

What if the Priest is out of Reach? Strategies of Absolution in Greek Devotional Literature. The Case of Agapios Landos

Abstract

Devotional literature provides a distinctive insight into practices of absolution in the Greek Orthodox community. Agapios Landos (1595-1657) exemplifies the cultural transfer from Catholic to Orthodox devotional practices and representations. Adapting the Tridentine discourse on the sacrament of penance, his limited understanding of Latin theology prevented him from fully grasping its doctrine. Beyond the core discourse on penance in *Salvation of Sinners*, and in his sermons, Landos invented new penitential practices, promoting direct confession to God, physical penance for minor sins, and rituals like drinking holy water for procatharsis, inspired both by Italian devotional prints and Athonite customs. His synthesis of Catholic and Orthodox elements resulted in a heterogeneous, context-dependent yet original discourse on forgiveness.

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