

# Symposium: World of the Byzantine Church Decoration

## Preface

Professor Athanasios Semoglou of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki was awarded the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Fund “Invitational Fellowships for Research in Japan (short-term)” (<https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-inv/index.html>). He undertook a visit to Japan in April-May 2024 with the objective of deepening his knowledge of Japanese medieval painting and mandala iconography.

The recent discovery of the signature of the painter Eutychios in the Church of Protaton on Mount Athos has generated considerable interest among Japanese researchers, who engaged in a discussion with Professor Semoglou regarding the significance of this discovery. The culmination of his visit to Japan was the symposium, World of the Byzantine Church Decoration, held on May 18 at the Toyama Campus of Waseda University. The program for the day is as follows:

Mika TAKIGUCHI (Meiji University)

The Narrative Cycle of the Life of the Virgin in Byzantine East and Latin West: The Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome and Daphni Monastery near Athens

Tomoyuki MASUDA (Waseda University)

Christ as Angel in the Church of Panagia Peribleptos in Ohrid

Hirofumi SUGAWARA (Kanazawa University)

“Visual Paraphrase” in Palaeologan Renaissance: Image Sources of the Ascent to the Cross

Eriko TSUJI (Saitama University)

The Date and Patronage of Agios Nikolaos Orphanos in Thessaloniki

Elena OTA (Waseda University)

‘Thou Wouldst Grant Forgiveness to Thy Servant’: The Joseph Cycle in the Upper-Outer Narthex of Sv. Sofija in Ohrid

Athanasios SEMOGLU (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

Protaton on Mount Athos: A pictorial «Εκφρασις» of Andronikos II Palaeologus imperial policy (1282-1328)

The papers based on the oral presentations of the day are provided below, with the aim of introducing Professor Semoglou’s latest insights and demonstrating the extent of research into the history of Byzantine art in Japan. As an appendix, we include a Japanese translation of Professor Semoglou’s lecture, which was distributed to participants on the day of the symposium. The translation and notes were provided by Dr. Elena OTA.

The editor recently published the book, *Byzantine Cappadocia* (Alexandros Press, Leiden 2022), which brought to light the achievements of Byzantine art historians in Japan. It is acknowledged that there is a greater prevalence of hermeneutical studies of decorative programs in comparison to empirical studies utilizing literary sources. This phenomenon may be reflective of the particularities of Japanese scholarship pertaining to Byzantine art. However, it is evident that a considerable number of individuals in a country of the Far East perceive a kinship between Byzantine art and their own artistic traditions, evincing a profound appreciation for Byzantine art.

(Tomoyuki MASUDA)