Wood-carved church-screens in Cyprus of the period of Ottoman rule (1571-1878)

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We aim at tracing, recording, plotting and studying (via comparison, evaluation, dating) the “Wood-Carved Templa of Cyprus during the Turkish Occupation (1571-1878)”, which up to this day, have not been studied in a methodical or comprehensive manner. We have located about 100 woodcarvings and their fragments (Sanctuary Doors, Crucifixes at the top of the iconostasis flanked by Theotokos and John the Evangelist [the so-called lypera]) which date back from the 16th century to 1878. No works have been traced back to the first 50 years of the Turkish Occupation (1571-1620). The 17th century templa follow the structure and adornment of the 16th century templa, with some minor variations, are to be found mostly in churches of villages or monasteries on the mountainous or semi-mountainous Cyprus and contain few inscriptions that have survived. More 18th century - especially of the second half - templa have been found. Much information regarding their painters, woodcarvers, the prelates, etc is derived from the inscriptions written or incised on the woodcarvings. Most of the templa that were constructed during the abovementioned century follow the standards of the 17th century and mainly belong to village churches. From the middle of the century a new type of templa, now in a baroque style, is also found in town churches and monasteries both in Cyprus and Greece. It is characterized by a more complex structure and rich and impressive decoration. A new, simple type of temple, with printed decoration and without gilding also emerges in the same period. The production of wood-carved templa continues through the 19th century with a 30-year interruption (1821-1851) due to the Greek War of Independence, during which we observe the construction of isolated parts but not of integral works. Only a small number of templa follow the standards of the 17th century, whilst most are constructed according to the new model which emerged in the mid-18th century, with some minor variations. One templon has been found to follow generally the simple type of the 18th century. Nineteenth century templa adorn mostly churches in villages and towns, while very few adorn monasteries.