

***Founders of churches and donors of ecclesiastical objects
of the period of Ottoman rule in Cyprus (1571-1878)***

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In the present doctoral thesis, the depictions of donors and founders in Orthodox churches and monasteries of Cyprus during the period of Turkish rule (1571 - 1878) are examined in their entirety. The originality of the thesis consists in the fact that no study or collection of the whole of the preserved material has been carried out to date. The depictions of the donors, clerics and laity, have been located in wall-paintings, icons on wood, metallic icon revetments and works of ecclesiastical craftsmanship, on carved wooden iconostases, on wooden panels (*thorakia*), on marble and paper. The examples that have been gathered throughout the island are ninety seven and furnish valuable information concerning the act of donation from historical, social, and artistic points of view, in urban centres of the period as well as in the countryside. Through the depictions of donors, social classes and gradations are made clear, while in certain instances they display their coat of arms. Through scenes of everyday life, such as illness, murder, medical treatments, shipwreck and salvage, important information is gathered. The current study is also informative on issues concerning Church History, religious faith and the activities of the subjugated Church of Cyprus. The Church lays strong emphasis on its autocephalous character, and for this reason the tradition of its privileges is depicted, as well as the emblems of this tradition. For the first time in the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art of Cyprus, portraits of Archbishops of Cyprus as donors make their appearance in paintings; in addition to archbishops, metropolitan bishops and the lower clergy are also represented as donors. Several monks, especially abbots from Cyprus' Orthodox monasteries -which flourished under Turkish rule- are depicted as donors. The portraits of the donors are both stylised and real. Moreover, representations of the clergy have made the study of the evolution and decoration of Byzantine sacerdotal vestments possible. The sartorial dressing preferences of the donors, as they are represented in the dedicatory scenes, are important for the reconstruction of clothing habits of the time. The dress of the clerical donors is a combination of traditional and westernized influence until approximately the middle of the 17th century, when it begins to be more influenced by the Turkish dressing habits. Christian merchants, mainly those of the urban centres, adopt Turkish dress (*alla Turca*), as the Dragomans of the Seraglio, together with the members of their families. During the 19th century, apart from wearing local costume, donors are depicted dressed according to European fashion. The aspect of the pictures is sometimes purely ecclesiastical. They are also sometimes in a mixed manner or at other times worldly as by the so-called "double-level" representations, depending on the periods and the persons involved. The iconographical models in the dedicatory scenes are both established ones as well as more modern. The donors are usually shown holding or standing by a replica of the church in their depictions as founders, or show the monastic complex that they are offering to their protecting saint.