

The research project focuses on a category of paintings called "composite icons" (σύνθετες εικόνες) – icons consisting of two panels that are connected by inserting a smaller icon into a larger one. Icons of this category are numerous on Cyprus. They mostly date from the 16th century and have some unique features that are absent in composite icons from other areas. The aim of the project is to present, describe, and analyze the composite icons of Cyprus, as well as to investigate and reinterpret the unusual way in which older icons were reused by inserting them into larger panels.

Composite icons have received far less scholarly attention than the similar phenomenon in Western art known as *Einsatzbilder*. In the case of composite icons, the act of insertion is usually mentioned together with other methods used to keep icons in good condition. The act of insertion should be reconsidered, since the larger panels were added not only to keep the smaller icons in good condition, but also to enable them to be transported, presented more effectively, and venerated, while the reason for the method of insertion was to create a sense of uniqueness for the object captured within by distinguishing the inserted element and drawing attention to it. In some Cypriot examples, the inserts can be hidden, revealed, or even removed, so this group deserves further study.

The project aims not only to analyze their iconography, style, and form in order to date both panels of each composite icon and to determine when they were combined, but also to present their subsequent use and reuse by tracing any evidence of adaptation to new contexts or changes in their functions, modes of perception, and presentation. The methods of art history will be enriched by non-invasive material analysis and digital imaging techniques, as they offer a wide range of data invisible to the naked eye, such as information about the painting materials and techniques used, as well as the subsequent history of the icons and their modifications and restorations over time.