

Maria Vassilaki

**Painting Icons in Venetian Crete at the Time of the Council of Ferrara/Florence
(1438/1439)**

The aim of this paper is to revisit an issue, which I touched upon many years ago in a paper entitled "A Cretan Icon at the Ashmolean: the Embrace of Peter and Paul" that was published in the *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, vol. 40 (1990). In fact, what I tried to show in that paper is that the theme of the *Embrace of the Apostles Peter and Paul*, which has survived in an impressive number of works, icons and *tondi*, either signed or attributed to the Cretan painter Angelos, active in the second quarter of the 15th century, may indicate this painter's pro-Unionist attitude. This can possibly be further exemplified by the existence of another series of icons representing *Christ the Vine*, also painted by Angelos, a theme that has also been interpreted as including pro-Unionist nuances. It is not Angelos alone, however, who painted icons with pro-unionists' themes in 15th century Crete. Triptychs and icons, which are either signed or attributed to Nikolaos Ritzos and Nikolaos Tzafouris, both active in Venetian Candia during the second half of the 15th c. and the early years of the 16th c., may also offer their own evidence to this discussion.