo degli Anziani in Ancona, promising to pay 80 golden Venetian ducats to a certain master

Angelos (“Magister Angelus Nicolai greci pictor”), painter of Greek origin, at the time residing in Ancona (Appendix B, Figure 1). The payment concerned a panel (“unam conam seu tabbulam”) that the Greek master had agreed to paint for the altar of the Archangel (“in altare Sancti Angeli”) at the church of San Francesco delle Scale. The heirs who signed the contract were Niccolò, Benvenuto di Filippo and Benvenuto d’Astorgio Scottivoli, also acting in name of lady Antonia, widow of the fourth trustee, Bartolino Naffini, who had died in the meantime.

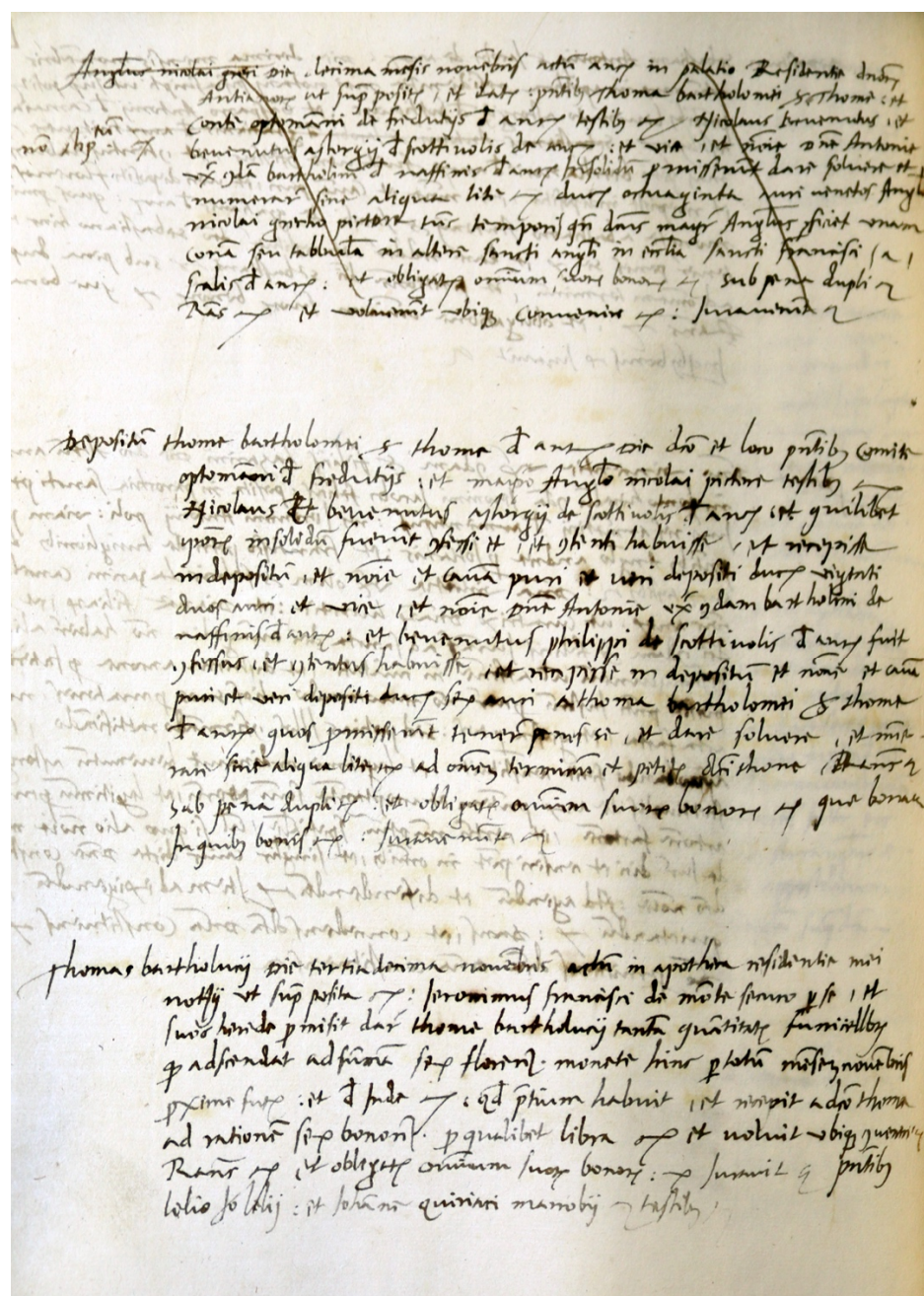


Figure 1. Acts documenting the commission of the Scottivoli altarpiece (ASA, ANA, vol. 182, notary Calisto Trionfi, 1504–8, fol. 404^v). Author’s photo; Reproduced with permission.

On the same day, Scottivoli’s heirs received a deposit of 22 ducats from one of the witnesses of the previous act, Tommaso di Bartolomeo di Ser Tommaso, in all probability used to pay master Angelos, who was now signing as a witness (Appendix B). The second witness, Conte Ottomano Freducci, who was also present in the rest of the contracts, was

the famous cartographer, active in Ancona between 1497 and 1539. Lorenzo Todini, also a witness, can possibly be identified with the aforementioned nobleman whose chapel at the church of San Francesco delle Scale was decorated with Lorenzo Lotto's Assumption of the Virgin.

Three days after the stipulation of these two contracts, on 13 November 1507, the said master Angelos acknowledged having received the promised 80 ducats from the heirs of Francesco Scottivoli and renewed his commitment to paint a "cona" or "tabula" for the church of San Francesco delle Scale (Appendix B). Finally, six months later, on 29 April 1508 Niccolò, Benvenuto di Filippo and Benvenuto d'Astorgio Scottivoli declared that they had received the commissioned altarpiece and released master Angelos of any obligations (Appendix B).

At the time of the completion of the altarpiece, 18 years had passed since Francesco Scottivoli's death. This was a substantial delay, especially considering the strict penalty of 25 ducats per year of postponement that was stipulated in the testator's will. The reasons for this delay remain unclear, however, the price of 80 golden ducats that was set for the altarpiece suggests that the penalty was never fully imposed. In fact, if we assume that the construction of the chapel cost around 50 ducats—the standard average price for a similar work and the amount that master Matteo demanded from Francesco's heirs (Mazzalupi 2008c, pp. 352–53, 363, docs. 352, 360, 380, 579)—that would leave 75 ducats for the manufacture of the altarpiece, a sum which would have risen substantially in the years elapsed until its completion. One possible explanation would be that the penalty was lifted or not fully imposed in the event of the timely completion of the architectural and sculptural works.

To put the remuneration into perspective, the price of 80 ducats that the altarpiece cost was still on the high end compared to similar commissions from the same period, amounting to the cost of an average house in Ancona (Mazzalupi 2008c, pp. 342, 344, docs. 138, 140, 179). For the sake of comparison, in 1441 Giovanni Antonio di Maestro Gigliolo da Parma was paid 100 ducats to paint an altarpiece and possibly the walls of a chapel in the church of San Francesco delle Scale (Mazzalupi 2008c, p. 343, doc. 168). Furthermore, in 1462, the Florentine maestro Antonio received 65 ducats for a painting with a predella for his patron Pietro di Dionisio (Mazzalupi 2008c, p. 349, doc. 325). In 1477 the same maestro Antonio and his son Nicola promised to paint an altarpiece for the church of San Francesco dell'Osservanza for 20 ducats (Mazzalupi 2008c, p. 356, doc. 437). Later, in 1486 the abovementioned Nicola di Maestro Antonio agreed to paint a lunette for the chapel of Niccolò Petrelli for 15 ducats, whereas in around 1496 he received 30 ducats for a painting commissioned by Angelo di Simone (Mazzalupi 2008c, pp. 360, 366, docs. 534, 635). Additionally, in 1494, another painter, named "magister Iacobus Iohannis Lucidus" received 35 ducats for the construction of an altarpiece (Mazzalupi 2008c, p. 365, doc. 615). Few commissions resulted more expensive than the Scottivoli altarpiece, such as the one painted for Niccolò Petrelli's family chapel at the church of San Domenico, which according to the patron's will, cost 150 ducats (Mazzalupi 2008b, p. 256n98). Similar or somewhat higher prices were set in Venice and other Italian centers, where renowned masters were charging from 60–100 ducats for an altarpiece, depending on size, with less popular painters demanding much lower wages (O'Malley 2005, pp. 131–60; Ćapeta Rakić 2019, p. 213n1).

5. Magister Angelus Nicolai Greci Pictor

Now that the legal documentation that has been discussed above has pointed out that "Magister Angelus" was commissioned to execute the Scottivoli altarpiece, the question becomes who this painter was and where his roots originated. In the earlier discussed contracts, the painter is recorded as "magister Angelus Nicolai greci", that is, master Angelos, son of the Greek Nikolaos. The artist's family name is not disclosed in any of these acts, nor is his place of origin, leaving only room for speculation regarding his identity. Among the Greek artists documented in the surviving sources, there is only one

painter by the name of Angelos, who had a father called Nikolaos and could have been active in 1507 (Cattapan 1968, pp. 29–46; Cattapan 1972, pp. 202–35; Constantoudaki 1973, pp. 291–380): Angelos Bitzamanos from Candia. Angelos Bitzamanos was first documented in 1482, when his father, Nikolaos Vitzimanos (Viçimano), a resident of Candia, signed a contract, placing young “Angelino” (“Angelinum filium meum”) into apprenticeship with the renowned Cretan master Andreas Pavius to be taught the art of painting (Cattapan 1972, pp. 221, 224–25). The next documented record of Angelos dates from as late as 1518, when the painter was commissioned to paint a large altarpiece for the parish church of the Holy Spirit (crkva Svetog Duha) in the village of Komolac, in the outskirts of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) (DAD, *Diversa cancellariae*, vol. 108 (1518–19), fol. 109^v). As a result, the 36-year period between the painter’s apprenticeship in Crete and his first known commission in Ragusa remains entirely undocumented, leaving the possibility of a potential sojourn in Ancona open and making Bitzamanos a likely candidate for creator of the Scottivoli altarpiece.

Speculations aside, the key to safely revealing the painter’s identity can be traced once again in the archival sources. More specifically, in the records of another Anconitan notary, Troilo Leoni, the name of Angelos Bitzamanos (“Angelus Bizamanus”) appears on three different acts, all stipulated in Ancona during the year 1508 (ASA, vol. 165, notary Troilo Leoni, 1508). The first document dates from 10 January 1508, when “Magister Angelus Bizamanus de Creta” gave a loan of 52 carlini to the painter Johannes Boschetus from Zadar and the carpenter Andrea di Giorgio (Appendix C, Figure 2). This document was briefly mentioned by Marcello Mastrosanti, who read the painter’s name erroneously as “Angelo Bizantino” (Mastrosanti 2011, p. 285). The second act was signed on just the following day, 11 January 1508, when Angelos Bitzamanos together with the aforementioned Johannes Boschetus—this time named as his associate (“socio”)—promised to execute certain unspecified painting works for three different patrons, one of whom was Niccolò Scottivoli (Appendix D). The last series of documents dates from 9 May 1508. On that day, both of the previous contracts were cleared, and in addition, Angelos Bitzamanos appointed painter Johannes Boschetus as his procuratore, authorizing him to represent him and demand the payment of a debt owed by Benvenuto Scottivoli and Antonia, widow of Bartolino Naffini (Appendix E). The name of Angelos Bitzamanos is also listed on the volume’s index: “Angelus Bizamanus cum Magistro Johanne pictore et socio”, “Angelus predictus cum dicto Magistro Johanne”, and “Angelus Bizamanus procuratorem in Magistrum Johannem pictorem” (ASA, vol. 165, notary Troilo Leoni, 1508).

The mention of Angelos Bitzamanos in the aforesaid 1508 documents in relation to several of Francesco Scottivoli’s heirs make it possible to safely identify the Cretan painter with “Magister Angelus Nicolai greci”, creator of the altarpiece of San Francesco delle Scale. These new sources further associate the Greek painter with the patronage of the Scottivoli family and are possibly also related to the commission for the altarpiece of San Francesco delle Scale. More specifically, two of the acts drawn up by Troilo Leoni were signed by members of the Scottivoli family: Niccolò Scottivoli in one case, and Benvenuto Scottivoli and Antonia Naffini in the other case. Since Angelos had acknowledged receiving his payment for the Scottivoli altarpiece already in November 1507, it seems unlikely that the debt owed by Benvenuto and Antonia on the 9 May 1508 would refer to the same work, which was after all delivered some ten days earlier, unless the painter demanded additional payment or in case extra works were required for the completion of the altarpiece. It is equally unclear whether the works ordered by Niccolò Scottivoli on 11 January 1508 were also related to Francesco’s altarpiece or if the possibility of an additional workload led the Greek painter to seek the assistance of his colleague, Johannes Boschetus. In any case, it is clear that the recurring involvement of Angelos Bitzamanos with several of his original commissioners indicates that the painter maintained a consistent association with the Scottivoli family, not only in relation to the altarpiece of San Francesco delle Scale, but possibly also for other individual commissions.

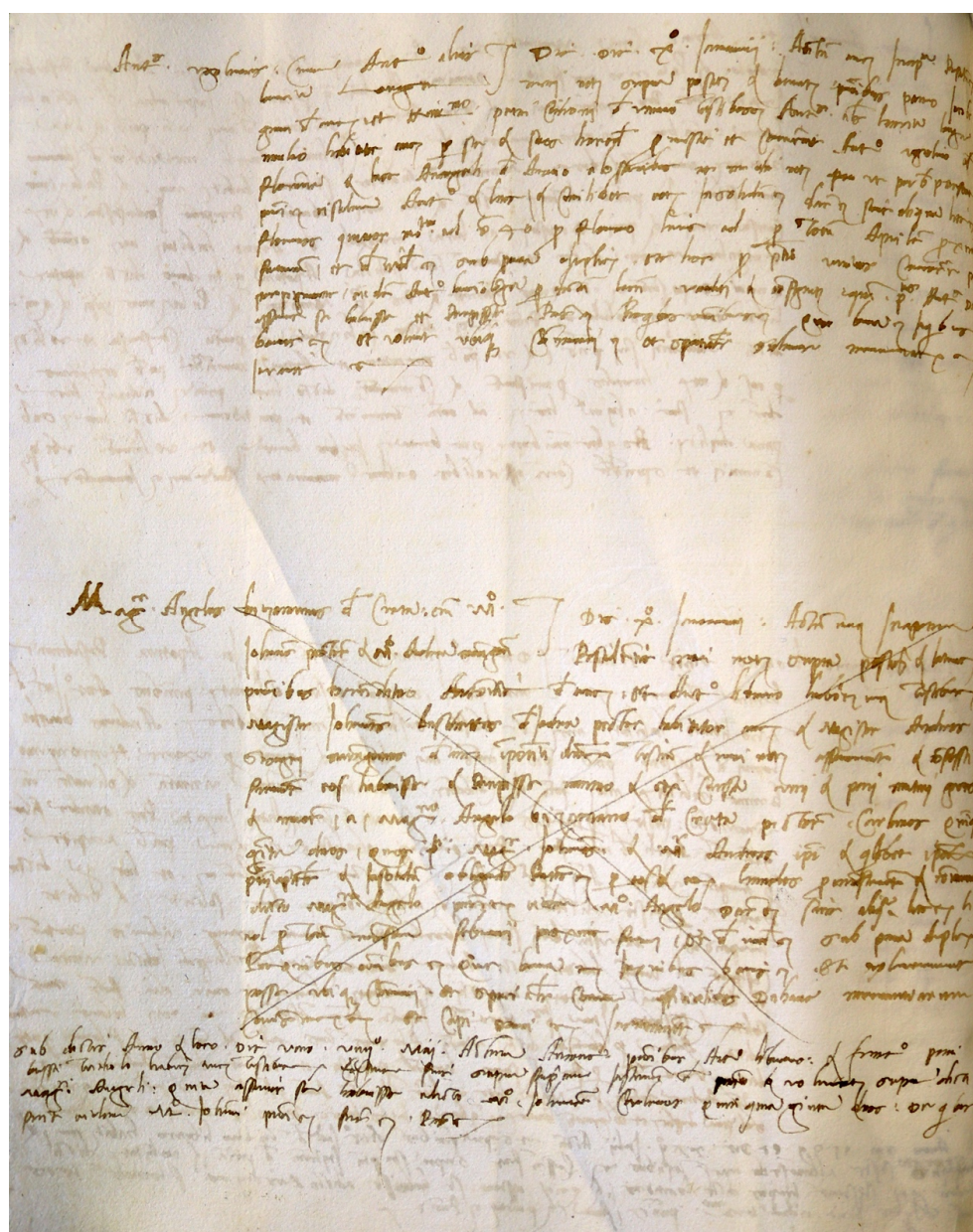


Figure 2. Acts documenting loan agreements between Angelos Bitzamanos, Johannes Boschetus, and Andrea di Giorgio (ASA, ANA, vol. 165, notary Troilo Leoni, 1508, fol. 55^v). Author's photo; Reproduced with permission.

6. In Search of a Lost Masterpiece

As mentioned in the beginning of this article, in the late 18th century the church of San Francesco delle Scale underwent an extensive renovation, followed by the dissolution of its chapels and the dispersal of its earlier works of art, which at that time seemed outdated and unfashionable. The renovation was carried out at the plans of Francesco Maria Ciaraffoni, an architect residing in Ancona. The demolition of the altars started sometime in late 1777, to give way to Ciaraffoni's expansion ("Nel fine dell'anno 1777 fu dato principio alla demolizione degli altari, ed altro per dar poi principio ad una nuova ristaurazione nell'anno seguente secondo il disegno del Signore Ciaraffoni Architetto dimorante in Ancona", BAV, Vat. Lat. 13387, fol. 19^r). The older paintings were first moved to the sacristy of the church or were returned to the families to which they belonged. Only five paintings remained from the original ones, none of them dating before the 16th century (Buglioni 1795, pp. 61–63; Albertini, 200r; Mazzalupi 2008b, p. 261).

A casualty of this purge, the altarpiece that adorned Francesco Scottivoli's chapel was removed from the church and has been considered missing ever since. At the church remained only the stone frame of the altar, which was detached and reused after 1777 to decorate the entrance to the adjacent ex-convent, now also destroyed (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Stone frame of the Scottivoli altar. Ancona, San Francesco delle Scale. Author's photo.

During the church renovation the coats of arms of the Scottivoli family, which were inscribed on the altar frame, were removed and replaced with those of the Franciscan order:

"La porta del convento era un altare di casa Scotivoli nella chiesa vecchia, e vi era nelle due piccole arme una torre, che poi fu convertita nell'arme di S. Francesco. La pietra si chiama de' Brioni, ed è stata scolpita nel 1500" [The door of the convent was an altar of the Scottivoli house in the old church, and it had a tower in the two small coats of arms, which was later converted into the coat of arms of Saint Francis. The stone is called of Brioni and was carved in the 1500s] (BAV, Vat. Lat. 13387, fol. 21^r).

"Due piccioli altari di pietra, ed un deposito a basso rilievo scolpiti sino dall'anno 1500 [...] furono in quella circostanza conservati per farne altro uso. [...] il migliore altare co' pilastri a fiori e fogliami e contropilastro sostenente l'arco con gruppi di frutti egregiamente incisi da saggio seultore in quella stessa pietra di Brioni, ehe pochi anni prima avanzò, allorché si ornò la facciata e la porta maggiore, servì per porta principale del Convento". [Two small stone altars, and a low relief deposit carved since the year 1500 [...] were preserved in that circumstance for a different use. The best altar with the pillars with flowers and foliage and the counter-pillar supporting the arch with groups of fruits excellently engraved by a talented sculptor in that same stone of Brioni, which a few years

earlier adorned the facade and main portal serving as the main entrance to the Convent] (Buglioni 1795, p. 47; Moretti 1929, p. 75).

“Non fu sempre una porta, fu già ornamento in un altare dell’antica chiesa di S. Maria Maggiore, da cui l’anno 1777 si trasportò nell’ingresso dell’edificio, che era convento de’ frati minori ed ora è spedale degli infermi e de’ pazzi”. [It was not always a door, it used to adorn an altar of the ancient church of Santa Maria Maggiore, from which it was transported in the year 1777 to the entrance of the building, which was the convent of the Friars Minor and is now a hospital for the sick and mentally ill] (Politi et al. 1834, tav. X; See also Fillareti 1765, p. 12; Compagnoni 1782, p. 392; Mazzalupi 2008b, p. 271n156).

In the early 20th century, the convent housed the city museum of Ancona, and the frame of the Scottivoli altar was used as entrance to the museum library (Moretti 1929, p. 75). No mention whatsoever of the painted altarpiece was made in any of these sources. But did these developments mean that the painting got irreparably lost or is there a possibility that it had survived in anonymity all along?

The answer may yet again be sought in the surviving archival and historiographical evidence. The contracts signed between the painter Angelos Bitzamanos and Francesco Scottivoli’s heirs do not specify the subject of the commissioned altarpiece, except that it would feature “certain figures”, painted according to what had been previously agreed upon between both parties (“cum certis figuris pictam iuxta conventiones inter ipsos initas”). It is reasonable to assume that Francesco’s heirs would have requested that the painter follow the instructions left in their uncle’s will, namely, to portray the Madonna and Child with saints Jerome, Francis, John the Baptist and Cyriacus, possibly together with a scabello depicting the Adoration of the Magi. As will be discussed next, the surviving sources confirm that this is indeed the case.

One of the first to record the presence of the Scottivoli tomb and altar in the church of San Francesco delle Scale was Giovanni Pichi Tancredi, writing sometime in the late 17th century. According to Pichi Tancredi, the Scottivoli altar was near the tombs of the Pici family, and in close proximity to the one of Ciriaco Massioli, as was in fact requested by Francesco himself in his will (“La sepoltura sotto l’altare à questo contiguo é de Scotivoli che dice cosi nell’Altare: Pium hoc opus cura et impensa Heredum Francisci Scotivoli absolutum est”, Pichi Tancredi, fol. 143^v.) However, apart from describing the altar’s location, Tancredi’s report does not make any particular reference to the painting, save for a dedicatory inscription commemorating that the work was “accomplished through the care and expenses Francesco Scottivoli’s heirs”. The same inscription was recorded in an 18th-century manuscript mentioned earlier in this article, as being “below the so-called panel of Saint Bonaventure at the altar of the house of Scottivoli” (“Sotto il quadro detto di S. Bonaventura nell’altare di casa Scottivoli si legge: Pium hoc opus cura et impensa Heredum Francisci Scotivoli absolutum est”, BAV, Vat. Lat. 13387, fol. 20v). Given that Saint Bonaventure was not mentioned in Francesco’s will among the figures to be depicted in the altarpiece, the reference of the painting in relation to this particular saint seems rather unexpected.

More illuminating is the information provided by Marcello Oretti, who visited Ancona and the church of San Francesco delle Scale in 1777, shortly before the renovation works were initiated. According to Oretti’s account “the first painting on the right” bore Greek inscriptions and featured the Virgin with the Child, together with saints Bonaventure, Jerome, Francis, and John the Baptist (“San Francesco delle Scale [. . .] Prima tavola a destra é greca con caratteri greci [. . .] la tavola à destra con carateri Greci sopra B[eata] V[ergine] B[ambino] S. Bonaventura S. Girol[amo], S. Francesco, S. Gio[vanni] B[attista] S[an]to Vescovo con la croce sopra in lunet[t]e la[. . .] morto de[l] S[igno]re”, Oretti, fols. 340^v–41^r; See also Mazzalupi 2008b, p. 261n155). Surprisingly, Saint Bonaventure is mentioned once again, although this time, all of the other figures described in the painting exactly match the ones that Francesco Scottivoli had requested in his will. In addition, Oretti’s remark about the presence of Greek inscriptions above the figures further indicates that the painting he saw was indeed the one executed by the Greek Angelos Bitzamanos

at the commission of Scottivoli's heirs. The inclusion of Saint Bonaventure was in all likelihood a later decision, either made by Francesco's heirs or promoted by the friars of San Francesco delle Scale. According to Oretti's description, the painting was accompanied by a lunette, which can also be deduced from the shape of the surviving frame. While Oretti's notes referring to the lunette were written in haste and are largely illegible, it is likely that the subject depicted was that of the Deposition of Christ, the Pietà or the Man of Sorrows, topics frequently encountered in 15th- and 16th-century altarpiece lunettes.

The different accounts of the Scottivoli altarpiece in the archival and historiographical sources, together with the fact that the work was executed by a Greek icon painter, allow us to piece together a rather specific picture of Angelos' composition. Even more remarkably, these sources point at a particular artwork, thus far largely elusive to scholarship, which perfectly matches the description of the "lost" painting. The artwork in question is a large "Byzantinizing" icon located at the Apostolic Palace in Vatican City, depicting the Madonna and Child with saints Cyriacus, John the Baptist, Jerome, Francis of Assisi, and Bonaventure (inv. n. 40522, Figures 4 and 5).



Figure 4. Madonna and Child with saints Cyriacus, John the Baptist, Jerome, Francis of Assisi, and Bonaventure, 1508. Vatican City, Apostolic Palace. © Musei Vaticani. Reproduced with permission.

Although the icon's provenance is not documented, in all probability it became part of the Vatican collections during the papacy of Gregory XVI (1831–46), whose cultural policy promoted the acquisition of works of Byzantine and Early Renaissance art with the intent to enrich the pontifical collections (De Rossi 1876, p. 140; D'Achiardi 1929; Costanzi 2005, p. 26). With the assistance of monsignor Gabriele Laureani, prefect of the Apostolic Library, pope Gregory addressed an encyclical letter to various religious

orders throughout the papal states, calling them to give away works of the so-called “primitives” in their possession that were not in use and stored in their deposits. The paintings collected at Laureani’s initiative eventually formed the nucleus of the Museo Cristiano at the Vatican Library, where the panel in question was first displayed. Indeed, the icon was first mentioned in 1867 by Xavier Barbier de Montault, who saw it at the bookbinding atelier (“atelier de reliure”) of the Vatican Library (“La Vierge et l’Enfant Jésus: à la droite du trône, S. Jean-Baptiste et S. Macaire, évêque de Jérusalem; à gauche, S. Jérôme et S. François d’Assise; au pied, S. Bonaventure, dont le nom est écrit en latin, tous les autres étant en grec. Tableau byzantin du XVe siècle”, [Barbier de Montault 1867](#), p. 8). De Montault identified all figures depicted on the icon save for Saint Cyriacus, whose name he misread as Macarius. During the early 20th century, the icon was kept at the deposits of the Pinacoteca Vaticana, from where it was temporarily moved to the papal private chapel in February 1923, only to be returned to the deposits later in August ([Bezzini 2010](#), pp. 281, 289). Subsequently, in 1991 the icon briefly appeared in an article by Marisa Bianco Fiorin, who reported seeing it at the Palazzo del Governatorato and attributed it to a Greek painter of the late 16th century ([Bianco Fiorin 1991](#), p. 212n14, fig. 3). The icon was later moved to the first loggia of the Apostolic Palace in 2003, after several relocations. The painting was last discussed by the author in 2007, when it was first associated with the cultural milieu of Ancona ([Voulgaropoulou 2007](#), pp. 174–76, n. 68, fig. 122–23).



Figure 5. The Altarpiece of Francesco Scottivoli (virtual reconstruction by the author).

The icon measures 178 × 160 cm and consists of three pieces of wood attached together. According to the museum’s inventory card the work was painted in a mixed technique with oil on canvas and not in egg tempera, which was the traditional medium of Byzantine and Cretan icon painting. In all likelihood, the painter became familiar with the new technique after his arrival in Italy, where oil painting was introduced during the course of the 15th century. Nevertheless, until a technical examination of the painting has been performed, it is impossible to carefully assess the artist’s use of materials and techniques,

especially since the icon bears visible traces of overpainting. This is particularly evident in the background and the inscriptions, now almost illegible, as the restorer was obviously unable to understand the Greek text he was copying, therefore committing extensive spelling errors.

The composition follows the iconographic conventions of the *Sacra Conversazione*, a pictorial device that had grown immensely popular in 15th- and 16th-century Italy. In the center sits the Virgin enthroned with the Infant Jesus on her lap, surrounded by five male saints. Saint John the Baptist is placed in his usual prominent position on the Virgin's right side, with Saint Cyriacus, the patron saint of Ancona standing next to him, depicted first from the left. Saints Jerome and Francis of Assisi stand on the Virgin's left, while another Franciscan saint, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, is depicted kneeling in prayer at her feet. All figures are identified by Greek inscriptions—albeit extensively overpainted—except Saint Bonaventure, who is inscribed in Latin. Greek is also the inscription of the Child's scroll, which reads “ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου”, meaning “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12), a text commonly featured in Greek icons. The painting's subject matter, including the figures requested by Francesco Scottivoli and Saint Bonaventure, whose presence is recorded in the historiographical sources, together with the use of Greek inscriptions, leave no room for doubt that this is indeed the altarpiece that once adorned the chapel of Francesco Scottivoli and was painted by the Greek artist “Angelus Nicolai”.

Although the painting bears no signature, its attribution to Angelos Bitzamanos and thus his identification with the painter of the Scottivoli altarpiece are further supported on the basis of stylistic and iconographic similarities with the artist's other known and signed works. In particular, the figure of the Virgin shares a strong likeness with Bitzamanos' icons from Split, Bari, and Saint Petersburg, although the latter ones were executed some 25 years later and in a much smaller, almost miniature scale (Figure 6).¹

Likewise, Saint John's facial features and slim ascetic body have been rendered in a similar manner to that of the male figures in Bitzamanos' triptych from Walters Art Gallery, as well as to several figures from the predella of Komolac, namely saints John, and Jerome and the beggar from the panel of Saint Martin (Figure 7).

Saint Cyriacus, on the other hand, is portrayed as a bishop, resembling the figure of Saint Blaise from the said predella, although in a much more elaborate and detailed manner, which is easily explained by the larger scale of the composition (Figure 8).

The floral arabesques and other decorative motifs of the saints' robes are also typical of the Bitzamanos' workshop, particularly the star motif depicted on the Virgin's robes, distinctively rendered as a square inside a square (Figure 9). The inscriptions, even though overpainted, have been copied after the original ones and display some of the painter's common misspellings, such as the name of Saint Jerome which is spelled “YEONIMOC”, in exactly the same way as in the predella of Komolac.

The Scottivoli altarpiece is Angelos Bitzamanos' only surviving monumental work and by far his most elaborate one, created at the peak of his artistic maturity. The only other large-scale work known to have been designed by the painter, the altarpiece of the Holy Spirit in Komolac has survived only in fragments, whereas the vast majority of the icons signed by or attributed to the Bitzamanos' workshop are mainly small-scale devotional images of industrial production, dating from his later Otranto period. Furthermore, the Scottivoli altarpiece stands as one of the few and earliest surviving examples of monumental-sized paintings created by Greek artists for Catholic patrons and displayed in Catholic religious settings. Among the few surviving examples are the early 15th-century polyptych from the church of Santo Stefano in Monopoli, now at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston; the *Sacra Conversazione* of Ioannes Permeniates for the Scuola dei Bottai in Venice, dating from around 1520, now at the Museo Correr; the altarpiece of the Madonna di Costantinopoli made by Donatos Bitzamanos in 1539 for the parish church of Noicàtaro, now at the Pinacoteca Provinciale di Bari; the altarpiece of Our Lady of the Rosary at the church of San Benedetto in Conversano, painted in 1572–82 by Michael Damaskenos; and lastly, the altarpiece of Our Lady of the Carmelites from Trogir, signed by Konstantinos

Tzanes in 1658 (Voulgaropoulou 2014, pp. 576–77, 590, 803, 920, with previous literature). The above works display different levels of integration of Western influences, including the use of Latin inscriptions, the adoption of Western formats, compositional devices, and painting techniques, the eclectic use of late gothic and renaissance stylistic elements, as well as the replication of Italian and Western-European iconographic models. One of the earliest cases on this list, Angelos' altarpiece offers a rare example of the creative fusion of Western and Byzantine iconographic and stylistic traditions that would become typical of Cretan artistic production.



Figure 6. Angelos Bitzamanos. Madonna and Child (detail). Saint Petersburg, Hermitage Museum (top left) © Musei Vaticani. Reproduced with permission; Angelos Bitzamanos. The Scottivoli altarpiece (detail), 1508. Vatican City, Apostolic Palace (top right); Angelos Bitzamanos. Madonna and Child (detail). Split, Arheološki Muzej (bottom left); Angelos Bitzamanos. Madonna and Child (detail). Bari, Pinacoteca Provinciale (bottom right). Author's photos; Figure created by author.

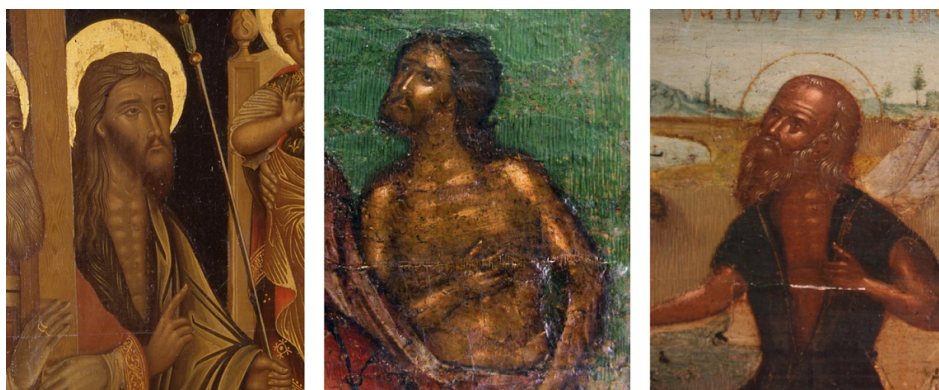


Figure 7. Angelos Bitzamanos. The Scottivoli altarpiece (detail), 1508. Vatican City, Apostolic Palace (left) © Musei Vaticani. Reproduced with permission; Angelos Bitzamanos, Saint Martin and Saint Jerome (details from the altarpiece of Komolac), 1518. Dubrovnik, Franjevački Samostan (middle and right). Author's photos; Figure created by author.



Figure 8. Angelos Bitzamanos. Saint Cyriacus (detail from the Scottivoli altarpiece), 1508. Vatican City, Apostolic Palace (**left**) © Musei Vaticani. Reproduced with permission; Angelos Bitzamanos, Saint Blaise (detail from the altarpiece of Komolac), 1518. Dubrovnik, Franjevački Samostan (**right**). Author's photos; Figure created by author.



Figure 9. Angelos Bitzamanos. The Scottivoli altarpiece (detail), 1508. Vatican City, Apostolic Palace (**left**) © Musei Vaticani. Reproduced with permission; Angelos Bitzamanos (attr.). Madonna and Child (detail). Barletta, San Sepolcro; Angelos Bitzamanos (attr.). Madonna and Child (detail). Lecce, Museo Provinciale; Seroux d'Agincourt after Donatos Bitzamanos. Noli me tangere; Donatos Bitzamanos. Madonna and Child with Saints (detail), 1539. Bari, Pinacoteca Provinciale; Angelos Bitzamanos. Madonna and Child (details). Split, Arheološki Muzej; Angelos Bitzamanos. Saint Blaise (detail), 1518. Dubrovnik, Franjevački Samostan (from **top left** to **bottom right**). Author's photos; Figure created by author.

7. The Scottivoli Altarpiece between East and West

The Scottivoli altarpiece is a highly idiosyncratic work, ostensibly influenced by Italian art in terms of layout and iconography, while retaining the conventions of Cretan icon painting. Staging his composition as a *Sacra Conversazione*, Angelos departs from the austere frontal representation of Medieval and Byzantine formulas and even attempts to geometrically structure his pictorial space with the use of perspective, imitating his contemporary Italian masters. Although his application of the rules of perspective remains fundamentally flawed, Angelos manages to create the illusion of space and depth through his positioning of the holy figures, which even extend beyond the painted frame of the composition, as well as through the foreshortening of objects, such as the Virgin's throne, Saint Jerome's church model, and the three crosses held by saints Cyriacus, John, and Francis.

Faced with the challenging task of depicting saints of the Catholic Church, Angelos drew his iconographic models predominantly from the repertoire of the Western pictorial tradition and resorted to creative solutions with which he had become familiar in the artistically bilingual workshops of his homeland. For example, he portrayed the Virgin as Madre della Consolazione (Virgin of Consolation), an iconographic type developed by late-15th-century Cretan painters that sought to adapt their artistic production to the tastes of the local Venetian and pro-Latin audiences. By combining the morphological conventions of Byzantine icon painting with the humanized religiosity of Gothic and Renaissance models, icons of the Madre della Consolazione had become widely popular in the West and were massively exported to the Adriatic markets. A significant number of those icons made their way as far as Ancona and the Marche, where they are preserved until today in churches and private collections. Records of “madonne dorate alla Grecesca” are still encountered casually in local household inventories, accounting for the favorable reception of Greek icons in the region (ANA, vol. 9, notary Andrea Pilestri, 1535, fol. 193^r. For icons preserved in churches and collections of the Marche, see [Voulgaropoulou 2014](#), pp. 484–87, 611–30.).

In addition to the Virgin, the male figures of the composition have been also depicted in a hybrid style, imitating Italian models of the trecento and quattrocento that were frequently adopted by Greek artists in Venetian-ruled territories. Compare, for instance, the figure of Saint Jerome with an icon from the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge featuring the same saint (inv. n. 1594), or the figure of Saint Francis with depictions of the saint in a triptych from the Pushkin Museum in Moscow (inv. n. Ж-266), a triptych from the Vatican Museums (inv. no. 40548), and an icon from the Museo Sartorio in Trieste (inv. no. 14682).

While in terms of style the Scottivoli altarpiece lies closer to Cretan art, in terms of iconography Angelos’ work reveals the influence of local painting workshops, such as the ones of Nicola di Maestro Antonio and Carlo Crivelli, who were active in Ancona and the Marche at about the same time. For instance, the figure of Saint Francis from the Scottivoli altarpiece bears a marked resemblance to the same saint from Nicola di Maestro Antonio’s 1487-polyptych of Jesi, now at the Musée du Petit Palais in Avignon (inv. Calvet 22872–22873) and especially to Saint Francis from Nicola’s altarpiece at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, dating from 1472, a painting which was originally on display at the Ferretti chapel, at the church of San Francesco delle Scale in Ancona (Figure 10) (For the painter see [Mazzalupi 2008b](#), p. 274).

Furthermore, the depiction of Saint Cyriacus bearing the True Cross evokes the figure of Saint Andrew from Nicola’s altarpiece for Casteldemilio (Agugliano), now at the Pinacoteca Vaticana, a work contemporary to Angelos’ altarpiece as it was painted in 1504–08 ([Mazzalupi 2008b](#), p. 295), as well as models employed by the Crivelli workshop, as for example the figures of Saint Andrew from Carlo Crivelli’s polyptychs of San Francesco a Montefiore dell’Aso, San Domenico, and Camerino. The visual dialogue between Cyriacus’ massive, realistically rendered cross and the slender staff-cross of Saint John, is yet another element frequently encountered in Italian Renaissance works, such as Carlo Crivelli’s polyptych of San Domenico in Ascoli. Saints John and Jerome were also possibly inspired by Crivelli’s works, such as the altarpiece from the Cathedral of Camerino. Crivelli’s influence extends to the ornamental elements of Angelos’ painting, notably the highly ornamented floral patterns of the robes of the Virgin and Saint Bonaventure (Figure 11).

A practice well established among Cretan icon painters, i.e., the reproduction of popular iconographic prototypes lay at the core of Angelos Bitzamanos’ family workshop.² Angelos, his younger relative Donatos, and their followers regularly exchanged *anthivola*—i.e., pricked cartoons—to reproduce standard compositions of Cretan iconography. This is suggested by the repetition of certain iconographic themes in the workshop’s tradition, as was for example the type of *Our Lady Glykophilousa*, painted by Angelos after Cretan models for the church of San Sepolcro in Barletta, and then copied by Donatos in an icon now at the Dominican monastery in Dubrovnik ([Voulgaropoulou 2014](#), pp. 582, 831–32). The same can be argued about Donatos’ icon of Saint Demetrius now at the Hermitage Museum,

which is based on Angelos' image of Saint George from the Vatican (Voulgaropoulou 2014, pp. 923–25). At the same time, the painters drew extensively from Western models to which they had direct access, mainly from paintings they could study in Italian churches, as well as from Western-European and Italian prints that ended up in their possession. For instance, Angelos' icon of the *Christ on the Column* for the church of the Santissima Annunziata in San Mauro Forte replicates an iconographic type that had become largely popular in the region of Apulia and was encountered in particular at the church of Sant'Agostino and the Cathedral of Barletta (Voulgaropoulou 2014, pp. 465–66, 602, 631, fig. 194.) On the other hand, Angelos' *Visitation of the Virgin*, now at the Walters Art Gallery, reproduces a print by Thielman Kerver, while his *Nativity* from Saint Petersburg copies an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi (Vassilaki 1990, pp. 86–89; Voulgaropoulou 2014, figures 374–75). It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that it was Angelos himself who consciously selected most of the above prototypes in order to best cope with the requirements of his commission. On the other hand, it is likely that at least some of these models were suggested or even imposed to the Cretan painter by his commissioners, a practice that was far from uncommon in this period. It is for instance known that in 1477 the painter Nicola d'Ancona and his father Maestro Antonio were commissioned to paint an altarpiece for the church of San Francesco ad Alto and were specifically requested to copy after a figure of Saint Bernardine from the Dominican church (Mastrosanti 2007, p. 54; Mazzalupi 2008b, p. 251; 2008c, p. 356, doc. 437).



Figure 10. Angelos Bitzamanos. Saint Francis (detail from the Scottivoli altarpiece), 1508. Vatican, Apostolic Palace (**left**) © Musei Vaticani. Reproduced with permission; Nicola di Maestro Antonio d'Ancona. Saint Francis, 1472. Pittsburgh, Carnegie Museum of Art (**middle**) Image in the public domain; Nicola di Maestro Antonio d'Ancona. *Saint Francis* (detail from the polyptych of Jesi), 1487. Avignon (**right**) Image in the public domain; Figure created by author.

To further explore this hypothesis, let us turn our attention to the figure of Saint Bonaventure, the only saint from the Scottivoli altarpiece that was not included in Francesco's will, as already discussed. A Franciscan saint and patron of the order of the Friars minor, Saint Bonaventure was canonized by pope Sixtus IV just a few years before Francesco Scottivoli's will, in 1482, after a 10-year long campaign. With his popularity rapidly growing, the newly canonized saint started to appear all the more frequently in art commissions of the late 15th and early 16th centuries, especially in works of the Crivelli workshop, such as in Carlo's altarpiece from San Francesco in Fermo, now at Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Vittore's

polyptychs from Sant’Elpidio a Mare, San Severino Marche, San Francesco in Amandola, Potenza Picena, and in two panels with Saint Bonaventure now at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris.



Figure 11. Angelos Bitzamanos. Detail from the Scottivoli altarpiece, 1508. Vatican, Apostolic Palace © Musei Vaticani. Reproduced with permission; Carlo Crivelli. *Madonna and Child Enthroned (detail)*, 1472. The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Carlo Crivelli. *Madonna and Child (detail)*, 1470–73. Macerata, Palazzo Buonaccorsi; Vittore Crivelli. *Madonna and Child (detail)*, ca. 1482. Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum; Vittore Crivelli. *Madonna and Child with Saints (detail)*. Philadelphia Museum of Art; Carlo Crivelli. *Madonna and Child (detail)*, 1482. Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera; Carlo Crivelli. *Madonna of the Swallow (detail)*, 1490–92. London, National Gallery; Nicola di Maestro Antonio d’Ancona. *Madonna and Child Enthroned (detail)*, ca. 1475–90. The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Carlo Crivelli. *Madonna and Child (detail)*, ca. 1490–92. Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera (from **top left to bottom right**). Images in the public domain; Figure created by author.

In the Scottivoli altarpiece, Saint Bonaventure is placed in a prominent position, occupying the whole mid-lower part of the composition. Unlike the other saints who are depicted standing, he is portrayed kneeling in prayer before the Virgin with his back turned to the viewer to reveal his elaborately embroidered cope (*piviale*), which rivals the garments of the Virgin in magnificence. The saint’s cope is made of silk brocade with floral arabesque motifs, in the center of which are embroidered seraphs, possibly an allusion to Bonaventure’s adherence to the “Seraphic” Franciscan order and his usual designation as Seraphic Doctor (*Doctor Seraphicus*). The hood of his cope (*scudo* or *cappuccio*) is decorated with the figure of the enthroned Christ, depicted as a counterpart to the enthroned Virgin

and dressed in opposing colors, while the Man of Sorrows (*Άκρα Ταπείνωσις*) is visible in a separate band above the hood.

The depiction of saints dressed in highly ornamented liturgical vestments was a common pictorial convention in Renaissance art, particularly diffused among Florentine masters, such as Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, Cosimo Rosselli, and Domenico Ghirlandaio. The latter, known for designing actual liturgical garments, was responsible for painting an image of Saint Bonaventure, which bears a striking resemblance to that of Angelos Bitzamanos. In his monumental *Coronation of the Virgin*, painted for the Franciscans of San Girolamo in Narni in 1486, Ghirlandaio portrayed Saint Bonaventure in a similar pose, exposing his yellow-golden cope to the viewer, with his cardinal's hat placed on the ground in front of him just as in the Scottivoli altarpiece (Figure 12).



Figure 12. Angelos Bitzamanos, Saint Bonaventure (detail from the Scottivoli altarpiece), 1508, Apostolic Palace, Vatican (left) © Musei Vaticani. Reproduced with permission; Domenico Ghirlandaio, Saint Bonaventure (detail from the Coronation of the Virgin), 1486. Museo Eroli, Narni; Lo Spagna. Saint Bonaventure (detail from the Coronation of the Virgin), 1511. Todi, Museo Civico e Pinacoteca; Lo Spagna. Saint Bonaventure (detail from the Coronation of the Virgin), 1522. Trevi, Pinacoteca Civica—Complesso Museale di San Francesco; Jacopo Siculo. Coronation of the Virgin, 1541, Former Church of Saint Francis, Norcia (from left to right). Images in the public domain; Figure created by author.

It should be stressed that Ghirlandaio's composition had gained widespread popularity during his time and was repeatedly copied by painters throughout Italy. Giovanni di Pietro, known as "Lo Spagna" painted two versions of the Coronation of the Virgin: one for the Observant Franciscans of Santa Maria di Montesanto in Todi, commissioned on the same year as the altarpiece of Ancona, in 1507, but finished in 1511, and another one—a mirror image of Ghirlandaio's original—for the Franciscan church of Trevi in 1522. Many years later, in 1541 Jacopo Siculo would revert to the same model for the Coronation he painted for the convent of the Observant Franciscans of the Annunziata Nuova in Norcia. Elements from Ghirlandaio's composition, including the model for Saint Bonaventure, were also adopted by Cosimo Rosselli in his *Coronation of the Virgin* for the Church of Santa Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi in Florence in 1505.

Another thing to note is that Ghirlandaio's composition and the above-listed copies were all intended for Franciscan institutions, indicating the consolidation and diffusion of a certain trend among the order in the early 16th century, as well as the active involvement of mendicant orders in the formation of iconographic programs and the circulation of iconographic models. The friars of San Francesco delle Scale were most likely aware of such a widely diffused trend and were in all probability the ones to propose the inclusion

of Saint Bonaventure in the Scottivoli altarpiece, providing the Greek painter with the desired iconographic prototype. Still, it appears that Angelos took the liberty to adjust the proposed model to his own composition, possibly combining it with a popular engraving of the *Mass of Saint Gregory* by Israhel van Meckenem, from which he seems to have borrowed the saint's spread-hands gesture (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Angelos Bitzamanos. *Saint Bonaventure* (detail from the Scottivoli altarpiece), 1508. Vatican, Apostolic Palace (left) © Musei Vaticani. Reproduced with permission; Israhel van Meckenem, *The Mass of Saint Gregory* (detail), ca. 1490 (right). Image in the public domain; Figure created by author.

8. Angelos Bitzamanos and Cross-Cultural Interaction in Early Modern Ancona

At the intersection of Eastern and Western artistic traditions, the Scottivoli altarpiece provides a unique reflection on Cretan cultural extroversion, while its study offers valuable insights on the early migrations of Greek artists in the West and the cross-cultural interchange that took place between the Eastern Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas during the Late Medieval and Early modern period. From the 15th century on and due to the increasing Ottoman expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, Greek and primarily Cretan painters were traveling to the Adriatic all the more frequently, either to settle permanently or to seek temporary commissions. The majority of these itinerant painters would set out for Venice, especially after the establishment of a Greek confraternity and an Orthodox church, however, there is ample evidence documenting the activity of Greek-speaking artists and artisans in other centers of the Italian and Dalmatian coasts (Voulgaropoulou 2020, pp. 23–73). Ancona and the region of the Marche have yet to attract extensive scholarly attention, however archival and field research suggests that the Marchigian ports constituted an important pole of attraction for artists of Greek origin, at least before the emergence of Venice as hub of the Greek Orthodox diaspora.

The earliest mention of a Greek artist in Ancona dates from 1446, when a certain master Nikolaos from Candia (“magistri Nicolai pictoris de Candia”) was hired by Urbano di ser Filippo da Cingoli for six months to “paint and design and do other things relevant to his art” (“ad pingendum et designandum et alia faciendum pertinentia et spectantia ad dictam artem”) (ANA, vol. 3, notary Chiarozzo Sparpalli, 1444–47, fol. 198^v; See also Mastrosanti 2007, p. 37; Mazzalupi 2008c, p. 345, doc. 225). Master Nikolaos was probably the same “Magister Nicolaus pictor de Graecia”, who was commissioned to paint an icon “in the modern style” (“moderno more”) for the main altar of the church of Santa Maria di Varano in 1475 (ANR, 1360–1939, notary Giacomo di mastro Petruccio, vol. 99, 1475, fol. 151^r; See also Coltrinari 2005, pp. 75–77). The presence of Greeks in Ancona became more frequent after the granting of a series of trading privileges to Greek and Levantine

merchants in the 1510s and the consequent establishment of a thriving Greek merchant community. It is estimated that, by the mid-16th century, more than 100 Greek merchant houses were established in Ancona, with the Greek population of the city rising up to 200 families (Saracini 1675, pp. 361–62; Natalucci 1960, p. 136; Stoianovich 1960, p. 237; anonymous). These developments led to the concession of the church of Santa Maria in Porta Cipriana to the Greek rite in 1524 (Porfyriou 2002, p. 155; Greene 2013, pp. 27, 39). This church, subsequently dedicated to Saint Anne (Sant'Anna dei Greci), was decorated with icons by the Greek painter Ioannes Permeniates from Rhodes, as well as with panels "alla greca" by the Venetian master Lorenzo Lotto (Voulgaropoulou 2010b, pp. 195–11; 2014, pp. 235–40, 611). Another Greek painter who was working in Ancona about the same time, possibly in relation to the Greek community, was the Cretan Ionas ("Jonac cretensis pictor"), documented in 1530 (ANA, notary Calisto Trionfi, vol. 369, 1525–43, fol. 17^r). A brief mention of the artist's name is also included in Mastrosanti 2011, p. 287). Mastrosanti also reports the presence of two more Greek painters, a certain "Cristoforo Siranicho", and a "Maestro Ludovico pittore dal Levante" (Mastrosanti 2011, pp. 287–88). This information, however, is incorrect and is based on the erroneous reading of the respective sources: in fact, the former name reads "Cristofanus Senichopolus grechus" (the surname's suffix was read as "pictor"), while the latter reads "magister Ludovicus de Lonbardis pictor", possibly to be identified with Lodovico Lombardi, a 16th-century artist highly active in the Marche with his brothers Aurelio and Girolamo (ANA, vol. 258, notary Bartolomeo di Corrado, 1516–24, fol. 199^{rv}; vol. 291, notary Gentile Senili, 1538–39, fol. 154^r). Aside from painters, in the archival sources there are also several records of Greek craftsmen working in the city, as were the goldsmiths Manolio ("Manollio Georgii greco aurifice"), active from roughly 1488 to 1495, and Ioannes from Rhodes ("magistri Iohannis aurificis de Rodo"), documented in 1501 (ANA, vol. 70, notary Melchior Bernabei, 1488–89, fols. 95^v–96^r; vol. 88, notary Giacomo Alberici, 1495–96, fol. 229^{rv}; vol. 181, notary Calisto Trionfi, 1495–1504, fol. 275^v; See also Mazzalupi 2008c, pp. 362, 366, 369, docs. 564, 632, 681).

The case of Angelos Bitzamanos stands out among these artists, not only because of the abundance of documented sources and signed works that allow us to reconstruct a fair deal of his life and activity, but also because his work encompasses the openness of Cretan culture under Venetian rule, and the vibrant cross-cultural exchanges that shaped the Adriatic into a dynamic "contact zone". In the multicultural milieu of Venetian Candia icon painters were regularly exposed to the Italian language and culture, and constantly inventing hybrid pictorial forms to render their work more appealing to the aesthetic tastes of the local Catholic audiences. Much like his fellow Cretan painters, Angelos was well versed in both the Byzantine and Western pictorial traditions, which he harmoniously blended in his works, depending on the demands of his specific commissions. Yet, contrary to most icon painters, who were principally engaged with a Greek-speaking, Orthodox clientele, Angelos addressed his production almost exclusively to Catholic audiences. In fact, until now there appears to be no evidence to support any association of the painter with Greek patrons or Orthodox communities, whereas the subject matter, iconography and inscription language of his surviving works indicate that they were commissioned by or intended for a Latin-oriented clientele. Whether this signifies that the painter was also an adherent of the Catholic faith is much harder to determine. Although the painter's family name, Viçimano, suggests a Latin origin, as does the fact that Angelos' relative, Donatos, also bore a name more common in the Catholic Church, there still is not sufficient evidence to support such a hypothesis, especially given the ethno-confessional fluidity of late-15th and 16th-century Venetian Crete. In fact, the name Viçimano, although initially of Italian origin, was often encountered among Cretans of the Orthodox rite, including priests (See Nikolaos Panagiotakes' relevant discussion on the religious affiliation of Domenikos Theotokopoulos. Panagiotakes 2016, p. 66.) In any case, even if Angelos came from a Catholic family or if he converted to Catholicism after settling in the Italian peninsula, he never renounced his origins as "Grecus Candiotus", an identifier which he consistently inscribed upon his works.

The documents presented as evidence in this article further confirm Angelos' association with Catholic circles as well as his ability to handle himself within his host society. Despite being a foreigner, Angelos managed to land a prestigious commission from one of the most prominent Anconitan families, something which in all likelihood earned him a respectable reputation and financial stability. What is more, contrary to other foreign artists who were not conversant in Italian—such as the above-mentioned painter Nikolaos from Candia who was in need of an interpreter when he signed with the priests of Santa Maria di Varano, even after residing in Ancona for at least three decades—Angelos was fully capable of representing himself in his legal transactions and even acted as witness and creditor for his patrons and colleagues. What is of particular note is that, although the Cretan painter was sufficiently integrated into the local society, at the same time he was well acquainted and involved with other foreign artists residing in the city.

In particular, from Troilo Leoni's notarial deeds we learn that during his stay in Ancona, Angelos Bitzamanos maintained financial, legal and professional relations with two artists from the Dalmatian coast: the carpenter Andreas Georgii, and the painter Johannes (Juan) Boschetus (Appendices C–E). According to the sources, the former hailed from Dubrovnik ("Magister Andreas Georgii de Ragusio carpentario habitator Ancone") and was first documented in Ancona in 1482. In 1487 he wrote his testament in Ancona, before embarking for a trip to Valona (Vlōre). Further records of Andreas Georgii in the sources appear in years 1484 and 1502, and it is possible that he may also be identified with a certain "magistro Andrea Georgii architectore de Ancona", mentioned in 1494 (ANA, vol. 115, notary Girolamo Pagliarini, 1480–84, fol. 305^v; vol. 115, notary Girolamo Pagliarini, 1485–89, fol. 237^{rv}; See also [Mazzalupi 2008c](#), pp. 358, 359, 361, 365, 370, docs. 483, 507, 555, 612, 691; [Mastrosanti 2011](#), p. 285). On the other hand, the painter Johannes Boschetus, Spanish of origin, was a naturalized citizen of Zadar (Zara), active in the Dalmatian cities of Šibenik (Sebenico) and Split (Spalato) as well as the islands Hvar (Lesina), Rab (Arbe), and Krk (Veglia). The earliest mention of Johannes Boschetus or "Giovanni di Matteo" dates from 1494, when the painter was working in Šibenik. In Ancona Boschetus was documented between 1507 and 1511, later, however, he returned to Dalmatia, where he worked until about 1526 (ANA, vol. 204, notary Bartolomeo Alfei, 1507–22, fol. 2^{rv}; vol. 100, notary Giacomo Alberici, 1511, fol. 97^r; See also [Mazzalupi 2008c](#), pp. 371–72, docs. 711, 725; [Mastrosanti 2011](#), p. 285. For the painter's activity in Dalmatia see [Kolendić 1920](#), pp. 116–90; [Prijetelj \[1960\] 1963](#), pp. 50–52; [Prijetelj 1990](#), pp. 81–84; [Fisković 1987](#), pp. 321–32; [Domijan 2001](#), p. 208; [Sobota Matejčić 2008](#), pp. 107–14; [Bradanović 2016](#), pp. 103–22; [Bracanović 2011](#), pp. 50–51; [Schleyer 1914](#), p. 121). Angelos and Boschetus appear to have been in close contact, since in May 1508 the Greek painter appointed the Spaniard as his procurator, while earlier in the same year the two artists had received a joint commission to execute certain painting works.

Although it is not possible to assess the precise nature of the collaboration between the two artists, it is tempting to speculate whether their contact actively affected the development of their respective pictorial languages. A close comparison of their known works indeed leaves the possibility of a mutual influence open, despite the pronounced stylistic and technical differences. On the one hand, Boschetus' paintings bear a marked similarity to Angelos' works, sometimes even adopting the morphological traits of Eastern icons, chiefly the portrayal of figures half-length against a golden ground, as seen in his *Pietà* from the Cathedral of Saint Stephen in Hvar. It is noteworthy that, in his report of his 1637-apostolic visit, bishop Zorzi refers to Boschetus' painting in the Cathedral of Hvar as an "icona cum imagine Pietatis" ([Demori Staničić 1998](#), p. 259; [Voulgaropoulou 2014](#), p. 443). Likewise, Angelos' compositional choices may also be attributed to the Spaniard's influence. For instance, the scene of the Pentecost from his altarpiece from Komolac is designed in a way that is clearly distinct from traditional Cretan iconography, but instead closely resembles Boschetus' corresponding composition for the church of the Holy Spirit in Hvar. Direct parallels can also be drawn between the two painters' rendering of the theme of the enthroned Madonna and Child before a draped backdrop, notably between

Boschetus' paintings from Baška and Rab, and Bitzamanos' relevant icons from Split, Bari, Saint Petersburg, as well as the Scottivoli altarpiece.

From the above it becomes evident that during his stay in Ancona Angelos Bitzamanos became engaged with a socially and culturally diverse network of patronage and cooperation, which arguably shaped his artistic development and determined his future course as an itinerant Adriatic artist. It is hardly a coincidence that the next documented mention of the Cretan painter would come from the East Adriatic coast, and particularly Ragusa, where he travelled in 1518 to paint the altarpiece of Komolac. The circumstances under which Angelos received that commission are still unknown, but it is reasonable to assume that the painter was introduced to his Ragusan patrons while he was still in Ancona, possibly through his above-mentioned colleagues.

During the Late Medieval and Early Modern period, the maritime republics of Ragusa and Ancona became the central nodes of a vibrant trading network that was established between the Marche and the Dalmatian coast, facilitating the mobility of people across and beyond the two Adriatic shores. This mobility is reflected in the establishment of numerous Slavic and Illyrian confraternities and colleges throughout the region of the Marche, the most prominent being the Slavic confraternity of Our Lady of Loreto, founded in 1469. Ragusan ships were regularly sailing to Marchigian ports, while numerous Ragusan merchants were frequenting the city of Ancona, often channeling their newly acquired wealth into art patronage (Stoianovich 1960, pp. 236–37; Popović 1970, pp. 443–62; Natalucci 1978, pp. 93–101; Voje 1978, pp. 200–3, p. 216; Pantić 1993, pp. 35, 37, 40; Abulafia 1997, p. 52). Such was the case of Alvise Gozzi (Gučetić), who in 1520 hired Titian to paint his famous altarpiece for the church of San Francesco ad Alto. Interestingly, it was a member of the same family that supervised Bitzamanos' work in Dubrovnik, Nicolò Martini de Gozze, subsequently rector of the Republic of Ragusa (DAD, *Diversa cancellariae*, 108 (1518–19), 109^v; Voulgaropoulou 2014, pp. 540–41). Alongside these rising merchant elites, numerous artists and craftsmen were frequently commuting between Dalmatia and the Marche, taking advantage of the short travel distance and the ample job opportunities created by the rapid economic growth. Archival sources abound with names of “trans-Adriatic” artists, the most prominent among them being the Venetian brothers Carlo and Vittore Crivelli or the “Schiavoni” Juraj Čulinović (Giorgio Schiavone), Ivan Duknović (Giovanni Dalmata), and Juraj Dalmatinac (Giorgio Orsini da Sebenico), who designed the portal of the church of San Francesco delle Scale in 1454 (Several cases of artists active between Dalmatia and the Marche are discussed in Fisković 2007, pp. 48–59).

Following the steps of these itinerant artists, Angelos Bitzamanos eventually left Ancona some time before 1518 to seek his fortune on the opposite Adriatic shore. Shortly thereafter the painter crossed the Adriatic once again, although there is no indication that he ever returned to Ancona or the Marche. Instead, it seems more likely that he sailed further south to the Apulian port of Barletta, where he worked for a brief period of time, before settling permanently in the Terra d'Otranto. Despite being well along in years, the Cretan painter established a flourishing icon-painting workshop in Otranto with the assistance of Donatos and their local followers, Fabrizio and Giovanni Maria Scupula (Voulgaropoulou 2010a; 2014, pp. 86–95). The Bitzamanos family workshop was specialized in the production of small-scale devotional images that would eventually become Angelos' trademark, thus shaping the future reception of his work by art historiography. The discovery of the Scottivoli altarpiece, Angelos Bitzamanos' only surviving large-scale work, steers us to a new understanding of the painter's artistic idiosyncrasies, and calls for reassessing common historiographical perceptions regarding early modern Cretan art.

9. Conclusions

Decontextualized from its original setting and secluded from the public eye in the Vatican collections, the altarpiece of Francesco Scottivoli from the church of San Francesco delle Scale was long considered lost, victim of the widespread dispersion of Marchigian cultural heritage. Its rediscovery, enriched with the testimony of written accounts, now

makes it possible to unravel the multiple layers of the historical, social, and cultural background from which it emerged. More specifically, the discovery that is outlined in this work offers new insights into art forms that were produced at the margins of the Renaissance, in geographical areas that are often considered peripheral to major artistic centers and by lesser-known artists that are commonly excluded from the dominant narratives of Western art history.

Painted by a Greek-speaking artist at the demand of Catholic patrons and displayed in a strictly Catholic religious setting, the altarpiece of San Francesco delle Scale epitomizes the creative fusion of the culturally diverse elements that crossed paths in the bustling cosmopolitan port of 16th-century Ancona. While being one of the countless examples testifying to the favorable reception of “Byzantinizing” art forms in the multicultural Adriatic societies, with its monumental scale and high technical quality the Scottivoli altarpiece stands out from the bulk of mass-produced portable icons that were swarming the Italian and Dalmatian markets in the early modern period and were mainly destined for private devotion. Its creator, the Greek Angelos Bitzamanos, previously regarded as a painter of average merit, now emerges as one of the most versatile and mobile icon painters of his time, entangled in a multinational network of patrons and collaborators, with a documented presence extending from Candia to Ancona, Ragusa, Barletta, and Otranto. Therefore, the Scottivoli altarpiece, not only provides an illuminating insight on the varied aesthetic preferences of the early modern Adriatic societies, but it also showcases a rare glimpse of the wide spectrum of activities that icon painters of Greek origin engaged with in the West, activities which remain largely unknown to us due to the scarcity of written sources and visual material. Interpreted in the context of inter- and trans-Adriatic transfers, the case of the Scottivoli altarpiece highlights the multicultural character of the early modern Adriatic port communities and the intense cross-cultural exchanges that were fostered between commercial centers of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Italian peninsula and the Dalmatian coast.

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Appendix A

10 January 1490: Testament of the nobleman Francesco di Benvenuto Scottivoli. Francesco appoints his grandsons Benvenuto d’Astorgio Scottivoli, Niccolò and Benvenuto di Filippo Scottivoli and Bartolino di Ciriaco Naffini as his heirs, and requests that they have a chapel and an altarpiece constructed at the church of San Francesco delle Scale (ANA, vol. 122, notary Pellegrino Scacchi, 1490–1495, fols. 2r–6v).

Testamentum spectabilis viri Francisci Bevenuti de Scottivolis de Ancona. Die decime mensis Ianuarii. Actum Ancone in domo habitationis dicti Francisci testatoris, posita in parrocchia Sancti Petri iuxta res Antonii Benincase, res Johannis Baptiste de Scalamontibus, et res Francisci Cambii de Schacchis de Ancona viam vicinalem ab uno latere, et a parte anteriori viam publicam et alia latera. Presentibus excellentissimo decretorum doctore, domino Dominico Pizoro canonico anconitano, ser Nicolao Bartholomei de Schacchis, Gabriele domini Iacobi de Bonarellis, Francisco Cambii de Schacchis, Marino Antonelli Rubei, Lutiano ser Iacobi ser Andree, Dominico Ieronimi Magii, Francisco Marinonii, et Johanne Nicolai Petri de Ancona omnibus testibus ad hec vocatis, habitis et rogatis. Spectabilis vir Franciscus Bevenuti de Scottivolis de Ancona per gratiam omnipotentis dei sanus mente et intellectu, et in bona et perfecta dispositione existens, licet corpore languens, timens dei iudicium et mortis periculum, cum nil certius morte, et nil incertius hora eius, nolens intestatus decedere, sed volens omnium suorum bonorum mobilium et immobilium, iurium et actionum, presentium et fucturorum dispositionem facere per hoc suum presens et nuncupativum testamentum, quod dicitur sine scriptis in hunc modum facere procuravit et fecit, videlicet. In primis recommisit eius animam omnipotenti deo et eius gloriose matri semper Virgini Marie. Item reliquit pro eius animam secundum precepta canonum solidos decem. [. . .]

Item dictus Franciscus testator reliquit, voluit, iussit et mandavit eius corpus sepeliri debere apud ecclesiam Sancti Francisci ordinis minorum delle Schale de Ancona in sepultura ipsius testatoris et suorum precessorum, que posita est in reclaustro dicte ecclesie Sancti Francisci, et prope aquam Sanctam, vulgariter nuncupatam, et super qua qua sepultura est depicta arma ipsius testatoris et suorum precessorum. Et cui ecclesia Sancti Francisci dictus testator reliquit quintam partem introitus et profectus unius anni, videlicet vini, grani, ordeï, olei, et naulorum domorum positarum tam in civitate Ancone quam in eius comitatu et districtu exceptis supradictis domus, in qua ipse testator ad presens habitat. [. . .] Cum hoc appposito et declarato quod fratres et presbiteri dictorum locorum et ecclesiarum teneantur et debeant dicto anno celebrari missas pro anima ipsius testatoris et suarum condam filiarum, et condam sue uxoris, ac etiam sui condam patris et matris et aliorum omnium suorum predefunctorum. Item dictus testator reliquit iure legati Bevenuto filio Astorgij fratris carnalis dicti testatoris et nepoti ipsius testatoris terram vineatam, campivat et olivatam cum fonte in pede dicte terre vinente quam vulgariter nuncupat la fonte de Fabritio [. . .]

Item reliquit eidem Bevenuto Filippi soli medietatem omnium pannorum lini existentium in camera ipsius testatoris pro indivisa cum alia medietate dictorum pannorum cum infrascripte domine Simone prout infra declarabitur et dividendorum per Dominicum Petripauli de Ancona. De quibus omnibus pannis lini detrahantur illa, que videbantur fore necessaria dicto Dominico Petripauli pro uno altari fiendo per infrascriptos heredes dicti Francisci testatoris in dicta ecclesia Sancti Francisci delle Scale de Ancona. [. . .]

Item dictus testator voluit, reliquit, iussit et mandavit quod dicti et infrascripti eius heredes teneantur et obligati sint, videlicet quilibet ipsorum pro quarta parte, fabricare seu fabricari facere unam cappellam cum tabula lignea intus ecclesiam Sancti Francisci dalle Scale de Ancona, videlicet subtus vel prope cappellam Quiriaci Massioli de Ancona, videlicet per directum sepulture dicti Francisci testatoris supra posite et confinate aut parum plus versus capellam dicti Quiriaci, seu parum minus ab alia parte versus murum porte dicte ecclesie, infra unum annum proxime futurum a die mortis dicti testatoris, cum infrascriptis figuris, videlicet gloriose semper Virginis Marie cum eius filio in bracchio, Sancti Iohannis Baptiste, Sancti Quiriaci, Sancti Ieronimi, et Sancti Francisci. Et in scabbello dicte tabbule depingantur tres magi, quando visitaverunt dominum nostrum Yhesum Christum, et Beatam Virginem eius matrem, parvis figuris prout poterunt astari et depingi in dicto scabbello. Et in qua capella, tabbulla, scabbello et figuris predictis depingendis ut supra prefati et infrascripti eius heredes teneantur et obligati sint expendere ducatos centum viginti quinque auri, cum hac tamen conditione apposita et declarata, quod si dicti heredes ipsius testatoris infra dictum terminum unius anni non expendiderint et finierint

dictam cappellam cum tabula et figuris supra declaratis, incidant in penam vigintiquinque ducatorum auri pro quolibet anno quousque dictam cappellam finierint ut supra dictum est, que pena debeat expendi et solvi pro maiori ornamento dicte cappelle. [...]

Item dictus testator reliquit iure legati Dominico Petri Pauli de Ancona eius condam congenato et aut patri amore et benevolentia unum vestitum panni Veronensis novi coloris frateschi foderatum panni monachini veteris. Item reliquit dicto Dominico unum mantellum panni nigri veneti ad usum dicti testatoris, et unum alium mantellum panni monachini usitatum fideicommissarios autem et executores presentis sui testamenti et ultime voluntatis dictus testator fecit, instituit, reliquit et esse voluit infrascriptos eius heredes et Dominicum Petripauli de Ancona ad solvendum ac satisfaciendum omnia supradicta relictas et legata predicti testatoris in presenti testamento facta et relictas, et ad fabricandum et fabricari faciendum supradictam cappellam, tabbulam prout supradictum est et in presenti testamento contentum. In omnibus autem aliis suis bonis mobilibus et immobilibus, iuribus et actionibus, presentibus et futuris sibi quolibet competentibus et conpetituris dictus testator instituit, reliquit et esse voluit supradictos Bevenutum Astorgii de Scottivolis de Ancona, Nicolaum et Bevenutum Filippi de Scottivolis et Bartholinum Quiriaci de Naffinis de Ancona nepotes dicti testatoris equalibus portionibus inter eos, videlicet unumquemque ipsorum pro quarta parte.

Cassans, irritans et adnullans dictus testator omne aliud testamentum seu ultimam voluntatem hactenus a se factum et factam, scriptum et scriptam manu cuiuscunque notarii ut alterius persone. Et hanc dictus testator dixit, asseruit et esse voluit suam ultimam voluntatem, quam valere et tenere voluit iure testamenti o³ et si iure testamenti non valeret saltem valere et tenere voluit iure codicillorum ut cuiuslibet alterius ultime voluntatis quo et qua melius de iure valere et tenere potest et poterit in futurum, et omni meliori modo via iure et forma quibus magis et melius de iure fieri potest.

Iubens et mandans dictus testator dictum suum presens testamentum et ultimam voluntatem ab omnibus supradictis suis heredibus, legatariis et fideicommissariis quolibet eorum inviolabiter observari debere sub pena et ad penam centum ducatorum auri pro quolibet contrafaciente applicandorum de facto partibus aut parti bene observanti et observantibus, et privationis relictorum et legatorum eis cuilibet eorum factorum per dictum testatorem in presenti suo testamento et ultima voluntate etc. Rogans dictus testator me notarium infrascriptum ut de predictis publicum conficerem instrumentum.

[Annotation]: Sub dictis anno dictione et pontificatu. Die vigesime Ianuarii. Actum Ancone in supradicta domo supraposita et confinata, presentibus Francisco Petri Abundantii de Ancona, et Francisco Cattarino civis et habitatoris Ancone testibus etc. Supradicta domina Simona filia condam Dominici Lippi de Ancona et olim uxor supradicti condam Francisci Bevenuti de Scottivolis de Ancona habuit et recepit in presentia dictorum testium et mei notarii infrascripti a supradictis Bartolino Quiriaci, Bevenuto Astorgii, et Bevenuto Filippi de Scottivolis heredibus et fideicommissariis dicti condam Francisci de Scottivolis infrascriptas res mobiles et bona dicte domine Simone relictas per dictum condam Franciscum in supradicto eius testamento [...] Item dicta domina Simona fuit vere contenta et confessa habuisse et recepisse et penes se habere a supradictis heredibus et fideicommissaries predictis omnia pannamenta lini usitata in domo dicti condam Francisci et dicte domine Simone relictas. [...] De quibus omnibus et singulis rebus et bonis dicta domina Simona relictas per dictum condam Franciscum in supradicto eius testamento, et per ipsam dominam Simonam habitis et receptis a supradictis Bartolino, Bevenuto Astorgii, et Bevenuto Filippi eorum nominibus et vice et nomine Nicolai Filippi, heredibus et fideicommissariis predictis, dicta domina Simona cum presentia, consensu et voluntate Nicolai et Francisci Dominici Lippi fratrum carnalium dicte domine Simone fecit per se et suos heredes dictis Bartholino Quiriaci, Bevenuto Astorgii presentis et consententis pro dicto Bevenuto eius filio, et Bevenuto Filippi heredibus et fideicommissaries predictis, ac etiam me notario infrascripto ut publice persone, stipulanti et recipienti vice et nomine dicti Nicolai Filippi heredis pro eius parte finem quietationem, liberationem, absolutionem perpetuam vel pactum de ulterius aliquid non petendo nec peti faciendo. Quam quietationem

et omnia et singula supradicta promisit et convenit dicta domina Simona cum presentia, consensu, et voluntate predictis perpetuo attendere et observare et non contravenire sub pena vigintiquinque ducatorum auri, et obligatione omnium suorum bonorum mobilium et immobilium presentium et futurorum.

Bibliography: (([Mastrosanti 2007](#), p. 60 (mention)); ([Mazzalupi 2008c](#), p. 362, doc. 575 (transcription of excerpt))).

Appendix B

10 November 1507: The heirs of Francesco Scottivoli promise to pay Angelos Bitzamanos 80 ducats to paint a panel for the altar of the Angel at the church of San Francesco delle Scale in Ancona (ANA, vol. 182, notary Calisto Trionfi, 1504–08, fol. 404^v. The act has been crossed out).⁴

Angelus Nicolai greci die decima mensis novembris actum Ancone in palatio residentie dominorum Antianorum ut supra posito, et laterato, presentibus Thoma Bartholomei ser Thome, et Conte Optomanni de Fredutiis de Ancona testibus etc.⁵ Nicolaus Benvenutus et Benvenutus Astorgii de Scottivolis de Ancona, et vice et nomine domine Anthonie, uxore condam Bartholini de Naffinis de Ancona in solidum promissirunt dare solvere et numerare sine aliqua lite etc. ducatos octuaginta auri venetos Angelo Nicolai grecho pictore tunc temporis quando dictus magister Angelus fecit unam conam seu tabbulam in altare Sancti Angeli in ecclesia Sancti Francisci a Scalas de Ancona: et obligatione omnium suorum bonorum etc. sub pena dupli etc.

Renuntiantes Etc. Et voluerunt ubique conveniri etc. Iuraverunt etc.

Bibliography: unpublished.

10 November 1507: Niccolò and Benvenuto Scottivoli, and Antonia, widow of Bartolino Naffini receive 22 ducats in deposit from Tommaso Bartolomei di ser Tommaso. Angelos Bitzamanos is present as witness. (ANA, vol. 182, notary Calisto Trionfi, 1504–8, fol. 404^v).

Depositum Thome Bartholomei ser Thome de Ancona die dicto et loco presentibus comite Optomanni de Fredutiis, et magistro Angelo Nicolai pictore testibus etc. Nicolaus et Benvenutus Astorgii de Scottivolis de Ancona, et quilibet ipsorum in solidum fuerunt confessi et, et contenti habuisse, et recepisce in depositum, et nomine, et causa puri et veri depositi ducatorum viginti duos auri et vice, et nomine domine Antonie uxoris condam Bartholini de Naffinis de Ancona. Et Benvenutus Philippi de Scottivolis de Ancona fuit confessus, et contentus habuisse, et recepisce in depositum et nomine et causa puri et veri depositi ducatos sex auri a Thoma Bartholomei ser Thome de Ancona quos promisserunt tenere penes se, et dare, solvere, et numerare sine aliqua lite etc. ad omnem terminum et petitionem dicti Thome. Renuntians etc. Sub pena dupli etc. et obligatione omnium suorum bonorum etc. Qua bona etc. In quis bonis etc. Iuraverunt etc.

Bibliography: unpublished.

13 November 1507: Angelos Bitzamanos acknowledges having received 80 ducats from the heirs of Francesco Scottivoli for the construction of a panel for the altar of the Angel at the church of San Francesco delle Scale in Ancona. (ANA, vol. 182, notary Calisto Trionfi, 1504–08, fol. 405^r).

Nicolaus, Bevenutus Philippi, et Bevenutus Astorgii de Scottivolis de Ancona.

Die dicto. Actum Ancone in palatio residentie dominorum Antianorum civitatis Ancone, ut supra posito, et laterato, presentibus Thoma Bartholomei ser Thome, et Conte Optomanni de Fredutiis de Ancona testibus etc. Magister Angelus Nicolai greci pictor habitator Ancone coram dictis testibus, et me notario infrascripto fuit vere confessus, et contentus habuisse et recepisce ducatos octuaginta auri venetos etc. a Nicolao, Bevenuto Philippi, et Bevenuto Astorgii de Scottivolis de Ancona presentibus etc., et a domina Antonia uxore condam Bartholini de Naffinis de Ancona, licet absenti, et a me notario infrascripto ut publice persone vice, et nomine dicte domine Antonie. Et hoc pro eo quia dictus magister Angelus per se et suos heredes promisit et convenit dictis Nicolao Bevenuto,

et Bevenuto presentibus etc., et mihi notario ut publice persone et nomine quo supra unam conam seu tabulam in altare Sancti Angeli sito in ecclesia Sancti Francisci a Scalas de Ancona cum certis figuris pictam iuxta conventiones inter ipsos initas, de quibus octuaginta ducatis auri dictus magister Angelus per se et suos heredes fecit finem et quietationem dictis Nicolao, Bevenuto, et Bevenuto presentibus etc., et dicte domine Antonie absenti etc., et mihi notario ut publice persone presenti et stipulanti etc., et voluit ubique conveniri etc. Et obligatione omnium suorum bonorum etc. Que bona etc. In quibus bonis etc. Iuravit etc.

Bibliography: (([Mastrosanti 2007](#), p. 67 (mention)); ([Mazzalupi 2008c](#), p. 371, doc. 714 (transcription))).

[Annotation]: 29 April 1508: The heirs of Francesco Scottivoli acknowledge having received the commissioned panel from the painter Angelos Bitzamanos (ANA, vol. 182, Notary Calisto Trionfi, fol. 405^r).

Sub anno domini 1508 indictione undecima die vigesima nona aprilis actum in platea dominorum Antianorum civitatis Ancone ut supra posita, et laterata, presentibus Laurentio de Todinis, et Ludovico domini Marci Antonii de Schalamontibus de Ancona testibus etc. dominus Nicolaus, Benvenutus, et Benvenutus fuerunt confessi et contenti habuisse, et recepisce dictam conam et tabulam a dicto magistro Angelo de qua fecerunt finem, et quietationem dicto magistro Angelo presenti etc. Renuntiantes etc.

Bibliography: (([Mazzalupi 2008c](#), p. 371, doc. 714 (mention))).

Appendix C

10 January 1508: Angelos Bitzamanos gives a loan of 52 carlini to Johannes Boschetus, painter, and Andreas Georgii, carpenter (ANA, vol. 165, notary Troilo Leoni, 1508, fol. 55^v. The act has been crossed out.).

Magister Angelus Bizamanus de Creta, cum Magistro Johannem pictore et Magistro Andrea marangone.

Die x^o Ianuarii: Actum Ancone in apoteca residentie mei notarii supra posita et laterata presentibus Bernardino Antonii de Ancona et Antonio libraro habitatoris Ancone testibus, Magister Johannes Buschettus de Jadra pictor habitator Ancone et Magister Andreas Georgii marangonus de Ancona in presentia dictorum testium et mei notarii asseruerunt et confessi fuerunt eos habuisse et recepisce mutuo et ex causa veri et puri mutui gratis et amore a magistro Angelo Bizamano de Creta pictore carlenos quinquaginta duos, quos ipsi Magister Johannes, et Magister Andreas ipsi et quilibet ipsorum principaliter et in solidum obligando renuntiantes etc. per eos et eorum heredes promiserunt et convenerunt dicto Magistro Angelo presenti eidem Magistro Angelo dare etc. sine aliqua lite etc. hinc ad per totum mensem februarij proxime fucturi et deinde etc. sub pena dupli etc. Pro quibus omnibus etc. Que bona etc. In quibus bonis etc. Et voluerunt posse ubique conveniri et specialiter coram officialibus duhane mercantie etc. communis Ancone etc. et capi domi etc. Iuraverunt etc.

Bibliography: (([Mastrosanti 2011](#), p. 287 (mention))).

[Annotation]: 9 May 1508: Angelos Bitzamanos acknowledges having received 52 carlini from Johannes Boschetus and releases him from his debt (ANA, vol. 165, notary Troilo Leoni, 1508, fol. 55^v).

Sub dictis anno et loco. Die vero viii^o maii. Actum Ancone presentibus Antonio libraro, et Francesco Petri Bassi tricholo habitatoribus Ancone testibus etc. Cassatum fuit suprascriptum instrumentum de presentia et voluntate supra dicti Magistri Angeli, quia asseruit se habuisse a dicto Magistro Johanne carlenos quinquaginta duos, de quibus fecit eidem Magistro Johanni presenti etc. finem etc. Renuntiantes.

Bibliography: unpublished.

Appendix D

11 January 1508: Angelos Bitzamanos and Johannes Boschetus receive painting commissions from Nicolao Scottivoli, lady Caterina, widow of Ambrosio de L . . . and Pietro di Giovanni from Bergamo (ANA, vol. 165, notary Troilo Leoni, 1508, fol. 56^r. The act has been crossed out).

Magister Angelus Bizamanus, et Magister Johannes pictor supradicti, declaratio.

Die. xio Januarii, loco et testibus suprascriptis. Cum fuerit et sic prout infrascripti contrahentes assureunt, quod Magister Johannes Buschettus de Jadra, et magister Angelus Bizamanus de Creta pictores ad presens habitatores Ancone acceperint ad faciendum certa laboreria de arte picture ab infrascriptis personas, et ea facere promiserint modo, et forma et pro pretiis inter eos conventis, a Nicolao Scottivoli, domina Caterina uxore dom[inis] Ambrosii de Laude[. . .] et Magistro Petro Johannis de Bergamo cassellario habitatore Ancone, que laboreria ipsi facere intendunt. Idcirco volentes inter eos uti veritate et bona fide declaraverunt, et declarando stare voluerunt et promiserunt quodlibet eorum ad dicta et in dictis laboreriis pro medietatis et equali portione, ad omnes et singulas eorum pensas pro dictis laboreriis faciendis quandocumque et qualitercumque, et similiter ad lucrum ex dictis laboreriis percipiendum. Promittentes dicte partes continuato tempore videlicet de die eos exercere ad dicta laboreria usque donec fuerint integraliter finita et completa. Cum pacto inter eos sollempniter expresso et declarato videlicet quod si quis ipsorum deficeret in laborando continue de die ut supra, alius possit accipere alium magistrum, loco illius qui nollet laborare et sit exercere ipsius non laborantis sumptibus et expensis, vel defalcetur et detrahatur, illi cui non laboraret ut supra de lucro percipiendum, pro rata temporis quo non laborasset et sit et esse debeat illius qui illo tempore laboraverit. Cum pacto etiam quod si in dictis et pro dictis laboreriis vel eorum occasione, aliquid . . . , illud . . . et remisse intelligatur similiter pro medietatis et equali portione inter eos. Que omnia etc. Sub pena dupli etc. Et obligatione bonorum etc. Que bona etc. In quibus bonis etc. Iuraverunt etc.

Bibliography: (([Mastrosanti 2011](#), p. 287 (mention))).

[Annotation]: 9 May 1508: Mutual acquittance of previous act (ANA, vol. 165 notary Troilo Leoni, 1508, fol. 56^r).

Sub dictis anno et loco. Die vero viiio Maii, presentibus Antonio Iacobi de Trino libraro, et Francesco Petri Bassi tricholo habitatoris Ancone testibus, cassatum fuit suprascriptum instrumentum de presentia et voluntate supradictorum partium, quia una pars ab altera, et a converso, vocavit se bene solutam et satisfactam, tacitam et contentam. Ideo ad invicem et vicissim una pars altera et converso fuerunt tam specialiter, quam generaliter, finierunt et quietaverunt, liberaverunt, et absolverunt per aquilianam stipulationem precedentem, et acceptilationem subsequutam etc. Renuntiantes etc.

Bibliography: unpublished.

Appendix E

9 May 1508: Angelos Bitzamanos appoints painter Johannes Boschetus as his procurator in order to represent him, and demand the payment of a debt, owed by Benvenuto Scottivoli, and Antonia, widow of Bartolino Naffini (ANA, vol. 165, notary Troilo Leoni, 1508, fol. 171^r).

Magister Angelus Bizamanus, cum Magistro Johanne pictore procuratore.

Die. viiio Maii: Actum Ancone in Apoteca Residentie mei notarii supra posita et laterata presentibus Antonio Jacobi de Trino libraro, et Francesco Petri Bassi tricholus habitatoribus Ancone testibus etc. Magister Angelus Bizamanus de Creta pictor non revocando alios suos procuratores actenus a se factos, nec acta facta et gesta per eos sed potius confirmando etc. fecit etc. Magistrum Johannem Buschetum pictorem habitatorem Ancone presentem, et acceptantem, suum verum, et legitimum procuratorem etc. specialiter etc. ad petendum, exigendum etc. ducatum a Benvenuto Philippi Scottivoli, et a domina Antonia uxore quondam Bartholini de Naffinis de Ancona, ducatum pecunie quantitatis eidem constituenti debitis per dictos Benvenutum et dominam Antoniam. Quibuscumque de causis etc. Item

ad lites et causas etc. Item ad substituendum etc. dans et concedens etc. Promictens etc. Fide iubens etc.

Bibliography: ((Mastrosanti 2011, p. 287 (mention))).

Notes

- ¹ The overall darker and warmer tonality of the Scottivoli altarpiece can be interpreted as a consequence of Bitzamanos's experimentation with oil painting, which tends to darken certain pigments with age. As a result, the Scottivoli icon lacks the more vibrant and lighter hues of the artist's other works, which were all painted in egg tempera.
- ² Previous literature casually accepted that Angelos was either Donatos' uncle or older brother, with the exception of Seroux d'Agincourt who considered him Donatos' descendant. (Artaud de Montor 1808, p. 20; Seroux d'Agincourt 1823, p. 115; Gault de Saint-Germain 1835, pp. 50–51; Artaud de Montor 1843, pp. 21–27; Siret 1848, p. 325; Paillot de Montabert 1851, p. 27; Michiels 1873, p. 73; De Mercey 1858, p. 104; Cattapan 1972, p. 224; Bianco Fiorin 1984, p. 89; Belli d'Elia 1988, pp. 141–43; Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou 1997, pp. 293–95). However, the fact that Donatos is not mentioned in earlier sources but only appears in Otranto after 1539, together with the fact that he never signed his works "Grecus Candiots", as Angelos consistently did, indicate that he was either not born in Crete, or at least that left the island at a very young age. This hypothesis is further supported by a closer observation of the two painters' works. While Angelos' style is clearly in line with Cretan icon painting of the late 15th century, Donatos' works are mere copies of Angelos' compositions and do not share the quality and stylistic standards of Cretan icons. Based on these observations the traditional view that the two painters were brothers who left Crete together and established a workshop in Italy appears less likely, and instead it seems more probable that they shared a father-son relationship. For the kinship between the two painters see in particular anonymous.
- ³ Marginal annotation: et cuiuslibet alterius ultimam voluntatem.
- ⁴ The index of volume 182, containing the record of the contract between Francesco Scottivoli's nephews, "Nicolaus, Bevenutus Philippi et Bevenutus Astorgii de Scottivolis" and "magistro Angelo Nicolai pictore" was misplaced during restoration works and has been attached to a different volume containing notary Calisto Trionfi's records from 1495 to 1504 (ASA, vol. 181). The year 1508 is inscribed on the last page of the index. It should be noted that the foliation of the index does not correspond to that of volume 182, which contains the actual act, as the original folio numbers were altered at some later stage.
- ⁵ Marginal annotation: notario stipulanti etc.

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