ΔΕΛΤΙΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ

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The article deals with the analytical presentation and suggests a preliminary best possible restoration of two epigrams in the church of Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona, in Mesa Mani. The epigrams constitute rare examples of inscriptions in verse surviving today in the region. Their condition is poor; the text is considerably mutilated and certain of the survived parts appear quite faded. However, close examination and scrutiny from epigraphic and palaeographic point of view prove them aesthetically sound and intellectually erudite scripts, which furthermore add to our historical knowledge and provide material for the literacy assessment of the Byzantine Maine, during the post Frankish period. The associated historic data point to the dating of both the inscriptions to the summer of 1264.

**Keywords**

13th century; inscriptions in verse; epigram; Byzantine Mani; Hagioi Theodoroi Kaphiona.

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The article gives an analytic presentation and suggests a preliminary best possible restoration of two epigrams in the church of Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona, in Mesa Mani. The epigrams constitute rare examples of inscriptions in verse surviving today in the region. Their condition is poor; the text is considerably mutilated and certain of the survived parts appear quite faded. However, close examination and scrutiny from epigraphic and palaeographic point of view prove them aesthetically sound and intellectually erudite scripts, which furthermore add to our historical knowledge and provide material for the literacy assessment of the Byzantine Maine, during the post Frankish period. The associated historic data point to the dating of both the inscriptions to the summer of 1264.
areas of the epigrams have been recently cleaned and maintained (Fig. 1).

This article presents a first attempt to systematically analyze the two epigrams. However, without advanced methods—for example infrared imaging—to procure secure renderings of the faded letters, a certain degree of divinatio for the restoration of the missing and hardly discernible parts of the inscriptions is unavoidable. For this reason, probable interpretations to fill the lacunae in the texts will be offered. The transcription of certain parts of the texts provided below should be considered preliminary. Despite the difficulties in completely reinstating the epigrams, however, they constitute valuable examples of late Byzantine Maniate epigraphy for their linguistic, artistic and historical significance.

Epigrams compared to inscriptions in prose are proofs of higher literacy and aesthetics and as such have constantly been treated with special care. The epigrams in question are not exceptions. The first of them (though mutilated) is largely preserved. The second, unfortunately in much worse condition, is equally important. It is written in the same scholarly style as the former and was probably executed by the same hand. The script is also of the distinctive majuscule style, although slightly less elaborate. The very poor state of this epigram allows little more than one third of the letters to be discerned. Only the first verse can be proposed (nevertheless with some reservation), while of the third only the last three syllables have survived.

The distinguishing monumental decoration of Hagioi Theodoroi in Kaphiona and its epigrams, following Drandakis, should be attributed to a workshop originating in Constantinople. This assertion was based on the quality of the paintings as well as on the contents of the inscription in the main sanctuary, which names the emperor’s step-brother, the Sebastokrator Konstantinos Palaiologos. From 1263, Konstantinos was in Mani for a short

Part 1. The six-verse epigram in distinctive majuscule at Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona, south wall

Written in a scholarly style, the epigram consists of six5 verses in the commonly used Byzantine dodecasyllable (“iambic trimeters” according to Drandakis), incorporated in a four line script above the lintel of the entrance in the south wall6. Estimated per line (on a average) are about 40 letters; there are no voids between the words. The legible part is graphically restored, as accurately as possible to its original appearance, in Fig. 2.

Based on the existence of the word ΠΟΛΕΜΙΟΝ (“πολεμίων,” “of enemies”) at the terminus, the epigram is plausibly devoted to a saint with military powers, either Theodore Stratilates or Theodore Tyron. The word ΠΟΛΕΜΙΟΝ, combined with the words “ΠΥΛΗ, ΠΥΛΑ” (several times in line 1) and the word “ΠΟΛΗΝ” in the third line, supports the idea that the epigram is a text inspired by military concerns. It refers to a town and probably its gates in a hostile environment. The town, whose name is not revealed, seems to be in imminent danger. The text further informs the reader that the people of the town were pleading for assistance against the enemy, most likely invoking the help of St. Theodore Stratilates, the military saint depicted in large scale in the sanctuary apse.


\( ΠΟΛΕΜΙΟΝ \) (plural). Although orthographically incorrect, is definitely preferred from \( ΠΟΛΕΜΙΟΝ \) (singular) due to the existing accent and the metrical rules of the dodecasyllable (accent on the penultimate).
The scribe attempts to give to the letters an elegant epigraphic style, likely of Constantino-

palopolitan influence. The text reflects the extraordinary conditions prevailing during the time when the church's decoration was carried out and underlines the significance and status of the donors mentioned in the (older) principal inscription in the sanctuary apse, the bishop Georgios of Veligosti and an unnamed synkellos.

The epigram is written by a literate person who was most probably not a native of Mani. The orthography of the painter is considered quite satisfactory. His literacy level is overall ranked “very good” (Error \(\text{Index} = 0.076\))\(^{10}\). By his consistency in the use of accents (although sometimes erroneous), he facilitates our understanding of the more obscure parts of the text.

The preserved part of the six-verse epigram is rendered below with the verses separated for convenient. The second verse—depending on the possible readings—is quoted in two alternatives:\(^{11}\):

1. \(+ΠΡΩ ΤΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ΠΡΑΓΩ ΣΟΙ || Ω^* Ε(ΕΟ)Υ^*\)
2a. \(ΠΥΛΑΣ ΤΗ(CE) || ΔΕΜΑΝΤ || [...]−ΩΛΑΠΙ\)
2b. \(ΠΥΛΑΣ ΤΗ(CE) || ΔΕΜΑΝΤ || [...]−ΩΛΑΠΙ\)
3. \(ΠΙΣΤΕΙ ΔΥΣΩΠΩ* || ΕΚ ΞΕΟΥ^* ΣΚΡ ΚΑΡΔΙΑΣ\)
4. \(+ΤΑΠΕΙΝΟ(Ο) || [...]−ΩΣ|| ΩΛΗΝ ΔΕ ΣΚΙΕΠΕ|| Ή−Ν ΔΕ ΕΙΚΟ(ΝΩΝ)|| [...] ΠΟΛΕΜΙΟΝ\)

or in minuscule (keeping the orthography):

1. \(+ΠΡΩ ΤΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ηράφω σοι || Ω(ΕΟ)Υ(ΠΥΛΗ\)
2a. \(ΠΥΛΑΣ ης ΕΗαή || Ωντ [...]−ΩΑ,Ωφι\)

... the prosody of the second syllable (should be long) to be properly reinstated the same could be valid for the orthographically wrong omega (in the place of an omikron) of the “−ΩΛΑΠΙ” at the end of the second verse; since accent and quantity never stand in opposition to each other, the stressing at the initiating syllable of the first verse could perhaps be the reason for the provokingly erroneous orthography of the preposition “ΠΡΩ” (instead of the correct “ΠΡΟ”, before, in front of).

The discussion of the literacy level of scribes and painters has always been a very delicate topic. Under this prism the fact that the orthography of the epigram in question is herewith considered as “quite satisfactory” is evidential only and does not necessarily constitute a concrete proof of high literacy level from the part of the executive person (i.e. the correct spelling of an inscription is not a necessary and sufficient condition for high literacy of the scribe).

Further questions are often posed at such circumstances, as: what was the quality of the script that the scribe had at hand? Additionally, what someone today calls “poor orthographic quality” in certain cases may reflect regional peculiarities. On this subject see also H. Eikeneuer, “Ορθογραφική και συναίσθηση στην επιγραφή των Παλαιοχριστιανικών ιερατικών εργασιών στην Εγκατάσταση του 5ου αιώνα” in Συνέδριο Επιγραφικού Μουσείου Ελλάδος: Μηνύματα στην εικαστική και επιγραφική τέχνη (1980-2000), Thessaloniki 2000, 197-205.

\(^{10}\) For the literacy assessment of the early Palaeologan period, see Maria Panayotidi in her article “Οι γραμματικές γνώσεις της κλασικής επιγραφής του 1ου γύρου της Μάνης” in DChAE 24 (2003), 185-194.

\(^{11}\) The “^*” signals change of line and the “^” a breath. The symbol “−” is in the place of the abbreviation sign. The symbol “^a” stands for the circumflex.
NEW EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE FROM MANI. THE KAPHIONA EPIGRAMS

1. Line 1 (verse 1): the first verse is readable in full. The invocation “ΠΥΛΗ” of a holy person acting as a supplicant’s intermediary before the Lord, is not uncommon in Byzantine inscriptions. In a 13th century epigram in the monastery of Kato Panagia, Arta the suppliant addressing himself to the Mother of Christ calls her “ΦΩΤΟΣ ΠΥΛΗ”12. In Kaphiona, in the first verse, we see the poetic use of the same word “ΠΥΛΗ” in three separate occasions: the entrance to the church, the acceptance before the Lord and most probably the gate of a town. The efficiently inserted interjection “Ω” serves metric and prosodic requirements. In the abbreviated word Θ(ΕΟ)Υ (υ) the scribe has offered both the circumflex and the abbreviation symbol, so the two signs can be clearly distinguished between each other. The circumflex is bow shaped, while the abbreviation sign is a wavy horizontal line.

2. Line 2 (verse 2): six letters (Δ, Ε, Μ, Α, Ν and Τ) at the beginning are confirmed. The Τ and the Α can also be confirmed. Above the Α a faded horizontal stroke is noticed. This obscure stroke cannot be unambiguously acknowledged as circumflex. It could equally be the sign of abbreviation. The remaining two letters are in very bad condition, retaining only their lower parts. Reservedly the lower curves of Α and Ε can be discerned. If the mark is the circumflex and the first letter is considered as Α, we are speaking either of the article “Ο” or, combined with the following E, the pronoun “ΘΗ” (“of this”, also indicative) could be a possibility, given that the subsequent E rather belongs to the following word in the next line13. What is formed by the letters “Τ, Ε, Α and Ε” is critically related to the deciphering of the second verse in next line 2.

Notes

1. Line 1 (verse 1): the first place omitted for some reason or not discernible today. If the mark is the abbreviation sign, the pronoun “ΘΗ” (“ΤΑΥΤΗΘΗ”) (“of this”, also indicative) could be a possibility, given that the subsequent E rather belongs to the following word in the next line13. What is formed by the letters “Τ, Ε, Α and Ε” is critically related to the deciphering of the second verse in next line 2.

2b +ΠΔΛΑς η(˜)ς / δείμων τον καθηγητή Ν. Β. Δρανδάκη
3 +ΠΔλεις γνωστή; / εκ ΤΔυθης χαράς
4 +ΤΩΠΟΝΟΥ; [[...]] ος
5 +Πάλλων δε σκέπε η-ν / δείμω (νος)
6 + [...] [polymion]

2. Line 1 (verse 2) the word ΤΑΒΛΗ is definitely recognized as the first word of the verse. Of the last four line letters the Σ and less the Α can also be confirmed. Above the Α a faded horizontal stroke is noticed. This obscure stroke cannot be unambiguously acknowledged as circumflex. It could equally be the sign of abbreviation. The remaining two letters are in very bad condition, retaining only their lower parts. Reservedly the lower curves of Α and Ε can be discerned. If the mark is the circumflex and the first letter is considered as Α, we are speaking either of the article “Ο” or, combined with the following E, the pronoun “ΘΗ” (“of this here”, indicative) where the delta of the particle “ΔΕ” is either in metric and prosodic requirements. In the abbreviated word Θ(ΕΟ)Υ (υ) the scribe has offered both the circumflex and the abbreviation symbol, so the two signs can be clearly distinguished between each other. The circumflex is bow shaped, while the abbreviation sign is a wavy horizontal line.

3. Line 2 (verse 2) six letters (Δ, Ε, Μ, Α, Ν and Τ) at the beginning are confirmed. The Τ and the Α can also be confirmed. Above the Α a faded horizontal stroke is noticed. This obscure stroke cannot be unambiguously acknowledged as circumflex. It could equally be the sign of abbreviation. The remaining two letters are in very bad condition, retaining only their lower parts. Reservedly the lower curves of Α and Ε can be discerned. If the mark is the circumflex and the first letter is considered as Α, we are speaking either of the article “Ο” or, combined with the following E, the pronoun “ΘΗ” (“of this”, also indicative) could be a possibility, given that the subsequent E rather belongs to the following word in the next line13. What is formed by the letters “Τ, Ε, Α and Ε” is critically related to the deciphering of the second verse in next line 2.

11 Between the indicative pronoun solutions, the “ΘΗ”, “ΔΕ” option is in a first approach preferable compared to the “ΘΗ”, “ΤΑΥΤΗΘΗ” option, since it is conception-wise less vague. However, both options incorporate some hardly encountered vulgarism—provided they are considered as parts of an epigram that seems to have an erudite origin—, since they refer to a town which should have been mentioned earlier or right after (the town in question is, instead, mentioned quite later, in the fourth line). In any case the option “ΘΗ” is obligatory to be written in abbreviated form and not as full word (“ΤΑΥΤΗΘΗ”) in order to conform to meter prerequisites of the second verse (twelve syllables and ending accent on the penult imate).


ΔΧΑΕ ΑΙΦ (2017), 287-310

291
2a ΗΥΑΑC TH( *)(*)C E / ΔΕÌΜΑΝΤ [ U || _ x ]
~ΩΛΑΡ15

The “pronoun” (indicative) alternatives can do with both the interpretations of the mark on top of “THC” of the first line. Considering the horizontal stroke above the “THC” (“TH(*)or(*)C) as abbreviation sign (¬) and not as tonismos -in this case the circumflex (¬)16, we option ourselves to deal with the “THC” as the –right previously discussed “pronoun” alternative “TAYTHC”. Assigning instead the circumflex above the “THC”, we option to the other pronoun alternative “TH*C(A)E”, where the Δ is either omitted or not discernible. In both cases the word formed by the sequence of the six letters “Δ-Ε-Μ-Α-
N-T” needs to be specially examined. It is probably originating from the verb “διόμο” (build, erect), often used in epigrams and dedicatory inscriptions17. The correct spelling, in all its credible applications, dictates the presence of an iota after the epsilon. Indeed, carefully observed after magnification, the horizontal stroke of the letter Ε seems to be on purpose extended and tied to the left vertical stroke of the M, therefore an escaping notice ligating iota (“I”) following the E could be a possibility (Fig. 4a, b). The two or three missing letters of the word in question could conceivably be further inferred: a preceding E is expectable, while (a) either a lost end-letter O or (b) two lost ending letters EC or AC are possible. The “pronoun” alternative, although to a certain degree speculative, is no inferior to the “article” alternative mentioned before. Besides its acceptance gives enticing solution and for this reason it will be supplementary commented.

Having the preceding ambiguous –vs. page 291– ending letter of the first line confirmed as E and staying in the “THC” interpretation as pronoun, we are faced with the following three options (pertaining to the amended letters’ sequence: “Δ-Ε-Ι-Μ-Α-N-T”), to decide upon

1 “...TH*C E / ΔΕÌΜΑΝΤ(O)…”
2 “...TH*C(A)E / ΔΕÌΜΑΝΤ(EC)…”
3 “...TH’C E / ΔΕÌΜΑΝ T(?)…”

Fig. 4a, b. Hagiai Theodori, Kaphiona. The six-verse epigram. Second verse (detail): «ΔΕÌΜΑΝΤ».

in minuscule:
4 “...της ε / δειματ(ο)…”
5 “...της(δ)ε / δειμαντ(ες)…”
6 “...της ε / δειμαν(π)…”

The third option must be discarded due to the accent. Although the latter is drawn as grave (should be acute accent) the tonismos is actually on the diphthong EI, not at the preceding E and this excludes the third option. Of the two remaining the first “TH*C EΔΕÌΜΑΝΤO” (passive voice) is interpreted as: “(the gates) of this town were built ...” and the second “TH*C(A)E ΔΕÌΜΑΝ-
T(EC)” (active voice participle) as: “(the gates) of this one (town) having built ...”. In both readings it is evident that the first half of the second verse, incorporating the word ΠΥΑΑC, speaks about the erection, upgrading or reinforcing of gates. Which of the two options is more probable has to do with the comprehension, decipherment and grammar of the next part of the epigram. Before proceeding with this examination, we should emphasize that the vocabulary used for describing the act of erecting an edifice of any kind combined with the word ΠΙΣΣΕΙ (faith) in the following verse is common in epigrams18. Common also is the use of words having

15 Rhoby, “The Structure”, op.cit. (n. 6), 329.

18 Rhoby, “The Structure”, op.cit. (n. 6), 319.
NEW EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE FROM MANI. THE KAPHIONA EPIGRAMS

The interpretation of “ΩΛΑΡΙ” is decisive for the overall comprehension of the epigram. Taking into consideration metric prerequisites of the dodecasyllable, three syllables before it are missing. Seeking for a verb, adverb, adjective, common or proper noun etc associated with the ending “ΩΛΑΡΙ” that would help the verse in question to make sense, due to the extremely limited choices, I initially came to the rather obvious name “ΧΧ(Κ)ΩΛΑΡΠ” (genitive of “ΧΧ(Κ)ΟΛΑΡΠΚ” coming from “ΧΧΟΛΑΡΠΟΣ”). Keeping in the same etymology, another possibility is that the “ΩΛΑΡΙ” is not genitive but the nominative plural “ΧΧΟΛΑΡΠΙΟΙ” of “ΧΧΟΛΑΡΠΟΣ” where the ending syllable “-Ω” is omitted for haplography reasons.19 The haplography interpretation is equally convenient with the genitive “ΧΧ(Κ)ΩΛΑΡΠ”, since it avoids the preproparoxytone pronunciation of the verse end. If this is so, the designation of the Byzantine military battalions of “Σχολάριοι (Scholarii)” is perhaps for the first time encountered in the Mani.21 The “Scholarii” assumption, if valid, is quite interesting and coincides with the military spirit of the epigram. However, in looking at the part of the inscription before the Omega (“Ω”), the cases of the letters C and X (or the C and K) do not seem probable in so far as dependable visual indications in place to support them do not exist. What can be superficially seen there is the indistinct upper part of a curved letter or symbol, the form of which does not look to be any of the alphabet except, due to roundness (reservedly) the beta. In case the (uncial) beta is adopted for this place, the missing letters of the last word of the verse should be of a (family) name “ΕΜΒΟΛΑΡΠ” (“Εμβολάρη”) (genitive).20 This assumption fits grammatically with the “ΕΔΕΙΜΑΝΤΟ” option. The word “ἐμβολάω” survives today in Mani in the word “στενομπόλα” (narrow road, path). Surnames in Byzantium, as is well known, were often given after certain features of the named person.22 Thus, we are confronted with the possibility of another donor’s name in Mani, “(Εμ)βολαρ.” This name may be linked to an old story concerning the origin of the village Boularioi (Μπουλάριοι) in Mesa Mani, where the name of the village may derive from the (family or clan) name Εμβολαροι (Εμβολάριοι).23 Reservedly, assuming the above relation of castle defenses (i.e. gates) is something that needs further investigation. For this issue cf. comments by Foskolou, “Donor Inscriptions”, 457 and note 16. See also F. Spingou, “A Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion in 1175”, Byzantina Symmeikta 21 (2011), 137-168, 141.

18 The Church of “Nicholas tou Kasniti” in Kastoria, see Rhoys, “The Structure”, op.cit. (n. 6), 316.
19 See for example, F. Miklosich – J. Müller, Acta et Diplomata Graeca, IV, Vindobona, 1871, 132 (manuscript of 1259): “Ειρήνη πόθῳ ζέοντι ἡ σχολάρη και οἱ παῖδες.” Proper nouns ending at “–ΑΛΙΡ” instead of the orthographically correct omikron, does not constitute a problem since it could be considered used for reasons of prosody.
20 E. Mioni, Εἰσαγωγή στὴν ελληνικὴ παλαιογραφία, translated by N. Panayotakis, Athens 1979, 121.
21 N. Svoronos, Les Nouvelles des empereurs macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratèges, Athens 1994, #4.1.1.102; #5.1.44, 120. How soldiers may have participated in the rebuilding or repairing

of castle defenses (i.e. gates) is something that needs further investigation. For this issue cf. comments by Foskolou, “Donor Inscriptions”, 457 and note 16. See also F. Spingou, “A Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion in 1175”, Byzantina Symmeikta 21 (2011), 137-168, 141.

21 The slightly wavy horizontally extending stroke above the Ω may compensate for the intentionally omittal syllable “ΕΜ-”. “Εμβολάριοι” was also a term used for the poor people who inhabited the “εμβολῷ”, the arcades of Constantinople. See Ph. Kousoulas, Βεζαντινοί βίοι και πολιτισμός, 4 Athens 1951, 340. For the “Εμβολοί” of Constantinople, see A. Vernadakis, “Πόθεν τί βεζαντινό εμβόλο”, Παράρτημα τῆς Εφημερίδος “Αθηνά”, Athens 1909.
22 Ph. Kousoulas, Βεζαντινοί βίοι και πολιτισμός, 6 Athens 1951, 469.
23 N. Drandakis, Βεζαντινοί ποιητές τῆς Μένης Μάνης, Athens 1964, 17. Drandakis (op.cit., 61) conjectures that even the course execution of some illustrations in the Ai Stratios church at Boularioi may be attributed to the vulgaire style of local painters or originated from the poor “ομοθλωρίον” of Constantinople who happened to have been established at the village of Boularioi. It is important to recall that family names connected with the names of villages are diachronically common in the Mani (e.g. Erimouthis
is correct, a certain person (Em)νολαζις, perhaps a habitant of the village “Μπουλαριοί,” may have been in those days an important man in the region of appreciable financial means, who was in some way connected with building activities and was probably fairly literate. For the two missing syllables before “Β[ΩΛΑΠ]” either of the words “ΚΟΠΙΚ”, “ΚΟΠΙς”, ΜΟΧΘʾ” etc, often witnessed in epigrams, could be candidates in order the verb “ΕΔΙΜΑΝΤΟ” to be connected with the noun “[Β]ΩΛΑΠ”

However the separation and examination of the components of the script as above cannot satisfy the following observation: the significance of the church’s decorative program, the artistically exceptional execution of the paintings and the distinguished named donors in the sanctuary apse inscription negate the possibility an ordinary provincial donor as the commissioner of an epigram placed at a key point like the entrance of the church. A high ranking official of the clergy, secular or military origin is more likely. For these reasons the previous “Scholarii” alternative, being in all respects tempting, deserves further attention. Closer re-examination of the earlier discussed obscure letter or symbol before the “-ΩΛΑΠ” (after applying magnification), revealed a right inclined extension at the top of the afore-noticed bow. This extension appears to ligate with the corresponding upper horizontal extension of the following Omega left semi-curvature. Having beforehand examined in detail the end of the third line of the epigram, I noticed there one of the two differing executions of the “ΕΙ” (type B) to have its upper right inclined extension ligating with the left upper horizontal extension of the broken-line-style executed Kappa (cf “ΕΙΚΟ”). Given the same seems to be happening in the ambiguous character-space before the Omega of the “-ΩΛΑΠ”, the obscure “letter” in question can be the typical ligature “ΕΙ”. This assumption fits with the “ΔΕΙΜΑΝΤʾ” option. The preceding “ΕΙ” in the first line, combined with the letter Ω before it, bears an indicative meaning and is considered attached to the foregoing “Theta” as “THʾCE” (a sort of pronominal form) or “THʾC(Δ)Εʾ”, both meaning “this one”, where in the case of “THʾC(Δ)Εʾ” the “Δ”, if initially existed, is now faded out or it was poetic license omitted for sounding reasons. In both cases it serves metric and prosodic requisite (penultimate accent of the verse end).

The remaining couple of the verse syllables before the “-ΩΛΑΠ” could be any two-syllable word compatible with the spirit of the epigram ending in “ΕΙ” (stressed preferably on the penultimate). The ΠΙΣΕΙ could be a matching choice but it is used one word after and therefore should be exempted. The dative ΤΕΞΕΙ (ΤΑΧΟΧ, rapidity) used as adverb (“in short time”), although of differing concept to ΠΙΣΕΙ or similar, can be an option. Same root adverb (“ΤΑΧΙΣΤΑʾ”, in very short time) has been noticed in epigram B at the Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula. The ΤΕΞΕΙ is here preferred as it remains in the military spirit of the verse, at the same time implying an important accomplishment.

At this point we have to return and examine the “article” alternative of “ΘʾΕ”, introduced at the beginning of the second verse argument. We are yet compelled to rely on the aforementioned best available interpretation for the “-ΩΛΑΠ”. Since whatever letters might have been in the lost part of this verse elude even judicious speculation, without sacrificing the obviously inherent military spirit, the following divinatio is reservedly proposed:

\[
2\alpha \ ΡΥΛΑΣ ΤΗ ’ΕΩΕ ΕΙΔΕMI ANT(EPEIΓʾ)ΕΙ (ΧΧ)Ο \ ΑΠΙ(ΟΙ)
\]

\[
2\beta \ ΠΟΛΙζες της ΕΙΩΗΥ έντερεξη[δεν] δει Σχολάρη[οι]
\]

\[
28 \text{Possibility of an escaping attention Δ in this extremely faded part of the inscription is not to be rejected so far as the space between Ω and Ε in this exceptionally densely written verse appears to be a bit more than the usual in the rest of the epigram (see also below note 33).}
\]

\[
29 \text{See P. Katsafados, “New Evidence on the Dedicatory Inscription (13th c.) in the Church of Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula, Inner Mani”, DChAE 36 (2015), 275-288, fig. 13. The epigram in Ano Poula is few years posterior (ca. 1265) to the ones in Kaphiona and of less philological value.}
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NEW EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE FROM MANI. THE KAPHIONA EPIGRAMS

The verb “ἀντερείδω”30 (supportively defend, to hold firm against) is here leaved to denote martial action to be undertaken by the Scholarii in order to safeguard the “gates of Edem” (which could metaphorically represent the protection of the Orthodox from the threat of the Latin opponents). The ending syllable of the infinitive has been amputated for metric reasons. Comparable elision, for the same reason (metre), has been applied by the scribe of the three-verse epigram commented in the second part of this article (see below note 77).

Despite the eventual correctness of these inferences, the word ΧΟΛΑΡΙΟΙ still remains incomplete; its first letters seem to have been omitted. This is quite improbable for our learned scribe or at least the author of the text. The very good spelling of the epigram indicates adequate literacy. All signs, accents etc have mostly been used deliberately and must be seriously considered. Such is the aforesaid faded wavy stroke above the omega. Although it resembles a circumflex, it abounds from the bow shaped circumflexes of the epigram therefore its use as such is questionable. It could better serve a sort of abbreviation. A possible explanation is this: maybe the missing initial consonants CX of the word ΧΟΛΑΡΙΟΙ were purposefully replaced by this wavy line. For this replacement poetic license cannot be invoked. The replaced letters are consecutive consonants which affect neither the meter nor the prosody of the verse. Amputations at the beginning of words are hardly encountered.3 These are arguments against the “Scholarii” alternative. The only reasonable explanation is precipitous estimation of the available writing space.3

4. Line 2 (verse 3 and beginning of verse 4): The third verse is survived in full. Provocatively erroneous is the circumflex above the ΟΥ of the word “ΖΕΟΥΣ” (“ζοοῦσ”)  It reads as follows:

3 +ΠΙΣΤΕΙ ΔΥΣΩΠΩ || ΕΚ ΖΕΟΥΣ ΚΑΡΔΙΑΣ

3 +ΠΙΣΤΕΥΟ ΔΥΣΩΠΩ || ΕΚ ΖΕΟΥΣ ΚΑΡΔΙΑΣ

This one and the first are the only fully preserved verses of the epigram. They are both soundly structured and point to an inspired and learned author.

5. Line 3 (verse 4 and partially 5): The fourth verse is almost completely lost. It is interesting to note that the epigram (maybe due to its special content, i.e. pleading for the saint’s assistance in military matters), at first glance seems to deviate from the rather common personal supplication for support on the Day of the Last Judgment or for redemption of the supplicant’s sins (except for the contents of the third verse and probably the fourth). Restoration of this part of the epigram is quite debatable. The researcher has to speculate and decide which path to follow in order to comprehend the pervading spirit of the text. There are two choices. The military spirit is definitely there but the supplication cannot be ignored. The supplication issue does better with the word “ΤΑΠΕΙΝΟC” and the sense inherent in the preceding third verse, that first and proceeded to the second line, close to the completion of the second verse (maybe a little earlier, at the word “…ΔΕΙΜΑΝΤ…”, where, obviously having neglected to apply the usual abbreviation for the diphthong EI, he unfamiliarly ligated the epsilon with the mu in order to save the space of the iota). He realized that the remaining available interval for the last word ΧΟΛΑΡΙΟΙ was not sufficient and he decided to abstract some letters, the C, X and the OI. In the place of the first two he put the horizontal stroke, for the ending diphthong “-OI” he put nothing; he relied on the existing “haplography” with the preceding iota. He considered the remained part “ΩΛΑΡΙ”, marked with the abbreviation sign, as adequately representing the initial word MI, judgment of the available writing space may also be the reason for his erasing of an initially drawn left inclined stroke belonging initially to the Y of the syllable “ΠΥ” which follows the Λ in the first line (Fig. 2). This stroke is today almost completely faded out and is difficultly seen. To be further underlined that the second verse in full has 32 letters, while the rest have between 26-28 letters each. For this reason the writing of this verse appears denser than the others.

ΔΧΑΕ ΑΙΦ (2017), 287-330

31 Μικινά, Εισαγωγή op.cit. (n. 21), 116. The preposition “com-”, “com” at the beginning of a word in latin paleography is occasionally replaced by a certain symbol, but this is scarce (E. Thompson, Ἑγεμόνικον ελληνικῆς καὶ λατινικῆς παλαιογραφίας, translated by Sp. Lambros, Athens 1903, 187).
32 For the opposing element of the not orthographically correct omega (instead of om & &ron) of the word ΧΟΛΑΡΙΟΙ, vs. note 10.
33 Having the surface where the text would be written prepared, the scribe divided the available length for the script into six roughly equal segments, which he probably marked by the small crosses, the ones we now see separating the verses (I measured the spaces between the small crosses and found them al being about 60-65 cm apart). Then he started writing the epigram. Having ended with the

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is, the sentences: "Πίστει δυσωπῶ ἐκ ζεούσης καρδίας, ταταιν(...)". This expression fits properly with a plea for redemption of sins38. Considering the above, for the purpose of the following missing part restoration, certain words commonly used in supplicative expressions (such as ΙΚΕΤΗΣ, ΑΥΤΡΩ ΑΦΗΜΗ, ΧΡΕΟΣ, ΛΥΣΩ, ΑΨΩ, ΛΥΣΙΣ etc) can herewith be levied39. On the other hand, the second ("military") choice, if adopted, would be irrelevant with the plea for redemption of sins as above and should refer to matters related to the main subjects of the epigram, i.e. the martial actions and the hostilities-induced uncertainty of the community40. In the below attempted transcription, however, I have considered the first solution as more appropriate. Meter and prosody prerequisites are taken into account as far as possible.

6. Line 3 (verse 5). The enclitic ΔΕ after the "ΠΙΘΗΝ" is frequently seen in poetic scripts. Among other subjects it allows the scribe to interrelate verses of differing contents, as is here the case with the current fifth and the previous fourth. The verb ΚΕΠΕΙ (cover, protect) (also in present tense as earlier the verb ΔΥΣΙΠΠΩ), is common in epigrams (for instance as "σφαίρας με"17, optative). The following Η ligates with the adjacent Ν while a horizontal line (similar to the one observed previously on top of the Η in the first line) is also noticed above, suspecting presence of pronoun ("Η-Ν"). Theodecasyllable fifth verse is lacking its three ending syllables which belonged to the lost initial part of the fourth line. In order to conform to the penultimate accent of the verse (considering exceptionally in this case the rhyme too), in addition to the obvious ending -ΝΩΝ of the previous word ("ΕΙΚΟΥ") the epithet ΘΕΙΩΝ (holy) is chosen for this place35. To follow the prosody, the rendering must disregard the orthography and write the word as "θειν" in order to overcome the spondee. Such adjustments are common in Byzantine poetry41.

7. Line 4 (verse 6). The sixth verse, like the fourth, is also almost completely lost. Speculation is here unavoidable, words compatible with the inspiring idea of the epigram are selected to restore the missing section. These are the "ΠΙΝΝΥΣ" (ἰσονύς), "ΒΟΗΘΟΠΟ" (βοηθοίς), "ΑΝΤΙΚΘΟ" (ἀντικτόθη), again considering meter and prosody42. The participle "ΠΙΝΝΥΣ" is of the same root as the noun "ΠΙΜΗ" (strength, power) which most probably is now seen in the contemporary dedicatory epigram (ca. 1265) at the nearby church of Hagioi Theodori, Apsa Poaln. In Apsa Poaln St. Theodore Stratilates is similarly begged to offer his support through his "ΠΙΜΗ" in order to assist the supplicant in accomplishing a goal (in this case the building of a church)43. The last word of the verse, "ΠΟΛΕΜΙΟΝ" (πολεμίου, orthographically corrected "πολεμίου", "of enemies") in the Kaphonia epigram is critical in providing the impetus for the epigram and guiding for the subjective restoration of the last verse.

Considering the aforesaid, given that the second alternative transcription of the second verse must be twofold in order to incorporate both options of the previous "ΔΕΙΜΑΝΤ" interpretation, the possible renderings of the epigram are the following:

38 Attempting to comprehend what the poet was trying to impart to the beholder by the expression "ἐκ ἡποτού̂ λεύ" (by means of the holy icons), employing the portable icons as means of discouragement of the enemy cannot be excluded. cf. S Lampos, "Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς Κώδιξ 524", ΦΜΕ 8 (1911), 146, where St. Theodore Tyron, on the occasion of the transfer of his icon is begged for assistance against enemies; the same in Marcianus 524, ibid, 7, f1b; 51, f3b etc. One could imagine the scene, where clergyman, common people and military stood on the walls singing psalms and holding up holy icons during the offensive. The best-known such example, of course, is the role of the icon of the Virgin in the defense of the city of Constantinople.

39 e.g. see Lambros, "Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς Κώδιξ", op.cit. (n. 38), 29f. 22v, verse 10 "Ἀγιάστου τετρακότος τοῖς ἐντόθησις", instead of ἐντολησις.

40 The "ΒΟΗΘΟΠΟ" (βοηθοίς, optative) is preferred from the "ΒΟΗΘΕΙ" (βοηθεί, imperative), for keeping the accent on the 5th syllable before the (masculine) caesura.

Katsafados, "New Evidence", op.cit. (n. 29), fig. 13.

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35 See Rhoby, "The Structure", op.cit. (n. 6), 319.
36 See Rhoby, "The Structure", op.cit. (n. 6), Appendix, 328-332.
37 The "ἐκλύτρωσον Αἰγύπτιον σκέποις ἡ (holy)
38 The "ἐκλύτρωσον Αἰγύπτιον σκέποις ἡ (holy)
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41 Katsafados, "New Evidence", op.cit. (n. 29), fig. 13.
The text can be freely translated as follows:

1. Before the portal I write to you, oh! gate of the Lord
2a. The gates of Emom to be supportively defended by Scholarii in short time
2b. The gates of this one town Scholarii erected by the endeavor of Volari
3. Faithful I beg out of my burning heart
4. Save (your) humble (supplicant) by annulling the moral debt
5. Protect also this town by means of holy icons
6. (Being you) fortified (I wish you to) assist (the town) to withstand the enemies

Comments

The structure of the epigram follows the common three-part rule. In the first part the donor addresses his patron saint using a kind of glorifying expression. In the second part he describes his action(s) or donation(s) (or the actions of the “population” he represents), through which he considers himself worthy to beg for assistance. The last part describes the assistance he seeks or the manner of the saint’s intervention before the Lord, in this instance redemption of sins and the protection of his “πόλις” (town), which is under imminent threat. What exactly should be understood by the term “πόλις” is inexplicit. We shall consider as “πόλις” a settlement that measures between 3.0 and 7.0 ha, although slightly smaller areas could conditionally be accepted.

In the principal inscription in the church’s apse the main donor appears to be Georgios, the bishop of Veligosti, the same highly ranked clergy official, the prelate of Veligosti, was likely involved in the commissioning of some of the fine illustrations in the church. If we assume he was involved also as the donor of the epigram in question, Veligosti would have been the town to which the epigram refers.

In order to opine, however, it is important to recall the historical events that took place in the region during
this period\textsuperscript{45}. According to the Chronicle of the Morea\textsuperscript{46}, after the victory of the Franks at the Battle of Makryplagi, the Frankish prince Guillaume de Villehardouin called for a meeting of his military leaders. They decided to attack the Byzantine-held territory in southeastern Morea and to lay siege to Mystras using the Frankish-held town of Lakedaimon (Sparta) as a base. In the summer of 1264 their army poured into Byzantine-held territory and pillaged the countryside. In the same year Veligostı was in the hands of the Franks and the Orthodox bishop Georgios, the donor of the Kaphiona church, having likely been expelled from his town, was temporarily residing in the Byzantine-controlled Mani\textsuperscript{47}. Given the Frankish control of Veligostı, it is improbable that the epigram refers to this town. The only remaining alternative is the town named in the epigram to be a significant settlement in the immediate vicinity of the church, i.e. a town of a large size in Mani. The assumed mention of gates and the fear of potential siege point to a fortified location, likely the stronghold of Ano Poula, which I have identified as the site of the Frankish Grand Magne\textsuperscript{48}. The latter (according to the Chronicle\textsuperscript{49}) was the last castle to be surrendered to the Byzantines in 1262, following Monemvasia and Mystras.

Ano Poula is located a few kilometers south of Kaphiona (Fig. 5). The castle on the ridge of Makryna and the adjacent inhabited slope to the east (the “burg”), where ruins of numerous medieval dwellings are scattered, could be the town in question\textsuperscript{50}. The inhabited area extends over 6.5 ha in total\textsuperscript{51}. The impressive site is


\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Chronicle of the Morea}, Paris codex, verses 598-592, see P. Kalonaros, \textit{Τὸ Χρονικὸν τοῦ Μορέως}, Athens 1940, 232.

\textsuperscript{47} For the bishop Georgios of Veligostı see some notes by Drandakis, \textit{Βυζαντινὲς τοιχογραφίες}, op.cit. (n. 1), 77.

\textsuperscript{48} P. Katsafados, \textit{Τα κάστρα της Μαΐνης}, Athens 1992, 159.

\textsuperscript{49} Kalonaros, \textit{Τὸ Χρονικὸν}, op.cit. (n. 46), 189, verse 4501 (Paris codex).

\textsuperscript{50} Katsafados, \textit{Τα κάστρα}, op.cit. (n. 48), 161, fig. 5; 448, fig. 85.

\textsuperscript{51} The medieval site is comprised in aggregate of more than 65 houses with estimated population at its culmination about 440 people. For the estimation of the population as well as regarding matters related to the magnitude of medieval settlements, see the preliminary study by the same author: “An Arithmetic Method for Evaluating the Magnitude of Medieval Byzantine Settlements”, an introductory presentation of which was made at the 34th Symposium ChAE (Athens 2014) (brief publication in www.academia.edu).
naturally fortified and has been used as stronghold since antiquity (it is believed to have been the site of ancient Ippola)\(^52\). The place fits the alternative which considers that Scholarii were involved in the reinforcement of gates. Due to the natural defensive advantage of the location, walling was never elaborately erected\(^53\). Anyone watching the gates of the enceinte realizes that in the case of an upgrade, these defenses should be the parts of the castle to be taken care of first (Fig. 6, 7).

I consider, as said, the last word in the epigram, “ΠΟΛΕΜΙΟΝ” (“of enemies”) to be critically important. Taking into account the conditions prevailing in the region, described in the previous paragraphs, I suggest that the inscription was commissioned and written during the summer of 1264, when the region was under serious threat\(^54\).

The contents of the epigram can give dependable evidence to assess the people’s emotional and mental condition in the face of the eventual opposition and hardship that followed the hostilities initiated shortly after the surrender of the Grand Magne to the Byzantines. A related parameter to be concurrently considered is the extraordinary number of churches built and decorated after 1262 (Fig. 7) and the large number of the military saints, especially those on horseback, often illustrated in a grandiose manner (the Kaphiona church included). As Sh. Gerstel observed for the region of Mani in the 13th c.: “The construction of churches named for sainted warriors and the inclusion of equestrian saints in churches close to the Latin-held Morea demonstrate a desire to protect rural communities through the invocation of powerful military guardians”\(^55\).


\(^{53}\) Katsafados, *Τα κάστρα*, op. cit. (n. 48), 397.

\(^{54}\) Related is the passage from the liturgy of John Chrysostom written in the scroll held by the same hierarch in the sanctuary: “Κύριε, ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, σῶσον, τὸν λαόν Σου” (“Lord, Our God, save your people”).

\(^{55}\) For “the new border status” of the southern Morea in the 13th century and the depiction of military saints “as an indigenous response to regional danger”, see Sh. Gerstel, “Art and Identity in the Medieval Morea”, A. Laiou – R. P. Motahedeh (eds.), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, Washington, D.C. 2001, 270-273. Prof. Gerstel underlined the significance of equestrian saints in 13th-century painting in the region and introduced the theory in which the appearance of saints on horseback would be connected to the hostilities between
The proliferation of military saints has been attributed to patriotic enthusiasm, the expression of thankfulness for liberation from the heretic Latins56, and the invocation for “personal or familial protection”57. Based on the contents of the epigram, another factor has to be combined with the third one above and may be put forward as: the unrest of the population in the Mani of 1264. The uncertainty and accompanying fear that made the population seek divine protection and assistance from saints, demonstrated both in portable icons in their possession as well as on their churches’ frescoes, is expressed in the epigram of this study. The latter although materialized as a personalized donation it is more than a private supplication; it expresses the communal concern and uncertainty due to hostilities.

_Palaeographic observations_

The epigram is interesting both from epigraphic and palaeographic points of view. It imitates the so-called “distinctive” majuscule58. The putative Constantinopolitan origin of the principal painter is supported by the style of the epigram. This style comes from the heart of the Byzantine Empire and anticipates writing trends in the Byzantines and Franks before and after the Frankish lordship in the region (1249-1262). Examples before 1262 include Ai Mamas, Karavas (1232) (Gerstel, op.cit., Appendix 281). Posterior to 1262 the cases are abundant (eadem, op.cit., Appendix, 281-284).


57 Gerstel, “Art and Identity”, op.cit. (n. 55), 272. In the invocation for “personal or familial protection” we must, after the epigram, add the “communal” protection.

58 Cf. “Epigraphische Auszeichnungsmajuskel” and “Versuchte Epigraphische Auszeichnungsmajuskel”; for synoptic description of these terms introduced by German speaking scholars (Hunger), see A. Rhoby, “Inscriptions and Manuscripts in Byzantium: A Fruitful Symbiosis?”, M. Manicci – P. Orsini (eds), Scrittura epigrafica e scrittura libbra: fra Oriente e Occidente, Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio meridionale Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia, Cassino 2015, 15-44, 22-25.
NEW EPGRAPHIC EVIDENCE FROM MANI. THE KAPHIONA EPIGRAMS

capital. The epigram is most likely contemporary with the older “north” inscription in the church, which is also written in “distinctive” majuscule, of which only a few letters can now be discerned with difficulty (Fig. 8). Commenting on the style of these letters we notice the K, the A, the N, the T, the V; the ligature of A and N of the older north inscription are written in a manner characterized by broken lines’ contours and “rectangular appearance” of certain letters (especially K, N, H, A) which is similar to those of the epigram. The script is trying to be more “distinctive” in the sense that surpasses in the embellishment of the letter edges, which are adorned by extensions and quasi crutches. On the other hand, less attention has been given to the ruling compared with that of the inscription. It seems that the epigram and the north inscription could have been drawn by different, contemporary hands, maybe reflecting the work of a teacher and an apprentice influencing each other’s script.

There are no voids between the words. Particulars of the epigram’s script are:

1. Cross potent at the beginning. The cross potent evidently was a preference of the painter. The painted crosses on the omophoria and polystavria of the hierarchs in the church have potent edges.

2. The ζ is written in minuscule. In the period where our epigram is written (1264) minuscule letters were already noticed in inscriptions written in majuscule.

3. The form of the ligature “ει” is generally considered as minuscule. The remarks in the paragraph 2 right before about the introduction of minuscule letters and/or ligatures into inscriptions in majuscule are valid also in the case of “ει.” In Kaphiona the “ει” is written in two different ways. One of the two forms (type A) is written as in line 2 “ΠΙΔΕΙ;” it resembles a vertical stroke having a quasi “omicron” attached at its left side mid height (Δ); the other way, the ordinary formal style (type B), is noticed in line 3, the word “ΕΙΚΟ” (ΕΙΚΟ) (which is the same as in the Archangels painting frame inscription addressed in Part 2, below).

4. Accents, breathings and punctuation. There are no breathings. The acute accent is distinctly drawn as a quasi-tick sign. This execution, certainly of Constanti-nopolitan influence, has been better described as “cuneiform” and clearly imitates similar accents in monumental stone inscriptions. The obvious consistency in the use of accents helps in reconstructing the missing words and letters. The dots (used in Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula) or double dots between verses seen elsewhere, have here been replaced by small crosses.

60 Drandakis, “Les peintures”, op.cit. (n. 1), 164.
61 The only inscription in the Mani challenging the Kaphiona epigrams in appearance and accomplishment is the inscription (epigraphic Auszeichnungsmajuskel) B in the church of Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula (ca. 1265, Katsafados, “New Evidence”, op.cit. (n. 29), fig. 13. The latter is gramary hands, maybe reflecting the work of a teacher and an apprentice influencing each other’s script.

62 See also Rhoby, “Inscriptions”, op.cit. (n. 58), 28: “Within painting workshops responsible for the fresco decoration of a church, it is thought that the most literate artist was chosen to paint the inscriptions, including the ones placed on the scrolls held by saints”.

63 The only inscription in the Mani challenging the Kaphiona epigrams in appearance and accomplishment is the inscription (epigraphic Auszeichnungsmajuskel) B in the church of Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula (ca. 1265, Katsafados, “New Evidence”, op.cit. (n. 29), fig. 13. The latter is most likely contemporary with the older “north” inscription in the church, which is also written in “distinctive” majuscule, of which only a few letters can now be discerned with difficulty (Fig. 8). Commenting on the style of these letters we notice the K, the A, the N, the T, the V; the ligature of A and N of the older north inscription are written in a manner characterized by broken lines’ contours and “rectangular appearance” of certain letters (especially K, N, H, A) which is similar to those of the epigram. The script is trying to be more “distinctive” in the sense that surpasses in the embellishment of the letter edges, which are adorned by extensions and quasi crutches. On the other hand, less attention has been given to the ruling compared with that of the inscription. It seems that the epigram and the north inscription could have been drawn by different, contemporary hands, maybe reflecting the work of a teacher and an apprentice influencing each other’s script.

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66 Examples in MSS BL Harley Ms 5786 (<1153), f. 5r, line 5; f. 6r, line 18 etc. BL MS 21 (1291-2), f. 119v line 6. BL Burney MS 21 (1291-92), f. 10r, line 8 etc. The execution of “ΕΙ” in the Archangel Michael church, Polemitas, inscription (line 24) is cursive. The second edition (type B) being diachronic a appears twice in the later inscription (1325) in the Panagioni monastery catholikon (for these monuments see P. Katsafados, “Βυζαντινές επιγραφικές μαρτυρίες στη Μέσα Μάνη (13ος-14ος αι.), Athens 2015, fig. 4, 50).

68 Ibid., 25.
70 Small crosses following double dots signaling ends of paragraphs

ΔΚΑΕ ΑΙΦ (2017), 287-310

301

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Part 2. The three-verse epigram at Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphionia, north wall

The inscription\(^1\), composed of approximately 90 letters in one line, written in majuscule, is located on the north wall of the church in the wide red upper border above the Synaxis of the Archangels (Fig. 9)\(^2\). The demonstrative expression “ΩΤΟΣ ΘΕΑΤΟΥΟΥ”, stressed on the fifth syllable, as well as the term “ΚΟΣΜΟΝ”, accentuated on the penultimate, proclaims the beholder to search in the obscure writing for verses in Byzantine dodecasyllable. The writing—arranged within the 220 centimeters of the border length—presumably constitute the remains of a three verse epigram\(^3\), which appears written in the same scholarly style as the one above the door of the chapel commented in Part 1 and probably executed by the same hand. The script likewise imitates the “distinctive” style, but in a slightly more elaborate manner. The condition of the inscription is today in a very poor state. Little more than one third of the letters can be discerned. Following a superficial reading only the first verse can be proposed (nevertheless with some reservation), while of the third only the last three syllables have survived. The second verse is in the worst condition and preserves only few scattered letters and combinations of letters. The indistinct part is difficult to restore. Due to the ambiguity in transcribing letters and combinations of letters, the text deserves particular attention. The epigram can be seen, for example, in BL Harley Ms 5786 (f. 153), f. 2r.

\(^1\) Briefly mentioned in Drandakis [“Les peintures”, op.cit. (n. 1), 171], although not referring to it as an epigram.

\(^2\) Inscriptions running round the frames of paintings (mostly icons) are frequently seen in Byzantine iconography. In the case of Kaphionia it is only the upper horizontal part of the image’s frame that is inscribed. The vertical bands are clear of letters. The same most probably happened with the lower horizontal part, which is missing today. See also A. Rhoby, Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten der Kleinkunst (= Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung, 2) (Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung, Vienna 2010, 23). For verses in illustrations’ frames see also Rhoby, “Inscriptions”, op.cit. (n. 58), 16, where the relevant bibliography is quoted.

\(^3\) A verse in dodecasyllable consumes about 25 letter spaces, consisting on average of about (+) 30 letters.

is the second in the same church and the third found so far in the territory of the Byzantine Mani\(^4\).

The transcription of the obscure text is facilitated by attempting to understand the inherent meaning of the rather secured first verse (Fig. 10) and the simultaneous exploitation of what else is saved, i.e. the term “ΚΟΣΜΟΝ” and the few epigraphic observations in the second and third verses. Emendatio is highly required.

A preliminary transcription of what the concerned observer can see today is as follows (arranged for convenience in three lines)\(^5\):

+ ΦΩΤΟΣ ΘΕΑΤΟΥΟΥ HCITAC ΑΙΤΟΥ (HYX)
+ + T(E) M (E)?)EI (PYOY (EI)
+ + Χ)EI ΧΟΣΜΟΝ

in minuscule (corrected orthography);

+ ΦΩΤΟΣ ΘΕΑΤΟΥΟΥ HCITAC ΑΙΤΟΥ (HYX)
+ + ΣΗΜΑΤΙΣΙΟΝ (ΠΟΙΟΥ ΗΥΧ [..] ΣΗΜΑΤΙΣΙΟΝ (ΠΟΙΟΥ ΗΥΧ [..])
+ + [..] [..]
+ + [..] [..]

At the beginning the supplicant probably addressed one of the Archangels. The abbreviated word HCITAC (the HC in ligature)\(^6\) with the wavy horizontal stroke a break, at first glance does not make sense. It could be assumed as exceptionally being used, poetic license, for metrical reasons in the place of the suspended HCITAC-ΘΗΝ (-AMHN) (worship by touching the lips on the icon), most probably the second option. The wavy horizontal line has been added as abbreviation sign for the amputated ending part\(^7\). The acutely accented word “ΑΙΤΟΥ” is the present tense imperative of the verb “ἐπιθύμω” which has the meaning of “attack

\(^4\) See the epigram in Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula (ca. 1265-1270) in Katsafados, “New Evidence”, op.cit. (n. 29), 281.

\(^5\) The symbols used in note 11 are valid here as well.

\(^6\) Same ligature is noticed in the epigram commented in Part 1 (see aove Fig. 2).

\(^7\) Such an extensive elision is not common. Suspensions in verbs are rare; these are mainly limited to names, titles, also grammatical cases, adverbs etc. Cf. the conjectured contraction of the initial consonants CX of the word ΧΟΧΑΛΙΠΟΙ (v.s. above page 295) and the assumed amputation of the verb “ἀνατριχίζω” (v.s. above page 295) in the 6-verse epigram.
to (someone)," as well as “oppose to”, “being involved in hostilities,” etc. The missing letters after the words “ΑΙΤΙΟΥ (HY) Χ” can be very difficultly recognized as “ΟΜΗΝ.” What therefore can be understood of the verse is the following:

Φωτός θεαυγοῦς ἡσπας|| ἅπτου ηὐχ(όμην)

(Having worshiped the divine-illuminating light, I wished […] to oppose)

The verse appears to refer to a supplicant’s wish which plausibly came after worshipping the divine illuminating light emanating off the newly painted and consecrated depiction incorporating the Archangels, either the ones of the Synaxis on the north wall (Fig. 8) or those below the sanctuary apse (v.i. page 308). Pertaining to the theme of the epigram, from what is ostensibly seen, although the imperative “ΑΙΤΙΟΥ” can guide the researcher mentally, unfortunately no concrete results at this stage could be induced. The only option left is, by all means, scrutiny of the scattered letter vestiges in the second verse (being both important and restrictive in the restoration attempt).

The first two letters of the second verse are lost. The second pair is a “ΣΣ” followed, after a letter space, by an indistinct letter formed by two vertical strokes and, one more letter space further, by a μυ and adjacently plausibly an epsilon; the next syllable incorporates the “Ε” in the form B (see epigram of Part 1, page 301); the syllable’s consonant appears to be the “C”. Next, difficultly seen, is the faded ligature of the τυ with the “H”, in the syllable “NH”. A pair of letters resembling at

78 Liddell – Scott, Λεξικὸ τῆς Ἀρχαίας Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσης, opcit. (n. 3), ἅπτομαι.

79 A small right curve stroke resembling apostrophe in between does not belong to the script and must be discarded.
first glance “TÈ” (grave accented), is observed short next (Fig. 11). That could quite possibly be the ending syllable of a word, for instance an epithet of the Archangel. The “TÈ” provokes the “ΠΠΕΠΠΩΤΕ” to be suggested\(^8\) but the traces before it are not supportive. Further very careful observation of the “TÊ” reveals that no right horizontal semi-extension of the tau exists. The letter rather is the Pi (“Π”) with a prevailing adornment crutch at its horizontal stroke. The so formed τΙΕΠ, correctly stressed, is fairly securely formed. The Y-(ΙΛ-) is rather the seventh syllable of the verse. Caesura at this point is not possible; the caesura should therefore be a penthemimeris before the ligation NH; this means that the NH must equally be a complete word, apparently the negation (abstractive) particle NH, which combined with the YΙΕΠ is interpreted as “not for, against”.

What comes next is the most interesting, though half debatable, word of the script. Three letter spaces following the YΙΕΠ show some ambiguous traces but the further next three are more or less positively identified as “(Π)ΟΥ” (Fig. 12). The rather surely read “POY” is also significant in so far as not too many matching words end in “POY”.

Pertaining to the three ambiguous letters before the “POY”, after the rho of the “YΙΕΠ” a letter with distinctly curved upper part (bow) is discernible. Next are two faded crossed inclined strokes (oppositely directed). Their crossing occurs at the middle height of the letter, not at the bottom. While the bottom crossing points to the letter ypsilon (several times seen in both epigrams dealt in this study), crossing at the middle belongs only to “X”. Next adjacent to the so deciphered “X”, the extremely obscure remnants of a round letter resembling the omicron or the theta are seen having left their traces on the dark red background, at extreme magnification. The choice here will be the theta, both because it makes sense in the emerging probable word and second it shows an horizontal stroke extending outside its round contour, exactly as it is drawn at the beginning of the inscription, at the similarly written letter Theta of the word “ΘΕΑΥΓΟΥΣ”. The significant word “ΕΧΘΙΟΥ” (“of the enemy”) thus formed, combined with the “ΑΙΤΤΟΥ” before, stimulates strong impulse in the “decoding” effort of the epigram, connecting simultaneously its implicit idea with the analogous of the previously commented epigram in Part 1. After the “POY” comes the symbol for “EI” drawn in the type A form; thereafter an epsilon and a nu quite faded are conjectured. A faded circumflex is seen above the Ν and the remains of a small cross short after. The word thus formed is “ΕΙ”“ΕΝ+” (optative of “rju”, be). Figures 11 and 12 are reproductions of the just discussed right side middle part of the epigram with schematized letter contours.

The third verse is more straightforwardly “approachable” –either in positive or in negative sense-, in so far as it has parts either rather easily discernible or severely erased\(^8\). For the latter, no attempt can be made for decipherment or transcription. More specific, save for the initial T of the verse, the indistinct letters “ΠΩΤΕ” in the middle, the terminus clearly seen word “ΚΩΜΩΝ” and the letters “ΧΕΙ” before it, nothing else has left even traces (Fig. 13). However it is significant, after adoption of the “ΠΩΤΕ”, to have rather positively defined one of the epithets “ΠΤΕΡΩΣΣΩΤΕ or ΑΙΤΤΕΛΟΠΠΩΣΣΩΤΕ\(^8\)” (or “ΑΙΤΕΛΩΝ ΠΡΟΤΗ") referring to the addressed saint, who reasonably can be identified as the Archangel Michael.

The following Fig. 14 contains the rendering of the epigraph complex, incorporating whatever has been initially saved in the work notebook in situ, enriched by the letters, combinations of letters or letter traces discussed in the previous paragraphs (always presented for reasons of convenience in three lines). Those of the above findings in doubt are properly marked. Whatever can henceforth be done with the inscription will be the offspring of the Fig. 14 assessment.

**Paleographic notes**

The epigram starts with a cross potent. The end of the first verse is (reservedly) signaled by a faded small cross

\(^8\) Practically a “tabula rasa”.

\(^8\) The letter is the X, not the Y for the same reason as in the word “ΕΧΘΙΟΥ” in the second verse. The clearly seen “EI” is written in the formal type B (vs. page 301).

\(^8\) Lambros, “Ο Μαρκιανός Κώδιξ”, op.cit. (n. 38), 143.

\(^8\) Lambros, “Ο Μαρκιανός Κώδιξ”, op.cit. (n. 38), 143.

PANAYOTIS ST. KATSAFADOS

ΔΧΑΕ ΛΗ΄ (2017), 287-310

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shortly after an “X” which is rather clearly discernible about 24 letter spaces from the beginning. Small crosses seem to separate the rest verses as in the Part 1 epigram. From what can be gleaned from the obscure traces at the terminus a “positura” ~ could be there. The rather difficult to be discerned “EI” is used in three cases exactly resembling the two versions of “EI” in the epigram in Part 1. The first here is drawn as a small circle or rectangle the right side of which is attached to a vertical stroke at mid-height, just after the “POY” (type A) and of the other two cases (type B), one is the elaborate execution just before the last word “KOCMON”84. The letters are embellished with crutches. Consistency of the learned scribe with the accents and punctuation (from traces in the inscription) could be considered rather certain, although due to the bad condition most are lost; in Fig. 14 accents are drawn after their remnants and are to a degree conjectural. Only few circumflexes and a “cuneiform” grave accent above the πιε are positively secured. As in the Part 1 epigram no breathing marks are registered. The marking on top the alpha of the “ΠΤΟΥ” although its form is not exactly cuneiform, it will be considered as acute accent. The script can be provisionally attributed to the same hand as the Part 1 inscription, though it is less elaborate. However, implications are raised after comparison of the orthography. Although the sample is small and not undisputable conclusions can be made, the impeccable spelling of what is left of the original three-verse epigram cannot be challenged by the good but not perfect performance of the six-verse epigram scribe. The master and apprentice scenario can here again be suggested, as well as the “template” option, drawn on a parchment, clay or wood by the literate creator of the verses and handed over to the scribe/painter. In any respect the correct spelling

84 Same was noticed in the six-verse epigram examined in the Part 1 above (v.s. page 301). The transcriptions are identical. In the three-verse epigram the type A is at the middle of the word, while the type B at the end.
combined with the structure of the epigram and the erudite style are indicative of literacy pointing to Constantinopolitan provenance.

Transcription

The structure of the epigram incorporates the normal elements. At the beginning the Archangel (through the divine light associated with him) seems to be the holy entity to which the supplicant addresses. The equivalent of a request for “blessing” (ḤYXΟΜΗΝ) is also implied in the first verse. The thankful glorification ΠΤΕΡΩΠΤΩΔΕ or ΑΠΤΕΑΟΠΗΡΩ of the Archangel (“ἈΧΡΕ” should usually follow. However, in the herebelow proposed transcription, it lies, instead, in the last part and occupies the place of the supplicant’s request, which normally should be the theme of the third verse. Nevertheless, crucial for the meaning of the epigram words are the “ἌΠΙΤΟΥ” and the “ἘΞΘΡΟΥ”. As in the case of the word “ΠΙΟΛΕΜΙΟΝ” in the previous six-verse poem, here again the inscription speaks of hostilities and enemies. That is, most probably, it refers to the same unsafe environment of the year 1264 which has been described in the aforesaid contemporary epigram in Part 1.

Based on the assumptions above and particularly considering the concern of the supplicant due to the hostilities taking place at the time when the epigram was written, availing ourselves with the options the versatile Byzantine poetic language offers, the following is an improvised rendering86:

The epigram freely translated is:

+ Having put my lips upon divine-illuminating light, I wished (to be guided by you) to oppose
+ (and) stand for nemesis; do not acquiesce the enemy to be
+ fortuitous, the people (or adoration) of whom (=enemy), winged-one, you repel

Notes on the proposed transcription

The letters and the letter traces of the first five syllables of the second verse will be complemented by matching letters to form words integrating the “(? T E)” and “(? MECEI”. The word NEMECIC (“cause for unavoidable punishment”) following attentive observation is secure and is quite in the spirit of the epigram. The present tense imperative ICT[HI] EN (“σὴν ἑν”, stand in, stand for) is conjectured; the “H” for metric reasons is omitted (echthlipsis), it is not part of the verse87.

85 Of the published contemporary texts, the Marcianus gr. 524 (late 13th c.), being adequately extensive, has been a good example for linguistic comparisons and a source of words frequently encountered in epigrams. See Lambros, “Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς Κύδων”, op. cit. (n. 38); also F. Spingou, Words and Artworks in the Twelfth Century and Beyond: The Thirteenth century Manuscript Marcianus gr. 524 and the Twelfth-century Dedicatory Epigrams on Works of Art (PhD Thesis), Oxford University, Oxford 2012. However, as regards to the proposed transcription, it is not the intention of this article to produce poetically impeccable alternatives of the missing parts. It rather aims to suggest more or less acceptable substitutes, which remain in the concept of the epigram and –conceiving simultaneously to reasonable deductions in the metric and prosodic requirements–, incorporate without exception the identified letters and letter traces of the obscure parts in minuscule (orthography corrected), implicitly:

+ ΦΩΤΟΣ ΘΕΑΤΟΥ “cause for unavoidable
+ ΠΟΛΕΜΙ 5/5/2017 11:08:09 /uni03BC/uni03BC
+ ΕΝ ΙΑΕ(PAC || ΡΩ
+ ΑΧΡΕ (HY)
+ ΘΩΤΕ ΜΠΗ ΔΕΠ EXΘ)
+ (PO)Y (EI)Y(EN)
+ Τ(ΥΧΑΙ O Y TE ΠΤΕ)(ΡΩ TE) || (АНТЕ)ΧΕΙ ΚΟΣΜΟΝ
+ τύχαι οὗ τε Πτερωτὲ || ἀντέχει κόσμον
+ θυγάτηρ σημαίνει, της ἄμην ὑπὲρ Ἑρμήν Εἰεν
+ τόχα οὗ τε Περιστε ἡ ἀντέχει κόσμον
+ ΦΩΤΟΣ ΘΕΑΤΟΥ “cause for unavoidable
+ ΠΟΛΕΜΙ 5/5/2017 11:08:09 /uni03BC/uni03BC
+ ΕΝ ΙΑΕ(PAC || ΡΩ
+ ΑΧΡΕ (HY)
+ ΘΩΤΕ ΜΠΗ ΔΕΠ EXΘ)
+ (PO)Y (EI)Y(EN)
+ Τ(ΥΧΑΙ O Y TE ΠΤΕ)(ΡΩ TE) || (АНТЕ)ΧΕΙ ΚΟΣΜΟΝ
+ τύχαι οὗ τε Πτερωτὲ || ἀντέχει κόσμον
+ θυγάτηρ σημαίνει, της ἄμην ὑπὲρ Ἑρμήν Εἰεν

86 Circumflex on the penultimate is rare, see Komines, Τὸ βεβαιοφονὸν ἱερὸν ἔγραμμα καὶ ὁ ἐγγραμματευτὴς (ἄθροισθε), Σύγγραμμα Περιοδικὰ τῆς Ἐλληνικῆς Συμπολιτείας 3, Athens 1966.

87 Liddell – Scott, Λεξικὸ τῆς Ἀρχαίας Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσης, op.
Conjectural also are the words, TYXAI (fortuitousness), Ο"Υ ("ο" genitive of the relative pronoun "ὅς", who), TE (conjunctive particle) and the (ANTE)XEI combination. The "EXEI" (present tense second person of "EXOMAI") with accusative means "keep away from, repel". The added "ANT" enhances the meaning and keeps the dodecasyllable. The ΠΤΕΡΩΤΕ compared with the ΑΙΤΕΛΩΠΩΤΕ and ΑΙΤΕΛΩΝ ΠΡΩΤΕ is preferable for the same reason, although it does not keep the accent on the fifth syllable of the verse. One of the word KOCMOC meanings is "adornment". The verb "κοσμῶ" (adorn) and its derivatives are frequently used in the contemporary Byzantine poetry (cf. the Marcialus 524, passim), where they bear almost exclusively the rendering "adorn". Other valid renderings are the common (modern Greek) "people" and "universe". The latter will be here discarded. Either of the other meanings of the word KOCMOC, i.e. "ornament" (associated with worship) or "people", could be applied (though "people" makes more sense) and dictate the improvised restoration of the third verse. The language of the epigram, as said, has strong similarities with the poetic language encountered in the Byzantine literature. The draft in Fig. 15 is the finally proposed edition.
In the wording of the epigram the surpassing manifestation of the Divine Illuminating Light in connection with the powerful substance of the Archangels is prevalent. Its significance is closely tracked by the exceptional beauty and high artistic value of the accommodating illustration, the Synaxis of the guardian angels Michael and Gabriel. In the church, the same interest in Light is also manifested in the unusual depiction of the round rhipidia associated with the further two Archangels, Uriel and Raphael, in the sanctuary (Fig. 16). This correlation, although not uncommon elsewhere, is unique in the Mani. These golden rotating discs held by the angels, painted as three concentric circles spinning in opposite directions, to my knowledge, are not manifested in any other Maniate monument. They look as vibrating in their own circular motion and as hovering in the air symbols of the God. Their intrinsic symbolic meaning is linked with the Heavenly Uncreated Light and Divine Power. According to Radojičić, in an interesting albeit not adequately documented hypothesis, they were believed to be miraculous signs that had the power to physically fortify, since they represented the Logos, the Word of God upon which everything was based. Weitzmann deduced from the placement and function of similar discs in the Sinai icons that they were associated with Divine Light and the Holy Spirit. E. Schwartz, who assigns an all-encompassing sense of holiness to the painted discs, records examples that give the impression of “polished metal” in Serbia, Kastoria and Bosnia. An interesting approach on the “whirling disc” issue was also made after investigations in monuments located in Cappadocia, Sinai, Thessalonica and Serbia: “Discs were often represented in the most important places of temple space and as a part of significant iconographic plots; discs had various art execution and color scheme; the form of disc and idea of whirling were common for all examples. When the disc consists of three segments, the form of disc and idea of whirling were common for all examples. When the disc consists of three segments,
it makes sense to assume this trinity as a symbol of the Holy Trinity. The form of a rotating or shining disc, especially on the Sinai monuments, where gold color is the main and form-building element of a luminescence, suggests symbolic parallels with a solar disc especially as both in the Scriptures, and in theological works where the sun is the image of God, or sanctity, and good fortune granted by Him. The following assumption of symbolism of rotating or shining discs is consolidated to understanding them as Divine energy. Considering all possible options, the most convincing assumption, from our point of view, is that understanding of rotating discs as Divine energy has serious theological justification in the developed orthodox doctrine about Divine light and energies. Understanding of the discs as emitters of Divine energy is quite inviting and congruent with the context perception of both the epigrams in Kaphiona.

Considering the conditions prevailing at that time in the area, the military spirit pervading the narrative of the epigram denotes Constantinople origin. The perfect spelling of the script and the scholarly style added to the military nature, as well as the personalized confrontational attitude (in distinction to the practically communal initiative behind the supplication in the previous six-verse epigram) justify the assumption that the person who ordered the epigram, its patron, is of the highest rank. While in the case of the Part 1 epigram the donor could be, for instance, the governor of the “ΠΟΛΙΚ” in question, in the epigram of Part 2 the alternatives are the prelate of Veligosti (less probable), a high military of decisive responsibilities during the Konstantinos’ campaign or even higher, the Sebastokrator himself.

The area around the church of Hagioi Theodoroi in Kaphiona appears to have concentrated Byzantine military activities during the summer of 1264. Drandakis’ old opinion that the exceptional Kaphiona work could be attributed to a team of adept painters accompanying the Sebastokrator Konstantinos in his campaign in Laco-nia, finds strong support in the discussed two epigrams.

* Among the examples of rotating discs, mention should also be made of the four at the cardinal points between the pendentives in the church of Panagia Phorbiotissa Asinou in Cyprus, a detail particularly discussed by Kalopissi in: S. Kalopissi-Verti, “The Murals of the Narthex: The paintings of the Late Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries”, A. Weyl Carr – A. Nicolaides (eds), Asinou. The Architecture and Murals of the Panagia Phorbiotissa, Cyprus, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C. 2012, 115-208, 137. Sh. Gerstel, on the occasion of a private communication pertaining to Kaphiona, commented: “What is impressive is the attention given to the colors of the rhipidia held by the angels in the sanctuary, which are clearly intended to evoke the reflective nature of gold and silver. In this darkened church, the colorful circles seem to shimmer. They would have probably been viewed through a screen embellished by bosses, that with radiant lines. The program of the church, filled with archangels, seems to all be about light and divine illumination. The Mani is full of churches of exceptional artistry…”.

Provenance of the figures
Figs 1, 2, 4, 6-16 P St. Katsafados. Figs 3, 5: Sh. E. J. Gerstel.
μνημονεύουν τον αδελφό του αυτοκράτορα Μιχαήλ Η', σεβαστοκράτορα Κωνσταντίνο Παλαιολόγο, και υψηλά ιστότιμες δωρητές, τον επίπονο της Βενεζουέλας, θείας και έναν ανώνυμο σύγχρονο. Δεν από τις επιγραφές αυτές αναφέρονται ως επιγράμματα. Το ένα βρίσκεται μέσα από το ανάψυξιν της νώτης θέρες ουσιαστικά, και το άλλο στον βόρειο τοίχο, σαφώς απέναντι από τον εισόδο στον ναό, γραμμένο μέσα στο βαθυκόκκινο πλαίσιο της παράστασης της Σύναξης των Αρχαγγέλων. Λόγω της εξαιρετικής κατάστασης στην οποία βρίσκονται, και των κολοβωμάτων της, τα δύο επιγράμματα έχουν μεγάλη σημασία αποκαταστάθηκε και μόνο εν μέρες αποκαταστάθηκε. Είναι και τα δύο γραμμένα σε βυζαντινό δωδεκασύλλαβο. Το πρώτο, και μεγαλύτερο, αποκατασταθεί. Είναι και τα δύο γραμμένα σε βυζαντινό δωδεκασύλλαβο. Το πρώτο, και μεγαλύτερο, αποκατασταθεί. Είναι και τα δύο γραμμένα σε βυζαντινό δωδεκασύλλαβο. Το πρώτο, και μεγαλύτερο, αποκατασταθεί. Είναι και τα δύο γραμμένα σε βυζαντινό δωδεκασύλλαβο. Το πρώτο, και μεγαλύτερο, αποκατασταθεί. Είναι και τα δύο γραμμένα σε βυζαντινό δωδεκασύλλαβο. Το πρώτο, και μεγαλύτερο, αποκατασταθεί.