scale: approximately x 2

3006. Icon of the Great Martyr and Healer Saint Panteleimon.

Byzantine 12th - 13th century.

Red steatite. 4.6 x 4 x 0.7 cm

Inscribed with the usual abbreviation for *ho agios* on the right, ΠΑΝΤ/ΛΕ on the left, and EM in ligature on the right.

**Provenance: Anonymous Sale; Christie's, London, 12 December 1984, lot 33.
Anonymous Sale; Christie's, New York, 18 December 1997, lot 211.
Jeffrey Spier, Senior Curator of Antiquities, J. Paul Getty Museum, prior to 2010;
Acquired from the above, 19 January 2010 by a New England private collector;
Alexander Collins, decorative arts, the Wallace Collection, London.**

Saint Panteleimon (transl. 'All-Merciful') in Eastern Christianity is one of the early Christian medical practitioners who refused payment. He was a martyr of Nicomedia in Bithynia during the Persecution by Diocletian in 305 AD. He is venerated as a healer and is the patron

saint of physicians. He is typically shown, as here, frontally, head and shoulders, holding his martyr's cross and a medicinal box.

The object was likely worn as a pendant. The unusually good condition and the absence of a boss at the top for threading a cord suggest it may have been cased in wood, perhaps with silver revetment.

Steatite, along with ivory, was used in Byzantium between the 10th and 14th centuries for luxurious fine quality carving. The definitive work on the subject is Ioli Kalavrezou-Maxeiner's two volume *Byzantine icons in Steatite*, (Der Österrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, 1985). The Dumbarton Oaks professor publishes about a hundred pendants, many of them fragmentary, relating to our example.
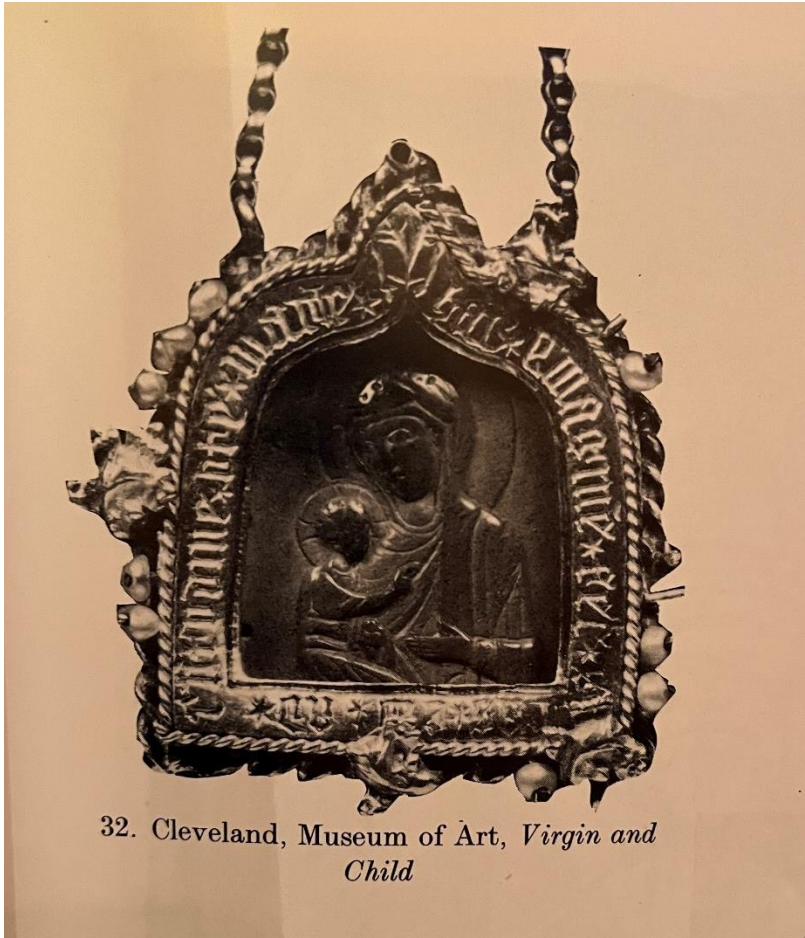
 scale 1:1

Fig. 1. St George, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC

A close comparison is a pendant steatite icon in Dumbarton Oaks (Fig. 1). The work is less refined than ours (Kalavrezou-Maxeiner describes the hatching on the border as 'crude workmanship'.)
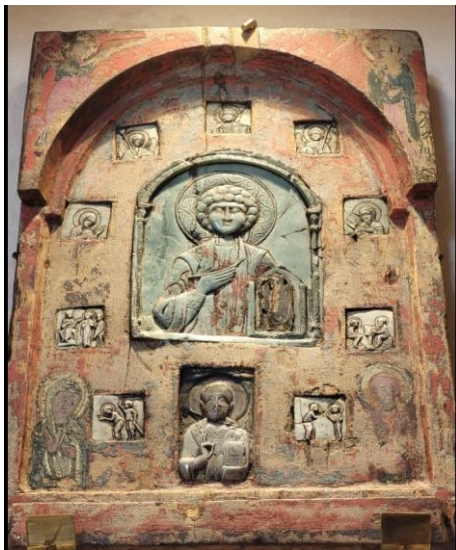
Some other examples are illustrated in the op. cit.

32. Cleveland, Museum of Art, *Virgin and Child*

 scale 1:1

Steatite of Saint Pantalaimon, 12th c, Grottaferrata Monastery.