



118 The Naked Soul at the Scales:
A Paper Icon in the Suna and İnan Kırac Foundation Collection

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Commercial transactions of various kinds and state regulations in the Byzantine marketplace required just weighing. To that end, merchants and traders used equal-arm balance scales with flat weights made of copper alloy or glass for measuring, among other things, quantities of meat, fruits, and vegetables as well as gold coins, jewelry, spices, and pharmaceuticals. For the most part, fear of damnation in Hell served to deter cheating.

The Suna and İnan Kırac Foundation Collection holds a Greek engraving depicting the Second Coming and the Last Judgment.¹ In this case, the pans of a balance scale, held by the hand of God, serve to weigh the deeds of the naked soul. Printed using a copper plate, the engraving belongs to a category of objects called paper icons and can be dated to the early nineteenth century.²

The composition of ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ, *Second Coming*, derives from Byzantine prototypes, one among the most impressive being the fourteenth-century Last Judgment on the domical vault in the eastern bay of the *parekklesion* of the monastery of Chora, or Kariye Camii.³

The art of paper icons began to flourish in the mid-seventeenth century with the development of printmaking in Europe. A Greek diaspora of wealthy

merchants and intellectuals in Moscow, Venice, and Vienna gave the first boost to paper icons, contributing to their rapid and wide distribution of iconographic types. The production of religious engravings greatly increased in the nineteenth century, with copper and wood engravers traveling to monastic centers, including Athos and Sinai, to practice their art. The presence and activity of engravers are also attested in Constantinople, where a Greek printing press had been set up in the seventeenth century, one of the best documented of the earliest presses established in the city.⁴

Easily accessible to believers on modest budgets, paper icons began to be used in private devotion and also served as prototypes for traditional icon painters. They acquired a distinctive character in incorporating Baroque features—such as ornamental borders and scroll ornament on furniture typically made from wood, adopted from earlier prototypes—and combining them with a number of new iconographic trends in icon painting (e.g., greater interest in landscape and architecture; varied representations of the Virgin and Child inspired by church hymnography; new iconographic types of the Virgin, such as the Zoodochos Pege, “Life-Bearing Source”; representation of vestments and attributes of saintly figures, including local saints and neomartyrs, such as Sts. George of Ioannina and Gedeon; and imaginative depictions of the monsters and demons combating evil). The engravings often included color highlights in imitation of painted icons.

The SVIKV example retains some of its original yellow coloring. A likely prototype is a paper icon dated 1820, printed at the Simonopetra Monastery on Mount Athos, and signed by

Parthenios Zakynthios, hieromonk, who hailed from the island of Zakynthos.⁵ An earlier variant by Parthenios and Gerasimos from Ithaca bears a date of 4 June 1807 and was printed in Constantinople.⁶

I. The Second Coming and Last Judgment

Upper Register

The *Second Coming* has a bilaterally symmetrical layout. Atop the central axis is a Deesis—the composition of Christ enthroned as supreme judge and flanked by the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist, to his right and left, respectively. Mary and John stand on their own clouds in entreaty and with the twelve apostles and angels assembled behind them to form the heavenly court on the Judgment Day (Matthew 19:28).

The throne of judgment, with a pair of winged wheels, floats above a band of clouds. Christ wears the vestments of the Great High Priest: an embroidered mitre, the patriarchal *sakkos* (a T-shaped garment with wide sleeves), an *omophorion* (a long scarf), and an *epigonation* (a rhombus-shaped stiff embroidered cloth worn over a *phelonion* or *sakkos*, and suspended over the right knee).⁷ An open book sits propped up in his lap as he extends his arms in blessing. The text on the book's pages reads στα(ν) / ελθι / ο υος / του αν(θ)ρω(που) – εν τη / δοξη / τοτε / καθι(σ) / σετε (When the Son of Man comes in his glory, [escorted by all the angels], then he will take his seat on his throne of glory) (Matthew 25:31).

The unfurling sky (Revelation 6:13–14; Isaiah 34:4), carried by two angels, depicts the sun, the moon, and the stars.⁸





(Ψυχοστασία), the weighing of souls, assessing the deeds of the half-naked soul, who stands with arms crossed. The judgment of the dead based on their recorded deeds is grounded in Revelation 20:12.

The angels supervising the weighing thrust their spears at demons on the other side of the scale in an attempt to drive them away. The pan on the naked soul's right holds what appears to be a round weight, apparently representative of his good deeds as determined by the angels, while the opposite pan holds the list of his bad deeds. One demon uses a hooked stick and another his hand to try to manipulate the scale, while one of their cohorts runs away with an armful of bad deeds towards Hell.

Beneath the naked soul, in a scene labeled Η ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ ΤΩΝ ΝΕΚΡΩΝ (Resurrection of the Dead), a group of kneeling figures huddle in prayer for the resurrected rising from graves.

Left Side (Christ's Right)

A retinue of the elect—clergymen and apostles—stand at the gate to Paradise, as St. Peter, followed by Paul, inserts his key to unlock the gate (Matthew 16:19).

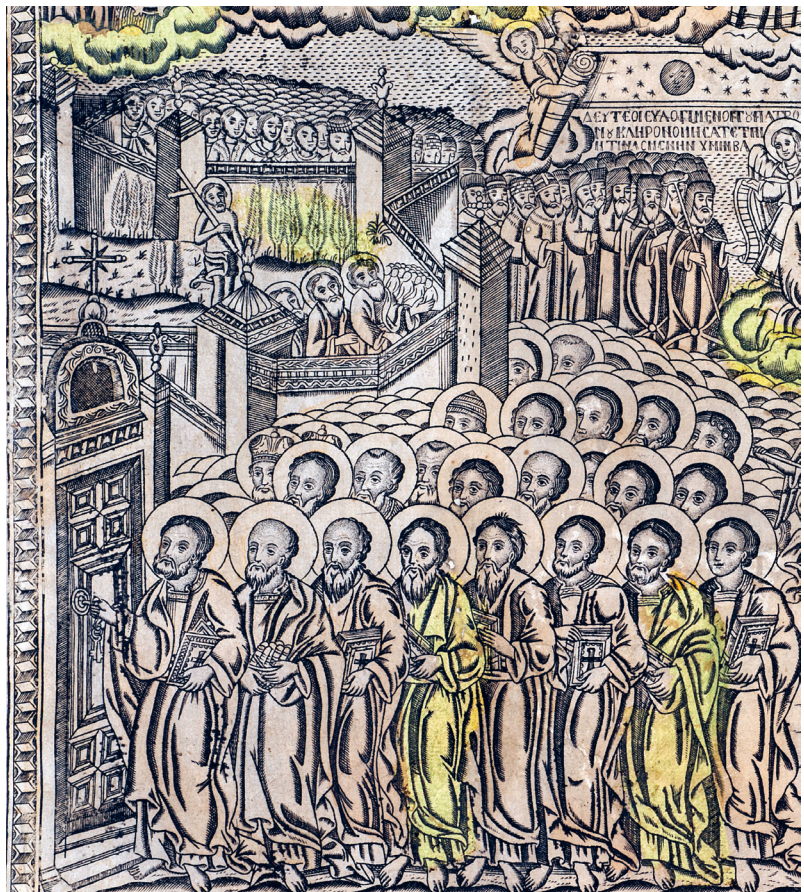
Towered walls enclose the Garden of Paradise, where cypress trees and grass grow. In the garden, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob observe the arriving hordes, and behind them stands the Good Thief (Luke 23:39–43), carrying a cross and serving as a model of salvation due to his repentance. The souls of the righteous who have already entered paradise are depicted as naked infants wrapped up in swaddling clothes. In Byzantine prototypes such infants are commonly depicted on the bosom of Abraham.

Central Axis

Directly below Christ is a *Hetoimasia*, Preparation (of the throne), the composition inspired by Psalms 88:15 and 102:19 in the Septuagint. An open Gospel Book lies on the actual *Hetoimasia*, the empty, draped prepared throne of justice and judgment, from which the radiating cross and some of the instruments of the Passion extend. The spear and sponge rise behind the cross, while the crown of thorns wreathes the cross at the intersection of the arms. The first sinners, Adam and Eve, kneel on clouds at the throne.

The river of fire, or the fiery stream, described in the Book of Daniel (7:10), issues from the left of the throne, shooting downward to the right through the other registers.

In the image labeled Ε ΨΥΧΑΙ ΚΡΙΝΟΝΤΑΙ (Judgment of the Souls), the balance of Justice hangs from God's handset, extending from the clouds of Heaven beneath the throne of justice and judgment. In this scene, angels use the balance for the *Psychostasia*





Right Side (Christ's Left)

Beneath the scene with John the Baptist and members of the heavenly court, Moses stands upon the clouds, holding the tablets containing God's law and pointing toward Christ. The scene is labeled ΜΩΥΧΗC ΕΛΕΝΧΕΙ ΤΟΥC ΕΒΡΑΙΟΥC (Moses Scolds the Jews). Above Moses' head, parallel with the angels unfurling the heavens, is a scroll bearing a heavenly admonishment:

ΑΛ[Α]ΖΩΝ ΙCΡΑΗΛ ΜΙΑΙΦΩΝΕ ΛΑΕ
ΙΔΕΤΕ ΟΝ ΥΜΙC ΕCΤΑΥΡΩCΑΤΕ
ΟΥΤΟC ΕCΙΝ Ο ΕΝ ΕΡΗΜΩ ΘΡΕΨΑC
ΚΑΙ [ΕΝ ΘΑΛΑCCH CΩCΑC]

(Wandering Israel, bloodthirsty people, Behold Jesus, whom you crucified. It is he who nourished [you] in the desert and [saved you on the sea]).⁹

To the right of Moses, an army of winged, black demons with horns and their tongues hanging out drag sinners into the river of fire which issues from the bottom of Christ's throne. The Rich

Man from the parable of Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31), who refused to give water to Lazarus, and Judas, both identified by inscriptions (ὁ πλούσιος and ὁ ἰούδαC), are among the multitudes consumed by the flames at the top of the fiery stream.

In the bottom right, the fanged dragon Leviathan, symbolizing the entry to Hell, prepares to consume the stream of fire and the sinners caught in it. At the dragon's mouth, Satan, large and black, has corralled a group of clergymen with a chain wrapped around his right forearm and is dragging them to Hell. With his right claw, he clutches some patriarchs and kings wearing their crowns. At Satan's elbow, a queen, also wearing a crown, is engulfed in the flames. The royal figures nabbed by Satan are usually identified as Constantine V (r. 741–775), the iconoclastic emperor also known as Constantine the Dung-named (Kopronomos); Julian the Apostate, the archetypal wicked tyrant; Ahab and Rehoboam, two kings of Israel or

Herod and Herodias, the mother of Salome. Meanwhile, the army of demons toil to drag souls to Hell. One menacingly brandishes a torch, and another a trident.

This graphic composition of the Second Coming and Last Judgment strongly contrasts the fate of the condemned and the saved to deliver the message of salvation through good deeds. The message is also conveyed through inscriptions beneath the scroll of heaven. On the left side of the engraving are the words of Christ to the righteous:

ΔΕΥΤΕ ΟΙ ΕΥΛΟΓΙΜΕΝΟΙ ΤΟΥ
ΠΑΤΡΟC ΜΟΥ ΚΑΗΡΟΝΟΜΗCΑΤΕ
ΤΗΝ ΗΤΙΜΑCΜΕΝΗΝ ΥΜΗΝ
ΒΑ(CΙΑΕΙΑΝ)

(Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world) (Matthew 25:34). On the right are those imparted to the sinners:

ΠΟΡΕΥΕCΘΕ ΑΠ ΕΜΟΥ ΟΙ
ΚΑΘΡΑΜΕΝΟΙ ΕΙC ΤΟ ΠΥΡ ΤΟ
ΑΙΩΝΙΟΝ ΤΟ Η(ΤΟΙΜΑCΜΕΝΟΝ)

(You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared [for the devil and his angels]) (Matthew 25:41).¹⁰

II. Sins and Punishment

Scenes of Hell occupy a large band at the bottom of the main composition. Nine rectangular compartments contain illustrations of individual sins and the requisite torments associated with them. Such depictions of punishment for committing sins were common in the late Byzantine period.¹¹

The first compartment, on the far left, features a confession and is followed by scenes of the sinners being punished. Their sins relate to money, social proscriptions (including one specifically targeting women), religious belief, crimes, and morality in general.

In the images, demons attack or threaten the damned with spears, torches, and their bare hands. Some of the sinners burn in the flames or are seized by serpents emerging from the mouth of the demons. Inscriptions



above each scene identify what is taking place in them. From left to right, the scenes are as follows:

Η ΑΓΙΑ ΕΞΟΜΟΛΩΓΗΣΙΣ
Holy confession

ΚΟΛ(ΑΖΟΝΤΑΙ) ΦΩΝΕΙΣ ΚΑΙ
ΠΡΟΔΟΤΑΙ
Murderers and betrayers are punished

ΚΟΛΑ(ΖΟΝΤΑΙ) ΚΛΕΙΠΤΕ ΚΑΙ
ΤΟΚΙΣΕ
Thieves and usurers are punished

Κ(Ο)ΛΑΖ(ΟΝΤΑΙ) ΠΟΡΝΗ ΚΑΙ
ΑΡCΕΝΟΚΙΤΑΙ
Prostitutes and those who seduce men
are punished

ΚΟΛΑΖ(ΟΝΤΑΙ) ΦΘΟΝΕΡΟΙ
ΥΠΕΡΙΦΑΝΟΙ
The jealous and arrogant are punished

ΚΟΛΑ(ΖΟΝΤΑΙ) ΨΕΥΤΑΙ ΚΑΙ
ΕΠΙΟΡΚΟΙ
Liars and perjurers are chastised

ΚΟΛΑ(ΖΟΝΤΑΙ) ΦΙΛ[Α]ΡΓΥΡΟΙ
ΚΑΙ ΑΡΠΑΓΕΣ
The greedy and rapacious are punished

ΚΟΛΑ(ΖΟΝΤΑΙ) ΜΑΓΟΙ ΚΑΙ
ΣΙΚΟΦΑΝΤΕ
Sorcerers and swindlers are punished

ΚΟΛΑΖΟ(ΝΤΑΙ) Η ΑΡΝΗΤΑΙ ΤΟΥ
ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ
Deniers of Christ are punished

This well-preserved paper icon is representative of the artistic trends in nineteenth-century monastic communities, including Mount Athos, where the prototype originated. Compared to Byzantine models, this version of the Second Coming and Last Judgment is more graphically detailed. It also differs in translating the images from the Scriptures and the other liturgical books commonly available to the monks.

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2 For a corpus of paper icons, see Dori Papastratou, *Χάρτινες Εικόνες: Ορθόδοξα θρησκευτικά χαρακτηριστικά, 1665–1899*, 2 vols. (Athens: Papastratos, 1986). See also Anastasia Tourta, ed., *Θρησκευτικά χαρακτηριστικά από τη συλλογή της Ντόρης Παπαστράτου* (Thessaloniki: Museum of Byzantine Culture, 1995); Tourta, “Χαλκογραφικές πλάκες της δωρεάς Δαρά,” *Μουσείο Βυζαντινού Πολιτισμού* 7 (2000): 48–60; Oksana Yurchyshyn-Smith, “Rare Paper Icons from Mount Athos: Addenda to *Paper Icons: Greek Orthodox Religious Engravings, 1665–1899* by Dory Papastratou,” *Print Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (2015): 143–161.

3 Cyril Mango and Ahmet Ertuğ, *Chora: The Scroll of Heaven* (Bern: Ertuğ and Kocabiyik, 2000), 195–207; Robert Ousterhout, *The Art of Kariye Camii* (London: Scala Publishers and Archaeology and Art Publications, 2002), 111–113. On the Last Judgment in Byzantium, see Marcel Angheben et al., eds., *Le Jugement dernier. Entre Orient et Occident* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 2007); Nancy P. Ševčenko, “Some Images of the Second Coming and the Fate of the Soul in Middle Byzantine Art,” in *Apocalyptic Themes*

in *Early Christianity*, ed. Robert Daly, Holy Cross Studies in Patristic Theology and History (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 250–272. See also Angeliki Lympieropoulou, ed., *Hell in the Byzantine World*, vol. 1, *Essays: A History of Art and Religion in Venetian Crete and the Eastern Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

4 See Nil Özlem Pektaş, “The First Greek Printing Press in Constantinople (1625–1628),” (PhD diss., Royal Holloway, University of London, 2014); Pektaş, “The Beginnings of Printing in the Ottoman Capital: Book Production and Circulation in Early Modern Istanbul,” *Osmanlı Bilimi Araştırmaları* 16, no. 2 (2015): 3–32.

5 Papastratou, *Χάρτινες Εικόνες*, no. 52 (0,56 × 0,80 m).

6 Papastratou, *Χάρτινες Εικόνες*, no. 51 (0,48 × 0,68 m).

7 See Warren T. Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon: Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 17–20, 171–174. For the iconography of Christ as the Great Archpriest in the Palaiologan period, see Titos Papamastorakis, “Η μορφή του Χριστού Μεγάλου Αρχιερέα / The Representation of Christ as the Great Arch-Priest,” *DChAE* 17 (1993–1994): 67–78 (in Greek with English summary).

8 Victoria Kepetzi, “Quelques remarques sur l'enroulement du ciel dans l'iconographie byzantine du Jugement Dernier,” *DChAE* 17 (1993/1994): 99–112.

9 Possibly a variation of *Acta ecclesiae Hierosolymorum*, *Analecta Ecclesiae Hierosolymorum* 9, ed. Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ανάλεκτα*

Περσολυμνική Σαχολογία, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: Ek tou typographeiou V. Kirsbaum [B. Kirschbaum], 1894), 129, l.15.

10 *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, accessed October 13, 2020, <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Revised-Standard-Version-NRSV-Bible/>.

11 See discussion in Ioannis P. Chouliarás, “The Post-Byzantine Iconography of the Individual Punishments of the Sinners in the Depiction of Hell in Northwestern Greece. Differences and Similarities with the Cretan School of Painting,” *Zograf* 40 (2016): 141–158; Ioanna Bitha, “Παραστάσεις της Δευτέρας Παρουσίας στη Ρόδο (13ος αι. – π. 1500) / Representations of the Last Judgment in the Island of Rhodes, Greece (13th c. – ca. 1500),” in *Αφιέρωμα στον Ακαδημαϊκό Παναγιώτη Α. Βοκοτόπουλο*, ed. Basilis Katsaros and Anastasia Tourta (Athens: Εκδόσεις Καπόν, 2015), 441–456 (in Greek with English Summary); Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, “The Murals of the Narthex. The Paintings of the Late Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries,” in *Asinou Across Time. Studies in the Architecture and Murals of the Panagia Phorbiotissa, Cyprus*, ed. Annemarie Weyl Carr and Andréas Nicolaïdēs (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2012), 146–148. See also Doula Mouriki, “An Unusual Representation of the Last Judgment in a Thirteenth Century Fresco at St. George near Kouvaras in Attica,” *DChAE* 8 (1975/1976): 145–172.